

NZAR ID 355, ARM TYPE: Rifle. Draft date (V1) 12 July 2012, Compiled by John Osborne AA DTT PhD FSG,

Pattern: BSA Co Ltd .177 Air Rifle Improved Model "D". Introduced: into NZ 1911. Withdrawn: After WWI

Specifications; Maker: BSA Co Ltd. Caliber: No.1 Bore (.177"). Model: Improved Model D Light version OAL 39.5", double safety sear, side-catch release for the cocking under lever, Rear sight screw elevator calibrated for 10, 15, 25 and 50 yards , adjustable trigger.



Left image: trigger adjustment using a threaded screw through the trigger guard. Second: cocking under lever with side-catch release. Third: Rear sight screw elevator calibrated for 10, 15, 25 and 50 yards. Right: Loading lever is moved upwards & the lead pellet dropped in.



In 1904 Lincoln Jeffries, a Birmingham gun maker designed and patented a revolutionary new air rifle, initially BSA made about 7000 rifles in his name then purchased his patents and after further developments produced from about May 1908 the improved model D starting about S/N 19236 which was made in three calibers No.1 Bore (.177"), No.2 Bore (.22") and No.3 Bore (.25") and in four scaled up sizes from Junior with an overall length of 34.25" then Light 39.5", Standard 43.5" and Sporting 45.5". A double safety sear was fitted starting about 1910 S/N "S" 51530. These have a side-catch cocking lever release, trigger adjustment using a threaded screw through the trigger guard and are capable of about 1" groups at 25 yards. About 80, 000 Improved model D were made before production ended in 1918. Special Military improved model D patterns were produced in very small numbers to teach gun laying to artillery and naval gunners and cadets in the confines of drill halls and courtyards instead of the gunnery range. The naval ones were fired using an electric solenoid and for land artillery the rifles were fired using a lanyard. The air rifles had their own mounting which was fixed alongside the big gun barrel.

New Zealand Service; The New Zealand Defence Act 1909 provided for the compulsory training of Junior Cadets which necessitated the taking over of all assets and lawful liabilities by the Government. Previously the Junior School Cadets had from 1903 used the Westley Richards Martini action .310 cadet rifles for musketry training on 200 yard outside ranges, however the time spent marching to and from these ranges was considered wasted and so initially 500 .22RF M1904 Winchester bolt action single shot rifles and 500,000 rounds of .22RF Short ammunition and 500 .177 BSA improved model D air rifles were purchased. By 1911 60 x 25yard .22RF and 46 x 10 yard air rifle indoor ranges had been constructed at schools. 878 WR .310 cadet rifles and spare parts and 683,000 rounds of ammunition were withdrawn from use by the Junior Cadets and transferred to Defence Dept. In 1911 there were approximately 2000 schools with a Junior Cadet Force of 29,067.

In 1912 it was reported that the Hazard Perfect Target was used with the BSA air rifles at 15 yards and the Winchester miniature rifles were using 22" short black powder cartridges on the 25 yard ranges. Regular local, North and South Island shooting championships were staged for the Junior Cadets and trophies were provided by the NZ Government and leading citizens.

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NZ Government Junior Cadets Reports 1910, 1911 and 1912. Osborne Arms Museum for images armsmuseum@xtra.co.nz
www.bsaguns.co.uk www.airgunbbs.com