

Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality
East London | Bhisho | King William's Town
Province of the Eastern Cape
South Africa

Website: www.buffalocity.gov.za



**BUFFALO CITY
METROPOLITAN MUNICIPALITY**

BCMM SPOKESPERSON

Samkelo Ngwenya

043 705 1170

073 557 4707

samkelon@buffalocity.gov.za

27 SEPTEMBER 2011

Buffalo City Metropolitan welcomes the Buffalo Volunteer Rifles

Buffalo Volunteer Rifles (BVR) will be exercising their right to the Freedom of the City under the newly formed Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality on Saturday, 1 October 2011. It is also the 135th Birthday Celebrations of the BVR.

The Freedom of the City was conferred on the Buffalo Volunteer Rifles (BVR) in 1947 and it was conferred 10 years later, in 1957 by the former City of East London.

The Freedom of the City parade will be held in Oxford Street and will comprise of a company of 100 foot soldiers supported by motorized column (various military vehicles), a mechanized column consisting of various armored vehicles on transporters and a fly past by the South African Air Force helicopters.

The BCMM Executive Mayor Zukiswa Ncitha will inspect the troops along with Honorable Colonel Gugile Nkwinti. The Public are welcome to attend.

The **Freedom of the City** is an honour bestowed by some municipalities all over the world to esteemed members of its community and to organisations to be honoured, often for service to the community; the term applies to two separate honours, one civilian and one military.

Freedom of the City is an ancient honour granted to martial organisations, allowing them the privilege to march into the city "with drums beating, colours flying, and bayonets fixed.

Legions, regiments, or other martial groups that had given heroic service or whose honour was beyond question, can be granted Freedom of the City.

Today, martial freedom of the city is an entirely ceremonial honour, but remains the oldest and one of the highest civic honours in the Commonwealth of Nations which includes, South Africa.

Editors notes: see background below

BACKGROUND

The Buffalo Volunteer Rifles (BVR) is an infantry regiment of the South African Army. As a reserve unit, it has a status roughly equivalent to that of a British Territorial Army or United States Army National Guard unit. It is headquartered in Buffalo City.

This unit was formed in the former East London in 1876, as the *Buffalo Corps of Rifle Volunteers*, for service in the 9th Frontier War. It disbanded in 1879. The name was taken from the Buffalo River.

The unit was re-formed in July 1883 and was named after the region of Kaffraria, the 19th-century name for the region around East London.

There had previously been many other units from this region, from which the Regiment can also claim descent: Kaffrarian Volunteer Corps, Kaffrarian Mounted Rifles (Kaffrarian Rangers), Buffalo Volunteer Rifles Corps, Buffalo Volunteer Engineers, Kaffrarian Volunteer Artillery Corps, Berlin Mounted Volunteers, Cape Mounted Yeomanry (1st Regiment), Frontier Mounted Riflemen (Brabant's Horse), East London Volunteers (Von Linsignen's Buffalo Corps and later Walkers Horse).

On 1 December 1900 George Herbert Farrar was appointed as a Major in the Kaffrarian Rifles.

In 1913 it was embodied in the Citizen Force as the *5th Infantry (Kaffrarian Rifles)*, but regained its old name in 1932. The unit was temporarily amalgamated with the First City Regiment, as the *First City/The Kaffrarian Rifles* from 1954 to 1956. In order to keep pace with the changing political climate in South Africa, the regiment was renamed the *Buffalo Volunteer Rifles* in 1999.

This Regiment and its predecessors took part in all of South Africa's armed conflicts, including the Bechuanaland Campaign (1897), the Second Boer War, World War I (when it fought in the then German South-West Africa and most of its members went on to serve in East Africa and Europe), World War II (when it fought in the Western Desert during 1941 - 1943) as well as in South Africa's "Border War" during 1975 to 1986 (when it fought in South-West Africa, Angola and Zambia).

- Ends -