

**COMMANDER: 12 SA ARMoured BRIGADE**

**BRIGADIER: PALMER, Robert John (P195900V)**

He was born on the 10 February 1891 and grew up in the town of Grahamstown he then Matriculated in 1907.

He joined the UDF as a private with the Transvaal Scottish Regiment until 1911. He then became a trooper in the British South African Police. Promoted to Constable in the Orange Free State Police in 1913.

In 1918 he joined the Royal Flying Corps as an airman becoming an pilot officer and serving in this capacity until 1919. He then returned to the South African police.

He was married to Henriette Muraour and two daughters were born from the marriage.

Promotion was steady from a Cpl to 2/Sgt, 1/Sgt, Head Constable, Lieutenant, Captain, Major and Lt Colonel.

With the outbreak of WW2 he was again appointed with commissioned rank in the UDF from 17/06/1940. His rank being that of Lt Col. He was awarded the first DSO on 06 Mar 42 for his leadership during the battle of Bardia were his armoured car had been shot from underneath him.

On 15/05/1942 he was promoted to the temporary rank of Brigadier. He was then appointed commander of 12 SA Motorised Bde in the 6th SA Armoured Division on 01 Feb 43 for service in Italy.

At El Alamein he earned the bar to the DSO. During the Italian campaign he earned his second bar to the DSO while in command during the push from CASSINO to FLORANCE.

He was the preferred replacement as OC 6 SA Armd Div should Maj General Poole have been a casualty.

He was the first Police Commissioner to rise from Constable to Comm. He was the only Commissioned to be a qualified pilot as well. He was also the only commander to have been a brigade commander in all three SA Divisions during the war.

He was also awarded the US Bronze Star.

Died in Johannesburg on 23/03/1957.

