GESKIEDENIS / HISTORY

Die PRETORIA WAPEN- EN AMMUNISIEVERENIGING (PWAV) is op 6 Mei 1995 gestig nadat ‘n aantal persone op 1 Mei die behoefte uitgespreek het om gereeld op in informele basis byeen te kom om hul vuurwapens wettig te gebruik en aspekte van wedersydse belang onder mekaar te bespreek. Die stigterslede was Mnre. JJO Beneke, WG Haese, LM Erasmus en Adv. JI Welch. Daar is besluit om nie dadelik ampsdraers te kies nie maar dit eerder te laat oorstaan tot die Grondwet opgestel en die lewensvatbaarheid van die nuwe vereniging bepaal is.

By die vergadering van 4 Julie 1995 is beluit dat die vereniging die Pretoria Wapen- en Ammunisievereniging genoem sal word. Nou, met die voordeel van retrospeksie, was die idee om ‘n vereniging te stig, wys, aangesien slegs verenigings mag akkrediteer vir doeleindes van die nuwe Vuurwapenbeheer Wet, 2000 (Wet no. 60 van 2000). Die 4 stigterslede van die Vereniging, Ben Beneke (F0001), Wally Haese (F0002), John Welch (F0003) en Louw Erasmus (F0004), het die Uitvoerende Bestuur gevorm. Louw Erasmus is as voorsitter gekies en Wally Haese as sekretaris. Die eerste Grondwet is ook op dieselfde datum aanvaar. Die eerste Algemene Jaarvergadering het op 6 Junie 1996 by Truvelo plaasgevind en is deur 18 lede bygewoon. Die Vereniging het toe 62 lede gehad en ‘n batige saldo van R3450. Tydens die Algemene Jaarvergadering van 5 Junie 1997 is John Welch as voorsitter gekies, ‘n posisie wat hy tans steeds beklee.

Die bedoeling was oorspronklike om ‘n eenstop diens aan vuurwapen entoesiaste in die Pretoria-omgewing te lewer. Dit het egter spoedig geblyk dat die Vereniging nie oor die infrastruktuur of die mannekrag beskik het om ‘n volledige diens vir jagters, sport-skuts en versamelaars te lewer nie. Aangesien daar alreeds sport-skiet klubs en jagtersverenigings bestaan het, maar geen werklike versamelaarsvereniging nie, is besluit om versamelaars se behoeftes aan te spreek. Daar is egter besluit om die klem te plaas op aktiewiteitsgeoriënteerde versamelaars. Alhoewel besluit is om die groei van die Vereniging te beperk tot slegs ‘n aantal lede, was die belangstelling oorweldigend en bestaan die Vereniging tans uit ongeveer 420 lede. Indien dit nie vir die streng keuringsvereistes en beperkte infrastruktuur was nie sou die Vereniging waarskynlik baie groter gewees het.

Die Sentrale Vuurwapenregister het die Vereniging erken as ‘n aktiwiteits-georiënteerde versamelaarsvereniging. Om voorsiening te maak vir die behoeftes van versamelaars en om die Vereniging in ooreenstemming met die reg, spesifiek die nuwe Vuurwapenbeheerwet, te te bring, was dit nodig om die Grondwet te wysig. Hierdie proses is voltooi en ons is trots daarop dat die PWAV tans een van die enigste aktiwiteitsgeoriënteerde versamelaarsverenigings in Suid-Afrika, miskien selfs die wêreld, is. Om te skiet met die vuurwapens wat jy versamel, word beskou as ‘n intrinsieke faset van vuurwapen versameling. Om hierdie rede word vuurwapen-veiligheid, regskennis, akkurate vuurwapens, etiese jag en verskeie ander aspekte as van kardinale belang beskou.

Onlangs het die PWAV ‘n belangrike rol gespeel in die stigting van die “National Arms and Ammunition Collectors’ Confederation of South Africa”, ‘n toesighoudende/oorkoepelende liggaam wat deur die Vuurwapenbeheerwet vereis word vir akkreditasie doeleindes. As stigterslid van NAACCSA is die PWAV ‘n lid van die Uitvoerende Bestuur.

Sedert sy totstandkoming het die PWAV ‘n kardinale rol gespeel ter beskerming van die regte van sy lede – inderdaad alle wetsgehoorsame vuurwapeneienaars. Die voorsitter het verskeie aanbiedings in die parlement en aan die SAPD gedoen. In samewerking met ander vuurwapen-regte organisasies soos SAGA, NAACCSA en SAAACA, vorm ons ‘n formidabele span. Verskeie van die PWAV se voorstelle is aanvaar en in die regulasies inkorporeer. Alhoewel hierdie wysigings nie die lewe van versamelaars noodwendig makliker sal maak nie, stel dit darem ‘n meer praktiese en effens redeliker benadering daar vir versamelaars, sportmanne en jagters.

Dit dien onomwonde gestel te word dat die PWAV nie saamstem met enige vorm van beheer wat op die regte van wetsgehoorsame vuurwapeneienaars inbreuk maak nie. Ondanks die feit dat die Grondwet van die Republiek van Suid-Afrika uitdruklik bepaal dat elke persoon vermoed word onskuldig te wees tot die teendeel bewys word, word wetsgehoorsame vuurwapeneienaars dikwels nie so hanteer nie. Ons het oor die eeue heen geleer om met ‘n lisensiëringstelsel saam te leef en ons is bereid om die owerheid by te staan om ‘n akkurate vuurwapen oudit te doen, maar ons is nie ten gunste van die huidige benadering om alle vuurwapens te herlisensieer nie of die onredelike beperking op vuurwapens of die buitengewoon swaar las wat op vuurwapeneienaars geplaas word nie. Alhoewel vuurwapeneienaars ‘n definitiewe plig het om hul vuurwapens veilig te bewaar (en sodoende misdaad te voorkom), moet dit nie uit die oog verloor word dat dit eintlik die dief en rower is wat die werklike krimineel is nie. In plaas van die maklike uitweg te volg om eenvoudig die lisensiehouer, wat bloot ‘n tegniese oortreding gepleeg het, te vervolg, behoort wetstoepassing gerig te word op die werklike kriminele. Ja, nalatige lisensiehouers moet ondersoek en waar nodig, vervolg word, maar dit is nie waar die wetstoepassing se energie toegepits moet word nie. Daar bestaan geen twyfel dat die nuwe Vuurwapenbeheerwet weining, of niks, gaan doen om misdaad te beveg nie, dat dit baie duur is om te implimenteer en dat baie polisiebeamptes wat andersins vir werklike wetstoepassing aangewend kon word, in die implimentering aangewend sal moet word.

MISSIE

Die PWAV sal voortgaan om sy konstitusionele mandaat uit te voer deur:

- Die versameling, bestudering, restourasie, bewaring en wettige gebruik van alle wapens en ammunisie en verbandhoudende artikels te bevorder;
- Informasie en kennis onderling tussen lede en verenigings en organisasies met soortgelyke doelstellings uit te ruil;
- Die veilige hantering en besit van vuurwapens te bevorder en om suiwer wapen etiket daar te stel;
- ‘n Gesonde kennis van alle relevante wette wat verband hou met vuurwapens en ammunisie te kweek en te bevorder;
- Lede aan te moedig en behulpsaam te wees om aansoek te doen om as versamelaars van vuurwapens en ammunisie te registreer;

- Deelname aan en betrokkenheid by wettige wapensport te bevorder;
- Wettige en etiese jag te bevorder;
- ‘n Gesonde kennis van alle relevante wette te bevorder; en
- Lede aan te moedig om by die Suid-Afrikaanse Geweereienaarsassosiasie (SAGA) aan te sluit.

Gebaseer op die konstitusionele reg van vryheid van assosiasie en as sulks dus ‘n wettige struktuur binne die konstitusionele bedeling van die Republiek van Suid-Afrika, sal die PWAV die Grondwet en die wette gehoorsaam en geen onwettige optrede duld, bevorder of aanstig nie. Die PWAV sal ook nie onredelik teen enige persoon diskrimineer nie, maar sal voortgaan om om die reg van vryheid van spraak uit te oefen ten einde wetsgehoorsame vuurwapeneienaars se regte te beskerm en hom te wend tot alle regmatige maniere om onkonstitusionele en despotiese wette en optrede teen te staan.

The PRETORIA ARMS AND AMMUNITION ASSOCIATION (PAAA) was founded on May 6, 1995. This followed after discussions between a few people on May 1, 1995 who expressed a desire to meet regularly to shoot their firearms and to discuss matters of mutual concern. The founding members were Messrs. JJO Beneke, WG Haese, LM Erasmus and Adv. JI Welch. It was decided to not elect any office bearers at that stage, but to rather leave that until a draft Constitution was presented and the viability of the new association established.

At the meeting of July 4, 1995 the name of the newly established association was accepted as the Pretoria Arms and Ammunition Association. With the benefit of hindsight, the foresight then of calling it an association, was appropriate, as only associations may become accredited for purposes of the new Firearms Control Act, 2000 (Act no. 60 of 2000). The 4 founder members of the association, Ben Beneke (F0001), Wally Haese (F0002), John Welch (F0003) and Louw Erasmus (F0004) constituted the executive council and Louw Erasmus was elected the first chairman and Wally Haese the secretary. The first Constitution was also accepted on that date. The first Annual General Meeting was held on June 6, 1996 at Truvelo. On that date the PAAA’s bank balance was R3450 and it had 62 members. 18 members attended the first AGM. At the AGM of June 5, 1997 John Welch was elected chairman, a position he still occupies.

The original object was to provide a one-stop service for firearm enthusiasts in the Pretoria area. However, it soon emerged that neither the infrastructure nor the human resources would be available to provide the members with a comprehensive hunting, sport shooting and collectors service. Because there were already a number of active sport shooting clubs and hunting associations, but none for collectors, it was decided to rather focus on the collectors’ needs. It was therefore decided that the emphasis should be on activity-based firearms collecting. And although it was originally decided to limit membership to only a few, the Association grew to its current structure where it has about 420 members. If it were not for the stringent membership requirements and the limited infrastructure the Association would have been much larger.

Over the years it has been decided to compose the PAAA as an association of active collectors and the Central Firearms Register has acknowledged it as such. To cater for the requirements of collectors and to meet the legal requirements, especially the new Firearms Control Act, we had to amend our Constitution.

This process has been completed and we pride ourselves as one of the only activity-based collectors' association and probably one of the best in South Africa, if not the world. Shooting with those firearms that you collect is regarded as an intrinsic facet of firearms collection. For this reason firearms safety, knowledge of the law, accurate shooting, ethical hunting and various other topics are considered crucial for our members.

Recently the PAAA has played an important role in the establishment of the National Arms and Ammunition Collectors' Confederation of South Africa, a governing body required by the Firearms Control Act for accreditation purposes. As a founder member of NAACCSA the PAAA is a member of the Executive.

Since its inception the PAAA has played a crucial role in fighting for the rights of its members – in fact for all law abiding firearms owners. The Chairman made various presentations to parliament and the SAPS. In conjunction with other gun-rights bodies such as SAGA, SAAACCA and NAACCSA, we formed a formidable team. Several of our proposals have been accepted and were incorporated in the new regulations. Although these do not necessarily make the life for law abiding firearms owners any easier, they at least allow for a more practical and reasonable approach towards collectors, hunters and sportsmen.

It needs to be unequivocally stated that the PAAA does not agree with any form of control that encroaches the rights of law abiding firearms owners. The Constitution of the RSA emphatically states that every person is presumed innocent until he or she is proven guilty, but unfortunately law-abiding citizens are not treated as such. We have learnt to accept a firearms licensing system and we are all prepared to assist the authorities to do an as accurate as possible audit of licensed firearms, but we do not agree with the current approach to re-licence firearms and that unreasonably restricts firearms ownership and to place heavy burdens on firearms owners. Although firearms owners have a definite obligation to safeguard their firearms (and thereby preventing crime), lest it never be forgotten that it is the person who steals or robs who is the actual criminal. The emphasis should be on arresting and punishing these criminals and not to following the easy route by harassing and prosecuting firearms owners who committed a technical offence. Yes, these people should be investigated and where necessary prosecuted, but this is not where all law enforcement's energy should be directed. There is no doubt in our mind that the new Firearms Control Act will do very little, if anything, to combat crime, that it will be extremely expensive to implement and that a huge number of police officials who could otherwise have been deployed for much needed law enforcement purposes, would have to be involved in the implementation process.

MISSION STATEMENT

The PAAA will continue to deliver upon its mandate as stated in its Constitution by:

- Promoting the collection, study, restoration, preservation and legitimate use of all arms and ammunition and related items;
- Exchanging information and knowledge amongst members and amongst associations and organisations with similar objectives;
- Promoting the safe handling and possession of arms and to establish sound arms etiquette;

- Establishing and maintaining a sound knowledge of all relevant laws relating to firearms and ammunition;
- Encouraging and assisting members to apply for registration as collectors of firearms and ammunition;
- Promoting participation and involvement in legitimate firearms sport;
- Promoting lawful and ethical hunting;
- Promoting a sound knowledge of all other relevant laws; and
- Encouraging members to join the South African Gun Owners' Association (SAGA).

Based on the constitutional right to freedom of association and thus being a legitimate structure within the constitutional dispensation of the Republic of South Africa, the PAAA shall uphold the Constitution and the law, will never tolerate, entice or promote unlawful conduct and will not unfairly discriminate against any person, but will continue to exercise its right to freedom of speech to protect the rights of law-abiding firearms owners and to resort to all legitimate measures to oppose unconstitutional and despotic laws and actions.