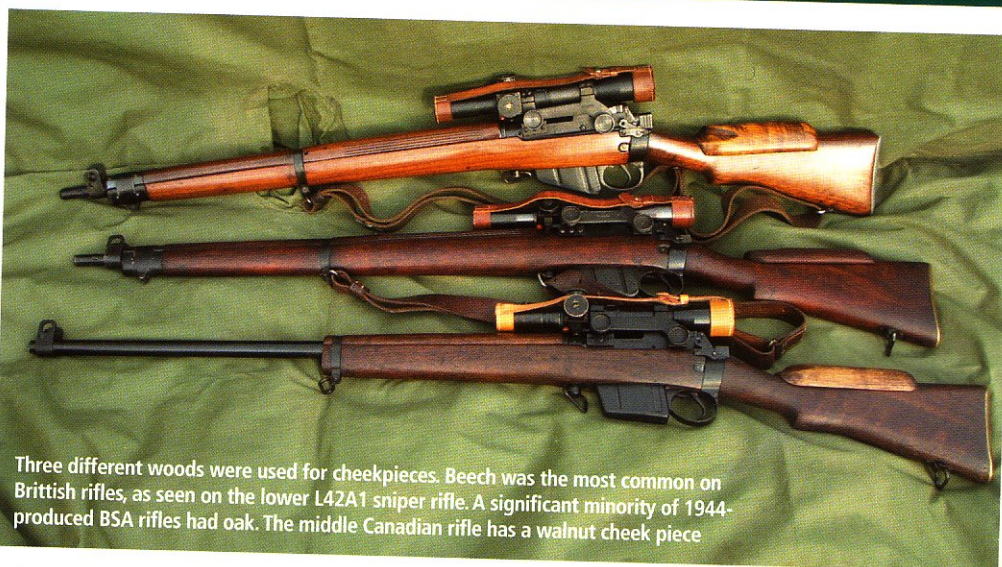


## KNOW YOUR ENFIELD

# ON YOUR MARKS

**NIGEL GREENAWAY** decodes the various military marks to be found on the No.4(T) Sniper Rifle and scopes



Three different woods were used for cheekpieces. Beech was the most common on British rifles, as seen on the lower L42A1 sniper rifle. A significant minority of 1944-produced BSA rifles had oak. The middle Canadian rifle has a walnut cheek piece

I HAVE handled upwards of 75 No.4(T) rifles. After a while, one gets a feeling for what is genuine or otherwise. However, there are two well-known experts in the UK who between them have handled thousands of these rifles, so I shall be drawing heavily on their experience and published articles and books. Peter Laidler is an armourer and current curator of the Small Arms Museum. He is the author of two books – one on the No.4(T) sniper rifle and one on the No.32 scope. Roger Payne is a Registered Firearms Dealer and collector of WWI and WWII British and

Commonwealth sniper rifles and has had several articles published. A fellow RFD and collector, David Tomkinson, shares a trade stand with Roger at the Birmingham International Arms Fair and they always have a nice selection of either matched or mismatched, but otherwise genuine, No.4(T) sniper rifles for sale. Roger and David have handled many of the early No.4(T) rifles and therefore have seen how the distinguishing markings developed over a period of time before evolving in to the accepted form of markings on 1944 and 1945 dated BSA Shirley rifles.

### Rifle receiver, butt-socket and woodwork

A Holland and Holland examiner's letter T-stamp (serif font) is present on the receiver sidewall, usually quite close to the ejector screw. On the left hand side of the butt-socket below the manufacturer's markings is a TR (sans serif font, so quite different from the 'T' on the receiver wall).

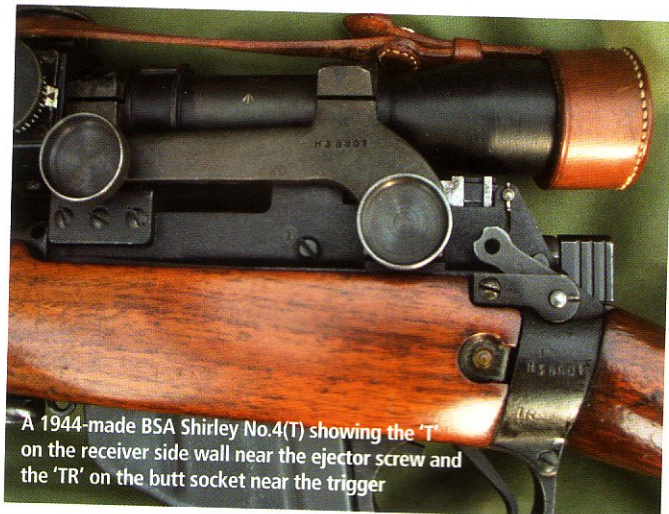
This mark was stamped by the manufacturer on rifles that exhibited tighter-than-usual groups during accuracy testing and was thus earmarked for conversion to a telescope rifle. On rifles that did not require the back sight to be re-zeroed or

exchanged for the modified Mk1 back sight (the modification was the removal of the upright battle sight that would otherwise foul the scope) there is a 1/8" high stamp of the letter 's' (sans serif). This was stamped on the block where the old Trials rifle magazine cut-off would have hinged.

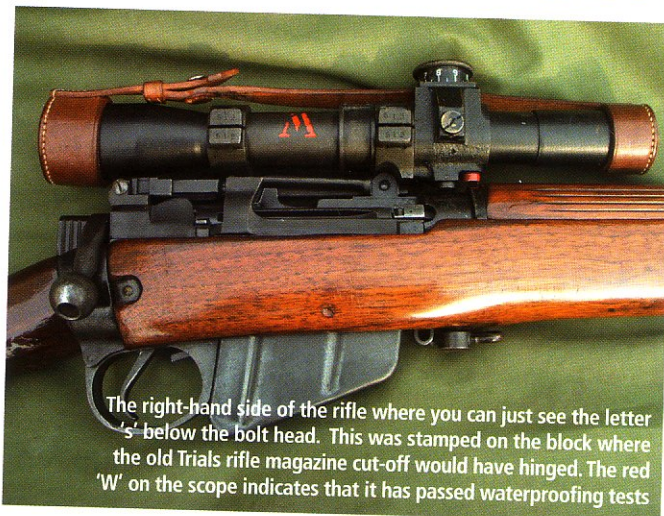
Another distinguishing mark is the 'D6E' examiner's mark, which is stamped on the left rear body next to the bolt-way after conversion to a No.4(T). The telescope number is stamped on the upper wrist of the wooden butt and the rifle number is stamped just forward of this number on the top part of the wooden socket, which disappears into the metal butt-socket when the butt is screwed onto the rifle.

On the underneath of the butt is the Holland and Holland wartime manufacturer code S51 (always present even on the 1941 rifles). The rifle serial number is stamped along the underneath of the forend at the muzzle end, instead of the more usual way of stamping across the camber of the wood.

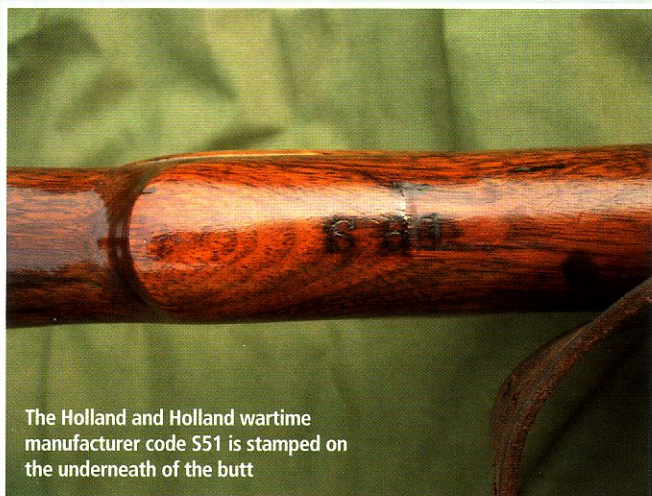
Other standard features – front (three mounting screws) and rear (two mounting screws) body pads were soft-soldered and screwed to the side wall of the receiver to



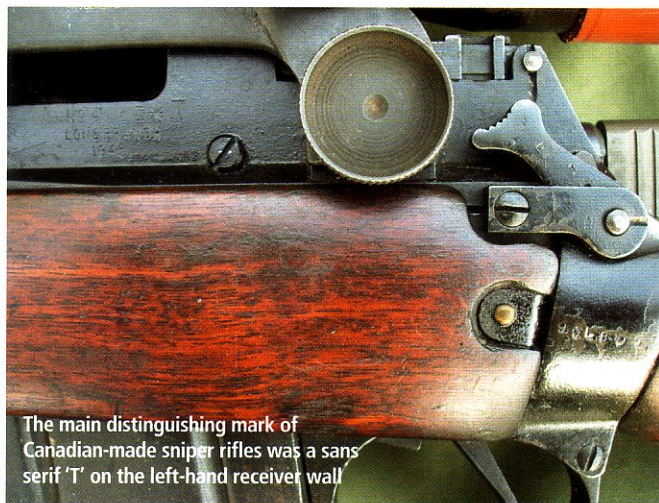
A 1944-made BSA Shirley No.4(T) showing the 'T' on the receiver side wall near the ejector screw and the 'TR' on the butt socket near the trigger



The right-hand side of the rifle where you can just see the letter 's' below the bolt head. This was stamped on the block where the old Trials rifle magazine cut-off would have hinged. The red 'W' on the scope indicates that it has passed waterproofing tests



The Holland and Holland wartime manufacturer code S51 is stamped on the underneath of the butt



The main distinguishing mark of Canadian-made sniper rifles was a sans serif 'T' on the left-hand receiver wall

accept the mount bracket. The screws on the front pads could work loose after as little as 1,000 rounds, so a solution was to stake metal from the pad in to the screwdriver slots of the screws using a punch. This became an official modification in March 1946, so many rifles subsequently going through repair shops or refurbishment would have been so modified. It is not uncommon to see multiple punch marks on the front pad, while the rear will usually just have one punch mark. From late 1944 triangular sling swivels were fitted in place of the front trigger guard screw (bedding screw) and many early rifles had these retrofitted. Cheek pieces fitted on British rifles were most commonly made from beech, but a significant minority of 1944-produced BSA rifles had oak – sometimes giving a pleasing tiger stripe look (as on my rifle). It was stipulated that split foresight blocks should be used, but many 1944-produced rifles can be found with solid foresight blocks. Only Mk1 rear sights were used with the battle sight ground off.

### Enfield-made rifles and conversions

Mention has already been made of the 1403 Trials Rifles that were converted at Enfield. Roger is of the opinion that only Trials Rifles were converted by Enfield – all of those that he has inspected lacked the Holland and Holland S51 code on the butt and they all had an Enfield examiner's mark on the front top flat of the front body pad – a mark not encountered on any other No.4(T)s. Most rifles noted are dated 1931 or 1933 with an 'A' prefix and serial numbers up to about 2,500. For example: A0794 and A2215. Woodwork is walnut and

they retain all the original Trials Rifle features.

### BSA rifles

Peter Laidler has calculated that 23,177 No.4(T) sniper rifles were completed by Holland and Holland, the last few in April 1946. Add to this the 1,403 Trials conversions, plus 1,524 Long Branch No.4(T)s and you have a grand total of 26,104. While there are no figures for the breakdown of different manufacturers' rifles supplied for conversion, the majority (85% is Roger's estimate) were supplied by BSA Shirley with the remaining 15% being made up by Enfield, R.O.F. Maltby, Savage and Long Branch. BSA's markings also evolved during the war, starting with a 'B' from 1941-1943, which changed at some point in 1943 to their wartime code of M47. This changed again in late 1943 to M47C. The serial numbering system also changed but by early 1944 it settled on a five-digit number, which usually started with a '3' and carried with a single-letter prefix. The latest production block of 'T' conversions used the 'X' prefix in 1945. No 1946-dated rifles have been observed, although some of the last Kershaw-made No.32 Mk3 sights are dated 1946. Early 1941 BSA rifles were stocked up in beech, although of a colour that is darker than the typical post-war 'blonde' beech. By 1943, it seems that BSA Shirley rifles were exclusively used for conversion.

### R.O.F. Maltby

The Royal Ordnance Factory Maltby-converted rifles were nearly all marked ROFM 1941 on the receiver side wall. The initial part of this will be obscured by the front body pad; the five-digit number will either lack a letter prefix

or carry a letter in the 'A' or 'B' series. Roger has only ever seen one 1942 rifle. Original rifles have butts marked S51 indicating that all the conversion work was carried out by Holland and Holland and not Enfield as some have speculated. The presence of the 'T' and 'TR' stamps is inconsistent; most examples will lack both letters, while some have one or the other. It is more than likely that ordnance armourers added these marks, usually of a non-standard style and size, at a later date while rifles were being repaired. The 'S' mark is absent on all Maltby converted rifles. Enfield examiner's marks, if present, are located on the right rear body under the point where the bolt handle joins the bolt body. Occasionally a genuine two-groove barrel is seen. Only No.32 Mk1 scopes would have been fitted but it is known for a later mark scope to be fitted 'officially' as part of an upgrade on an otherwise serviceable rifle. This point also applies to the Savage-made rifles. There were probably fewer than 1,000 Maltby conversions and a similar number for Savage.

### Stevens-Savage

The American-manufactured Savage rifles were converted from very early No.4 Mk1 production and a very few Mk1\*, probably at the point when production changed over to the differential bolt release system on the Mk1\*. Serial numbers seem to be in the 12, 13 and 14C blocks. The odd two-groove barrel will also be observed – this was supposed to be a reject feature if spotted by Holland and Holland! There is some speculation that a second batch of Savage rifles was converted by Holland and Holland near the termination of the sniper rifle conversion contracts in 1945/46 but

were not fitted with scopes. Unfortunately, these rifles lack the standard markings, which by this date had become standardised, so there are considerable doubts about these scopeless rifles.

### Long branch

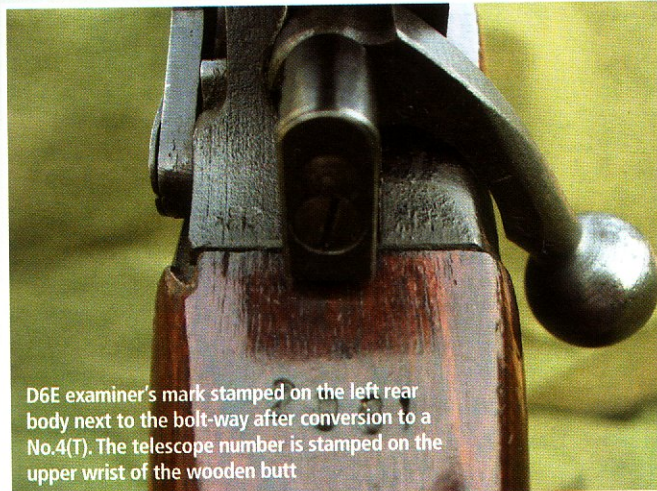
Worthy of an article in its own right, the history of the Canadian Long Branch-made No.4(T)s is very interesting. They tried to develop the No.4(T) into a more modern sporterised sniper rifle with a half-length forend, Monte-Carlo butt, rubber butt-pad and a 5x magnification scope – all at a considerable weight saving. The British rejected it, saying 5x magnification was too much; this was a great shame because all the trials showed that the users loved it! The Canadians did have six different scopes including the Mk1, Mk1A, Mk2 and Mk3, which were the same or very similar to our three marks. They also had the C No.67 Mk1 (3.5x24mm). This was originally designated a No.32 Mk4 but was reassigned because it was a completely new development that owed nothing to the No.32.

Due to production difficulties in churning out enough scopes through the Quebec-based Research Enterprises Limited (REL), the Canadians ordered 350 off-the-shelf American Lyman Alaskan all-weather scopes which they designated the C No.32 Mk1 (TP) – TP stood for Trade Pattern. For a long while, research showed that only 1,141 Canadian No.4(T)s were made, but Clive Law's excellent book *Without Warning*, revealed that all the rifles using No.32 Mk3 scopes were produced after the war, bringing the grand total to 1,524. The Canadian markings did

## KNOW YOUR ENFIELD: MILITARY MARKS

### Sources:

*The Armourer Militaria Magazine*, Issue 57 May/June 2003, "WW2 Sniping Rifles" by Roger Payne  
*International Arms & Militaria Collector Magazine* No.20, 2002, Roger Payne and David Tomkinson's article on the No.4(T)  
*An Armourer's Perspective .303 No.4(T) Sniper Rifle*, ISBN 1 85367 144 4. Peter Laidler's bible on the history of these rifles  
*Telescope Sighting No.32 – An insider view of the Sniper's Rifle Telescope*, Peter Laidler. Last reprinted in 1993, a very comprehensive booklet on these scopes and how to strip and reassemble them (if you are very brave)



D6E examiner's mark stamped on the left rear body next to the bolt-way after conversion to a No.4(T). The telescope number is stamped on the upper wrist of the wooden butt

not follow any of the British stampings and the main distinguishing mark was a sans serif 'T' on the left hand receiver wall.

About 500-600 Canadian No.4(T)s were accepted into British service and these tend to have the scope number stamped on the upper wrist of the butt. There are other specific Canadian markings, but these are beyond the scope of this article.

Next issue we will look at the ongoing development of the No.4(T) with the introduction in British service of the three main marks, plus one hybrid version of the No.32 scope and the associated scope tins, lens caps, wooden rifle chests and training literature.

My thanks to David for supplying many of the close-up photos used in this article.

