

## Cape Field Artillery: 153 years old and Training for the Future

Article supplied by Mrs Regine Lord.

Photos supplied by Major D. Coetzee, Mr L. Steyn, Mr and Mrs Best, and Mrs R Lord.

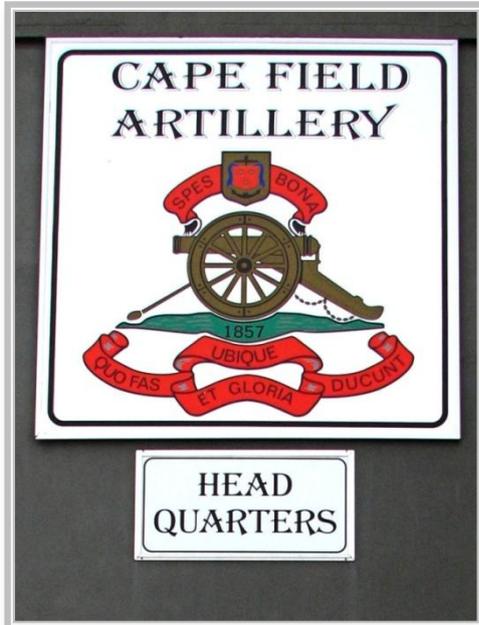


Photo 1: Cape Field Artillery unit badge

In July 2010, **specialised GV5 training** was provided to Cape Field Artillery (CFA) at their regimental headquarters in Fort iKapa, Acacia Park near Goodwood.

CFA is a Reserve unit in the South African National Defence Force, and part of the South African Army Artillery Formation. Its current Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Colonel C.A. (Kees) de Haan, is ably supported by Major Dalene Coetzee as second in command (2IC). The gun crew members, many of whom come from the Western Cape town of Robertson, are all volunteers who train and drill in their own time.

The regiment was established as far back as 26 August 1857 in Greenmarket Square, Cape Town; at that time, it was known as **the Cape Town Volunteer Artillery**. As one of the oldest volunteer artillery regiments in the world still in existence today, it has celebrated its 153<sup>rd</sup>

birthday this year. The unit has three **regimental mottos**, namely, *Ubique* (Everywhere), *Quo Fas Et Gloria Ducunt* (Whither right or glory) and *Spes Bona* (Good Hope), all of which are incorporated into its unit badge.

The **name of the regiment** has changed several times over the years. Most notably, in 1867, when the Duke of Edinburgh visited Cape Town, he was so impressed with the skill and professionalism of the gunners, that he conferred upon them the designation Prince Alfred's Own Cape Town Volunteer Artillery (PAOCTVA). This was changed some 30 years later to Prince Alfred's Own Cape Artillery (PAOCA), and in 1903, to Prince Alfred's Own Cape Field Artillery (PAOCFA). In 1932,

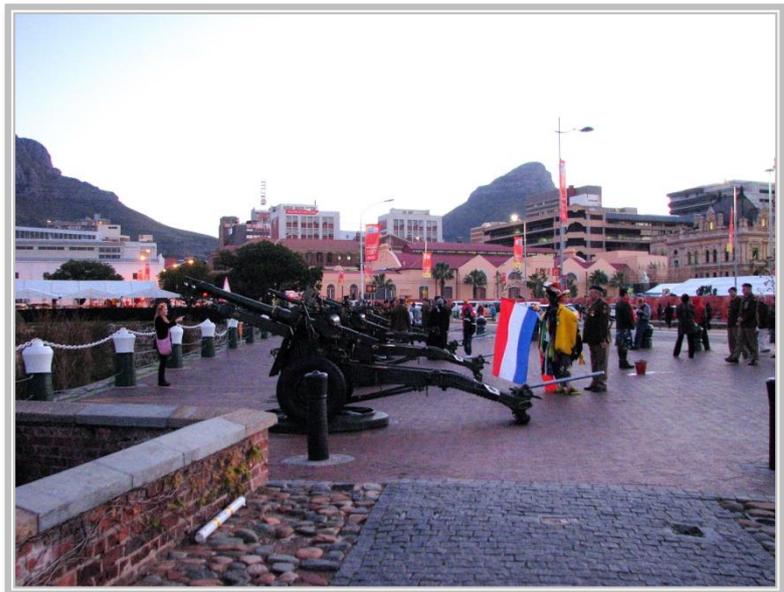


Photo 2: Ceremonial 25-pounder (GV1) guns in front of the Castle on the final day of the 2010 FIFA World Cup

the regiment became Cape Field Artillery (Prince Alfred's Own); in 1960 it was briefly renamed the Regiment Tygerberg, until the name was changed back to **Cape Field Artillery** in 1963, which it has retained until today.



**Photo 3: Volunteer gunners of CFA receive specialised GV5 training at the unit's regimental headquarters at Fort iKapa**

Over the 153 years of its history, the unit has fought courageously and honourably in many theatres of war. **Regional campaigns** included the 9<sup>th</sup> Frontier War (1877-1879) and the Tambookie Campaign (1880-1881) on the Eastern Cape frontier, the Basutoland Rebellion (1880-1881) and the Second Anglo-Boer War (1899-

1902). The regiment's participation in the South-West Africa campaign of 1915 led to it receiving the battle honour "**South West Africa 1915**", although artillery units in the SA Army are not usually awarded such honours.

During **World War II**, the regiment was sent as far afield as East Africa, North Africa and Italy. It played an important role in the **South African Border War** (1966 to 1989), spending three months in Angola during Operation Savannah in 1976, and undertaking several tours of duty along the South West African border in the years that followed.

The Regiment also fulfils many ceremonial duties. At the annual **Opening of Parliament** in central Cape Town, the CFA Ceremonial Gun Troop fires a salute with its well-maintained GV1, 25-pounder guns. These are also



**Photo 4: This map of Africa shows the various campaigns in which CFA was involved.**

fired to signal the start of the annual **Gun Run**, which is a popular half-marathon that starts and finishes at Hamiltons Rugby Club in Green Point (this year it is scheduled for Sunday, 10 October 2010). The ceremonial guns are also fired at the annual **Robertson Agricultural Show** (which will take place from 28 September to 02 October 2010).



**Photo 5: In addition to the practical, hands-on training on the guns, the gunners also receive theoretical instruction on the computer.**

The Ceremonial Gun Troop was part of the opening of the **2010 FIFA World Cup**, and the firing of its 25-pounder guns on Friday 11 June at 18h00 in front of the Castle was part of an unforgettable heritage moment. The guns were fired once more on Sunday 11 June at 1840 in front of the Castle, marking the final day of the 2010 World Cup.

On many of the nights during the FIFA World Cup, Staff Sergeant Andrew Imrie of the CFA Pipes and Drums piped

‘Nightfall in Camp’ from the Leerdam Bastion; he did so one final time at 23h00 on 11 June, thus symbolically closing the Fan Fest on the Grand Parade.

The regiment has received the **Freedom of Bellville and of the City of Cape Town**, a ceremonial honour that dates back to ancient Roman times, when military units were obliged to leave their weapons outside the city gates. Being granted the Freedom of the City is thus a mark of honour, as it allows military units to march through the city streets with fixed bayonets, drawn swords, drums beating and colours flying on all ceremonial and other occasions.

CFA regularly undergo **refresher training** to ensure that they are well versed in the use of the R4 rifle and that their physical fitness levels are kept high, in view of the strength required to operate their guns. Members also receive training in computer literacy.

Lieutenant Jacques Farmer, Staff Sergeant Mokoto and Sergeant Moroko from the **School of Artillery in Potchefstroom** travelled down to Cape Town with three Samil 100 6x6 gun tractors and three GV5 Howitzer guns to train 26 members of CFA, who qualified as gunners at the end of this training.



**Photo 6: The GV5 gun is deployed at the start of the demonstration on Saturday, 17 July 2010**

Two courses were presented, namely, **Artillery Orientation** and **GV5 Crew Member**. The three weeks of training, from 5 to 16 July 2010, culminated in a demonstration on midday of Saturday,

17 July, at which the students impressively demonstrated their standard of training and displayed their newly acquired skills to a group of invited guests, colleagues, friends and family.

Before the demonstration began, the **CFA Pipes and Drums** in their red tartans entertained the invited guests, the energetic drum beats and the unmistakable sound of the pipes setting the scene.



**Photo 7: The gun crew load a percussion round and pull the firing lanyard to fire a shot**

**Lt Col C.A. de Haan**,  
Commanding Officer of CFA,

welcomed the guests, who then witnessed one of the guns being brought into action in record time. With the long barrel of the GV5 Howitzer gun facing south towards Muizenberg, the gun crew loaded a percussion round and pulled the firing lanyard to fire a shot. They immediately reloaded the gun and fired a second shot, before bringing the gun out of action and withdrawing.

Another GV5 was deployed on the lawns next to the Warrant Officers and Non-Commissioned Officers' Mess, with the tote, including maintenance and support equipment, neatly on display. One of the reserve members explained the use of the tote to the guests, answering their myriad questions.

After the demonstration, all the guests, including the students and their families and supporters, enjoyed refreshments in the Mess.

**Major General K. Mokoape**, Chief SA Army Reserves, indicated that he was very pleased with the fact that the decentralised training had been so successful. Other guests who marvelled at the skills of the Reserves were Lt Col Uys van der Westhuijzen, Chairman of the Reserve Force Council



**Photo 8: Tote on display**

Western Cape, Advocate Anthea Michaels (A/CEO of the Chrysalis Academy) and OCs of the other units based at Fort iKapa.



**Photo 9: Lt Col Johan Conradie, Adv Anthea Michaels and Major General Mokoape admire the skill of the gunners.**

At the **course function** on Wednesday night, 21 July, Lt Col CA de Haan and Lt J. Farmer announced the three top students in each course.

Each student received a certificate and a group photograph as a memento. There was a very positive atmosphere among the students, and it was clear from their demeanour that they felt confident in themselves and rightly proud of having successfully completed their training. The three top students

in each course received additional certificates in acknowledgement of their achievement. The rest of the class surprised them by presenting the top achievers with beautifully wrapped gifts.

**Presenting the training course at Fort iKapa** gave the Reserves an opportunity to train with their own unit and at their own base, rather than having to travel to Potchefstroom. Not only did this lead to significant cost savings with regard to transport, accommodation and meals, but it also meant that learners did not need to take even more time off work.

The excellent results obtained drove home the point that there are indeed suitable training facilities available at Fort iKapa, and that the standard of training is just as high, if not higher, than if all the participants had travelled to Potchefstroom. Furthermore, it was highly beneficial for them to have been trained within their own units, as group cohesion was already very good, improving even further during the training.



**Photo 10: Major General Mokoape in animated conversation with Colonel Alan Nelson.**



**Photo 11: Lt Col C.A. de Haan thanks Lt J. Farmer for the training.**

**Lt Col J.K. Moraka**, from the SA Artillery Formation S01 ETD (Education, Training and Development), came from Pretoria to evaluate progress. He indicated that he was very happy with the work done by the students, and mentioned that they could usually only accommodate 24 people for training at Potchefstroom, but that they had been able to teach 26 people from this unit alone at Fort iKapa.

The **practical aspects** of the training were covered first, before the **theoretical instruction** took place. This proved to be a particularly effective way of teaching, as it allowed the learners to gain some hands-on practical experience, which significantly enhanced their understanding of the theoretical aspects.

**Lt J. Farmer** confirmed that the training had gone very well indeed, that participation in the practical hands-on component was exceptionally good, and that the levels of discipline were high throughout the course.

All of the above suggests that there is indeed value in decentralised training.

The next big upcoming event for CFA was the Artillery Open Day, which was held in Potchefstroom on Saturday, 28 August 2010.



**Photo 12: Group Photo**

## **Congratulations to the following students:**

Artillery Orientation: 1st: Ssgt E.R. Hendriks, 2nd: Gnr N. Mqgiba; 3rd: L/Cpl J.W. Cloete

GV5 Crew Member: 1st: Ssgt E.R. Hendriks, 2nd: Pte M. Salomo; 3rd: Gnr N. Mqgiba



**Photo 13: Staff Sergeant E.R. Hendriks**



**Photo 14: Gunner N. Mqgiba**



**Photo 15: Private M. Salomo**



**Photo 16: Lance Corporal J.W. Cloete**