

**Pattern: 1866 Snider Enfield Rifle(Snider Long Rifle/3 band Snider)** Introduced to NZ Service:1868,Withdrawn: 1907  
Makers: RSAF Enfield; RSAF Birmingham, Tower; Birmingham Small Arms Co, London Armoury Co; Private contractors.

Calibre: .577 in, 25 bore, Bore: 3 groove uniform or progressive depth rifling RH twist 1turn in 78in.,

Barrel length: 36.5 in. OA Length: 54.2 in. Weight: 9 lb 4 oz. (4.2 kg)

Type of Action: Snider breech loading, single shot

Magazine: None, Sights: rear sight bed to 400, leaf to 950 yds., foresight barleycorn on fixed block.

Bayonet: Pat 1853 Socket. (NZAR # 58)



Following Ordnance Board trials in the period 1864 to 66 to determine a suitable method of converting the large stocks of Pattern 1853 Enfield Rifles to breech loader, the invention of Jacob Snider was chosen together with the centre fire cartridge developed by Col Boxer. This in its final form involved cutting off the breech end of the barrel and replacing it with a shoe containing a hinged breech block with firing pin that swung open to the right and include an ejector claw, the shoe being screwed into the rear end of the original barrel. The conversion was announced in LOC 1327 dated 18 September 1866 with the ammunition by LOC 1328 dated 20 August 1866 and was generally applied to the 4<sup>th</sup> Type or model of the Pat 53 with Baddeley barrel bands. The conversion quickly progressed from Mk I to Mk I\* (squared rim to cartridge), Mk II\* and Mk II\*\* (larger breech block & cupped hammer) leading to the Mk III introduced by LOC 1759 dated 13 Jan 1869 which included a breech block locking bolt, and steel instead of iron barrel, these Mk III rifles were made new rather than conversions.(1)

**New Zealand Service** The first Snider long rifles to see service in New Zealand were issued to a detachment of the 18<sup>th</sup> Royal Irish Regiment of Foot bound for Wellington in March 1868 and to those serving at Napier by May 1868. (2) According to the Evening Post of the 23 November 1868 they appear to have been used on the range for the first time in November of that year.

In the Colonial Government arms return of 26 August 1869 there were no Sniders owned by the Colony, however it was reported that 500 Hay medium rifles had been sent to England for conversion in February of that year. By September of the same year 1,900 Snider Rifles had been received from British Stores although many were later exchanged for short rifles and carbines. In December 1869 the Wanganui Herald reported 50 picked men armed with Snider rifles had been sent from Wellington to Taupo to help combat the Hauhau uprising.

By 1875 the snider rifle was on more general issue to Volunteer forces within the colony and by 1879 there were 696 on issue or in store, increasing to 1049 by 1892. From 1890 onwards the snider was gradually replaced by the Martini Henry (1895), Martini Enfield (1898) and Lee Enfield (1901), however some Volunteer Rifles corps were still armed with the snider as late as 1902 and in the 1905 arms return 920 are shown still held in the colony.

In 1907 7,000 snider rifles (long, medium and short rifles) were sold to a Manchester firm and shipped to England.

#### Marking



Butt tang



lock plate



proof marks

*Acknowledgements:* Information and photos-John Osborne, Phil Cregeen,

*References:* (1) 577 Pattern 1853 Rifle Musket & Snider-Enfield by I D Skennerton

(2). <http://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz>

NZ Marked			
Arm	NZ Marked	Maker	Dated
Snider 3 band	NZ 165	Enfield	1864
Snider 3 band Mk II**	NZ S 1104	Enfield	1865
Snider 3 band Mk II	N^Z 1743 S	LAC	1861
Snider 3 band Mk II	NZ S 1229	Enfield	1861
Snider 3 band Mk II**	NZ 1399	Enfield	1861
Snider 3 band Mk II**	NZ S 1096	Enfield	1859
Snider 3 band Mk III	A NZ 80	J Rigby Dublin	
Snider 3 Band Mk III	NZ 264-50-3106	Tower	1855