

In a previous article (NZAHAA e-Gazette Mk II) I speculated that the many short socket Pattern 1895 found in NZ may have been modified to fit the Martini 310 Cadet Rifle, I now find it necessary to review this information in the light of more recent research.



Top: Pat 1895 Socket bayonet for Martini Enfield, Bottom: Broken Pat 1895 bayonet

My theory is now that these bayonets are simply broken ones that have been roughly treated, although they do fit on a Martini Cadet. Comment from Noel Taylor: *“The reason you find so many bayonets with broken socket was that they were later issued as candle holders in Bell Tents, the hammering into the ground caused damage to the socket. I have one from one of my father’s TF mates he acquired it at his first Annual Camp in 1927 it still had candle grease in the socket and needed a bit of heat to straighten out.”*

The Pattern 1895 Socket bayonet for the Martini Enfield .303 rifle was a conversion from the Pattern 1876 Martini Henry bayonet and was introduced in the List of Changes # 8119 on 4 October 1895 and stated “ The conversion is made from the bayonet, triangular, Martini Henry, long, and consists generally in cutting down and rebushing the socket, the socket then being bored and slotted, and fitted with a new locking ring, stop, and screw arranged to fit the rifle. When fixed, the blade is below the barrel instead of at the side, as in the Martini Henry Rifles.”

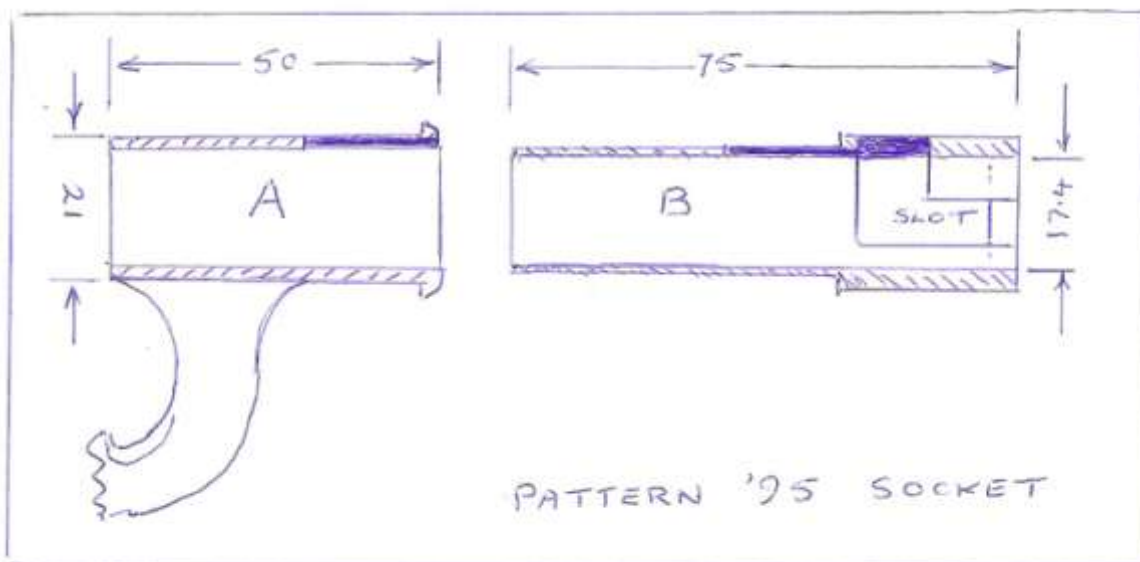


A comparison of Martini sockets

Note: the P 76 bushed for .303 ME was converted at Citadel Arsenal, Khartoum and not issued in NZ, the two sockets on the right appear to be attempts at repair by an amateur.

Having studied a number of damaged bayonets it is possible to form an opinion as to how the conversion process was achieved and why they break. Unfortunately no Enfield drawings or procedure has been uncovered, so the following is speculation at this stage.

- Rear part of socket is cut off at the locking ring guide, leaving about 50mm of original socket. OD 22.5 mm (Part A in drawing below)
- Reduce remaining socket diameter by swaging down outside diameter from 22.5mm to 21mm which also reduces the inside bore diameter (we don't know if this was done hot or cold)
- New smaller diameter socket bored to size to receive the bush and rear forging (as per drawing below).
- New rear part of socket hot forged (Part B), centre hole bored under size. OD 21 mm
- Rear forging inserted, being brazed in place and old slot filled. Socket normalised by heat treatment.
- New slot cut and bore opened up to finished size (ID 17.4 mm).
- External socket polished and blued.
- New locking ring fitted. Note the new locking ring has a higher bridge opening to match the one on the insert.



RSAF Enfield converted over 86,000 Pat '95 bayonets and to date no record has been found of any new made Pattern '95 bayonets, although it is possible that some were made by the Trade.

Close examination of a Pat '95 in good light will reveal where the old slot has been filled and at the front end of the socket it may be possible to see the bushing. Another indicator of conversion is on the top of the blade where it is possible to see old proof and inspection marks over stamped with new ones.



The filled section of the original slot can be seen in front of the locking ring in line with the new slot.



Conversion marks



A broken socket

In 1898 New Zealand purchased 5,000 Martini Enfield Rifles and Pat '95 bayonets, the rifles are marked on the front of the receiver N ^Z 98 and a rack number on the rear of the receiver, the bayonets have a rack number stamped on top of the socket.

Why are so many found broken? When the internal bore is opened up to size to fit on the rifle the forward bush part of B is less than a mm in thickness and is further weakened by the slot, thus it is easy to see why they fail at this point when used as tent pegs or receive similar abuse. All the broken bayonets I have examined show the inner bush to be broken in the region of the step rather than cut off with a hacksaw.

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