



A Marine with Weapons Training Bn conducts the new ARQ during a “train the trainer” course at MCB Quantico, Va., Feb. 17. The ARQ is replacing the current annual rifle training by creating a more operationally realistic training environment and will be implemented service-wide by Fiscal Year 2022. (Photo by PO2 Rachael A. Treon, USN)

New Annual Rifle Qual “Aims” To Make Marines More Lethal

The Marine Corps began the “train the trainer” course for its new annual rifle qualification in February, which will fully replace the previous Table 1 and Table 2 qualification course of fire on Oct. 1.

The Annual Rifle Qualification (ARQ) was designed to give a more realistic and “train like you fight” environment by emphasizing lethality and positional shooting. Improvements to the Marine Corps rifle training and qualification program have been under development since 2016.

The ARQ will further develop combat scenario shooting skills, resulting in a more proficient fighting force. The service-wide entry level rifle training will remain unaffected for recruits at both Marine Corps Recruit Depots and for officers at The Basic School in order to

develop strong fundamentals, confidence and weapon comfortability.

“This has been the same qualification that every Marine shoots throughout their entire career, until now. The ARQ enhances proficiency, confidence and lethality in a dynamic environment using multiple targets, limited exposure targets, moving targets and shooting on the move,” said Chief Warrant Officer 4 Anthony L. Viggiani, Marine Gunner, Training and Education Command.

Marine Corps-wide implementation will take place no later than the beginning of fiscal year 2022, with active-duty forces transitioning by Oct. 1. During the second and third quarters of fiscal year 2021, Weapons Training Battalion at Marine Corps Base Quantico, Va., will provide training and assistance on the conduct of ARQ to formal marksmanship training

units in order to facilitate the transition to service-wide ARQ implementation.

The ARQ includes a three-day course of fire. Day one is a “holds day” with the drill portion conducted first. Days two and three are pre-qualification and qualification, respectively, where the “destroy” portion is conducted first with engagements starting far to near in order to foster an offensive combat mindset.

The more operational training requires Marines to conduct the course of fire in helmet and body armor but allows the opportunity to use bipods, rest the weapon on their magazine, or rest the weapon on their assault pack as long as time constraints are met. Scoring is measured by lethal effects with destroying targets in the allotted time.

“This enables the individual Marine the opportunity to engage their weapon

Right: In the prone position, a Marine with Weapons Training Bn shoots according to the new ARQ guidelines during the “train the trainer” course at MCB Quantico, Va., Feb. 17.

system from multiple firing positions and find the most efficient way to utilize alternate shooting positions throughout the course of fire,” said Viggiani. “Our operating environment has changed over the years, so we had to make changes to our qualifications on marksmanship.”

Other significant updates include the incorporation of a singular target throughout the course of fire, with the exception of a moving target at the 100-yard line, with a requirement to score by hitting “lethality zones” and the introduction of support barricades at 100 and 200 yards, allowing Marines to shoot from the standing, kneeling or supported position with stationary and moving targets. This transition from a competition-style course of fire to assessing lethal effects on a target is a significant change for the ARQ.

Similar to the physical fitness and combat fitness tests, Marines must achieve a

minimum standard in each portion of the course of fire to qualify in the overall assessment. The implementation of the ARQ directly impacts the mission statement: We must adapt our training in a manner consistent with the threat and

anticipated operational challenges as stated in the Commandant’s Planning Guidance.

PO2 Rachael A. Treon, USN



PO2 RACHAEL A. TREON, USN

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