



THE ROLE OF THE CIVILIAN MARKSMANSHIP PROGRAM IN NATIONAL DEFENSE

I. History

- A. While both Military and Civilian marksmanship prior to the 1870s was a sometimes sort of thing, the readily available supply of rifles and pistols utilizing metallic cartridges had become almost universal by 1880. The military services had been officially supplied with metallic cartridge rifles since the Allen Conversion of 1867 (eventually evolving into the so called "Trap Door Springfield" of 1873) and pistols since the adoption of the 1873 Colt Single Action. Even though consistent accuracy was now a possibility, target practice and proficiency with the issued weapons had not kept abreast of the technology. Fortunately in this case, civilians and citizen soldiers led the way. Military target practice (during Custer's time for instance) was virtually non-existent due to the perennial lack of funding common to the frontier army of the time. Depending on the unit, the allocated funds for target practice allowed for fewer than 50 rounds per year, in some units considerably less. Individual citizen soldiers who had a personal interest in developing their marksmanship skills often bought ammunition out of their own pocket and practiced on their own time.
- B. Following the Civil War by only six years, a group of National Guard Officers formed the National Rifle Association chartered in New York State in 1871. A statement by General Winfield Scott Hancock, serving as the President of the NRA in 1881, sums up the goal of the organization: "The object of the NRA is to increase the military strength of the country by making skill in the use of arms as prevalent as it was in the days of the Revolution." This worthy attitude was to guide the efforts of the NRA, the National Board for the Promotion of Rifle Practice, the Director of Civilian Marksmanship and our citizen soldiers for generations to come.

The importance placed on marksmanship by the hierarchy of the United States Armed Forces of the day may be seen by some of the individuals occupying the position of President of the NRA. General Hancock had watched in awe during the battle of Gettysburg as the 1st U.S. Sharpshooters had been instrumental in defending "Little Round Top". Other noted soldiers moving into the job of NRA President were no less than General Ulysses S. Grant, former President of the United States, and General Philip H. Sheridan, Commander-in-Chief of the U. S. Army. Theodore Roosevelt, while President of the United States, authorized the sale at government cost "...of surplus U. S. Service Rifles and ammunition to rifle clubs meeting specifications laid down by the National Board for the Promotion of Rifle Practice". President Roosevelt, himself an ardent rifleman, was a life member of the National Rifle Association. By 1904, members of NRA affiliated clubs were entitled to compete for a "*National Marksmen's Reserve*" qualification. Those qualifying were recorded by the War Department as



If you are a citizen of the United States between the ages of 15 and 45 you should be a

"National Marksman"

The members of all Government Rifle Clubs organized under the recent act of Congress and affiliated with the

NATIONAL RIFLE ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

are eligible to compete for qualification as such and at the close of the year your name will be listed in the War Department as a member of the

NATIONAL MARKSMAN'S RESERVE

(The third line of Defense for the Army)

And you will receive a badge like this.



The Government will give preference to National Marksmen when enlisting volunteers. Application blanks and information concerning the organization of Rifle Clubs may be procured from

Lieut. ALBERT S. JONES, Secretary,
National Rifle Association of America,
PASSAIC, N. J.

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members of the nation's "Second Line of Defense" and were promised "First Consideration" by the War Department in times of national emergency when volunteering for active duty. Since 1871, the NRA under the guidance of and in consonance with the National Board for the Promotion of Rifle Practice had been primarily concerned with the promotion of marksmanship in among the reserves and militias of the several states. The *"National Marksmen's Reserve"* marked a new direction of the NRA and the National Board in the planning and preparation of the national defense by potential citizen soldiers. By 1908 a youth program had been added, but the seniors were not neglected either. The seniors usually acted as coaches for the young shooters, thus building a self-perpetuating base of instructors to be used in time of national emergency. A study conducted at the time concluded that "boys and young men taught to shoot the rifle as a means of making them fit to serve their country in time

of need are not on that account more inclined to warlike strife". While shooting is certainly a wonderful sport and a wholesome pastime it was recognized as a necessary skill in the defense of our country.

- C. As the war in Europe threatened to engulf the United States, the quotes of a number of individuals began to illustrate the intelligence and foresight of our Board for the Promotion of Rifle Practice. Lord Kitchener, the Commander of the British Armed Forces, stated on 2 September 1914 (while appealing for additional volunteers): "Never mind whether they know anything about drill. It doesn't matter whether they know their right foot from their left. Teach them how to shoot and do it quickly!" General Pershing himself was later quoted as saying, "send me men who can shoot and salute!" The National Defense Act signed in June of 1916, among other things earmarked \$300,000 to promote civilian marksmanship training and authorized the distribution of appropriate arms and ammunition to civilian rifle clubs established under the rules established by the National Board for the Promotion of Rifle Practice. Military instructors were authorized to assist civilian rifle clubs, all military rifle ranges were opened to civilian shooters and \$60,000 was provided to transport civilian teams to the National Rifle and Pistol Matches. Perhaps the most far-reaching provision of the Act was the creation of the



BOYS!! 1916-1918

Become a
"JUNIOR MARKSMAN"

Organize a Rifle Club in your school

OUR AIM—To instill the principle of manhood and loyal citizenship in the youth of the land.
(National Rifle Association of America)

MEN!!

Show your loyalty and patriotism
 Become a
"NATIONAL MARKSMAN"

Organize a government rifle club in your town and qualify for the National Marksmen's Reserve. Get in line for Government issued information on the building of rifle ranges furnished.

Included Membership—for you a life membership in the association may be secured—give all the rights and privileges, annual dues, \$2.00 life.

For full information, blanks, etc., address

Lieut. ALBERT S. JONES, Sec'y

National Rifle Association of America
 1115th Building WASHINGTON, D. C.

Office of Director of Civilian Marksmanship under the National Board for the Promotion of Rifle Practice.

- D. The Small Arms Firing School (SAFS) was brought into being on 15 May 1918 with the task of training instructors rather than expert riflemen. Each student was selected for his ability to teach. Each student received a month of intensive instruction from some of the world's finest rifle shooters. Upon returning to his regiment/unit the graduate of the SAFS was able to pass on his newfound knowledge to members of his unit. The French officers in the Allied forces were skeptical of accurate rifle fire, viewing the rifle as a reasonably handy platform for the bayonet. General Pershing knew better and called for extensive marksmanship training to be conducted prior to sending the Doughboys to France. The Marines made their point in Belleau Wood. Captured German letters spoke of unbelievably accurate rifle fire that began to take effect at 700 yards. For that and the ferocity exhibited in the attacks on their assigned objectives, the Marines became known as "shock troops" by the Germans who gave them a name that has been proudly worn by Marines since that time – "*Teufel Hunden*" or in English, "Hounds of Hell". The Marines simply shortened it to "Devil Dog". Clearly, accurate rifle fire had made a distinct impression on the German Soldier.
- F. The SAFS continued throughout the years following W.W.I excepting a couple of years from (1932 to 1934) due to the Depression. The final National Match session prior to W.W.II was fired in 1940, thanks in no small part to the intercession of General George C. Marshall, Chief of Staff of the U. S. Army. Recognizing the value of the National Rifle Matches and the Small Arms Firing School in the training of military personnel, he personally rearranged the maneuvers being held by the National Guard Units being held in Louisiana. The National Guard Units were then able to attend the matches. The Nationals were also adjusted so that they were held during the first three weeks of September of 1940 to accommodate the National Guard. Many attendees of the SAFS were able to put their knowledge to use in the ensuing war years. The knowledge gained during the years between wars was about to pay for itself many times over. Many general officers in both the Marine Corps and the Army were generous with their praise of the skills taught in the Small Arms Firing School and carried with them into the service as new recruits. A few of the better known individuals are listed below:
1. General Marshall (Chief of Staff of the U.S.Army).
 2. General Eisenhower (Supreme Commander of the European Theater and later President of the United States).
 3. General George S. Patton, Jr. (Claimed the M1 Rifle was the " ...greatest battle implement ever devised).
 4. General Tommy Holcomb (Distinguished Marksman, Commandant of the Marine Corps, and Navy Cross winner in Belleau Wood).
 5. General Rupertus (Distinguished Marksman, Marine General in charge of the Tarawa Invasion and author of "This is My Rifle" dissertation still published in the Marine Corps qualification Data Book and required to be memorized by every Marine recruit).

6. General Merritt Edson (Distinguished Marksman, winner of the Medal of Honor, Commanding Officer of the 1st Marine Raider Battalion on Guadalcanal, and later President of the NRA).
7. General David Shoup (Distinguished Pistol Shot, Medal of Honor winner from Tarawa and future Commandant of the Marine Corps).

All were lavish with their praise of the contributions made by the National Board for the Promotion of Rifle Practice and the Director of Civilian Marksmanship in preparing the American Citizens for service in the armed forces. When Lt. General Chesty Puller (then a Col.) returned from the Pacific, he was asked how the United States might increase its national preparedness in the future. He stated that "In my opinion, every male U. S. Citizen 18 years old or older should be required to own a .30 caliber rifle and practice with it!"

- G. The Small Arms Firing School continued coincidentally with resumption of the National Matches following W.W.II. While the units assisting the conduct of the school have changed from time to time, the National Board continued to ensure that the school was conducted at every opportunity. Korea benefited from the graduates of such marksmanship training as did our graduates who were involved in the training and fighting of the Vietnam War.

II. The Dawn of a New Era and a New Attitude

- A. The 1960s and the attitudes coming out of Vietnam have not been kind to the shooting programs. The word "gun" has become a dirty word in many quarters and Congress no longer seems kindly inclined towards national defense. They seem well disposed towards the building of more sophisticated aircraft or more powerful ships, but the individual soldier seems to have become a forgotten entity. Perhaps the most destructive blow was our rather easily obtained "walk through victory" in the farce known as "Desert Storm". While the victory was almost bloodless, and obtained in something approaching record time, it was unfortunately *not* obtained because of superior airpower or a lack of a need for the armed infantryman. Here we were dealing with a different culture not accustomed to fighting in a toe to toe or "setpiece" battle. While the airstrikes were certainly spectacular they were not, in my opinion, indicative of things to come. The final 100 yards of the battlefield still belongs to the infantry and always will, (barring a war utilizing strategic nuclear weapons or nerve gas). Congress, however, doesn't necessarily understand the continued need for a soldier well versed in the use of his rifle.
- B. In this time of seeming disinterest in personal marksmanship, the job of conducting the Small Arms Firing School is more important than ever. The 1960s saw the demise of known distance marksmanship in the Army. The current Army qualification course consists of 40 rounds fired at the distance of 1000 inches at ten (10) silhouette targets of greatly reduced size simulating distances from 50 to 300 meters. The rifles are "sighted in" utilizing three (3) groups fired for triangulation. Once the rifles are deemed to be sighted in, the soldier shoots his qualifying target and is finished with his formal marksmanship training during the morning of one day. Night firing (or the lack thereof) is based on the availability of funds at the time of training. Some field firing is

conducted depending on the training facility and whim of the commander, but nothing else is required past the initial qualification. The day of the superiority of the American Rifleman would seem to be a thing of the past. Only the Civilian Marksmanship Program and the training program of the U. S. Marine Corps stand between the legend of the American Rifleman and total extinction.

III. The Civilian Marksmanship Program and Military Preparedness

- A. A study done by the Government Accounting Office in May of 1990 concluded that the CMP is of limited value. A summary of the statements and conclusions are as follows:
 - 1. The CMP was conceived in the early 1900s during a period in U.S. History when civilian training in marksmanship was viewed as essential to total military preparedness. Its mission and purpose were simply to train U. S. Citizens in rifle skills in the event that they might later be inducted into the military.
 - 2. If usefulness is defined as a measurement of whether this program contributes to the military preparedness of the United States today, we believe that the CMP is of limited value for the following reasons:
 - a. CMP objectives and goals are not linked to Army mobilization and training plans.
 - b. Army requirements do not exist for the CMP-trained personnel or instructors.
 - c. CMP-trained personnel are not tracked and may not be available when needed.
- B. Included in the report is a supposed statement by Army officials mainly reiterating the above concerns, but going a bit further in their concerns. They stated that there is some question about the requirements for the program during the mobilization. Part of their rationale is as follows:
 - 1. The Civilian Marksmanship Program is not included in the Army's overall mobilization plans or training strategy.
 - 2. No Army requirements exist for either civilians trained in marksmanship or for CMP instructors to augment the mobilization training base.
 - 3. No system is in place to track CMP-trained personnel.
 - 4. No program has been developed to train, certify, and track CMP instructors who could be used to augment the mobilization training base.
- B. The Army's analysis concludes that: "...while the intent of the CMP is to contribute to military preparedness, its two mobilization goals appear to have to have no direct linkage to Army mobilization, training requirements and plans. There is no system in place to track or identify CMP-trained personnel, and the program's second goal, to provide trained CMP instructors, essentially is not being accomplished. Because of the program members' volunteer status, there is no assurance that program-trained personnel will be available when needed."

III. An Analysis of the GAO Military Preparedness Report

- A. While the above GAO and Army analysis may be somewhat upsetting to the CMP purist, a hard look at their (the Army and the GAO) complaints will indicate that they have several points that are hard to dispute. Taking a look at each point we find:
1. We are *not* currently included in the Army's training or mobilization plans! We must make certain that the Army realizes that we are in place and that we *desire* to be of assistance in time of national emergency or general mobilization.
 2. We find that indeed, *no* Army requirements do currently exist for either civilians trained in marksmanship or for program instructors to augment the mobilization training base. We have much to offer the Army's training program, but they cannot be expected to realize *what* we have to offer if we do not maintain close liaison with such organizations as TRADOC, or the training personnel in the Pentagon.
 3. While we do turn out instructors, *no program has been put in place to track such instructors!* Certificates issued to graduates of the Small Arms Firing School should indicate the level of training of each individual. A system must be put into place that will allow the CMP to track trained instructors and to ascertain their availability in time of national emergency and to augment the mobilization training base.
- B. If we are to be of use to the national defense effort, we must redirect our efforts and directly address the concerns the Department of Defense. This, however, must take two directions.
1. We must set up a liaison section between the CMP and DOD. They will never take advantage of our talents if 1) they don't realize they exist and 2) if they don't realize that we are both willing and able to use our experience and knowledge to further the goal of national preparedness.
 2. We must re-educate the United States Army in precise shot placement. Field firing is a necessary part of a well-rounded marksmanship program, but under no circumstances should field firing be used in place of (or instead of) sound marksmanship basics. If the Army Qualification course listed above is considered to be sufficient for a well trained soldier, it is extremely fortunate we were not pitted against a modern, determined enemy in the Gulf War. It is a sad state of circumstances that our modern, (supposedly sophisticated) army armed with complex weapons systems of much greater lethality than a common rifle, have forgotten the most basic of weapons. As I said previously, if anyone thinks the next REAL war will be won in the air as opposed to the last hundred yards with a rifle and a bayonet, they are mistaken. *I am sorely afraid that we have learned to wage war, but we've forgotten how to fight!*

V. A New Approach

- A. We must do several things to bring about a change in the current system.

1. We must re-educate the Armed Forces, (specifically the United States Army), in the need for sound marksmanship principles as a basis for success in combat and stand ready to assist them in any manner they request or require.
 2. We must set up what amounts to a "farm team" system of instructors, and tie the system into a coordinated marksmanship competitive system that will maintain a fine edge on the talents of the "identified instructor" staff.
 3. If possible we must bring the USAMU back into the competitive marksmanship circle, but hopefully with a redirected effort aimed at increasing combat efficiency in the Army (as opposed to a directed effort to win in International Competition). Put in plain language, we must get the "Army Area system of Marksmanship" back into place. This system encourages marksmanship throughout the entire Army as opposed to a pool of extremely talented individuals who are collected for the specific purpose of demonstrating their individual excellence. If at all possible, the Army Infantry, Artillery, Armor, Engineer, and MP teams should be brought back to spread the knowledge throughout the (entire) Army.
 4. The ultimate purpose of military marksmanship must be to win battles and wars, not to beat the Marines, Air Force and Navy. In the heyday of marksmanship, competition was fun, and encouraged participation by all hands, not just "the best and the brightest". The Army allowed their concentration on medal winning to essentially destroy their program. While the USAMU is still afloat, it is just barely afloat and desperately looking for something to tie itself to. USAMU freely admitted that no officer could even qualify to be assigned to USAMU under the current rules, and any officer who touched the program was essentially finished career-wise in the Army. Under such a system, you can hardly expect the Army hierarchy to be friendly to the program, as none of them will have any experience with it. Col. Dave Willis essentially saved the Marine Corps program a number of years ago by insisting on the competitors in the Division Matches fire the M16 Rifle as opposed to the M14, and the M9 instead of the 1911A1 .45 Auto. While there were screams of protest from the old-timers, history has proven him correct. Headquarters Marine Corps could again see a purpose in sending competitors to the Division Matches. The shooters came home with a "Marksmanship Instructor's additional MOS" and were a definite asset as coaches and marksmanship instructors in their home units. In other words, marksmanship became known (in the Marine Corps) as a "martial art" again as opposed to a sport. Cuts in budgets always can find reasons for cutting sports, but not essential military skills. This is a long-winded way of saying it would be extremely wise to keep the Civilian Marksmanship Program from becoming simply another "Midnight Basketball Program!" If we can prove the CMP program indispensable to national defense, its future will be assured.
- B. In order to furnish the requisite number of instructors in time of national emergency, and keep track of them, we will have to slightly modify and expand our current system. I recommend that we use the following vehicles to accomplish our purposes:
1. Divide the United States into Regions (or Areas) to roughly match the old U.S. Army Areas (2nd Army Area, 6th Army Area, etc.).

2. Organize CMP Excellence-in-Competition Matches in each area on an annual basis.
3. Supply a team to set up (or assist in setting up) an "Area Match" (the NRA can satellite their Regional Matches on the Area Matches if they wish). These Area Matches would conduct a "Mini-Small Arms Firing School" prior to the match. The CMP would (at least initially) furnish Mobile Training Teams to conduct the Small Arms Firing School. At the least, the firing school would require the student to fire once across the National Match Course after appropriate instruction. A certificate would be awarded the graduates and issued with an order of merit indicating his or her score on the NMC. The NMC would be fired with a lot of ammunition furnished at cost by the CMP to be used in the E-i-C (leg) match.
4. In order to participate in the E-i-C Match, the student would be required to participate in the SAFS. E-i-C (leg) medals would be awarded on the usual basis, but any leg winner would be subsidized up to say \$200 towards their transportation to the Nationals. The cost here will be minimal as there are usually less than four medal winners in each (Regional) E-i-C. The medal winners would (or could) also be subsidized to some extent on their rent for the housing (hut) at Camp Perry. Distinguished Shooters would be allowed to take advantage of the subsidized housing, but would be required to participate in the Area/Regional E-i-C Match and shoot a score at least equal to the last place leg medal awarded. Distinguished Shooters participating in the E-i-C Matches and placing as above, would be issued a distinctive certificate worthy of framing, in addition to a subsidy on their Perry Housing.
5. All leg winners from the Area Matches accepting travel subsidy and or housing subsidy would be required to act as instructors in the Small Arms Firing School at Camp Perry. Individuals completing such instructional duties would be issued an instructors rating and earmarked for use in time of national emergency.
6. The Small Arms Firing School at the National Matches would also include a more comprehensive course of instruction for the advanced students and require that they fire across the National Match Course as part of the School. All shooters desiring to shoot the Leg Match would be required to attend the SAFS as a prerequisite for entering the National Trophy Individual (Leg) Match.
7. *Ideally* each leg match (both Area and Nationals) would be fired with the current service rifle furnished by the CMP/Department of the Army. The firing of the SAFS with a lot of ammunition selected by the CMP to be used in the "leg match" would be a great incentive to participation in the school. The E-i-C ammunition would be furnished at a minimal cost to the competitor by the CMP and would ensure that each competitor. The use of "issued ammunition" would ensure that each competitor would start the match using the same lot of ammunition and without undue advantage over his or her fellow shooter(s).

8. Contrary to popular belief, the use (or required use) of the M16 in the E-i-C match would probably *not* discourage the current sale of M1 Rifles by the CMP. A comprehensive study of the firing line would indicate that only a very small percentage of competitive shooters use an M1 Rifle to fire the E-I-C Matches at the Nationals. Our current plan to have an "As Issued Service Rifle Match" will satisfy the average competitor's urge to utilize his "pappy's smoke pole" in competition.
9. Once the "Area Match" concept is in place and functioning smoothly, I suggest that we invite the Army to send teams from the appropriate Army Area(s) to participate in the E-I-C Matches and encourage the Army to issue Leg medals for those who place in the match. What I am suggesting is that we "kick-start" the Army's Shooting System back to life by encouraging competition. We can furnish instructions for the fledgling Army Shooters, and allow them to use their issue rifles in the Area Match. Slowly but surely we may be able to salvage a grand old tradition. If the idea takes hold, we might even be able to host the equivalent of the old "All Army Match" until it starts to breathe on its own. Army pride would no doubt kick in at some point and relieve the CMP of its duties of holding a match more properly hosted by the Department of the Army.
10. In order to track our newly created instructors, we would use good old-fashioned psychology and make selection for the honor very exclusive. Only those "selected" would be allowed to participate in or be called in time of National Emergency. Much like the old "Corps of Civilian Marksmen", they would receive a special lapel pin and be assured that they would be the "Third line of National Defense" (after the Regular Service and the Guard/Reserves). Once the program is well organized, each individual could be given a definite mobilization assignment. If the psychology is properly applied, the selected instructors would be ringing the telephone off the hook notifying the CMP of even temporary changes of location.
11. We must liaison with the Department of the Army and sell them on our marksmanship program. If they know we exist and have something worthwhile to offer that will be of minimum expense to the Government, they may be more than receptive to our plan for assistance in times of mobilization or National Emergency.
12. To bring the forces up to speed, we could (should) liaison with the Adjutants General of each State and give him (or her) a rundown on our instructional capabilities. The mobile training team concept could be used to institute initial marksmanship training in each State Guard and perhaps even encourage match participation by National Guard Teams from each individual State in the Nationals, or at least to the Area Matches. Like the All Army Team, the All Guard Team isn't really indicative of the state of readiness of each State's National Guard. Much like the idea of learning how to wage war and forgetting how to fight, the individual services have been placing the emphasis on beating the other service teams (by collecting the best shots from all over the services). This neglects the idea that competition on the local (State) level produces a much more healthy marksmanship climate and encourages better shooting across the board. For instance, the All Army team may well be able to beat the Marine Corps team (well, *occasionally* at any rate), but if you place the average soldier against the average

Marine, the Marine would win hands down. The Marine is exposed to hardcore marksmanship from his/her earliest training and this is continued throughout his or her career. By utilizing the same technique(s) the overall marksmanship performance in *all* services would be brought more nearly in line. We must find our way "back home" (our *roots* if you will) and never forget that the idea is to promote marksmanship among *all* members of the services, not just a select few individuals. While its always necessary to kill a few alligators, we should never forget that the original task was to drain the swamp.

VI. Conclusions

- A. I believe that the CMP *definitely* has a place in the national defense picture. The GAO report was a wake up call and should be utilized as a guide to make ourselves useful in the overall defense and mobilization plans. This will require extensive liaison with the Army and DOD and a new look at our farm team system.
- B. The near demise of the USAMU was another wake up call and demonstrates the fate of any program tied to the Department of the Army that does not contribute in a positive manner to the National Defense. If *we* get put in the same category of "Midnight Basket Ball" we too are doomed to go the way of the Do-Do bird. Congress is not easily convinced to finance sporting events, but like God and Motherhood, National Defense is a sacred word in the hallowed halls of Congress.
- C. If we approach the problem in the manner put forth above, we will also have a chance to restore the sport of shooting to its former glory. We can put the fun and purpose back in the shooting game, by getting each State involved, encouraging the (State) National Guard(s) to participate as a State Guard Team (as opposed to an All Guard Team), getting the Army Areas (and hopefully the individual branches) involved. It would be great to compete against the *Infantry Team*, the *Artillery Team*, etc. We must get back to taking the sport back to the common individual, making it a matter of pride for each branch and as a very fortunate side effect increasing our National Defense!
- D. We must not knuckle under to the anti-gun forces, but use the CMP to demonstrate the positive aspects of marksmanship. We must demonstrate that team shooting develops teamwork, leadership, the ability to focus your mind and develops hand eye coordination. Individuals engaged in competitive marksmanship have a wonderful track record of becoming good citizens! ...unfortunately being a good citizen sometimes requires each of us to participate in the defense of our country. Because of our individual skills developed in the shooting sports, we are uniquely qualified to participate in this defense, even as our forefathers on the Lexington Green.

Respectfully submitted,

R. O. Culver, Jr.