

NOTES
CANNON INFORMATION FOR
SUVCW, Civil War Memorial Assessment Form #61

The cannon information requested on Form 61 is less than what is needed to fully describe a cannon and help with its recovery if stolen. On the main Form 61, I give the information requested and/or then add a note to refer to attachment.

Cannons at Civil War Memorials may not be Civil War era weapons of American manufacture. There were a few cannon that were sold to the combatants from other countries. Then there were obsolete or surplus cannon in their or our arsenals that were pressed into service. Some American models were still made after the Civil War and are considered by some as "CW" cannon, as are models cast prior to and used during the Civil War. Many of the bigger guns were sleeved with rifled inserts during and after the war. Because of the many different sources, the tube must be searched in various places for markings that will fully identify the gun and which are necessary to prove its uniqueness as a specific unit from all other similar cannon.

Cannon from the Federal Government usually were given on indefinite loan and are the property of the U. S. Government. The Mayor of a City, or some other agency representative, commonly signed for these pieces to be used in a specific manner and they are illegal to sell. This information may be found in dedication articles or newspaper coverage on the date the cannon(s) arrived locally. Cemetery board minutes and old city records can sometimes be found to determine who is the official caretaker for these guns.

Places to look for markings:

Cascabel neck or neck of the knob. Markings can be found along the top edge, particularly in some older pieces.

Base of breach. Various markings from weight to various dates are stamped in this area. The whole area must be searched.

Base ring. Usually any markings are found near the twelve o'clock position. On Parrot guns there is a light stamp, which is usually masked by paint at this end of the breech.

Touch hole, vent or lockpiece, at top of breech. A few tubes have markings in the area near the "vent".

Top of tube, to the rear of the start of the chase and slightly forward of the trunnions center line. Various markings such as ownership, who it was made for, foundry, model, caliber or poundage, and tube weight, can be found in this area on some cannon.

Trunnion ends. Often have cast or stamped marks with various meanings, year of cast, Foundry, etc.

Trunnion rimbase next to the cannon barrel. This milled area is used at about the 1200 location to stamp the foundry number, usually on the right side.

Muzzle sight. Later models, may have some stamped information in this area.

Muzzle Face. Main face can be stamped or have cast information, generally iron cannon are stamped and bronze cannon have cast information at this location. It is important to note if there is no information.

Bore can be stated as poundage of shot used in inches, smooth or Rifled. If shot poundage is only available for the piece, it is advisable to record the muzzle bore diameter. Later models during the Civil War started to use measurements instead of shell weight as conical shells became common. Bore inserts: Steel rifled inserts were used to convert a smooth bore to a rifled piece. This resulted in a smaller bore for the piece. The retrofit information is usually found along the inserts muzzle face and often includes a new date. Thus a cannon could have been cast as a 10" piece and changed to an 8" piece. You now have the original casting and model date and another retrofit model and date. Both dates and model changes should be recorded in the research report.

These are the most common areas to look for information and should provide sufficient information to identify a particular cannon. All area of the barrel need to be checked as other stamped information was added as the piece was moved about, captured, re-inspected, etc. The problem is that many times the cannon has been painted so many times that it is difficult to locate the information and to read it. Do not mar the finish without permission.

The instructions on the Form 61 ask that if a memorial can be viewed from all sides, then a photo/image, should be taken from each side. With a cannon monument this is usually a straightforward task. A close up photo/image of the muzzle face should be provided to document the marking information or lack thereof. Photo/image may be a desirable procedure to document trunnion and other markings. A photo/image is a document of fact for research and if the need arises for police reports, recovery, and identification in court.

One can usually set up two horizontal 4" X 5" photos or one vertical 4" X 5" photo on a page with information labeling room available. I suspect that with digital images one could develop a neat page with multiple entries for the miscellaneous markings.

I recommend a supplemental entry cover sheet with all the pertinent information about the cannon. Then back this up with the photo/image documentation. Since supplemental pages have a tendency to occasionally get separated from the Form 61 it has been asked that each supplemental page list the name and location of the memorial. They also need submitter's name and address. This can usually be added at the bottom of a page in 8 or 9 size font with the comment, provided by, copied by, submitted by, photos or images by, etc. It is a task to get the photos/images, label them and arrange the information for a neat presentation packet to add to the Form 61. It does make the Form 61 extremely more valuable to many people, researchers, and is absolute documentation that should hold up in court.

Should you have any question, or suggestion, please contact me and I will do my best to answer or obtain an answer for you.

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