



# Homer M. Brett



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**Subject: The Marine Corps Bayonet Program, The USMC, M9-FT  
The Base line to the 3rd USMC Wire Cutting Bayonet Project.**

The 3rd Marine Corps bayonet project occurred between 1999 and 2000. During this project the Marine Corps was still considering only a scissors-style wire cutting bayonet. At the beginning of the project the only two designs under current manufacture were the Lan-Cay made, Army issue M9, and the German-made Eickhorn KCB. At the beginning of the 3<sup>rd</sup> project Lan-Cay was the only manufacturer of the M9, but this changed when Lan-Cay and Ontario received a split contract, which put Ontario into the M9 manufacturing business.

Even though the previous MARCORSYSCOM general had shut down the previous (2<sup>nd</sup>) bayonet project and terminated its funding, a group of junior officers kept the project threads quietly alive and connected. Finally a new project officer came on board, followed by a new general. The new project officer was very highly motivated, and interested in reviving the bayonet program, even though no specific funding existed for it. Despite this lack of funding the bayonet was still on the list of items officially approved for Marine Corps procurement. However, it was also so far down the procurement list of new equipment as to be a wish, rather than a real possibility. At the beginning of the 3<sup>rd</sup> project the bayonet's procurement possibilities seemed to be zero.

On the new project officer's own volition, before I had actually met him, he sought me out and asked me to assist him. Thus began a very well thought out and hardworking Marine Corps partnership. The new project officer was well aware that I had worked with the Marine Corps with its efforts to procure a new bayonet since 1991.

Inside the Marine Corps in general, few people were familiar with the Army's continuing M9 bayonet development, except for the original Phrobis 1<sup>st</sup> generation design. That was what the Marine Corps had purchased from Buck Knives in 1991, and these were in issue only to selected units at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina. There was virtually no knowledge or Marine Corps familiarity with the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> generation M9s that had been manufactured and delivered to the Army by Lan-Cay.

As the Marine Corps was concerned about appearing to favor any specific manufacturer, I personally served as a professional conduit of information, data and materials for the Marine Corps throughout the 3<sup>rd</sup> bayonet project. During this project tremendous efforts were made to develop a uniquely Marine Corps wire cutting bayonet. I was paid for the metal, materials and parts the Marine Corps wanted, with Marine Corps' research and development funds.

*"Fortuna Audacibus Favet"*

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After the first month of work, the project officer and I came to the conclusion that what was needed was an actual up-to-date base line bayonet for the project, and the Phrobis 1<sup>st</sup> generation would not serve that purpose, as its design was historically out of date.

**Using Marine Corps funds, I arranged for the Lan-Cay Corporation to have a special die stamp manufactured, and then had them manufacture 125, 3<sup>rd</sup> generation (Army pattern) M9s. These bayonets all had black oxidized blades, and were assembled with the latest production parts. This unique, base-line M9 bayonet was the USMC, M9-FT (United States Marine Corps, M9-Field Trials).**

In January of 2000 these bayonets were delivered to Camp Lejeune by the project officer and me. Their specific purpose was to have the most current model of the M9 in the field, where we could get feed back, comments, and suggestions. Additionally we could counter any criticism of the M9 concept, which would have been based on the Marine Corps' out-of-date knowledge of the 1<sup>st</sup> model Phrobis/Buck M9 bayonet. We could also actually inspect the 3<sup>rd</sup> generation bayonets for wear and usage. At the same time the project officer distributed a project specific bayonet questionnaire to various infantry units, most of them at Camp Lejeune.

These M9-FT, USMC bayonets were made for the Marine Corps one time, and one time only. Each blade was stamped:

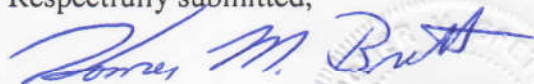
**M9-FT  
USMC  
Lan-Cay**

There were no markings on the opposite side of the ricasso.

These bayonets were produced only with the standard Lan-Cay green-colored Zytel parts, and the scabbards had no sharpening stones, and were stamped "Lan-Cay" on the back side at the tip. This group of bayonets was also produced well before Lan-Cay began marking the company name on its latch plates and cutter plates.

It was from this distinctive bayonet that the 3<sup>rd</sup> Marine Corps bayonet project began its highly politicized and difficult trek towards final success.

Respectfully submitted,



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