

CANNON OF 1600'S FIRED OFTEN NOW

Gun Salvaged From Swedish
Hulk Used to Open Fairs

STOCKHOLM (Reuters)—A 4,000-pound cannon salvaged from the Swedish man-o-war Vasa, which sank after a maiden voyage of only half a mile 337 years ago, has logged about 40,000 miles in the last year.

The Vasa, built to be the pride of the Swedish Navy by order of King Gustavus Adolphus, remained on the seabed in Stockholm harbor for 333 years before it was raised in 1961 to become one of the city's outstanding tourist attractions.

Although the bronze cannon was never used in the 17th century, it has been fired on 12 occasions since 1961, opening international fairs, in Seattle and New York. Its most appropriate boom, officials of the Vasa Museum here say, was perhaps the one that greeted the arrival of Sweden's Prince Bertil at Wilmington, Del., to celebrate the 325th anniversary of "New Sweden."

"New Sweden," founded in 1638, embraced parts of what are now Delaware, Pennsylvania and New Jersey. It remained a Swedish colony for only 17 years, but it is said here that during their brief tenure, the Swedish immigrants gave America its first courts of law, its first schools, and the log cabin.

Nor is the old cannon finished yet. It is scheduled to boom out the inauguration of the 1967 world's fair in Montreal, and to make appearances in Chicago, Los Angeles and Dallas.

Duplicate Cannon Used

In fact, according to Vasa Museum officials, the cannon has been in such demand that a second, identical one had to be used to open the Munich Fair.

Like most of the 64 cannons carried by the Vasa, these cannons are 24-pounders—that is, they are capable of hurling a 24 pound iron ball a distance of 2,500 feet. This was a tremendous range at the time they were made.

Incendiary bombs and chain shots, intended for firing at the rigging of enemy ships, were also part of the armament of the Vasa.

Each cannon is decorated with the Vasa "sheaf"—the symbol of the ruling dynasty—and the Swedish coat of arms inscribed with the initials G.A. R.S., for Gustavus Adolphus Rex Sueciae and the year in which they were cast, 1626.

Although it is now four years since the Vasa was salvaged, interest in it has not slackened.

Museum officials said that many inquiries had been received from museums, institutions and individuals interested in purchasing the cannon. So far, the highest bidders are two private collectors — each of whom has offered \$1,000,000.

"But neither the cannon, nor any of the equipment or other items found on board the Vasa, are for sale," said Anders Franzen, the naval historian who discovered the Vasa.