

**NZAR ID 305, ARM TYPE: Carbine. Draft date (V1) 14 March 2012, Compiled by John Osborne AA DTT PhD FSG,**

**Pattern: Sharps Breech Loading Carbine M1854. Introduced: Into NZ 1865. Withdrawn: c1880s**

M1854 Sharps patent slant breech saddle ring carbine. 3 groove deep slow twist rifling, 21 ½" barrel, fixed 100 yard and adjustable ladder rear sight, brass mounted walnut stock fitted with a brass cap box.

During the NZ Provincial Government years 1853 - 1877 there were Special Constables appointed in the country areas and these constables were normally required to buy their own arms. As they were mounted Provincial Armed Constabulary - carbines, revolvers and sabers were their normal arms. The provenance of this M1854 Sharps Carbine below is that it belonged to a Central Hawkes Bay Farmer who acted as a Special Constable (part time - as and when required) in Hawkes Bay Province c1860s. Wellington Provincial Arms Returns dated August 1869 listed six Sharps carbines in store. The Sharps Carbine could use the 30bore Terry carbine ammunition but normally settlers on remote farms would cast their own lead bullets and make their own ammunition. 2 drams (55 grains) of Fg black powder and a 530 grain hollow base lead Minie pattern bullet contained in a nitrated (to self combust) cartridge paper covering with a wax lubricated felt wad glued to the base to seal off the breech joint and lubricate the bore. About 19,000 M1854 slant breech rifles and carbines were made during the ten years before the US Civil War. Cost about £2 traded from American Whalers c1866 compared to £9 for a new Terry BL Carbine.



Left side showing saddle bar and two rings. Loading lever down which lowers breech block and exposes chamber for loading.



The butt tang markings A / N Z / 8 were probably stamped on at a later date. The nipple accepts a standard military musket percussion cap. White's patent (1852) disc priming mechanism was discarded for New Zealand use because of the unavailability of the priming tapes.



It is not known who made this Sharps carbine as it is unmarked and no proof marks. Any information would be appreciated. Acknowledgements and special thanks to: New Zealand National Archives, Hawkes Bay Museum, Osborne Arms Museum