



Archives ACT

Finding Aid

Freedom of the City & Freedom of Entry and Keys to the City

Introduction

This finding aid is to assist researchers using ACT Government archives on the topics of Freedom of the City, Freedom of Entry and the bestowing of the Keys to the City of Canberra. The government files listed in this aid are not necessarily a full listing of records on the topic; they indicate the areas of government that compiled the records and are now older than 20 years and so on open access. Other contemporary sources, such as newspapers are also cited to give a different viewpoint.

Freedom of the City and Freedom of Entry are two different rights. Freedom of the City is conferred on individuals and Freedom of Entry is conferred on military units. These honours evolved out of different historical backgrounds dating to medieval times.

Freedom of the City

A freeman was a feudal status which granted full privileges and immunities of a city, borough or company. It was acquired by birth, purchase or apprenticeship to a freeman. In England the *Municipal Corporations Act 1835* gave everyone living in the city or borough these rights. In 1885 the *Honorary Freedom of Boroughs Act* allowed local councils to admit distinguished people as honorary freeman. In Victoria, the *Freedom of the City of Melbourne 1956* was passed to enable it to grant freedom of the City to individuals.

Freedom of Entry

Freedom of entry to a city arose in the medieval struggle for power between the Barons and the Crown. It was customary for bodies of armed men to be challenged at the city gate by the City Marshall and allowed to enter with their arms sheathed, colours cased and drums silent to ensure their peaceful intention.

With time the custom has evolved into a re-enactment comprising the relevant armed force, the relevant police commissioner and the head of the elected body symbolising the close association between military and civilian authorities.¹ The ceremony comprises two parts, the granting of the right, symbolised by the giving of the scroll by the civilian authorities to the military authorities and the exercising of the right by the military unit marching through the city.

¹ Australian Capital Territory House of Assembly. House Committee. Report 1 Freedom of Entry and Freedom of the City of Canberra, February 1981.

When Freedom of the City was granted to the Royal Australian Air Force Base Fairbairn the actual wording for the challenges and replies were²:

City Marshal, Sir Colin Woods KCVO, CBE, QPN [sic] issues the challenge:
Halt – Who comes here?

Parade Commander:
RAAF Fairbairn exercising its right and privilege to march through the City of Canberra with swords drawn, bayonets fixed, drums beating, bands playing and colours flying.

The parade commander then shows the scroll to the city marshal.

Police Officer:
I acknowledge your right and privilege. Pass RAAF Fairbairn.

This wording was published in the program of the day; it was much abbreviated from wording discussed in the file.

Sir Colin Woods KCVO, CBE, QPM was the Commissioner for the Australian Federal Police 19 October 1979 to 1985. KCVO is Knight Commander of the Victorian Order, CBE is Commander of the Order of the British Empire, QPM is the Queen's Police Medal for Gallantry.

Rights holders

The City of Canberra has granted Freedom of the City and Freedom of Entry to:

1928, Sir Charles Kingsford Smith and Mr Ulm

<http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article1233458>

1929, 26 November Mr C. S. Daley extended the "freedom of the city" on behalf of the public authorities to the visiting bowlers.

<http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article2517399>

In 1980 the Secretary of the Department of the Capital Territory, Mr Laurie Daniels announced that two military units would be granted freedom of the City of Canberra in 1981.³

² File 81/295 Department of the Capital Territory. Information and Public Relations Section. Production of Freedom of City scroll

³ File 81/295 Department of the Capital Territory. Information and Public Relations Section. Production of Freedom of City scroll

The Freedom of the City of Canberra will be conferred next year on two locally based units of the Australian Defence Forces.

It will be the first time that the ancient traditional ceremony of granting the Freedom of the City will be exercised in Canberra.

The two recipients will be the Royal Australian Air Force Fairbairn on Australia Day, 26 January, and the 3rd Royal New South Wales Regiment, the locally based CMF unit which has its headquarters in Canberra, on Saturday 14 March, in association with the Canberra Day Festival procession.

The Secretary of the Department of the Capital Territory, Mr Laurie Daniels, made the announcement today on behalf of the Minister, Mr Michael Hodgman, who is on leave for the next two weeks.

The conferring of the Freedom of the City on military units is normally exercised each 12 to 24 months by the unit formally marching through the city.

The freedom ceremony will be the first major event in the celebrations next year to mark the 60th anniversary of the RAAF.

22 December 1980

This action caused considerable reaction in the Australian Capital Territory House of Assembly, as that body believed it had the right to initiate and decide any bestowing of civil or military honours.⁴

1981, 26 January RAAF Fairbairn. They exercised their right in 1990.

⁴ File 81/613 Department of the Capital Territory. Ministerial & House of Assembly liaison - Freedom of Entry & Freedom of the City of Canberra.



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The City of Canberra



**Grant of
The Freedom of the City
to
RAAF FAIRBAIRN**



Northbourne Oval
10am
26 January 1981

Figure 1: Grant of the Freedom of the City to RAAF Fairbairn - Cover of program

CANBERRA CREST

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BE IT KNOWN TO ALL
THAT
THE FREEDOM OF
THE CITY OF CANBERRA
HAS BEEN GRANTED TO
THE OFFICER COMMANDING, HIS OFFICERS,
WARRANT OFFICERS, NON COMMISSIONED OFFICERS,
AIRMEN AND AIRWOMEN OF
THE ROYAL AUSTRALIAN AIR FORCE BASE,
FAIRBAIRN, A.C.T.

to mark the association of the Base with the City since its establishment in 1940.

This honour is conferred in recognition of the manner in which officers, Airmen and Airwomen of the Base have served in War and Peace over a period of 40 years thereby bringing added prestige to the City and Region.

It is with pride that the Loyal and Devoted Service to our Sovereign, our Country and our City is acknowledged and, being desirous of recognising, cementing and fostering the intimate association which is now and has for so long been enjoyed between the City and the Royal Australian Air Force based at Fairbairn do by these presents confer upon the Base the title, privilege, honour and distinction of marching through the streets of the City of Canberra on ceremonial occasions with Swords Drawn, Bayonets Fixed, Drums Beating, Bands Playing and with Colours Flying.

Given under my hand on behalf of the citizens of the City of Canberra on this 26th day of January 1981.

MICHAEL HODGMAN
Minister of State for
for Capital Territory

Figure 2: Folio 28 - Final wording for scroll

1981, Saturday 14 March⁵ 3rd Battalion the Royal New South Wales Regiment in recognition of the bond.

Originally the 3rd Battalion – the Werriwa Regiment – was raised in and drawn from Canberra and surrounds before deployment to the Kokoda Trail in 1942. The 4th Battalion – the Australian Rifles – had longstanding connections with southern New South Wales and the Riverina.

On 22 October 1988 it was agreed the right will continue with the now reconstituted as the 4th/3rd Battalion Royal New South Wales Regiment.

The Regiment exercised their right of Freedom of Entry to the City of Canberra in 1985 and then again on 11 December 1999, with the Chief Minister addressing and inspecting the parade.

http://www.cmd.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0017/1754/CMD-Annual-Report-1999-2000-Vol1.pdf

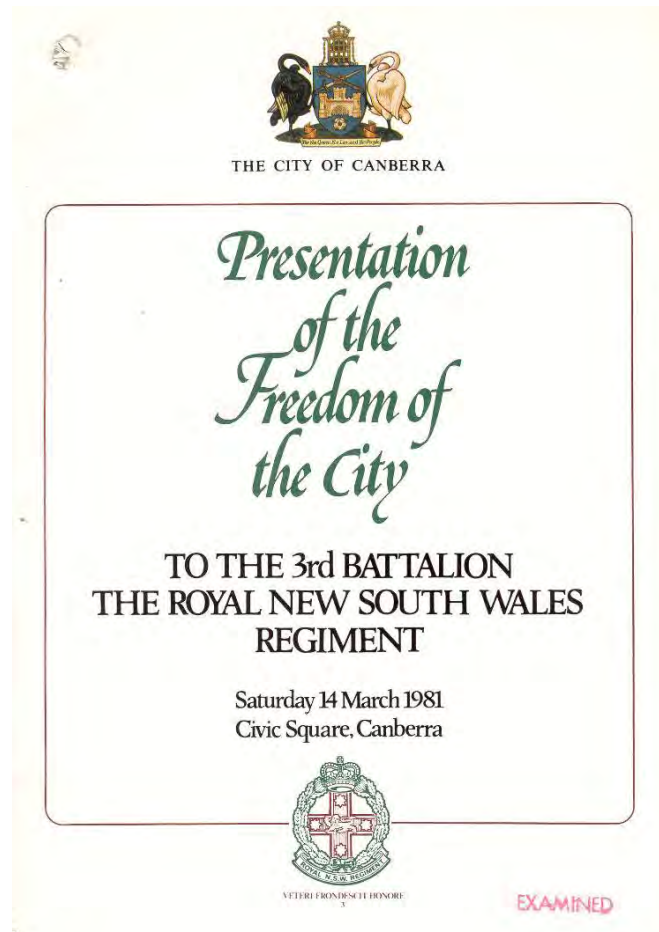


Figure 3: Presentation of the Freedom of the City to the 3rd Battalion the Royal New South Wales Regiment - Cover of program

⁵ File 81/295 Department of the Capital Territory. Information & Public Relations Section – Production of Freedom of City scroll



**Be it known to all
that**

The Freedom of the City of Canberra

**has been granted to the Commanding Officer,
his Officers, Warrant Officers,
Non Commissioned Officers
and soldiers of the**

**3rd Battalion
The Royal New South Wales Regiment**

This honour is conferred in recognition of the manner in which many of our citizens have served with pride in your distinguished Battalion which, by its great achievements in times of peace and war, has built up honourable traditions.

It is with pride that the loyal and devoted service to our Sovereign, our Country and our City is acknowledged and, being desirous of recognising, cementing and fostering the close association which has for so long been enjoyed between the City and the 3rd Battalion, we do by these presents confer upon the Battalion the title, privilege, honour and distinction of marching through the streets of the City of Canberra on ceremonial occasions with swords drawn, bayonets fixed, drums beating, bands playing and Colours flying. Given under my hand on behalf of the Citizens of the City of Canberra on this 14th day of March 1981.

Michael Hodgman
Minister of State for
the Capital Territory

NORTH AFRICA
1940-42

BARDIA 1941

DEFENCE OF
TOBRUK

EL ALAMEIN

SYRIA 1941

GREECE 1941

MALAYA 1941-42

KOKODA TRAIL

BUNA-GONA

BORNEO



VETERI FRONDESCIT HONORE

SUAKIN 1885

SOUTH AFRICA
1899-1902

SOMME 1916, 1918

POZIERES

BULLECOURT

YPRES 1917

PASSCHENDAELE

AMIENS

HINDENBURG
LINE

LANDING AT
ANZAC

RUMANI

PALESTINE
1917-18



Figure 4: Presentation of the Freedom of the City to the 3rd Battalion the Royal New South Wales Regiment - Scroll reproduced from program

1982, 10th March *HMAS Canberra* was granted freedom of entry to the city of Canberra by the Hon. Michael Hodgman, Minister for Territories. The right was exercised in 1990 and in 2000. On 4 March 2000 they led the National Multicultural Festival parade.

http://www.cmd.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0017/1754/CMD-Annual-Report-1999-2000-Vol1.pdf

<http://www.hansard.act.gov.au/Hansard/2000/week02/477.htm> They also exercised their right, for the final time, in 2005 to mark the decommissioning of the HMAS Canberra.

1995, 15 September, Australian Defence Force Academy received the Freedom of the City of Canberra on the 10th anniversary of midshipman and officer cadet training at Australian Defence Force Academy

http://www.unsw.adfa.edu.au/pr/news/news_archives/Archive%202008/February%2021.html They also exercised their right in 2008.

2001, 9 June, Royal Military College Duntroon

<http://www.dunsoc.com/Newsletter-web/2-2004-web.pdf>

http://www.cmd.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0016/1753/CMD-Annual-Report-2000-01-Vol1.pdf

2003, 27 June 28 Squadron RAAF Base Fairbairn relinquishes its right to Freedom of the City and the honour is granted to 28SQN 30 June 2003

<http://www.defence.gov.au/news/raafnews/editions/4510/topstories/story07.htm>

<http://www.defence.gov.au/news/raafnews/EDITIONS/4512/history/story01.htm>

<http://www.chiefminister.act.gov.au/media.php?v=7013&m=51&s=4>

2004, May Royal Military College Duntroon Band

<http://www.dunsoc.com/Newsletter-web/2-2004-web.pdf>

Archives open to the public

81/295 Department of the Capital Territory. Information and Public Relations Section - Production of Freedom of City Scrolls

81/613 Department of the Capital Territory. Ministerial and House of Assembly Liaison - Freedom of Entry and Freedom of the City of Canberra

81/739 Department of the Capital Territory. Information & Public Relations Section - Production of visitors scroll

81/989 Department of the Capital Territory. Recreation & Tourism Branch. R.A.A.F. Fairbairn - Freedom of the City 26/1/81

81/991 Department of the Capital Territory. Recreation & Tourism Branch. 3rd Battalion Royal N.S.W. Regiment. Freedom of the City 14/3/81

82/0652 Recreation & Tourism Branch HMAS Canberra - Freedom of the City

89/18357 Public Affairs Branch - Canberra - Freedom of the City

Keys to the City of Canberra

Keys to the City are granted in recognition of significant celebrations or contributions by organisations and individuals at the discretion of, prior to self-government the relevant Commonwealth Minister and after self-government, the Chief Minister.

1981 September Peter Allen presented by Michael Hodgman

1983 July Robert De Castella ⁶

1987 September Raiders rugby league team presented by Ros Kelly ⁷

1988 August Canberra Cannons basketball team presented by Member for Canberra and Cannons patron, Ros Kelly ⁸

1989 September Raiders rugby league team presented by Ros Kelly ⁹

1997 June ACT Brumbies rugby union team presented by the Chief Minister Kate Carnell and Minister for Sport Bill Stefaniak¹⁰

1999 November Wallabies Australian rugby union team¹¹

2000^s, 2002 and **2007** Canberra Capitals Women's Basketball Team ¹²

2000 October Sydney Paralympic Team presented by Gary Humphries

2004 September ACT Olympians, Petria Thomas and Katrina Powell ¹³

2004 October Commissioner Keelty on behalf of the Australian Federal Police received the keys presented by the Chief Minister John Stanhope ¹⁴

2005 December Ted Quinlan, the Minister for Sport and Recreation presented the Keys to the City to ACTAS scholarship holders Michael Rogers and Oenone Wood in recognition of their outstanding achievements in cycling¹⁵

2006 April Scouts ACT presented by the Chief Minister, John Stanhope ¹⁶

2006 September Jason Croker of Canberra Raiders rugby league team presented by the Chief Minister John Stanhope¹⁷

2007 October Carrie Graf Canberra Capitals coach presented by the Minister for Sport Andrew Barr¹⁸

⁶ Canberra Times 6 July 1983

⁷ Canberra Times 30 September 1987

⁸ Canberra Times 12 August 1988

⁹ Canberra Times 26 September 1989

¹⁰ Canberra Times 11 & 12 June 1997

¹¹ Chief Minister's Department annual report 1999-2000

http://www.cmd.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0017/1754/CMD-Annual-Report-1999-2000-Vol1.pdf

¹² <http://www.wnbl.com.au/index.php?id=351>

¹³ <http://www.abc.net.au/news/newsitems/200409/s1194112.htm>

¹⁴ http://www.afp.gov.au/media_releases/act/2004/canberra_to_give_afp_keys_to_the_city.html;
http://www.afp.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/3996/keysToCanberra.pdf

¹⁵ http://www.cmd.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0017/1943/ED-Annual-Report-2005-06-PartB.pdf

¹⁶ http://www.cmd.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0015/1734/CMD-Annual-Report-2005-06-Vol1.pdf

¹⁷ <http://www.theqh.com.au/forum/viewtopic.php?f=2&t=5613&view=next>

¹⁸ <http://www.chiefminister.act.gov.au/media.php?v=5308&m=51&s=21>