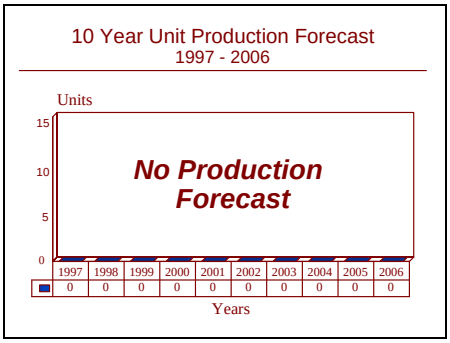
PRC-68 - Archived 7/98

Outlook

- Production ending, if not complete
- No recent reported contract activity
- This report will be dropped from future supplements



Orientation

Description. VHF/FM hand-held radio.

Sponsor
US Marine Corps Headquarters
Washington, DC

Contractors
Magnavox Government & Industrial Electronics Co
Magnavox Electronic Systems Co
Ft. Wayne, IN
(Prime: Development/production)

Oklahoma Aerotronics Inc
Hartshorne, OK
(PRC-68A production)

Status. Production is diminishing, if not completed.

Total Produced. Through 1994, approximately 29,500 PRC-68 radio sets were produced.

Application. Tactical communications.

Price Range. Unit cost is estimated at US$1,890.

Technical Data

Design Features. The PRC-68A is a lightweight (0.95 kg), hand-held VHF-FM military radio designed specifically for use within rifle platoons, fire teams, reconnaissance patrols, and artillery observation posts. The radio set provides short-range voice communications up to 500 meters with a concealed antenna, and up to 2,200 meters with the antenna extended. It operates with all VHF/FM tactical radios at 30 MHz to 79.95 MHz. One thousand channels are available with the PRC-68A.

The PRC-68B radio is a ruggedized, state-of-the-art, fully synthesized transceiver that offers tactical users full access to all frequencies in the VHF/FM (30 to 88 MHz) range when configured as a (V)1, or in the High Band VHF (130 to 174 MHz) range in the (V)2 version. The PRC-68B radio is controlled by a microcomputer; both versions can be preset to 10 channels anywhere in the frequency range. Channel spacing can be accomplished at 12.5, 15, 20, 25, 30 or 50 kHz; and some 23,200 channels are available in (V)1 and 17,600 in (V)2 versions.

The PRC-68(X) FM transmitter/receiver was designed to provide full frequency control over the 30 MHz to 80 MHz range in 25 kHz increments. The radio used integrated analog and digital technology similar to the PRC-68B.

Variants/Upgrades

See Design Features section.

Program Review

Background. The US Navy, acting for the Marine Corps, initiated preliminary development of the PRC-68 in September 1966 with contracts to over 10 companies. In August 1971, Magnavox was selected for full-scale development of the PRC-68. The US Army came aboard to procure the radio in the late 1960s, and it entered service in the late 1970s. Magnavox produced the PRC-68 until the early 1980s, when it was selected by the US Army to produce its follow-on, the PRC-126(V) (see separate report). Oklahoma Aerotronics was brought in as the current production source in 1987.

Funding

Specific funding unavailable, since all related Marine Corps equipment is carried under a single line item titled "Manpack Radios and Equipment."

Recent Contracts

Contractor	Award ($ millions)	Date/Description
Oklahoma Aerotronics	0.13	Apr 1990 — PRC-68 radios (M00027-86-C-0079)
Oklahoma Aerotronics	0.05	Oct 1990 — PRC-68 radios (M00027-86-C-0079)
Oklahoma Aerotronics	0.03	Mar 1991 — PRC-68 radios (M67004-90-C-0112)

Timetable

	1966	Marine Corps initiated PRC-68 preliminary development
Aug	1971	Magnavox selected to develop PRC-68
	1975	Testing began
Late	1970s	PRC-68 entered service
	1987	Oklahoma Aerotronics awarded production contract
Jun	1992	*CBD* solicitation issued for additional PRC-68s

Worldwide Distribution

The PRC-68 is in service with US Marine Corps, Air Force and Army units.

Forecast Rationale

The Marine PRC-68A radio program seems to be finally winding down.

A solicitation for additional PRC-68A radio sets and spares (between 1,000 and 5,050 units) for the Marine Corps appeared in the 1995 *Commerce Business Daily*. However, no further activity has been reported; this procurement must not have gone through.

In light of the pressure to make additional cuts in procurement programs, and the planned downsizing of Marine Corps forces in the years ahead, it seems likely that the Marines have decided to follow the US Army's lead

and replace its PRC-68s with Magnavox's newer PRC- 126(V).

Ten-Year Outlook

Due to a lack of recent contract activity, PRC-68A production is believed complete. Should this state of inactivity continue over the next year, this report will be dropped from future supplements.

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