



CANNON RESEARCH & PROJECTS

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NEWSLETTER No. 70 - December 2019

A free service to the muzzle loading enthusiast

OVSAC NEWS

I think that my last newsletter and some incoming news from MC Heunis passed each other somewhere in the ether. The OVSAC group have concentrated on the restoration and display of their Krupp gun, limber and baggage wagon. They go the whole hog – they have corduroy clothing, “Mutze” caps and all the uniform and leather webbing pieces that go with it.

They celebrated 120 years since the outbreak of the Boer War on 11 October by camping out with their fully equipped baggage wagon and I would not be surprised if what they ate came off a menu dated 1899.

They have been sourcing all sorts of tools and equipment as listed in the original Krupp documentation. They have scrounged, begged, traded and manufactured nearly everything. They can be followed on Facebook at “**Oranje Vrijstaat Artillerie Corps**”.

NITIDA CANNON STATION NEWS

Erick and Jurg have disassembled the 9 pdr RML and carriage for restoration. Jurg took on the tricky job of restoring the spoked wheels and has furnished me with a photo of the pair looking like new. He had to tighten the wheels by means of inserting wedges and glue and then sanding the wheels and applying multiple coats of varnish.

The loading equipment for the RML has been serviced and a longer handle put on to the copper ladle which was a little shorter than the other equipment.

With a lot of huffing and puffing the English 9 pounder RML Field Gun (RGF No 1128 Mk II 1871) DURR number 264 was pushed up the dam wall and is now in position among the other guns and it looks most impressive and almost regal.

Erick, with the help of child slave labour, has erected the new display board which explains the purpose and method of each piece of loading equipment and he also positioned an anchor point to which the RML is chained to prevent its “accidental” loss over the dam wall. They can be followed on www.nitidacannonstation.co.za

SABRE NEWS

Debbie Mills sent me a form of cannon pedigree for Basil, and it sure makes for some interesting reading. Basil began firing cannon formally in 1987 when he fired a cannon for the opening of the Albany Museum. Between then and 1999 he fired 87 shots at various venues for charity, the launch of products, celebration of 1820 settlers and many more. In 1999 – 2000 Basil went to the USA and was involved in re-enactments involving cannon in Kentucky and Ohio.

There followed another series of celebration firings, charity fundraisers and others until he brought his well trained team to participate in the CAOSA re-enactment of the Battle of Blouberg in January 2006.

In 2008 Basil was invited by “The Sealed Knot” to participate in the English Civil War cannon crew at the Battle of Kelmarsh, which he did. He also visited and took 1st Grahams town Boy Scouts to Portsmouth to be trained and to gather information of field gun regulations and field gun racing.

Basil and his SABRE team participated in several battle re-enactments on behalf of the Eastern Cape Government and drew the praise of all involved. His greatest involvement thus far was when his SABRE crew were involved in the making of the film “Gettysburg” after which his bleeding and bandaged members came to the Castle and participated in the CAOSA cannon day.

Basil and SABRE are very involved in youth training and development. He has teams which have to transport a gun and carriage over a hill, across a gorge by jackstay and the survivors get to fire a shot on the other side; not many can do that.

GENERAL CAOSA NEWS

I have difficulty in providing CAOSA news because the news is generated by NCS, OVSAC, SABRE and others who are all CAOSA members. However this is a good spot for passing on general information to members.

Alf Parris has sold his nice little ½ pounder on wheeled carriage with loading equipment, stand and all. The buyer apparently intends joining CAOSA and training as a gunner- Heads up Erick.

Another important piece of information is the fact that the Bank account details for CAOSA have changed; it is no longer at CAPITEC but at NEDBANK as follows:-

CAOSA

NEDBANK

Savings a/c No. 2036409903

Branch Code 198865

Swift Code NEDSZAJJ

So please, when you pay your subs don't follow the old example – do it correctly. They can be followed on www.caosa.co.za

HOUT BAY NEWS

It is with regret that I pass on the news of the passing of Allan Dellbridge, the senior gunner of the Hout Bay contingent. Allan was one of the key figures in the development of the Hout Bay batteries, he worked closely with the late Peter Gibb and with Dave Cowley to get the guns repaired and mounted and trained several enthusiasts to be capable gunners.

Allan always had a smile on his face and exhibited the classic laid-back Hout Bay style of getting things done. He leaves a pleasant and lasting impression on all who knew him.

THE GUNS ON LION'S HEAD (Durr 17 and 18)

IDENTIFICATION - A pair of Armstrong pattern smooth bore 6 pounder cannon cast in England and supplied by Gordon and Stanley in the period 1790 – 1820.

These are the only cannons (among 1048 recorded in SA) which can be attributed to Gordon & Stanley and they are a pair which has been together since they were cast. Gordon & Stanley was a prolific supplier of cannon to both the Board of Ordnance and to the private sector, yet they were never listed as a foundry: they were probably the middle-man traders.

MARKINGS - Crest of King George III on the first reinforce. GS on the trunnion end for the supplier Gordon and Stanley. One gun has the number P 1713 on the top of the base ring and the other has 1714. These could be the weight of the gun marked in the manner used by the French.

Gordon and Stanley supplied the older pattern guns long after other foundries had changed to the new Blomefield pattern of C.1790. G&S supplied a lot of guns for sale on the open market and it is quite plausible that they were bought for a French trading ship which would explain the French style marking of the weight. The "M" markings on the guns could represent either the Earl of Mulgrave or the Earl of Marlborough who were both earlier Masters of the Ordnance.

In an article by Prof. Dirk Kotze published in the Burger of 12 February 1977 he states that these two guns were found abandoned behind the Sea Point town hall in 1957. His research led him to believe that these guns were removed from their original site in November 1907 on the orders of the Municipality of Sea and Green Point. The guns were mounted on wooden carriages in front of the Municipal Offices. Time and the usual lack of maintenance took its toll and the wooden carriages rotted away and the guns were moved to one side where they lay and corroded.

The Municipality constructed the concrete carriages and built the look-out point on which they now stand in 1961. The original position was about 150 m north of the present position but these remains were obliterated when the road was built. The present site was selected for its excellent view in all directions. The broken concrete carriages were replaced with wooden carriages again by Cannon Research & Projects in 2018.

Make the festive season pleasant for all of those with whom you have contact.

UBIQUE

Gerry de Vries