

PART 3

CANADIAN CADET MOVEMENT

UNIT MARKSMANSHIP TRAINING PLAN

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
PART 1 – AIR RIFLE TRAINING MANUAL	1-1-1/1-1-2
PART 2 – AIR RIFLE TRAINING AIDE-MÉMOIRE	2-1
PART 3 – UNIT MARKSMANSHIP TRAINING PLAN.....	3-1
Introduction	3-1
Unit Marksmanship Team – Yearly Training Plan Overview	3-2
General Preparation Phase (6 Weeks – 01 Oct – 15 Nov)	3-4
Week 1 – First Team Selection.....	3-4
Week 2 – Application of Marksmanship Principles I.....	3-5
Week 3 – Application of Marksmanship Principles II.....	3-6
Week 4 – Application of Marksmanship Principles III.....	3-7
Week 5 – Application of Marksmanship Principles IV.....	3-8
Week 6 – The Sling and Marksmanship Equipment.....	3-9
Specific Preparation Phase (6 Weeks – 15 Nov – 22 Dec)	3-10
Week 7 – Relaxation Techniques	3-10
Week 8 – Development of a Shot Routine I.....	3-11
Week 9 – Development of a Shot Routine II.....	3-12
Week 10 – Endurance Training I	3-13
Week 11 – Mental Training	3-14
Week 12 – Break	3-16
Pre-competition Phase (7 Weeks – 22 Dec – 15 Feb).....	3-17
Week 13 – Match Routine I.....	3-17
Week 14 – Match Routine II.....	3-18
Week 15 – Endurance Training II	3-19
Week 16 – Rhythm Training	3-20
Week 17 – Endurance Training III	3-21
Week 18 – Competition Simulation I.....	3-22
Week 19 – Competition Simulation II.....	3-23
Competition Phase (6 to 8 Weeks – 15 Feb – 15 April)	3-24
Week 20 – Development of Tactics	3-24
Week 21 – Competition Simulation III.....	3-25
Week 22 – Endurance Training IV	3-26
Week 23 – Competition Simulation IV	3-27
Week 24 – Zone Championship.....	3-28
Week 25 – Development of a Shot Routine III.....	3-29
Week 26 – Competition Simulation V	3-30
Week 27 – Provincial Championship	3-31
PART 4 – MARKSMANSHIP CHAMPIONSHIP SERIES.....	4-1-1/4-1-2

PART 3

UNIT MARKSMANSHIP TRAINING PLAN

INTRODUCTION

Since the introduction of the CCM's Marksmanship Championship Series in 1998, over 700 corps and squadrons have actively participated in Zone or Mail-In competitions. Many of those corps/squadrons have also developed marksmanship teams that train on a weekly basis. In order to facilitate the training of new units and improve the level of marksmanship teams that are currently active, the CCM has produced a yearly training plan broken down in 27 weekly training sessions.

This training plan has been developed to meet the following goals:

- a. Give the corps/squadron coach a guide to better run weekly training sessions;
- b. Provide a structured plan to encompass the various technical components of marksmanship training; and
- c. Develop dynamic training sessions to improve the cadets' proficiency level in marksmanship;

This training plan is based on a corps/squadron that trains once a week from October until the Provincial/Territorial Championship. The number of weeks allocated to training may vary depending on the timing of the various championships.

This training plan should only be used as a guide and can be modified to better fit the corps/squadron's training schedule.

UNIT MARKSMANSHIP TEAM – YEARLY TRAINING PLAN OVERVIEW

WEEK	ACTIVITY	SHOTS FIRED
GENERAL PREPARATION PHASE (6 WEEKS)		
1	Initial team selection	8 groups of 5 shots or 2 relays of 2 targets (40 shots on score)
2	Application of marksmanship principles I Goal setting Selection of master eye Prone position	6 groups of 5 shots
3	Application of marksmanship principles II Stretching Natural alignment Breathing	8 groups of 5 shots
4	Application of marksmanship principles III Training diary Aiming	12 groups of 5 shots
5	Application of marksmanship principles IV Trigger control Follow through Use of marksmanship equipment Sling	12 groups of 5 shots
6	Marksmanship equipment	10 groups of 5 shots
SPECIFIC PREPARATION PHASE (6 WEEKS)		
7	Relaxation Progressive Muscle Relaxation Breathing Relaxation Refinement of position	12 groups of 5 shots
8	Developing a shot routine I Natural alignment Shot routine	12 groups of 5 shots
9	Developing a shot routine II Aiming, Breathing, Trigger control, Follow-through Breaking the shot sequence	14 groups of 5 shots
10	Endurance training I Physical training	3 relays of 8 groups of 5 shots (120 shots)
11	Mental training Concentration Perception	6 groups of 5 shots and exercise (24 shots)
12	Break	

PRE-COMPETITION PHASE (7 WEEKS)		
13	Match routine I Sight adjustments Match routine	2 relay of 2 targets (40 shots on score)
14	Match routine II Natural alignment Match routine	Natural alignment exercises (40 shots) 1-2 relays of 2 targets (20-40 shots on score)
15	Endurance training II	3 relays of 3 targets (90 shots on score)
16	Rhythm training	Exercises 2 relays of 2 targets (40 shots on score)
17	Endurance training III	3 relays of 3 targets (90 shots on score)
18	Competition simulation I Exercises	Exercises (Approximately 40 shots) 2 relays of 2 targets (40 shots on score)
19	Competition simulation II Exercises Final team selection	Exercises (Approximately 40 shots) 2 relays of 2 targets (40 shots on score)
COMPETITION PHASE (8 WEEKS)		
20	Development of tactics	2 relays of 2 targets (40 shots on score)
21	Competition simulation III Exercises	4 relays of 2 targets (80 shots on score)
22	Endurance training IV	3 relays of 3 targets (90 shots on score)
23	Competition simulation IV Positive thinking	2 relays of 2 targets (40 shots on score)
24	Zone championship	15 practice shots 40 competition shots on score
25	Developing a shot routine III Competition debrief Shot routine	10 groups of 5 shots
26	Competition simulation V Positive thinking	2 relays of 2 targets (40 shots on score)
27	Provincial championship	15 practice shots 40 competition shots on score

GENERAL PREPARATION PHASE (6 WEEKS – 01 OCT – 15 NOV)

WEEK 1 – FIRST TEAM SELECTION

The following is the selection criteria for the first team:

- Aim – Select a minimum of six cadets (up to a maximum of eight), including at least three juniors
- Selection must be open to all cadets
- Selection to be done either on group size or score
- Criteria must be set in advanced, known by all and respected
- Cadets may use marksmanship apparel as stated in the CCMACS Rule Book

The selection is done early in order to start to train the team as soon as possible. Focussing on more than eight cadets would prove very difficult for the coach and the firing time would be reduced for all team members.

It is crucial to keep at least one or two spares to replace cadets who may have to drop off the team. Furthermore, a sense of competitiveness is good to motivate the cadets. After the selection is done, focus the training only on team members. A second team can be set up to build a pool of talented cadets but this should not be done to the detriment of the main team.

It is recommended that the initial selection be done using only the sling and no other marksmanship equipment. This will point out the cadets with “natural talent”. Also, it is recommended that cadets fire on grouping targets and not scoring targets as this will allow cadets of all levels an equal opportunity to qualify for the team.

WEEK 2 – APPLICATION OF MARKSMANSHIP PRINCIPLES I

Goal setting

- Define goal setting
- Explain how goal setting will play a role in each training session

Selection of the master eye

- Importance of the master eye
- Cadets find their master eye

Prone Position

- The prone position (theory)
- The prone position (demonstration – have a model)
- Various characteristics of the position and the reasoning behind these characteristics
- Steps to adopt the prone position using a rest
- Benefits of using a rest
- Cadets adopt the position using a rifle rest and get a feel for the position
- Correct the positions
- Cadets fire groups using a rest while emphasising the feel of the position (six groups of five shots)

The coach prior to **each** training session should identify goals. This allows the cadets and the coach to focus on the task at hand. The goals can be different for all cadets as their levels of abilities may vary greatly. Cadets and coaches must not lose sight of previous goals and must build on the attained ones. When setting goals, the coach should ensure that they are SMART: **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**ttainable, **R**ealistic and **T**imely. An example of a training goal could be for a cadet to fire eight perfect shots out of ten on a given target (Perfect shots do not necessarily have to be 10s!)

It is crucial to have the cadets select their master eye before they start learning about the other concepts.

When teaching the prone position, it is very important that cadets understand why all the different characteristics are important. If they do understand the reasoning behind these characteristics, it will be much easier for them to apply them. When correcting the positions, remember that all cadets are different, therefore they will all have slightly different positions. However, it is important to not deviate too far from the norm. It is crucial for the cadets to develop a feel for their positions. They are the only ones that know if they are adopting the same position shot after shot, and the only way for them to know is through feel. This will take a long time to master but they have to start the process right away.

WEEK 3 – APPLICATION OF MARKSMANSHIP PRINCIPLES II

Stretching

- Importance of stretching
- Describe stretching exercises
- Cadets do stretching exercises

Natural Alignment

- The concept of natural alignment
- Demonstrate how to perform natural alignment
- Natural alignment exercises on the rifle rest
- Cadets fire groups using a rest while emphasizing natural alignment (four groups of five shots)

Breathing

- The importance of breathing in marksmanship
- Breathing exercises using a rifle rest
- Cadets fire groups using a rest while emphasizing the breathing sequence (four groups of five shots)

Stretching exercises should be done before **every** practice. This greatly minimizes the time necessary for the position to settle. Although it's not mentioned later on, incorporate 5-10 minutes of stretching exercises at the beginning and end of **each** session.

When firing on 12 diagram targets, natural alignment is of the utmost importance. It is therefore important to start working on it now.

Natural Alignment Exercise 1

Using a competition target and a rifle rest, have the cadets move between the different diagrams using the proper technique to adjust natural alignment. Cadets should not dry fire or fire any pellets at the target. To test if their alignment is fine, cadets should close their eyes, relax their positions and then open their eyes. If they are centred with the aiming mark, then their alignment is good and they should move on to the next diagram. They should repeat this exercise a few times.

Using a rest makes it much easier for the cadets to see the impacts of breathing in and out. When practising, have the cadets retain their breath for longer periods to see the negative impacts of over-holding. Remind the cadets to still focus on the feel for the position.

Breathing Exercise 1

Using a grouping target and a rifle rest, have the cadets focus on the front sight and the impact breathing in and out has on it. Have the cadets take a deep and slow breath until they finally hold it. Have them look at how still the rifle is when they are not breathing. Repeat this for a few shots.

WEEK 4 – APPLICATION OF MARKSMANSHIP PRINCIPLES III

Training diary

- Explain the benefits of using a diary
- Give diary examples
- Cadets start to keep a diary

Aiming

- The theory of aiming
- The importance of sight alignment
- The perfect sight picture concept
 - Cadets fire groups using a rest while emphasizing proper sight alignment (three groups of five shots)
 - Cadets fire groups using a rest while emphasizing perfect sight picture (three groups of five shots)
- Cadets select a proper front aperture
- Cadets select the proper positioning of the rear sight for best focus
 - Cadets fire groups using a rest while trying out different aperture sizes as well as different rear sight positions (four groups of five shots)
- The use of a blinder
- Cadets practice with and without a blinder
 - Cadets fire groups using a rest while emphasizing proper sight alignment (two groups of five shots)

The training diary is key in recording all the information that cadets need to know when they are firing. From now on, they should write in their diary after each training session, focussing only on positive aspects or solutions to problems.

Aiming is key in rifle marksmanship and this is why a whole session should be spent on it. This session should be broken down in three components. The first should cover sight alignment and sight picture. Place special emphasis on the distance between the eye and the sight and the focus and refocussing between the front sight and the aiming mark. For the second component, have the cadets try out both sizes of apertures and have them pick the one they like best (however, the bigger one is preferable). Move the rear sight back and forth on the sight rail and ask the cadet to place it where the focus is best. The last segment deals with the use of a blinder. Have the cadets fire with and without the blinder to see the difference but recommend that they do use one.

WEEK 5 – APPLICATION OF MARKSMANSHIP PRINCIPLES IV

Trigger Control

- The proper way of pulling the trigger
- Trigger control exercises
- Cadets fire groups using a rest while emphasizing trigger control (six groups of five shots)

Follow-through

- The reasoning behind follow-through
- Follow-through exercise
- Cadets fire groups using a rest while emphasizing follow-through (six groups of five shots)

Emphasize the exercises for trigger control. Remember to spend a bit of time on the theory aspects, as this will be the cadets knowledge base as they move on. When practising follow-through, place an emphasis on calling the shots and watching the recoil. Although it is a little early in the training year for them to start calling their shots, this is a good time to introduce the subject.

Trigger Control Exercise 1

Using a rifle rest and the back of a competition target or a blank sheet of paper, have the cadets fire about 20 dry fire shots, with their eyes closed, while focussing solely on the way the trigger feels. They should be able to predict the exact point where the trigger will break and should learn to control that. **Do not** use this exercise while live firing.

Trigger Control Exercise 2

Using a rifle rest and the back of a competition target or a blank sheet of paper, have the cadets fire about 20 pellets while focussing solely on the way the trigger feels. They should be able to predict the exact point where the trigger will break and should learn to control that.

Follow-through Exercise 1

Using a rifle rest and a grouping target, have the cadets fire 20 pellets while watching the effect of the recoil on the front sight. They should check to see if the recoil is always moving in the same direction and for the same amount.

WEEK 6 – THE SLING AND MARKSMANSHIP EQUIPMENT

Sling position

- The benefits of using a sling
- The benefits of using a jacket and glove
- Assembling the sling
- Positioning the sling on the jacket
- Adjusting the position of the sling swivel on the rifle
- Steps when adopting a position with a sling and with a rifle rest
- Cadets fire groups using a rest and a sling while emphasizing the feel of the sling (eight groups of five shots broken down in two relays)

When firing, have cadets try both a low and high sling position on the arm to see what they like best. To adjust the sling swivel, have the cadet take up a proper position without using the sling. The point of contact of their left hand on the rifle stock should be the position of the sling swivel. Adjust the length of the sling so that it supports the weight of the rifle.

Have the cadets fire with different sling tensions (both the tightness around the arm and between the arm and the rifle) to see what best suits them. The rifle should be barely resting on the rest with most of the weight supported by the sling.

SPECIFIC PREPARATION PHASE (6 WEEKS – 15 NOV – 22 DEC)

WEEK 7 – RELAXATION TECHNIQUES

Progressive Muscle Relaxation

- Explain how to do the exercise
- Cadets do the relaxation exercise

Relaxation – Breathing exercises

- Explain how to do the exercise
- Cadets do the breathing exercise

Position refinement

- Make necessary adjustments to the sling swivel position, the sling tension and the marksmanship equipment
- Cadets fire groups using marksmanship equipment and no rest (12 groups of five shots broken down in three relays)

It is very important that cadets are relaxed prior to the start of a training session. When they enter the firing range, they should leave all their problems, worries or outside thoughts at the door and focus on their performance.

Two techniques are suggested for relaxation before firing. The **first** technique is called progressive muscle relaxation. It implies progressively tensing-up muscle groups and then relaxing them. This technique is explained in detail in chapter 14 of the CCM Air Rifle Training Manual.

The **second** technique is a deep breathing technique. To practise this, cadets should lay on their backs with one hand on their stomach. They should breathe in their stomach, slowly and deeply. When doing this, they have to ensure that air is going in their stomach and not in their chest. Cadets should use at least one of these techniques before **every** training session.

Positions need to be assessed and adjusted slightly on a regular basis. When modifying a position, it is very important to only do one modification at a time in order to correctly verify the impacts of the change. The modifications should be tested for a few relays in order to ensure that they work properly or do not work at all.

WEEK 8 – DEVELOPMENT OF A SHOT ROUTINE I

Natural alignment

- Reemphasize the importance of natural alignment
- Do natural alignment exercise
- Cadets fire groups of five shots (two relays of three groups)

Shot routine

- Describe the importance of a shot routine
- Develop a shot routine with the cadets
- Have cadets write down their shot routine
- Have cadets fire while emphasizing this shot routine
- Cadets fire groups of five shots (two relays of three groups)

Natural alignment is very difficult for cadets to comprehend and for coaches to verify. This concept must therefore be reemphasized on a regular basis throughout the training year.

Natural Alignment Exercise 1

Using a competition target, have the cadets move between the different diagrams using the proper technique to adjust natural alignment. Cadets should fire two pellets at each diagram. To test if their alignment is fine, cadets should close their eyes, relax their positions and then re-open their eyes. If they are centred with the aiming mark, then their alignment is good and they should fire their two shots and move on to the next diagram. They should repeat this exercise twice.

Developing a shot routine is essential in a sport such as marksmanship. A well-defined shot routine will ensure consistency for every shot and will keep the cadet's focus on the task at hand by helping to prevent unwanted thoughts to enter their minds. By abiding to their shot routine, cadets will remember every step in their shot process and will increase their probability of firing perfect shots.

When developing a shot routine, cadets should use key words for each action they will take. At first, these actions will take place in the conscious mind, meaning that cadets will have to think of every step in order to perform them. However, as they gain more experience through hours of training, many of these actions will become natural to them, or done subconsciously. Key words and actions that could be used are as follows:

Relax – Make sure the position is comfortable and that all the muscles are relaxed

Align – Properly align position with the target

Breathe – Initiate the breathing sequence as described earlier

Hold – When comfortable, stop breathing and focus on properly holding the rifle

Squeeze – When hold is perfect, start squeezing the trigger slowly and constantly

For more experienced cadets, less key words may become necessary. For example, after saying **Relax**, cadets will learn to automatically align their position and their breathing sequence will begin instinctively.

WEEK 9 – DEVELOPMENT OF A SHOT ROUTINE II

Shot routine

- Review shot routine
- Review aiming process and have cadets fire two groups of five shots focussing on proper sight alignment
- Review breathing sequence and have cadets fire two groups of five shots focussing on proper breathing
- Review the trigger control process and have cadets fire two groups of five shots focussing on proper trigger control
- Incorporate a verification stage to the shot routine
- Have cadets write down their new shot routine
- Cadets fire groups of five shots (two relays of four groups)

It is important to focus a second week of training on the shot routine, as this sequence of actions must become second nature to the cadets. It is crucial for them to understand that they must not deviate from their sequence when they fire a shot. Doing this while focussing on specific components will only make the whole sequence stronger in the long run.

After the cadets have practised their shot routine, it is now time to mention how and when this routine should be broken in order to prevent bad shots from being fired. They must understand that as soon as they deviate from their original sequence, they must return to it or **break the routine and start over**. The following should be adhered to when in the firing sequence:

Position relaxed	– OK – proceed to natural alignment – NO – put rifle down and start over
Natural alignment	– OK – proceed to breathing sequence – NO – put rifle down and start over
Breathing sequence	– OK – proceed to holding – NO – restart breathing sequence or put rifle down and start over
Holding	– OK – proceed to squeezing – NO – restart breathing sequence or put rifle down and start over
Squeezing	– OK – proceed to follow through – NO – restart breathing sequence or put rifle down and start over

WEEK 10 – ENDURANCE TRAINING I

Physical training

- Describe the importance of physical training (cardio and endurance)
- How physical training fits in with marksmanship training

Endurance training

- Explain why endurance training is a key component of the annual plan
- Cadets fire groups of five shots (three relays of eight groups)

Physical training is important in rifle marksmanship because the heart rate of an individual will directly affect their breathing capability. On top of stretching exercises, cadets who intend to excel in the sport of marksmanship should practice regular fitness activities such as running, cycling, swimming or any other sports that emphasize cardiovascular training.

In order to build up their endurance, cadets should do some light weight training. Cadets who want to become excellent marksmen should not try to become body builders as too much muscular strength may actually hinder performance. Cadets should focus on performing a higher level of repetitions with weights that are not too heavy. This will build their muscular endurance and not strength or power.

In conjunction with weight training, cadets should focus on developing the specific muscles that affect their positions. To do so, there is nothing better than to spend long amounts of time in position. By doing so, the body becomes accustomed to the way limbs are positioned and the weight and feel of the rifle. An easy exercise to practice this is to have cadets fire more shots than a normal match would require. A normal competition relay would have cadets firing 20 competition shots as well as a few sighting shots; therefore, in order to feel comfortable firing the shots, cadets should train to be able to fire twice this amount.

When doing endurance training, even though cadets may become tired, it is crucial for them to keep focused for all the shots. The shot routine developed in previous sessions should be reinforced throughout this practice. Breaks could be taken between groups but cadets should remain in position.

WEEK 11 – MENTAL TRAINING

Concentration

- Explain the importance of concentration in marksmanship
- Do concentration exercises

Perception

- Explain the concept of perception
- Cadets fire groups of five shots (one relay of two groups) focussing on the position (upper body)
- Cadets fire groups of five shots (one relay of two groups) focussing on the position (lower body)
- Cadets fire groups of five shots (one relay of two groups) focussing on sight alignment
- Cadets fire groups of five shots (one relay of 24 shots on 12 diagram targets) focussing on the position of the fired shot

Almost all cadets are able to fire a ten, however, few are able to repeat this ten times in a row. Even though they have the technical skills to fire a perfect shot, they are lacking the mental training to focus properly for a long period of time.

Many mental skills should be looked at when doing marksmanship training, amongst others: positive thinking, self-confidence, concentration and perception. Although the first two are extremely important, we will only focus on the latter two skills.

In order to fire perfect shots, cadets must completely focus on the task at hand. This can however be very difficult when cadets have to concentrate for long periods of time. The following six exercises should be done to improve the cadets' concentration level:

Concentration Exercise 1. While playing a recorded piece of music, have cadets try to focus solely on one instrument and change the focus point as the song progresses. For example, have cadets focus on the drums for 30 seconds while forgetting about all the other sounds. Then, switch the focus point to the guitar, the bass, the piano or any other instrument. When selecting music for this exercise, it is important to pick songs where the various instruments can be easily identified and isolated.

Concentration Exercise 2. Make up a chart of eight rows and eight columns and write down in random order the numbers 23 to 86 in the various cells. Then have the cadets find the numbers in order from the first to the last. This exercise can also be done in reverse order.

The second point that needs to be emphasized is perception. This could be described as the point of contact between the brain and the outside world. Everything that we see or feel is first experienced by our sensory organs. This training session should be used to examine perception as it relates to position and possible weaknesses in technical skills.

Perception Exercises 1 and 2 – Perception of the position. During live or dry firing, cadets should fire while placing emphasis on how their position feels. For the first exercise, they should focus on how their upper body feels, more specifically their arms, hands and shoulders as well as their head and neck. They should try to fire every shot with a position that feels (and is) consistent. The exercise should be repeated with emphasis on the lower body, with specific attention to the mid-section, the legs and the feet.

Perception Exercise 3 – Perception of the sight picture. Knowing what happens to the sight picture while aiming and holding is crucial in identifying potential positional or technical weaknesses. Therefore, cadets should be able to answer the following questions after every shot:

- What movements were made by the rifle during the holding and aiming process?
- Where was the front aperture at the moment the shot was released?
- In what direction did the recoil cause the front sight to go after the shot was released?

Perception Exercise 4 – Calling the shots. One of the most important and complicated exercise to do is to be able to correctly identify good shots from bad shots, as well as to identify the placement of poor shots on the target. Being able to do this will allow cadets to properly centre their group (which is key in marksmanship) without taking into account poor shots. For this exercise, cadets should record the estimated position of their shots on a piece of paper and then compare it upon completion of the firing sequence. They should first centre their group and then fire one shot at each of the 12 diagrams of a competition target. During this exercise, the coach should emphasise that cadets should still strive to get perfect shots. This exercise can be done twice.

WEEK 12 – BREAK

Before starting the pre-competition phase, it is recommended to take a week off. This will enable the cadets to do other activities and when they come back, the level of motivation should be at its highest. This week could also be used to catch up on any of the subject matter that couldn't be covered or it could be used as a review for the concepts that are a little more difficult to comprehend.

PRE-COMPETITION PHASE (7 WEEKS – 22 DEC – 15 FEB)

WEEK 13 – MATCH ROUTINE I

Sight Adjustments

- Explain how to adjust sights
- Explain when to adjust sights

Match routine

- Explain how to set up the targets
- Use of sighting shots
- Role of the Cadet Coach
- Communicating with the Cadet Coach
- Order in which to fire the diagrams
- Cadets fire two relays of two competition targets

A brief overview on how the sights are to be adjusted should be done to ensure that everyone on the team has the same interpretation of the amount of sight corrections needed for various adjustments. Also, time should be spent on making the cadets understand the correct moment to change the sight settings. It should be emphasized that sight corrections should not be made until at least three sighting shots have been fired and that a group has been formed. Further on as the match progresses, sight adjustments should be made to keep the group centred directly in the middle of the ten ring. These sight adjustments should not be made after every shot but rather after a few shots in which a tendency can be perceived.

Competition targets are always shot in pairs. When setting them up it is imperative to place them as close as possible together, being careful not to overlap them. They should be positioned a few inches off the ground. The targets can be oriented in two directions, either vertically or horizontally. It is recommended to position them vertically as the amount of movement between the various diagrams is decreased and made easier.

Before starting a match, cadets must fire between five and ten sighting shots. If a cadet fires less than five shots, their position will not be settled in and changes in the natural point of aim may occur during the match. Firing more than ten shots may place the cadet under a time constraint and hinder their performance. A good sighting routine would be to fire three shots, adjust the sights and fire two more to confirm the sight change. If the group is perfectly centred, the cadet should start their match. If not a few more sighting shots should be taken.

The Cadet Coach is used to keep the marksman's group centred and to ensure that everything is going well on the firing line. The Cadet Coach should always remain calm and show no emotions after good or bad shots. Although the Cadet Coach and the cadet who fires cannot communicate verbally, it is possible for them to communicate through signs or by way of writing. The marksman should not turn around after every shot to see their Cadet Coach but should keep firing until the Cadet Coach taps their foot. This will enable the marksman to develop a good rhythm and will save time. Since the marksman relies on the Cadet Coach for sight adjustment, he/she should not have access to a spotting scope.

The diagrams on the competition target do not need to be fired in the order in which they are numbered. Therefore, the first diagram to be fired should be one adjacent to the sighting diagrams, thus minimizing the movements between diagrams. The order in which the diagrams are fired is irrelevant as long as the movements between each diagram are minimized. However, that order should be the same for all cadets on the team and should be adhered to every time a cadet fires a match. This will reduce the chances for cadets to fire two pellets in one diagram, skip a diagram or lose track of their firing order.

WEEK 14 – MATCH ROUTINE II

Natural alignment

- Review the concept of natural alignment
- Do natural alignment exercises

Match routine

- Review the Match Routine detailed in the previous session
- Cadets fire two relays of two competition targets

As mentioned earlier, natural alignment is crucial in marksmanship, especially when firing on multi-diagram targets. The fact that cadets need to adjust their natural alignment between every diagram needs to be reinforced. To practice this concept, cadets should perform the following two exercises:

Natural Alignment Exercise 1. Using a competition target, cadets should fire groups of five shots in the corner diagrams of the target. This will exaggerate the movements that need to be done when moving from one diagram to another. A good natural alignment will ensure that all four groups are in the same spot on the various diagrams. If they are not, the cadets are not doing their alignment properly.

Natural alignment Exercise 2

The same format as exercise 1 should be followed but with the cadets firing one shot at each corner diagram, repeating this five times. This places an even greater effort on the movements.

- The match routine explained earlier should be reviewed quickly and the cadets should fire one or two relays emphasizing this sequence as well as their shot routine.

WEEK 15 – ENDURANCE TRAINING II

Endurance training

- Cadets fire three relays of three competition targets

A normal competition relay would have cadets firing 20 competition shots as well as a few sighting shots; therefore, in order to feel comfortable firing the shots, cadets should train to be able to fire twice this amount.

When doing endurance training, even though cadets may become tired, it is crucial for them to keep focused for all the shots. The shot and match routines developed in previous sessions should be reinforced throughout this practice. Breaks could be taken between groups but cadets should remain in position.

WEEK 16 – RHYTHM TRAINING

Rhythm training

- Review breathing pattern
- Explain importance of rhythm
- Do rhythm exercises
- Cadets fire one or two relays of two competition targets

The breathing pattern directly influences the marksman's rhythm. Therefore, it is obvious that the firing rhythm for each individual will be different. The rhythm established by the cadet should be the same for both practice and competition. An example of a good firing sequence is as follows:

- 0-5 seconds – Focus
- 6-13 seconds – Adopt the position
- 14-22 seconds – Check natural alignment, start breathing sequence
- 23-30 seconds – Aiming, trigger release
- 36- 38 seconds – Follow-through
- 39-50 seconds – Pump and load the rifle

Rhythm Exercise 1

After the cadet is in position, the coach counts out loud from 1 to 15. By the time he/she gets to 15 the shot must be fired. This is repeated for 20 shots. This will instil in the cadet the sense of time related to the timings explained above.

Rhythm Exercise 2

The same exercise is done with the cadet counting in his head. The coach may count out loud for a few shots.

- Cadets fire two relays of two competition targets.

WEEK 17 – ENDURANCE TRAINING III

Endurance training

- Use of breaks
- Cadets fire three relays of three competition targets

The last session demonstrated the importance of rhythm in marksmanship. Now, it is important to understand the use of breaks in the firing sequence.

Breaks should be taken when the rhythm wanted is unachievable for one reason or another. One or two minutes of refocussing will often allow the cadet to start firing using proper shot and match routines. Breaks should also be taken when the quality of the shots fired starts to decrease. Often, a short break will prevent bad shots from being fired.

While breaking, the cadets may leave their minds wander decreasing their level of focus. This will allow them to be more rested and alert when they resume their match.

WEEK 18 – COMPETITION SIMULATION I

Competition simulation

- Competition exercise
- Competition simulation (two relays of two competition targets)

In order to perform well in competitions, it is crucial for cadets to train under the same conditions and rules that they will face in Zone, Provincial or National Championships. Therefore, from now on, all rules and conditions found in competitions should be adhered to when cadets fire competition targets. This should include such regulations as timings and communication between the marksman and the cadet coach.

In order for cadets to get used to the pressures they may face in a competition situation, it is recommended to do some competition exercises. A few exercises have therefore been planned for the next few weeks.

Competition Exercise 1

Cadets fire ten 10's in the fewest amount of shots. This means that after sighting in the rifle, cadets keep firing at the same diagram until they achieve a ten. Depending on the skill level of the cadet, the standard could be decreased to hitting the nine ring instead. This exercise will place emphasis on firing perfect shots and will enable cadets to see a target with all ten bulls shot out. This can be repeated if time permits.

- Cadets fire two relays under competition conditions.

WEEK 19 – COMPETITION SIMULATION II

Final team selection

- Ensure final team is picked by this time

Competition simulation

- Competition exercise
- Competition simulation (Cadets fire two relays of two competition targets)

By this time, the team composition should be finalized. Therefore, team strength should be decreased to a minimum of two juniors plus three more cadets, for a total of five cadets. This will allow cadets on the team more time to prepare during the competition phase of this training plan.

Competition exercise 1. Each cadet must fire a string of shots, hitting a specific value. The cadet with the longer string wins. For example, cadets have to fire the most consecutive 10's possible. Depending on the skill level of cadets, the value could be decreased to a nine or eight. However, this has to remain challenging for the cadets. Cadets from all skill levels can also compete against each other since the standard varies according to their proficiency levels. This exercise should be repeated four or five times.

Then the cadets fire two relays under competition conditions.

COMPETITION PHASE (6 TO 8 WEEKS – 15 FEB – 15 APRIL)

WEEK 20 – DEVELOPMENT OF TACTICS

Development of tactics

- Develop contingency plans for various situations
- Cadets fire two relays of two competition targets

In order to cope with every possible situation that can occur during a match, it is crucial to define contingency plans ahead of time. Listed below are a few situations that may occur and what to do in order to deal with them:

Broken equipment – Have a spare rifle nearby, have the team equipment organised in the waiting area and know where all the equipment is.

Range distractions – Break, refocus on the task at hand and try to eliminate the distraction. Resume only when ready.

Two shots in one diagram or skipping a diagram – Listen to the Cadet Coach, do not doubt the Cadet Coach, and ensure the cadet coach is very familiar with the rules.

Infractions noted – Relax, fix problem (officials are only doing their job) and resume when re-focussed.

Cease-fire – Break, resume upon the command. There is nothing to do but wait so keep focussed and relaxed. Stay in position if allowed to.

Uncomfortable position – Stand-up and lay down again. Repeat until the position is fine.

Strange shot pattern – Check sights, sling swivel, counter weight to see if they are tight on the rifle. Change rifle if necessary.

Cadets should worry about what they can control, not about everything else. They should also remember that the better prepared they are, the better their performance will be.

Cadets should fire two relays of two competition targets.

WEEK 21 – COMPETITION SIMULATION III

Competition simulation

- Competition exercise
- Competition simulation (Cadets fire two relays of two competition targets)

Competition exercise 1. After sighting in their rifle, cadets stand up, lay down again and start their match. After every five shots, they stand up and reassume their position. This is all done without having the opportunity to return to firing sighting shots. This exercise places emphasis on such skills as adopting a constant position, performing natural alignment and keeping to the shot and match routines. This exercise can be done twice.

Then the cadets fire two relays under competition conditions.

WEEK 22 – ENDURANCE TRAINING IV

Endurance training

- Cadets fire three relays of three competition targets

When doing endurance training, even though cadets may become tired, it is crucial for them to keep focussed for all the shots. The shot and match routines developed in previous sessions should be reinforced throughout this practice. Breaks could be taken between groups but cadets should remain in position.

WEEK 23 – COMPETITION SIMULATION IV

Positive thinking

- Briefing for upcoming Zone Championship
- Refocussing on team goal

Competition simulation

- Competition simulation (Cadets fire two relays of two competition targets)

It is important to brief cadets prior to travelling to a competition to ensure they are well aware of what this challenge represents. It is important to ensure all comments are positive and that this meeting does not place added pressures on them. The competition should actually be tackled as if it was just another practice, since all the match conditions, rules and equipment will be identical as the ones used in training.

Special emphasis should be placed on what to do with “Dead Time”, or time spent off the range. Since cadets have to rotate through on the firing line, they are left with a lot of time to spend in the team area. Therefore, a plan should be developed to keep them busy and focussed on the task at hand. For example, they could bring cards, a book or a personal music device in order to pass time. Also, cadets should avoid listening to others with regards to marksmanship techniques or routines as this is not the time to change aspects of their training or instil doubts in their minds. However, coaches are more than encouraged to go out and discuss various training techniques in order to pick up new ideas that could eventually improve their own corps or squadron program.

It is important that the goals that are set for the competition do not go beyond the capabilities of the cadets. For example, it is fine for cadets to fire their average score during a competition since this is the level at which they are comfortable. For example, if a cadet fired a pair of 99s once this year while their average is 95, it would be wrong to expect the cadet to go out and fire a pair of 99's again. If the cadet does so, then great, but that's a bonus!

Cadets should fire two relays of two competition targets after the briefing.

WEEK 24 – ZONE CHAMPIONSHIP

Upon arriving at the Zone Championship, ensure you are familiar with the site and the competition organization. Get a schedule and pass it on to the cadets as soon as possible.

The most important thing to do in a competition is to follow the game plan you have laid out. This is not the time to change things, try out new ideas or modify the team's or the individual's goals. Let the cadets do what they came there to do.

WEEK 25 – DEVELOPMENT OF A SHOT ROUTINE III

Competition debrief

Shot Routine

- Reemphasise the shot routine
- Focus on the fundamentals
- Cadets fire three relays of four groups of five shots

The competition debrief should only focus on positive aspects and on solutions to weaknesses that were noted. This is also a good time to boost the self-confidence of all team members.

The shot routine that the cadets have been adhering to for the past few months should be reemphasised and practised for this entire session. Cadets should go back and fire groups of five shots while focussing on specific aspects such as their position, breathing or trigger control. This return to the basics will allow the cadets to move away from the importance of score while focussing on what is key: firing good shots!

WEEK 26 – COMPETITION SIMULATION V

Positive thinking

- Briefing for upcoming Provincial Championship

Competition simulation

- Competition simulation (Cadets fire two relays of two competition targets)

It is important to brief the cadets prior to travelling to a competition to ensure they are well aware of what this challenge represents. It is important to ensure all comments are positive and that this meeting does place added pressures on the cadets. The competition should actually be tackled as if it was just another practice, since all the match conditions, rules and equipment will be identical as the ones used in training.

Cadets should fire two relays of two competition targets after the briefing.

WEEK 27 – PROVINCIAL CHAMPIONSHIP

Upon arriving at the Provincial Championship, ensure you are familiar with the site and the competition organization. Get a schedule and pass it on to the cadets as soon as possible.

The most important thing to do in a competition is to follow the game plan you have laid out. This is not the time to change things, try out new ideas or modify the team's or the individual's goals. Let the cadets do what they came there to do.