

NZAR ID A30 Muzzle Loading Single Shot Pistols used by Military and Police in New Zealand 1769-1870s

by John Osborne AA DTT PhD FSG, 19 March 2012 - Request for information for the NZ Arms Register



From c1840 most commissioned officers in New Zealand military and constabulary services were expected to purchase their own arms (handguns and swords), and all other NZ Colonial military and constabulary personal were invited and encouraged to buy their own handguns at a special government price (cost landed in NZ). Handguns were not normally issued to rank and file personal, only muskets, rifles or carbines with bayonets as appropriate. Military, constabulary and settlers normally procured military type handguns for which ammunition was available and issued. In the early days 1840s and 50s all types of handguns were in use including dueling pistols. With the establishment of the Provincial Governments in 1853 and their setting up of their own Armed Constabulary (foot and mounted) they purchased and issued their own arms. In 1858 the NZ Colonial Government passed the Militia Act and this brought some uniformity to the types of arms and ammunition issued to NZ Colonial Militia but as NZ was a fledgling colony it purchased (where possible surplus / used / converted / best current model) military arms from the UK.

The single shot flintlock and percussion lock pistols shown above have a New Zealand provenance. Please send any information or comments to jcosborne@xtra.co.nz or post to PO Box 52, Kaitaia, 0441, New Zealand.

The handguns in the image above from lower left in a clockwise rotation.

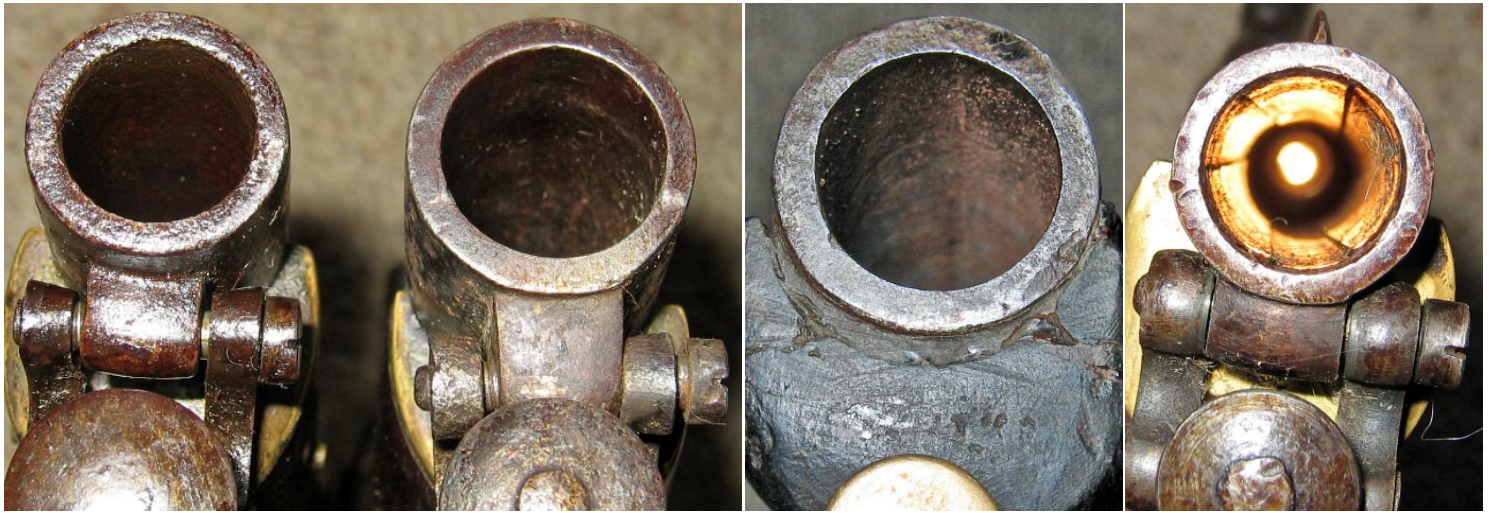
1. P1759 Sea Service Flintlock Pistol, 25bore .57" cal 12" barrel & wooden ramrod type used by Captain Cook c1769 & on British Warships till the 1820s belt hook removed, a well made, strong reliable pistol used with minor changes from c1720 for 100 years then from 1839 by New Zealand's early settlers
2. P1759 Land Service Flintlock Pistol 17bore .66" cal 9" barrel early type with goose neck cock with peg on top jaw, used by Police & Military settlers
3. P1770 Land Service Flintlock Pistol 17bore .66" cal 9" barrel with ring neck cock slotted top jaw, wooden ramrod used by Police & Military settlers

4. P1800 New Land Pattern Flintlock Pistol 17bore .66" cal 9" barrel swivel steel ramrod ring neck cock originally fitted with a sliding safety peg that locked the cock but later fixed, type used by New South Wales Mounted Police during the signing of Treaty c1840 & by early Police & Military settlers.
5. P1797/1839 Napoleonic War emergency (easier & cheaper to make) musket bore .71" cal 8" brl cavalry flintlock pistol converted percussion from c1839 for private sale/colonial use. Used the same ammunition as Brown Bess muskets (.69" 1oz ball) low cost pistol for early NZ Militia (military settlers)
6. P1839 originally flintlock British sea service pistol .57" cal 6"brl converted to percussion captivated swivel steel ramrod, used by early NZ coastguard & mounted Police. Victorian Goldfields Police recruited to police the Otago & West Canterbury Goldfields at first used this type of pistol, belt hook removed
7. P1839 originally flintlock British Land Service holster pistol .66" cal 6"brl converted to percussion captivated swivel steel ramrod, fitted with a P1853 hammer, used by some early militia also foot and mounted police who were issued with .66" caliber smooth bore carbines well into the 1860s.
8. P1842 new made British Sea Service percussion pistol .57" cal 6"brl dated 1849 captivated swivel steel ramrod and belt hook fitted, type used by early NZ Coast Guard and by Police similar use to pistol No 6 above for land service generally the belt hook removed and carried in a belt holster.
9. P1853 British Land Service percussion pistol dated 1855 .577" cal Enfield 3 groove 1in78 twist rifled bore 7.75" brl. Early revolvers were not trusted .

I would appreciate images and details of any single shot handguns used by NZ forces during this period for inclusion in the NZ Arms Register.

Please send any information or comments to jcosborne@xtra.co.nz or post to PO Box 52, Kaitaia, 0441, New Zealand. Many thanks, John Osborne





Sea service .57" caliber

Land service .66" caliber

Land service .71" caliber

Land service .577" rifled caliber



1. P1759 Sea Service Flintlock Pistol.



2. P1759 Land Service Flintlock Pistol



3. P1770 Land Service Flintlock Pistol



4. P1800 New Land Pattern Flintlock Pistol



5. P1797/1839 Napoleonic War emergency Pistol



6. P1839 British sea service pistol



7. P1839 British Land Service holster pistol



8. P1842 British Sea Service percussion pistol



9. P1853 British Land Service percussion rifled pistol



4. P1800 New Land Pattern Flintlock Pistol



8. P1842 British Sea Service percussion pistol



9. P1853 British Land Service percussion rifled pistol

In time I will compile draft NZAR Info Pages on the above pistols for critique / comment.

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