

NZAR ID No: 141. Arm type: Knife. Draft date: 11 Mar 2011. Compiled by: John Osborne DTT, PhD, FSG. icosborne@xtra.co.nz

Pattern (name): Bowie Knife. Introduced into NZ Service: From 1863. Withdrawn: 1886?

This example of a large traditional 1lb 12oz Bowie fighting knife made by George Wostenholm - I*XL, Sheffield, England has a 9 ½" blade 1 ¼" wide with a clipped back 5 ½" false edge hand forged from 7/16" best carbon steel with heavy brass cross guard & coffin head rosewood brass shimmed handle. 2.78" wide brass cross guard. The heavy grade leather sheath made by Jack Stamper Master Leather Smith, Hastings, NZ. **Provenance:** Bowie type fighting knives (some New Zealand made) are reputed to have been owned by some members of the NZ Forest Rangers 1863-67 and the Field Force of the NZ Armed Constabulary 1867-86. This traditional shape Bowie knife was commissioned by the NZ Armed Constabulary Force RS Inc to commemorate the New Zealand Forest Rangers 1863-1867 & the NZ Armed Constabulary Force 1867-1886.



I*XL 9 ½" traditional clipped back 5 ½" false edge hollow ground blade Bowie Knife with coffin head handle rosewood grips, heavy brass cross guard.



Traditional heavy grade black leather sheath with diagonal loop and cross guard strap. "JAX" trade mark of Jack Stamper, Hastings, NZ



Marked G. Wostenholm & Son / Washington Works / None Are Genuine But Those / Marked I*XL. Brass shimmed between carbon steel tang and rosewood grips.

In 1867 with the disbanding of the NZ Forest Rangers many FR members transferred to the NZ Armed Constabulary Force of which No 5 Division was commanded by Inspector (Major) G F von Tempsky who continued to encourage his men in the NZ Armed Constabulary Force 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. 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".

Acknowledgements and special thanks to: National Army Museum, Waiouru www.armymuseum.co.nz
Image, Details and Provenance of this knife courtesy Osborne Arms Museum armsmuseum@xtra.co.nz
New Zealand National Archives Wellington www.archives.govt.nz National Library of New Zealand Wellington ATL www.natlib.govt.nz
Egginton Bros Ltd. Owners of Wostenholm I*XL www.eggintongroup.co.uk James Bowie and His Knife by C. Allen Reed

Further information on NZAR ID No: 141. Bowie knife in NZ.

George Wostenholm was arguably the greatest of England's cutlery manufactures continuing to this day. The famous trademark I*XL was registered in 1787 and went on to be revered all over the United States and the world as the pinnacle of excellence in knife manufacture. It is reputed that Wostenholm's were instrumental in the development of the very first Bowie Knife acting on instructions of legendary American frontiersman Colonel James Bowie. A knife bearing the I*XL trade mark is reputed to have been found on his body when he was killed defending the Alamo in 1836. Information courtesy Wostenholm – I*XL www.eggintongroup.co.uk



Left: Sgt Arthur Wakefield Carkeek (awarded the New Zealand Cross) New Zealand Armed Constabulary Field Force 1869. Armed with what appears to be about an 8" blade Bowie knife in a diagonal cross draw leather sheath, a 30 bore Terry Breech loading Carbine with sling and 52 bore Beaumont Adams 5 Chamber Revolver. Cap pouch on cross belt, Revolver in holster, carbine, & revolver ammunition pouches on waist belt. courtesy ATL-National Library of NZ. Right: Hat badge of the NZ Armed Constabulary Force



10" blade Bowie Knife c1860s I*XL G WOSTENHOLM & SON / WASHINGTON WORKS / SHEFFIELD. courtesy www.flayderman.com

Example of an original circa 1860's, best quality large Bowie knife & sheath by noted British maker I*XL Wostenholm. Classic style. 15" overall with large clip point, wide, single edge 10" blade (with 6" false edge). Very sturdy quality, weighing over one pound. German silver elliptical crossguard. Two piece handsome stag grips.