

**4 ARTILLERY REGIMENT'S FREEDOM OF THE CITY OF
POTCHEFSTROOM PARADE: ADDRESS BY THE EXECUTIVE
MAYOR OF TLOKWE, COUNCILLOR M.A. MAPHETLE**

Programme Director

Honoured Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

All Protocol Observed

On this occasion, we exercise confer the freedom of the city of Potchefstroom to the 4 artillery regiment, and on the day preceding this special regiment's sixty seventh birthday, allow me first to express my heartfelt best wishes on the occasion also of the birthday of the people's regiment.

Today is a demonstration of yet another small but significant step in the ongoing, unstoppable process of transforming the institutions of our state machinery. As we lay another brick in the transformation wall that is currently under reconstruction, we do so knowing that today's function also represents another brick dismantled from the old ruins of racial exclusivity and the use of these men of valour to defend those erstwhile social divisions.

The freedom of this city was conferred upon 4 artillery regiment in 1984. Way-back then our country was ruled by stealth and states of emergencies, with a large number of our population alienated from the defense institutions of their own country. These sections of population could not even be proud to take part in the defence of their country.

Now and then we are compelled to recall this shameful history. However, at the same time we also look forward with pride and hope in the future knowing that it can only be bright. Our gathering here today is an important testimony to that fact.

Programme Director, let me also hasten to say that this occasion is long overdue, having had conferred this freedom of our city to 4 artillery regiment for the first time in 2001. This was and remains an unequivocal statement on the part of the Tlokwe City Council that 4 Artillery Regiment t will forever be an integral part of our community. It is a statement of intent that says to the local community, we have in our midst the best land-ward defence component on the African continent and therefore the protection of our way of life, our wellbeing, our individual and national security can be guaranteed.

Yes, the presence and readiness of 4 Artillery Regiment in our lives indeed provides the confidence in our constitutional declaration of own sovereignty. The Regiment was established as an urgent requirement of the Second World War and had to participate at an early stage in the halting of the German war machine in North Africa. From the North African campaign to the Italian sub theatre, the regiment fulfilled its mandate with distinction.

The lifeline that mankind inherited from the cessation of hostilities at the end of the Second World War was in no small thanks to the contribution made by the south African forces with 4 artillery regiment having played no small part in what is today the biggest victory for humanity.

The Regiment has fulfilled its given mandate throughout South Africa's turbulent history including the so called bush war. In recent history the regiment has been transformed and used as an instrument of peace and has thus played its role in sending a battery to what has now become the first African miracle: the stabilisation of Burundi as part of the African mission in Burundi between 2003 and 2004.

Furthermore, the unit has been in various internal deployments including the border patrol missions in Pongola and Madimbo corridor in the Limpopo Province. To us, as the local community, it is rather clear that in 4 Artillery Regiment we have a partner that is reliable, efficient and a great asset to both the country at large and ourselves in particular. We should therefore pride ourselves with this Regiment and should not hesitate to interact with its members both as fellow community members and as custodians of our individual and national security.

To the members of the regiment and especially members on parade, thank you and congratulations for a splendid display of military hardware and precision of your drills. Remember that much as your predecessors have established a name for the unit, you are not only required to maintain it but improve and enhance it as well.

To borrow the words from Frederick Engels in his revolutionary ideas book: "history does nothing, it possesses no immense wealth, it wages no battles. It is man, real, living man who does all that, who possesses and fights; history is not, as it were, a person apart, using man as a means to achieve its own aims; history is nothing but the activity of man pursuing his aims".

Today's challenges are not the same as yesterday's. As Engels continues in his book: "we make our history ourselves, but, in the first place, under very definite antecedents and conditions. Among these the economics are ultimately decisive". We are all faced with the challenges of defining our challenges today and to determine the best solutions to those challenges.

It is how we perceive these challenges that will determine the historical judgment of our generation. To those in uniform, it will be the manner in which you classify and effectively deal with the wide range of security issues that characterize our daily lives today that will determine the extent to which our confidence in our military machine is maintained.

Needless to say, this parade is an indication on our part that we still regard the military and particularly yourselves as active members in it, as the role models, critical to our efforts of restoring moral values of our country.

You have displayed discipline, to maintain the highest standards so that others can rely on you.

- Loyalty, to stay faithful to your comrades and to your duty.
- Respect for others, treating them with decency at all times.
- Integrity, earning the respect and trust of your comrades.
- And selfless commitment, to put others before yourself.

Whilst many young people aspire to these exacting standards, you have proven that you have them and you have proven that you have got what it takes to be soldiers.

You must be encouraged to continue to be the beacon of hope where hope is lost and to always set an unquestionable example of good citizenship and patriotism. On behalf of all our people we say to you once again we are together with you and let today's occasion mark the continuance of the remarkable relationship we have fostered over the years.

History shows that the Army's long record of successes rests upon the qualities of its soldiers in the heat of battle. You would not be here unless you were trusted to exhibit courage, both moral and physical, to face up to danger and do what is right.

In the final analysis, I once more pay tribute to these, our brave men in uniform. We do not forget the military contribution you will continue to make for a better future at home as well as elsewhere in our continent and the world; - to the heritage, history and values of our nation; - on operations closer to home, such as bomb disposal work and helping communities in the aftermath of floods or storms.

We salute you!

