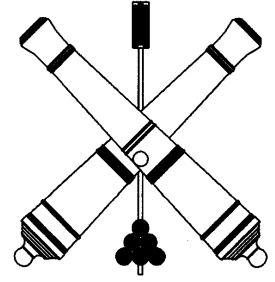


THE CANNON ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH AFRICA

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NEWSLETTER No. 25 - November 2007

A service to the muzzle loading cannon enthusiast

Where a name is followed by a number (45) it is the individual's CAOSA membership number. You may well ask why I am not member No. 1. It is because I made the bold statement that numbers would be allocated in the order that members paid their fees, and Martin Venter had the fastest wallet in Africa.

THE CONSTITUTION

I am pleased to announce that the CAOSA constitution was read, discussed, debated, accepted and signed into force at a special meeting on 03 November 2007. E-mail copies can be obtained from me on request.

Individual membership fees will remain at R70 pa except for those very supportive members who elect to make an additional donation to our cause. All fees are now payable by 01 March 2008 and will be valid until the end of February 2009. Any payments made between now and March 2008 will constitute the fees for membership until February 2009.

THE GOLF BALL MORTAR

Johan van Zyl (44) and I (4) co-operated in the development and manufacture of a replica Coehoorn mortar model in SG 42 steel with a 43mm bore. Mounted at the mandatory 45° elevation on a thick oak bed the model was proof and test fired. The proof and first two normal firings resulted in the loss of three perfectly good golf balls. Only when we reduced the propellant charge to 1,5 grams did we manage to retrieve three balls which landed about 70m distant. We think that we have invented a new mortar/golf game termed "molf".

Sir David Graaff has offered a prize of three bottles of De Grendel wine for the first "molf" ball to hit the rock in the middle of the dam on the estate. (Conditions apply).

SENTINEL GUNS

One of the Sentinel guns, the C. 1650 vintage Dutch 6 pdr Finbanker has been delivered and mounted on the wine farm Groote Post (Peter Pentz) off the West Coast road near Darling. Groote Post was a VOC outpost and appears to have had a gun mounted there because several cannon balls were unearthed there a few years ago.

The 8 pdr Finbanker has been re-vented and the bore cleaned out. A full set of loading equipment has been made and the gun is destined to replace the missing gun on the Hessewakloof farm near Swellendam.

The retired Noon Gun, an 18 pdr English Blomefield, has reached its new home on a ranch near Port Elizabeth and last reports said that it had been taken to an engineering works to have its copper vent replaced.

BRONZE CANNON OFF A VOC SHIP

Prof. Peter Spargo of UCT sent me an interesting article extracted from the Standard Encyclopaedia of Southern Africa Vol 10 (1974) which relates to the many shipwrecks around our coast, but to the *Huis te Craijenstein* in particular. The ship was wrecked at Oudekraal about 5km from Camps Bay on 27 May 1698. An intrepid salvor by the name of Henry Adams managed to salvage a bronze gun weighing 2,270kg, a second bronze cannon and three silver ingots from the wreck. The two cannon were shipped to England where they were sold.

The salvage operation took place in the 1860's and an article in the Cape Times of 04 August 1883 reported that they had "realized a very considerable amount". I suppose that locating any living witnesses is out of the question!

SIGNAL GUN WINE

MJ de Wit (29) has produced his first batch of wine which is labelled as "Signal Gun Wine" and displays a good depiction of the 6 pdr signal gun which stands on the mountain on their farm Hooggelegen in Durbanville. He has a very limited stock of a cabernet/merlot blend, a shiraz and a sauvignon blanc. I can attest to the high quality, having sheveral empty bottlesh with labelsh which I refuse to throw away. Orders can be placed directly with MJ at wynstok@gmail.com.

MILITARY TATTOO – CAPE TOWN 14–17 NOVEMBER 2007

CAOSA was invited to participate in the Tattoo in order to add some punctuation to the program. Tests conducted by Ian van Oordt (2) with his 2 pdr indicated that nothing larger than a ½ pdr could be fired in the relatively confined space, and then only with charges reduced from the normal 70gm to 50gm.

Jacobus van Niekerk (41) and Johan van Zyl (44) made their ½ pdrs and equipment available and Martin Venter (1), Johan (44), MJ de Wit (29), Roland Hudson Bennett (45), Jurg Zimmerman (9), Neville Potgieter (20), Alf Parris (33) and JJ Taljaard (69) conducted the firings on different evenings. Martin did the planning and co-ordination of the cannon portion of the show and the event was a virtual sell-out.

Jacobus has been relentlessly teasing Johan about his misfire caused by his (alleged) failure to prick the charge prior to priming. This took place in front of a huge crowd while Johan was dressed as a hotel Doorman with a wicker lampshade on his head (Javanese Artillery C.1800). On 28 November the tables turned. Johan now has a high definition photo (irrefutable evidence) of Jacobus firing his ½ pdr with the tampion in place. The beautifully handcrafted Burmese teak and bronze tampion, complete with CAOSA badge on the front, has not been seen since and it is thought to have gone to the same place where odd socks go.

CHAVONNE'S BATTERY – CAPE TOWN

Major Willem Steenkamp has eventually broken through the red tape and obtained permission to open Chavonne's Battery in the Clock Tower precinct of the V&A Waterfront to the public again. He has, for the past 8 months, been unceasingly pounding every ear that would listen until he wore them down into capitulation. This great effort on his part deserves all the support that we can give. Willem intends opening for business in mid December, if you have not yet visited the displays, put it on your holiday itinerary. If you have seen the battery, send all your friends for a visit. Just don't say, "That's good", and do nothing!

CAOSA GOLF SHIRTS

The shirts that Ian van Oordt had made a year ago have proved to be durable and popular. The shirts have added an element of uniformity and identity at public events. The minimum order number is 25 shirts (No! total number, not per individual – sigh!). I will be placing another order in late January and I expect that the cost will increase to R110 per shirt. Any surplus from this price will go into the coffers of CAOSA.

Please place your orders by e-mail complete with number of shirts and sizes.

Payment will be requested later only if sufficient orders are placed.

BATTLE OF BLOUBERG 2008

We are still trying to arrange a cannon exhibition on the beachfront in Melkbosstrand on 05 January. This will be held at the exact spot where the English landed on 06 January 1806. We are carving our way through jungles of red tape and reams of paper, but there is still hope of success.

ON A PERSONAL NOTE

My son, Leon, member No. 18 (slow wallet) was involved in a serious car accident and spent 10 days in ICU with multiple fractures, cuts and contusions. The rumour seems to have spread rapidly and we have been overwhelmed by the kind messages and telephone calls from both members and readers. I am pleased to advise that once out of hospital he spent 4 weeks recuperating at home with us and is now well on the mend and back at home with wife and child.

Thank you for your concerns and good wishes.

GREETING FOR THE SILLY SEASON

May 2008 show a tendency to approximate what you planned.

Regards,

Gerry de Vries

Secretary to CAOSA.