

# Official Opening of the Restored Buffalo Volunteer HQ Complex East London

*Article and photographs by: Maj A.J. Step (Ret), Curator Rharahbe Museum*

The 24<sup>th</sup> June, 2017 was a red letter day in the annals of the history of the 142 year old Regiment, the Buffalo Volunteer Rifles. The main functionary Major General R. Maphwanya SM, MM, MMM, MMB, OMM, performed the honour of officially opening the restored 131 year old Regimental HQ complex. It was a very proud moment for the Officer Commanding, Lt Col F.R. Shweni, as well as the men and women of the Regiment to be able to move back into their historical HQ.

The proceedings started off with a company of troops led by the SA Army Military Band (KZN) very smartly marching onto the parade ground. After the reading of the Code of Conduct, Cpln P. Diniso attended to the devotional aspect and prayed for the Regiment and those who served in it. Maj Gen Maphwanya and the inspection party inspected the formed up troops. He gave a very impressive address and mentioned that the regimental museum would be renamed in honour of the Xhosa King Rharahbe.

After the parade Maj Gen Maphwanya unveiled the rededication plaque, cut the tape in the colours of the regiment. All the dignitaries then followed for a conducted tour of the two museum rooms by the museum curator Maj (Ret) A.J. Step. During the tour of the museum it was mentioned that phase one re-display of memorabilia was almost complete and phase two would start soon to recognise the important part in our history played by the Xhosa kings, chiefs and the indigenous people of the region, who played a significant role of resistance during the struggle against land dispossession.

While a walk around by all guests to admire the professional restoration of the HQ complex was on going, the Silent Drill platoon performed their precision drill skills.

In the evening a semi-formal dinner was held at the Drill Hall with the main functionary Maj Gen Maphwanya, GOC SA Army Inf Formation, giving the address. Other distinguished invited guests were representatives of: Director Army Reserve, Brig Gen (Dr) G. Kamffer SM, MMM, DWD. Reserve Force Council, Director Force Prep SA Army Inf Form, SSO Director Army Reserves, SSO Mot South SA Army Inf Fmn, Fmn Sergeant Major, BCMM Hon Exec Mayor representative as well as a Rharabe Kingdom representative.

A most enjoyable evening was had by all with three former regimental OCs as well as a groups of past and serving members. The dinner was well supported by a contingent of Moth ex servicemen.



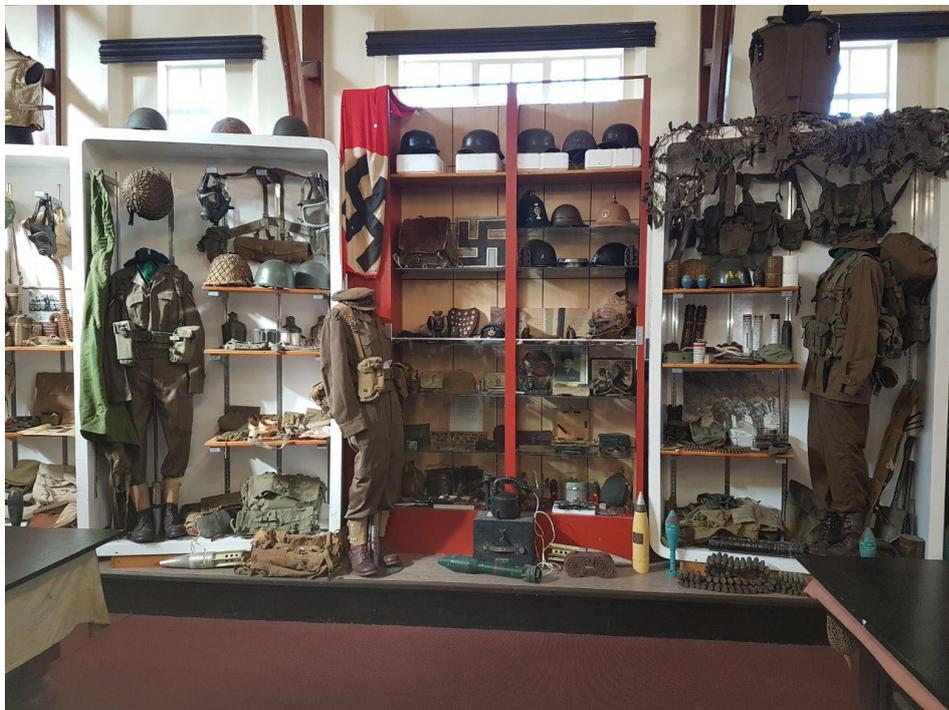
Foreground L to R: Capt J. Steenkamp, Mr and Mrs Hannes Mare, Contractors; Maj A.J. Step (Ret), Col R. Ledingham (Ret), ex OC, Ex RSM C. Hundermark, Lt. Col (Ret) M.J. Cock, previous OC BVR and Mrs E. Cock.



L to R: Brig Gen (Dr) G. Kamffer, Lt Col F.R. Shweni, Lt Col (Ret) D. Benito (ex OC), Maj Gen R. Maphwanya, GOC Inf Formation and Lt Col (Ret) M.J. Cock, previous OC BVR.



Maj Step, the curator of the newly refurbished museum explains the background and significance of the museum exhibits.



Military uniforms and memorabilia relating to the conflicts that BVR has been involved with over the years.

