

Pattern (Name) 1888 Mk I and Mk II Sword Bayonet, Introduced into New Zealand Service 1898, withdrawn Post WWII

Length OA 16.7 in (424mm), Blade 12.0 in (305mm), MRD 16.5 mm, Scabbard 12.5 in (317mm)

The Pattern 1888 Mk I Bayonet was introduced for the Lee Metford Rifle and went into production at RSAF Enfield in 1889. It was a departure from previous designs in that it mounted under the rifle with the blade vertical, as opposed to on the right side and thus required a new style of bayonet bar which formed part of the nose cap. Because the new rifle had a cleaning rod which extended through the bayonet bar the pommel and hilt of the bayonet was drilled to accommodate this and a clearing hole drilled through the grips. In 1899 the cleaning rod was abolished and thus the need for the hole drilled in the pommel and hilt, the clearing hole was then drilled through the pommel and the brass rivets securing the grips repositioned, advancing the bayonet to Mk II.

Pattern 1888 Bayonets were made by RSAF Enfield (236,610), and contractors: Wilkinson, Sanderson and Mole, who also made them for Volunteers and the Trade.

The Pattern 1888 bayonets were used for Lee Metford Mk I & II rifles, Lee Enfield Mk I & I* rifles, Charger Loading Lee Enfield rifle, Martini Metford and Martini Enfield Artillery carbines, Royal Irish Constabulary LE carbines and NZ Pattern Lee Enfield carbines.



Top: Pattern 1888 Mk I 2nd Type with Volunteer Patter scabbard, Bottom: Pattern 1888 Mk II with Mk I scabbard

These two versions of the Pattern 1888 bayonet are the most common types, a 1st Type Mk I with three brass rivets was only manufactured for a short time at Enfield, and a Mk III with grips secured by screws was introduced in 1901.

The Bayonet saw service in the Boar War, WW I and in WW II when issued to Home Guard.



Pattern 1888 Mk II bayonet fitted to a Lee Enfield Mk I* rifle



Mk I marking from top, left side: Monarch (VR), date (6/97)

Right side: maker (EFD), Enfield inspection mark, bending mark (X), sold out of service.



Mk II marking from top, left side: Monarch (VR), date (4/01), maker (Wilkinson London)

Right side: sold out of service, Wilkinson inspection mark, bending mark(X)

New Zealand Service

This bayonet was first issued in New Zealand in 1898 with the Martini Enfield Artillery carbine and later with the NZ Pattern Lee Enfield carbine. It was also used with Lee Metford and Lee Enfield Rifles purchased by New Zealand.

1903 small arms returns show the following on issue and in store:

MLE Rifles 18,785

MLE Carbines 1,478

ME Carbines 1,464



New Zealand issue .303" Martini Enfield MKI Artillery Carbine (ACI) converted at Enfield in 1897 from a 577.450 Martini Henry MkIII rifle originally made at Enfield in 1882. 1500 Martini Enfield Artillery Carbines and 1888 MKI bayonets were purchased by NZ Government in 1898 for use by New Zealand Mounted Rifles. Issued in NZ to the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and about half of the 5th Contingents of NZ Mounted Rifles (Rough riders) who served in the Boer War together with 1888 MKI knife bayonets (top) compared to the MKII (Lower) c1901. These carbines continued in service with some NZ based volunteer corps, for military training purposes during WWI and WWII and issued to some Home Guard Units during WWII.

New Zealand soldiers were sent to fight in WWI armed with Magazine Lee Enfield MKI*(Long Tom) Rifles and Pattern 1888 bayonet, although they were soon exchanged for the SMLE and Pat 1907 bayonet.

The bayonet also saw service with Home Guard in WW II.

Reference: British & Commonwealth Bayonets by ID Skennerton & R Richardson

Photos – Phil Cregeen & John Osborne