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Johannesburg Regiment Wins the Trophy as the Best Unit in the SA Army for “Combat Readiness” in 2015

Article and Photographs by: Lt Col M.D. Motsamai , Johannesburg Regiment

A special and significant honour was bestowed upon Johannesburg Regiment at the recently held annual C Army's gala evening by receiving the trophy for the most combat ready SA Army operationally deploying entity in 2015.

What makes this award of particular relevance is that it was received in the face of stiff competition from Regular and Reserve units who competed at an equal level based on stringent criteria.

The following aspects were evaluated:

- Discipline
- Personnel
- Drills
- Equipment
- Command and Control

SHORT HISTORY OF THE UNIT

On 29 February 1960, 8 Field Artillery Regiment closed down and re-mustered on 1 March 1960 as an Infantry Regiment named Johannesburg Regiment. The Regiment's Headquarters were originally based at Auckland Park, where the current SABC offices are situated. Officers and other ranks of 8 Field Artillery Regiment automatically moved over to Johannesburg Regiment. Commandant A.J. Pretorius was the officer Commanding and his Second in Command was Major van der Merwe with WO1 G. F. Hauptfleish as the Regimental Sergeant Major.

In May 1962 the Johannesburg Municipality agreed that the Regiment could use the Municipal Coat of Arms as their Unit Emblem. Some minor changes were however done to the coat of arms, namely, the two sable antelopes that acted as the supporters being replaced with two F.N. Rifles to give it a military touch. With

this, the Regiment made history by being the first unit that used a F.N. Rifle in its armorial bearings. A badge that consists only of the shields, was also included.

The official Colour presentation parade was held at the Milnerpark Show Grounds stadium on 26 February 1966. Whilst the unit was formed up, the Colour was draped over the traditional three tenor drums by Councilor Alec Jaffe, then Mayor of Johannesburg.

The Johannesburg Regiment has been actively involved in continuous and operational service since its founding in 1960.

Regiment achieved a pinnacle in its history, becoming one of the first then citizen force units to be converted from a motorized to a mechanized unit in 1980 – the achievement occurred as the Regiment was voted the best unit in 72 Brigade Formation on various evaluations during the year.

RECENT HISTORY OF THE UNIT

In 2005 Johannesburg Regiment again made history when it provided troops for the first Reserve Company to be deployed in Peace Support Operations in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). A section of the unit was attached to the SA Irish Regiment. At that stage Lt Col Justus Immelman was the Officer Commanding of the unit.

Johannesburg Regiment deployed a platoon in 2006 to Sudan attached to a Company of the SA Irish Regiment.

In 2007 the Regiment deployed a platoon for Border Safeguarding (Ops Corona) attached to a Company of the Transvaal Scottish.

In 2010 Lt Col J.L. Immelman handed over command to Lt Col. J.E. Tshabalala. In the same year a Company deployed at Pongola KZN for Ops Corona led by Maj M.D. Motsamai. During this operational deployment the unit lost two soldiers in the line of duty.

In 2012 handing and taking over of the Regiment occurred between Lt Col J.E. Tshabalala and Lt Col M.D. Motsamai. Under his command a company was deployed in Limpopo in 2014 for Ops Corona.

In 2015 the unit deployed a fully staffed Battalion HQ and One Rifle Company in Limpopo for Ops Corona under the command of Lt Col M.D. Motsamai who is currently the Battalion Commander.



Lt Col M.D. Motsamai has been the Officer Commanding of Johannesburg Regiment since 2012.



Unit emblem with the motto in Latin: "Fortiter Et Recte" which means "With Valour and Justice".



The Second-in-Command of Johannesburg Regiment, Maj Prince Ligaraba, with the Combat Readiness Trophy and Brig Gen Gerhard Kamffer (Director Army Reserves) at C Army's Gala evening.