

Billingshurst-Requa Volley Gun, 1864



The State Arsenal in Frankfort, Kentucky, housed this weapon, purchased from a New York firm, during the Civil War and for many years thereafter. Also called a "street sweeper" or a "covered bridge gun," the volley gun guarded small, enclosed areas against attack. The gun was designed to fire twenty-five metallic-cased cartridges. The bullets, however, lacked a primer and relied on a chain reaction to fire. Difficulties in achieving this chain reaction made the weapon unpredictable. Only a few of these weapons saw service with the Union army during the Civil War.

Donated by the Commonwealth of Kentucky, 1923.27

War is not just a compilation of dates that represent a series of battles. "[Kentucky Military Treasures](#)," an online exhibition that illustrates the personal stories of bravery, innovation, heartache and perseverance, provides evidence of the people and artifacts history books often neglect. To learn more about this item and others in the military collections of the Kentucky Historical Society, visit "[Kentucky Military Treasures](#)."