

GAO

Report to the Chairman, Committee on
Armed Services, House of
Representatives

May 1990

**MILITARY
PREPAREDNESS**

**Army's Civilian
Marksmanship
Program Is of Limited
Value**



National Security and
International Affairs Division

B-237374

May 23, 1990

The Honorable Les Aspin
Chairman, Committee on Armed Services
House of Representatives

Dear Mr. Chairman:

The House Armed Services Committee Report on the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Years 1990-1991 requested that we review the Army's Civilian Marksmanship Program (CMP) to evaluate its mission, purpose, usefulness, and cost. In March 1990, we testified before your Subcommittee on Readiness on the results of our work to date.¹ This is our final report.

Results in Brief

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.

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:

- CMP objectives and goals are not linked to Army mobilization and training plans.
- Army requirements do not exist for the program-trained personnel or instructors.
- Program-trained personnel are not tracked and may not be available when needed.

About \$4.3 million was spent on the program in fiscal year 1989. The proposed CMP budget for fiscal years 1990 through 1994 is about \$5 million a year.

Program Mission and Purpose

The CMP is a congressionally mandated program established 87 years ago. The general purpose was to create interest in marksmanship training among U.S. men of military age. During the Spanish American War,

¹Evaluation of the Army's Civilian Marksmanship Program (GAO/T-NSIAD-90-20, Mar. 8, 1990).

serious problems with mobilization, training, and combat operations surfaced. These problems raised concern about the adequacy of marksmanship training and the ability of the United States to expand the Army quickly.

Legislative History

The CMP began in 1903 with the establishment of the National Board for the Promotion of Rifle Practice. During the next three decades, the Congress increased the scope of the program through a series of legislative actions, which authorized (1) a Director of Civilian Marksmanship, (2) an affiliated club system, (3) rifle competitions, (4) annual National Matches that would include the National Rifle Association (NRA), and (5) the sale of weapons to affiliated club members. The authorizing legislation is contained in title 10, sections 4307 through 4313 of the U.S. Code.

The CMP legislation authorized a program of diversified shooting activities. The common premise of the program's legislative history is that training civilians in marksmanship will contribute to military preparedness.

Organization and Activities

The Secretary of the Army is responsible for implementing the CMP. He is advised by the National Board for the Promotion of Rifle Practice, which is authorized 35 military and civilian members. The members of the board, who are all volunteers, meet at least once a year. A military officer serves as the Director of Civilian Marksmanship and manages a separate organization responsible for the program's day-to-day activities. He is assisted by a staff of 36—21 in Washington, D.C., and 15 in a support detachment located near Camp Perry, Ohio.

The CMP (1) promotes and monitors generalized rifle training through a system of affiliated clubs and other organizations and (2) sponsors marksmanship competitions. As part of these activities, the program

- sells surplus weapons to affiliated club members,
- loans surplus weapons to affiliated clubs, and
- donates and/or sells ammunition and other shooting supply items to affiliated clubs.

As of November 1989, approximately 165,000 individuals in 1,945 clubs were affiliated with the CMP. Forty-one percent of the total membership

was under 21 years of age. Table 1 shows the CMP's affiliated club membership by age.

Table 1: Affiliated Club Membership by Age

Age group	Club membership as of November 1989	Percent
13 - 20	68,490	41
21 - 26	9,491	6
Over 26	86,911	53
Total	164,892	100

Affiliated clubs must have (1) at least 10 junior members (members in the lowest age group), (2) three responsible adult leaders (with at least one who is a qualified marksmanship instructor), and (3) access to a shooting range with adequate facilities. Club members participate year-round in a prescribed course of generalized instruction.

Other organizations, outside of the club system, also receive marksmanship training. For example, during 1989, about 8.7 million rounds of ammunition were issued to the Boy Scouts for use at their summer camps. The Director of Civilian Marksmanship estimates that up to 365,000 junior-aged scouts were exposed to rifle training.

In addition to generalized training, the CMP sponsors state and regional shooting competitions. During fiscal year 1989, the program sponsored 135 rifle and pistol matches. About 7,468 competitors participated, shooting a standard national course of fire from standing, kneeling, and prone positions.

The CMP also conducts an annual competition known as the "National Matches." This event, which is held at Camp Perry, Ohio, during a 4-week period each summer, includes military personnel, CMP-affiliated club members, and NRA members. In fiscal year 1989, there were approximately 3,650 competitors.

The National Matches are divided into two basic competitions: the National Trophy Matches sponsored by the National Board for the Promotion of Rifle Practice and the National Rifle Association Championship Matches sponsored by the NRA. These competitions consist of pistol, small-bore rifle, and high-powered rifle firing. Three CMP training courses are held concurrently with the matches.

During fiscal year 1989, the CMP sold 6,000 M1 Garand rifles to affiliated club members and issued over 37 million rounds or components of ammunition to affiliated clubs. As of September 1989, the program had on loan to affiliated clubs or in storage over 24,000 weapons. Table 2 shows CMP weapon and ammunition transactions for 1989.

Table 2: CMP Weapon and Ammunition Transactions for 1989

Item	Quantity
Weapons sold to affiliated club members^a	
M1 Garand rifles	6,000
Weapons loaned to affiliated clubs or in storage	
Air rifles	214
.22 caliber rifles	14,875
.30 caliber rifles	7,253
.45 caliber pistols	217
5.56 millimeter rifles	1
7.62 millimeter rifles	1,580
Ammunition sold to affiliated clubs^a	
.22 caliber ball	367,500
.30 caliber bullet	974,176
.30 caliber case	126,900
7.62 millimeter case	328,700
Ammunition donated to affiliated clubs and other organizations	
.22 caliber rounds	35,490,000
.30 caliber rounds	2,154,470
.45 caliber rounds	16,000
7.62 millimeter case	212,400

^aRevenues from the sales of weapons and ammunition are returned to the U.S. Treasury.

Program Contributes Little to Military Preparedness

The CMP's role in U.S. military preparedness is reflected in its two mobilization-related objectives. The first objective is to provide training in rifle marksmanship to civilians who would be subject to induction into the military. The second is to train and qualify program instructors so that they can augment the mobilization training base.

According to Army officials, the expected benefits of the program are as follows:

- Inductees who have program training will be better marksmen.