



## Fort Pulaski News Release

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### Fort Pulaski to Unveil the Largest Firing Reproduction Cannon in the U.S.



Historic View of 30-Pounder Parrott Cannons in a Civil War gun emplacement, *Library of Congress*

Superintendent Charles E. Fenwick announces that Fort Pulaski National Monument will unveil a 30-Pounder Parrott cannon, the largest fully-functional Civil War reproduction cannon in the U.S. The 4,200-pound artillery piece is scheduled to be fired for the first time during the 145<sup>th</sup> Commemoration of the Siege & Reduction of Fort Pulaski on April 14-15, 2007.

The cannon is being manufactured by Steen Cannon & Ordnance Works of Ashland, Kentucky. Marshall Steen, the owner of the company, was eager to take on the challenge. Steen added, "Nothing like this has ever been attempted before. I am very proud to be a part of this." Steen's 4,200-pound gun will easily eclipse the next largest functional reproduction cannon in the U.S., a 20-Pounder Parrott, which weighs 1,750 pounds.

Superintendent Fenwick is understandably proud of the milestone. "For the first time in history visitors to a Civil War battlefield park will be able to appreciate the incredible power of these large artillery pieces." The 30-Pounder Parrott used a 3.25-pound charge of gunpowder. For the park's live demonstrations, a 2-pound charge will be used, which "should definitely leave a lasting impression on anyone who visits Fort Pulaski."

Parrott rifled cannons were introduced on the eve of the Civil War, and were named for their inventor, Robert Parker Parrott. They came in a variety of sizes, and were praised for their great range, accuracy, and hitting power. The 30-Pounder version could fire a 30-pound projectile at ranges in excess of five miles. During the Siege & Reduction of Fort Pulaski on April 10-11, 1862, Union forces on Tybee Island, Georgia, used 30-Pounder Parrott cannons to successfully breach the 7.5-foot-thick walls of Fort Pulaski. The battle featured the first significant use of rifled artillery in combat. Prior to the battle, Confederate General Robert E. Lee



The 30-Pounder Parrott is scheduled to be unveiled during Fort Pulaski's Siege event of April 14-15

announced that Union guns could not breach the fort's walls. The battle clearly demonstrated the power of these new weapons, while signaling the end of masonry fortifications.

After the reproduction cannon is fired for the first time on the weekend of April 14-15, it will then be fired every Saturday during the park's weekly cannon demonstrations. Fort Pulaski National Monument has a trained crew of park staff and volunteers that offer frequent cannon and musket demonstrations. The additional cannon, which was purchased using entrance fees collected at the park's entrance station, will be the centerpiece of one of the most active black powder programs in the U.S. Fenwick added, "This year we plan to offer more than 1,200 weapons demonstrations, which should exceed all of the other major Civil War battlefield parks combined."

Steen Cannon & Ordnance Works has produced numerous high-quality reproductions for the National Park Service. When other cannon companies were approached last year about the 30-Pounder Parrott project, none were interested. Steen had worked with Fort Pulaski before. A year ago Steen produced a reproduction 12-pdr field howitzer for Fort Pulaski. Since then the howitzer has been involved in more than 300 live demonstrations.

The 30-Pounder reproduction Parrott will be cast solid in iron, then fully machined, drilled, and sleeved using a 100,000-pound tensile strength sleeve. The cannon will include a reproduction carriage built to historic specifications, but instead of using wood, the carriage will be made of weather-resistant aluminum to provide long life in outdoor conditions.

To learn more about the park's living history programs, visit the official Fort Pulaski National Monument website at [www.nps.gov/fopu](http://www.nps.gov/fopu).

Fort Pulaski National Monument is on U.S. Hwy 80, 15 miles east of Savannah. An entrance fee of \$3 per person is charged; ages 15 and under are free.

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