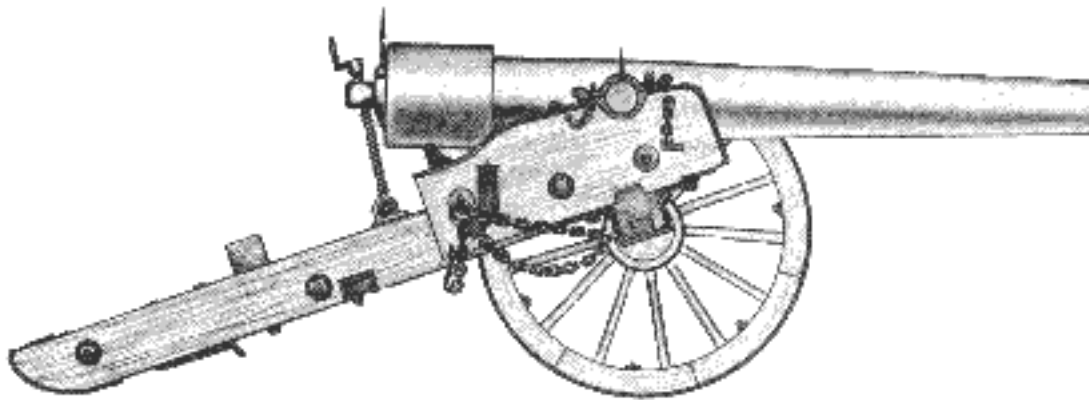


Artillery

Civil War Artillery

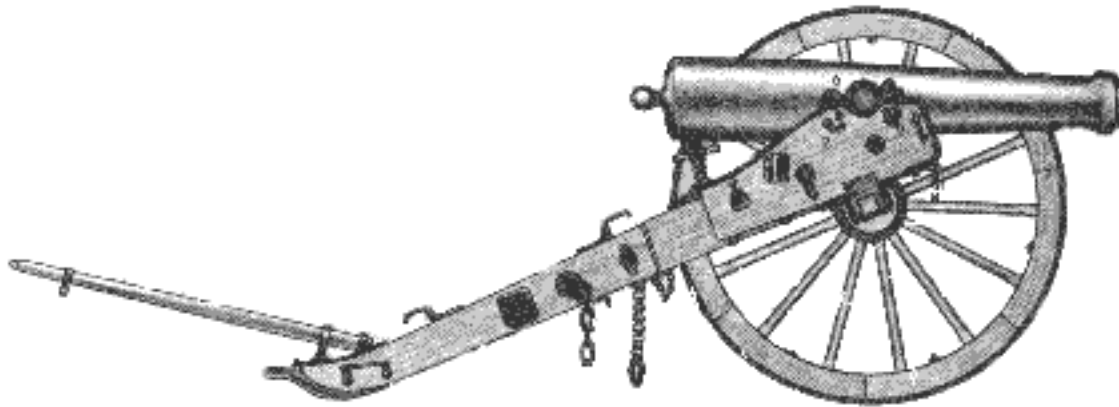
1. Cannon Types- There were 4 basic types of cannons in the beginning of the civil war:

Rifled cannons-



A brand new type of direct fire gun that used a rifled barrel to improve accuracy. The 2 major types were the 3 inch ordnance rifle and the 10 pound parrot rifle. Both were very similar in performance. The historical 3rd US battery L&M had 4 2.9 inch parrot rifles. Our current battery has 2 3 inch rifled guns. Maximum practical range was around 1800 yds or 1 mile. It used 1 pound of blackpowder per shot.

Smoothbore guns-

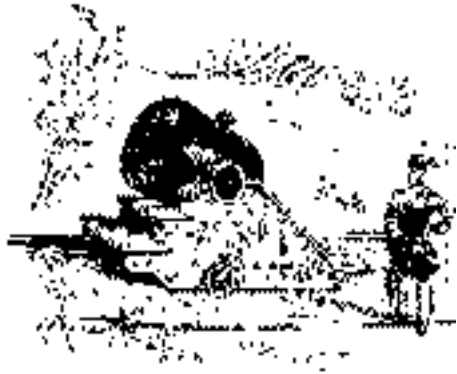


A tried and true gun virtually unchanged for many years. Since the 1840's the US had used the 6 pounder gun. This was in the process of being replaced by the Light 12 pounder which came out in 1857. It was a "jack of all trades/ master of none" type weapon which could do most things well. It was especially good at close range because of its large bore size of almost 5 inches made a very large cannister round. The historical 3rd US battery L&M started the war with 2 of these cannons, but lost them during the move to the vicksburg. The Maximun practical range was around 1600 yards. It used 1 to 2 pounds of blackpowder per shot.

Howitzers-

A Howiziter was a gun that "lobbed" the shell by using a trajectory rather than a more direct fire rifle or smoothbore cannon. The light 12 pounder was starting to replace it at the begining of the war as it could perform this task. The idea was to be able to fire "behind" cover by lobbing the shell over the obstacle the enemy was hiding behind. They had a short range, but were very effective at short range because of their bore size of usually over 5 inches. Our current battery has 1 howitzer in its inventory, which is actually a naval howitzer. Maximun practical range was about 800 to 1100 yards depending on the type. Our Naval howizter would probably be on the low end of this scale.

Mortars-



Mortars take the idea of the howitzer a step further by using a even higher trajectory than a howitzer. It could not fire directly on a target at all. (ie no cannister), and its range was usually less than 1000 yds. In the war because of their weight they were usually used in sieges and not in the field. By late in the war a light weight type was developed and used in the siege of petersburg by both sides.

2. Types of Ammo used. Their were 4 basic types of ammo used during the civil war they were:

Solid shot- (solid ball)

This is only type the public thinks we had. Many cannons were classified by the weight of a solid shot that would fit in its bore. (like a "10" pounder"). They were useful against fortifications, hitting a limber box and if you had nothing else firing at troops in which you would try to get the shell to "skip" accross the battlefield.

Explosive Shell- (shell)

This was a hollow shell with gun powder poured inside. The idea was to get it to explode next to enemy troops and demoralize them. Some injuries could occur from the outer shell , but it as mainly a "scare" tactic using concussion as its weapon although a piece of the outer shell could kill someone. Often this shell would explode on impact

Case Shot-(shrapnel)

This was a explosive shell where the hollow interior was filled will metal balls , tar and gunpowder. It was most effective when it could explode over the heads of the enemy. Usually this shell would have a timed fuse.

Cannister- (sometimes referred to as grapeshot although this was usually used by the navy) Cannister was something like a giant shotgun. It fired bullet size balls out the canon barrel. It was effective to about 300 yards. Rifled cannons could not use cannister very effectively because the rifling would break up the "pattern" of shot. I often find commanders complaining that this type of round was overused by the artillery.

3. Fire Rates

You could fire about 3 rounds a min. if you were firing cannister. This is because you really did not have to aim a cannon very carefully with cannister. Most of the fire time was in the aiming not the loading and cleaning. A typical fire rate of firing shell or case shot would be about 1 round in 5 mins. and most of that would be the gunner trying to account for the wind, movement of the enemy, range and various other variables.