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CMP APPROVES TWO AIMING AIDS FOR USE IN SERVICE RIFLE COMPETITION

The CMP has now approved two commercial rear sight inserts for use in Service Rifle competitions. The rectangular rear aperture insert produced by ShootingSight LLC of Cincinnati, Ohio (<http://www.shootingsight.com/>) and the SR MicroSight produced by Stallings Machine of Senoia, Georgia (<http://www.auburnscouts.com/stallingsmachine/index.htm>) are now legal for use in CMP-sanctioned Service Rifle matches beginning with the 2011 shooting season.

Both rear sight hood inserts are designed as aiming aids that offer improvements in sight picture clarity not always attainable with standard corrective lenses or with uncorrected vision and standard rear apertures. In approving these changes, the CMP is accepting an argument made for both products that Service Rifle shooters should have access to aids that improve or equalize visual acuity. The decision to approve these aiming aids also recognizes that the Armed Services are issuing more and more rifles with optical sights to military personnel and that the day will come when service rifle rules must consider the approval of military-type optical sights, which are the ultimate visual aid.

The ShootingSight rectangular aperture is designed to improve clarity of the horizontal top edge of the front sight while increasing sight picture brightness. A “white paper” explaining technical details about the rectangular aperture is posted at <http://neergaard.org/shootingsight/WHITE%20PAPER%20-%20Rectangular%20Apertures.pdf>. The MicroSight is a dual focus system designed to provide clearer focus on both the front sight and target. Technical details regarding this sight are posted on the Stallings Machine website.

The original concept of Service Rifle shooting was that competitors must use rifles issued to military personnel and that were, in fact, carried in combat. However, the “as-issued” concept underlying early Service Rifle shooting started to disappear with the introduction of the NM M1903 rifle in 1921 and the NM M1 Garand in 1953. Accurizing techniques developed by Springfield Arsenal and the military marksmanship units led to a long series of legal “Service Rifle Modifications.” In order to control this process and be true to the spirit and intent of Service Rifle shooting, each of these modifications had to be specifically approved in the CMP Rules. CMP Rules (Rule 6.1.2) state, “***No modifications or alterations to the service rifle are permitted except modifications or alterations that are specifically permitted by these rules.***” This means any new product or modification that might be used on a service rifle must be approved and described in Sec. 6.0 of the CMP Rules.

There are specific CMP Rules that address any alterations to the front and rear sights. Rule 6.1.1 (4) states, "***Front and rear sights must be of U. S. Army design.***" Since there are no known U. S. Army rear sight designs that provide for the insertion of a corrective lens, a rectangular aperture or a multifocal lens, specific authorization is required. Rule 6.1.3 (3) already provides an exception for corrective lenses, "***A corrective lens may be inserted in the rear sight hood.***" To approve the two new aiming aids, Rule 6.1.1 (4) and Rule 6.1.2 (3) have been modified to read:

6.1.1 (4) Front and rear sights: Must be of U.S. Army design (either service or match). Front sights must have square-topped posts. Any modifications to the front sight, rear sight or rear sight hood must be specifically authorized in Rule 6.1.2.

6.1.2 (3) The dimensions of the rear sight aperture (internal diameter) and the front sight post (width) may vary from standard military dimensions. The rear sight hood diameter may not be longer than 0.70" or larger than 0.50" in diameter. The rear sight aperture may have a fixed, non-adjustable round, square or rectangular aperture insert. A corrective lens or multi-focal lens system may be inserted in the rear sight hood.

These changes will be incorporated into the ***2011 CMP Competition Rules*** that are due for release in March. Anyone with questions should contact CMP Headquarters at Camp Perry.