

NZART ID: 72, Arm Type: Carbine, Date of Draft: (V1) 2 May 2013, Compiled by: Phil Cregeen
Pattern: Lancaster Royal Engineers (Sappers & Miners) Carbine of 1855 Introduced in to NZ Service: 1858, Withdrawn 1880s
 Makers: Charles Lancaster, London until 1858 then Birmingham and London trade.
 Calibre: .577 in, 25 bore, Bore: Oval .577 minor axis & .593 major axis at the muzzle, RH twist 1turn in 36in.,
 Barrel length: 31.5 in. OA Length: 48.0 in. Weight: 9 lb 0 oz. (4.0 kg)
 Type of Action: percussion muzzle loader, single shot
 Magazine: None, Sights: rear sight bed to 400, leaf to 1000 yds., foresight barleycorn on fixed block.
 Bayonet: Pat 1855 Lancaster Sword bayonet, bar on barrel (NZAR # 41)



The Lancaster carbine was introduced in 1855 and issued to the Royal Sappers and Miners, it was manufactured exclusively by Charles Lancaster until 1858 when contracts were let to the London and Birmingham trade. In addition to the Royal Engineers it was used by many Volunteer rifle regiments. This carbine has similar proportions to the Enfield Short Rifle of 1856, however noticeable differences are the brass furniture, rear sight mounted the opposite way round and of course the oval bore. The bayonet bar also has a forward extension similar to the early Pattern 53 Artillery carbines.



Lock



Rear sight leaf hinged at the front



Bayonet bar

New Zealand Service

The Royal Sappers and Miners became the Royal Engineers in 1857 and served in New Zealand from 1835 to 1870, although most had left by 1866. While no documentary evidence has yet been found, judging from the delay to equip line regiments in New Zealand with the Pat 53 and Pat 56 Enfield rifles (1858) it is probable that the Engineers were not issued with their Lancaster carbines until about 1857/58.

The Dunedin Volunteer Artillery Corp formed in 1863 was issued with Lancaster oval bore rifles in 1864. However they were found to be difficult to load and did not shoot well and were replaced in 1866 with Hay Pattern Enfield medium rifles. Otago Volunteers and Hawkes Bay Volunteers were still using the Lancaster for prize shoots in 1869 and 70 and also offered as shooting prizes in Taranaki in 1870 and Christchurch in 1873.

In the 1883 Report on Volunteer Forces 31 Lancaster rifles were listed as being on issue to School Cadets.

Acknowledgements:

References: *British Military Long Arms 1715-1865 by D W Bailey*
The Volunteer Movement by Grant Sherriff NZAHA Gazette December 1995
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Papers past