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 mag-azine 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
- 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 ex-
tolled as a great, “fun” gun to shoot because of its low weight and easy handling, minimal recoil and surpris-
ing accuracy over distances up to 300m. These are ex-
actly the virtues it was designed to produce, remarka-
ably spending only a year in development - from initial
specifications published by the US Ordnance Depart-
ment in October 1940 to its formal acceptance in Octo-
ber 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 alter-
native 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 them-
selves if pressed into direct combat.

The specifications for the weapon to be developed by
interested parties were announced on 1st October 1940
in a circular entitled “Military Characteristics for Light
Weight Semi-automatic Rifle as Possible Replacement
for Cal. .45 Pistol and Submachine Gun”. A new car-
tridge that the rifle was to fire, based on the commer-
cial Winchester Self-loading Cartridge, Caliber .32,
was broadly described. Actual development and deliv-
ery of the cartridge by the Winchester company was
delayed, requiring the first trials of rifles to be post-
poned from 1st February to 1st 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 identi-
fied, however two models - including that of John Gar-
and - 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 submit-
tions of entirely new designs were permitted, provided
they were presented by a new deadline on 15th Septem-
bright 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 de-
gined.

Winchester and “Carbine” Williams

Although responsible for designing the .30 Carbine
cartridge for the light rifle to fire, the Winchester com-
pany 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 deput-
ty during a raid on an illegal distillery he had been run-
in 1921. Williams had long been interested in
carbine designs, and by applying a short-stroke mecha-
nism 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 ri-
fe. The use of the short-stroke piston ("tappet" sys-
tem) made considerable weight savings and by incor-
porating various other Winchester designs (such as the
target 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 15th
September Service Trials, but Williams - who it seems
did not like doing anything in a rush – became unhap-
py 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.
September Displays

Naval Snider with Cutlass Bayonet and N marked Yatagan 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.

20th October 1805 – The battle of Frafalgari, HMS Victory bits and pieces. 210 years on 20th 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 1st 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
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, Government