

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



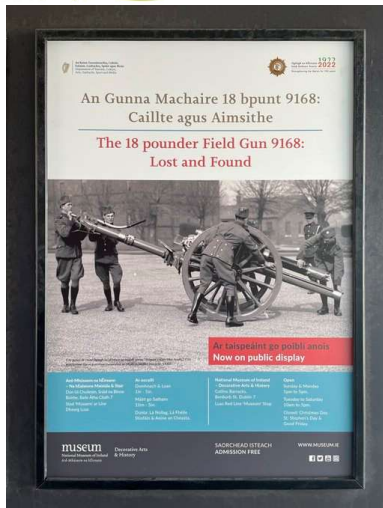
### **Military Heritage**

The Military Heritage of Ireland Trust has developed a close relationship with the National Museum of Ireland and with museums in Northern Ireland in advancing Ireland's rich military heritage. Examples include the Trust's long association with the much-acclaimed Soldiers' and Chiefs' Exhibition in Collins Barracks, Dublin, and links with the Enniskillen Castle Museum – the Inniskillings Museum, County Fermanagh.

In this context, and on the occasion of the launch of the '18pdr Field Gun 9168 - Lost and Found' Exhibition, the Trust commends the work of the National Museum of Ireland, in advancing a shared understanding of Ireland's significant military experiences, whilst making a substantial contribution to retaining the culture, traditions, ethos and legacy of Ireland's unique military heritage.

### **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. 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.



Ba mhór ag Bord agus Stiúrthóir Ard-Mhúsaem na hÉireann tú a bheith i lúthair ar an

**Déardaoin 9 Feabhra ar a ó tráthnóna**

Aoi speisialta  
Catriona Crowe

nuair a osclofar an taispeántas

**An Gunna Machaire 18 bpunt 9168: Caillte agus Aimsithe**

ag

Ard-Mhúsaem na hÉireann - Ealaíona Maisiúla & Stair, Dún Uí Chóiláin, BÁC 7.

Riachtanach: Seol freagra faoin 7 Feabhra 2023  
[rspv@museum.ie](mailto:rspv@museum.ie)

Gúineadh do bheith é seo agus ní féidir é a thabhairt do dhuine ar bith eile

Arna eagrú i gcomhgháirtíocht le hOglaigh na hÉireann agus leis an Roinn Cosanta

An Roinn Taispeánachta, Cultúir, Ealaíon, Gaeltachta, Spóirt agus Meia  
 Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media

The Board and Director of the National Museum of Ireland have the pleasure in inviting you to the opening on

**Thursday, 9th February at 6.00pm**

Of

**The 18pdr Field Gun 9168: Lost and Found**

Special Guest  
Catriona Crowe

At the

National Museum of Ireland - Decorative Arts & History, Collins Barracks, Dublin 7.

RSVP by 7<sup>th</sup> February 2023 is essential  
[rspv@museum.ie](mailto:rspv@museum.ie)

Invitation admits two and is non-transferable

Organised in partnership with the Irish Defence Forces and the Department of Defence

An 17th Battery (AP/Wire Royal) at Carrick at Chinnigh, Co. Down, c.1922-23  
 The 17th Battery (Royal Artillery) at the Curragh Camp, Kildare, spring 1922. NAM 2008.20.22.1

**museum**  
National Museum of Ireland  
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Decorative Arts & History

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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, 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 McEoin, 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 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.

I N T E R A R M C O

Schedule attached to letter Ref: B-1/XI155, February 10, 1939

MARKS	DESCRIPTION	TONS
111/3 to 11/23	23 Cases of Spares on following guns	41
111/24 to 11/42	19 Loose Pieces consisting of: 5 ea. - 12 Pdr. Barrels 5 ea. - 12 Pdr. Pedestals 2 ea. - 3" 20 Cvt. Barrels 2 ea. - 3" 20 Cvt. 2 wheel platforms 2 ea. - 3" 20 Cvt. 2 wheel platforms 5 ea. - 4" Barrels (Note: Above consists of 10 gun barrels, 9 of which have sighting components.)	
111 to 1126	Loose - 5 ea. Guns MK. I-18 Pdr. Loose - 13 ea. Guns MK. II-18 Pdr. Loose - 17 ea. Trailers for above Loose - 17 ea. Platforms for above (a) Breed - 17 ea. Each Box 1 Breech for above Breed - 1 ea. Contains 17 sights for above Loose - 22 ea. Guns 4.5 Howitzers Loose - 22 ea. Trailers for above Breed - 22 ea. Each Box 1 Breech for above Breed - 1 ea. Contains 17 sights for above Loose - 6 ea. Gun w/Breech and Limber 48 Pdr. Loose - 12 ea. Mts (a) Breed - 1 ea. Contains 17 sights for above 155 pieces (This count of 155 is reconciled to 126 pieces by eliminating 17 Platforms (a) and 12 Mts (a)??)	130
111 to 1126	404 Boxes of Mortar Smoke Bombs 2", 7229 rounds	11
# 1 to 836	836 Boxes of Lewis Guns & Spares	47
# 839 to 845	7 Boxes of Browning MGs	
# 846	1 Box of Signal Mortars 3"	
# 847	1 Box of Bomb Throwers & Spares	
# 848	1 Box of Vickers MGs & Spares	
849	(Note: B/L calls for 849 cases and this figure is correct since 5 cases were sent to Ougwell & Harv rious, 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		273

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 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 1916. 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 associative with this Field Gun 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 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 of the National Museum of Ireland, 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, 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 Military Heritage of Ireland acknowledges Commandant Lar Joye’s commendable initiative in securing this gun for the Defence Forces. Commandant Joye is a Director of the Military Heritage of Ireland, 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.



### **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. According to the report, the Field Gun required urgent conservation which could take 18 – 22 months to complete.

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.



Significant conservation and restoration work was undertaken in the Ordnance Base Workshops 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 (Army Reserve), Ms Brenda Malone National Museum of Ireland, and assisted by Mr Sven Habermann.



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 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.



## **Bibliography**

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