

# Ordnance QF 25-pounder

**Place of origin:** United Kingdom

**In service:** 1940–present

**Calibre:** 87.6 mm (3.45 in)

**Breech:** Vertical [sliding-block](#)

**Recoil:** [Hydro-pneumatic](#)

**Elevation:** -5° to 45° (80° with dial sight adapter and digging trail pit or wheel mounds)

**Traverse:** 4° Left & Right (top traverse)  
360° (platform)

**Sights:** Calibrating & reciprocating

**Muzzle velocity:** 198 to 532 m/s (650 to 1,750 ft/s)

**Maximum firing range:** 12,253 m (13,400 yd) (HE shell)

**Rate of fire:** Maximum 6–8 rpm

**Mass:** 1,633 kg (3,600 lb)

**Length:** 4.6 m (15 ft 1 in) muzzle to towing eye

**Barrel length:** 2.47 m (8 ft 1 in) (28 calibres)

**Width:** 2.13 m (7 ft) at wheel hubs

**Height:** 1.16 m (3 ft 10 in) trunnion height

**Crew:** 6 (No 1 – detachment commander (a sergeant), No 2 – operated the breech and rammed the shell, No 3 – layer, No 4 – loader, No 5 – ammunition, No 6 – ammunition, normally the "coverer" – second in command and responsible for ammo prep & operating the fuze indicator. The official "reduced detachment" was four men.)

**Shell:** 88 x 292mm R

High explosive, Anti-tank, Smoke, HESH

**Shell weight:** 11.5 kg (25 lb) (HE including fuze)



- Major British [field gun](#) and [howitzer](#) during the [Second World War](#).
- Introduced into service just before the war started
- Combining both high-angle and direct-fire abilities, a relatively high rate of fire, and a reasonably lethal shell in a highly mobile piece
- Remained the [British Army](#)'s primary [artillery](#) field piece well into the 1960s, with smaller numbers serving in training units until the 1980s
- Many [Commonwealth of Nations](#) countries used theirs in active or reserve service until about the 1970s and ammunition for the weapon is currently being produced by [Pakistan Ordnance Factories](#).
- Initial production was slow, but by 1945, over 12,000 had been manufactured. The 25-pounder was probably the most outstanding field artillery piece used by British and Commonwealth forces in the Second World War, being durable, easy to operate and versatile.
- 25-pounder was called "[quick firing](#)" ([QF](#)), originally because the cartridge case provided rapid loading compared with bag charges, and was automatically released when the breech was opened.
- In common with all British guns of the period the indirect fire sight was "calibrating". This meant that the range, not elevation angle, was set on the sight. The sight compensated for the difference in the gun's muzzle velocities from standard. The gun was also fitted with a direct-fire telescope for use with armour-piercing shot. It also used "one-man laying" in accordance with normal British practice.

- An important part of the gun was the ammunition trailer ("trailer, artillery, No 27"). The gun was hooked to it and the trailer hooked to the tractor for towing. The gun did not need a limber<sup>[2]</sup> and could be hooked directly to a tractor.
- Many different companies manufactured the guns and component parts in the UK. Vickers-Armstrongs in Scotswood, Baker Perkins in Peterborough and Weirs in Glasgow were some of the most significant. The various Royal Ordnance factories produced most of the ordnance components. In Canada, Sorel Industries built complete guns and provided the ordnance for fitting to the Sexton. Australia also built complete guns, choosing to weld the carriages rather than rivet, as was the practice in the UK and Canada. In all, over 13,000 were made worldwide.

There were two types of cartridges. The normal cartridge contained three cloth charge bags (coloured red, white and blue). White or blue bags would be removed from the cartridge to give "charge one" or "charge two", leaving all three bags in the cartridge case gave "charge three". The cartridge case was closed at the top with a [leatherboard](#) cup. The second type of cartridge was "super", which provided one charge only. The cup could not be removed from the cartridge case. In 1943, an incremental charge of 5.5 oz (160 g) of cordite ("super-plus") was introduced to raise the muzzle velocity when firing [armour-piercing](#) shot with charge super; this required a [muzzle brake](#) to be fitted.<sup>[3]</sup> Adoption of "upper-register" (high-angle) fire needed more charges to improve the range overlap. This led to the development of the "intermediate increment" of 4oz cordite, which was introduced in 1944. The bags were striped red and white to indicate that they should only be used with charges one and two. When one bag was used with charge 1 it provided charge 1/2. When one was added to charge 2 it provided charge 2 1/3, and two bags, charge 2 2/3. This allowed a range of seven different charges instead of four.<sup>[4]</sup>

Throughout most of the Second World War, the 25-pounder was normally towed, with its limber, behind a 4x4 field artillery tractor called a ["quad"](#). These were manufactured by Morris, Guy and Karrier in England, and, in greater numbers, as the [Canadian Military Pattern field artillery tractor](#) by Ford and Chevrolet in Canada. In the 1950s, the British Army replaced the various "quads" with a new Bedford three-ton gun tower fitted with a specialist body.

By Second World War standards, the 25-pounder had a smaller calibre and lower shell-weight than many other field-artillery weapons, although it had longer range than most. (Most forces had entered the war with even smaller 75 mm (3.0 in) designs but had quickly moved to 105 mm (4.1 in) and larger weapons.) It was designed for the British practice of [suppressive \(neutralising\) fire](#), not destructive fire that had proved illusory in the early years of the First World War. Nevertheless, the 25-pounder was considered by all to be one of the best artillery pieces in use. The effects caused by the gun (and the speed at which the British artillery control system could respond) in the [North-West Europe Campaign of 1944–1945](#) made many German soldiers believe that the British had secretly deployed an automatic 25-pounder.<sup>[8]</sup>

After the Second World War, 25-pounders remained in service with many Commonwealth armies into the 1960s. They were used in Korea by British,<sup>[10]</sup> Canadian<sup>[11]</sup> and New Zealand regiments<sup>[12]</sup> and in Malaya by British and Australian batteries. They also featured in wars on the Indian sub-continent and in the service of Israeli and other Middle Eastern armies.

In 1949, 48 ex-British-Army Mark III 25-pounders were acquired by the [Irish Defence Forces](#) and were in service with the [reserves](#) until 2009, having been replaced in the army by the [105 mm Light Gun](#) in 1981. The Irish Army maintains a six-gun ceremonial 25-pounder battery for use on state occasions.<sup>[18]</sup>

More info at [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ordnance\\_QF\\_25-pounder](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ordnance_QF_25-pounder)