

**NZART ID No: 66, Arm Type: Rifle, Date of Draft (V1) 11 February 2013, Compiled by Phil Cregeen BSC Eng, FSG**

**Pattern: Carbine, Magazine Lee Enfield Mk I fitted for Pat 1888 bayonet** Commonly referred to as the New Zealand pattern Introduced into NZ Service: 1901, Withdrawn from Army 1903,

Makers: RSAF Enfield,

**Details of Arm:**

Calibre: .303 British, Rifling: 5 grooves 1:10 in LH Twist, Barrel Length: 21.0 in., OA Length: 40.24 in. (1021 mm),

Action: Bolt with 6 round detachable box magazine. Weight: 7 Lb 8 oz, (3.4 Kg)

Sights: barleycorn foresight with protective wings, leaf back sight 200-2000 yds. Bayonet: (NZART # 52) Pattern 1888

Markings: Makers name and date on LH butt socket, NZ Issue marks on RH butt socket.



The Magazine Lee Enfield Carbine fitted to take the Pattern 1888 bayonet was introduced on 30 May 1900 by LOC 10220. Since it was only ever issued to New Zealand it has been termed the New Zealand Carbine by collectors and authors. It differs from other military versions of the Lee Enfield Cavalry Carbine Mk I & I\* in that it has no barrel band and the stock is shorter and fitted with a Martini Enfield Mk III nose cap to accept the Pattern 1888 bayonet. The barrel has the heavier profile of the Martini Enfield with the same foresight protector wings. The top hand-guard is secured by two spring clips. In October 1902 a new back sight was approved with a lower cap and narrower slide, these are marked EC/88 on the leaf. Other differences from the MLE rifles are a curved bolt handle with a flattened knob. The first batch of 1000 carbines appear to have been assembled using new made components, whereas the second batch of 500 supplied in 1903 comprised a mixture of new made in 1902 & 03 and used second hand Lee Metford & Lee Enfield Cavalry Carbine receivers.

**Markings**



Marking on the first batch of 1,000, supplied in 1901;  
New made at Enfield



Marking on a second batch (of 500) carbine supplied in 1903  
Converted from LMC (Cavalry) at Enfield

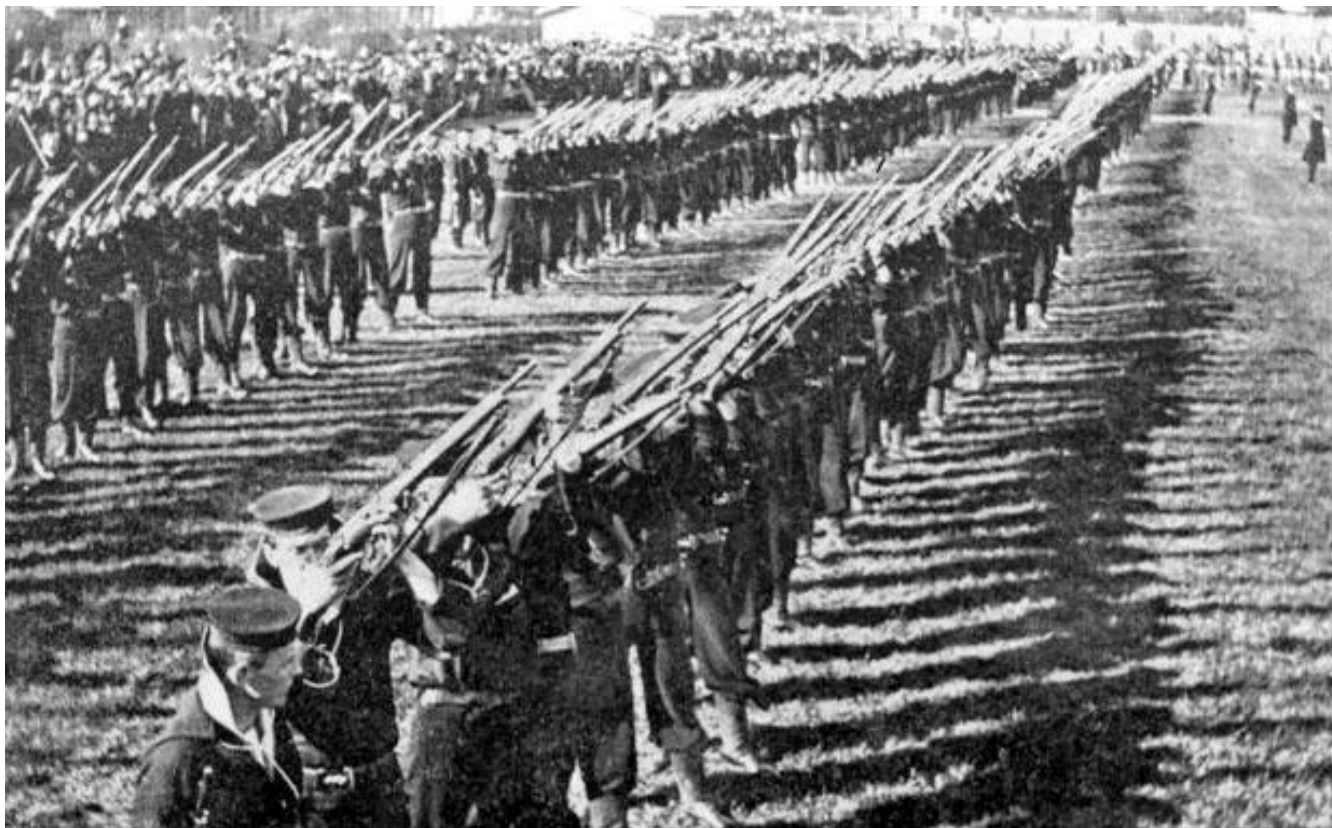
**New Zealand Service**

No evidence has yet been found that indicates that this carbine was designed specifically for New Zealand, but rather it was a design available at a time when it was necessary to replace those Martini Enfield Carbines sent to South Africa. Another explanation for New Zealand being the only country to adopt this carbine was the fact that by 1902 it had been decided by the War Office to arm all branches of the army with the new Short Magazine Lee Enfield and do away with carbines.

By July of 1900 the Commander of the NZ Armed Forces reported to Parliament that nearly 1200 carbines (Martini Enfield) had been sent to South Africa with various contingents and that with the large increase in the Volunteer Force not all troops were yet armed with the .303 rifle. However he hoped that these would be recovered or replaced by the Imperial Government and in the meantime magazine rifles were on order from England (AJHR 1900 H-19).

By July 1901 sufficient magazine rifles had been ordered to equip all forces with a small reserve, in the same year New Zealand received 1,000 Lee Enfield Carbines with a further 500 in 1903, plus an additional number of spares and replacements. These

appear to have been issued to Artillery and coastal defence forces in New Zealand. The Auckland Star of 14 August 1901 reported that 380 Lee Enfield carbines (fitted for Pat 1888 bayonet) had been sent from Wellington and issued to the Auckland Naval Artillery Companies, Devonport Submarine Miners, the Coastguard Artillery and A Battery. It could be assumed that the defence forces of the three other major New Zealand ports were similarly issued with these carbines. By July 1903 all corps had been armed with the Magazine Lee Enfield Rifle and the Lee Enfield Carbines had been withdrawn from adult forces and issued to cadets. (AJHR 1903 H-19). No evidence has yet been found to suggest that this carbine was used by NZ forces in South Africa.



This photo was from the CHCH Press in August 1902 showing the firing of the "Feu De Joie by the Volunteers", no doubt in commemoration of the coronation of Edward VII. There must be several hundred carbines appearing here. Courtesy Grant Sherriff FSG

Some of the LEC were used by the NZ Police at the time of the First World War.

*Acknowledgements: Photographs: Phil Cregeen , John Osborne, Grant Sherriff*

*Reference: The Lee Enfield by Ian Skennerton*

*Appendix to Journal of the House of Representatives (AJHR)*

*Last of the Dust Cover Lee Enfields, by D Munro, J Millagan, N Taylor: International Arms & Militaria Collector No 30*