Boston 12 Jan. 1808

Hon’d Sir—
Permit me to describe an improvement I have made on the fire arms, or a new kind of cannon or instrument to discharge a quantity of shot at once, & instead of scattering them in a circular manner, throw them in a horizontal line. I suppose the instrument to be made at the breach as a common hoeterz with a calibre or chamber sufficient to hold a proper quantity of powder to throw three or four lbs. of musket balls— or buck shot. & a muzzle to be made of wrought iron somewhat like the bell muzzle blander nuts, instead of being a round calibre—a flat or a long oval.

Thus the common musket will scatter its shot in-circle.
thereby a part of the shot is carried above & below the object. I have thought that such things might be constructed for a kind of flying artillery: to throw musket balls or even in a close engagement to throw brick or duck shot—suppose a regiment of men were armed with pistols of such a construction hung at their backs and to meet their enemy sword in hand in the first place to discharge small shot in the faces of enemy them fall upon them with the sword—on fall back at and let the cavalry fall upon them. I am confident that I can with a machine & two men to work it cast a ton of musket balls per day. I have not yet thoroughly proved my plan of a cannon or gun. If on examination you find it worth your attention you will please to inform me (your most obedient)

Th. Jefferson Esq

Daniel Pettitbone
Ps Please to show this communication to General Dearborn. -- art is better than particular forms in war.