

NZAR ID 362 ARM TYPE: Sword. Draft date (V1) 19 March 2014, Compiled by John Osborne MG DTT PhD FSG, Pattern: 1827 Honorable East India Company (HEIC) Naval Officers sword. Introduced: NZ 1845. Withdrawn: c1846?

Specifications; Maker: Several including Osborn of Birmingham. Blade: Quill / ramrod back, double-edged, curved spear point 1 1/8" wide, 29" long. Gilt brass half basket hilt with inner flap turndown, fish skin grip, lion head pommel with short mane down the back strap. The blade is acid etched which includes a Rampant Lion supporting the British crown and on the reverse a fouled anchor. The hilt also has a ring on the ferrule for a sword knot—a feature that did not extend beyond the mid 1830s. Scabbard: Black leather with gilt brass fittings the top locket has a frog stud and on the reverse is engraved with a large cat. In 1827 the British Admiralty (also the HEIC) adopted a sword that could be worn for dress and used in combat. This type of sword hilt with slight changes has remained the regulation pattern for Royal & NZ Navy officers but the blade configuration has changed over the years.

Background: The Honorable East India Company was granted a Royal Charter by Queen Elizabeth I on 31 December 1600, the company transformed from a commercial trading venture to one which virtually ruled India as it acquired auxiliary governmental and military functions. HEIC became the biggest and richest company in the world and was able to afford the best arms available incorporating the latest British arms technology, equally as good and often superior to British Military arms. The passing of the "Tea Act" in 1773 gave the HEIC Company greater autonomy in running its trade in America but the companies monopolistic activities triggered the Boston Tea Party in the Province of Massachusetts Bay, one of the major events leading up to the American War for Independence. The Indian rebellion of 1857 brought about the end of the Honorable East Indian Companies rule in India, and led to direct rule by the British Government (British Raj). The HEIC military became part of the British forces in 1858.



Gilt brass half basket hilt with fish skin grip, lion head pommel with short mane down the back strap. Pre 1835 ring on the ferrule for a sword knot.



Honorable East India Company Naval Officers Sword Pattern 1827 with quill back blade, fish skin grip, gilt hilt with HEIC Lion supporting King William IV Crown. Blade etched with HEIC Lion supporting the crown, black leather scabbard with gilt brass fittings.

New Zealand Service: Type used by officers of HEIC warships including "Elphinstone" whilst in NZ waters and during the Battle of Ruapekapeka 1845-46. When available in times of war the HEIC warships gave assistance to the British Royal Navy.

Acknowledgements and special thanks to: British Naval Edged Weapons - An Overview by Peter Tuite. Phil Cregeen FSG. Grant Sherriff FSG. Osborne Arms Museum for images of sword. New Zealand National Archives Wellington. National Archives UK.