



Homer M. Brett

Military Historian ★ Writer ★ Consultant

P.O. Box 111 Alexandria, Virginia 22313 USA

Tel. Voice (703) 548-9694 Fax (703) 548-4582



Subject: The Ontario-Made, Product Improved, 2nd Army Contract M9 Bayonet; The Ontario ACU Colored Bayonet.

In 2000 the Ontario Knife company produced its first U.S. Army contract bayonet, when it and Lan-Cay were awarded a split contract. The Army's purpose in dividing the contract was to develop a second manufacturer able to produce the Army's M9 bayonet.

Since that 1st contract, Ontario has continued to produce the Product Improved pattern Army M9 bayonet, with the P.I. scabbard, but in a lime-green color and only with the old style round M9 (Phrobis-designed) grip, as permitted by the Army. Ontario has also continued to provide the Army with their original pattern bayonet in small non-contract quantities, but only in its first pattern design.

In the fall of 2005 Ontario won a new Army contract, their 2nd U.S. Army contract. The requirements of this contract were for the M9 bayonet complete with its new ergonomic grip (originally designed by, and first manufactured by, Lan-Cay).

Ontario not only provided its 2nd Army contract with the new ergonomic grip, it also made a number of other very visible changes in order to bring their original, lime-green M9 bayonet design into the current Army form and configuration.

First a new ricasso stamp was introduced. The 1st contract bayonet had the marking that included the incorrect "hyphen" between the "M" and "9" on the blade's left ricasso. The Army never complained (or possibly may not even have noticed), so it was never corrected. The current (2nd) contract bayonet has the correct marking "M9" thereby conforming to the Army's standard marking protocols.

Old and incorrect marking:

M-9
ONTARIO
KNIFE CO.
USA

Correct & current marking:

M9
ONTARIO
KNIFE CO.
USA

The color of all Army contract M9 bayonets must be within the Army's color-book, color-ranges, and all bayonets delivered to the Army by both Lan-Cay and Ontario have been within that very broad range. However, the lime-green colored M9 bayonet produced by Ontario (from its 1st contract until very late in 2005) was in a very bright and garish color, which was unpopular both with the Army troops and with the commercial

market. It also did not camouflage effectively when worn with the current (now old model) Army camouflage uniform

Recognizing this problem, Ontario's new bayonet color is purposely colored to keep it within the color range of the Army's newly adopted **Army Combat Uniform**, normally called the "**ACU**" uniform. This uniform has a gray-green pixel pattern of camouflage, and replaces all other Army camouflage uniforms, including both the desert and woodland patterns.

When the Army assigned to Ontario its 2nd Army contract, the company was left with a quantity of the 1st pattern, lime-green colored plastics (grips & scabbards) made during their first Army contract still in stock. Ontario is now using up these plastics to produce all their commercial orders, including those delivered to the military AFEES and Post Exchange systems.

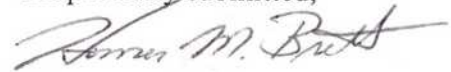
Individual U.S. soldiers and individual units will still be buying and using the old-style, lime-green colored bayonets, with the circular 1st pattern grip, until these bayonets are entirely used up at Ontario. It is quite normal for Army units and individual soldiers to reach into the non-contract market to purchase M9 bayonets to replace those bayonets which have become lost or broken on deployments. This also includes bayonets presented as awards, or just taken home as personal mementos of war and combat.

The lime-green M9 bayonet was originally produced only with the "M-9" ricasso marking on its blade. These lime-green parts were used for both military and commercial M9 sales by Ontario, right up to the current contract. Currently these remaining parts are being assembled and shipped with the new blades with the new "M9" ricasso marking. Expect to find these bayonets in the armories of U.S. military units, and being worn by U.S. military personnel.

There now exist three different Ontario M9 bayonet variations in the green-color, Army color-book limits. Any of these three variations can potentially be found in any Army unit, whether active duty, reserve or National Guard. The lime-green bayonet with "M-9" ricasso marking, the lime-green bayonet with "M9" ricasso marking, and the new ACU colored bayonet with "M9" ricasso marking.

A small aside about National Guard units. One such unit recently returned from a combat tour, and when I inspected their bayonets I found half a dozen, new condition, Chinese-made M9 replicas in the armory. I brought this to the command's attention and there was some obvious embarrassment. Then one of the senior NCOs (humorously) said, "That's no problem sir, we'll issue those to the officers". As they say in the Army, "stuff happens".

Respectfully submitted,



H.M.B.---24 June 2006