

REGIMENT POTCHEFSTROOMSE UNIVERSITEIT

(Source: SA Gunner)



The regiment was “established and designated” as a unit of the Citizen Force with effect from 1 January 1960. This is recorded as such in a Defence Force Order which gave the impression that it was an entirely new unit. But the origins of the regiment go back to 1 Observation Battery, South African Artillery (A.C.F.), established in the Witwatersrand Command, with Headquarters at Krugersdorp from 1 August 1946. The letters (A.C.F.) were removed from the title in 1949. The battery struggled to attract recruits but the situation improved dramatically when the Headquarters moved to Potchefstroom and it was coupled to the university. Two years later it was expanded into a regiment with: RHQ and Radar Battery at University of Potchefstroom, Survey Battery at the University of the Orange Free State and an Observation and Sound Ranging Battery at the University of Pretoria. By 1953 the locating functions of the regiment had been abandoned and normal field artillery training was being undertaken. In January 1960 RHQ and the original Radar Battery, by then known as “P” Battery, became Regiment Potchefstroom Universiteit.

With its own cap badge from 1962 the regiment’s designation was altered on 1 October 1963 to read: Regiment Potchefstroomse Universiteit (RPU).

The regiment was converted to a Medium Artillery establishment in 1969 and in 1974 was placed under 82 Mechanised Brigade. It was mobilised with the brigade in 1988 for *Operations Packer* and *Displace*, the final operation in which the SADF was involved. RPU crossed the border with only two batteries, one with GV5 gun-howitzers and the other with GV-2 140mm guns. The regiment was among the first in action, the GV5 battery firing harassing fire and engaging opportunity targets on 11 March, while it was still undergoing conversion training to the GV5. It took part in the attack on Jumbo which commenced on 22 March with a bombardment of the main objective, later coming under fairly accurate enemy artillery fire. The regiment was in action several times before finally moving back across the Kavango River on 8 May, the first element of 82 Brigade to enter Angola for *Operation Packer* and the last to leave. In the re-organisation of 1991, RPU and 25 Field Regiment amalgamated on 23 September with the name of Regiment Potchefstroomse Universiteit being retained. The end of National Service and the literal disappearances of most of those on strength left the regimental with nothing more than a few volunteers.