CLAIMS

1. A split lift howitzer, the howitzer comprising:
   i) an elevating mass comprising:
      a) an ordnance for firing a projectile, the ordnance ~~including~~ comprising a barrel defining a barrel axis and having a muzzle towards ~~a~~ the front end of the howitzer and a breech assembly at ~~a~~ the rear end of the barrel; and
      b) a cradle for holding the ordnance at a traverse and an elevation, wherein the cradle includes a front bridge portion which engages with a piston rod of a recoil brake and a piston rod of a recuperator, and the recoil brake is mounted on top of the barrel and the recuperator is mounted below the barrel, wherein the cylinder bodies of the recoil brake and recuperator are attached to the barrel; and
      c) two trunnion pins ~~of a trunnion~~ located on said cradle, which co-locate with receiving trunnion bearings on a saddle,
   ii) wherein in a first position said breech ~~assembly~~ is located forward of said trunion,
   iii) in a second position said breech ~~assembly~~ is retracted substantially behind said trunion, ~~and~~
   iv) ~~wherein a recoil stroke is variable depending on a selection of elevation.~~ wherein the cradle comprises a recoil brake elevation cut-off gear, such that said recoil stroke is variable, wherein at barrel elevations above 30 degrees, the recoil stroke is shortened by operation of the elevation cut-off gear.

2 A howitzer according to claim 1, wherein a pair of combined elevation and balance actuators are located between the saddle and the cradle.

3 A howitzer according to ~~claim 1~~ any one of the preceding claims, wherein the saddle ~~comprises:~~ has at least one co-operative engagement ~~unit that links~~ means, for linking said saddle to a towable lower carriage assembly, a fixed forward operating base, a track mounted base within ~~a~~ an ISO containerised system or self-propelled arrangement.

4. A howitzer according to claim 3 wherein the towable lower carriage assembly comprises;

i) a body unit, comprising ~~a pintle for engaging with said saddle,~~
ii) a pintle for engaging with said saddle,
iii) a pair of front stabilisers, pivotally connected to said body;
iv) a pair of rear trails pivotally connected to said body;
v) a pair of wheels substantially co-axially aligned with the barrel axis.

5. A howitzer according to claim 4 wherein said rear trails comprise~~:~~ a trail leg, a trail arm which is pivotally connected to said trail leg, a spade and a damper, wherein said damper is located between the trail leg and trail arm.

6. A howitzer according to ~~claim 1~~ any one of the preceding claims, wherein the barrel is of sub-optimal length.

7. A howitzer according to any one of claims 3 to 6 wherein the howitzer comprises
i. a traverse lock, located between the saddle and body, to prevent rotation of the ordnance about said pintle,
ii. an elevation lock, located between the cradle and saddle, to prevent elevation movement of the ordnance with respect to the lower carriage.

8 A howitzer according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein only the recoil brake cylinder body is attached on top of the barrel and only the recuperator cylinder body is attached below the barrel.

9. A howitzer according to claim 8, wherein the recoil brake and recuperator lie in the same plane as the barrel.

10. A method of transforming a howitzer according to claim 7, from a firing mode to a travelling mode, comprising the steps of
i. engaging the traverse lock between the saddle and body to prevent rotation of the ordnance about the pintle,
ii. engaging the elevation lock between the cradle and saddle to prevent elevation of the ordnance with respect to the carriage,
iii. pivoting the front stabilisers and stowing them in a rearwards direction,
iv. pivoting the spade and trail arm upwards and in a general a forwards orientation,
v. pivoting the trail legs inwardly towards said body.