



**MARINE CORPS LEAGUE  
DEPARTMENT OF PENNSYLVANIA  
P.O. BOX 6687, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17112-0687**

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**31 May 2021**

To: Detachment Commandants

Via: Email to all Detachment Commandants or Adjutants (if no Commandant email.)

Subject: Department Marksmanship Program

Over the last nine months, I have been reporting to the Department and the Board of Trustees, on the status of a new effort to revise and reinvigorate the Department's Marksmanship Program.

The need to something different with Marksmanship seemed clear. Even without COVID restrictions, it had become increasingly difficult to put on a Department level match. Further, as Commandant, I fielded many complaints and it became obvious to me that something needed to change. COVID was the last straw and succeeded in shutting down what was left.

Marines adapt and improvise – so that is what we did. Instead of trying to blindly hold on to the past, we went a different direction. Last January, I formed a Marksmanship Steering Committee to take long-term look at the program and provide a roadmap for the future. The Committee recognized several issues that the Marksmanship Program should address:

- There should be more than one rifle and one pistol match each year. The recent past has shown that only one match per year becomes a weakness – if anything gets in the way of either match, it gets cancelled and that match is then lost for the year.
- Matches need to be held in more than one location and held in different regions of the Commonwealth – not just near our Department Headquarters at Fort Indiantown Gap.
- There is a tremendous potential to use the Marksmanship program in recruiting. Limiting the number of matches to just a few doesn't help recruiting, it does the opposite.
- Detachments across the Department are holding their own matches – particularly in Districts 2, 6 and 10. These matches are generally open to the Department – however – there are differences in how some Detachment matches are held and for various reasons.
- There are no Department-level SOPs for holding Rifle or Pistol matches. There are documents from previous years for the Department matches, but they have not been formatted as SOPs nor have they been updated to include requirements (such as liability insurance or shooting positions.)

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***Once a Marine, always a Marine. It is who we are. Semper Fidelis.***

The Committee took a long-term view of the Marksmanship Program and arrived at an plan of attack to address all of the issues that it had considered, and to get the program moving forward this year. Because of COVID, the committee thought that the safest approach to take would be to write and implement SOPs for sanctioning Detachment matches first. Detachment matches are usually smaller, generally will have fewer restrictions and therefore will be less likely to be cancelled. Department matches will come second, most likely in 2022.

The first few steps the committee is taking or took are:

1. Prepare and issue Department SOPs for both Rifle and Pistol matches that Detachments can use in conjunction with any requirements from their local ranges to plan and hold their own matches. Detachments are not required to use these SOPs – but – if they do and their match is sanctioned, shooters and teams in their matches will be able to compete with other shooters and teams for awards at a Department level.
2. Develop the concept of “sanctioning” of Detachment matches and a written process that covers all of the requirements. Sanctioning is the term the committee came up with to describe the requirements for complying with the SOPs for Department level competitions.
3. Get the SOPs into circulation, brief the Department Marksmanship community at the Convention and the adjust and improve the program, especially during the first year.
4. Locate and plan Department-level matches for 2022 and beyond. Department matches may be held at FITG but are not required to be held there. The process of selecting rifle and pistol match location(s) should not be up to one person to plan. The selection process should be similar to that used by the Convention Committee for Convention sites – the committee should locate, visit, solicit a proposal and then get a contract and approval through the BOT. (Contracts must be approved by the BOT per Bylaws.)

The committee has developed new SOPs, describing the Rifle and Pistol Programs, and including the idea of sanctioning (steps 1 and 2.) The next step (i.e. step 3) is to distribute the SOPs and provide a report to the membership at the upcoming Convention in June. The Marksmanship report to the membership will be on Friday, June 18, 2021 in the PM session.

The two new SOPs are included with this letter and are for your Detachment members’ review. These SOPs are new, and there may be questions. If you have questions, comments, or suggestions to improve either SOP, please send them to the POCs below.

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Any other questions or comments can be directed to me.

Semper Fidelis,  
Bob Ziltz