

NZAR ID A64

New Zealand Officially Modified Snider Rifles by New Zealand M & P Armourers

By Dr John Osborne DTT, PhD, FSG. Copyright March 2003, reviewed Sept 2005, July 2008, August 2010, Jan 2015.

The practice of modifying / converting New Zealand Government Issued Military and Police arms by New Zealand Colonial Military & Police Armourers / Gunsmiths started with the conversion of Brown Bess Flintlock Muskets to Percussion Locks from the late 1840s and converting some to percussion carbines. In the late 1890s and early 1900s conversions of Long, Medium and Short Snider Rifles to NZ colonial type (2 band) Constabulary and (1 Band) Cavalry Carbines was common and for use by School / Military Cadets.



Top; Pattern 1853 Percussion Long Rifle converted in UK to 1868 Snider Enfield MKII** action long rifle (36.5" barrel) 3 groove 1 in 78" twist rifling arrived and issued in NZ from November 1868 to some Provincial Militia units; converted c1900 in NZ to 2 band 21.5" Constabulary Carbine (no bayonet fixing provision) Later issued to School cadets c1911, Lock marked Crown / VR and 1862 / LACo (London Armoury Company) NZ / 1287 stamped on Butt Tang

Centre: NZ contract to BSA & M Co 1880, Pattern 1869 MKIII action Snider Enfield Short Rifle (land Service) all steel furniture, (31.5" barrel) 5 groove 1 in 48" twist rifling, First issued with 21.5" blade saw back sword bayonet to the New Zealand Armed Constabulary Field Force in 1880; converted c1905 in NZ to 2 band 21.5" barrel Constabulary Carbine (no bayonet fixing provision); Later issued to School cadets c1911, Lock marked Crown / VR and 1880 / BSA & M Co (Birmingham Small Arms & Metal Company) NZ / 857 stamped on breech and NZ / 1880 stamped on stock. (ramrod missing)

Lower: Pattern 1853 Percussion Long Rifle converted in UK to 1868 Snider Enfield MKII** action long rifle (36.5" barrel) 3 groove 1 in 78" twist rifling; converted c1910 in NZ? to 1 band 19" Constabulary (Mounted) Carbine (no bayonet fixing provision) Later issued to School cadets C1911, Lock marked Crown and TOWER / 1871. No cleaning rod or butt trap, ramrod channel filled in. This arm was made up of parts and refurbished c1968 for me by a retired NZ Army Armourer in Gisborne who had carried out some of the original conversions. Note the raised foresight to be able to zero in at 100 yards.

Note. 1 & 2 band 19" & 21.5" barrel carbines were also NZ Armourer converted from NZ issued MKIII Hay Pattern 33.5" barrel Sniders with 3 groove 1 in 48" twist rifling issued in NZ from November 1869; also converted from NZ issued MKII** Sea Service Pattern 30.5" barrel Sniders with 5 groove 1 in 48" twist rifling issued in NZ from November 1868.

Acknowledgements and Special thanks to. Phil Cregeen FSG; Noel W Taylor FSG; Grant Sherriff FSG; Howard Isles; Blue Thomas; Dr Neil Hayes PhD, FSG: Osborne Arms Museum, for image.