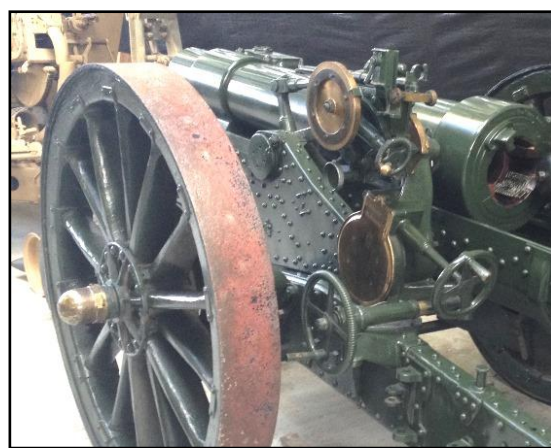
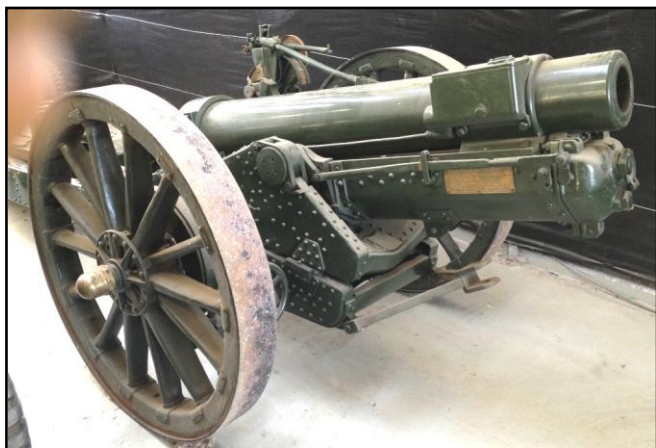


NZAR ID 486 ARM TYPE: Artillery. Draft date (V1) 10 August 2017, Compiled by Phil Cregeen

Pattern: 6 in Breech Loading 26 cwt Howitzer.

Introduced in NZ: 1920. Withdrawn: 1953

Manufacturers: Vickers, W Beardmore & Co, Coventry Ordnance Works, Woolwich Ordnance Factory, Midvale Steel Co. **Weight:** Barrel: 2,856 lb (1,295 kg) Total: 8,142 lb (3,693 kg), **Length:** Barrel: 7 ft 3in (2.21m,) Total 21 ft 7 in (6.58 m). **Width:** 6 ft 10 in (2.08m). **Calibre:** 6 in (152.4 mm). **Breech:** Wellin screw. **Recoil:** hydro-pneumatic. **Ammunition:** High Explosive with both percussion and time fuses. **Shell weight:** 86 lb (39 kg) or 100 lb (45 kg). **Max Range:** 11,400 (86 lb) 9,500 yds (100 lb). **Rate:** 2 rpm. **Crew** 10.



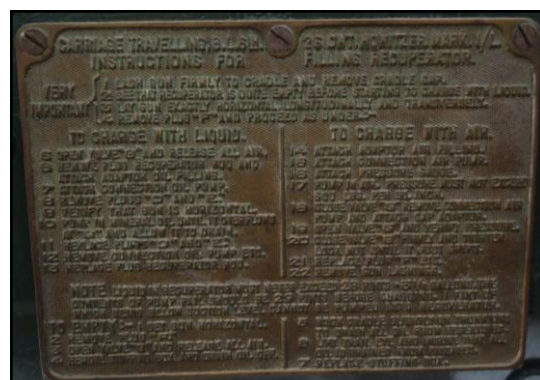
This howitzer was designed by Vickers and introduced in to British Service in 1915, when it became apparent in the early stages of WW I that the current British howitzers (25 & 30 cwt 6 in) were outclassed by their German opponents. It was a combination of built-up construction and 'wire' winding, the latter being of steel riband 1/4 x 1/16-inch (6.36 x 1.59-mm) section. Rifling was polygroove plain section (PPS), of uniform twist, one turn in 15 calibres. The breech mechanism consisted of a Welin single-action screw with steep-coned obturator and a vertically acting lever breech mechanism (LBM), which speeded up opening and closing.

A total of 3,633 guns were manufactured and they served with British, Dominion and Allied armies until 1945, when they were declared obsolete. Between the wars the wooden spoked wheels were replaced with steel wheels with pneumatic tyres.

New Zealand Service

Following WW1, three NZ territorial batteries were equipped with the howitzer in the early 1920s. In 1938 the NZ government adopted a local pattern conversion kit to mechanise the gun by fitting a bogie with four pairs of heavy truck wheels. The result did not track well behind the towing vehicle though as the trail of smashed one-way bridges in certain parts amply testified.

The howitzer remained on active service until 1941, and became obsolete in 1945 with the arrival of the 5.5 inch medium gun. However, the NZ Army retained the guns for CMT (Compulsory Military Training) use until a premature detonation occurred around 1953 during a shoot in the South Island involving 17 Medium (Petone), 19 Medium (Wellington) and 14 Medium (Dunedin) that blew the muzzle off one of the guns. No one was injured but the howitzers were quickly retired. The National Army Museum's gun (pictured) came from Hopuhopu Military Camp who had received it in 1953.





Territorial gun crew in the South Island c.1930 with the 6 inch Howitzer in the centre



New Zealand gunners pose for a photo at Waipukurau 1928

Acknowledgements and Thanks: John Osborne, Peter Maxwell, Grant Hayes (National Army Museum), RNZAA.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/BL_6-inch_26_cwt_howitzer

<http://riv.co.nz/rnza/hist/local/bl6in.htm>