



Pacific Region Cadets

ROYAL CANADIAN SEA CADETS
ROYAL CANADIAN ARMY CADETS
ROYAL CANADIAN AIR CADETS

THE CANADIAN CADET ORGANIZATION IS A NATIONAL YOUTH PROGRAM SPONSORED BY THE CANADIAN FORCES IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE CIVILIAN ARMY CADET, AIR CADET, AND NAVY LEAGUES OF CANADA

BACKGROUNDER DOCUMENTATION

CADET MARKSMANSHIP AND FIREARMS SAFETY PROGRAM

The Cadet marksmanship and firearm safety program is centred on the sport for recreational purposes only. Competitive shooting is an integral part of cadet training in that it teaches cadets self-discipline, builds their confidence and allows them to compete equally in a recreational sport that is gender neutral. The marksmanship program is mostly conducted using non-lethal air rifles that are not classified as firearms under any provincial or federal legislation. Of the 1,150 cadet corps and squadrons in Canada a minority of the units train with smallbore rifles for Olympic-style marksmanship and biathlon programs.

Marksmanship and biathlon are two of the most popular activities in which sea, army, and air cadets participate. The benefits the cadets reap from participating in the sport have long been recognized as enhancing personal development. Cadets experience a sense of achievement and personal satisfaction as their skill improves. Acceptance of responsibility and gaining a healthy respect for firearms are other benefits derived from cadet marksmanship training.

The tradition of marksmanship training within the cadet organization is linked to the Canadian Forces through its mandate to support and familiarize cadets with Canadian Forces customs and practices. It must be emphasized that the cadet marksmanship programme has been specifically designed for youth. For example, cadets do not participate in military style marksmanship events; they fire only on Olympic-style competition paper targets.

Cadet marksmanship training is patterned on Olympic-style competitive shooting with an emphasis on the safe handling and care of firearms. Several world-class athletes started as cadets including Canadian Olympians Pat Vamplew and Mike Ashcroft, and Commonwealth Games participants Des Vamplew and Garry Bowman. Canadian Olympic biathletes Myriam Bédard, Nikki Keddie and Martine Albert were also introduced to their sport as cadets. A number of these athletes continue to work as instructors and advisors in the cadet marksmanship and biathlon programmes in recognition and appreciation for what they and others received as youth in the cadet organization.

Safety is paramount to the cadet marksmanship program. Safety procedures are taught first and foremost to cadets before they are ever permitted to handle any air rifle or smallbore rifle. Safe practices are continuously reinforced throughout their training. Furthermore, the training is regularly reviewed and modified in order to ensure the safety guidelines and training standards set by the Department of Justice through the Canadian Firearms Centre are strictly adhered to and enforced. Cadets learn to treat firearms with respect and experience their use within the context of activities sanctioned by Sports Canada. There has never been an incident in which cadets have been injured as a result of their participation in the cadet marksmanship program.

The cadet organization provides youth a realistic outlook on firearms by teaching them the proper use and safe handling of firearms for recreational purposes only. Cadets who participate in competitive shooting understand the consequences of the careless handling of firearms, and have chosen to pursue their interest in marksmanship in terms of achieving personal satisfaction in an Olympic sport.