

Seven Years War Artillery

The subject of Seven Years War artillery is very complex, so the information below is only a summary. For anyone wishing to study the subject in detail it is suggested that the Kronoskaf <http://kronoskaf.com/syw>

Austria

Artillery Pieces - the 1753 System

During the Seven Years War the Austrian army probably had the best artillery in Europe. On 1753, after years of experimentation, von Liechtenstein and his team introduced a new artillery system, which consisted of three groups of guns:

- Light: Artillery: 1-pdr amusettes for use by the Grenzer infantry.
- Field Artillery: 3-pdr, 6-pdr and light 12-pdr cannon, all with barrels 16 calibres (the bore of the gun) in length, and the 7-pound howitzers.
- Battery Pieces: long and short-barrelled 12-pdr, 18-pdr and 24-pdr guns.

Only the Field Artillery would normally appear on the battlefield, the lighter guns being used in skirmishers and the battery pieces in sieges. The mould allows the 6-pdr gun and 7-pdr howitzer to be cast.

For the field artillery the barrels were bronze; with the carriages painted in dark yellow, and the ironwork black.

Austrian Field Artillery deployment

The 3-pdr guns (and sometimes the 7-pdr howitzers) were distributed to the infantry at the rate of 2 per battalion. The larger pieces were combined into batteries, usually of 6 or 12, to bombard the enemy at long range. At the battle of Kolin (1757) Austria had approximately 154 pieces:

- 94 x battalion guns, mostly 3pdrs
- 24 x 12pdrs, in two 12 piece batteries
- 12 x 7-pdr howitzers in a single battery
- 24 x 6-pdr guns in four 6 piece batteries

Austrian Crew

Austrian artillery pieces were crewed by a combination of trained gunners, and untrained infantry who did much of the manual work. Early in the war the untrained men were temporarily drawn from the infantry, and were called *Handlanger* (assistants), during the second year of the war (1757) efficiency was improved by forming the *Artillery Fusiliers* to provide training. The number of crew varied, larger pieces needing more crew to handle them:

Artillery piece	Gunners	Handlangers/Fusiliers	Total
3-pdr gun	6	6	12
6-pdr gun	7	8	13
12-pdr gun	7	8	15
24-pdr gun	7	16	23
7-pdr howitzer	7	10	17

The trained gunners' roles were similar for all the types of artillery, typically:

No.1, stood to the left of the muzzle and loaded the projectiles

No.2, stood to the right of the muzzle with the combined rammer-mop

No.3, commanded the detachment, aimed the piece and inserted the trimming tube into the touch hole.

No.4, carried the linstock and fired the gun

No.5, was responsible for traversing the piece under the direction of N.3.

Nos. 6 & 7 brought up the ammunition

The crew moulds allow gunners No1, No.2 No.3 and No.5 to be cast. These can be distributed around the gun with No5 traversing the gun under the direction of No3, and the other 2 standing ready to load the gun.

Austrian Uniforms

There were two distinct parts of the artillery, those from Austria and those from the Netherlands which wore slightly different uniforms. (The Austrians were by far the most numerous branch)

The gunners of both branches wore a coat and trousers variously described as 'wolf-grey' or 'wolf-brown', which appears in contemporary pictures as ranging from a warm brownish-grey to fawn. For both branches the coat had red cuffs, however whereas the Austrians did not have lapels and had had brown turn backs (sometimes shown red), those from the Netherlands also had red lapels and turn backs. Below the coat was worn a waistcoat in the same grey. Legwear comprised high black cavalry boots.

For both branches, headwear comprised a black tricorne with yellow lace

The Artillery Fusiliers wore the same uniform, but with the boots replaced with black gaiters. The earlier Handlanger would have the uniform of their parent infantry battalion.

Prussia

Prussian Artillery Pieces

Like the Austrians, the Prussians had standardised on the use of 3pdr, 6pdr and 12pdr cannon for battlefield use, plus 7pdr field howitzers, to which the Prussians added a 10pdr howitzer. However unlike the Austrians, the Prussians had not standardised their artillery, and there were in the region of six different 3pdrs, four 6pdrs, ten 12pdrs and three howitzers in use.

Prior to the Seven Years War, the Prussians had introduced a number on pieces with 'conic' chambers, in which the cannon's bore tapered towards the end. These used a smaller charge of gunpowder, and so thinner, lighter barrels could be used. When used in action these were found to be unsatisfactory, as they were outshot Austrian full bore guns, and it also proved difficult to load the ammunition into the conical recess at the end of the barrel under battlefield conditions. The conic chambered guns were replaced as the war progressed.

The artillery had bronze barrels mounted on blue carriages with black ironwork.

Prussian Field Artillery deployment

The 3pdr and 6pdr cannon, along with the 7pdr howitzer were used as battalion pieces at the rate of 2 or 3 pieces per battalion. Although the use of 6pdrs would suggest more firepower than the Austrians 3pdrs this was not the case, as many of the Prussian guns were the conic type and lacked hitting power.

Prussian Crew

Crews to the Prussian guns would operate in a similar manner to the Austrians.

Prussian Uniforms

The uniform of the Prussian foot gunners consisted of a dark blue coat with red turn backs and blue cuffs with a red piped flap and yellow buttons. This was worn over a yellow waistcoat and yellow breeches. The gaiters and shoes were black and the neck stock red. Belts were white. Headgear was generally the tricorn, with white lace edge and a pompom coloured yellow/black/red/white (from top to bottom) and similar corner rosettes. Until 1756 bombardiers (served the howitzers) wore a fusilier style mitre cap, this was black leather with a brass front plate and decoration.

Garrison artillery wore similar uniforms, except the stock was black, and the bombardiers may have continued to wear the mitre cap.

Horse artillery wore similar uniforms, but with cavalry boots rather than black gaiters.

Russia

Russian Artillery Pieces

The Russians had a wide selection of artillery pieces, many of which were unique in their army:

- Cannon - 3pdr, 6pdr, 8pdr and 12pdrs
- Howitzers – 1/ pud and 1 pud (1 pud approx 16.4kg)
- Unicorns – 8pdr, 12pdr, 24pdr and 48pdr. Uniquely Russian, a cross between a cannon and a howitzer which could fire, bombs, incendiary bombs, cannonballs and canister, It was lighter than a cannon and easier to move on the battlefield, but the reduced charge meant that its range was limited. Its main drawback was that it requires more time to load than most cannon.
- Shuvalov Secret Howitzer – ½ pud (1 pud approx 16.4kg); Again unique to the Russian army, this one being even more unusual with an oval bore, specifically designed to spread canister shot in a horizontal plane.

Russian Field Artillery deployment

For regimental artillery there were generally two 3pdrs attached to each infantry battalion. However in the 'Observation Corps', and in an unsuccessful issue in 1759 these could be replaced by 'secret howitzers' and unicorns.

The larger guns were grouped into field batteries, typically of 8 pieces.

Russian Crew

Crews to the Russian guns would operate in a similar manner to the Austrians.

Russian Uniforms

At the start of the war Russian gunners wore a red coat with black collar cuffs and turn backs. This was worn over a red sleeved waistcoat, along with red breeches and black gaiters. Headdress was a black tricorn with white lace for the men and gold for the officers, both with a white cockade. The bombardiers (serving the howitzers) wore a black grenadier style helmet with a brass front plate. Belting was leather, and the neck stock black. In the summer months the outer coat was discarded, and the men fought in their waistcoats.

From 1759 black lapels were added to the coat, and the waistcoat changed to white -not a practical colour for operating a dirty gun)!