

THE PRETORIA REGIMENT



(Brig Gen DFS Fourie, SD, SM and Bar, MMM, JCD and Bar, KStJ
SA Army Res F [Rtd])

Origins. When the Northern Mounted Rifles, a Transvaal Volunteer unit, was disbanded in accordance with the requirements of the SA Defence Act of 1912, it was replaced on 1st July 1913 by the 12th Infantry (Pretoria Regiment), an Active Citizen Force regiment. It consisted of members of a Pretoria unit called the Northern Mounted Rifles as well as Pretoria companies of various Volunteer regiments headquartered in Johannesburg and also a number of new recruits. Compulsory service ended in 1994 and the PR now recruits volunteers among former Reserve and Regular Force soldiers and university students, men and women, Black and White. By 2010 it included a Black major in the command cadre. Decentralized training enabled several members to be trained at the School of Armour in 2009, followed by promotions. Conventional training and skills tests have led to participation in training for and participation in peace-keeping operations - one of the SANDF's major roles.

Roles and Active Service. In 1913 and 1914 the PR served during the industrial strikes. *First World War 1914-1915 - German South West Africa.* Landed from the sea and served at Aus and Tschaukaib in the south and bombed by German aircraft. They were then in the advance from Swakopmund to Tsumeb and the German surrender in July 1915. PR men who enlisted in the *South African Overseas Expeditionary Force 1915-18* served in France, Belgium, Egypt and German East Africa. *Rand Revolution March 1922* in which they prevented armed force of strikers from cutting the Pretoria to Germiston railway. In 1936 a 2nd Bn PR (PAO) was established as a Machine Gun Bn. *Second World War.* 1940 Mobilised 23 July. Amalgamation of 1st and 2nd Bns PR (PAO) as a single battalion. *Madagascar* May-June 1942 in the 7th SA Infantry Brigade Group. Landed at Diego Suarez and were in the occupation of southern Madagascar. *Egypt and Italy, 1943- 1945.* Converted to armour at Khatatba, Egypt. In 6th SA Armoured Division the PR (PAO) fought in Sherman tanks in Italy from April 1944 until May 1945. Served as infantry in the Winter Line. In 1944 added a Reconnaissance-Assault Squadron of Stuart tanks carrying 'commando-infantry storm troops' for combined-arms operations in the Po Valley. *1960 Emergency.* Defence Headquarters Reserve following the Sharpeville debacle. *1970s.* Closely involved in development of Olifant MB Tank. *Mid-1980s.* In an infantry role provided aid to the civil power and infantry patrols in Kaokoland, Namibia and was Army HQ Contingency Reserve. *Angola -1987-88.* One Squadron was attached to 61 Mechanised Bn. Fought a very successful action in Olifant tanks at Cuito-Cuanavale, sustaining no personnel or vehicle battle casualties.

Casualties in Operations. Three deaths in German SWA 1914-15, one by German air action, one in Madagascar, 61 in Italy and two due to malaria and accident in Angola in 1988.

Theatre, Battle and Other Honours. 1938 Regimental Colour. Replaced in 1963. *Theatre and Battle Honours:* SWA 1914 - 1915, Madagascar 1942, Italy 1944 - 1945, Bagno Regio, Sarteano, La Foce, Florence, Gothic Line, Caterello, Ridge, Po-Valley, South West Africa/Angola (1976-1989. *City of Pretoria Banner - 1915. First World War Banner* - awarded by King George V in 1923. Freedom of the City of Pretoria - 1 July 1963.

Command. Colonel-in-Chief. Princess Alice, Countess of Athlone, 1930–1961. Six Honorary Colonels were appointed from 1913. I. First Commanding Officer. Lt Col Hartley Dales (1906 – 1914).

Alliances. 1927. On invitation 12th Inf (PR) were allied to the *Royal Welch Fusiliers* – Alliance continues unbroken. 1937. *Cadet Detachment 141* (Pretoria Boy's High School) until Cadet Corps disbanded 1995. *PBHS Pipe Band* continued. *Pretoria Regiment Association.* Founded in 1930s by Princess Alice and re-established in September 1944, at Lucca, Italy.

Badges and Flashes. (a) 1913 12th Infantry (Pretoria Regiment): Badge an impala antelope trippant, on a mount representing the Magaliesberg range north of Pretoria. Below the mount the Roman numeral "XII" and on a ribbon the name Pretoria Regiment. Impala chosen because they roamed the valley in the earlier days of the town. 'Impala' is the Zulu name for the red antelope.

(b) 1934 PR (PAO). When Princess Alice was appointed Colonel-in-Chief, the Regiment added title Princess Alice's Own. Badge was redesigned to obtain better artistic work. Instead of the number below the compartment there was a double ribbon bearing the name "Pretoria Regiment - Princess Alice's Own". In Madagascar theatre the badges were painted black. When the PR became a tank regiment in 1943 black berets replaced polo helmets and the large badge was replaced by the left collar badge, the impala facing wearer's right. In Italy the PR (PAO) was the armoured regiment for the British 24th Guards Brigade (Grenadiers, Coldstream and Scots Guards) in the 6th SA Armoured Division. At the end of six months together the Brigade Commander obtained King's permission for award to PR (PAO) of a theatre honour in the form of stylised wings in Guards Brigade colours.

(c) In 1959 name changed to Regiment-Pretoria and designation 'Princess Alice's Own' removed. **(d)** In 1961 Maj Gen P H Grobbelaar, Chief of the Army Staff, (former PR officer) arranged for a return to the former name and badge.

(e) When regimental names were removed from badges and replaced by mottoes in 1960, a design was devised based with the name ribbon imperceptibly altered to bear the motto "*Nulli Secundus.*" Thus the badge continued to fit the outline of the Guards' flash. *The badge.* "An Impala antelope (*Aepyceros melampus*) proper, trippant on a compartment representing the Magaliesberg range at Eloff's cutting, with Bon Accord Dam visible through the cutting, the foreground semé of succulents, there below a ribbon bearing the motto, Nulli Secundus, Or (i.e. gold), the whole surmounting the Brigade of Guards flash of a pair of wings conjoined in lure Gules, (Ruby colour BCC 38), the inner portion and pen-feathers decked azure (Oxford blue BCC 49)".

(f) The motto, by coincidence that of the Coldstream Guards, was given to PR by brigade commander at the end of the campaign in Namibia in July, 1915.

(g) From 1977 PR was one of 25 regiments permitted by Chief, SA Army, to wear items of traditional dress. In memory of its infantry origins the Regiment wears brass or gilding metal badge and buttons instead of chrome. Officers' badges and buttons gold plated.

Shoulder flash. In 1988 a metal enamelled shoulder flash was adopted. Black fimbriated pallwise in the regimental facings, an Olifant tank and Guards' wings, Or. *Colour Sergeants' Sash.* Red cloth, worn diagonally over the right shoulder under the shoulder-strap and over the white waist belt.

Regimental Cravat. Silk made to standard cravat pattern, Black (colour BCC 220). *Regimental Beret Flash.* 'A bar coupé, per pale Gules and Or'. In 1913 cherry and old gold, the colours of the City of Pretoria, were adopted as facings. A red and gold diamond, red to the front, was worn superimposed upon a square flash, green above for the Transvaal and black below for the infantry. When a 2nd Battalion was formed the 1st Battalion wore a red diamond superimposed with a gold figure. After amalgamation in 1940, only the cherry and old gold diamond was worn.

Regimental Music. 1. **Trooping music.** During trooping the Colour the music played is: (a) *For Warrant Officers advance to the front.* "Kommando. No. X" (i.e., Ten); (b) **For the Band's Troop.** "Les Huguenots". (c) **For "A" Guard's March to the Colour.** "The British Grenadiers". (d) **To troop the Colour through the ranks.** "The March of the Men of Harlech". 2. **Regimental marches.** *Regimental Quick March.* "Colonel Bogey on Parade". *Regimental Slow March.* "Scipio".

Headquarters. Magazyn Hill, Patriot Street, Salvo Kop, Pretoria.

Tanks: The PR is equipped with Oliphant Mark IB MBT