Those booms you heard in Boston today? They were part of a centuries-old tradition

By Teresa M. Hanafin Globe Staff, June 3, 2019, 2:01 p.m.
Members of the minutemen fired off their guns on Tremont Street during the annual parade by the Ancient and Honorable Artillery Company on Monday. (DAVID L RYAN/GLOBE STAFF)

Did you hear the booms?

If you were downtown around noon Monday and heard weapons firing and loud explosions, be advised that it was the day of the annual parade by the Ancient and Honorable Artillery Company; more than 30 historic military organizations were scheduled to take part.

They were slated to march from the company’s headquarters at Faneuil Hall at 12:15 p.m. to the Granary Burial Ground on Tremont Street to lay a wreath on the grave of Robert Keayne, the company’s first captain.
Then the group was scheduled to stop at the Cathedral Church of St. Paul on Tremont Street for a memorial service for recently deceased members, before heading to Boston Common, where the organization’s officers will resign and their replacements sworn in.

According to the company’s website, the ceremony is a reenactment of the first election and has continued without interruption since 1638.

The cannons may be exciting, but they are also loud, and prompted concern among those on the street in the area when they went off on Monday.

The Globe reported last year that a Harvard Business School graduate had sued in federal court claiming hearing loss from the cannons several years ago.