



## LA BOUSSOLE CANNON

This cannon is a relic from a tragic chapter in France's exploration history.

It is a one-pounder perrier bronze cannon that fired metal or stone shot.

In 1785, King Louis XVI chose Jean-François de Galaup, Comte de La Pérouse, to lead an expedition into the Pacific, commanding LA BOUSSOLE and L'ASTROLABE.

The ships spent three years mapping and recording regions of the Pacific before disaster struck and they disappeared. One theory concerning their fate claims that after being hit by a hurricane near Vanikoro Island in the Solomons, LA BOUSSOLE sank, and most of the men drowned or were killed by islanders, La Pérouse among them.

L'ASTROLABE suffered a similar misfortune. Trapped on a reef off Paetu Bay, her crew threw guns overboard in a futile effort to free the ship. Her survivors built a small boat and sailed off, never to be seen again.

Wreckage from the ships was first found in 1826 in 1958. Reece Dismore, a New Zealand diver, rediscovered the wreck of L'ASTROLABE and in 1962 found LA BOUSSOLE. Reports from the diver who retrieved this cannon suggest that it came from LA BOUSSOLE.