

## The Changing of the Guard at CMP: Mark Johnson Succeeds Orest Michaels as Chief Operating Officer



Retiring CMP boss Orest Michaels (R) symbolically hands an M1 to his deputy Mark Johnson (L).

Civilian Marksmanship Program Deputy Chief Operating Officer Mark Johnson will assume the duties of Chief Operating Officer in September 2014 and will be responsible for oversight of all CMP operations. Mark is a family man, a competitive shooter, a trained gunsmith, a former gun store owner, and has been a CMP staff member for the past 14 years.

Mark was born in December 1970 in Talladega, Alabama, right down the road from what would become the site of the CMP 25 years later. After graduation from Talladega High School in 1989, he attended Jacksonville State University and graduated in 1994 with a BS in Business Management. He subsequently attained his Masters Degree at Jackson State in 1996 while teaching English at the Four Square Christian Academy in Anniston. Two years later, Mark earned a Doctorate in Philosophy while teaching and serving as Principle of Four Square.

Mark always had a keen interest in firearms and began attending gun shows regularly in 1992. Five years later he decided to make his first love a career and in 1997 opened a gun shop in Anniston that he named Shooters Headquarters. His involvement with the CMP began a year later when Orest Michaels engaged Shooters Headquarters to test-fire the M1's CMP was refurbishing and selling.

Orest quickly recognized Mark's talent and invited him to join CMP as an armorer after only a couple of months. At the time CMP had only three full time armorers under Jerry Shealy, the Armorer Supervisor. Mark's rise in the company was rapid as he demonstrated his ability at every new task he was assigned. He was promoted to Business Development Officer in January 2001, where he was in charge of advertising, commercial product procurement, and pricing of all products including rifles and ammunition. In October 2004, he was promoted to Distribution Center Manager and tasked with constructing the South Store and developing that whole operation. In October 2007 Mark was elevated to Assistant Chief Operating Officer and manager



of the Production Planning and Control Department. PP&C was responsible for all special projects and future planning concepts, in general a “think tank” for strategic planning of the organization. In October 2009 he was made Deputy Chief Operating Officer responsible for oversight of all CMP operations. This freed Orest from daily operations, allowing him to concentrate on the strategic future of the organization.

Mark has a beautiful family that includes two sons, Brinton (17) and Brayden (7) and two daughters, Seanna (13) and Arabella (2). Just as Orest’s wife Nina was a key part of the CMP administration, Mark’s wife Gina serves as Human Resource Manager.

The Garand Collectors Association congratulates Mark on his ascension to the top job at the Civilian Marksmanship Program and wishes him the same success as his mentor and predecessor Orest Michaels. His rise through the ranks at CMP, from entry level to the top spot, attests not only to his ability but to his hands-on knowledge of all phases of the corporation. GCA looks forward to continuing the exceptional relationship our organizations enjoy and is eager to contribute in any way Mark finds of value to CMP. At the same time, we wish Orest the very best in retirement. He has been a great friend to the GCA, and we will never forget him or all he has done for us.