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## **Subject: The Ontario Knife Company OKC M10 Bayonet.**

All of the companies who participated in the Marine Corps bayonet competition spent a good bit of their financial resources and energy in developing new bayonet models and on refining earlier existing bayonet models for the competition. This was especially true of the Ontario Knife Company, who did a real yeoman's job of designing a series of new and more efficient bayonets.

No sensible company can afford to simply allow this development effort to go to waste. From this great investment in time, money and energy, some of the various competitors have slowly begun to present new bayonet designs, or modified and improved designs of earlier bayonets. In July of this year, Ontario publicly unveiled its OKC M10, a more compact and more evolved model of the current, 3<sup>rd</sup> generation Army M9 bayonet.

The greatest complaint about the current and all of the previous generations of the U.S. Army M9 bayonet is that it is unnecessarily heavy and unnecessarily bulky. It also still retains the original Bianchi belt clip mounting system, which is rapidly becoming obsolete with the steady introduction into the Army of the looped MOLLE, load carrying system.

During the long work up to the final Marine Corps Bayonet Trials, all of the competing companies purposely had equal access to the research I did for the Marine Corps on the M9 bayonet and its possible improvements, as well as any other design ideas. This included handling the prototypes I personally made using standard 3<sup>rd</sup> generation M9 bayonets. These bayonets were crude but effective examples of M9s with ergonomic grips and reduced mass scabbards. These USMC Compact/Ergonomic M9 prototypes were made in both black and green, and were available for viewing by any company in the competition. They were publicly on display at MARCORSYSCOM and at the Martial Arts Center of Excellence (the MACE).

Ontario wisely copyrighted the model designation "OKC M10" for commercial purposes, recognizing that the M9 and M11 already exist. This made their new bayonet the uncontested model OKC M10 and clearly separated it from the existing M9 bayonet generations.

The new bayonet has a reduced mass scabbard with the unnecessary side slots and the space they take up on the rifleman's equipment harness deleted. It should also be noted that the scabbard body has much deeper manufacturer's markings molded into the back of the tip of the scabbard; underneath the MOLLE webbing (the webbing must be



removed to see this). This vertically stacked, two piece MOLLE strap webbing, is joined together with a Fastex quick-release, which is a very efficient solution that Ontario developed for Army use.

The pair of MOLLE straps, with snaps fasteners, safely retains the bayonet to the wearer's vest or body armor. In doing so it eliminates his having the constant irritation of the bayonet banging against him, as well as making unnecessary noise during movement.

The bayonet's hilt is the same ergonomic style that Ontario designed for the Marine Corps Trials, but it is purposely slightly shorter than the Marine Trail's hilts. The M10 has a hilt that is the same length as the current Army M9's hilt. This grip is easily identified by the grip oval on the left side, into which is molded the Army's eagle crest, and on the right side is a second oval with the words "U.S." and "Army" molded in two lines.

The M10 tang rod, crossguard, latch plate, and latch plate screw are still of the same pattern as the current M9, which makes them purposely and totally interchangeable with the current Army M9 bayonet parts. The bayonet's blade has the same short threaded tang on it, also ensuring total interchangeability of parts. In fact all parts of the M10 are purposely interchangeable with all of the previous Army contract bayonets, and this includes the new MOLLE webbing.

Of special note is that the blade of the M10 is made from 1095 Carbon steel, not the 420 stainless steel of the current Army M9. This means that the blade is much easier to sharpen and to keep sharpened. The change over from stainless steel does not really affect the normal wear and corrosive factors on the blade, as U.S. soldiers are trained to clean their equipment properly under any field conditions.

The M10's ricasso is marked on both sides. On the left ricasso (the front side) it is stamped: **OKC M10** On the right ricasso it is stamped: **ONTARIO**  
**ONTARIO** **USA**  
**KNIFE CO.**  
**USA**

There is no military requirement for double markings the bayonet's ricasso, but there is also no requirement that it be single marked; so Ontario chose to double mark it.

About 275 of these limited production OKC M10s were produced. To call it a prototype is a bit of a reach, but it is definitely a preproduction prototype bayonet. The actual prototypes were made for the Marine Corps Bayonet Trials, and then refined after the trials were over. These newly made preproduction prototypes are intended to be Ontario's entrée into the large potential market for new bayonets for the new rifles the U.S. Army has under consideration. This includes the XM8 and the new Special Operations carbine of the M16 family.

The OKC M10 bayonet preproduction prototypes were produced only in a desert sand color. His was intended to work effectively with the desert camouflage currently in

use in the Army. However a future contract might well change the bayonets color, as the army is now officially adopting a new computer generated pixel camouflage. Unlike the Marines who have a Desert and a Woodland pattern, the Army is once again trying to have only one single color of camouflage uniform, with emphasis on green to grays in coloring.

No serious American blade manufacturing company wants to be left out of the next military bayonet competition, which will inevitably come. Ontario has specifically produced this new bayonet to be able to have it ready for use and display for the fall series of U.S. military expositions throughout the United States in 2005. The major expositions are with the Modern Day Marine exposition at Quantico, Virginia, followed by the Infantry Conference and exposition at Fort Benning, and the granddaddy of them all, the Association of the U.S. Army (AUSA) exposition here in Washington, DC. No one with military work to be done misses these major opportunities to display their new products, knowledge and designs for the future.

Respectfully submitted,



H.M.B.---July 2005