

# 1853 Pattern Tower Enfield Musket

By Austin Reville



1863 Produced 1853 Tower-Enfield Musket .577 Caliber

For many, firearms are a controversial issue in the world today. While the purpose of this article is not to get into the controversies and misinformation surrounding guns, we do acknowledge they exist. The lost part about firearms is that their history is deeply connected to ours here in America. The manufacturing, designs, and engineering that goes into these weapons is truly amazing.

Then there are the historical uses for firearms. Especially certain firearms that served in militaries around the world. Here in America, we have codified the right to own firearms within our founding document via the Second Amendment to the Constitution. This presents the unique experience and opportunity to own and shoot various historical firearms that have shaped our world today.

In the Reville family (my family) this opportunity began with this Tower-Enfield 1853 Pattern Musket. My father's



1868 Snider-Enfield Rifle .577 Caliber

AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

REL/08475

side of the family has been in possession of it since at least the early 1900's. This version of the British made Tower Enfield 1853 Musket was manufactured in 1863 and boasts the serial number 25. It sat above the fireplace in Panther Lake, NY in a wooden cabin on a lake built by my great grandfather in 1928. While we unfortunately, do not have any records to indicate when, where, or who purchased this firearm (my family on this side did not reach the United States until the late 1800's) these rifles have an interesting history.



Early 1800's Brown Bess Rifle .75 Caliber

The 1853 Pattern Enfield Rifle-Musket, often referred to as the "P53 Enfield" or simply the "Enfield," was a muzzle-loading rifle-musket that played a significant role in various conflicts during the mid-19th century. Here is a written description of the 1853 Pattern Enfield Rifle-Musket. It featured the below specifications.

**Design and Origin:**

The 1853 Enfield was a British-designed rifle-musket that emerged as an evolution of the earlier Pattern 1851. It was officially adopted by the British Army in 1853.



The rifle-musket was manufactured both in Great Britain and abroad, including in India. It became widely used by British and Commonwealth forces during the Crimean War, the Indian Mutiny, and the American Civil War.

**Caliber and Ammunition:**

The 1853 Enfield was a .577 caliber muzzle-loading rifle. It used a Mini ball, a conical-shaped lead projectile, which was loaded down the barrel and expanded upon firing to engage with the rifling.



ing

**Barrel and Rifling:**

The rifle featured a rifled barrel, which improved accuracy compared to smoothbore muskets. The rifling consisted of several grooves, imparting a spin to the projectile for greater stability in flight.

**Lock Mechanism:**

The Enfield had a wooden stock, often made from walnut, providing a solid and comfortable grip. It featured a bayonet lug for attaching a socket bayonet, which was a common accessory.



**Stock and Bayonet Lug:**

The Enfield had a wooden stock, often made from walnut, providing a solid and comfortable grip. It featured a bayonet lug for attaching a socket bayonet, which was a common accessory.



**Length:**

The overall length of the 1853 Enfield was around 55 inches, with a barrel length of approximately 39 inches.



Richard Gatling Gun 1861

By the 1850's firearms were beginning to advance rapidly. For instance, while this Tower was patterned and designed in 1853 (this particular one was built in 1863), Henry had designed and produced his Henry Repeater in 1860. The American Civil war would see a great leap forward in firearms development from the Henry Rifle to the Gatling Gun. Thus, rendering this particular patterned rifle obsolete almost as soon as it came out.



1860 Henry Rifle .44 Mag

This was somewhat common amongst firearms right around the time of the American Civil War. As industrialization started to up in the U.S. and in Europe, the ability to build and mass produce more complex machines grew. This coupled

with war, drove firearm makers and inventors to tinker with the designs to make them more effective, easier to use, and cheaper to build.

The P53 Tower-Enfield's story would not be limited to European wars and conflicts involving the British Empire. On April 12<sup>th</sup>, 1861, Southern Separatists fired upon Fort Sumter in what would begin 4 long bloody years of the American Civil war. The Southern Confederacy found themselves at a great disadvantage compared to the Northern Union. While the North was industrialized and mechanized, the South was predominantly rural and farmland. Everything was hand built and the South did not have the resources, nor the ability to sustain a war effort on their own.

This lead Jefferson Davis and his Confederacy to seek out help from arms makers around the world. The P53 musket was a perfect example of the multiplicity of arms fielded by the South throughout the war. France and England both saw an opportunity to financially capitalize off of the Civil War in America by providing arms to both sides of the conflict. The South relied more heavily on foreign made arms like the P53 Tower-Enfield while the Union needed additional sources to augment their arms supply.

By the time the Civil War had started, however, the average Civil War soldier would rather have a Henry Rifle or even the legendary "Mississippi" Rifle over its English counterpart. Lack of options left the units issued these rifles few and far between. This example was most likely used by the South during the war due to its modifications. It has been shortened and a new front sight bead attached to bring it in line with the carbines and rifles of that era. This was a common practice among Southern blacksmiths and gun makers to ease with muzzle loading firearms.

The P53 Enfield is still being reproduced today for gun enthusiast and reenactors. Owning a historical piece of firearm weaponry is one of the many blessings of living in the United States. We here at 2 If By Sea Tactical will be highlighting several different historical pieces as we continue through the year that we are fortunate enough to have access to.

For a closer look at the Models 1905 and 1910 please check out our Youtube Channel @2IBST for more!

