

THE NOTES ON THE CALL-UP SYSTEM GUNS

The Call-up signal system fell into disuse during the English occupation of 1795 - 1803. The English had no use for the system, as the burghers and local officials were unlikely to respond in the manner desired. The system was overhauled and prepared again soon after the English departed. The changes made to the system during this period, in terms of the relocation or addition of guns, are not clear, and the present location of guns may not reflect the true situation prior to 1795.

NOTE 1 Gun 279 was removed from Vlaeberg (Asiaskop) in 1972, but this may not have been its original position. It is possible that this was the original gun on the farm "Rustenburg", and was moved to Vlaeberg during the expansion of the system. This is the only gun in the call-up system which pre-dates 1690 and it was declared unserviceable, in its position on Vlaeberg, in 1758. A replacement gun (399) was mounted nearby and the old gun was not removed at that time.

NOTE 2 The gun in Salt River, which gave Cannon Road and Cannon Bridge their names, was stolen from the grounds of Atlantic Knitting Mills in 1996. Contemporary reports refer to a 12 pdr gun at the point where the road crosses the Salt River, but the gun which was removed in 1996 was a 6 pdr. This may have been one of the later changes to the system. A replacement 6 pdr gun was purchased for that site in 1998.

NOTE 3 The 12 pdr gun from Tygerberg, which was served from the farm "Plattekloof", now stands in front of the Parow Civic Centre. A 6 pdr replacement gun (8), was donated to the reserve by the SA Navy in 1994.

NOTE 4 The author heard from a retired farm worker on the slopes of Koeberg that his grandfather had passed on a tantalising piece of verbal history. In 1806, the grandfather and three other workers from a nearby farm were taken to the crest of Koeberg and instructed to dig a large hole adjacent to the gun. The gun was toppled into the hole and the low carriage was, with some difficulty, removed from the hole. The gun was buried where it lay, and the disturbed earth was disguised with stones and shrubbery. The carriage was removed and used for firewood. The burghers were not willing to surrender their gun to the English. What lends credibility to the tale, is that the grandfather had apparently previously been sent to the gun to clear brush around the site and pack stones in a circle around the gun, a common practice at many signal guns.

NOTE 5 The purpose of the gun on Postberg in Saldanha Bay is not clear. The single gun was too high and too far from a road or track to have had any defensive or offensive purpose. It is likely that it was a signal gun, but whether it formed part of the call-up system or part of another system which originated in Saldanha Bay is not yet known.

NOTE 6 A gun was removed from the Northern slopes of Paardeberg and stood for many years at the Municipal Building in Malmesbury. The gun is no longer there, and all enquiries shed no light on its fate or present whereabouts.

NOTE 7 The second gun (350) in Moorreesburg was donated to the town by someone at the Castle, and did not form part of the call-up system.

NOTE 8 Among the VOC documentation is an undated letter to the authorities at the Castle, requesting that an additional signal gun be mounted between Pieketsberg and Piekenierskloof as the guns could not be heard in the northern parts of area. Whether this gun was ever supplied is not known, but there is a verbal report of a gun which was seen on the slopes of Zebraskop in c1920.

NOTE 9 It is not clear if there ever was a gun on Klapmuts Hill. Contemporary reports refer to "A gun on the hill behind the Company Post at Klapmuts". This could also refer to the Joostenberg gun (394), or to the gun on the southern slopes of Simonsberg (281).

NOTE 10 The gun on the farm "Fabritus" (434) is not listed in the 1793 survey of the call-up system and is not of the standard "Dutch" pattern gun. It may have been one of the ad-hoc additions to the system just prior to 1806.