

Flint & Cap

Newsletter of The New Zealand Antique
and Historical Arms

Association Wellington Branch Inc.

P.O. Box 14-029

Kilbirnie

WELLINGTON.

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www.nzaaawgtn.org.nz

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colour

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June 3rd Meeting. The letter "A" and a fine start to the alphabet with an astounding array of items on display.

- * Ammunition packets with animal scenes
- * Range of hunting and fishing advertising.
- * Shooting accessories
- * Afghanistan bayonets
P1888, 1907 and 1913
- * Selection of Webley Automatic Pistols
9 mm, .25 and .32's
- * Lee Enfield No1 Mk II manufacture by
National Rifle factory marked RNZAF
- * Selection of bayonets manufactured by
various communist countries for the AKM
rifle.
- * A superb collection of Japanese Arisaka rifles
and bayonets, rarely seen in this condition.
An eye opener for the serious Japanese
collector.

- * Adams pattern revolvers No 1,2 and 3.
- * Armourers tools, gauges, jigs and accessories for use
with the L1A1 rifle
- * Austrian Helmet and British WWII Ambulance helmet
- * Accessories for use with SMLE Mk III rifle
- * Collection of various styles and types of headgear for
Artillery
- * Alexandra Henry military rifle and bayonet
- * Adams Beaumont Military revolver
- * A fine pair of Allen and Wheelock lipfire revolvers.
These guns are rare to see in New Zealand, even rarer to
see two from two different members in the same club.
Interestingly, neither member was aware of the other
example being held by a club member.
- * Antiques. including a gauge off a traction engine
- * Prussian Army medals, badges and sword
- * Display of various ammunition.
- * Three recent purchases:
Manhattan percussion Navy type .36
revolver
Colt percussion .36 revolver
Colt Cloverleaf .41 rimfire revolver.
- * Soviet Army Badges
- * Artillery Carbines. G.C. Bonehill 1880 N.Z.
contract Snider, A pattern '53 Belgium contract

**Wellington Branch Auction
July 7-8**

A reminder, **your help is required.** Please, we ask that everybody makes an effort to help out! The same people seem to do the same jobs every time, for the most part they are happy to do it, but a little help from us all will mean we can all enjoy the event without too much stress. If you are not sure what to do, or how you can help, please talk to **Alwyn** on **528-8190.**

A selection of the quality items that were displayed by members at the May meeting.



Alexander Henry Carbine & Bayonet



An assortment of militaria



Assortment of militaria

Lee Enfield 303 Rifle & Accessories



Colt Revolvers



Allen & Wheelock Revolvers



Part of a Collection of Arisaka Bayonets



Hunting Horns & Associated Gear



L1A1 Rifle Gauges



Webley Automatic Pistols

OFFICERS BUT NOT GENTLEMEN

Naval officers, in accordance with dress regulations, are required to carry or “trail” their swords rather than being hitched at the waist. The scabbard is suspended from two long hanger straps requiring the wearer to carry the scabbard to prevent it dragging on the ground, unlike army and air force officers who hitch their swords and scabbards to their belts.

The myth surrounding this unique naval custom is that naval officers are required to carry their swords as a mark of disgrace, allegedly for involvement in the Spithead mutiny of 1797 that was confined to sailors, not officers, although it might be said that officers’ mismanagement led to that situation. It wasn’t until Victoria came to the throne that details regarding the carrying of swords became uniform and Victoria’s reign was well after the Spithead and Nore mutinies. In any case, the major mutinies of the Royal Navy involved ratings, with officers having no involvement. There is some suggestion that Victoria had made a casual remark that “naval officers were not gentlemen” (and the wearing of a sword was the mark of a gentleman.) In one sense she was quite correct.

were not considered less than an aristocratic army officer; just different, and the title “naval officer” carried with it a degree of social standing which indeed made one a gentleman. So, while they may not have been the sons of gentlemen, naval officers were certainly considered gentlemen in British society.

Some historians suggest that naval officers never wore swords at sea and when the sword was used, the scabbard was discarded as useless, particularly when boarding another vessel. That certainly makes practical sense except that for most naval officers, who were unlikely to be good fencers, an edged sabre was the weapon of choice for close quarters fighting. Swords and rapiers had little place in the hack and slash boarding fights of the days of sail.

What is more likely is that the army changed and the navy did not. Trailing a sword shows up as an act of pride among light horse regiments where both officers and troopers loosened their spurs and allowed their trailing sword scabbards to rattle over the cobblestones.

Typical naval officer’s sword of an 1827 model



Naval officers in British society were unique. The navy had, by the late 1600s, made it clear that being a “gentleman” was not sufficient to enter or succeed as a naval officer. Skill, as opposed to social status, was the mark of a naval officer and the navy exercised equality of opportunity at the point of entry over a century before the army saw the merits of such a program. Army commissions, very much the preserve of the nobility, were generally purchased. Naval commissions were granted only after a young teenager had learned his trade, passed his examinations and was selected for promotion on the basis of merit. When wartime required the navy to expand its officer corps, most were drawn from the seaman pool where education and skill in handling ships carried weight; social status carried none. Those aristocrats who did enter the navy found themselves competing on an equal basis with the sons of merchants and labourers. Given that, naval officers

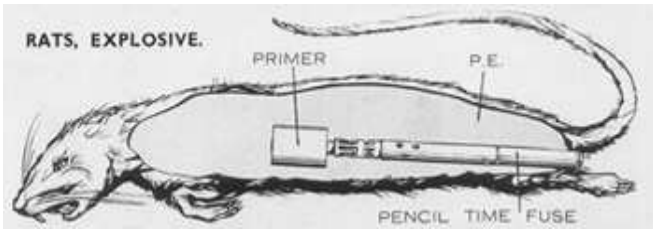
Naval officers, who would have no reason to wear a sword except when ashore, copied what was then a military display. So, all officers, regimental and naval, actually trailed their swords, with slings as long as possible, as a means of attracting attention to the wearer. This is the origin of the term, “sabre rattling”.

On parade, all officers carried their swords whether they were army or navy. Soldiers eventually slung their swords from their belts, for practical purposes, particularly as field drill developed. Naval officers, having never used swords for practical reasons and rarely wearing them in any case, saw no need to change and continued to carry them when dress dictated.

New Zealand naval officers today still continue the tradition of carrying their swords on parade.

British Special Operations Executive (SOE):

Can anyone help to identify the uniform of this soldier?



The Dirty Tricks Brigade

The S.O.E. was a British secret service formed in July 1940 – soon after the fall of France – to foster resistance among the civil population in Nazi-occupied Europe and to promote sabotage and subversion. Winston Churchill inspired the formation of S.O.E. and continued to support it until it was dissolved in 1946, its wartime task completed.

The idea for the ‘exploding’ rat - now immortalised as part of the SOE legend - was developed in 1941. The aim was to blow up the enemy’s boilers by slipping the rats in to the coal piles at railway yards and in factory installations, with the fuse being lit when the rat was shovelled into the fire. They were never used, as the first consignment was seized by the Germans and the secret was blown. That did not stop the huge waste of man-hours in the tying up of troops checking the huge stockpiles of coal looking for any suspicious looking objects, let alone the wary fireman shovelling coal into a railway train boiler knowing that the boiler could blow at any moment if one of the rodents got through. The source of the dead rats was a London supplier, who was under the belief that they were for London University.

For those of you who may have not seen it, the article below appeared in the “Dominion Evening Post” of 11th June 2007 and is reproduced here for your information. This will again raise the issue of firearm ownership and security, and with it, the adverse publicity that it creates for all gun owners, more especially, for the collector who has restricted weapons in their collections. The anti-gun fraternity will be out in full cry demanding that people have no need of having in their possession 150 firearms, further leading to the call for tougher measures be taken by the authorities to prevent this from happening in the future by banning the private ownership of firearms. It is in all our interests to insure that our own security precautions are up to at least the minimum police requirement to prevent such an occurrence from happening again.

ED.

oo0oo

Gun Collection Stolen

Dozens of firearms have been stolen from a collector in Darfield, Canterbury, in the past week. Police said the collection of 120 pistols, revolvers and shotguns had been built up over many years. “Some of the items are very rare; many are antique and most are unable to be used because of their age,” Constable David Pitkethley said.

Subs, there are still a few Members who have not paid their 2007 subs. Your attention to this matter would be appreciated.

oo0oo



This photograph of relatives of mine I believe was taken at Feilding, circa. 1914-18, the soldier appears to be a mounted horseman. Can anyone help me to identify the regiment from the uniform he is wearing, the inverted horseshoe - possibly he could have been a Vet maybe? I am sure that one of our WWI uniform collectors will be able solve this riddle.

Contact Ross on 569-9579.

Quote for the day

“I cannot imagine any condition which would cause a ship to founder. Modern shipbuilding has gone beyond that”

Edward Smith, captain of the Titanic, 1912.

Next Meeting .
Sunday 1st July. At the usual venue Petone Working Men’s club Udy Street Petone from 1.30pm. Display theme will be the letter “B” which represents a multitude of choices so get your thinking caps on. Remember Terry will be running his lucky draw for exhibitors so make sure you are in the draw.