

FRONT PAGE

Marksmanship training includes historical lessons

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WSMR Soldiers improved their marksmanship skills and trained up on long range accuracy with the help of the Revolutionary War Veterans Association March 8-12 at the Dona Ana Range Camp.

2nd Engineer Battalion Soldiers reviewed their marksmanship fundamentals and learned a little history as part of a training program sponsored by the Appleseed Rifle Marksmanship Project. The Project is a marksmanship program that instructs civilians and service members on shooting fundamentals and teaches the history of the American Revolution. "The way I like to describe us is as rifle toting history buffs," said Ron Vandiver, a master instructor with the Program.

Working with the civilian instructors, the Soldiers reviewed basic marksmanship fundamentals like stance, breathing and sight pictures. "It's the kind of stuff we go over, but they are really drilling it in," said 2nd Lt. Brad Lowry, a platoon leader with the 595th Sapper Company. With the battalion preparing for deployment in the near future, the Soldiers are taking every extra opportunity available to better prepare for possible combat. "Normally, we don't get a whole week on a range like this, so we now have a chance to really go out and refine our technique," Lowry said.

Using history as their guidebook, the Appleseed trainers not only instructed the Soldiers on their rifle skills, but also had them go through a rifle qualification course. Taking a page out of history, the Appleseed instructors didn't require the Soldiers to use the current Army qualification requirements; but instead had them qualify using a set of World War II requirements. These older requirements are important to the Soldiers and instructors in that they have a longer range requirement; so the Soldiers had to learn to be accurate at longer ranges. "The intent of the program is to consistently hit targets at 400 meters plus," Vandiver said.

While this extra training will allow the Soldiers to perform better when shooting at targets at long range, the focus on the fundamentals of marksmanship means that it can also help in other areas, such as room clearing. "(They are) learning to hit targets farther out, but they are also learning the fundamentals of close quarters battles too," Vandiver said.

In addition to providing marksmanship instruction, the instructors also teach about the history of the American Revolution. "America was founded on an important set of principals, and if we let that fall by the wayside we lose who we are," Vandiver said.

While the training session for the Soldiers was restricted to members of the Battalion, the Appleseed Project will be running another session at Butter Field Range outside of Las Cruces April 10 and 11 which will be open to the public. For more information on the Project, go to www.appleseedinfo.org.



Photo by Drew Hamilton
Soldiers from the 2nd Engineer Battalion shoot at targets under the instruction of members of the Appleseed Rifle Marksmanship Project. Members of the Project instructed Soldiers on marksmanship fundamentals and long range marksmanship.