

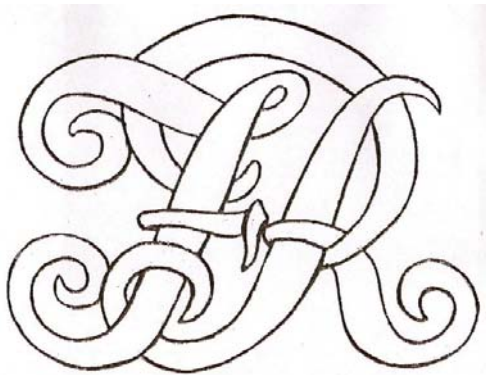
**NZAR ID No: 133. Arm type: Knife. Draft date: 9 Mar 2011. Compiled by: John Osborne DTT, PhD, FSG. [jcosborne@xtra.co.nz](mailto:jcosborne@xtra.co.nz)  
Pattern (name): European/English Dirk Von Tempsky. Introduced into NZ Service: From 1863. Withdrawn: 1886?**

This European/English Dirk (maker unknown) Blade length 8.6" (220mm), width 1.18" (30mm), thickness 0.24" (6mm) at cross guard which is 2.36" (60mm) wide. Handle pierced at end to attach a wrist thong, length 4.72" (120mm), width 1" (25mm). The cross hatched bone scales/grips are attached with three rivet pins. **Provenance:** This knife is reputed to have belonged to Inspector G F von Tempsky (who probably had several fighting knives). Although similar has a different shape handle to the one von Tempsky wears in the image below.



**Acknowledgements and special thanks to:** National Army Museum, Waiouru [www.armymuseum.co.nz](http://www.armymuseum.co.nz)  
Image, Details and Provenance of this knife courtesy Waikato Museum of Art and History, Hamilton [www.waikatomuseum.org.nz](http://www.waikatomuseum.org.nz)  
New Zealand National Archives Wellington [www.archives.govt.nz](http://www.archives.govt.nz) National Library of New Zealand Wellington ATL [www.natlib.govt.nz](http://www.natlib.govt.nz)

### Further information on NZAR ID No: 133. Fighting knives used in NZ.



Outline of the cloth badge of the NZ Forest Rangers



Major von Tempsky



Hat badge of the NZ Armed Constabulary Force

Major Gustavus Ferdinand von Tempsky commander of No2 Company Forest Rangers from December 1863 and later Inspector (commanding officer) of No 5 Division NZ Armed Constabulary Force from January 1868 armed with his cross draw, belt sheath fighting knife,. Prussian born Von Tempsky had learnt his knife fighting skills as a mercenary in Mexico before coming to New Zealand. Image courtesy Alexander Turnbull Library.

Von Tempsky encouraged his men in the NZ Forest Rangers to carry fixed blade fighting knives (not formally issued and purchased at their own expense and not to any pattern) and trained them in their use. Normally the knife was held diagonally in a sheath fixed to the front waist belt for ease and quick knife withdrawal. Later Armed Constabulary Force Inspector John Roberts outlined the training, - "We were taught knife fighting drill, grip the knife handle, small finger against the guard, bending the wrist so that the blade was laid along the inner arm enabling warding off, cutting and stabbing actions by arm extensions and wrist movements". Von Tempsky was killed in action on 7 September 1868 (shot in the head) during an attack at Te Ngutu-o-te-manu, Taranaki. All attempts to recover his body failed and in respect rather than being cut up and eaten his body was burned on a funeral pyre by the Maori defenders.