

8 March 2019

Our Reference: IR-01-19-1596

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED]

I am writing to you in response to your request received on 21 December 2018. You said:

- 1. How many firearms, sold to the public by the armed services, have later been found in the hands of criminals?*
- 2. List these arms.*

New Zealand Police has no record of when the armed services agencies sell firearms to the public. Section 3(b) of the Arms Act 1983 states that it does not apply to the sale or supply of firearms by the Crown or to the Crown.

It is known that about 2,500 L1A1 Self-Loading Rifles were sold by the Defence Force in the early 1980s. The New Zealand Defence Force has not provided New Zealand Police a record of firearms sold to the public. As was publicly identified at the time of Napier shootings in 2009, one L1A1 was held by Jan Molenaar. In another incident in 2017, a L1A1 was seized as part of drug related search. Police records apply only generic characterisations of firearms when they are seized and a manual search would be required of individual records to identify those firearms that may have originated from a sale by New Zealand Defence Force. Trace-back is difficult as the New Zealand Defence Force records from those sales are not held in an electronic form.

A further search for L1A1 in Police electronic databases was completed to answer your request. Police holds electronic records about 1,244 L1A1 firearms, most of these have been linked to firearms licence holders through normal firearms licencing. Twenty four of these firearms have been linked to occurrences, and the details of these are provided below (each line is a separate L1A1 firearm).

We cannot be confident whether L1A1 firearms on our records came from New Zealand Defence Force as some could have been purchased and imported legally by collectors, particularly from Australia, so it cannot be assumed that all the L1A1 firearms below were sourced from New Zealand Defence Force.

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### Police National Headquarters

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reported stolen in burglary in 1998
reported stolen in burglary in 1999
reported stolen in burglary in 1999, recovered in possession of a family member of a deceased offender in 2015
reported stolen in burglary in 2000
reported stolen in burglary in 2000, recovered in possession of a drug offender in 2018
reported stolen in burglary in 2003, recovered in 2004 and transferred to a dealer
surrendered for destruction in 2005
seized following attendance at a family harm incident in 2008
seized through search warrant in 2008
reported stolen in theft in 2009
seized after an incident with mental health concerns in 2009
reported found on roadside in 2009, not previously reported stolen or lost
reported stolen in burglary in 2008, recovered in 2010
seized after an incident with mental health concerns in 2010
seized through search warrant in 2012
reported lost in 2012
seized following notification by owner of residential property in 2014
seized following attendance at a family harm incident in 2014
reported stolen in burglary in 2014, recovered (handed into police by a firearms dealer) in 2018
reported stolen in burglary in 2014
seized following notification via Crimestoppers in 2015
seized from a passenger at an airport in 2017
seized following attendance at a family harm incident in 2017
seized after an incident with mental health concerns in 2018

For your information, Police has developed a process for proactive release of information, so the response to your request may be publicly released on the New Zealand Police website.

Yours sincerely



**Mike McIlraith**  
Acting Superintendent  
Arms Act Service Delivery Group