

Pattern: (name) **Beaverette NZLP Armoured Car**, Introduced into NZ Service: 1942, Withdrawn 1945
Crew: 2 (driver, gunner),
Weight: 2.0 tonnes, Length: 13 ft 6in. (4.1 m) Width: 5 ft 3 in. (1.6 m) Height: 5 ft 0 in. (1.52 m).
Guns: one .303 Bren Gun or Boys Anti Tank Rifle.
Engine: Ford V 8 32.5 hp, Speed: 24 mph (38 Km/h), Range: 190 miles (300 Km).



NZ Prototype Beaverette



Beaverettes on parade in Auckland

'Sir George Grey Special Collections, Auckland Libraries, AWNS-19420624-20-1'

The first version of the vehicle was built in 1940 by **Standard Motor Company** in Britain at the instigation of **Lord Beaverbrook**, then **Minister of Aircraft Production** (hence the name **Beaverette**) and comprised an armour plate body built on a 1 ton truck chassis. In 1941 General Sir Guy Williams visiting New Zealand supplied the specifications of the British version and a pilot model was commenced at the NZ Railway Workshops at Woburn in August. This was handed over to the Army in October and following tests approval was given for production to go ahead in November.

The New Zealand Beaverettes were built on a 1941 Ford 1 ton commercial truck chassis and initially it was planned to build them at the NZ Railways workshops in Lower Hutt with the chassis and motor being supplied by Ford NZ. An initial order of 187 was placed, later increased to 208. When it was found that the 7/16" steel plate was not initially available from Australia it was decided to use steel plate salvaged from the wreck *Port Bowen* on Wanganui beach, the *Mokoia* at Dunedin and also steel salvaged from the Waipouri pipeline. As a consequence 57 vehicles destined for South Island LAFV Regiments were manufactured at Hillside Railway Workshops in Dunedin. In 1942 a quantity of suitable plate arrived from Australia. As a result of the various sources of steel plate a number of variants of the Beaverette resulted: Class B-12 made from heavy new plates, Class C - 5 with side plates ex *Port Bowen*, Class D - 30 all *Port Bowen* except side plates, Class E - 20 all new plates but lighter than B. Production began at the end of February 1942 and a ceased in July.

New Zealand Service

The Beaverettes were intended for the nine LAFV Regiments, 19 per regiment in lieu of Stuarts. When these regiments were restructured as armoured and reconnaissance regiments at the end of 1942 they were retained as scout cars. Some vehicles were also supplied to the infantry brigade in Fiji. Following criticism of the vehicle in service a number of modifications were trialled in May 1942 at the NZAFV School. These comprised an additional 12 inches of plate sloping inwards at 30° on all four sides, external stowage of pioneer tools, Bren AA tripod and standard Carrier Bren mount in the front and radio on RHS, however they were never formally adopted in general service. The Bren AA mounting behind the driver and gunners seat became a common feature by 1943.

In July 1943 they were withdrawn from service and put into storage, as the LAFV regiments had been reduced to training cadres and no longer need them. After the war they were sold off by the War Assets Realisation Board to various Government Departments and private individuals.

Acknowledgements:

Reference: *Armoured Fighting Vehicles of New Zealand 1939-59* by J Plowman & M Thomas.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Standard_Beaverette

<http://panzerserra.blogspot.co.nz/2013/09/beaverette-mk-iii-part-01.html>