

MAGAZINE LEE-ENFIELD, SHORTENED RIFLE CLUB PATTERN (AUST)

Calibre: .303 in.
Rifling & Twist: 5 groove, Enfield, L.H.
Barrel Length: 25.2 in. (640mm)
Overall Length: 44.6 in. (1130mm)
Weight: 8 lb. 6 oz. (3.8 kg)
Magazine Capacity: 10 rounds.
Converted: Lithgow, Various Gunsmiths,
Rifle Club Armourers.



V. R.
ENFIELD
1896
L. E.
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Typical Markings, R.H. side of the Butt Socket:

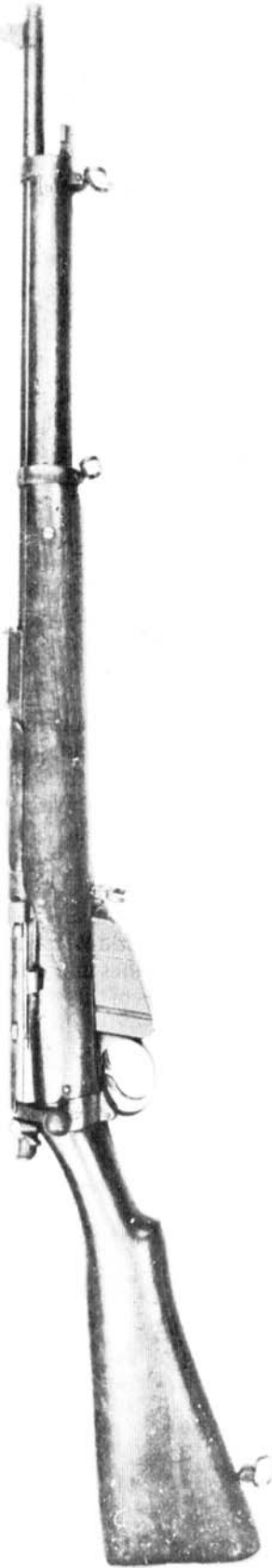
With the introduction of the S.M.L.E. into Australian Rifle Club competition, many British M.L.E. and possibly some M.L.M. rifles were reduced in length to comply with the new Rifle Association regulations on barrel length. This merely involved shortening of the fore-end and the fitting of a 25.2-in. barrel, the same length as the S.M.L.E.

Three techniques were applied to modify the barrel length, essentially the introduction of the Lithgow "heavy" barrel:

- (1) The original 30.2-in. barrel was cut to S.M.L.E. length, re-crowned, and the original foresight band re-fitted after the muzzle was turned down; an adjustable blade was fitted by cutting a dovetail into the foresight block.
- (2) A new 25.2-in. long barrel made at Lithgow, of M.L.E. profile, was fitted. This is marked "LITHGOW" on the knob form and an adjustable foresight was fitted.
- (3) A new S.M.L.E. barrel was fitted, the muzzle part of the original M.L.E. barrel was then sleeved over the turned-down S.M.L.E. muzzle. This retained the original M.L.E. foresight assembly but an adjustable foresight was generally fitted after a new dovetail slot had been cut into the M.L.E. foresight block.

The original M.L.E. backsights were retained, with the leaf graduated to 1,800 yards. Long range dial sights were usually retained. Rifle Club type sling swivels were usually fitted and for club shooting, a sideplate and detachable, adjustable aperture sight was generally fitted onto the left side of the action body.

The fore-end was reduced in length, by about ½-inch, and the original M.L.E. noscap re-fitted. Many of these shortened rifles were recalled or relinquished for military service during World War 2 and such rifles will have service marks for this period. The appropriate bayonet remains the Patt. 1888, as for the M.L.E. and M.L.M. rifles.



B. Labudda

