

English signal equipment - More about heliographs

Introduction



English heliograph team at Feuchy, France, 1917 [1](#)).

In the first article on the heliograph, I mentioned the model produced by the defunct English company *Mark Time*. Here follows a little about how my English units have been supplied with a number of new heliographs - an opportunity that opened up thanks to the ardor and ingenuity of a good friend.

From word to table



"Would it be possible to make a form of such an object?" Something along those lines was my question one evening in the middle of June. "Well, it should probably be possible - now let me look into the matter!" The answer came promptly and my friend pushed his glasses up onto his forehead to take a closer look at the small metal object. It was clear that this was quite a challenge, because how do you make a form of a tripod with a few delicate details mounted on it?

My only requirement was that the original must not be damaged - I could not bear that, as it is very difficult to reacquire. And it was with some interest that I awaited the result. At the same time, it was clear that the circle of friends might not be fully aware of what a heliograph was, let alone how it worked. That then became the direct reason why I wrote my article about the heliograph.

In the article *Casting a heliograph - a challenge of the very special*, you can see how, according to all the rules of art, it was possible to produce a mold which could subsequently be used to produce all the heliographs that one can almost dream of.

Now there are limits to how many heliographs I needed - a few extra copies would be nice so that my units would be able to communicate over longer distances - and perhaps I hadn't fully considered the magnitude of the need.



A few days later I was presented with the finished result and the opportunity to see the very nice shape in which the heliographs were cast. A very nice result that exceeded my wildest expectations.

All that was left now was to sand and file a little on the raw models and then paint them so that they resembled the model.

The picture on the left shows the raw model and the picture on the right the finished result.

The new signaling equipment is being phased in



On the left in the picture three new heliographs are seen, while the original model is seen on the right.

Basic course in heliography ... is probably an appropriate title for the picture and the well-proven educational principles - show, explain, practice - should also be catered for!

The four kneeling and the four standing figures operating the heliographs are Britain's catalog number 313 - *Royal Regiment of Artillery (Gunners)*.

The sergeant is from a company called *Toy Army Workshop*, who make a wide range of excellent models of British soldiers from the First World War - see www.4milmodels.com. The company also has an extensive range of equipment, including cannons, horse-drawn vehicles and motor vehicles.

Closing



This postcard shows a heliograph team from *the Royal Horse Artillery*, circa 1907.

The artillerymen's uniform is as described in *Uniform postcards - Royal Artillery*.

It is thus possible to use heliographs together with figures in uniforms other than the khaki uniforms which are now part of my collection.

Finally, I would like to express my thanks to Ole Friderichsen for his great and successful work in producing the mold, which now made it possible for me to supplement my collection.

Per Finsted

To note:

1) The image comes from the book *The 1917 Spring Offensive - Arras, Vimy, le Chemin des Dames* by Yves Buffetaut, Histoire & Collections, Paris 1997, ISBN 2-908-182-66-1.