

SYMBOLIC MEANING OF THE MEMORIAL AT 44 PARACHUTE REGIMENT, TEMPE, BLOEMFONTEIN

The memorial comprises three main components, each reflecting a particular and significant meaning:

- The Wall of Remembrance
- The Sculpted Group and
- The Memorial Stone

The **Wall of Remembrance** represents by its unusual shape a parachute in the process of deploying behind and above a jumping paratrooper. The progressive deployment of the parachute indicates the development of 1 Parachute Battalion as an operational unit with an increasing commitment to the active defence of South Africa. The reassuring formation of the parachute canopy behind the paratrooper is symbolic of the paratrooper's reliance on a spiritual Higher Authority in the execution of his dangerous and demanding work against the enemy.



Flames are a general symbol of eternal life. The **Memorial Flame** is strongly associated with the commemoration of our war dead. It helps us to remember and recognise in gratitude the sacrifice of those who died during service, giving their lives in times of wars, conflicts, and peacekeeping operations.

The **Memorial Stone** was added to the structure of the basic memorial in January 1992 after the move of 44 Parachute Brigade to Tempe. In its entirety, this memorial conveys to us something of the men in whose honour it has been erected, as well as something of the units in whose ranks they died. It will serve as a reminder to those paratroopers who remain, of the example set for them by these, their fallen comrades.



The **Sculpted Group** consists of three individual statues in a mutually supporting pose. Collectively they epitomize group cooperation – a basic requirement for paratroopers in action. Individually they display those qualities which characterize every paratrooper: aggression, initiative, dedication and stamina.



The Wall of Remembrance bears a **plaque** with the name of each paratrooper who has died in action against the enemy. Subsequent plaques will be installed should other members of Parachute units be killed in action. Though the Brigade in no way wishes to detract from the contribution of those members killed in accidents, operational or otherwise, during their service, a decision has been made to erect this memorial solely in remembrance of those who died as a result of enemy action.



The memorial is deemed a fitting reminder of those paratroopers who paid the highest price a soldier can – to die in defence of his country. They were combat soldiers in combat units which are proud of them.

**EX ALTO VINCIMUS
WE CONQUER FROM ABOVE**

(first published in *Paratrooper*, 1992:12)