
Rifle Marksmanship



U.S. Marine Corps

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Unless otherwise stated, whenever the masculine gender is used, both men and women are included.

DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
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FOREWORD

1. PURPOSE

Marine Corps Reference Publication (MCRP) 3-01A, *Rifle Marksmanship*, provides techniques and procedures for Marine Corps rifle marksmanship.

2. SCOPE

Every Marine is first and foremost a rifleman. MCRP 3-01A reflects this ethos and the Marine Corps' warfighting philosophy. This publication discusses the individual skills required for effective rifle marksmanship and standardizes the techniques and procedures used throughout the Marine Corps. It constitutes the doctrinal basis for all entry-level and sustainment-level rifle marksmanship training.

3. SUPERSESSION

MCRP 3-01A supersedes the discussion of rifle marksmanship in Fleet Marine Force Manual (FMFM) 0-8, *Basic Marksmanship*, and FMFM 0-9, *Field Firing for the M16A2 Rifle*. The discussion of pistol marksmanship in FMFM 0-8 remains in effect until it is superseded by MCRP 3-01B, *Pistol Marksmanship*, which is currently under development.

4. CERTIFICATION

Reviewed and approved this date.

BY DIRECTION OF THE COMMANDANT OF THE MARINE CORPS



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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION TO RIFLE MARKSMANSHIP

All Marines share a common warfighting belief: “Every Marine a rifleman.” This simple credo reinforces the belief that all Marines are forged from a common experience, share a common set of values, and are trained as members of an expeditionary force in readiness. As such, there are no “rear area” Marines, and no one is very far from the fighting during expeditionary operations. The Marine rifleman of the next conflict will be as in past conflicts: among the first to confront the enemy and the last to hang his weapon in the rack after the conflict is won.

1001. ROLE OF THE MARINE RIFLEMAN

Marine Corps forces are employed across the entire range of military operations. At one end is war, which is characterized by large-scale, sustained combat operations. At the other end of the scale are those actions referred to as military operations other than war (MOOTW). MOOTW focuses on deterring aggression, resolving conflict, promoting peace, and supporting civil authorities. These operations can occur before, during, and after combat operations. Training and preparation for MOOTW should not detract from the Corps’ primary mission of training Marines to fight and win in combat. MOOTW normally does not involve combat. However, Marines always need to be prepared to protect themselves and respond to changing threats and unexpected situations. Whenever the situation warrants the application of deadly force, the Marine rifleman must be able to deliver well aimed shots to eliminate the threat. Sometimes the need for a well aimed shot may even be heightened by the presence of noncombatants in close proximity to the target. The proficient rifleman handles this challenge without unnecessarily escalating the level of violence or causing unnecessary collateral damage. The Marine rifleman must have the versatility, flexibility, and skills to deal with a situation at any level of intensity across the entire range of military operations.

To be combat ready, the Marine must be skilled in the techniques and procedures of rifle marksmanship and take proper care of his rifle. Even when equipped with the best rifle in the world, a unit with poorly trained riflemen cannot be depended upon to accomplish their mission. Usually, poorly trained riflemen either fail to fire their weapon or they waste ammunition by firing ineffectively. To send Marines into harm’s way without thorough training in the use of their individual weapons carries undue risks for every Marine in the unit. On the other hand, well trained riflemen can deliver accurate fire against the enemy under the most

adverse conditions. A well trained rifleman is not only confident that he can help his unit accomplish its mission, he is confident that he can protect his fellow Marines and himself.

1002. CONDITIONS AFFECTING MARKSMANSHIP IN COMBAT

Many factors affect the application of marksmanship in combat; among them are—

- 1 Most targets are linear in nature and will consist of a number of men or objects irregularly spaced along covered or concealed areas.
- 1 Most targets can be detected by smoke, flash, dust, noise or movement, but will only be visible for a brief moment before taking cover.
- 1 The nature of the target, irregularities of terrain and vegetation will often require a rifleman to use a position other than prone in order to fire effectively on the target.
- 1 The time in which a target can be engaged is often fleeting.

1003. COMBAT MINDSET

In a combat environment, the Marine must be constantly prepared for possible target engagement. When a target presents itself in combat, there may be very little time to take action. A Marine must be able to engage the target quickly and accurately. The unique demands of combat (i.e., stress, uncertainty) dictate that the Marine be both physically and mentally prepared to engage enemy targets. It will not be enough to simply know marksmanship techniques and procedures. The Marine must develop the mental discipline

to prepare for enemy contact. In the confusion, noise, and stress of the combat environment, the Marine must have the ability to eliminate any hesitation, fear or uncertainty of action and to focus on the actions required to fire well-aimed shots. This is accomplished through establishment of a combat mindset. The key factors in the development of a combat mindset include both physical and mental preparation.

Physical Preparation

In combat, targets can present themselves without warning. Therefore, it is essential for the Marine to maintain proper balance and control of his weapon at all times so he can quickly assume a firing position, present the weapon, and accurately engage the target. However, speed alone does not equate to effective target engagement. The Marine should fire only as fast as he can fire accurately, never exceeding his physical ability to apply the fundamentals of marksmanship. To be effective in combat, the Marine must train to perfect the physical skills of shooting so those skills become second nature. Mastery of physical skills allow the Marine to concentrate on the mental aspects of target engagement; e.g., scanning for targets, detection of targets, selection and use of cover. The more physical skills that a Marine can perform automatically, the more concentration he can give to the mental side of target engagement.

Mental Preparation

While combat is unpredictable and constantly changing, the Marine can prepare himself mentally for confrontation with the enemy. The stress of battle,

coupled with the often limited time available to engage targets, requires concentration on the mental aspects of target engagement; e.g., scanning for targets, detection of targets, and the selection and use of cover.

Knowledge of the Combat Environment

The Marine must be constantly aware of the surroundings to include the terrain, available cover, possible areas of enemy contact, backdrop of the target, etc. This awareness will enable the Marine to select and assume a firing position and to quickly and accurately engage targets.

Plan of Action

In combat, the situation will dictate the action to be taken. The Marine must understand the situation, identify and evaluate possible courses of action, and then develop a plan for target engagement that accomplishes the mission.

Confidence

The Marine must believe in his ability to engage targets accurately in any combat situation. A Marine's level of confidence is rooted in the belief that future challenges will be overcome—particularly the challenge of firing well aimed shots in a combat environment where the enemy may be returning fire. A key factor in a Marine's level of confidence is the degree to which he has mastered the techniques and procedures of the rifle marksmanship. Mastery of rifle marksmanship can only be obtained by quality instruction. Quality instruction is the foundation for practical application of the marksmanship fundamentals during range and field firing.