

# MARTINI HENRY PRIZE RIFLE

## by John Carter



Part of my Naval collection is this .455/577 cal Martini Henry rifle by P. Webley & Son-Birmingham. This civilian version is similar to the Mk II with the fore-end attached by a pin which passes through a lug underneath the barrel, and two bands. The front band has an integral sword bar, the band being secured by a pin and clamping screw. There is no butt swivel, the swivels being attached to the trigger guard and front band. The sight ramp is graduated to 400 yds and the ladder sight to 1200 yds, it has a sight protection cap marked "Martini".



The RHS of receiver is marked with the manufacturer and an unusual mark that looks like an "M" with squiggles. Not being a military model it has no Royal Cypher or service marks. The LHS of receiver has the trade mark of a "Winged Bullet over W&S"



*Note: the unusual mark (M with squiggle) is an acknowledgement of Martini's Patent, placed on commercial Martini Henrys (Ed)*



The most distinguishing mark of course is the silver Medallion inlet into the butt, which is:- "J. C. FIRTH'S PRIZE won by 1<sup>st</sup> Class Petty Officer A.Graham P.N.A.Vol - Auckland N.Z. 1887"



Just under the bow tying the laurel leaves together are the initials of the medallion maker "A.T". Just who is A.T. and who is J. C. FIRTH



Above - Ponsonby Naval Artillery Volunteers Shooting team with P.O. Graham sitting in the centre (now rated C.P.O.) holding a Snider Carbine.

A. T.



FERDINAND ANTON NICOLAUS TEUTENBERG (1840-1933) but preferred the shortened name Anton Teutenberg, he was a master engraver.

His father Anton Ludwig Teutenberg was an engraver and gunsmith in the employ of King Wilhelm IV of Prussia. Anton his son was born in Husten-Germany and schooled in engraving, metalwork and drawing.

Young Anton served his two years of military service in the Prussian Army. His brother Frederich was a mercenary with Gustavus Von Tempsky in central America and New Zealand. Anton heard from his brother of the opportunities in the Antipodes and fired with enthusiasm he, his two sisters Ida and Franzika and a nephew Carl (Karl) decided to immigrate to N.Z.

They departed London 25 March 1866 on the ship 'Rob Roy' which was transporting a cargo of sandstone to NZ for the construction of a Post Office and a Custom House, the trip lasted 119 days during which time Anton had embellished the captains dinghy and also tried his hand at carving sandstone which he had never done before. This stood him in good stead and landed him his first job carving the heads and gargoyles for the Supreme Court building in Auckland. Later in 1867 he was asked to do the same for the Shortland Street Post Office. Within a year of his arrival Anton was established in Wellesley Street East. He advertised his engraving service along with Karl who was a pistol maker. From this time on Anton created seals and medals for every walk of life in the city. (see business card)

Brother Frederich returned home to Germany after the tragic death of Von Tempsky in 1868.

His sisters were embroiderers and advertised their work as Art Needlework from an address also in Wellesley Street.

Anton Married Nannchen Nicolai on 28<sup>th</sup> September 1881.



C. J. FIRTH

JOSIAH CLIFTON FIRTH (1826-1897)

Of Matamata Estate New Zealand, had four sons and was a strong supporter of the Military Volunteer movement and provided various prizes for marksmanship. He commissioned Anton Teutenberg to design and manufacture the mould for this medallion. He also presented similar medallions to each of his sons for marksmanship within the Volunteer Militia. Within the last few years one of these Medallion on its own to 'Arthur C. Firth' (his son) sold at Webbs auction for almost \$3000.

*References:- "Teutenberg-a master engraver & his work" by Numismatic Society of Auckland  
Wikipedia C.J.Firth  
Webbs auction realised price results*