

Johannesburg Regiment Parades

By Harry van Staden: Lt. Col. (ret)

A parade is a weird and wonderful experience. It is one of those things where the spectators always leave with a sense of fulfilment, and the participants are never really satisfied. It is the only event on a military calendar that can truly destabilise a Regimental Sergeant Major and cause irrational behaviour in the week leading up to the parade. A parade is a thing that you do every year, but every year you have difficulty getting the parade order out, and although the Drill Book is very clear, the format is almost always contentious. Lastly, it is almost inevitable that the company and leader group on parade will attend all rehearsals and will be as ready as can be, but all senior ranks and dignitaries participating in the parade are likely to pitch 20 minutes before the parade, without a clue as to what their role and function is. Welcome to the world of parades!



Recently, Johannesburg Regiment once again executed on the time honoured tradition of having an annual medal parade and a commemorative parade in one week end. The history to this is that the Regiment exercises its right to Freedom of the City annually by holding a parade to commemorate the City and Regimental members that have fallen in service, as well as to celebrate its anniversary. The Regiment has always had close ties with the City of Johannesburg and amongst others is also authorised to wear the Johannesburg City Coat of Arms as the Regimental badge. In 2008 it was decided by the Johannesburg Metropolitan Council that it needs to have a more formal association with the Military Units in Johannesburg, and the function of military liaison was added to the portfolio of the Speaker of the Council. Since then the annual parade of Johannesburg Regiment is hosted by the Speaker.

On 01 March 2013 the Regiment hosted a medal parade at the Alpha Training Base in Heidelberg, during which 36 medals were awarded.



It was hot, it was dusty and the parade ground was more suited to off road racing than military precision, but the members on parade put their heart and soul into it, and pulled it off remarkably well. Infantry Formation was represented by Col. Gaosale, who also assisted the Officer Commanding with the handing out of medals. This parade also coincided with the Regiment's 53rd anniversary, and guests were treated to a great finger lunch in the mess afterwards.

On 02 March 2013 the Regiment paraded at the Altrek Sports Centre in Alexandra. The parade was hosted and attended by the Speaker, Councillor Connie Bapela. The General Officer Commanding of the Infantry Formation, Major- General Yam was also in attendance. This was a special parade as it included the handing over of command between Lt. Col. Jabulani Tshabalala (outgoing) and Lt. Col. Duncan Motsamai (incoming).



During the latter part of the parade there was a Commemorative Service and Wreath Laying Ceremony.



The parade was held in front of in excess of 100 guests, and a generous sprinkling of spectators, and very smartly executed by the members of Johannesburg Regiment. The National Ceremonial Guard band made a very professional contribution to the parade, and Signals and Medics were in support. Afterwards Councillor Bapela hosted a lunch for all invited guests in the community centre, and the participating members received a very welcome food parcel and cold drinks, sponsored by the Metropolitan Council.

Also in attendance:

Senior guests at the Parade:

Senior Master Chief Warrant Officer Jan Viljoen

Master Warrant Officer Mike Else.

Lt. Col Godfrey Giles- Vice President of the World Veterans Association.

Johannesburg Regiment Participants:

Honorary Colonel: Col. John Wilson

Incoming Officer Commanding: Lt. Col. Duncan Motsamai

Regimental Sergeant Major: Master Warrant Officer Jan Oosthuisen

Parade Commander: Captain Seane

Parade Sergeant Major: Sergeant- Major Paulus.

Chaplain: Reverend Gideon du Toit.

Announcer: Lt. Col. Harry van Staden (retired)

Wreath Laying Order:

Speaker, Councillor Connie Bapela.

General Officer Commanding of the Infantry Formation, General Yam.

Officer Commanding: Lt. Col. Duncan Motsamai

Honorary Colonel: Col. John Wilson

We left the parade with the usual sense of satisfaction, primarily because we managed to do it, and do it well. We also left the parade with a sense of gratitude towards Sister Regiments, as it is once more becoming fashionable for Officers Commanding and Regimental Sergeant Majors to attend these functions. The old timers also left the parade with a sense of security, as clearly Lt. Col. Motsamai is the next in a line of very competent commanders. Above all, the events leading up to the parade, as well as the two parades left us in no doubt that Regimental Associations have a role to play, as long as they understand fully what that role is. And lastly, but most importantly, it left us all with a feeling that the Reserve Force is alive and well, and contributing to the SANDF in a big way.

And it left the scribe with an uncontrollable urge to shout: “Viva Johannesburg Regiment, Viva!”

