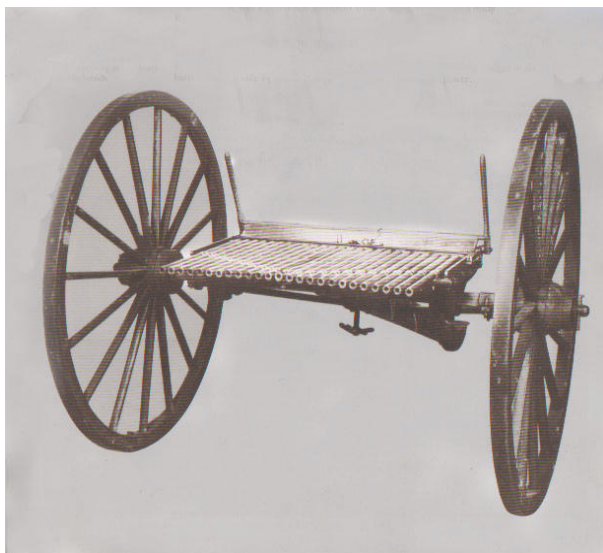


# Billinghamst Requa Battery Gun

The **Billinghamst Requa Battery Gun** was an early rapid-fire gun used during the American Civil War. It was invented by a Dr. Josephus Requa (1833–1910), a dentist by profession, who had at the age of 16 spent three years as an apprentice to William Billinghamst (1807–1880).

In 1861 on the suggestion of an Albert Mack, Requa began thinking about the design of a rapid-fire gun. Requa talked with Billinghamst, who he remained friends with and came up with a scale model of a design by 11 July 1861. After it was received favorably, Billinghamst and Requa decided to build a full-scale prototype, which cost approximately \$500 to build.



It consisted of twenty-five heavy .58 caliber rifle barrels, each 2 feet (0.61 m) long and mounted together in a secure frame, which could be elevated for range. The frame was then mounted on a two-wheeled carrier. Ammunition was loaded as a long clip of twenty-five rounds, which were fired by a single percussion cap in a single volley. With a crew of three, it could be reloaded and fired seven times a minute, giving a rate of fire of 175 rounds per minute. The .58 caliber bullets were conical and weighed approximately one ounce. It was also possible to adjust the spread of the guns to make them diverge for use at close range.

Requa met with General James Wolfe Ripley on 22 April 1862 to propose the idea. Ripley however dismissed Requa with the argument that such a weapon would consume expensive ammunition at such a rate that it would cause logistical problems. Requa then approached President Abraham Lincoln

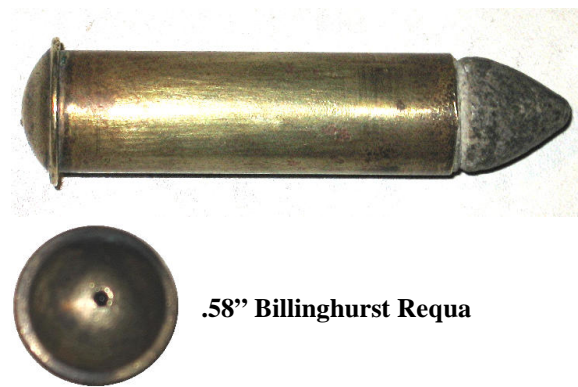
on 1 May 1862, who listened to Requa's explanation of Ripley's dismissal. He gave Requa a note which said: *Gen. Ripley, please see Mr. Requa A. Lincoln, May 1, 1862.*

Ripley, however, would not move from his position. Requa went back to Lincoln, who then ordered Ripley to arrange a demonstration of the weapon. Two tests were arranged on 12 May 1862 and 24 May 1862 with favorable results. Requa and Billinghamst needed financial backing to proceed with production of the weapon, and arranged for a public demonstration of the weapon as proof to backers. This was conducted on 12 August 1862 at Rochester, New York. At the demonstration, the gun blasted holes in a wooden barrel target setup 1,800 feet (550 m) away in the Genessee River. The backers were impressed, and contracts were drawn up to produce 50 units. A patent numbered 36,448 was also issued on 16 September 1862.

The battery gun was never officially accepted into service; however it saw action at Fort Sumter and the Siege of Petersburg as well as the Battle of Cold Harbor.

After the war a final test of the gun was conducted at the Washington Arsenal in August 1864, with a report issued in 1866 indicating that the gun was reliable and performed well during the testing. As a result, an additional five guns were ordered.

However advances in firearms technology soon rendered the weapon obsolete. **Wikipedia**



**.58" Billinghamst Requa**

This separate primed 58 Billinghamst Requa is of interesting two-piece construction: A parallel brass tube is soldered over a long formed brass base piece with a deep internal concave cavity, to produce a very robust case capable of withstanding numerous reloads.

A greased cord was wound several times around the bullet base for lubrication and bullet seating depth varies among examples. **BWG**