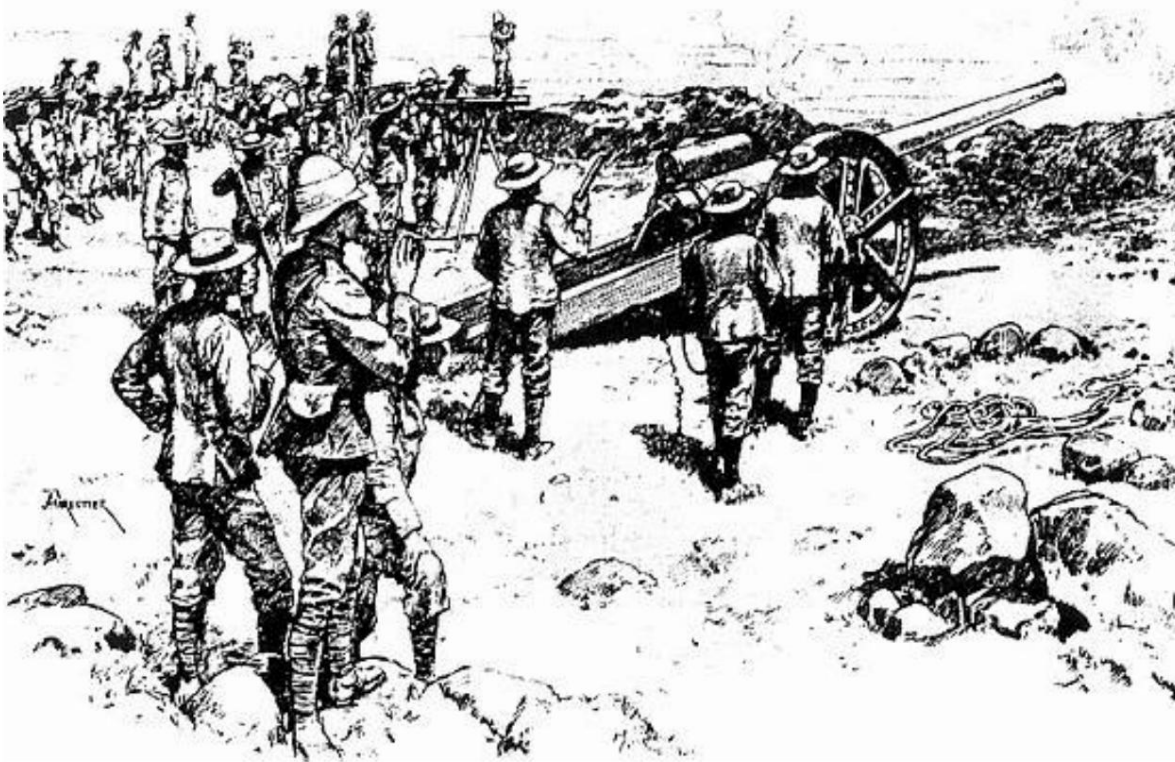


QF 4.7-in Field Gun

Introduction

The origin of this pamphlet must be sought in South Africa, during the Boer War, where the lack of long-range and heavy artillery was one of the many challenges of the British army.



4.7 inch Naval Gun at Colenso, 15 December 1899 1).

Commander Percy Scott, Commander of the Royal Navy in South Africa, decided to remedy this situation and had a number of guns from HMS *Monarch*, *Powerful* and *Terrible* mounted on locally made field lavettes, designed by himself.

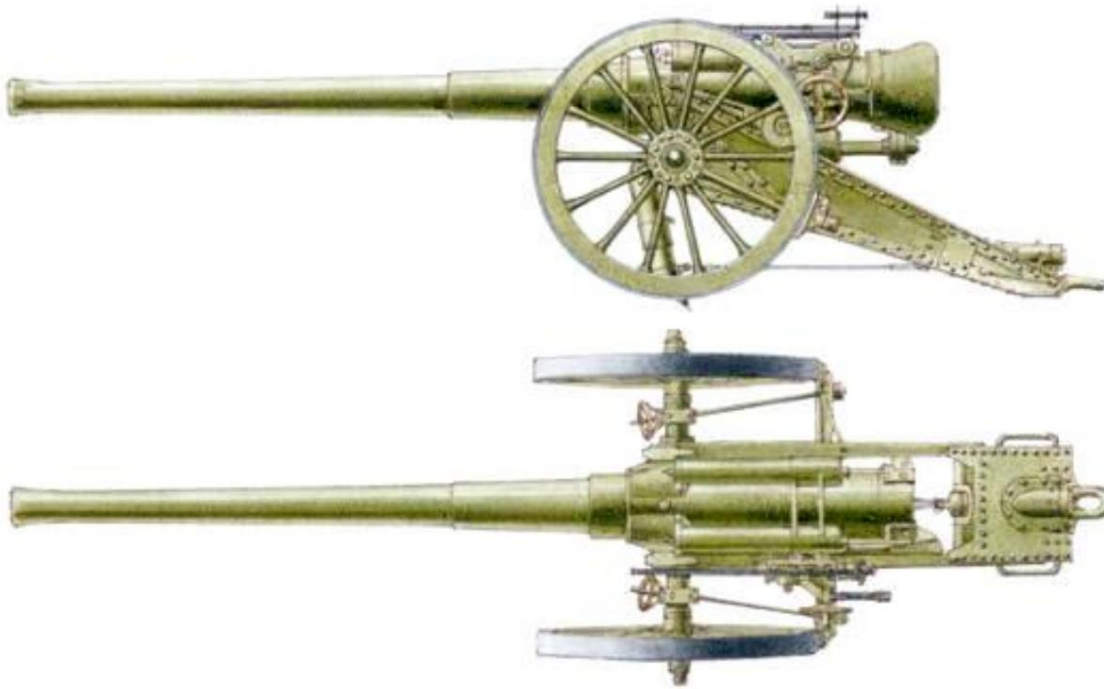
Among the guns were the current 120 mm (4.7 in) type, which had been developed for use on board ships and/or in coastal fortifications.

The new field guns were manned by personnel from the Royal Navy.

One of the first times the new pamphlet was used seriously was at the Battle of Colenso on 15 December 1899, where two pamphlets from HMS *Terrible* were in action.

An impression of the cannon during the march is obtained from Source 2, where a situation is mentioned from the week before the battle, where *the ponderous 4.7 naval gun, which, preceded by the majestic march of thirty-two bullocks and attended by eighty seamen gunners, creaked forwards over the plain.*

QF 4.7-in Field Gun

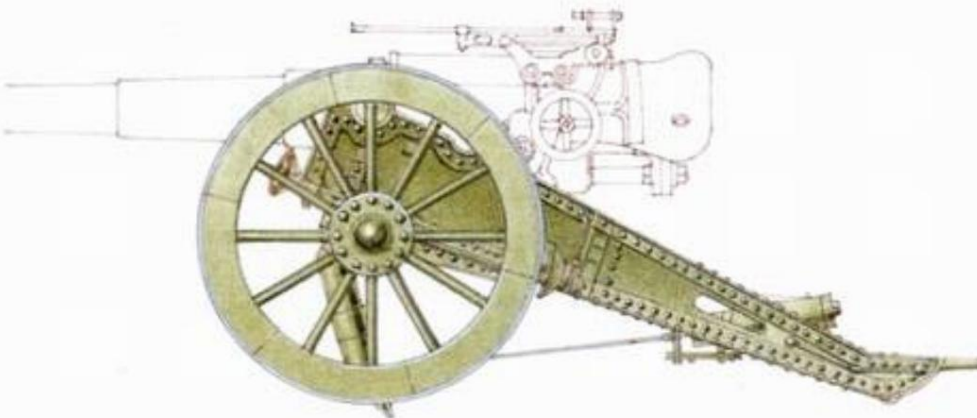


4.7 inch Naval Gun, from 111th Battery, Royal Garrison Artillery, France 1914.
From Source 3.

The success of the naval gun in South Africa led *the Royal Ordnance Factory* to begin development of an authorized make – *Carriage, traveling QF 4.7-in Mk I* – for the gun, which was issued to batteries of the Royal Garrison Artillery from about 1903.

The success of the Boer War also led the Secretary of War to promise that the Volunteer Forces should be equipped with this new weapon system, and Parliament appropriated funds to equip a total of 60 batteries.

For this purpose, among other things, it was decided to convert a number of lavettes from an older rifled cannon.



Carriage, traveling, QF 4.7-in., converted.
From Source 3.

The converted made that was approx. 560 kg (11 cwt) heavier, was designated *Carriage, traveling, QF 4.7- in., converted.*

Before 1914, the heavy batteries of the regular army were equipped with new field guns - *the BL 60-pdr Mk I Field Gun* - and the marine guns were transferred to the reserve.

It can be difficult to tell the two versions apart, but based on the drawings from

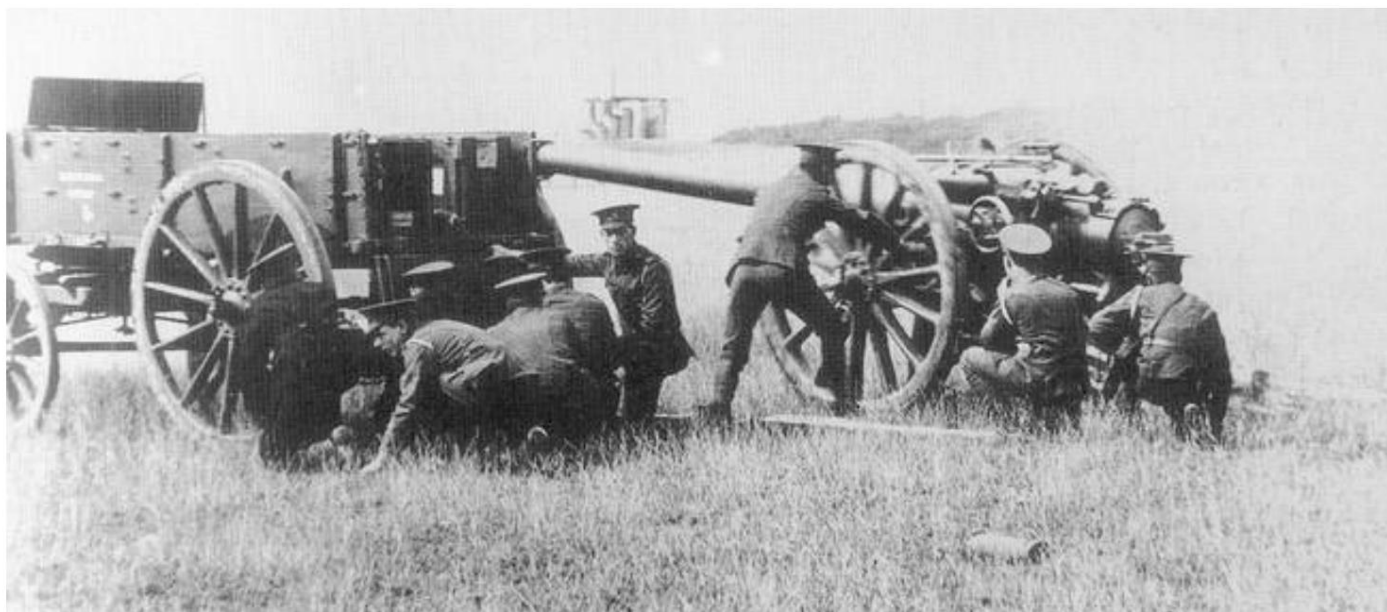
Source 3 is the best guideline probably the different types of wheels - on the converted made the "rim" is stronger/thicker.

Heavy Field Artillery (Territorial Force)

The 14 reserve divisions provided by the Territorial Force included a battery of 4 naval guns.

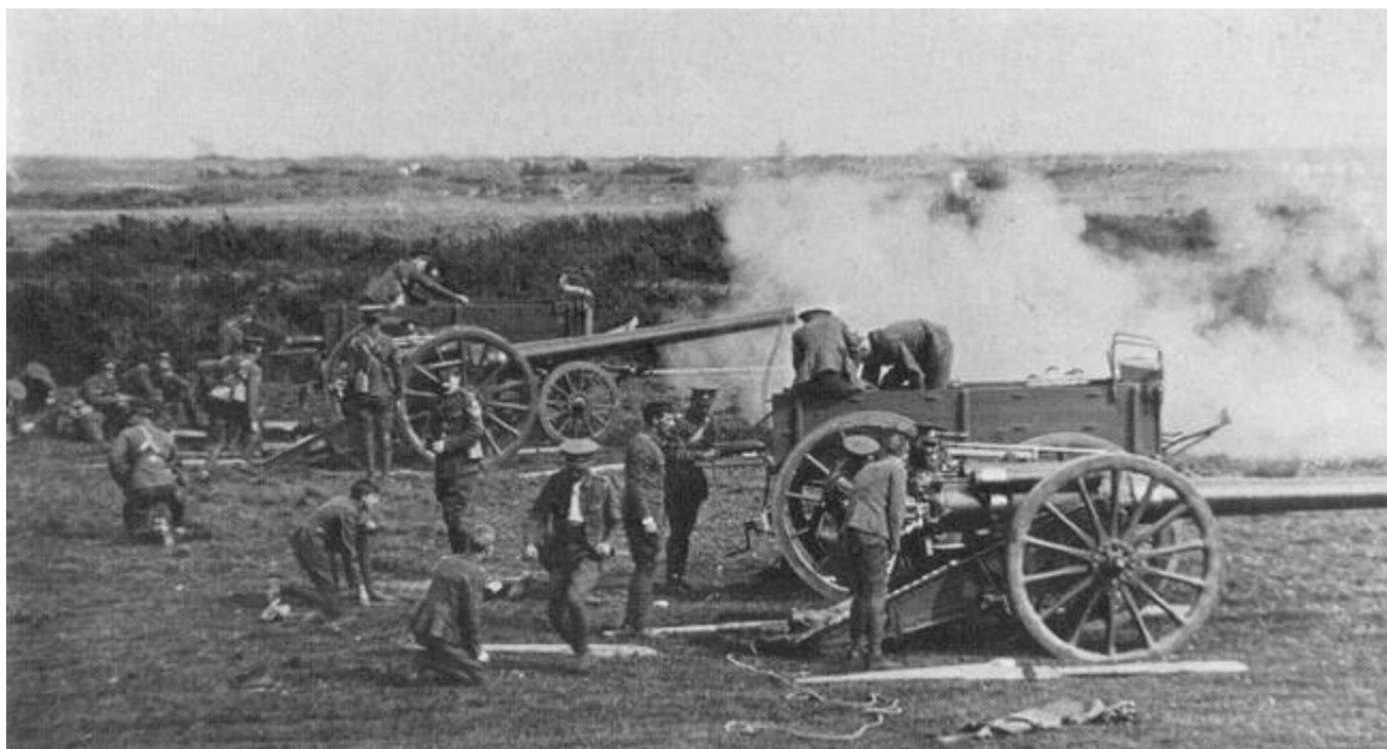
The batteries were (in principle) named with the name of the division (numbers were first introduced during the mobilization) as well as the battery's geographical affiliation:

The name of the battery	Division (1914)
2nd Lancashire Heavy Battery, Royal Garrison Artillery 2)	42nd (East Lancashire) Division
Wessex (Hampshire) Heavy Battery, Royal Garrison Artillery	43rd (Wessex) Division
Home Counties (Kent) Heavy Battery, Royal Garrison Artillery	44th (Home Counties) Division
North Midland (Staffordshire) Heavy Battery, Royal Garrison Artillery	46th (North Midland) Division
2nd London Heavy Battery, Royal Garrison Artillery	47th (2nd London) Division
South Midland (Warwickshire) Heavy Battery, Royal Garrison Artillery	48th (South Midland) Division
West Riding (York) Heavy Battery, Royal Garrison Artillery	49th (West Riding) Division
Northumbrian (North Riding) Heavy Battery, Royal Garrison Artillery	50th (Northumbrian) Division
Highland (Fifeshire) Heavy Battery, Royal Garrison Artillery	51st (Highland) Division
Lowland (City of Edinburgh) Heavy Battery, Royal Garrison Artillery	52nd (Lowland) Division
Welsh (Carnarvonshire) Heavy Battery, Royal Garrison Artillery	53rd (Welsh) Division
East Anglian (Essex) Heavy Battery, Royal Garrison Artillery	54th (East Anglian) Division
1st Lancashire Heavy Battery, Royal Garrison Artillery	55th (West Lancashire) Division



Wessex (Hampshire) Heavy Battery, Royal Garrison Artillery (Territorial Force), in the firing range at Lydd, 1911.

From Source 4.



Home Counties (Kent) Heavy Battery, Royal Garrison Artillery (Territorial Force), c. 1913.

From Source 5.

My collection includes two postcards which (perhaps) show both versions of the cannon. The photographs may not be of the best quality, but the pamphlet is not one of the most photographed, so you have to take advantage of the opportunity when it presents itself.

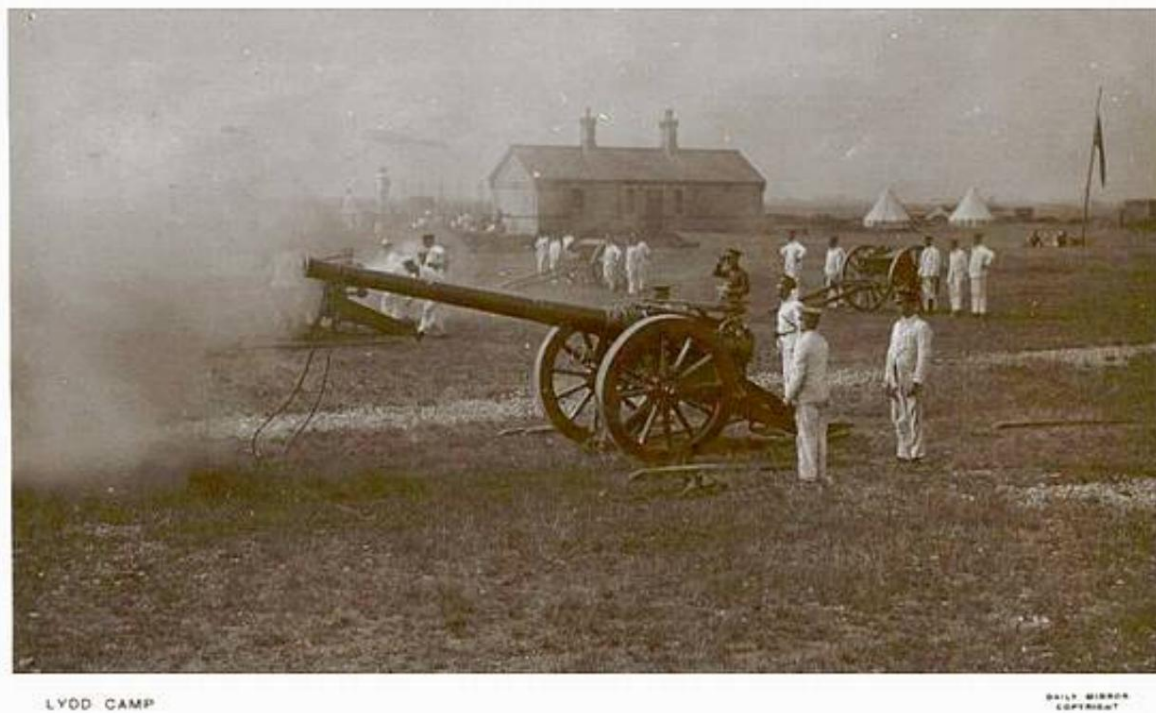


Here, the marine cannon is seen, in an unspecified firing range, together with an educational unit - *the Officers Training Corps*.

As far as I can tell, the guns in question are made in *Carriage, traveling QF 4.7-in Mk I*.

The pictures show a wooden wagon with the guns and it probably functions as an ammunition wagon.

I am not clear as to whether this is a peaceful measure - for use on the shooting range - or whether the wooden wagon was also used as an ammunition wagon in a wartime setup. I haven't seen any pictures of the cannon in a wartime setup, so so far this cannot be determined with certainty.



Naval guns photographed in the firing range at Lydd (on the English south coast, west of Dover).

Perhaps these are cannons made in *Carriage, traveling, QF 4.7-in., converted*.

World War One



BL 60-pdr Mk I Field Gun, on march, circa 1914.

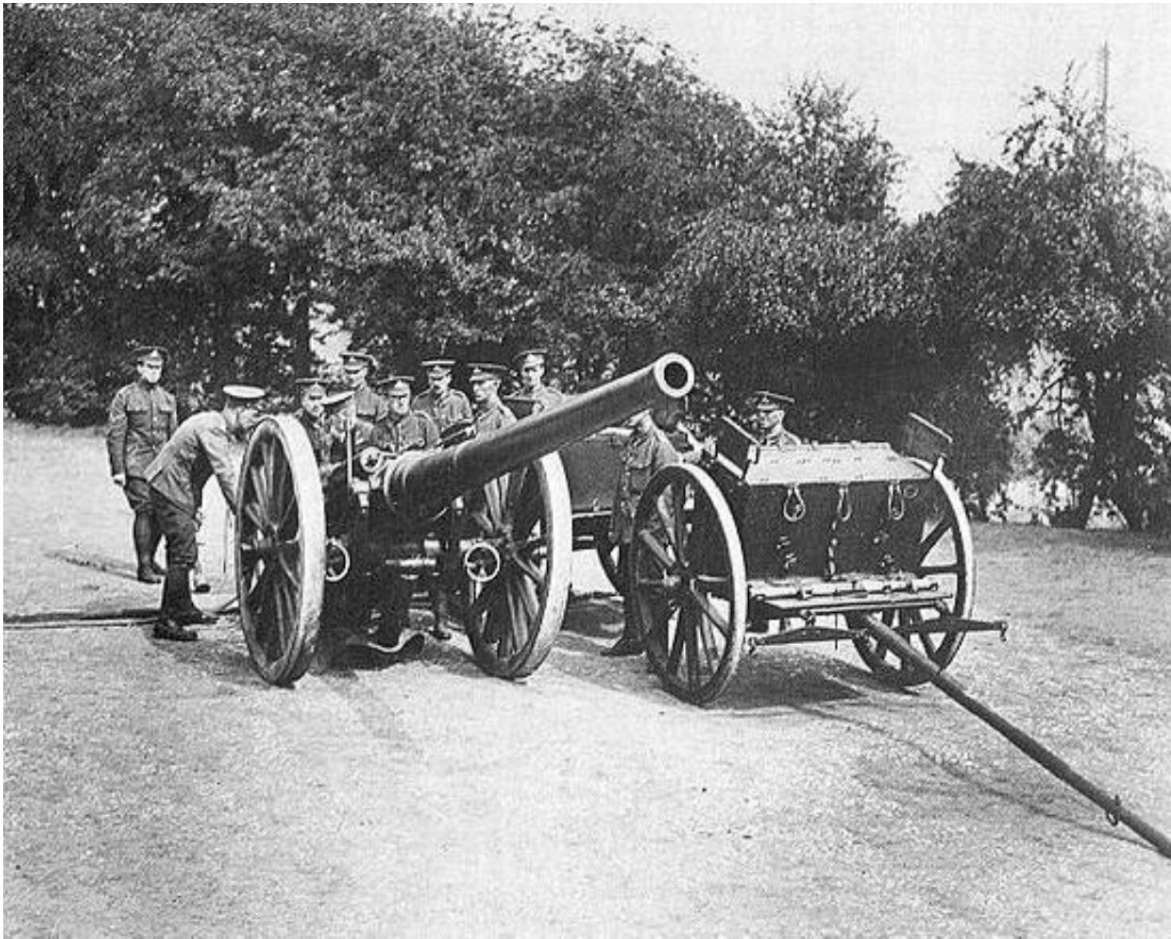
The Expeditionary Force, which was sent to France in August 1914, included six infantry divisions (*1st to 6th Division*).

Each of these divisions had a heavy battery equipped with 4 *BL 60-pdr Mk I Field Gun*.

The caliber of the gun was 5 inches, as stated on this postcard, but it was most commonly known as the *60-pdr Field Gun*.

From units in England as well as units withdrawn from the colonies, two more divisions (*7th and 8th Division*) were created. The heavy batteries in these divisions were equipped with *the QF 4.7-in Field Gun*. These divisions were initially equipped with a heavy artillery division (*III and VIII Heavy Brigade, Royal Garrison Artillery 3*).

The heavy batteries of the reserve divisions (Territorial Force) were mobilized with their respective divisions, and the batteries were all equipped with *the QF 4.7-in Field Gun*. Similarly, the heavy batteries that formed part of the Indian Expeditionary Force that came to France in September 1914 were equipped with naval guns.



Exercise with the QF 4.7-in Field Gun, Woolwich, c. 1914.
From Source 1.

The London suburb of Woolwich was/is the home of the English artillery, and the center for, among other things, the training of artillery units.

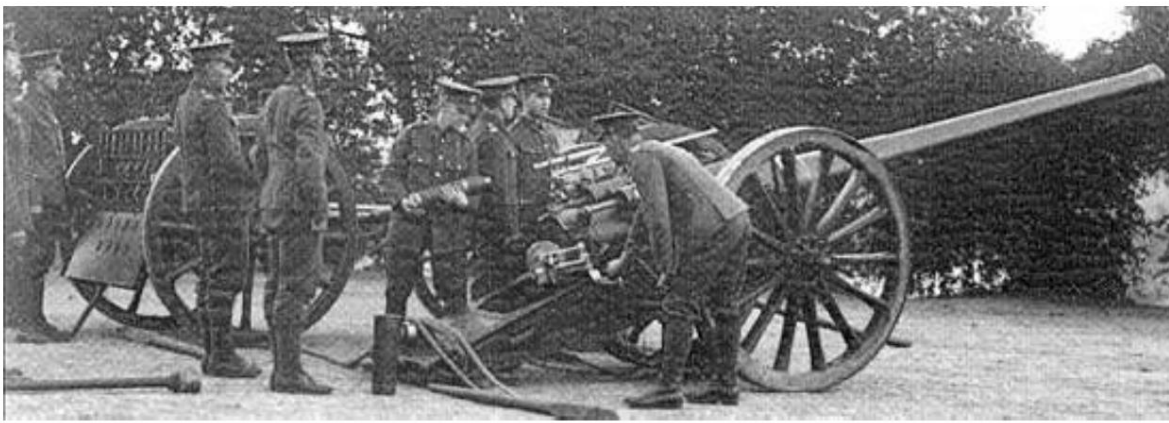
The English Artillery Museum *Firepower* is conveniently located in Woolwich.

Unfortunately, when I visited the museum in 2001, there was not a copy of the cannon on display. Perhaps you have not - in time - secured a copy for posterity.

It may be a picture in series with the previous one.

At the beginning of 1915, the heavy batteries were transferred from the infantry divisions to heavy divisions that were part of the corps and army group artillery.

Many of the pamphlets were eventually in a condition where the tubes had fired more than 1,000 rounds beyond their expected life, and the cannon eventually gained a reputation for being inaccurate and often firing too short. It was therefore deployed in counter-battery firing, where the lack of precision was less critical than firing close to the trench lines.



Exercise with the QF 4.7-in Field Gun, Woolwich, c. 1914.

From Source 3.

However, there were not yet resources to replace the naval guns with the more modern *60-pdr* and the guns continued in service on the Western Front right up until the beginning of 1917. The gun remained in service on secondary front sections - e.g. Italy and Serbia - until the end of the war.

Immediately after the war, the cannon was finally "retired" after a career that had shaped up somewhat differently than its designers had originally envisioned.

About organization

A heavy battery (1914), consisted of the following:

Heavy Battery, Royal Garrison Artillery, War Establishment, 1914

	Personnel		Horses			2-horsed		4-horsed		Note 1				
	Officers	Other Ranks	Riding	Draught	Heavy Draught	Guns (60-pdr.)	Cart, Maltese	Wagon, cooks, or travelling kitchen	Wagon, telephone	Wagon, G.S., technical stores	Gun carriage	Wagon, ammunition	Spare horses	Bicycle
Battery and Ammunition Column	6	192	29	6	109	4	1	1	1	3	4	12	17	1
Battery						4	1	1	1	2	4	8	14	1
Ammunition Column										1		4	3	

Note 1:

Kanonerne blev trukket af 8 heste

Ammunitionsvognene blev trukket af 4 heste

The overview originates from Source 6 and basically covers the heavy batteries of the regular army, equipped with *the BL 60-pdr Mk I Field Gun*. The figures for manpower and horses are not found here separately for the battery and the ammunition train.

In *Regulations for the Territorial Force and County Associations, 1908* (Source 7) is a summary of the manpower of a heavy battery in the Territorial Force, equipped with *the QF 4.7-in Field Gun*.

The battery consists of 5 officers and 160 men, while the ammunition train consists of 1 officer and 48 men, i.e. almost the same manpower as in the regular army's heavy batteries.

When the Territorial Force was first equipped with cannons and other material upon mobilization, appears alone

figure for what the battery could dispose of in connection with its education.

Closing

Despite its almost 20 years behind the scenes in the real English army, the naval cannon had an even longer career as a toy. Britains produced its first model of the pamphlet around 1902 and it was - without interruption - part of the factory's range right up until 1979, which must be described as quite an achievement for a toy.

The toy version of the cannon was, if nothing else, praised by HG Wells, who used it extensively in his war games.

A later article will describe the toy version of the cannon.

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. *The Great Boer War* by Arthur Conan Doyle, Thomas Nelson & Sons Ltd., London, c. 1903.
3. *British Artillery 1914-19 - Field Army Artillery* by Dale Clarke, Osprey, New Vanguard Nr. 94, London 2004, ISBN 1-84176-688-7.
4. *British Territorial Units 1914-18* by Ray Westlake, Osprey Men-at-Arms No. 245, London 1991, ISBN 1-85532-168-8.
5. *The Territorial Artillery 1908-1988* by Norman EH Lithcfield, Privately Published, Derby 1992, ISBN 0-9508205-2-0.
6. *Field Service Pocket Book (1914)*, published by the General Staff, War Office, London 1914, Reprint by David & Charles Reprints, London 1971, ISBN 0-7153-5225-3.
7. *Regulations for the Territorial Force and County Associations, 1908* published in 1908 by The Army Council. Republished in 2003 by Naval & Military Press, ISBN 1-84342-574-2.

Postscript



BL 6-in Field Gun Mk 7, Western Front, c. 1915.

The British army also had a heavier field gun - *the BL 6-in Field Gun Mk 7* - which looks similar to *the QF 4.7-in Field Gun*. The cannon's history also resembles that of the naval cannon, as Commander Percy Scott had one or two heavier ship's cannons mounted on field lavettes in the style of the naval cannon.

After the Boer War, a further number were converted to form part of the army's heavy artillery, called Siege Batteries, Royal Garrison Artillery.

The Lavette existed in two versions - *Carriage, traveling, BL 6-in Mk I and Mk II*.



BL 6-in Field Gun Mk 7, Western Front, c. 1917.

The Mk I version had the same type of wheel as the naval gun during the Boer War, and can therefore easily be confused with the early version of the naval gun.

However, the two pictures of the cannon show the Mk II version.

The images originate from the Imperial War Museum's extensive image collection; I bought mine at a postcard market.

Per Finsted

Notes

- 1) From *Battles of the Boer War* by W. Baring Pemberton, Pan Books, London 1972/1969. *2nd* *2nd Lancashire Heavy Battery* was tentatively merged into *Lancashire Heavy Brigade, Royal* *2) 1st and Royal Glamorgan Artillery Battery* merged into *London Heavy Brigade, Garrison Artillery*, and correspondingly was *1st* and batteries were mobilized together with their respective divisions.
- 3) *III Heavy Brigade* consisted of *111th* and *112th Heavy Battery*, and *VIII Heavy Brigade* consisted of *the 118th* and *119th Heavy Battery*.