

SPEECH: REMEMBRANCE DAY – 2023

Families of officers and colleagues here remembered,
Mr. Mayor,
Councillors and Aldermen,
Members of the Safety & Security Portfolio Committee,
Executive Director Vincent Botto,
Director Robbie Robberts,
Chiefs, Deputy Chiefs, Assistant Chiefs,
Managers and Heads, all supervisors and
members of the extended family of the Safety & Security Directorate,
Master of Ceremonies,
ladies and gentlemen:
good morning, molweni, goeie more.

I would like to extend a **warm welcome** to you as the Mayoral Committee Member for Safety and Security and Events for the City of Cape Town.

In the spirit of remembrance, I want to provide some **background** to today's ceremony so that we can appreciate and **understand the symbols** we use to acknowledge our fallen officers and colleagues.

There are **five aspects** of today's ceremony that are especially important:

The first is the **commemorative wall**. Previously the only record of these officers and the sacrifices they made was contained in various offices or meeting rooms around the City, mostly quite small and hidden from view. When I saw the memorials in other cities around the world, I knew we needed to do more to honour these fallen members of our services.

Thus started a long process to design and build this memorial, which **reminds every person** who walks this concourse **never to forget** these men and women.

The second aspect is the **2 minutes of silence** that we will observe later on in the ceremony. The **first minute** is to **acknowledge members who have passed away**. The **second minute** of silence is to **acknowledge members who are currently in service** in the line of duty. During these minutes of silence, we will pause to think of the courageous people whom we have lost and dedicate this moment in time to remembering them.

The third aspect is the **Last Call**. This is a tradition started by the Fire Department where the bells, which have in time been replaced by electronic sirens at the fire stations, are rang at the start of a shift as well as when the shift has ended.

The **ringing bell** signifies the call to deploy to a fire or special service call. The City's Police Training Academy has expanded on this concept of ringing the bell for each of the Safety and Security Directorate's operational services: Fire, Traffic, Law Enforcement, Metro Police, Disaster Risk Management and other departments in **acknowledgement** and **unification of them** into one directorate.

As I said last year, the ringing of the bell also ties in with the **Noon Day gun**. In past tradition, people would observe 2 minutes of silence at 12 o'clock to acknowledge those who have passed away.

A powerful act of acknowledgement, which we uphold in the Safety & Security directorate of Cape Town, is the **radio call**, which will sound out to all staff across this City today and allows them all to share this moment with those here assembled.

Finally, bringing these things together, we have chosen to dedicate a day in the year which we call **Remembrance Day** so that we may jointly remember the Safety and Security staff within the City of Cape Town that have died in the line of duty as well as those that have succumbed to COVID while on duty.

This last year we lost good men and women **on and off duty**. **Each one had a story** - a story of passion, determination and a desire to make a difference. They embraced the call to service, fully aware of the risks involved, yet driven by a commitment to their fellow Capetonians.

I call on all here to remember officers and emergency staff like **Allesandro Heynes** – one of our Law Enforcement officers who was lost to us last year. He did not pass on duty but his loss was strongly felt in the service.

It was his vision to establish a **brass band** for the Safety & Security Directorate. We tried for some time but could not get things moving, as there was no policy or laws to guide this. But Allesandro was persistent – very persistent and he prevailed in the end.

Sadly, he was murdered **on the day** when Deputy Chief Shaun Smith received notification that the band had been given the green light and before Shaun could give him the news.

That band is here with us this morning.

Allessandro and the various officers that did not pass in the line of duty are not commemorated on this memorial, but **I want to pay tribute to them** now as their deaths are remembered and felt by their families, friends and all those who worked with them:

In Law Enforcement

Nomzamo Bovu - 22 Aug 2022 - Lukeamia
Andile Qomoyi - 30 Aug 2022 - passed
Alessandro Heynes - 01 Oct 2022 - shot (by gangsters) whilst off duty
Geraldine Renier - 25 Nov 2022 – passed from cancer
Sixole Maram - 25 Jan 2023 - fatal accident
Simphiwe Ntsham - 25 Jan 2023 - fatal accident
Siphelo Magwa - 18 May 2023 - shot whilst off duty

In Fire

Firefighter Mzuphela Dakela – 03 July 2022
Senior Firefighter Andre Brown – 01 July 2022
Firefighter Lindokuhle Matroos – 29 January 2023
Station Commander David Hill – 28 May 2023

In Metro Police

Constable Brendon Engelbrecht - CCTV & CRU – 04 Sep 2022 – aged 44 -
passed away in his sleep
Constable Henry Jacobs - Area North – 25 Oct 2022 – aged 51.

In the SSIU

Eric Ntshikelelo Lamani, whose death in December 2021 is from the previous year, but we have not yet paid our respects here and he deserves our recognition.

Mercifully, there were no lives lost in our **Traffic, EPIC, DRM, SSIU, SSIMS, Events, Support Services** or other units.

Each of these officers left a painful void with their passing. A void that is felt and which lingers.

Today, we join one another here to honour and **pay tribute** to the brave men and women who made the **ultimate sacrifice** in the line of duty.

We come together **not to mourn their loss, but to celebrate their lives** and the impact they had on our city. These fallen officers and firefighters were not just heroes, but **beacons of inspiration and hope** to us all.

Last year I said that this ceremony was an occasion to **honour their lives with our memories** and that their courage, resolve, and selflessness is **forever etched in our hearts**.

In every part of our city, these individuals stood as **protectors and guardians of peace and safety**. They dedicated themselves to protecting us, ensuring that our streets were secure and our homes were safe.

They **faced danger head-on**, running towards the shooting or towards the fire while others retreat - never faltering in their **commitment to serve and protect**.

Today, we remember their **indomitable spirits** and their **devotion to duty**. We remember their sacrifices, the countless hours spent away from their loved ones and the risks they faced, all in the name of protecting and serving others. They understood that **bravery was not the absence of fear, but the willingness to act in the face of it**.

Let us also **remember the families and loved ones left behind**, who have endured great pain and loss. They, too, have **made sacrifices**. They have kissed their loved ones goodbye, not knowing if it would be the last time. They have held back tears and put on brave faces, supporting our heroes as they embarked on their duty to protect and serve. **We stand with them today** and offer our support and gratitude.

After this morning's ceremony, let us **not depart with heavy hearts**, we must not dwell on sorrow – instead let us **find solace** in the legacy these fallen officers and firefighters have left behind. They have left us a **flame of bravery**,

compassion, and unity and it is our duty to carry that torch forward and to honour their memory through our own actions.

Martin Luther King Jr. said, "**Injustice anywhere** is a threat to **justice everywhere**." Let us remember these words as we strive to create a world in which the sacrifices made by our fallen heroes were not in vain.

May their lives spur us on to work for a **safer, more just and more compassionate** Cape Town. Let us **support our enforcement and emergency services** departments with the resources they need to continue their crucial work.

Let us also use this day to **reflect on the challenges** they face daily. Let us recognise that **the path they walk is not an easy one** - it is filled with **uncertainty, danger**, and, at times, **injustice**. Let us pledge to support them, to advocate for their well-being, and to work together to **build a society that values and respects their service**.

We have made strides in **providing training** to help officers face their daily challenges such as the stop-and-approach training, street survival and firearm retention training and have improved equipment and vehicles for the safety of our staff.

Our **firearms simulator** will soon be adding to this safety training, giving officers greater confidence in the decisions they have to make under stress. We must **take every action to keep them safe**.

Allow me to **conclude** by saying that in the face of **tragedy**, we can find **strength**. In the midst of **darkness**, we can find **hope**. Today, as we remember these fallen heroes, let us **ignite a spark** of resilience within

ourselves. Let us **draw inspiration** from their dedication, courage and their love for our city and its people.

Among police and members of the military, one will sometimes hear the phrase “**Until Valhalla**”.

This refers to **meeting each other again in the afterlife** in Norse mythology. Valhalla is an anglicisation of ‘Valhall’, or the Hall of the Slain.

After death, Vikings would have expected to go to Valhalla if the **character of their life** and the **circumstances of their death** were honourable – Valhalla being the destination for those that passed in battle – those who died in the line of duty.

Those who we remember today, are not forgotten. To our brothers and sisters allow me to say “**Until Valhalla**”.

I thank you.