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Department:
Defence
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



Cape Field Artillery Plays an Important Role at the 2017 Opening of Parliament

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The Cape Field Artillery Ceremonial Gun Troop fired the 21 gun salute at the 2017 Opening of Parliament. The Cape Field Artillery Pipes and Drums lead the National Colours onto the parade.

A **21-gun salute** is the most commonly recognized of the customary gun salutes that are performed by the firing of cannons or guns as a military honour.

The gun salute was originally a maritime practice of demanding that a defeated enemy expend its ammunition and render itself helpless until reloaded, a time-consuming operation. The gun salute had been established as a naval tradition by the late sixteenth century. A ship which visited a foreign port would discharge all its guns to show that they were empty. Since the ship would not have enough time to reload before it was within range of the shore batteries, it was clearly demonstrating its friendly intentions by going in with empty guns.

Salute by gunfire is an ancient ceremony. International practice compelled "gun for gun" on the principle of equality of nations. In the earliest days, seven guns was the recognized national salute because seven was the standard number of weapons on a vessel. In that day, gunpowder made from sodium nitrate was easier to keep on dry land than at sea. Thus those early regulations stated that although a ship would fire only seven guns, the forts ashore would fire three rounds to each one shot afloat, hence the number 21.



2Lt Victor Jensen, officer shouting the commands "Fire!!!".



The Cape Field Artillery Pipes and Drums lead the National Colours onto the parade.



The Cape Field Artillery Ceremonial Gun Troop firing 21 gun salute with the 25 pounder (GV1) guns at the 2017 Opening of Parliament.



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Cape Field Artillery Ceremonial Gun Troop rehearsing for the 2017 Opening of Parliament.