

## REGIMENT DE LA REY



(Source: Wikipedia)

Regiment de la Rey (abbreviated to RDLR) is an infantry battalion of the South African Army.

The Regiment de la Rey was established in 1934 as one of the new Afrikaans language Citizen Force units of the Union Defence Force.

The regimental badge depicts a lion's head, in memory of Boer General JH de la Rey, the *Lion of the West* after whom the regiment is named.

Before the Second World War, battalion headquarters were at Rustenburg in the Transvaal. The unit had company headquarters at Potchefstroom, Klerksdorp and Ventersdorp, with a support company at Brits.

Mrs J E Morkel, daughter of General De la Rey, became the first honorary colonel of the regiment.

The regiment was affiliated to the Northamptonshire Regiment of the British Army.

RDLR was called up for full-time service on 18 July 1940. Because the commanding officer, Lt-Col (later Brig) H P van Noorden, was by then commanding a battalion of the Field Force Brigade, command of the regiment passed to Lt-Col WD Basson.

The regiment was amalgamated with the Witwatersrand Rifles Regiment. After training in Egypt, the new unit, Wits-delaRey (WR/DLR) made a name for itself as one of the motorised infantry battalions of the 12th Motorised Brigade in the 6th South African Armoured Division in Italy in 1944–45.

For almost the entire Italian campaign RDLR was commanded by Lt-Col Jack Bester, until he was appointed to command the newly formed 13th Motorised Brigade.

The regiment distinguished itself particularly in taking Allerona on 15 June 1944, in fighting on Monte Querciabella and Monte Fili, and in forcing the River Greve in July 1944.

WR/DLR were the first on Monte Stanco in the Apennines in October 1944 and scored a spectacular success in the final offensive in Italy when they took Monte Caprara on 16 April 1945.

The unit's casualties were among the heaviest in the division. During the Italian campaign 119 soldiers were killed, 576 wounded and 17 were posted missing in action.

On 1 January 1960 the regiment was renamed Regiment Wes-Transvaal with headquarters at Potchefstroom. After objections and strenuous efforts it resumed its original designation as Regiment De la Rey on 1 September 1966.