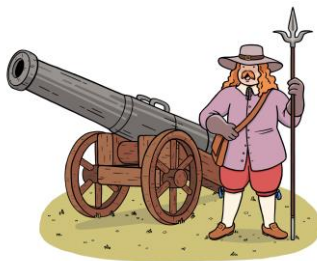


Artillery Officer



Artillery (also known as ordinance) are an army's cannons. An artillery officer was a soldier in charge of the cannons and the men who loaded and fired them (known as gunners).

Cannons were extremely powerful but clumsy weapons made of iron or bronze, that could cause enormous damage to people and buildings when used properly. Cannons fired round cannonballs (called "shot") made from iron, lead or stone. Cannons could also fire grapeshot, small clusters of lead balls sewn into a canvas bag that would spread out when fired. Grapeshot was devastating against tightly packed groups of soldiers.

Cannons came in different sizes, from the Demi-cannon that that was almost 10 feet long, weighed 6,000lbs and could fire shot weighing 32lb, to the Robinette that was 3 feet long and weighed 200lb. Cannons were particularly difficult to move around the country. They had to be pulled by horses or even oxen. The really heavy cannons were transported by river or sea in boats or barges.

Heavier cannons would be employed at the start of a battle to force the enemy to leave a good position. Once the battle had begun, lighter cannons could be moved around to support friendly infantry (foot soldiers) and could do terrible damage to slow moving, tightly packed enemy groups of soldiers such as pikemen and musketeers.

Cannons were also used in sieges by the attackers to destroy the defending walls of town, cities or castles. The defenders also used cannon to shoot back at the attackers. The risk of getting shot by the defenders was high. A gunner's only protection might be walls of earth, or large wicker barriers packed with dirt called gabions. Attacking gunners also used mortars, smaller weapons that shot bombs called grenades over the defender's walls. Grenades were designed to start fires and burn down property.

On the battlefield, gun crews could be easily overrun if the battle went against them. They didn't have much in the way of hand weapons or head armour to defend themselves. In a siege, gunners were at high risk of getting shot by the defenders.

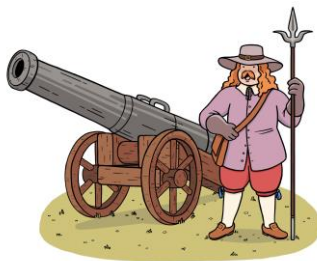
Explore britishcivilwars.ncl.ac.uk

This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/).



Discover more resources online at:
www.ncl.ac.uk/library/in-the-community/education-outreach
and www.nationalcivilwarcentre.com/schools

Artillery Officer



Gunners worked in crews of three. Between them they would load and fire the cannon in a disciplined and dangerous process. To fire a cannon the gunners would need to:

- Make sure the cannon was level on the ground.
- Check that the barrel of the cannon wasn't blocked.
- Clean the cannon barrel.
- Put out any burning embers near the cannon. Failure to do this might cause the cannon to explode.
- Pour gunpowder into the mouth of the cannon.
- Push wadding down the barrel of the cannon to keep the gunpowder in place.

Put the cannonball down the barrel of the cannon.

- Aim the cannon.
- Pour gunpowder into a vent above the cannonball and the rest of the gunpowder.
- Fire the cannon by touching the vent with a long match called a lintstock.

Equipment

- Gunners kept most of their gunpowder in a wooden container called a **budge barrel**.
- Gunners would carry gunpowder in flasks called **powder horns**.
- A gunner wouldn't touch the gunpowder with his hands. He would scoop gunpowder using a giant spoon called a **Ladle**.
- Cannonballs, wads and gunpowder chargers would be pushed down the barrels of cannons using large sticks called **rammers**.
- Packed straw called a **wad**, designed to keep the gunpowder in place would be rammed down the gun's barrel.
- The amount the cannon would need to be raised before firing was calculated using a **quadrant**.
- The cannon would be fired from a distance and the gunpowder lit with a long match called a **lintstock**.
- Cannon barrels were heavy and could get extremely hot. It was not a good idea to lift them by hand. Instead, you would lift the barrel using special sticks called **hand spikes**.
- After firing, the barrel of the cannon would be cleaned with wet **sponge** on a stick.
- Gunners had knives called a **gunner's stiletto**. The stiletto was not generally used for fighting.
- The gunners only weapon was a **short sword**.

Explore britishcivilwars.ncl.ac.uk

This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/).



Discover more resources online at:
www.ncl.ac.uk/library/in-the-community/education-outreach
and www.nationalcivilwarcentre.com/schools