

NZAR ID 162, Arm Type: AFV,

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Pattern: (name) Bren Gun Carrier (Universal, Full Track, Carrier), No 1, 2, & 3

Introduced into NZ Service: April 1939, Withdrawn 1956-8

Crew: 1 (driver) but usually 3-4, **Battle Weight:** 4 tonnes

Length: 12 ft 0in. (3.66 m) **Width:** 6 ft 9 in. (2.06 m) **Height:** 5 ft 3 in. (1.6 m)

Guns: most commonly One .303 Bren LMG or none. But also Vickers MMG or others.

Engine: No 1 65 HP, No 2 85 hp, No 3 95 hp Usually Ford 8cylinder.



National Army Museum LP 2



Armistice in Cambridge November 2010



Early Carrier Bren LP No 1 (NZ) riveted construction



Later Carrier LP 2 welded construction

These vehicles were used by both Divisional Cavalry and Infantry, built in Britain and locally in New Zealand, initially from British plans and later to an Australian design.

The New Zealand Army took delivery of its first 6 Carriers, Bren No 2 Mk I & II purchased from Britain on 3 April 1939, these were the first armoured vehicles in the country. However in the early stages of WW II it proved impossible to obtain more carriers from overseas and so a decision was taken to manufacture them locally. In August 1940 the Army placed an order for 40 riveted carriers with the NZ Railway Workshop in the Hutt Valley. The first vehicles were handed over in February 1941 and were almost identical to the British No 2 Mk I carrier save for locally sourced components such as Ford headlights, instrument panel and differential. In October 1941 an order was placed for 420 all welded carriers (Carrier Machine Gun Local Pattern No2), this proved to be beyond the capacity of NZR workshop and so the order was split between them and other contractors around the country with General Motors NZ Ltd eventually taking over responsibility for assembly. This order was later increased to 520 and completed by the end of August 1942.

New Zealand then went on to manufacture a further 650 carriers for export, which were complete by October 1943, however apart from 23 supplied to US forces in the Pacific and 10 to free French forces, the remained unsold until the end of the war. In February 1946 they were purchased by the NZ Government for the Army and the existing carriers in service declared surplus.

Throughout WW II the carriers saw extensive service in New Zealand and Fiji, with a small number being taken to Tonga. In the 1950s a number of carriers were equipped with Wasp flame throwers, or modified to carry mortars, Medium MGs or tractors for 6 pounder guns. By 1956-8 they were becoming difficult to maintain and were phased out of service.

Acknowledgements:

Photos: Barry Hopkins, Phil Cregeen

Reference: Fighting Vehicles of the New Zealand Army by Michael Burgess

Armoured fighting Vehicles of New Zealand 1939-59 by J Plowman & M Thomas