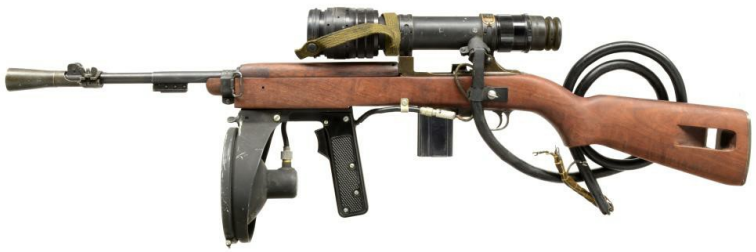
The Early Model M-2 Sniperscopes

Contracts & Quantities



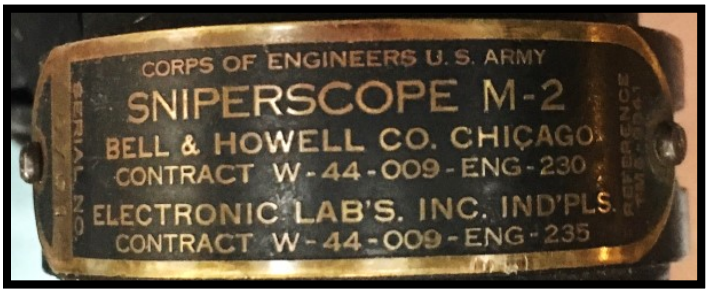
October 20, 2017

Introduction

The information contained within this document has been compiled as part of a larger research project to learn and share the history of the infrared scopes used in conjunction with the U.S. .30 caliber carbines. The intent is to eventually make the information available on the website USCarbineCal30.com. The information shared below is but a small part of what has been discovered but significant enough to warrant a report on the contract and quantities for the M-2 scopes manufactured in 1945 that are commonly referred to as the early M-2's.

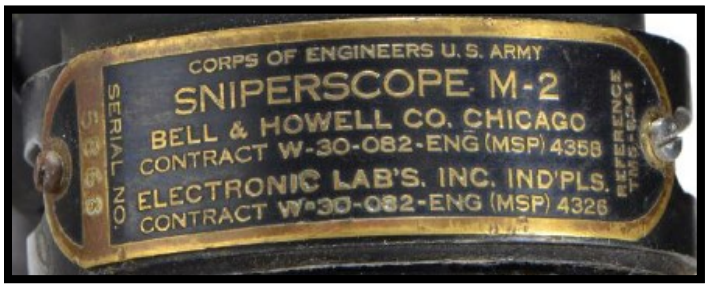
The Early M-2 Sniperscopes

The first Corps of Engineers contract for the development of the Sniperscope M-2 was awarded to Bell & Howell in September 1944 for 846 M-2 scopes. Electronic Laboratories was contracted in November 1944 to supply Bell & Howell with the power supplies and additional electronics. [1]



Contractor	Item	Contract #	Amount	Start Date	Completion
Bell & Howell	Classified	44009ENG230	$281,000	9-44	9-45 [2]
Electronic Labs	Sniperscopes M2	44009ENG235	$369,000	11-44	7-45 [2]

The first two M-2 scope prototypes were delivered to The Engineer Board in January 1945 resulting in a second contract for additional quantities. [1]



Contractor	Item	Contract #	Amount	Start Date	Completion
Bell & Howell	Telescopes	30082ENG4358	$1,327,000	1-45	12-45 [2]
Electronic Labs	Sniperscopes M2	30082ENG4326	$1,389,000	1-45	12-45 [2]

Research is continuing in an effort to determine the exact quantity ordered by the second contract along with additional information. A clue as to the total quantities ordered can be found in a report from the Sphinx Project in August 1945 [3].

This report has been quoted in prior articles but without an explanation of the context in which the report was written and who actually authored the section devoted to infrared equipment. A brief explanation is in order to put the information into perspective.

The Sphinx Project was a combined arms exercise with a primary focus on Japanese field fortifications. The intent was to determine how best to defeat their fortifications in preparation for the invasion of Japan. The project involved thousands of participants and many different units within the U.S. Army and Navy. The events took place at Camp Hood, TX over a 2 week period in July 1945.

The project included a Corps of Engineers contingent tasked with testing various items and tactics under their command including a tests devoted to "Night Vision Equipment". The activities of the Engineers was overseen and commanded by Colonel Samuel W. Waddle, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. At the completion of the tests Col. Waddle prepared a typewritten report on the outcome of the tests. This appears in the Sphinx Project final report later prepared by Army HQ as Appendix M. The Night Vision Equipment tests were detailed in Section V of Appendix M.

Included in the Engineers report was a table (p. 381) devoted to the current status of Night Vision Equipment within the U.S. Army at the time the report was prepared in July 1945.

b. The status of availability is as follows:

(1) Snooperscopes (no longer standard)
1,420 manufactured (mostly in POA).

(2) Sniperscope M-1 (no longer standard)
715 manufactured (mostly in POA).

(3) Sniperscope M-2 (standard item, supersedes Item 1 and 2 above)
5,486 on order (about 1,000 per month starting 1 Aug 45).

(4) Metascope US/F (standard item)
40,000 manufactured (approximately) (mostly in U.S.)
10,000 on order (approximately).

(5) Airborne Beacon M-1 (limited procurement)
120 manufactured (mostly in U.S.)
80 on order

(6) Filters, 18-inch (limited procurement) (For Crouse-Hinds searchlight).
200 manufactured
None on order

(7) Filters, 6½-inch (pilot procurement)(for vehicle driving)
60 manufactured
None on order

(8) Filter, 2-inch (limited procurement) (for flashlight TL-122)
2,000 manufactured (approximately)(mostly in POA)

(9) Type Z binoculars (pilot procurement)
14 manufactured
120 order pending

(10) Retrodirective reflectors (limited procurement)
Over 1,000 manufactured (OSS)

(11) Infra-red transit (pilot model)
One manufactured
None on order

(12) Penrod (pilot procurement)
Two manufactured
16 on order

While listed as "availability" the list was actually an overview of total production to date. It did not take into account how many items had been issued, their various locations worldwide or how many were actually serviceable.

The quantities shown for the Snooperscope and Sniperscope will be discussed in a separate report that will be included on the website. They require an explanation beyond the scope of this document. While both are indicated as superseded by the M-2 they had been deployed and were in active service.

Organizing the data from the records indicated above presents the following timeline for the history of the early M-2 scope.

Month/Year	Activity
July 1944	1st contract awarded to Bell & Howell to develop/mfg 846 of the Model M-2 scope
November 1944	Electronic Labs contracted to supply the power units and electronics for Bell & Howell
January 1945	a) First two prototypes delivered to the Corp of Engineers
	b) Bell & Howell with Electronic Labs awarded a 2nd contract for more M-2's
July 1945	a) Col. Waddle, COE, reports a total of 5,486 M-2's on order
	b) Electronic Labs completes 1st contract
August 1945	M-2 production scheduled to begin (Col. Waddle, COE)
September 1945	Bell & Howell completes 1st contract for 846
December 1945	Both Bell & Howell and Electronic Labs complete 2nd contract

Add to this TM 5-9341 dated August 1951 indicated the M-2 serial numbers started at 5001.

As part of the ongoing research project serial numbers and information are being collected on all of the infrared scopes related to the carbines. So far serial numbers and information being collected on the M-2 Sniperscopes has shown scopes having the 1st contract on their name plates have serial numbers that precede the serial numbers on scopes with the 2nd contract. This and the 1st contract completion date infer the first M-2's manufactured were for the 1st contract. With the total number of M-2's on order the breakdown appears to be as follows.

	Company	Contract	Quantity	Serial Numbers
1st	Bell & Howell	44009ENG230	846	5001 to 5847
	Electronic Labs	44009ENG235		
2nd	Bell & Howell	30082ENG4358	4,640	5848 to ? (see next page)
	Electronic Labs	30082ENG4326		

With the end of the war in the Pacific Theater September 2, 1945 funding for many military contracts came to an immediate halt causing production to be placed on hold. Contracts were subsequently re-negotiated to terminate the contracts and thereby reduced the quantities manufactured.

Had production continued at the production estimate of 1000 a month with a start date of 01 Aug 1945 Bell & Howell could have produced approximately 5000 model M-2 scopes by the end of December. This does not appear to have been the case. So far with the serial numbers and data collected to date the highest M-2 second contract serial number has been 6161. Hopefully those who own an early M-2 scope will share information that will help shed more light on how many may have been produced.

In the meantime research is continuing to determine if the 2nd contract for the M-2's was re-negotiated with the total quantity initially ordered being reduced.

Sources:

(1) The Engineer Board Report No. 908, Snooperscope and Sniperscope,
Project XR 441, dated 30 January 1945

(2) Alphabetic Listing, Major War Supply Contracts, Cumulative, June 1940 through September 1945
Civilian Production Administration, Industrial Statistics Division, 1946

(3) Report of Joint Air Ground Tests Against Japanese Type Field Fortifications (Sphinx Project), Camp Hood, TX, period 6 Jul 1945 through 24 Jul 1945; Headquarters Army Ground Forces, 5 Aug 1945 (480 pages)
Section V- Night Vision Equipment

Request for Assistance

Our research project needs your help. If you own or know someone who owns infrared equipment and/or documents related to the infrared scopes used on the U.S. .30 caliber carbines please consider sharing whatever information you have to help reconstruct this history.

We have two active survey's requesting basic information. Both are available as an online survey form with the option of a hard copy to scan and submit or mail for those who prefer it. Or simply e-mail us your photos and we'll do the survey for you. We also have a discussion forum still in it's infancy.

Survey, Infrared Sniperscopes & Snooperscopes, Models T120, M1 and M2

http://www.uscarbinecal30.com/irsurvey.html

Survey, Sniperscope, Infrared, Set No. 1, 20,000 Volts

http://www.uscarbinecal30.com/m3irsurvey.html

E-Mail:

Survey@USCarbineCal30.com

IR Discussion Forum

http://www.uscarbinecal30.com/forum/infrared-sniperscopes-and-equipment_forum86.html

As the research progresses in the upcoming months and years more information will be shared on the discussion forum and with additional reports such as this one. Links to web pages for each of the scope models will be added to the Model T3/M3 web page now under construction.

As most owners know the research of the history of these scopes and their equipment has been long overdue. This is no small endeavor with all being done by volunteers of The Carbine Collector's Club on their own time and at their own costs. For the history to be shared with all at no cost to anyone.

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