

## THE MILITARY SCENE

### Tourist potential of Frontier War sites

Military history has a substantial following and Kwa-Zulu Natal has developed excellent battlefield sites, which have attracted large numbers of tourists. The Eastern Cape has few battlefield sites as the Xhosa warriors engaged the British soldiers in guerrilla style, rather than facing up to superior numbers and weaponry in open 'traditional battle' formation. What the Eastern Cape does have are forts, which have been largely neglected as tourist attractions. There are over 100 fort or post sites in the Eastern Cape, with 18 of these within the boundaries of Buffalo City, and their potential as tourist attractions as yet unrecognized and undeveloped.

The Buffalo City area has the remains of a classic stone-built 'permanent' fort and an earthworks 'temporary' fort as well as powder magazines, which were a part of old forts, and buildings in the old Military Reserve in King Williams Town. Some of these are proclaimed National Monuments.

#### Sites selected

**Frontier Wars:** Fort Glamorgan, Fort Pato, Fort Murray, Fort Hill (two powder magazines), the Military Reserve (military chest vault, barracks, officer's mess, smithy, military hospital, stone gutters).

**Anglo-Boer War:** Colonial Division Memorial.

**First and Second World Wars:** Cenotaphs in East London, King Williams Town and Cambridge, Lych Gate East London, Memorials – Selborne College, West Bank, Catholic Church and selected Memorial tablets.

### THE FRONTIER WARS: The fort sites in Buffalo City date from 1835 to 1857

#### Introduction:

The expansion westward of the Dutch and English settlers during the 19<sup>th</sup> century brought them into conflict with the Xhosa-speaking people and the present Eastern Cape became a frontier zone. The old Cape Colony boundary was extended to the Fish River in 1785. Conflict over the land between the Fish and the Keiskamma Rivers led to the proclamation of this area as the so-called Neutral Territory in 1819. The Xhosa were systematically being deprived of thousands of hectares of arable and grazing land and by 1834 this drew a response from them. Warriors crossed the Fish River raiding farms and settlements and in 1835 the 6<sup>th</sup> frontier war broke out. British military forces were brought in, King William's Town was proclaimed and became the centre for military operations and D'Urban, Governor of the Cape at the time, proclaimed the area between the Keiskamma and the Kei Rivers to be the province of Queen Adelaide. A number of forts were established in the new province, including Fort Hill in King Williams Town and Fort Murray, near the Mount Coke Mission Station. The British government refused to recognise the Province of Queen Adelaide and the forts were abandoned.

Renewed hostilities broke out in 1846 (the War of the Axe) and King Williams Town again became the centre for military operations. **Fort Hill** was reoccupied and **Fort Murray** relocated. East London was established as a port at the mouth of the Buffalo River, in order to bring supplies to the scene of the action by sea. In conjunction with this, **Fort Glamorgan** was constructed to guard the supply port. With the precarious peace being agreed on in 1847, the land between the Keiskamma and Kei rivers was annexed as the colony of British Kaffraria. The peace was short-lived and in 1850 the War of Mlanjeni broke out and lasted until 1853. Temporary posts were erected along the wagon-route between East London and King Williams Town to guard the supply wagons. These

were **Forts Grey, Pato** and **Needs Camp**. The military establishment at King Williams Town was reinforced and a **Military Reserve** proclaimed.

## **FORT GLAMORGAN**

### **Introduction**

Fort Glamorgan was established at the mouth of the Buffalo River in 1848 to house troops and to guard the start of the supply line to King Williams Town. It was named for Lord Charles Somerset's father, the Earl of Glamorgan. It was proclaimed a National Monument in 1938.

### **Description**

The original fort consisted of a loop-holed stone wall surrounding barrack accommodation for soldiers and officers, forage stores and stabling, a hospital and cookhouses.

The original powder magazine was outside the precinct of the fort, but it was realised that this was useless and so one was constructed inside the grounds in 1856. This still exists in good condition as it has been well maintained by the Dept of Correctional Services. It is built of dolerite blocks and has an arched roof of brick roof, surrounded by a high stone wall with a small guard house attached. On the outside is a round-topped stone with *WD* and an arrow incised. This is one of the original four perimeter stones, which were situated to indicate the boundary corners of the military rayon. None of the other buildings remain, but the profusion of stone for supporting walls etc. was taken from the original fort.

### **Location**

It is situated on the West Bank on the right hand side of Bank Street and is well marked as it is the present day prison of Fort Glamorgan. The powder magazine is situated about 500 m from the main gate.

### **Access**

Permission must be obtained from the Area Manager, Dept Correctional Services, by sending a fax to 7311512 stating the number in the group. Arrangements will then be made for the visit.

### **Condition**

Very good

### **Capacity and Constraints**

This is situated in prison grounds so the Area Manager may have a problem with groups that are too large. This needs to be discussed with him. A group size of 20 to 30 is recommended.

### **Recommendations**

Establish courteous relations with the Area Manager of Dept Correctional Services.

## **HEADQUARTERS**

### **BUFFALO VOLUNTEER RIFLES (ex KAFFRARIAN RIFLES)**

#### **Introduction**

The Buffalo Volunteer Rifles was a colonial regiment raised in East London in 1876 under Captain E.Y. Brabant. Two companies took part in the frontier war of 1877/ '78 and they also saw service in the Basuto war of 1880. In 1883 it was reformed as the Kaffrarian Rifles and this regiment fought in the Anglo-Boer War and both World Wars. In 1989 the name was changed back to the Buffalo Rifles. The building dates to 1906, when the foundation stone was laid by Col H.T. Lukin, Commander of the Colonial Forces

#### **Description**

The building is of red brick with a castellated parapet. A small museum reflecting the history of the regiment has been established and can be visited.

#### **Location**

It is situated on the corner of Fleet and Buffalo Streets, East London, with the entrance in Buffalo Street.

#### **Access**

The museum is open from 08h00 to 18h00 Monday to Friday. Permission to visit may be obtained by telephoning 742 0677. Officer Commanding is Lieut. Col A.C.M. Clegg. WO2 Craig Brown is the officer in charge of the museum.

#### **Capacity & Constraints**

Large groups would be difficult to handle. The recommended group size is 20.

#### **Visitors**

Very few people know about this small museum and it receives no publicity.

#### **Condition**

Very good

#### **Recommendation**

Tourists interested in military history would find this most interesting. The Officer Commanding and the Curator of the Museum should be invited to tourism functions and be involved in planning. There is plan at present for the development of the museum to widen its scope with particular reference to a more inclusive military history, targeting tourists and education.

## **WAR MEMORIAL TABLETS:**

### **East London City Hall**

On the landing in the vestibule are tablets made of white marble. On the panels are the names of white men who died during the frontier wars.

## **FORT PATO**

### **Introduction**

This was a temporary post which was established in 1853 on the Gulu river ridge (then called 'Goolah Heights'), on the site of an outspan, to guard the supply line from East London to King Williams Town. It was named for Chief Phatho of the Gqunukwebe, as it was situated in his territory and who had promised to remain neutral during the War of the Axe.

### **Description**

This was a square redoubt enclosed by an earthen parapet, 8 feet high, and fosse, 4-5 feet deep, with two small square loop-holed bastions at opposite corners. It contained three stone buildings, a commissariat, a powder magazine and a cookhouse and brick officers' quarters. Soldiers' barracks and stables were built of wattle and daub. Today the earthworks still exist and remains of brick and stone can be seen within. It is completely overgrown with shrubs and trees.

### **Location**

Fort Pato is about 300m off the R346, (the Mount Coke road) between East London and King Williams Town.

### **Access**

This is on land owned by the Dept Nature Conservation and falls within the Directorate of Marine and Coastal Management with Mr Robert Stegman as the responsible official.

### **Capacity and Constraints**

As this is out of doors, large numbers would not be a problem

### **Visitors**

One party of 8 attempted to view the site but were unable to penetrate the thick bush.

### **Recommendations**

Fort Pato is typical of the temporary earthworks forts built in the Eastern Cape during the frontier wars period. No other structure of this kind has been preserved so this is an opportunity for the preservation of a unique site to attract tourists. Mr Stegman has expressed his willingness to clear the area and maintain it for tourists. Contact can be made with Mr Robert Stegman at 043-

It is further recommended that local community should be involved in the project and some volunteers could be trained as tour guides for the site.

## **FORT MURRAY**

### **Introduction**

The original Fort Murray was established in 1835 near to the Mount Coke Mission Station. In 1848 it was moved to the present site in Ndlambe territory. It was intended to add muscle to the Chief Commissioner of British Kaffraria, whose house was situated nearby. Fort Murray was occupied by the Frontier Armed and Mounted Police during the 1870s and by the Cape Police in the 1880s. It was declared a National Monument in 1938. The present ownership of the land and management of the site is not known.

**Description**

This was constructed of stone and was intended as a more permanent structure. It consisted of a loop-holed stone wall enclosing quarters for officers, barracks for soldiers, a commissariat store, powder magazine and stables. . Restoration of the buildings was done in 1977.

**Location**

Turn off the R346 (Mount Coke Road). It is some 5 kms on. The gravel road in poor condition and is not sign-posted.

**Access**

Open.

**Condition**

The impressive stone structures still exist, but as there is no control it has been vandalised.

**Capacity and Constraints**

This is a large open air site, so large groups could be accommodated.

**Visitors**

None known.

**Recommendation**

As this is a declared National Monument, funds could be requested from SAHRA to do some restoration. Local inhabitants could be contacted and involved with the project and tour guides trained. The Department of Transport (roads) needs to be approached to repair the road and erect signs. This is the only stone fort of its kind to have been declared and therefore to have had some form of protection.

**FORT HILL****Introduction**

The outbreak of hostilities in 1835 led to the building of Fort Hill, named for Lord Hill, who was the Commander in Chief of the British Army at the time. It was established in King Williams Town, with the proclamation of the Province of Queen Adelaide. It was to be the military headquarters and depot for all the forts in the new province. It was evacuated following the withdrawal in 1837, but reoccupied and rebuilt following the War of the Axe, in 1846.

**Description**

It was originally laid out as an irregular earthworks square with flanking redans for three guns on three of its faces. Wattle and daub huts were built for 400 soldiers. When rebuilt the walls were reinforced with brick. It was to be used mainly as a depot so provision was made for commissariat and ordnance store complexes and a powder magazine. A second powder magazine was added later. The powder magazines surrounded by a stone wall are all that remain of the original fort. The complex is a declared National Monument.

**Location**

King Williams Town, Lovedale College FET, Amatola Row.

**Access**

Permission from the Head.

**Recommendations**

The Principal be consulted about this and other buildings from the Military Reserve being accessible to tourists.

**MILITARY RESERVE****Introduction**

In 1847, the area between the Keiskamma and the Kei Rivers was proclaimed the colony of British Kaffraria, this further dispossessing the Xhosa peoples and extending British control. Commissioners were appointed to administer and work with the chiefs. It was realised that control would have to be through the force of arms and so provision was made to build and reoccupy fortifications throughout the new colony. King Williams Town was again selected to be the headquarters and in 1848 a large area was cordoned off for military buildings – the Military Reserve.

**Description**

The area covered about 5 acres adjoining the new town and included Fort Hill. The buildings, often of stone, included officers' quarters, an officers' mess, a vault for the military chest, a hospital, a smithy for the engineers, barracks for Artillerymen, a cavalry troop, a battalion of infantry and a house for the Chief Commissioner.

**Location**

- 1 The barracks, the house for the Chief Commissioner and the vault for the military chest are all situated within the grounds of Lovedale College (KWT campus)..
- 2 The officers' mess, a National Monument, is situated in Hood Street.
- 3 The Smithy, a National monument is situated in a field off Military Road..
- 4 The military hospital, a National Monument, is in Military Road.
- 5 Stone gutters in Military Street. These were laid by the Royal Engineers and are proclaimed by the NMC.

**Access**

For Fort Hill and Military barracks.

Permission from the Principal, Lovedale College campus, Mr N. Dickson, - 043- 6421414

**Condition**

Some are good. All need care and attention.

**Recommendations**

The principal of the Lovedale College (KWT campus) be contacted and access discussed. The possibility of introducing a tourism component for one of the courses could be suggested. SAHRA should be contacted and advice given on care of the proclaimed sites. The Departments under whose control the various buildings fall be contacted and possibly hold a tourism workshop with them to involve them in the project.

## **ANGLO-BOER WAR 1899-1902:**

### **THE COLONIAL DIVISION MEMORIAL**

#### **Introduction**

East London was an important port of entry for supplies for the Anglo-Boer War of 1899-1902. Most East London and King Williams Town white inhabitants were pro British and many streets in East London were named for the Colonial and British generals, such as Lukin, Brabant, Buller, Kitchener, Roberts and French. Many fine houses in the Belgravia were built from the proceeds of burgeoning trade, of which the Ann Bryant Art Gallery is a fine example. While no military engagements were fought in the Buffalo City area, many of the Colonial Division Units were raised in the area and the equestrian statue was a memorial to those killed in action.

#### **Description**

This is a bronze equestrian statue mounted on a plinth of Irish marble. It depicts a scout sculptured by W. Reynolds-Stephens of London. The model for the figure was Captain G.J. Hearn M.C., of the Cape Mounted Riflemen, and the model for the horse was 'Boodles'. The inscription reads "This statue was erected to the memory of the officers and men of the Colonial Division who lost their lives in the Anglo-Boer War 1899-1902". The names of men from the Cape Mounted Riflemen, the Kaffrarian Rifles, the Queenstown Rifle Volunteers, Border Horse, Cape Medical Corps, and two regiments of Brabant's Horse. It was unveiled on 9 November 1908 by General Sir E.Y. Brabant. The statue was named the best equestrian statue by the Royal Academy in 1910.

#### **Location**

It is situated in front of the entrance of the City Hall, Oxford Street, East London.

#### **Capacity and Constraints**

While this is out of doors in front of the City Hall, it would be undesirable to have very large groups, especially as a visit is likely to be linked to a visit to the City Hall itself.

#### **Recommendations**

Any efforts to move this statue should be vigorously opposed. Movement would certainly damage the fabric and bronze becomes very brittle. It should be kept clean and its condition should be monitored.

## **MEMORIALS FOR WORLD WAR 1, 1914-1918 AND WORLD WAR II, 1939-1945**

#### **Introduction**

South Africa sent many units to fight in the first World War and, in common with most South African towns and villages, both East London and King Williams Town erected memorials those who lost their lives. The horrific loss of life generated deep emotions and the proliferation of memorials was an effort to justify and glorify those who had died. East London had 5 cenotaphs erected, 2 memorial windows, and 6 rolls of honour were inscribed and located in various buildings around the town. The second World War did not generate such an outburst of sentimentality and fewer and smaller memorials were erected. Many simply added names to existing memorials.

## **THE CENOTAPH EAST LONDON**

### **Introduction**

The Cenotaph was erected through public subscription and was unveiled on 11 November 1923 by Major General Sir H.T. Lukin K.C. CMG DSO. The design of the memorial was selected from 14 entries and was by Ing and Jackson of Durban. The bronze figure was designed by Mr J.W. Jagger of London

### **Description**

The central memorial is set within a square enclosed by wrought iron railings, with lamps on pillars at each corner. The memorial is of the cenotaph style with a shaft resting on a platform of sandstone blocks. Each face has the names of the various battle fronts. On the north face is a life-size bronze sculpture of a soldier in full trench kit.. Above the figure is the coat of arms of East London and with the inscription "To the men of East London who fell in the Great War, 1915 to 1918". The names are inscribed on the lower faces of the memorial.

### **Location**

The area is bounded by Oxford and King Streets and Lukin Road.

### **Access**

Open.

### **Condition**

Good.

### **Capacity and Constraints**

As this is open air, large groups could be accommodated.

### **Visitors**

No record has been kept. A public ceremony is held annually to lay wreaths on November.

### **Recommendations**

Council should be made aware that maintenance should be ongoing as vandalism does occur.

## **LYCH GATE – EAST LONDON**

### **Introduction**

The passion for elaborate memorials had waned by the end of the Second World War, but it was felt necessary to erect some memorial. A Lych Gate, or covered gateway was usually the entrance to a church, and this was selected for this memorial. It was unveiled and dedicated on 2 September 1951 by Lt Genl G.E.Brink Cb CBE DSO Croix de Guerre

### **Description**

A slate roof supports wooden beams. Benches are situated on each side. The names of those who lost their lives are inscribed on tablets.

### **Location**

Adjoins the World War 1 Cenotaph.

**Access**

Open

**Condition**

Good.

**Capacity and Constraints**

As for the Cenotaph

**Visitors**

No records kept.

**Recommendations**

As for the Cenotaph, this should be regularly inspected and cleaned.

**WEST BANK WAR MEMORIAL****Introduction**

Two committees were formed by the West Bank community during the First World War, to raise money for the troops: the Ladies' Comforts Fund and the Overseas Contingency Fund. At the end of the war there was a small surplus of money and it was decided to erect a memorial. Further costs were collected from the community. The memorial was dedicated and unveiled by Lieut Colonel R.W. Currin (Officer Commanding the Kaffrarian Rifles) on 15 October 1921.

**Description**

The memorial takes the form of a white marble obelisk standing on a granite base. A springbok badge and inscription "To the Glorious Dead 1914-1919" overlie the names of the fallen on two panels. On the third panel, "1939-1945" has been added with additional names. It is set in a small square, which abuts the pavement, and is bounded by two stone walls and railings.

**Location**

It is situated on the corner of Bank and Frere streets in the grounds of St Andrews Presbyterian church, West Bank.

**Access**

Open

**Condition**

The monument is in good condition but of the four supporting concrete pillars which support the railings, one is broken in half. Railings are also missing. Weeds are growing through the paving.

**Recommendation**

Contact with the responsible church officials should be made. Council should be made aware of this memorial and suggestions made that the pillars and railings be repaired. It would not be difficult for the groundsmen to keep the area weed free when they come to mow the grass in St Alfred Square.

## **SELBORNE COLLEGE WAR MEMORIAL**

### **Introduction**

The building of this memorial was part of the building of the college when it moved to the present site in 1923. The memorial was unveiled by Sir Frederick de Waal, then Administrator of the Cape, on 8 November 1924. The inscription and names for those who died in the Second World War were added later. Every year there is a service of dedication "The Ceremony of the Key". The Head boy is named the Custodian of the Key and is handed the key to the enclosure. It is his responsibility to look after the monument.

### **Description**

A life size statue in Italian marble of a soldier stands on top of a dressed stone base. On the side of the base is the coat of arms of the school and motto "Palma Virtuti" and inscription "To the glory of God and in proud and loving memory of those old Selbornians who laid down their lives in the Great War 1914-1919. Their names liveth for ever". On the four sides of the base are the words "SW Africa, East Africa, Egypt and Palestine, France and Belgium". The names of those who died are inscribed.

Added later: "The World War 1939-1945 At the going down of the sun and in the morning we will remember them".

### **Location**

It is situated in the grounds of Selborne College, entry in Dawson Road.

### **Access**

Only with permission of the Headmaster, Mr S. Gunn

### **Condition**

Excellent as maintained by the school.

### **Recommendations**

Make contact with the staff and Headmaster.

## **CATHOLIC CHURCH MEMORIAL**

### **Introduction**

Members of the parish raised funds to erect this memorial to their members who had died in the First World War.

### **Description**

A large cross with an effigy of Christ appears to be moulded of concrete. It is mounted granite pedestal with marble panels, on which is inscribed "To the memory of the Catholic men of this parish who were killed in the Great War and in gratitude for the return of many others". The names are inscribed on the base.

### **Location**

It is situated in a niche next to the door of the Church of the Immaculate Conception, close to the pavement, in Albany Street. Note: vehicle access from Buffalo Street is closed, so entry is via Park Avenue of Beaconsfield Road.

**Access**

Open

**Condition**

Good, but it has been painted rather crudely with a heavy layer of white paint.

**Recommendation**

Make contact with the church officials to discuss the paint layer. A sentry box is situated directly in front of the memorial, which detracts from it. This could be investigated.

**CENOTAPH – CAMBRIDGE****Introduction**

The village of Cambridge was first proclaimed in 1904 and was a separate municipality from East London. A separate town hall was built in 19 . The municipality decided that their own memorial should be erected. The Cambridge Municipality was incorporated into that of east London in 1942.

**Description**

A simple structure of blue granite was erected with the names of the fallen on a Roll of Honour. It was unveiled and dedicated on Delville Day, 16 July 1922 by Brigadier Gen J. Bryan.

**Location**

In front of the old Cambridge Town Hall off Mayfair Street.

**Access**

Open

**Condition**

Extremely Poor. The name bearing plaques have been removed.

**Recommendations**

Council should be reminded that this memorial also falls under their care.

**OTHER MEMORIALS:**

There are memorial windows in St Saviour's Anglican Church, St Peters Road and in the original chapel of the Missions to Seamen building in Buffalo Street.

The following churches have memorial tablets:

- Baptist Church, Oxford Street
- St Georges Presbyterian Church, Oxford Street
- Trinity Methodist Church, Oxford Street

**Memorial tablets:**

- were in the vestibule of East London City Hall are now in the Kaffrarian Rifles Museum.  
Names of Municipal employees
- Chamber of Commerce Hall EL Produce Association \* cant be found
- Railway Station – SA Railways & Harbours

## **CENOTAPH – KING WILLIAMS TOWN**

### **Description**

This is one of the most impressive war memorials in the Eastern Cape. It is a very tall stone plinth surmounted by the figure of a winged victory.

### **Location**

Alexandra Road, King Williams Town.

### **Access**

Public open space.

### **Condition**

Good.