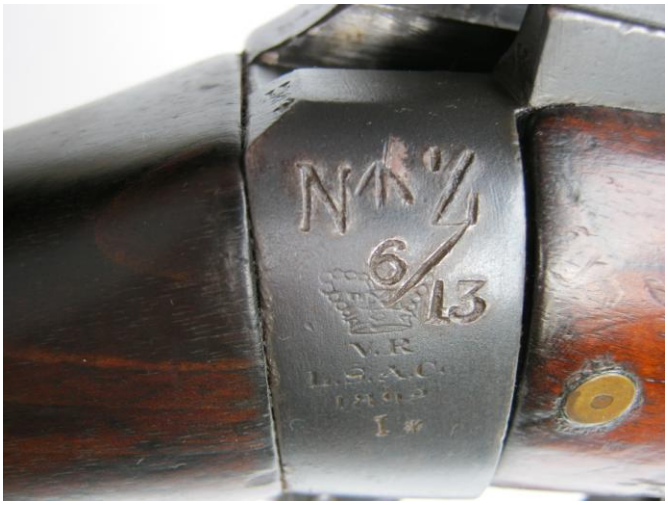
NZART ID: 190, Arm Type: Rifle, Date of Draft: 14 September 2011, Compiled by: Phil Cregeen

Pattern: LE .22 Short Rifle Mk I, Introduced in to NZ Service: 1913 , Withdrawn 1920s
Maker: As per the original MLM, Conversion at RSAF Enfield.
Calibre: .22 Long Rifle, Bore: 8 groove RH twist 1:16 in, Barrel length: 25.2 in.
OA Length: 44.3 in. Type of Action: Bolt, single shot Weight: 8 lb 4 oz.
Magazine: None, Sights: as SMLE

This conversion was approved in LOC 14139 dated 13 December 1907 for Mk I* Lee Metfords in order to produce a training rifle that resembled the SMLE. This involved fitting a new .22 barrel of SMLE profile and SMLE Mk III sights, shortening the fore-end, the cut off and magazine were removed and in some cases replaced by a locally made wood blank. Note in the example pictured above the nose cap and fore-end do not conform to the approved pattern, being modified to accept a bayonet.

The Lee Metford bolt was modified by removing the dust cover and replacing the bolt head. A floating firing pin was introduced in 1910.

Bolt head Marked: **.22 No 2**



From the above pictures it will be seen that this particular example was manufactured in 1892 by LSA Co as a Lee Metford Mk I* and converted to a .22 Short Rifle Mk I at Enfield in 1910. It also has NZ ownership marks suggesting issue here in 1913.

The Defence Report of June 1919 states: “Six hundred MLE, short .22 have been received and distributed to districts,”

A memo from the Director of Ordnance Services dated 13 June 1924 reports stock held in store:

“ 15 Rifles, Short .22 RF pattern 14 No 2 and 26 rifles, Short, .22 RF BSA, which have been repaired and re-barrelled.”

Another DOS memo dated 15 July 1925 reported that of 165 of these types of rifle on issue all but 42 were in poor condition.

The Rifle, short .22 in RF Mk I was declared obsolete in LOC A109 dated 20 December 1923.

Acknowledgements:

Photographs: Phil Cregeen

Reference: The Lee Enfield by Ian Skennerton

Noel Taylor-NZ Defence Reports

Phil Moore - DOS memos