

CTH Change-of-Command Parade and Freedom-of-the-City Parade

The Cape Town Highlanders welcome their new Commanding Officer

By: Lt Col Johan Conradie and Mrs Regine Lord
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Military music is provided by the Drums and Pipes of the Cape Town Highlanders, led by Drum Major Hashiem Isaacs, and the SA Army Band Cape Town, led by Drum Major WO2 André van Schalkwyk.

On Saturday, 1 March 2014, Lieutenant Colonel Andre van der Bijl JCD stepped down as commanding officer of the Cape Town Highlanders, having served in this position since 2006. His successor is Lt Col Tenie Lott, who has 19 years of Regular Force service and 17 years in the Reserve Force. The Regiment celebrates its 129th birthday this year.

The Change-of-Command parade was held at the Castle of Good Hope, in front of many invited guests and members of the Defence Reserves and Regulars, including Major General R.C. Andersen, Chief of Defence Reserves.

Military music was provided by the Drums and Pipes of the Cape Town Highlanders, led by Drum Major Hashiem Isaacs, and the SA Army Band Cape Town, led by Drum Major WO2 André van Schalkwyk. After the Change-of-Command parade,

the troops regrouped for the annual Freedom-of-the-City parade through central Cape Town. With the Drums and Pipes of the CTH playing a couple of stirring marches, the troops marched out of the Castle of Good Hope and into Darling Street, where they lined up in front of the City Hall.

Deputy Executive Mayor of the City of Cape Town, Alderman Ian Neilson, took the salute from the steps of the City Hall. Together with Lt Col Tenie Lott and Maj Gen Roy Andersen, he inspected the regiment and confirmed their right to exercise the Freedom of the City. This honour was bestowed on the CTH on 10 October 1967, and it allows them to march through the city centre with flags waving, bands playing and bayonets fixed.

After a short service and prayer, the Regiment, led by their new Commanding Officer, Lt Col





Lt Col Andre van der Bijl inspects the troops for the final time before handing over command to his successor, Lt Col Tenie Lott.

Tenie Lott, marched around the City Hall and back into Castle Street. Turning left into Strand Street, they collected a convoy of military vehicles and marched all the way into Adderley Street before turning into Darling Street once more, and passing the City Hall on their way back to the Castle.

The parade was well supported by passers-by, some of whom walked alongside as it wound its way through the city centre. Locals and visitors alike gazed admiringly at the neatly attired soldiers and the convoy of imposing military vehicles, waving and cheering excitedly as the parade passed.

The vehicles included four SAMIL 20 gun tractors of Cape Field Artillery, drawing their well-known 25-pounder guns, two Ratel Infantry Fighting Vehicles from the CTH, four Mamba Armoured Personnel Carriers, a Rooikat Armoured Fighting Vehicle from Regiment Oranjerivier, and a Samil 50 Recovery Vehicle from 30 Field Workshop.

The new commanding officer set out his vision for the Regiment in the coming years:

"Firstly, I believe that a Commander should always be visible to his men and feel the vibes of his soldiers on the ground. He should not be afraid to be close to the troops and close to the ground, and not afraid to get his hands dirty. He should get out of his HQ and his office environment as often as possible or allowed."

He should be involved and participate in all training activities and operations without neglecting the other, just as important, management responsibilities, like Log, HR, OHS etc.

I also believe that discipline in its entirety, amongst the other pillars, such as fitness, training and combat readiness, is the cornerstone on which the CTH should build their future.

I strongly believe that the Unit should have a well-structured, easy to implement and practical 'Branding Plan'. The broader community of Cape Town and the surrounding areas should know who the CTH are, where we come from, what we stand for and where we are going.

My Vision for my Unit is: 'Strive to organise the Cape Town Highlanders (CTH) into a professional, disciplined and dynamic force, ensuring that their plans are implemented, that discipline is of a high standard, and that the troops are well trained, fit and combat ready for the internal and external tasks, which are laid upon us.'

We wish the new Commanding Officer of the Cape Town Highlanders all the best!

**Lieutenant Colonel Andre van der Bijl
JCD**

Lt Col van der Bijl completed his national service at 1 SAI Battalion in Bloemfontein in 1982, where he qualified as a mechanised platoon commander and assault pioneer. Transferring to CTH, he held a number of administrative and leadership posts. In 2001, he was appointed as second-in-command, and in 2006, as commanding officer of the Regiment.

As commanding officer, he has been instrumental in transforming this very active fighting mechanised





Captain Vena and Capt Murdoch escort Alderman Ian Neilson, Maj Gen Roy Andersen and Lt Col Tienie Lott as they inspect the parade.

infantry unit of the Army's Mechanised Reserves. Since then, the strength of this very active fighting mechanised infantry unit has increased considerably, with the CTH being active in both internal and external deployments.

Lt Col van der Bijl has brought about a fundamental change in the leadership ethos within the unit while strongly defending its historic 129 year-old unique identity, culture and values. He has been a strong supporter of the maintenance of the unit's custom and tradition, and has supervised the Pipes and Drums' attendance at six international tattoos.

Lt Col van der Bijl is a graduate of the University of Cape Town and Stellenbosch University (the latter with a Masters' degree in Education). He is a senior lecturer in the Faculty of Further Education and Training at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology (formerly the Cape Technikon), and has guided countless undergraduate and postgraduate students towards worthwhile careers in education, commerce and industry. He is currently completing a PhD in adult education.

Lieutenant Colonel Tienie Lott

Born on 21 August 1957, Lt Col Marthinus Petrus 'Tienie' Lott grew up in Tiervlei (now known as Ravensmead) and matriculated at the nearby Florida High School. In 1976, he commenced tertiary stud-



The Drums and Pipes of the Cape Town Highlanders create a stirring musical backdrop to the Freedom-of-the City Parade.

ies at the University of the Western Cape (UWC), then taught at Uitsig Primary School for a while before joining the Defence Force (SACC) in September 1978.

Over the next decade, promoted on merit and appointed as Company Commander, he was deployed in various provinces in the Republic, as well as in northern Namibia and Angola.

In 1990, the then-Major Lott was transferred to Group 39 (Queenstown) as SO2 Operations. In January 1994, he was promoted to the rank of Commandant and transferred to Group 8 in East London as SO1 Operations. In 1996, he took a severance package and moved back to Cape Town with his wife Pauline, and three children, Yvette, Nathaniel and Anthea.

Since then, Lt Col Lott has been involved in the SA Army's Reserve Force. He has served with several units and in various posts, including Group 1 (SO1 Ops), PAA Cmdr during the 2010 FIFA World Cup, acting 2IC of J TAC WC, as SO1 Career Manager RF at Army HQ. 

