CAPE FIELD ARTILLERY CELEBRATED ITS
160TH YEAR OF EXISTANCE

Article by Major Dalene Coetzee

The Streets of Cape Town were closed on Saturday morning of 26 August 2017 when Cape Field Artillery together with the Air Force Base Ysterplaat exercised the freedom of the entry to the City of Cape Town.

What made the parade special was that Cape Field Artillery, the oldest active Artillery Regiment in the Commonwealth, is celebrating its 160th birthday.

The Parade Commander was Major G.P. Damon, the Acting Officer Commanding Cape Field Artillery and the Parade Warrant Officer was Warrant Officer Class 1 M.J. Pretorius of Air Force Base Ysterplaat.

The members on Parade were from Cape Field Artillery, supported by Transvaal Horse Artillery, Vrystaat Artillerie Regiment, Transvaalse Staats Artillerie and 18 Light Artillery Regiment and the Air Force Base Ysterplaat.

The Colours on Parade were the 13 Pounder Colour Gun of Cape Field Artillery and the Colours of 35 Squadron, 22 Squadron and the Air Force Base Ysterplaat.
The Band on Parade was the Army Band Western Cape under the Baton of Captain V.A. Michaels and Bandmaster Warrant Officer Class 1 A.S. van Schalkwyk. The Band Trooping was performed by the Cape Field Artillery Pipes and Drums under Pipe Major, Warrant Officer Class 2 A.J. Imrie.

The mechanized columns were GV5 Guns used by Cape Field Artillery and GV1 88mm Ceremonial 25 Pounder Guns used by Cape Field Artillery for Ceremonial purposes, 35mm Anti-Aircraft Guns from Cape Garrison Artillery, 2 Mambas from Cape Town Rifles (Dukes) and a Withings recovery vehicle from 30 Field Workshop. The mechanized columns were supported by members from 4 Artillery Regiment Potchefstroom. The Fly Past by 2 helicopters, was done by 22 Squadron stationed at the Air Force Base Ysterplaat.

The parade has formed up in the Castle of Good Hope and started at 10 am on Saturday morning and the salute was received by Alderman JP Smith on behalf of the Mayor of Cape Town at the City Hall.
A GV5 in the mechnised column going past the City Hall while Mr JP Smith receives the salute on behalf of the Mayor of Cape Town

Cape Field Artillery Pipes and Drums trooping on parade
Air Force Base Ysterplaat joined the parade to exercise their freedom of the city

On Friday 25 August, a formal guest evening was held in the CFA Gun Park in Fort iKapa and on Sunday 27 August, the celebrations came to a close with a church service at the CFA HQ.

Members of the CFA Pipes and Drums also attended the dinner and played the Regimental song

L/Bdr RR Daniels was awarded the trophy for Best NCO of the year. With him is Brig Gen K Makina, MWO and Bennie Havenga
At the Church Parade a salvo was fired and then 2 min silence and then a 2nd salvo was fired to remember those gunners who lost their lives in the line of duty.

The church parade was also attended by 3 ex-OC's of Cape Field Artillery. On the photograph is:

(left to right) Lt Col Ian McKinney, Maj Damon (Acting OC of CFA), Col Lionel Crook and Lt Col Kees de Haan

BRIEF HISTORY OF THE 160 YEARS OF CAPE FIELD ARTILLERY

Cape Field Artillery is a Reserve Force Regiment in the South African National Defence Force, and forms part of the South African Army Artillery Formation. It is currently based at Fort iKapa Military Base, in Goodwood. The Regiment was formed at the Old Town House, Greenmarket Square, Cape Town on 26 August 1857 as the Cape Town Volunteer Artillery. Major the Chevalier Alfred du Prat, was its first commanding officer. The Regiment enjoys the unique distinction of being the oldest operational volunteer artillery regiment in the British Commonwealth.

Over the 160 years of its history, the Regiment has fought courageously and honourably in many theatres of war.
**WW1:**
Although the Regiment did not serve on the European continent during World War I, it did take part in the South-West Africa Campaign. The unit took part in the South African invasion of German South-West Africa in 1915 where it earned the battle honour “South West Africa 1915”.

**WW2:**
During World War 2, the Regiment was sent as far afield as East Africa, North Africa and Italy.

The Regiment fought during Operation Crusader at Bardia, Sollum, Halfaya Pass and at Gazala during the Battle of Gazala. It fired the first and last rounds before the Fortress at Tobruk surrendered on 21 June 1942.

1 and 3 Field Batteries, joined by 14 Field Battery, fought in the First Battle of El Alamein in July 1942 as well as in the Second Battle of El Alamein.

**POST WAR:**
During the post-war period, the Regiment was mobilised several times for duty in the South African Border War (1966 to 1989), including Operation Savannah in 1976.

The Regiment has three regimental mottos, namely, *Ubique* (Everywhere), *Quo Fas et Gloria Ducunt* (Whither Right or Glory Lead) and *Spes Bona* (Good Hope), all of which are incorporated into its unit badge.

**The Regiment also fulfils many ceremonial duties:**

- At the annual Opening of Parliament in central Cape Town, the Cape Field Artillery Ceremonial Gun Troop fires a 21 Gun Salute with its well-maintained GV1, 25-pounder guns.

- The ceremonial guns are also fired at the annual Gunners’ Memorial Service in the Gardens in Cape Town.

- The highlight of the Cape Town Military Tattoo at the Castle of Good Hope is when the Guns of Cape Field Artillery provide the gunfire during the playing of Tchaikovsky’s 1812 Overture.

- Because of the high level of skills and training, CFA is often tasked to do ceremonial shoots at various occasions, such as salutes for visiting state presidents as well as state funerals. In recent years the ceremonial troop, had to travel several times as far as the Eastern Cape to perform such tasks. On one very memorable occasion the ceremonial troop was honoured to fire the 21 Gun salute in Operation Uxolo, the funeral of the late President Mandela in Qunu.