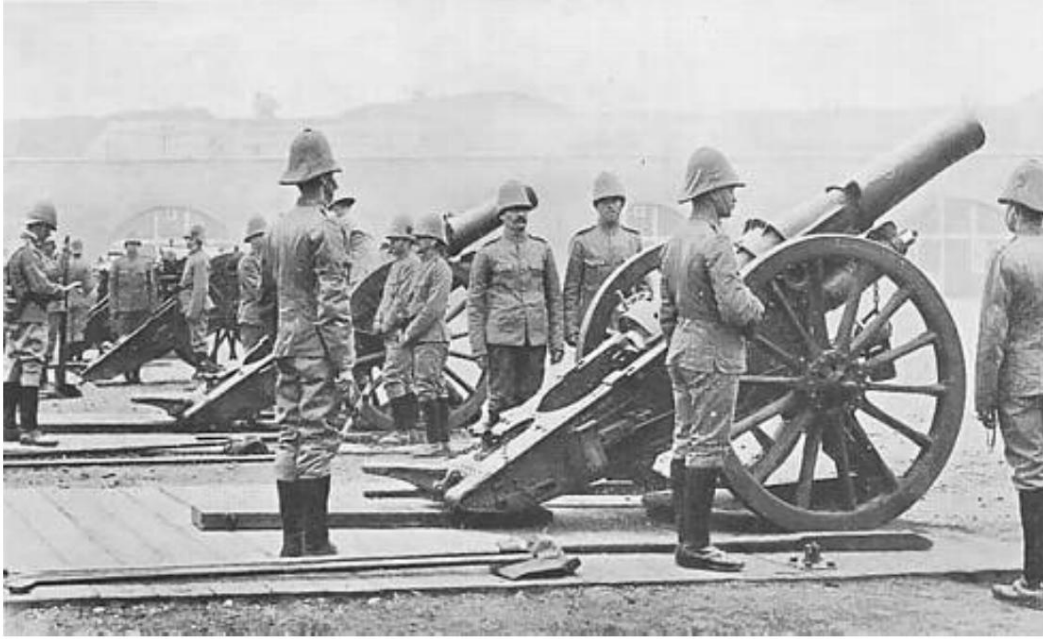


About the English 6-inch howitzer 1914-1915



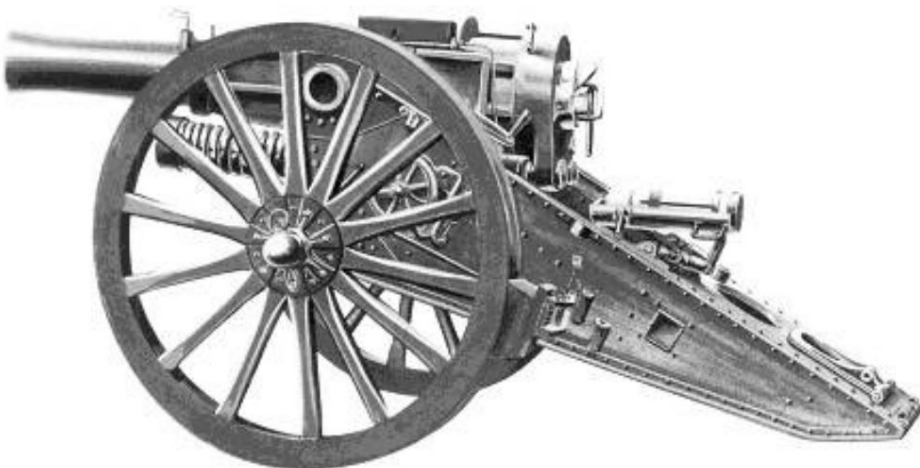
Royal Garrison Artillery - 6-inch howitzer battery ready to fire, approx. 1900 1).

Introduction

In my review of the book *British Artillery 1914-19 - Heavy Artillery*, it is mentioned that 6 heavy batteries were created under the auspices of the Royal Garrison Artillery and sent to France in 1914.

Each battery was equipped with 4 *BL 6-in Siege Howitzer Mk I* howitzers.

BL 6-in Siege Howitzer Mk I



6-inch howitzers From
Source 2.

The pamphlet was introduced into the British army in 1896.

The concept was like the siege artillery of old, where mobility was not a priority, rather than the mobile and long-range heavy artillery that would prove needed when the First World War broke out

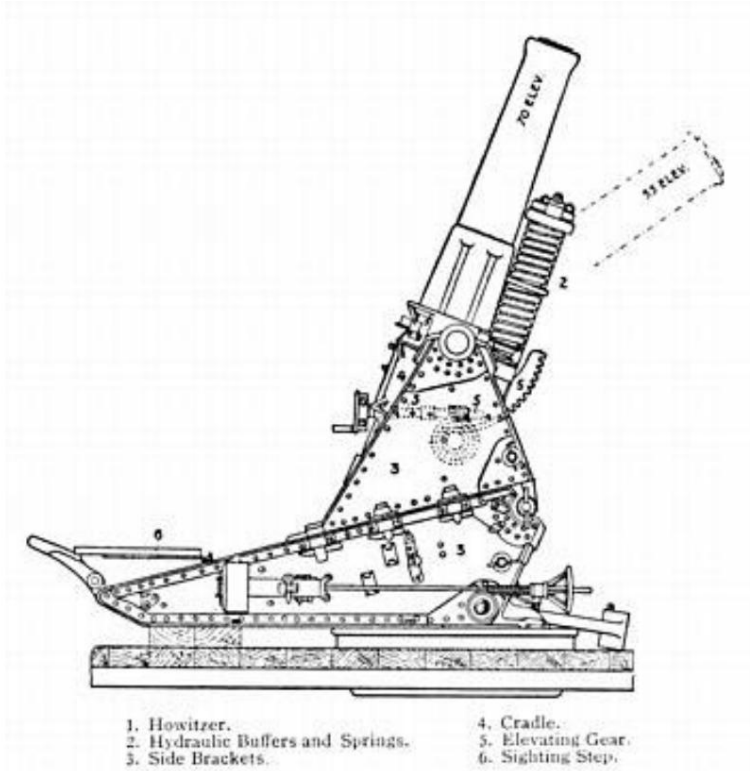
out and the pamphlet came into serious use.

A similar but slightly lighter version - *the BL 6-in 25-cwt Siege Howitzer Mk I* - was included in the heavy batteries stationed in India, but this type is not known to have been used during the First World War.

Data

BL 6-in 30-cwt Siege Howitzer Mk I Pjecen Weight Firing Range Grenade Weight

Wheel made	4 tons	4.7 km	54 kg; later 45 kg 2) —
The Siege Slave		6.3 km	



6-inch howitzers, in siege artillery.
From Source 3.

A crew of 10 men belonged to the pamphlet.

The pjecen could fire from wheels or from a siege aftutage, which appeared when a special superstructure was mounted on the platform, whereby the elevation could be increased.

The wheels were removed and the pamphlet was then placed on a base of beams.

The sources state that the pamphlet's accuracy decreased when fired from the siege gun.

Siege Brigades, Royal Garrison Artillery, September 1914

Batteries	Tribal unit	Arrived to France
No. 1 Siege Battery, Royal Garrison Artillery	39th Company, Royal Garrison Artillery	19 September 1914
No. 2 Siege Battery, Royal Garrison Artillery		
No. 3 Siege Battery, Royal Garrison Artillery		

Artillery
No. 4 Siege Battery, Royal Garrison
Artillery

23rd Company, Royal Garrison
Artillery

19 September 1914

No. 5 Siege Battery, Royal Garrison
Artillery
No. 6 Siege Battery, Royal Garrison
Artillery

107th Company, Royal Garrison
Artillery

27 September 1914



6-inch howitzers, Western Front, 1914 [3](#). —

As mentioned, each battery had 4 leaflets.

In addition to these 24 pamphlets, there were a further 90, which during the first few years of the war were used on almost all front sections.

An example is the 14th Siege Battery, Royal Garrison Artillery, which, under the command of Major LS Bayley, took part in the Gallipoli Campaign (Source 5).

From 1915 the pamphlet was replaced by the more modern 6-in 26-cwt BL Howitzer.

Traction agents



6-inch howitzers, at Ypres, c. 1914.

Reproduced from a contemporary postcard.

The picture gives a good impression of how the heavy pamphlet is pulled by a team of 8 powerful horses.

The nets along the road are "obscuring nets", perhaps fishing nets, set up to make it difficult for enemy observation of the current terrain area.



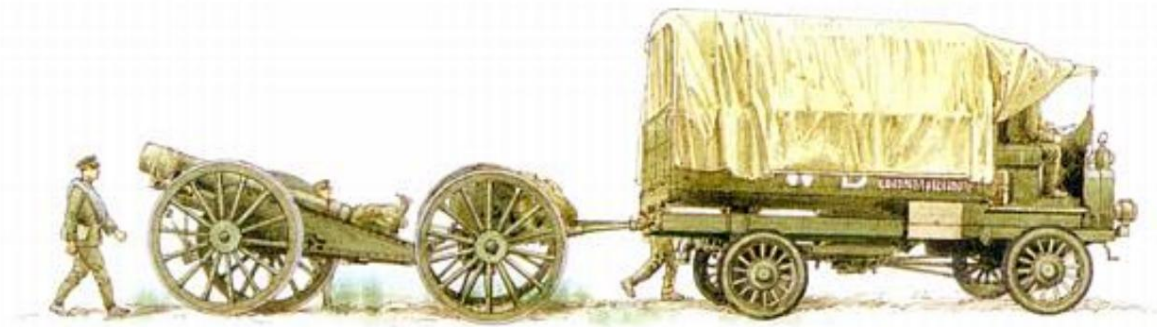
6-inch howitzers, at Ypres, c. 1914.

Reproduced from a contemporary postcard.

The picture shows the artillerymen from *the Royal Garrison Artillery*, now bringing their pamphlet into position.

Two French officers - either liaison officers, or simply from a nearby unit - are monitoring things.

In line with other heavy pamphlets, motor vehicles of various types - everything from steam-powered to gasoline-powered - were used to promote transport.

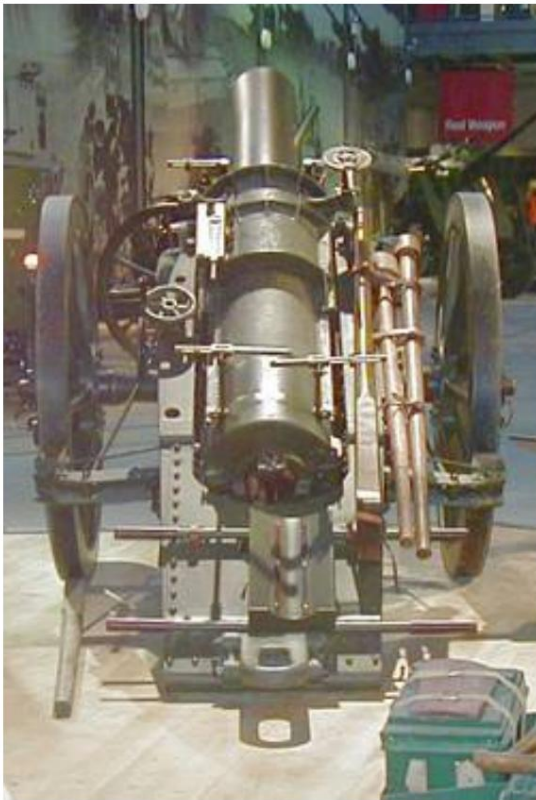


6-inch howitzers, towed by FWD gun tractor, approx. 1915.

From Source 4.

The two rear artillery constables are tasked with assisting when slowing down the train.

Sources



1. *British Artillery Weapons & Ammunition 1914-1918* by Ian V. Hogg and LF Thurston, Ian Allan Ltd., Surrey 1972, SBN 7110-0381-5.
2. *Artillery* by John Batchelor and Ian Hogg, Ballentine Books Inc., New York 1973, SBN 345-23499-5-495.
3. *ABC of the Army* by Captain J. Atkinson (editor), Gale & Polden, Aldershot, 1910.
4. *British Artillery 1914-19 - Heavy Artillery* by Dale Clarke, Osprey, New Vanguard Nr. 105, London 2005, ISBN 1-84176-788-3.
5. 14th Siege Battery, Royal Garrison Artillery (search results from Great War Forum).

Closing

At least two copies of the pamphlet have survived, and I have thus had the opportunity to study it respectively at the British Artillery Museum in Woolwich - Firepower and at the Imperial War Museum's branch in Duxford.

It is quite a compact "case", which this photograph from the Firepower museum illustrates quite well.
The box in the foreground does not belong to the pamphlet.



6-inch howitzers.

Reproduced from a postcard, sent June 1916,
found for sale on the Internet.

As a special "feature", the current postcard was to contain 12 small "fold-out" images from Liphook, mounted under a flap on the front of the card.

Liphook, which is referred to on the map, is a town located in Hampshire in southern England, approx. 50 km northeast of Portsmouth.

The possible "banging" connection between Liphook and the Royal Garrison Artillery, or just artillery in general, is not known. Perhaps an explanation can be found on the back of the postcard or in the 12 pictures. The card became too expensive for me to acquire it, so the connection must remain unexplained.

The area housed, among other things, a training camp for Canadian units during both World Wars, see Liphook (Wikipedia).

Nearby training camps are Longmoor and Bordon; the former was from 1907 to 1969 the center for the training of British engineer troops in railway service - see Longmoor Military Railway (Industrial Railway Record) and Bordon History (UK Ministry of Defence).



A. E. Shaw, Photo, Copyright.

R.G.A. AT LYDD.

Lydd, Kent. 109

Royal Garrison Artillery at Lydd, approx. 1913 4).

Reproduced from a contemporary postcard.

Postscript

Since publishing my article On the English 9.2" Howitzer 1914-1940, I have added to my collection this exciting reproduction of the Skoda 9.45" howitzer which was the predecessor of the 9.2" howitzer.

The lack of heavy artillery during the Boer War led to the British secretly acquiring 4 copies of the Skoda factories' Model 1898 howitzers.

Via Gibraltar the pamphlets came to South Africa, but only one shot was said to have been fired "in anger" by a "quarter-to-ten" pamphleteer, as it was called.

Pictures of this pamphlet are, in my experience, quite rare, so the map is a bit of a "scoop". The 4 heavy howitzers were not used in the First World War, but were only used for training purposes and as inspiration for the design of the 9.2" howitzer.

Per Finsted

Notes:

1) From *Modern Weapons of War by Land, Sea, and Air* by Cyril Hall, Blackie and Son Limited, London 1915, seen for sale on EBay. The book's list of illustrations mentions that there is also a picture where the pamphlets are loaded.

2) Originally, a specially developed grenade was used, which weighed approx. 54 kg, but the stocks of these were soon used up. As a replacement, the Coast Artillery's 6-inch standard shell was used, weighing approx. 45 kg, and the pamphlets were adapted to be able to use this type of grenade.

3) *From Mons to Ypres with General French* by Frederic Coleman, Sampson Low, Marston & Co. Limited, London 1916.

4) Lydd was an artillery firing range on the English south coast, west of Dover.