

# The Regiment Westelike Provincie (RWP)

CAOSA Gunner Erick Kellerman had the honour of firing a 1/2pdr muzzle loading cannon to launch the opening of 2 bottles of the Regiment's pot still brandy.

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NEWS

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## Enjoy a tot of regiment's tippie

LIZAHN WENTZEL

The Regiment Westelike Provincie (RWP), based at Fort Ikapa military base in Goodwood, relaunched their "dop" of choice at a black-tie event at D'Aria Wine Estate in Durbanville on Friday March 11.

Twenty-four bottles of the regiment's pot still brandy was first produced in 1978.

Since then the custom has been that only two bottles are opened every leap year, during the regimental birthday dinner.

But the regiment had also been producing the brandy on a small scale for private functions and ceremonies.

Now the brandy will be available at stores for you to taste.

Traditionally it had been reserved for the regiment.

"The brandy is offered per tot to serving and past members, who are present to toast the regiment," explained Nardus Nel, a member of RWP.

A traditional shooting of the cannon accompanied the launch. The event was attended by about 120 guests, including business people, Army Reserve Force members, Memorable Order of Tin Hats (MOTH) members and dignitaries.

RWP is a mechanised infantry regiment of the South African Army, similar to the British Army Reserve or US Army National Guard unit. RWP is one of 23 traditional regiments who were awarded traditional status by Parliament.

Mr Nel said since 1936, members of the RWP would get parcels from home, which often included home-brewed brandy. It was unique because it would be a mix of different home brews from the Cape Winelands.

"Each batch would have its own unique blend and flavour, depending on the combination of brandies put together at the time," he said.

Mr Nel explained that the practice of home brewing died a natural death after wartime, but was resuscitated in 1978 when it was approved and officially registered.

"Since then it has become a sought-after item as it is only available at the regimental headquarters, and then only per tot or on the rare occasion," he said.

Mr Nel joined RWP in 1973 as a lieutenant in the machine gun platoon. Now retired, he is a member of the RWP Veterans' Association and RWP Regimental Council, part of the Memorable Order Of Tin Hats (MOTH) Blaauwberg Cuca Shellhole.

The regiment is toasted at the annual dinner. The toast is regarded as the highest honour that RWP can bestow on a person or occasion – and is instituted only in exceptional circumstances.

"A certificate of the event with a serial number is handed to such persons or instances and a copy is preserved in the regimental register," Mr Nel said.

The brandy is presented in terms of strict protocol during the regimental birthday dinner. The barrel containing

the liquid is carried in by bearers and decanted by the cellar master.

"The brandy is then sampled and approved by the Mess President, Commanding Officer, Honorary Colonel and the guest of honour," Mr Nel said. The other guests now pour their own brandy and when the toast is called, everyone is expected to empty their glass in one swallow.

The brandy barrel was fondly known as "Die Kruitvat" (The Powder Keg) and new officers allocated to the regiment, would have to stand on the keg to explain why they deem themselves fit to join the unit, as part of a welcoming ritual. "This was accompanied by a lot of chirping from members, after which the new officers would down a jug of RWP," Mr Nel said.

The regiment has its own unique uniform, has a facility in the Castle of Good Hope, and has a registered regimental brandy and its own song.



■ Brigadier General Mannetjies de Goede tastes the brandy. He is pictured with Lieutenant Colonel Harold Gertse and Lieutenant Colonel Gerald Boshoff

The previous Goodwood military units, including Regiment Westelike Provincie in 1994. municipality conferred freedom of entry to Goodwood to four



■ Members of the Regiment Westelike Provincie.