

New Zealand issue US M1905 bayonet for the M1903 Springfield rifle

At the 2011 AFCB meeting in Rungis, Paris, I was fortunate enough to find a New Zealand marked US M1905 Springfield bayonet.



I wondered how it might have ended up in France.

The following possible explanation came from a collector friend of Phil's. If I may quote :

"According to the NZ Army Museum in Waiouru, the M1903 saw use by some NZ forces in the Pacific Theatre of Operations. Their use was driven by the need for interoperability with US forces/Logistical networks. The main user was the Royal New Zealand Air Force (RNZAF) - ground crews and servicing units. RNZAF units in the Pacific were under the operational command of COMAIRSOPAC.

Other units that were supplied with M1903s included the 1st and 2nd Commando, Fiji Guerillas. Commanded and trained by New Zealand troops these units were supplied by the US on operations.

While NZ did receive some M1903s under lend lease, these were not normally marked as they were not NZ property (the N arrow Z stamp denoted NZ Government ownership). The NZ stamp on rifles most likely denotes use by the RNZAF.

Records from 1942 show the establishment of the Joint Purchasing Board (JPB) which operated under the US-NZ Reciprocal Aid Agreement. This agreement operated alongside, but separate from Lend Lease. The JPB allowed NZ to supply and support US operations in the Pacific and obtain US stores and equipment as partial or as in lieu of cash payment. The stores received became NZ property.

Following the end of WWII the British and the Commonwealth countries in the Pacific renewed the British roots and went back to the .303 calibre arms. Most of NZs non-British standard weapons (M1903s, M1917s, Thompson SMGs, etc.) were shipped to the French in Indo-China in the 1950s.”

Thus the possibility exists this bayonet came to France via Indo-China.

Some months later I aquired another example.



The NZ markings are somewhat different, and only faintly visible. They consist of NZ arrow D and a serial number struck into the grip.



The grips are also finished differently, with a rough, unvarnished treatment, presumably for a better grip. Examples of these bayonets appeared regularly on the US collector market some years back, suggesting they may well have been ordered, but kept in storage and never issued.

Can anybody add further information?

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