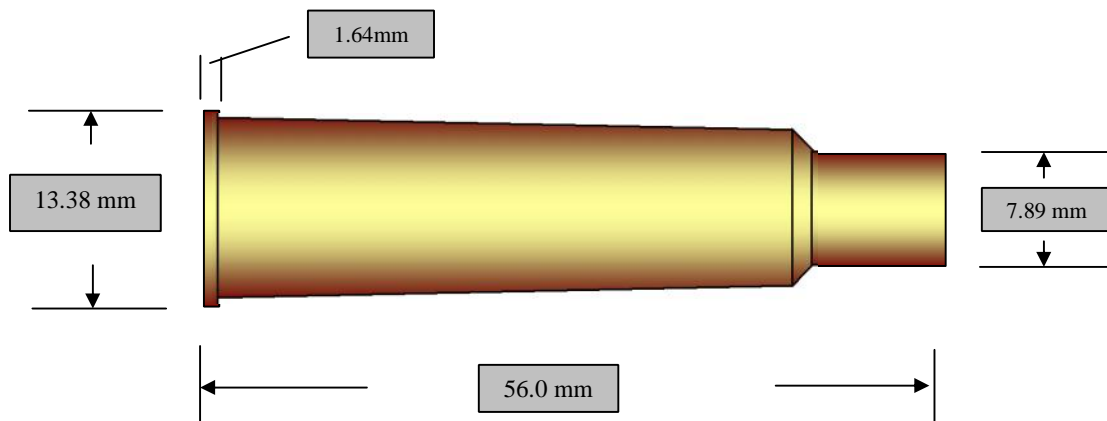


.303 AUSTRALIAN



Australia being a colonial outpost of the British Empire adopted the .303 calibre in 1890 which is only two years after the cartridge was approved in the United Kingdom. The first production was by the New Zealand Colonial Ammunition Company and it is believed that the first cartridges made were the .303 Mk II ball in 1900. Confusion arises because the factory in Australia used the same monogram as the parent factory in New Zealand. It has not yet been proved beyond a reasonable doubt, but it is believed that Australian cartridges of this time show the mark numeral reading from the primer outward and the New Zealand cartridges show it reading from the rim inward. Australia changed from Mk II cartridges to Mk VI in May 1906 and this is also open to question, as this is the earliest cartridge that can be found in collections. Somewhere out there might be an April 1906. Month dating ceased in August (?) 1936.

In January 1918 Australia converted to the production of Mk VII ammunition and retained this model in continuous production until 1960 when the .303 was passed out of service and placed in war reserve status. Some production took place in 1962. In addition to the ball cartridges Australia made the following cartridges:

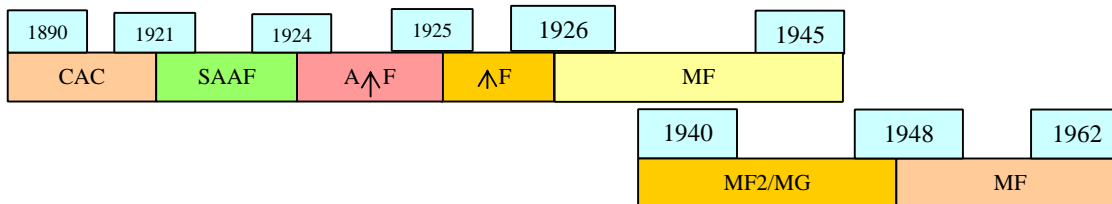
- Armour piercing
- Tracer,
- Incendiary,
- Blank,
- Grenade discharger,
- Drill,
- Proof,
- Booby trap switches.

The .303 cartridge served Australia well for many years and was highly regarded by all that used it both for its accuracy and reliability. It is still soldiering on in many parts of the world today.

The metric designation is 7.7x56R

HEADSTAMPS

The Federal Government leased the Colonial Ammunition Company in 1921 and continued to use CAC as the factory monogram until 1919 when it was changed to SAAF. This was changed in 1922 when two arrows were added to the H/S. In 1924 it was changed to A ↑ F. The A was dropped in 1926 to become ↑ F. In 1927 the Government purchased the factory outright and changed the monogram to MF, and this is where it gets a bit complicated but the diagram below may make it a little easier to comprehend.

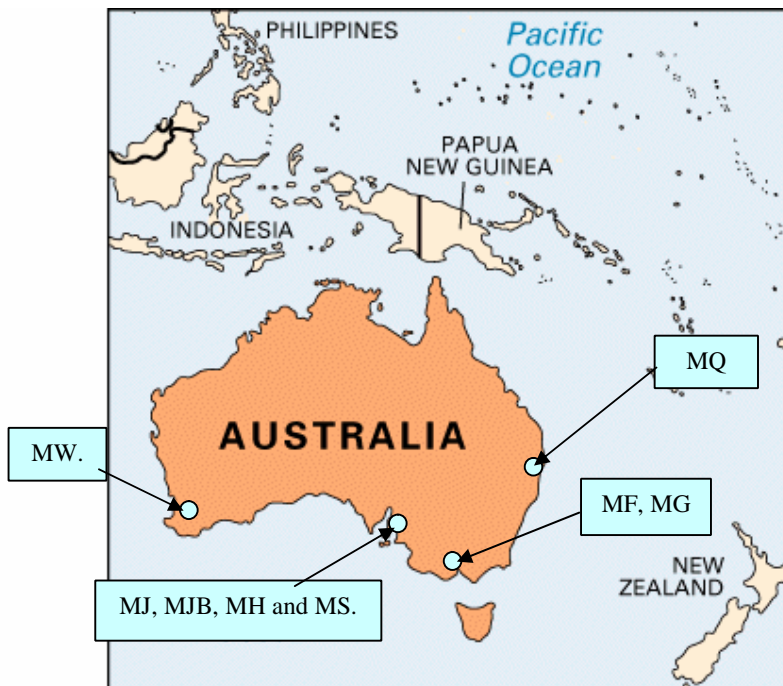


Factory No. 1 operated until the end of WWII and retained the H/S MF up to the end of 1945. Factory No. 2 commenced operations during WWII and used the H/S MF2 for a very short time until the H/S MG was introduced and used until 1948 when the H/S was again changed, this time to MF. There are therefore two sets of Australian .303 cartridges bearing the H/S MF. The .303 cartridge was made until 1962 with no production at all in 1961. The introduction of the 7.62x51 cartridge into service ended the career of the venerable old “303”.

The stress of war placed great demands on ammunition usage and production. To meet these demands Australia put into service six factories throughout the nation. These factories were mostly very short-lived entities; one of them did not get into regular production at all. This was MS in South Australia. One of them produced for only two years, this being MQ in Queensland. The end of the war had closed them all down, as Australia could not afford the luxury of seven small arms ammunition facilities

FACTORY NUMBERS AND LOCATIONS

NUMBER	LOCATION	HEADSTAMP	YEARS OF PRODUCTION
1	Footscray VIC.	MF	1890 to 1945
2	Footscray VIC	MF2/MG/MF	1940 to 1992
3	Hendon S.A.	MH	1940 to 1945
4	Hendon S.A.	MJ	1941 to 1945
4a	Hendon, Annex	MJB	1942 to 1943
5	Rocklea QLD.	MQ	1942 to 1943
6	Welchpool W.A.	MW	1942 to 1945
7	Penfield S.A.	MS	1944 only.



The location of Australia's wartime and peacetime .303 ammunition production facilities.

PRESUMED DATES OF MANUFACTURE

CARTRIDGE	MF	MG	MH	MJ	MQ	MW	MS
.303 MK6 BALL	1910-19						
.303 MK7 BALL	1918-45	1940-62	1940-45	1941-45	1942-3	1942-45	
.303 MK7 INC	1942-44	1942-43		1942-45			
.303 MK4 INC				1942-43			
.303 MK6 Drill	1914-40	1942-56					
.303 MK7 Drill		1956-62					
.303 LP Diecast		1941-43					
.303 LP Mk 1		1944					
.303 Mk SPG Tra	1928						
.303 Mk 1 Tracer	1928-41	1940-41					
.303 Mk 2 Tracer	1942-44		1943-44	1942-45?			1944
.303 Mk 2Z Tracer			1944-45				
.303 Mk 1Z Grenade	1925-45	1943-45					
.303 Mk 2 Grenade	1939						
.303 Mk 1z Aust Gren	1945	1946-51					
.303 Mk5 Blank	1910-42		1942-45	1942-44?		1943-45	
.303 Mk 7 Blank		1944-57					
.303 Mk 9z Blank		1957-62					
.303 Mk 3 Proof	1921-45	1941-53					
.303 Mk 5 Dummy	1935-42	1943-45					
.303 Mk 1 AP	1934-43		1942-43				