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FIELD GUNS IN WAR.

THEY ARE THE FAVORITE WEAPONS AMONG MILITARY MEN.

These Long Range Death Dealers Can Be Fired With Great Rapidity, Are as Accurate as Rifles at Their Range and Exert Tremendous Energy.

The betterment of the modern field gun is fully equal to the development of other branches of military armament. It has been especially rapid within the last dozen years. The work of specialists and the results of extended tests have ended in the production of a weapon of great accuracy and of titanic force. The field gun of today is the favorite weapon of the military man, and he expects from it some very remarkable demonstrations when opportunity to use it occurs.

Napoleon is credited with the remark that Providence is always on the side of the heavy artillery, but the artillery which Napoleon knew was not worthy to be mentioned on the same day with the light, graceful and deadly arm with which the moderns are prepared to do slaughter. The first great step forward was taken when the breechloading action was invented. Well known scientific rules of boring and the improvement in projectiles and powders have done the rest. The field gun now in use by the powers is as accurate at its range as a rifle and has tremendous energy.

The United States has no better field guns than those with which the armies of Germany and France are armed, but they are every bit as good. Like our other ordnance, they are all made on this side of the water. The American manufacturer yields to no one in ability to make a perfect weapon. Indeed many of the chief improvements in field guns and in the larger sizes, sometimes called "siege" guns, are the products of American brains.

The field guns of the United States army are made at Watervliet, N. Y., just as the large guns for the navy and for coast defense are turned out at Washington. They have a caliber of a little more than three inches, are, of course, breechloading, are rather lengthy for their width and are lightly but strongly mounted. They use a pointed shell which explodes either on concussion or by time fuse, generally the former, and are fired with great rapidity.

Each gun of a battery is in command of a lieutenant, who, under the eye of his superior, sights it and directs its working. He has his elevation, depression and wind gauge formulae at his fingers' ends, and with him good shooting is mainly a question of care. The powder used in these guns is of the smaller grained brown hexagonal kind, though the pheroidal is preferred for some calibers.

The recoil of this gun on level ground is 26 feet, with the wheels unlocked. With the wheels locked it recoils five feet, and is run forward and resighted very swiftly. Its point blank range is 2,200 yards. It can be made effective at a much greater distance, of course, but officers prefer that range for accurate shooting.

It fell to me some seven years ago to report the first field trial given the Watervliet guns. Three of them were sent to Fort Sam Houston at San Antonio, where Light Battery F, Third artillery, was stationed under command of Major James B. Burbank, a most capable officer, now attached to the staff of the governor of New York. Major Burbank was instructed to try them out thoroughly, and for this purpose selected an ideal range on Ganahl's ranch, 60 miles north of San Antonio.

The guns were planted in line and 20 feet apart on the side of a green hill and pointed across a shallow valley. On the opposite hill, 2,200 yards away, a tent fly was put up as a target. It was 15 by 9 feet in dimension and was stretched on two poles. At that distance it looked like nothing in the world so much as a man's pocket handkerchief. One shot was fired as a range finder, and that shot proved the range was found. Then the work began.

For half an hour these guns pitched shells through or under or over the target, according to the firing directions, with as much accuracy as a man would use a Winchester rifle at 100 yards. The work was done with the precision of a clock. There was the rush of the piece into its first position, the quick command to load, the rapid aim and discharge, the faint scream of the shell, the puff of smoke and dull report as it struck and the dust rose up in a pillar.

When it was ended, we rode across the valley and up the opposite slope to the spot where the tent fly had stood. Bits of it lay about here and there. One of the poles was bitten short off. For 60 yards below the other pole, for 30 yards on either side of it and for 100 yards above it the earth was not plowed—it was harrowed. An ant could not have lived on the ground.

It was not difficult to imagine what would have become of an opposing force. Men and horses would have been dead and all guns dismounted in five minutes after the firing began. There could have been no better illustration of the absolutely fatal character of these pieces. It was found that they did not become unmanageable through heat, that the breech mechanism displayed no sign of strain, that the recoil was not greater than was calculated and that accuracy was as perfect with the last shell as with the first. These findings were reported to the Washington authorities, and the manufacture of the guns went on. The regular army is now thoroughly supplied with them.—Chicago Times Herald.

Just What It Seems.

"It seems like a dream," he said in speaking of his courtship.
"My boy," replied the veteran, "when you wake up after marriage you will find that that is just exactly what it is—nothing but a dream."—Chicago Post.

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