







MINIATURE CANNON

Canon de 8 Gribeauval (8 pounder). France, early 19th century.

Length,

of barrel: 24,3 cm (9.57 in.),

overall: 86 cm (33.86 in.),

cannon: 41,5 cm (16.34 in.),

horse-drawn carriage: 55 cm (21.65 in.).

A fine model comprising of a horse-drawn carriage, cannon and various instruments. The barrel still has its original linseed patina, which is very rare, since the majority of existing examples have suffered from heavy overcleaning in the course of time, leading to its irrevocable destruction. Also the carriages and metal parts show an attractive surface. The bucket is probably a later addition. All four sticks that serve to position the cannon are preserved as is the tool to remove a dud from the barrel. Scovel/scoop missing, swabbing a later replacement. Ammunition compartment.

The Gribeauval System

Lieutenant General Jean Baptiste Vaquette de Gribeauval (1715 – 1789) set a new milestone with his standardization of the French artillery in the 18th century, significantly improving the Vallière system. Gribeauval had served in Austria in 1762 and got to know their artillery as well as he already knew the French one. In a letter from Vienna to Duke Choiseul he wrote: “If a talented man combined the best of both artillery systems (the Austrian and the French), he could create a troop that would win almost all battles”.

Shortly after returning to France he was ordered to reorganize the Royal artillery. His main principle was that the equipment had to adjust to the purpose of its operation purpose. Thus he differentiated four categories: field, siege, fortress and coast artillery. Gribeauval revolutionized everything in existence. He reduced the length and weight of the barrels while maintaining their range and firepower. The amount of gunpowder was fixed at one third of the bullet's weight. By introducing rear pillar, bead sighter and winch to adjust the barrel's angle he improved the accuracy, the cannonball cartridge increased the shot sequence three times. Carriages and ammunition carts were standardized.

When Gribeauval began his reform in 1765 he faced a lot of disagreement. His project was paused in 1772 but succeeded in 1774. It was the campaign of Napoleon that finally proved the technological leadership of the contemporary French artillery.¹

¹ Egg, E. et al (1971): Kanonen. Illustrierte Geschichte der Artillerie, p. 63.



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