

NZAR A84 Enfield P14 .303" Caliber Rifle & Bayonet in New Zealand Service

Enfield P14 Military & Sporter versions were both used for troop training & by Home Guard in WWII. By Dr John Osborne MG DTT PHD FSG 2011 reviewed March 2016

The Enfield .303 Pattern 1914 (P14) bolt action rifle with an integral 5-round magazine was based on a new design of rifle the P 13 in .276" calibre but the war made it impractical to change the calibre and so the rifle was redesigned in 303. Initial manufacture by Vickers Ltd ran into problems so the UK govt approached the USA. After WWI the Military P14 rifles came to NZ and were held in store. In WWII some P14s fitted with scopes saw service as Sniper rifles in Italy, the P14s in NZ were used for training and issued to NZ Home Guard and held in reserve. The P14s were declared obsolete from the late 1940s but still held in store. A 24" barrel BSA converted P14 .303" sporter produced in the 1920s and 30s was also popular in NZ with Deer Cullers & Hunters. Privately owned .303's were requisitioned by the NZ Government in WWII & used for training or by the Home Guard. In the 1960s - 70s the NZ military P14s were sold off as surplus.



Top: ERA (Eddystone Remington Arsenal) made .303" Enfield Pattern 1914 (P14) MK1 E with heavy 26" barrel made 1916. Trigger pull 13.5"; with its pattern 1913 (made by Winchester December 1916) 17" long x .93" wide blade bayonet and steel capped black leather scabbard.

Lower: P14 / BSA .303 sporting rifle fully floating 24" barrel, thousands converted from a P14 military rifles c1920s on. In this case later fitted with a 3x military Pattern 1918 rifle scope, single post elevation adjustment on top. Windage screw adjustment on dovetailed rear mount. Lightened walnut stock chequered fore-end and pistol grip. Contemporary quick detachable hooks on adjustable sling. Popular with NZ hunters & used by Home Guard in WWII.



Fore sight with wing protectors, bolt showing front locking lug & cartridge extractor, rear aperture sight fine ratchet adjustment graduated to 1600yds.



Maker ERA and serial No. 174893. Left side of receiver with British Broad Arrow and acceptance marks NZ marks. Bayonet marked 1913 / 12-16 / W



Winchester made Pattern 1913 bayonet - blade 17" long x .93" wide marked 1913 / 12-16 / W and steel capped black leather scabbard

The Enfield .303 Pattern 1914 Rifle (P14) was approved in October 1914, however all British rifle factories were committed with SMLE production so the War Office contracted the American firms of Winchester Repeating Arms Co. and Remington Arms/Union Metallic Cartridge Co. to manufacture the P14. Production began in January 1916. Winchester manufactured the P14 at its New Haven, Connecticut plant. Remington/Union manufactured the P14 at its Ilion, New York plant and also in its new Eddystone Arsenal, each factory operated independently, this led to some parts incompatibility, so in June 1916, three separate models were approved; the Pattern 1914 Mk I E (manufactured by Eddystone (ERA), the Pattern 1914 Mk I R (manufactured by Remington), and the Pattern 1914 Mk I W (manufactured by Winchester). In December 1916, a new bolt with a longer locking lug was approved. Rifles fitted with the new bolt are designated the Mk I* E, the Mk I* R, and the Mk I* W. By April 1917, 1.2 million P14 rifles produced for the British & an additional 100,000 for India was completed.

When the U.S. entered the war on 6th April 1917, & after the British contracts had been completed the P14 was modified & standardized by the U.S. Ordnance Department and went into production as Model 1917 Enfield at the same factories as had produced the P14. The M1917 was chambered for the standard US 30-06 cartridge and complemented the Springfield M1903 rifles which up to then were America's official WWI standard issue, the M1917 Enfield soon far surpassing the Springfield in total production and breadth of issue. By October 1917, the British needed a sniper rifle, about 10,000 SMLEs were set up with a variety of rifle scopes and mounts.

Because British production of SMLEs was meeting the needs of the front line forces most P14s ended up serving in a reserve or training capacity. In April 1918, a scope-sighted P14 model was approved; only Winchester-made P14s were fitted with scopes, the Winchesters having proved more dependable and more accurate than the others. These are designated the Mk I* W (T), the "T" indicating "telescopic sight."

At the end of WWI SMLE Sniper rifles were all returned to Weedon and declared obsolete in 1921. The P14 with the Pattern 1918 rifle scope was to be the only sniper rifle in service in 1921. The SMLEs were broken down for components and most of the rifle scopes were sold as surplus to the gun trade. About 1,000 scopes were retained at Weedon and some of these were eventually mounted on P14s. In 1926 the Nomenclature of the P 14 was changed to Rifle No 3 Mk I*. The WW II sniper version fitted with an Aldis scope and cheek piece was designated No 3 Mk I* (T) A. The WWII Weedon repair programme removed the long range dial sights. Both WW I and WWII issue P 14s are found in NZ.



BSA P14 sporter blade foresight dovetailed for windage adjustment, U rear sight. BSA Serial No M 9124. Proof marks for 41grs Cordite & 215gr Bullet.



British snipers training in France 1944.



NZ marked Winchester made P14

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 New Zealand Artillery in the Field, 1914-18 <http://www.nzetc.org/tm/scholarly/tei-WH1NZAr-t1-body-d2-d11.html>
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ross_rifle <http://www.nzhistory.net.nz/media/photo/dillon-sniper-rifle>
<http://muse.aucklandmuseum.com/databases/cenotaph/RecordDetail.aspx?OriginalID=81679&SearchID=1404011&processed=true&Ordinal=1>
 Osborne Arms Museum armsmuseum@xtra.co.nz for images of the P14 rifles, rifle scope, bayonet & scabbard.
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pattern_1914_Enfield http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0BQY/is_1_53/ai_n16866650/

Supplement to NZAR A84

Enfield P14 Sniper Rifle Winchester Pattern 1914 MK I* W(T) Sniper Rifle with Matching Scope

