



18-pounder Mark II QF Field Gun, Serial Number 9168



Introduction

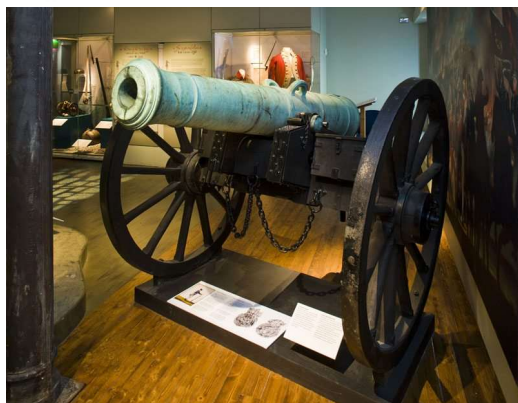
The Artillery Club supports the preservation of the Defence Forces Artillery Corps unique legacy and distinctive traditions, promotes professional excellence, provides a focal point for remembrance and camaraderie, in order to encourage and foster the Artillery Corps admirable Esprit de Corps.

One of the Artillery Club's prescribed objectives is to support military and regimental museums, in the acquisition, preservation, maintenance and display of Artillery weapons, equipment, material and artefacts.

In this regard, the Club remains proactive in its support to the Artillery School and Artillery Regiments for outdoor Weapon Displays throughout the Defence Forces, and for weapon displays and galleries of an Artillery nature in the National Museum, the Curragh Military Museum, and museums in Collins Barracks Cork, and the former Columb Barracks Mullingar (relocated to Custume Barracks Athlone).

Pursuant to its objectives, the Artillery Club wishes to formally convey its appreciation to the Defence Forces for the authentication, acquisition, recovery, storage, conservation and restoration of the Mark II QF Field Gun, Serial Number 9168, with its distinctive type of recoil system, currently on loan from the Defence Forces, and on display in the Soldiers and Chiefs Exhibition, National Museum of Ireland, Collins Barracks Dublin.

In this context, and on the occasion of the launch of the '*18pdr Field Gun 9168 - Lost and Found*' Exhibition, the Artillery Club commends the National Museum of Ireland for its award-winning Soldiers and Chiefs exhibition which traces Ireland's military history from 1550 into the 21st Century covering Irish soldiers at home, Irish soldiers abroad, and Irish soldiers in the 21st Century. The Exhibition consists of appropriate artefacts from the National Museum's Arms and Armour, Costume, and Historical collections, with selected items from the Defence Forces holdings of twentieth century equipment and memorabilia.



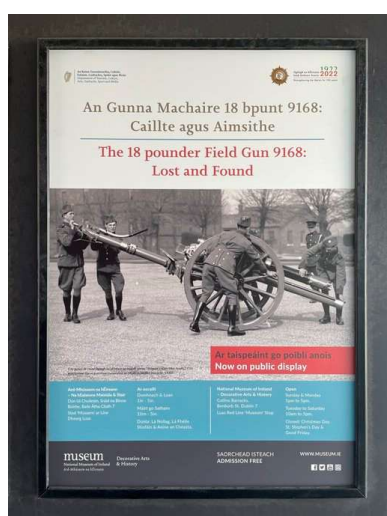
Lost and Found Exhibition – National Museum of Ireland

On 09 February 2023, an exhibition titled ‘18pdr Field Gun 9168 - Lost and Found’ was launched in the National Museum of Ireland, Decorative Arts and History, Collins Barracks, Dublin.

The launch was opened by the Director of the National Museum of Ireland Lynn Scarff, Lieutenant-General Seán Clancy Chief of Staff addressed the attendees, and Dr Catriona Crow formally launched the exhibition.

Attendees included Brigadier-General Tony Cudmore GOC 2 Brigade, Colonel Mathew Byrne Director of the Ordnance Corps, Colonel Patrick Whyte President of the Artillery Club, Sergeant Robert (Bobby) Delaney with his family and his comrades of Ordnance Base Workshops, Brenda Malone Curator Soldiers and Chiefs Exhibition, Brigadier-General Paul Fry (Retd) Chair of the Military Heritage of Ireland Trust, and members of the Artillery Club.

Kindly donated by Glenn and Penny Gates, Virginia, USA, and on loan to the National Museum from the Defence Forces, the 18-pounder Mark II QF Field Gun, Serial Number 9168, with its distinctive type of recoil system, is now on display in the Soldiers and Chiefs Exhibition.





This particular Field Gun played a significant role in the Irish Civil War of 1922 – 1923, when it was acquired by the new Irish State from the departing British forces. It was likely one of the four Field Guns deployed against the anti-Treaty IRA forces occupying the Four Courts in June 1923. This Field Gun was discovered in the United States of America, authenticated, recovered to Ireland by the Defence Forces, and was successfully restored to its original state by the Ordnance Corps.

Historical Background

The 18-pounder Mark II QF Field Gun, Serial Number 9168, was manufactured in England and Scotland during the First World War for the Royal Artillery. 18-pounder Field Guns were deployed in action by the British and Commonwealth forces during this war. Up to 250,000 Irishmen served in the British Army at this time, some of whom served with the Royal Artillery, firing the 18-pounder Field Gun.

Provided by the Royal Artillery, six 18-pounder Field Guns (two Mark Is and four Mark IIs), were deployed by the National Army during the Irish Civil War.

From 28 June through 30 June 1922, four 18-pounder Field Guns were deployed in action at the Four Courts, in Dublin. The first artillery round was fired between 0407hrs and 0429hrs, on Wednesday, 28 June, marking the start of the Civil War. From an historical perspective, this engagement was the first occasion that the Irish Army fired an Artillery Field Gun. Through contemporary research, efforts are being made to identify the actual Serial Numbers of all of the four Field Guns which were deployed at the Four Courts. Apparently, the Mark II 18-pounder that fired the first round on 28 June had the Serial Number 10756, was deployed at the corner of Winetavern Street and Merchant's Quay, and fired a total of 375 rounds between 28 and 30 June. It is highly likely that Field Gun, Serial Number 9168 was one of the four Field Guns deployed at the Four Courts.

The presence of the anti-Treaty IRA's homemade mines in the building, and its shelling by the National Army, led to the complete destruction of the Four Courts, including the Public Record Office, resulting in the permanent loss of over 700 years of Irish archives.



The above photograph shows an 18-pounder in action during the Irish Civil War.

From an analysis of National Army engagements during 1922 - 1923, six deployed 18-pounder Field Guns can be identified, either by the name of the gun (e.g. *Four Courts* and



Drogheda, Rose of Tralee, Hammond Lane No 4), or by the commander (e.g. Gen Sean Mac Eoin, Comdt Dinny Galvin). It is generally understood that the National Army received a total of nine 18-pounder Field Guns from the British Army in 1922.



An 18-pounder Field Gun was deployed as the gun carriage for the funeral of General Michael Collins on 28 August, 1922.

The 18-pounder Field Gun, Serial Number 9168, on display in Soldiers and Chiefs Exhibition is the last known remaining Mark II deployed in the Civil War. Apparently, there is no record of the location or indeed the existence of any of the other Mark II Field Guns deployed in the Civil War.

Between 1926 and 1941, the Artillery Corps acquired additional Mark I and Mark II 18-pounder Field Guns, as well as the more modern Mark IV version.

Despite the introduction of the Ordnance QF 25-pounder in 1949, the 18-pounder Mark IV continued in service in the Artillery Corps, and the last round was fired in Glen Imaal by the 14 Battery, 2 Field Artillery Regiment on Sunday, 28 April, 1974.

Preserved 18-pounder Mark IVs are on display throughout Ireland, and one can be viewed in the Curragh Military Museum. In 2006, a private firm in Portsmouth, England, refurbished an 18-pounder Field Gun Mark IV for the National Museum. This Field Gun is also on display in the Soldiers and Chiefs Exhibition in Collins Barracks, Dublin.

Shipment of Defence Forces Artillery Guns to USA in 1959

In February 1959, having departed Dublin, a Finnish cargo ship, the *SS Finnmerchant* docked in Alexandria, Virginia. Its shipment of obsolete Defence Forces weapons, purchased by an American arms trader: International Armament Cooperation (InterArmCo) based in Virginia, included:

- Seventeen 18-pounder Field Guns with limbers,
- Twenty-two 4.5inch Howitzers with limbers,
- Six 60-pounder guns with limbers,
- Five 12-pounder guns, and
- Four 3-inch Anti-Aircraft guns and mounts.



INTER ARMS CO		
Schedule attached to letter Ref: H-1/XI155, February 10, 1959		
MARKS	DESCRIPTION	TONS
#11/1 to 11/23	23 Cases of Spares on following guns	41
#11/24 to 11/42	19 Loose Pieces consisting of: 3 ea. - 12 Pdr. Barrels 3 ea. - 12 Pdr. Pedestals 4 ea. - 3" 20 Cvt. Barrels 2 ea. - 3" 20 Cvt. 2 wheel platforms 2 ea. - 3" 20 Cvt. 2 wheel platforms 2 ea. - 6" Barrels (Note: Above consists of 10 gun barrels, 9 of which have matching components.)	
#K1 to K126	Loose - 5 ea. Guns MK.1-18 Pdr. Loose - 12 ea. Guns MK.2-18 Pdr. Loose - 17 ea. Trailers for above Loose - 17 ea. Platforms for above (a) Boxed - 17 ea. Each Box 1 Breech for above Boxed - 1 ea. Contains 17 sights for above Loose - 22 ea. Guns 4.5 Howitzers Loose - 22 ea. Trailers for above Boxed - 22 ea. Each Box 1 Breech for above Boxed - 1 ea. Contains 22 sights for above Loose - 6 ea. Gun s/Breech and Limber 60 Pdr. Loose - 12 ea. Wags (a) Boxed - 1 ea. Contains 6 sights for above 155 pieces (This count of 155 is reconciled to 126 pieces by eliminating 17 Platforms (a) and 12 Wags (a)???)	130
#A1 to A804	804 Boxes of Mortar Smoke Bombs 3", 7229 rounds	11
# 1 to 838	838 Boxes of Lewis Guns & Spares	47
# 839 to 840	2 Boxes of Browning MGs	
# 840	1 Box of Signal Mortars 3"	
# 847	1 Box of Bomb Throwers & Spares	
# 848	1 Box of Vickers MGs & Spares	
(Note: H/L calls for 842 cases and this figure is correct, since 5 cases were sent to Cugwell & Bay rians, London, but we do not have particulars as to the contents of these 5 cases, our files are lacking full information on this matter. Advise if you want more particulars on this one transaction.)		
TOTAL TONS		247

The shipping manifest of the *SS Finnmerchant* that includes the Field Gun Serial 9168, among the other Mark I and Mark II 18 pounders, 4.5-inch howitzers, and Lewis light machine guns.

The serial numbers of four of the five Mark I 18-pounder guns were: 6460; 7209; 7470; and 10392. The serial numbers of the twelve Mark II 18-pounder guns were: 2819; 2908; 3484; 4254; 4770; 5605; 7554; 7765; 8577; 8976; 9168 and 10756.

Serial Number 9168 is the restored 18-pounder Field Gun Mark II currently on display in the Soldiers and Chiefs Exhibition. Aside from the Mark IV 18-pounder Field Gun also on display in the Soldiers and Chiefs Exhibition, a Mark II 4.5" howitzer (Serial Number 2839) is in a private collection in Virginia, and two more 4.5" howitzers are on display at the Pennsylvania State Museum in Boalsburg (near State College in Pennsylvania).

Historical Narrative

The provenance of the 18-pounder Mark II QF Field Gun, Serial Number 9168, is supported by the engravings on various parts of the gun, including the breach, (War Department Mark, FF Mark, Serial Number, Maker and Date). The breech markings indicate that the William Beardmore Company of Glasgow, Scotland, had manufactured the gun in 1918. The 'FF' shows ownership by the Irish Free State, and its serial number is recorded as '9168.' This provenance would be further enhanced with the discovery of the Field Gun's gun history sheet(s).

A physical reminder of the Irish Civil War, in the context of the Decade of Centenaries, the historical narrative associated with this particular Field Gun, Serial Number 9168, has to be meaningfully, proportionately and sensitively presented, in an inclusive manner, in order to broaden the parameters of our nation's analysis of the Civil War, and to confront its difficult history 100 years later.



Recovery of 18-pounder from United States of America

In August 2016, an 18-pounder Mark II Field Gun, Serial Number 9168 arrived back in Ireland having left for America in 1959, as part of a large consignment of surplus and obsolete Defence Forces military equipment. The Field Gun had been purchased from Interarmco by the owner of the *Lazy Susan Dinner Theatre*, Woodbridge, Virginia 22194-0346, located not far from Washington D.C.

The Field Gun was on display as part of an outdoor antique gallery for many years in the *Lazy Susan Dinner Theatre*. In 2015, Ken Smith-Christmas of the US Army Museum at Fort Belvoir, Virginia, discovered that the gun was for sale, and subsequently facilitated a valuable interface between the gun's owner Mr Glenn Gates and Commandant Lar Joye (AR) of the National Museum of Ireland and an Artillery Officer, resulting in the owner kindly donating the gun to the Irish Defence Forces.

During the period February through August 2016, the acquisition and recovery of the Field Gun to Ireland was successfully conducted by Colonel Conor Fitzsimons Military Advisor Irish Permanent Representation UN New York and an Artillery Officer, Lieutenant-Colonel Paul Carey J4 Branch Defence Forces Headquarters, Commandant Stephen MacEoin OIC Military Archives, and Commandant Lar Joye (AR).



On 1 February, 2016, Colonel Conor Fitzsimons, Commandant Stephen MacEoin, and Commandant Lar Joye (AR) visited the location of the gun in Virginia, negotiated its donation to the Defence Forces with its owner Mr and Mrs Glenn Gates, and its recovery to Ireland.





The above photographs include one of Lieutenant-Colonel Paul Carey collecting the 18-pounder from Mr Glenn Gates in the “Ivy Patch”, Virginia. The Artillery Club acknowledges Commandant Lar Joye’s commendable initiative in securing this gun for the Defence Forces. Commandant Joye (AR) is the Secretary of the Artillery Club, a former Military Curator in the National Museum of Ireland in Collins Barracks, and is currently the Heritage Director at Dublin Port.

Following its recovery to Ireland in August 2016, the 18-pounder was transported to Custume Barracks Athlone, and held by the 2 Ordnance Group, pending its evaluation, conservation and restoration.



The above photographs were taken during the Artillery Club’s Field Tour, incorporating a visit to 2 Ordnance Group, on 22 June 2017.

Restoration Project

The 18-pounder was subsequently transferred to the Ordnance Base Workshops, Defence Forces Training Centre, The Curragh.

According to a Condition Report provided to the Defence Forces by Mr Matthew Hancock, a conservator at Royal Armouries, the Field Gun was heavily corroded in many areas, and most of the moving parts were seized as result of corrosion. The Report stated that the Field Gun required urgent conservation which could take 18 – 22 months to complete.

The Artillery Club retained an over-watch posture regarding the conversation and restoration of the Field Gun, with Commandant Lar Joye (AR) taking the lead on behalf of the Club’s Committee.



Based on the Condition Report and the poor condition of the Field Gun, Ordnance Base Workshops initiated urgent conservation treatment. On account of the condition of the Field Gun, a realistic level of ambition would be one of restoration rather than of conservation. The project entered a new phase of development, requiring technical expertise and experience, appropriate resources, and best practice.

On 10 June 2019, the Artillery Club's President presented a comprehensive submission to the Deputy Chief of Staff (Support), covering issues including: Historical Background, Steering Group, Conservation Expert, Skill Sets – Restoration and Replacement, Recording the Restoration Process, Replica Work, Historical Narrative, National Cultural Institutions Act, Time Scale, and Display.

The conservation and restoration process commenced with cleaning and degreasing the Field Gun. All moving parts, nuts and bolts were coated with penetrating oil to facilitate the disassembly of the Field Gun for treatment. The breech block with the firing lock, which was completely seized due to corrosion, was opened for the first time in sixty years, reversing the gun's decommissioning. Areas of steel corrosion and overpainted brass were treated, including the barrel, trail, elevating and traversing mechanisms, range scale and sight rests. It is interesting to note that some of the internal gearbox components in gearboxes were completely untouched by moisture, and were in near perfect condition, still covered with grease.

The conservation of the original "Boynton Steel Shield" presented a challenge, due to the poor state of what little remained of the four ash braces used to strengthen the armoured shield on the front of the Field Gun. New timber was used which fitted around the large flat 100-year-old headed rivets remaining in place. Replicas of the missing two extensions were affixed to the shield.

Small sections of the original grey paint and even smaller areas of Royal Artillery green paint survived on the gun's cradle and carriage, and were preserved when protective painting using appropriate undercoat and topcoat were applied.

Replica timber [cart] wheels were procured and reattached to the Field Gun, thus replacing the pneumatic tyres which were part of the Martin Parry conversion process used in 1939. The Martin Parry conversion kit fitted in 1939 is an important part of the gun's history and is available for display. Converting the pneumatic wheels back to cartwheels displays the Field Gun as it appeared during the Civil War.

The Field Gun was reassembled for display, replacing any damaged parts which were beyond repair.



During its visit to Ordnance Base Workshops on 21 April 2022, the Artillery Club's President availed of the opportunity of saluting the considerable research, and significant conservation and restoration work undertaken in the Ordnance Base Workshops since 2017 by Captain Daithí O'Flynn, and Armament Artificers Sergeant Robert Delaney (i/c Project), Sergeant Cregan and Sergeant Sexton, under the guidance of Commandant Stephan Mac Eoin, Defence Forces Heritage Officer, Commandant Lar Joye (AR), and assisted by Mr Sven Habermann and Ms Brenda Malone National Museum of Ireland.

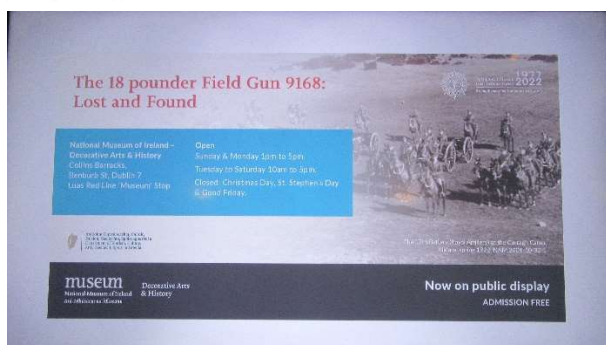


The above photographs were taken during the Artillery Club's Field Tour, incorporating a visit to Ordnance Base Workshops, Defence Forces Headquarters, on 21 April 2022.

Following its professional conservation and restoration, the 18-pounder Mark II QF Field Gun, Serial Number 9168, was deployed as a temporary display during a four-day national conference, hosted by University College Cork, from 15 to 18 June 2022 titled '*The Irish Civil War*'.

Since 09 February 2023, the 18-pounder Mark II QF Field Gun, Serial Number 9168 is on display in the Soldiers and Chiefs Exhibition, National Museum of Ireland, Decorative Arts and History, Collins Barracks, Dublin.

Target Round for the Defence Forces and the National Museum of Ireland.



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Artillery Club Newsletters 3/2016, 2/2017, 1/2022, available on the Club's website: [www/artilleryclub.ie](http://www.artilleryclub.ie)

Artillery Club's submission to the Deputy Chief of Staff (Support), 10 June 2019: Restoration of 18-pounder Mark II QF Field Gun, Serial Number 9168.

National Museum of Ireland, Decorative Arts and History, February 2023: The 18pdr Field Gun 9168 – Lost and Found.

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