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Keeping in Touch

This and future issues of the "Times" will highlight individuals from AMU's past. The "AMUA Times" editor is soliciting names and current histories on anyone you would like to see featured in the "AMUA Times".

This should be a very popular feature, please send us something to print.



Photo by USAMU PAO

USAMU Service Pistol Team Wins With M-9

USAMU PAO

MSG David E. Sams works on one of the 9mm Beretta pistols used to win Interservice Championship.

Service pistol shooters with the U.S. Army Marksmanship Unit of Fort Benning, GA, recently proved that when it comes to shooting service pistols, the Army is the best in the Department of Defense. The USAMU Team won the 1997 Interservice Service Pistol Team Championship at the 38th annual Interservice Pistol Championships in Little Rock, AR, June 16 to 19. Representing the Army, the USAMU competed against teams from the Army Reserve, Army National Guard, Air Force, Marine Corps, Marine Corps Reserve, Navy and Naval Reserve.

USAMU team members, CPT Steven King, SSG Roger Jacobson, SGT Aaron Schreiber and SPC Fritz Ficke, not only won the Service Pistol Team match, but they won it using the USAMU's modified M-9 Beretta, a semiautomatic 9mm pistol, making them the first members of the armed forces to compete and win with the M-9.

Out of a score of a possible 300 points, King received 291 points. Schreiber got 280 points, Ficke shot a 279 and Jacobson a 277. With a total team score of 1,127 points out of a possible 1,200, the USAMU Blue Team beat the second -place Army Reserve Black

Team by six points; third place went to the Army Reserve Red Team with 1,118 points.

Jacobson said he felt, "absolutely fantastic" when he realized they had won the match.

"It's the best feeling in the world," Jacobson said. "This was the first major event in which we used the Beretta and the first major win with the new service pistol."

According to SFC Michael Lane, NCOIC of the USAMU Service Pistol Team, training and the desire to win is what gave the team the edge over the other competitors.

"We worked really hard to develop the team and the weapons; the coaching and gunsmith support are tremendous," Lane said. "The team's dedication to the sport is unequalled; they think of themselves as winners and won't settle for less. Winning this match makes all the hard work and effort worthwhile."

But Lane and the team members agreed that most of the credit goes to MSG David Sams, the master pistol gunsmith of the USAMU Custom Firearms Shop, who was

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DEPUTY COMMANDER's REPORT

Bob Aylward

The USAMU is making great strides in 1997 getting the unit back to be the dominating force in the United States as well as a force to be reckoned with in all international competitions. So far this year members of the USAMU have won 10 individual National Championships, three world cup medals, won the Service Pistol Team Match at the Service Pistol Interservice Championships, and placed seven soldiers on the World Shotgun Championship team. Leading the assault at these matches was CPT Steven King who won the national Center Fire Pistol Championship and was high firer on the winning Service Pistol Interservice Pistol Team. This year marks the first time all firers on the winning team fired the 9mm Beretta in lieu of the traditional 1911A1. CPT Glenn Dubis won the 3x40 and English Match Championships at Chino, CA as well as a silver medal in the Korean World Cup in the 50m 3x40. SSG Daryl Szarenski won an impressive double at the International National Championships winning the Men's Air Pistol and the Free Pistol Championships. His free pistol score of 573 was truly world class. SSG Lance Dement, after only 18 months as a Running Target shooter, won both 10 meter national championship events this June in Chino, CA. SGT Armando Ayala was close on SSG Dement's heels in both 10 meter events, while winning the 50m mixed run national championship. SSG Roger Jacobson fired a 2662 at Camp Robertson, leading the USAMU Service Pistol team to its best Interservice results in over a decade. SSG Todd Graves won two World Cup medals in Cypress and Italy, with SFC Brett Erickson winning one at the Italian World Cup. SFC Erickson was promoted to SFC on 1 July, making him the first shooter promoted under the new personnel promotion policy. MAJ Steven Goff won the 300 meter Free Rifle Championships, with SSG Tommy Tamas winning the English Match, and CPT Dubis winning the Standard Rifle competition. Service Rifle has won just about every match it's fired this year and is itching to defend its championships this summer at Interservice and Camp Perry. The trio of CPT Greg Way, CPT Jay Christy, and SPC Julie Goloski have made great strides and should give top performances at this year's IPSC Open National Championships. The unit has done well this year and with strong training we expect to finish the year strong at Camp Perry, CISM, World Shotgun and the Championships of the Americas later this year.

Other projects of note are: the "shack" (not the round house)

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USAMU Gunsmith Credited with M-9 Success

USAMU PAO

Since the early 1990's, MSG David E. Sams, the master pistol gunsmith of the Custom Firearms Shop of the U.S. Army Marksmanship Unit, has been working to add to the performance scope of the M-9, a semiautomatic 9mm pistol, making it as reliable on the firing line of competition as it is in combat.

Sams said not only are the modifications important to the USAMU's mission to compete and win in competitions, but it is also important to the rest of the Army. He said he believes that someday the modified M-9 can be integrated into specialized Army organizations such as military police or special forces units and eventually perhaps the entire Army.

"The 9mm has been highly accurized in the modification process to provide our shooters with a weapon of pinpoint accuracy," Sams said.

According to Sams, there were numerous problems with accuracy before the modifications were made.

Sams, who was solely responsible for the weapon's transformation from the developmental stage to production, said the process involved fine-tuning of the pistol's three main components: the barrel, the slide, and the frame.

"The problem that we were seeing with the standard-issue 9mm was that when it was fired, the main components were not returning to the same exact place," Sams said. "The spacing between the components was designed with loose tolerances to keep dirt and carbon from seizing the action. These loose tolerances reduced accuracy as the barrel changed position in the frame each time it was fired."

Another problem the M-9 presented, according to Sams, was that repeated pounding of the steel slide against the aluminum frame caused wear on the frame, which quickly reduced accuracy.

To counteract these shortcomings, Sams placed steel inserts in the pistol's frame to act as a buffer against the slide. He also replaced the weapon's barrel with a match-grade barrel and increased the barrel diameter to fit more snugly in the slide. He also placed set screws in the slide to stabilize the bottom rear of the barrel.

Another improvement was the adjustment of the trigger to the regulation four-pound pull instead of the standard M-9 pull of over seven pounds.

Sams finalized his modifications with an adjustment to the front and rear sights. He continues to work to improve the M-9 for competition use.

KEEPING IN TOUCH

AMUA

The purpose of this column is to bring former members of the AMU back in contact with each other. We hope by the "where are they now - what are they doing" approach that old friends will get together again. While we can start the program, **you** have to help by letting us hear from you! Please send your information to the Editor, AMUA Times, P.O. Box 52025, Ft. Benning, GA 31995. The editor reserves the right to edit for brevity.

Jim Clark, the first member of the AMU Shotgun Section to make an Olympic Team in 1960, retired from Phillips Petroleum in Bartlesville, OK. Jim still enjoys hunting and fishing and missed the reunion in 1996 because he was preparing for a photo safari to Africa. **Kevin Onka**, vintage mid 1960's AMU member, is a painting contractor in the Sugar Creek, MO area. Kevin recently visited the Ft. Benning area and shotgun facilities to say hello. Kevin missed the reunion last year because his daughter was expecting -- congratulations, Grandpa! Of more recent vintage, **Bill Clemmons** (1977-1981) is back in the Columbus, GA area. Bill left the AMU to go to Ft. Sam Houston, TX to reclassify in the medical field. From there Bill went to Ft. Leavenworth, KS to finish his commitment to the Army, then went on to Physicians Assistant School as a civilian. Bill is now a licensed P.A. at the Houghston

Sports Medicine Clinic in Columbus, GA. **Hank Shaw**, was one of the first people to be assigned to the Shotgun Section in 1961 (he was here in 1959 TDY) and retired in 1963. Hank went on to a successful career with Mutual & United of Omaha Insurance Company - many of you may have bought a policy from him! Hank is now retired but has devoted the rest of his life to pheasant and goose hunting. **Bobby Ott**, of Service Rifle fame, stopped by the USAMU to visit but was disappointed because just about everyone assigned to the Unit right now is at Camp Perry. He visited with D.I. Boyd for a while before going on to see fellow service rifle shooter, **Terry Daugherty** of Columbus. **Cecil Smith**, pistol, stopped by the USAMU to pick up an AMUA application- he will be trying to bring **Herschel Anderson**, into the AMUA fold. Cecil also spent some time with D.I. Boyd going over old times.

If you liked reading about old friends (or maybe even "the competition"), send your news to the editor for publication in the next "Times".

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on the Shotgun Range is being replaced with an office building for better administration and match supportability; a research and development building along with reload and test facilities will be constructed on Parks Range; and all International Ranges are being upgraded with electronic targets. These projects should be completed by November 1997. So when *you* locate those junior shooters and gunsmiths that *you* feel would contribute to *your* USAMU, *you* can still be assured they will be training and competing on the finest ranges in the United States.

I would ask you to check your television listing for early October, when Fort Benning and the USAMU will be featured on the Discovery Channel. The title of the show is Discovery Magazine, on Wednesday nights.

The USAMU is continuing with its unit history project. We are currently researching the individuals that our ranges are named after; Pool, Easley, Phillips, Hibbs, Parks, and Hook. We are having a difficult time finding any information on CPT Alfred J. Hook. He was killed in WWI and received a DSC. Any assistance you can offer to add to his history is greatly appreciated.

Coming in January, 1998



AMUA Annual Meeting
Fort Benning, GA

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responsible for accurizing the weapon.

All the branches of the service, except for the USAMU Team, used the .45 caliber pistol in the service pistol match because, according to USAMU Chief of Competition David I. Boyd, up to this point, the accurized .45 has been much more accurate than the best M-9.

But being able to use the modified M-9, rather than the .45 caliber, enabled the USAMU team to win the match, according to Ficke.

"The M-9 is easier to use than the .45 caliber," Ficke said. "The other services have not been able to use it because their gunsmiths have not been able to get the accuracy up to competitive standards."

"Next year they may use the 9mm," Jacobson said. "Since we shot and won with it, everyone else will probably try to. Some of the other services already talked to MSG Sams at the match about the work he did on the weapon."

According to Schreiber, the service pistol match is the most difficult match to shoot because service weapons do not have any sighting aids such as scopes, they have a heavy four pound trigger pull, and they use full-powered ammunition, which makes the weapon harder to control.

"We got our extra edge from our gunsmith, MSG Sams, who was able to accurize our M-9 pistols to be competitive at this level," Schreiber said. "That, along with our coach, Mr.

Ray Arredondo, gave us the ability to excel."

"The shooters are adapting well to the M-9 and gaining confidence in the guns, not only because of the accuracy but also because of the reliability," Sams said.

"We're looking forward to the National Championships next month where we'll be able to put the M-9 up against the .45 again," Boyd said.

SHOOTING SHORTS

Monthly Training Match, Atlanta, GA, July 13 - International pistol shooter SGT Carl Trompeter II won the Center Fire and the Rapid Fire matches. PV2 Terry Bradley won the Men's Air Pistol Match and finished second in the Junior Sport Pistol Match. PFC Travis Jorgenson won the Junior Sport Pistol and the Free Pistol matches. SGT Shane Harreld came in second in the Women's Sport Pistol Match.

Ohio Regionals, Canton, OH, July 11-13 - The USAMU Service Pistol Team won the .22 Team Match, took second place in the Service Pistol Team Match and finished third in the Center Fire Team Match. CPT Steven King took second place in the .22 Individual Match and third place in the overall aggregate.

NOTE: Your renewal month is noted on the address sticker below. Please renew early! Or better yet - renew with our new multi-year memberships!

**Army Marksmanship Unit Association
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Stamp

