Walnut Secretaire Chest

Sold



REF: 84205

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Height: 111.08 cm (43.7")

Width: 99.02 cm (39")

Depth: 46.97 cm (18.5")

Description

A figured walnut, brass bound Military Chest with a central secretaire drawer with two short drawers to either side.

The strong grain of the figured walnut is book match veneered to the drawers of the chest with solid, straight grain walnut used for the top and sides. The hole on either side of the top half of this campaign chest indicates that it was made to be used as a Sideboard Chest if so wished. It was originally sold with a pair of upright packing cases that would have had figured walnut to their doors. When setting up camp, they could be bolted to the sides of the chest, using the two holes to the sides of the top section. Alternatively, they could be used as separate cupboards. A previous example we have had of such a chest can be seen here in our Archive under Campaign Chests here:

https://www.campaignfurniture.com/campaign-furniture/campaign-chests/portable-drawers-to-form-a-sideboard

The secretaire drawer of this chest is set at a height to stand at to work. The interior has a black leather skiver with gilt tooled boarder as a work surface with one long and two short drawers behind, flanked by pigeon holes. The long drawer is fitted with dividers to one side to house an inkwell and pens. The pens' compartment originally would have had a removable pen tray which is now missing.

The drawers have a moulding around their edge to give a clean line to the edge of the veneers and to further elevate the chest. The drawer linings are ash with a quarter round moulding to the interior edges for additional strength. The flush drawers handles are a good shape and it is worth pointing out that those to the four short drawers are smaller in size. Many cabinet makers would use the same size handles on all the drawers but some went the extra step and bought ones appropriate to the size of the drawer.

This walnut chest would have been bought by someone who was not expecting to travel to a hot climate such as India or the West Indies as there was a danger of the veneers lifting. It also would have been someone who wanted to be seen to have a much smarter chest. Figured walnut chests were the most expensive you could buy in the second half of the 19th century and they are still amongst the most sort after today. Circa 1875.

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