

# Flint & Cap

Newsletter of The New Zealand Antique and Historical Arms Association

Wellington Branch Inc. P.O. Box 14-029 Kilbirnie, Wellington

<http://www.nzaaaawgtn.org.nz/>

October 2015

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Club meetings

Venue is at the Petone Club

Starting at 1.00pm

1st November—NO MEETING

6th December

3rd January - NO MEETING

7th February

### Range Days

22nd November

### **CLUB AMMO FOR SALE**

We still have some Winchester .22 ammo for sale. A box contains 555 rounds @ \$38.00. Bring \$\$\$, no credit given

### **Bayonet DVD's**

A new batch has been produced and will be at the next meeting. Please see Steve

### **Finally, a good gun story**

A guy walked into a crowded bar, waving his unholstered pistol and yelled, "I have a .45 Colt with an eight shot magazine and I want to know who's been sleeping with my wife." A voice from the back of the room called out, "You don't have enough ammo."

### 15th November

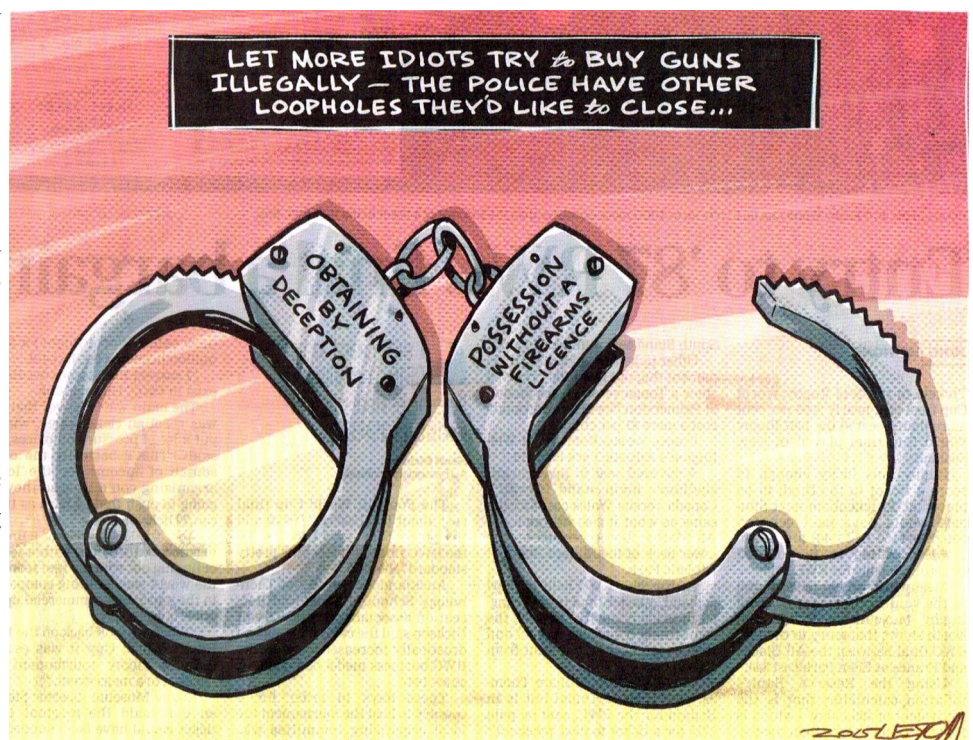
#### **Wellington Branch Annual Luncheon:**

The booking has been made at the Porirua RSA, McKillop Street and Rose is available to do the catering again. The date is the 15th November 2015.

We need members to indicate if they are planning to attend so we can get accurate numbers. It is just not acceptable for people to turn up on the day as the caterer needs to plan ahead for the ingredients and we need to know how many we are paying for.

#### **You can either:**

- Attend the Branch meeting and sign the sheet
- Email the Secretary to: [warbirds@clear.net.nz](mailto:warbirds@clear.net.nz)
- Mail your intention to attend to:
- P O Box 14029, Kilbirnie, Wellington 6166





## US Trip Aug/Sept 2015

Our travels to US a few weeks ago included a road trip to a number of States. We drove from New York south to North Carolina then into Virginia and the great Smoky Mountain route to Tennessee and Kentucky then up the Great River Road alongside the Mississippi river through the mid west to Lake Superior and back to NY. The towns and cities along the way depict a very different life style than is evident in the city of NY and are generally much more relaxed and usually well spread out.

Roading is king and the highways are of a very high standard to cope with volumes of traffic we never experience or even dream of in NZ. As a collector of firearms I kept an eye out for Civil War battle sites and I noted various places of interest and numerous plaques commemorating various incidents but it was not until we reached Louisville that I visited a museum. By chance I learned that this was the only museum in the world that has items on permanent exhibition from the Royal Armouries in Leeds England which of course is the UK's prized National collection of centuries worth of Arms and Armour, so this made it sound attractive. However the museum, the Frasier International History Museum was really an excellent modern museum with interactive displays for children and well displayed exhibits. Like the Royal Armouries they also stage re-enactments and we started off by viewing one on the life of the legendary sharpshooter Annie Oakley. The young lady acting the part was using a very well preserved Winchester 1873 rifle and at the conclusion of the show she invited the audience to inspect the rifle. Our family and one other were the only spectators at the time and myself being the only one interested in the rifle managed to get a look at it and it certainly looked in excellent condition. The firearms on display in the museum were my main interest and there was no shortage of these although almost entirely of American manufacture but all very well displayed and identified along with historic time lines of the various famous American manufacturers. I will include some photos of the exhibits.

Soon after we visited the historic place of Bardstown some 30 miles out of Louisville where large numbers of troops camped and skirmished during the Civil War and here I visited the local museum. This museum was quite small by comparison with the Frasier museum in Louisville but was nicely set out and well stocked with Civil War exhibits some of which illustrated gruesome scenes and barbarous looking medical equipment. Once again almost all firearms and cannons were of early US manufacture, some of which we see specimens of in New

Zealand although we seldom see much of the other accoutrements. I will include the odd photo.

Later we travelled to Davenport which part of Quad city made up of the Mississippi riverfront cities of Moline, East Moline, Rock Island and Bettendorf. Davenport proved to be a rather interesting place but I will keep that for a later issue of Flint & Cap.

Rex









## The M1 Carbine – Development

The U.S. Carbine, Caliber .30, M1 is a very popular collector's and shooter's firearm. It is generally extolled as a great, "fun" gun to shoot because of its low weight and easy handling, minimal recoil and surprising accuracy over distances up to 300m. These are exactly the virtues it was designed to produce, remarkably spending only a year in development - from initial specifications published by the US Ordnance Department in October 1940 to its formal acceptance in October 1941 - and going on to become the most-produced military firearm in U.S. history.

### **The Need for a Carbine**

The development of a "light rifle" for the U.S. armed forces came from the realization that the M1 Garand was too heavy and cumbersome a weapon for frontline "specialist" soldiers who had other duties to perform (e.g. radiomen, machine-gun and mortar crews, certain NCOs) and was largely unnecessary - and, at the time, unavailable - for non-frontline troops (e.g. supply train, engineers, headquarters staff) heretofore issued with the M1911 pistol or M1917 revolver. However, after the spectacular German advances in Europe in 1939-40 it also became clear that non-frontline troops could easily be exposed to combat due to the new tactics and techniques of mobile warfare. The only available alternative to the sidearm was the M1928A1 submachine gun - also fairly hefty while still firing only a pistol cartridge, the weapon itself expensive to produce and already in short supply. The "light rifle" was to be a weapon to replace the sidearm of support troops that would enable them to more effectively defend themselves if pressed into direct combat.

The specifications for the weapon to be developed by interested parties were announced on 1<sup>st</sup> October 1940 in a circular entitled "*Military Characteristics for Light Weight Semiautomatic Rifle as Possible Replacement for Cal. .45 Pistol and Submachine Gun*". A new cartridge that the rifle was to fire, based on the commercial Winchester Self-loading Cartridge, Caliber .32, was broadly described. Actual development and delivery of the cartridge by the Winchester company was delayed, requiring the first trials of rifles to be postponed from 1<sup>st</sup> February to 1<sup>st</sup> May 1941. On that day 9 pilot rifles were submitted for evaluation, including models designed by John Garand, Eugene Reising and Val A. Browning (son of the late John M. Browning). After testing no clearly satisfactory design was identified, however two models - including that of John Garand - were deemed worthy of further testing, after modifications. Due perhaps to the disappointing re-

sults of these first trials, re-submissions of improved versions of any of the pilot models and even submissions of entirely new designs were permitted, provided they were presented by a new deadline on 15<sup>th</sup> September 1941. Some of the original specifications - such as the capability to provide automatic fire - were changed to improve the chances of a suitable rifle being designed.

### **Winchester and "Carbine" Williams**

Although responsible for designing the .30 Carbine cartridge for the light rifle to fire, the Winchester company had not submitted a weapon for the initial trials. They had been working on a design for an alternative to the M1 Garand rifle firing the standard .30-06 round, based on early efforts by Jonathan Edmund "Ed" Browning (John M. Browning's half-brother). Ed Browning had died in May 1939 and work had been continued by the (in)famous David Marshall "Carbine" Williams, whom Winchester had hired after he had demonstrated his abilities as a gunsmith and inventor whilst serving time in prison for killing a county deputy during a raid on an illegal distillery he had been running in 1921. Williams had long been interested in carbine designs, and by applying a short-stroke mechanism he had previously patented into the "Caliber .30 M2 Browning Military Rifle" under development, had produced a rifle which if scaled down for the smaller cartridge might meet the requirements for the light rifle. The use of the short-stroke piston ("tappet" system) made considerable weight savings and by incorporating various other Winchester designs (such as the trigger mechanism from the Model 1907 SLR) a working prototype was produced in just 13 days. It was test-fired at an "intermediate trial" at Aberdeen Proving Ground on August 11, 1941 and proved promising, but not totally without problems. The team at Winchester were encouraged to improve on their design for the 15<sup>th</sup> September Service Trials, but Williams - who it seems did not like doing anything in a rush - became unhappy and reportedly "began to sulk". Work went on without him but on the Friday three days prior to the trials the second prototype would not work properly. Williams was coaxed back into the team and together they worked over the weekend to solve the problems. On the Sunday at a proving session on the day before the final Service Trials the rifle performed admirably, firing 960 rounds with only 3 malfunctions.

### **Final Trials**

The final Service Trials for the light rifle commenced on September 15th and consisted of 10 days of firing the submitted rifles at the Aberdeen Proving Ground "under all known conditions of severe service". Five rifles were tested, the strongest competitors being the

Winchester and Springfield (Garand) models. Three days into the test the bolt of the Winchester rifle broke but a new one was built overnight by one of the engineers (Fred Humeston) who had the dimensions of the part "in his head". Final reports after 10 days of testing identified the Winchester Light Rifle as clearly superior to all other contenders, concluding:

The weight of the rifle with 5-round magazine and sling was 4.97 pounds

Its length was 35.50 inches with an 18-inch barrel

Its general functioning was excellent

In handiness this rifle was excellent

In lightness of recoil, the rifle was excellent

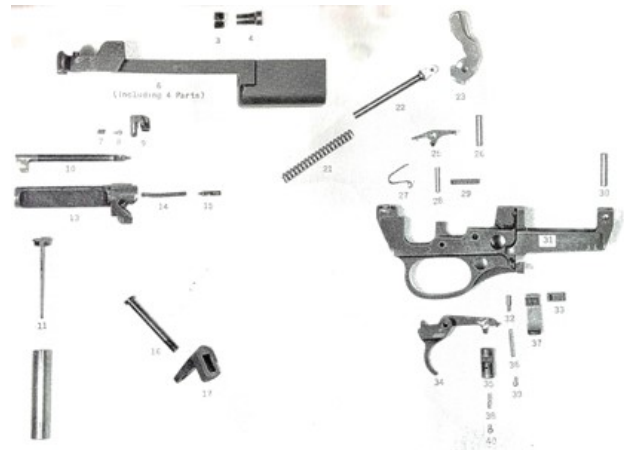
Function in unusual positions was excellent

It was a simple mechanism

In case of hand operation (manual operation if the self-loading mechanism failed), the rifle was excellent.

On September 30th, the light rifle subcommittee of the Ordnance Board unanimously recommended adoption of the Winchester entry as the "Carbine Caliber .30, M1".

The production of the successful prototype by the Winchester team in only a few short months has been considered "an amazing feat of engineering and managerial prowess". By combining the ideas of extremely talented individuals into a novel weapon conceived to solve a specific problem at an extra-ordinary time in history the team produced a classic firearm that not only met the purpose of its creation but accomplished much more during its service life, and that continues to be admired as both a practical working gun and a notable firearm well worth collecting.



## America's New Light-weight Weapon ...with a Heavy-weight's Punch

**T**HANK the United States Ordnance Department for this good news. They quickly realized that, in this war, our paratroops, and all other non-rifle bearing combat forces, needed a personal weapon that was lighter than the standard rifle... greater in fire-power, longer in range and faster in action than the automatic pistol. Yesterday, no such weapon existed. Today, it is rapidly being made available to America's fighting men.

Here's the story. In record time Winchester originated, engineered and developed the U. S. Carbine, Caliber .30, M1. Gruelling tests in sand, rain and water—the toughest tests that Aberdeen Proving Grounds could devise—resulted in a unanimous verdict for this carbine as the best for this vital U. S. military job.

Operating on a simple principle that's entirely new to military arms, with 15 rounds in its magazine, the Winchester U. S. Carbine, Caliber .30, M1 packs a terrific wallop. It speeds its .30 caliber bullet 1900 feet per second... greatly increases offensive power.

Winchester is proud of this accomplishment... of originating and developing the U. S. Carbine, Caliber .30, M1... of manufacturing it in ever increasing quantities. We are mindful of the fact that it is Winchester men, not machines, that made it all possible. And that these same Winchester master craftsmen look forward to the coming peace when, once again, they can supply you with Winchester sporting arms and your favorite Winchester ammunition.

**WINCHESTER REPEATING ARMS CO.**  
New Haven, Conn.  
Division of WESTERN CARTRIDGE COMPANY

### GARANDS, TOO!

Here again, Winchester craftsmanship is in the forefront of service to America. For we have long been on a 'round-the-clock production schedule of this famous rifle which won its spurs at Bataan and Wake Island.

"Everyday—with a Winchester Garand across his knees and a bolo to cut himself out of his harness if he fell into the water—he flew between Bataan and Corregidor..."

"The Heroic Defense of the Philippines"  
—Reader's Digest, July 1942



# WINCHESTER





## September Displays

Navel Snider with Cutlass Bayonet and N marked Yata-ghan Bayonet

19.17 08 Maxim Machine Gun with ammo belt and book explaining the workings etc..

Papers and Photos of Stanley Ledger who was Captain Class Frigates on escort duty.

20<sup>th</sup> October 1805 – The battle of Frafalgari, HMS Victory bits and pieces. 210 years on 20<sup>th</sup> October.

4 Swiss Bayonets with Scabbards and Frogs

Extractors for shotgun shells, some incorporated with knives. More than 30 different types.

Derringers – Pair of .41 Coly third model. Pair of NZ made daggers and an Enfield .38 cal revolver

My Grandmother - An Nurse in the 1<sup>st</sup> WW

Naval uniform plus naval bayonet, oil bottle and drum

Naval Cutlass, Naval flintlock pistol and naval officers dirk

Desert Eagle .50 AE and .44 mag

Dutch AR10 issued to flight crews as artic survival kits

British Naval officers' swords, midshipman's dirks and sword belts. Plus Japanese naval dirk and German naval dirk

Danish Helmet M23 from WWII

Royal Navy cigarette cards and medals link to Royal Navy

Copper printers blocks with a military theme

My father was John Ridley who joined the navy as a 19 year old – Photos and information relating to John plus photo of Margaret with the Vengeance's Bell found at Mana College

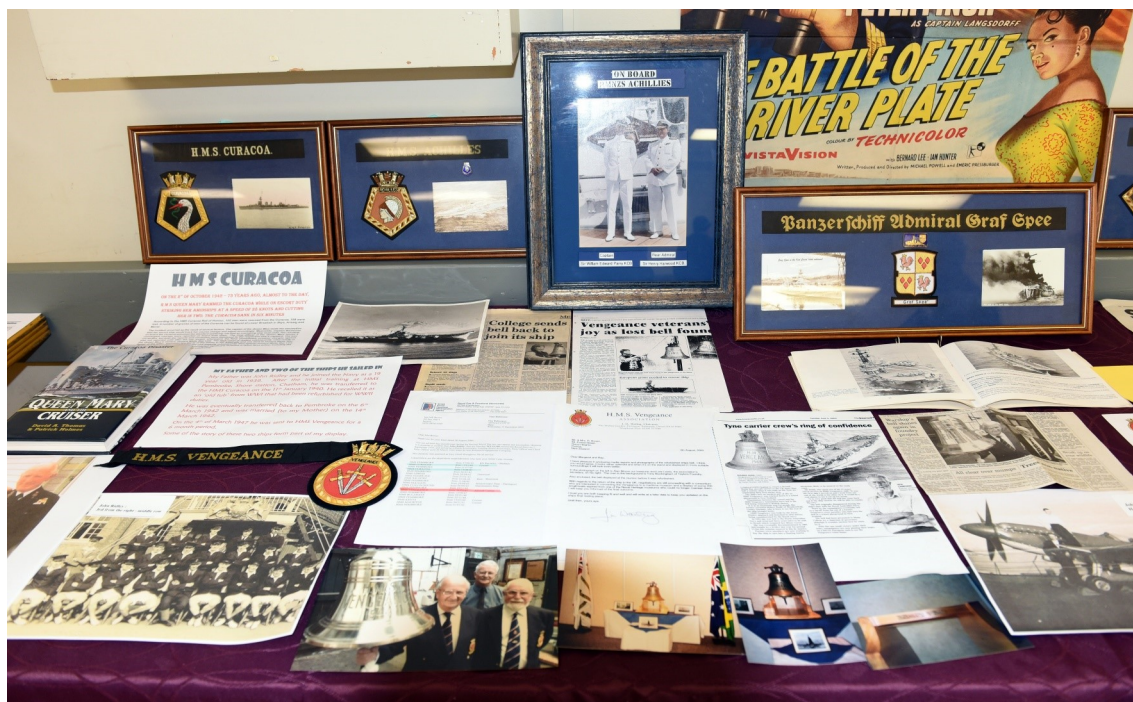
Vacuum pump – pump designed for telescopes and binoculars dated 1944











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November Christmas  
Meeting All displays  
welcome



The Theme for  
December will be

The New Zealand Army  
The letter of the month  
still applies and these  
are F & G. Some ideas  
are Factory, French,  
Flintlock, Forging, Flack,  
Gauges, Gilt, Grease,  
Grips, German, Govern-  
ment