

INFORMATION SHEET

Australian Army Clasp Knife

Clasp knives issued to Australian troops and sailors during World War 2 that were made in Australia include:

- Carr Fast** The first pattern clasp knife was marked CARR over a broad arrow //I on the can opener, the second pattern was marked CARR FAST CO AUST with **D/ID** on the scales.
- Gregory Steel** A first pattern clasp knife marked GREGSTEEL on the tin opener and a Royal Navy (RN) pattern clasp knife, marked GREGSTEEL on the blade.
- Sterling** Second pattern clasp knife marked STERLING Made in Australia with **D/ID** on the scales.
- Tatham** A first pattern clasp knife marked TATHAM MAKER SYDNEY on the tin opener.
- Whittingslowe.** The first pattern clasp knife was marked with a stylised WE over a broad arrow //I. The second pattern was marked Whittingslowe Opener 15737 Pat App Adelaide with **D/ID** on the scales.

The Whittingslowe company was a major manufacturer of bladeware for the war effort. The irony: Thirty years later, the knives for the Australian Military Forces were manufactured in Japan, one of the enemies whose support from Whittingslowe had helped overcome and the Whittingslowe Company had gone out of business.

Most of these clasp knives were made of steel with flat metal sides (scales). The knives were nickel plated. The most common clasp knife has a blade, a tin opener, a marline spike a screwdriver stub and a shackle. The first pattern had a British style tin opener (Fig 1). In 1945 the second pattern with improved tin opener came in to service (Fig2).

Figure 1



Figure 2



Canoe body clasp knives manufactured by Whittingslowe Engineering, Adelaide.

Figure 3



RN pattern clasp knife made by Gregory Steel Products, Melbourne.

British clasp knives were also issued to Australian servicemen during WW2. They include both the standard British clasp knife with chequered black plastic scales and the RN pattern. Unfortunately, there is not a lot of information about the issue of these knives.

Clasp knives issued to Australian Defence Force personnel from about 1970 onwards were made of Stainless Steel and no longer made in Australia.

They include the brands:

Joseph Rodgers, Stanley Rogers, John Nowill & Sons, Cooper Tools, Shelham, Black Wolf and Victorinox.

If anyone has any additional information that can add to this, I would be most grateful to hear from them, please contact me at:

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Amended 25 February, 2020