

# **.58 Caliber minie balls**

## **Object Card**

Minie balls were used with Civil War rifle muskets and revolutionized long-range firearm performance and accuracy. They replaced round balls. Cast from pure lead, the hollow-base Minie ball was rammed down the barrel until it came in contact with the loaded powder charge. When the powder ignited, the base expanded outward to engage the barrel's rifling. This caused the bullet to spiral down and out of the barrel. The added spin enhanced accuracy and, with the conical shape, it increased range. Its large size and soft lead meant that damage was severe and destructive. Any bone struck was shattered for six to 10 inches, making amputation a certainty. Men hit in the torso usually died of their wounds. The ball is named for French inventor Captain Claude Minie.

