

1902-1903 Krag Rifle Qualification Courses

OK, for Starters, let's see how our granddaddies had to qualify with the Krag Rifle!

U .S. Army Rifle Qualification Course (circa 1902 -1903)

(prior to firing this course, each individual fired approximately 450 round of practice ammunition)

Qualifying Score was the aggregate of two runs of the KD (Known Distance) course and the two Skirmish Runs, requiring the individual to fire a grand total of 80 rounds over both courses per run. A total of 160 rounds were fired for the entire match.

1st Course of fire:

Total number of rounds fired = 60

#Rounds	Range	Type of Fire	Position	Time Limit
10 Shots	200 yds.	Slow Fire	Standing	Average of 1 min/shot*
10 Shots	300 yds	Slow Fire	Sit or Kneel	Average of 1 min/shot*
10 Shots	500 yds	Slow Fire	Prone	Average of 1 min/shot*
10 Shots	600 yds	Slow Fire	Prone	Average of 1 min/shot*
10 Shots	200 yds	Rapid Fire	Standing	2 strings of 5 shots fired** in 20 seconds per string
10 Shots	300 yds	Rapid Fire	Sit or Kneel	2 strings of 5 shots fired** in 30seconds per string

* No specific time limit specified during the slow fire stages. In the old days slow fire was usually understood to be "a reasonable amount of time." This usually was understood to be an average of 1 minute per shot. Match time limits were normally 1 minute per shot.

**The Krag rifle was reloaded with five individual cartridges, with no "stripper clip" to assist. Hence rapid fire strings were fired in two individually timed 5 round strings

2nd Course of fire:

Total number of rounds fired = 20 per Skirmish Run (a total of 40 rds per individual for qualification)

Each shooter fired two Skirmish Runs utilizing the targets called in slang, the Squaw and Papoose Targets. Officially, the Squaw (the larger of the two) was called the "E Silhouette Target" and the Papoose (the smaller of the two) was called the "F Silhouette Target".

The Skirmish Run was fired in the following manner (this was a sort of individual version of the "rattle battle" or *National Trophy Infantry Trophy Match*):

1. Each shooter had one (each) Squaw and Papoose Target sitting on top of the butts in front of his firing point - any firing position was allowed at all ranges (you could shoot prone at all distances if you wished):
2. The line of shooters formed just to the rear of the 600 yd line in a skirmish line. When the line was formed, it was ordered forward ("**well dressed**" needless to say) to the 600 yd. firing point and halted. On command, each shooter fired 2 rounds at the target(s) within a time limit of 30 seconds.
3. Upon expiration of the 30 sec. time limit the line was ordered forward to the 500 yd. line. The first half of the distance was covered in quick time and the last half at double time. At 500 yds. 2 rounds were fired at the target in a time limit of 30 seconds.
4. Upon expiration of the 30 sec. time limit, the line was ordered forward to the 400 yd. line. Again, the distance was covered first in a quick time with the last half done at the double. At 400 yds. **3 rounds** were fired in 30 seconds (vice 2 at 500 & 600).
5. Upon expiration of the 30 sec. time limit, the line was ordered forward to the 350 yd. line, using the combination quick and double time routine (which would be continued through the end of all courses fire during the skirmish runs). Again you were required to shoot **3 shots** in 30 seconds, just as at 400 yds.
6. Upon expiration of the 30 sec time limit, the line was ordered to the 300 yd line. Here you had a total of 10 rds. remaining. The individual shooter was allowed to distribute these in any way he wished between the 300 and 200 yd line. He had another 30 second time limit at 300 yds, but this was cut to 20 sec. at 200 yds.

Old timers were said to have favored the prone position at all ranges with a few diehards using the sitting position at 200. Total possible score was 100. An extremely accomplished shooter of the day was thought to be doing well if he scored 80 or more points on a skirmish run.

Put into table form, it would look like this:

Skirmisher's Course

Range	# of Rounds Fired	Time Limit	Position
600 yds	2	30 sec	Any
500 yds.	2	30 sec.	Any
400 yds.	3	30 sec	Any
350 yds.	3	30 sec	Any
300 yds	10 rds. to be used at shooter's discretion	30 sec.	Any
200 yds.		20 sec.	Any
Two Targets per Shooter: Squaw = 4 points Papoose = 5 points			
Movement between yard lines = 1/2 quick time - 1/2double time			
Shooters move as a skirmish line "downrange" on command.			

As a strategy, most competitors fired at the Squaw (kneeling) target down to and including 350 yds. They then fired at the Papoose (prone) target at 300 and 200 yards. Col. Townsend Whelen said that he personally used the junction of the target and the ground as an aiming point, and set his sights to hit into the (wider) shoulder area of the kneeling target

Sgt. Emmet Hawkins of the 24th Infantry (colored), is thought to be the 1st and only man to ever make a perfect (100 points) score in the Skirmish Run in competition.

The qualifications in those far off days were:

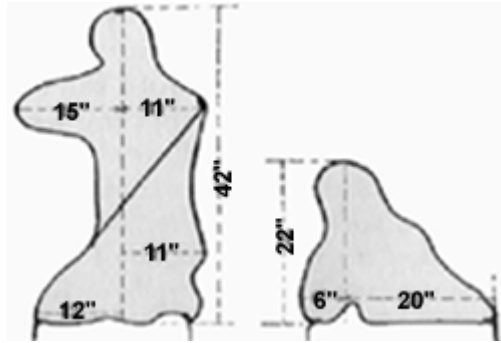
Highest = Sharpshooter

2nd = Marksman

3rd = 1st Class

(I haven't been able to come up with the score for each classification yet, but I'm looking)

Kneeling and Prone Silhouette (Skirmisher's) Targets



Skirmish targets, the "Squaw" (left) and "Papoose" (right), used at Sea Girt and elsewhere in military shooting. These targets were also used as a part of the National Trophy Individual Rifle Match in the early days, when the "leg" course required the individual to add his Skirmish Run to his National Match Score Total.

Hits on Squaw Target = 4 points

Hits on Papoose Target = 5 points

Would you say that this is a far cry from the 40 rounds fired from the "mousegun" at the 1000 inch range that now passes for Army rifle qualification? You are now introduced to rifle marksmanship, march to the 1000 inch range, fire your rounds and head for chow all in one morning. "Poof"!! that's it! Instant "rifleman" - I'll bet you think I kidding? I would that I was! Sorry folks, that's it! End of story! A man had to be a real rifleman in those far off days of the Krag Rifle - and it would be almost 72 years until we lost our first war! It might be difficult to establish a genuine "cause and effect" between the current quality of our training, and our ability to impose our will on the enemy, but still... Of course we now understand one another so much better and of course our sensitivity training is much improved, so I suppose that has to count for something, eh what? Are we to trade political correctness for freedom? Ah well...

