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## **South Africa's Defence Force after democracy**

The army in the 1990s continued to rely on a small Permanent Force of professional soldiers and a large Citizen Force. The Citizen Force consists of volunteers serving an initial period of training and active duty, followed by several years of reserve status. Reservists rotate into active duty when called upon. Volunteers can apply to transfer from the Citizen Force to the Permanent Force if they wish to become professional, career soldiers.

The sweeping changes of the mid-1990s allowed varying assessments of the strength of the army. The government's South Africa Yearbook, 1995 indicated that roughly 95,000 active-duty members of the SADF and of the former homeland militaries, as well as about 27,000 former liberation fighters, made up the army in 1995. Many of the active-duty troops were in various stages of training or retraining for at least one year after that. After the integration of these forces into the SANDF was completed, officials planned to reduce army ranks, to a force of about 91,000 by the year 1998. Officials were also considering further reductions, perhaps to a force of about 75,000 active-duty troops, by the year 2000. The number of military reservists, in a wide variety of reserve duty statuses, was estimated at more than 360,000 in late 1995. The government's South Africa Yearbook, 1995 indicated that more than 500,000 troops were on part-time or reserve status.

The chief of the army, who holds the rank of lieutenant general, commands all army forces. He is assisted by his general staff at the army headquarters in Pretoria. He also is responsible for the Army Battle School at Lohatla in the Northern Cape, the Defence College (formerly the South African Military College) at Pretoria, and various corps schools, such as the Artillery School at Potchefstroom (North-West Province), the Infantry School at Oudtshoorn (Western Cape), and the Intelligence School at Kimberley.

The army is organized into territorial forces and conventional forces, both commanded by the chief of the army through different command structures. This division reflects the army's dual mission -- to ensure internal security and to defend the country against external threats. The territorial forces are organized by region and are primarily responsible for internal security tasks, such as helping the police ensure law and order, combating terrorism, patrolling national borders, protecting strategic sites, providing emergency and disaster relief, and administering military reserve forces within their region. In 1996 most members of the former homeland military forces were being incorporated into the territorial forces.

The ten regional military commands are headquartered at Cape Town, Port Elizabeth, Johannesburg, Kimberley, Durban, Bloemfontein, Pretoria, Potchefstroom, Nelspruit, and Pietersburg. In 1996 the boundaries of the military regions were being changed to conform more closely to the country's new administrative regions.

Like the territorial forces, the army's conventional forces are stationed throughout the country, but their training and organization are separate from the territorial forces. The conventional forces fall under the operational control of the army headquarters in Pretoria, not under the regional commanders. The conventional forces are trained to confront

traditional security threats, such as a foreign enemy.

The conventional forces are organized into contingency forces and a mobilization force. As of the early and mid-1990s, the contingency forces consisted of one mechanized/motorized brigade and two parachute brigades--the Forty-fourth Parachute Brigade and the Forty-fifth Parachute Brigade. The mobilization force was organized into three mechanized divisions--the Seventh Division, the Eighth Division, and the Ninth Division.

Functionally, the army also distinguishes between combat corps and support service corps. The combat corps include infantry, artillery, antiaircraft, and armored corps. The infantry is the largest of the combat corps and has both mechanized and airborne units. The artillery corps uses indirect fire guns, howitzers, field guns, and multiple rocket launchers, generally coordinating operations with the antiaircraft corps to protect ground forces. The armored corps relies largely on tanks with 105-millimeter guns and on a variety of other armored vehicles.

The support service corps include engineers, signals specialists, and others trained in ordnance, technical services, intelligence, personnel, and finance, as well as musicians, caterers, and the military police. Service units maintain, repair, and recondition all equipment, except communications equipment. The military police serve as the army's internal police force and control traffic to and from operational areas.

The Commandos are formally under the authority of the regional commands of the army but are organized and deployed in a tradition similar to that of the National Guard in the United States. Originally volunteers trained for quick-response to local emergencies, they were used to quell unrest during the apartheid era; in the 1990s, Commando units are assigned to guard important installations, such as industrial plants, oil refineries, communication centers, and transportation facilities.

Commandos generally serve a total of 1,000 active-duty days over a ten- or twelve-year period. In emergencies, the period of active duty is increased in increments of fifty days. Urban Commando units are generally organized into a single urban battalion. Rural Commando units are sometimes organized into a regional battalion.

The army's ground forces in the mid-1990s can field an imposing array of equipment, most of it produced in South Africa. Their arsenal includes tanks, armored reconnaissance vehicles, infantry fighting vehicles, and armored personnel carriers. The army also has a wide array of artillery pieces, including towed and self-propelled heavy artillery, multiple-rocket-launcher systems, as well as mortars and antitank and air defence weapons.