



# ARMY RESERVE MARKSMAN



## Captain Horace Wayman Bivins: First Double Distinguished Marksman

The U.S. Army enacted a Distinguished Marksman program in 1884. In the entire 133-year history of the program, with tens of millions of Soldiers eligible to try, as of 2017 a total of 5,102 Army personnel have earned either Distinguished Rifleman or Distinguished Pistol Shot. Captain Horace Wayman Bivins was the first person to earn both in 1894; a Corporal at the time. Cpt. Bivins was also the first marksman to win three Army marksmanship gold medals in one year.

Cpt. Bivins had a military career that was so varied and full of adventure that early newspapers wrote his life's account "reads like fiction from the imagination of a pulp magazine writer." He was assigned to Troop E of the 10th Cavalry, which took a prominent part in the campaigns against Geronimo, Apache Kid, and other Indian chieftains of the southwest. While serving in Cuba during the Spanish-American War, Bivins was awarded a Silver Star from actions during the famous battle of San Juan Hill. A sergeant by then, Bivins was assigned to a Hotchkiss gun battery. With all other members of his unit killed or wounded, he single-handedly fired 72 shells from a Hotchkiss guns, which recoiled six to eight feet after each shot. His performance was all the more remarkable because early in the battle, he had been knocked out briefly by a slug that passed through an iron-plated hub of a gun carriage and hit him in the temple. President Teddy Roosevelt recalled of the action "I don't think it an exaggeration to say that but for the timely aid of the 10th Cavalry, the Rough Riders would have been annihilated."

Cpt. Horace Wayman Bivins, the first Double Distinguished marksman in United States history in 1894, was

an African American. It would take more than five decades after this before Jack Roosevelt "Jackie" Robinson was able to receive the same acceptance in baseball, as detailed in the film 42. Lieutenant Colonel Earl Woods, father of pro golfer Tiger Woods, served two tours in Viet Nam as an officer in the Infantry and Special Forces. While in college, Woods once was not allowed to play golf because of his skin color. In fact, the Professional Golfer's Association of America (PGA) enforced a "Caucasians only" clause in their official published rules until the 1960s.



*Above: Horace Wayman Bivins, the first Double Distinguished marksman in United States history, earned the distinction in 1894.*

Army marksmanship programs trace their lineage to when General Philip Sheridan officially created the Distinguished Marksman class, as announced in General Orders Number 24, back in 1884. This was formalized by the War Department (predecessor to the current Department of Defense) in 1887. The original concept has been run continuously ever since. Marksmen participate in Excellence In Competition events and the top ten percent of the eligible, non-distinguished competitors are awarded "Leg" points at the event. Like the leg of stool or chair or the leg of a journey, a number of points have to be accumulated over the shooter's lifetime for specific awards. The first leg is the EIC Bronze medal. After 20 lifetime points are accumulated, the Silver EIC medal is awarded. Once 30 or more points are earned, the shooter reaches Distinguished status. EIC events are held for rifle and pistol shooting and there are Distinguished Rifleman and Distinguished Pistol Shot badges.

These awards are more prominent than normal qualification badges and eligible for wear on dress uniforms. Like combatives, instead of Level 1-4 to recognize accomplishment, Bronze, Silver and Gold badges are awarded. Army marksmanship programs are published in Army Regulation 350-66 and 140-1, with the awards and their wear detailed in 670-1. While first started by the U.S Army, all branches of the Department of Defense maintain this program, as does the Civilian Marksmanship Program (CMP) for civilians. Distinguished marksmen come from all walks of life, even outside the military. The CMP maintains all master records dating back to 1884 in their Competition Tracker.

Read more about Cpt. Bivins <https://armyreservemarksman.info/cpt-bivins> **USARMCMP**