



MMA TIMES

MILITARY MARKSMANSHIP ASSOCIATION, INC.
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Visit the MMA Web Site at -

militarymarksmanship.org

Join Us Today!!!

Strong winds can help!

Richard L. Jones

When I first picked up a battered and worn 1911A1, fresh from the arms room at a small communications agency in Puerto Rico, I had no idea where it would lead. But it was the 4th of July 1959 and there was food and beer at this annual Field Day Celebration. And for us "non-jock" types, the shooting events promised a way to participate, without the burden of working up a sweat.

Thirty rounds later, unprotected ears ringing and eyes watering from gun smoke, I walked away from the firing line carrying my first trophy and the conviction that here, at last, was something I really wanted to do. The noise, the smells, the brutal recoil, and yes, even the bleeding web between my thumb and forefinger from the untrimmed hammer tang - I loved it all!

Five years later, with time out for a tour in Vietnam, I received the final points for Distinguished Pistol Shot Badge and set a new goal to reach the lofty ranks of the 2650 Club. It took a blustery day in Norcross to achieve that level.

I've always been partial to the Georgia State Championships in Norcross. It was there, in 1964, that I broke 2600 for the first time. I still have the worn and fading scorecard for that match, 2603x95. At last, I was shooting with the big boys. Well, some of them anyway. Then came the 1965 season.

Assigned to Fort Bragg, I was shooting for the XVIIIth Airborne Corps Team. Warmup matches that spring had been encouraging and I won the Third Army match with a solid 2636, shooting double hardball. That caught the attention of the folks at AMTU and I was soon attached to the summer campaigns.

We arrived at Norcross under threatening black clouds and it rained most of the night before the matches. The rain stopped early, but the weather was still threatening throughout the .22 relays. The wind had started to pick up by the time my relay was called for the center fire stages, and the gusts increased to unbelievable before the slow fire match was complete.

I was running out of time. Half of the ten minutes were gone and I only had four rounds downrange. Waiting for lulls was eating up the clock. So, predictably, I tried to force the next shot. I held right into the middle of a strong gust and the surprise break came just as the front sight was passing through the edge of the target frame. "Oh, God", I thought. "There goes the ballgame." I squinted through the scope and there it was - a perfect .38 caliber hole., straight up at 12 o'clock . . . outside the scoring rings.

But the 2650 gods were in my corner that day. I was still looking through the scope when an even stronger blast of wind removed nearly a third of the targets from the frames and blew them over the berm.

Range alibi! "We will refire the stage," called the range officer. Lots of tens and Xs and more nines than I wanted later, I had my loftiest goal in hand - 2656 and membership in a very elite club.

USAMU 46th Reunion and Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony 18-19 OCT '02

Registration with refreshments on Friday,
Activities, Meals, Socials on Saturday

Open Ranges, Demos, Hall of Fame
Induction Ceremony

General Membership Meeting with
Election of Officers

Members \$10, Guests \$12

USAMU Commander's Report

Col Robert I. Hoidahl, Jr.

Wow! What an exciting summer and it ain't over!

This has been one heck of a three-month period since I last wrote this column. AMU soldiers have been involved in world cups, world shooting championships, interservice/national championships and upcoming Action Shooting World Championships in South Africa. But, before I get to the shooting scores, I'd like to provide a brief SITREP of other happenings within the unit.

As you know USAMU became a Recruiting Command asset in October 1999. At that time we were given the additional mission of assisting recruiters across the country meet their recruiting goals by putting young Americans into boots. Remembering back to your time in the unit and all the time spent on the road, we have added several more days for recruiting support. AMU soldiers touch almost every state in the union telling the Army story in schools, Boy Scout events, 4H camps and hometown USA. You can be proud of the great feedback we get about the quality of our AMU shooters, simply OUTSTANDING. As you're reading this addition of MMA Times all soldiers of USAMU will again change patches from Recruiting Command (USAREC) to Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC). A new major command has been formed called US Army Accessions Command (USAAC) which is subordinate to TRADOC. Our former Headquarters, Recruiting Support Brigade has been re-named Accessions Support Brigade with command and control moving from USAREC to USAAC under TRADOC. Bottom line: missions stay the same, patches change. USAMU will continue to shoot and WIN, PROMOTE the Army and ENHANCE combat readiness.

The ammunition bunker was finished early August with final prep and move-in this fall. Located at Parks Range, this new CLIMATE CONTROLLED facility should immediately improve our mission to put rounds on target.

Shooting business:

- June started off with Service Pistol Interservice at Ft Benning. USAMU teams shot exceedingly well, earning the overall team championship. At the banquet MSG (R) Charles McCowan, SFC (R) Jimmy McCauley and SFC (R) Hershel Anderson were inducted into the Service Pistol Section Hall of Fame. Hooah!

- The Atlanta World Cup was next up with SSG Jason Parker leading the charge with a Gold Medal in men's 10m air rifle. This performance earned the United States a birth at the 2004 Olympics. SSG Parker wasn't finished, he had enough left to go to Lahti Finland and win the World Championships in Air Rifle. Tied at the end of regulation, tied at the end of a ten shot finals; sudden death, one shot, Parker placed first after 51 shots. There were many other exceptional performances that you will read about in this quarter's edition, but this one was something special.
- Service Rifle made its annual pilgrimage to Quantico and Camp Perry. SFC Singley earned the title of best military service rifle shooter (for the fifth time). Truly unique. Then along came the long-range matches and SSG Hatcher. 1000 yards, iron sights, M-16 Rifle-200X8, best ever with a M16. USMC squeaked by service rifle in the ten-man team match by one point but payback at the nationals was only a week away. SFC McMahon is the National Service Rifle Champion. The team won the Dogs of War, Enlisted Mens Team Match, Infantry Trophy, a USAMU Service Rifle clean sweep at the Nationals. Another big hooah for Service Rifle.

Summer is fading but the next round of events include Action Shooters going to South Africa for the world championships, Fort Benning hosting the Pan-American Games selection matches this October and of course our reunion.

In closing I would like to extend my personnel invitation to all, in joining your teammates at the 46th USAMU reunion, October 18, 19. This will be an exciting time to meet the current soldiers and renew acquaintances. Three former members of the USAMU will be inducted into the Hall of Fame. I look forward to seeing you all there...that's an order!

USAMU 46th Reunion

18 and 19 October 2002

Fort Benning, Georgia

Visit the MMA Website for more information

MMA President's Report

Phil Cannella

The summer has about done its thing. At last, we are starting to enjoy a few cooler days and nights in Columbus, Georgia, and that is a welcome relief. I hope all of you enjoyed a great summer and are looking forward to the cooler temperatures at the 46th Reunion.

During the summer meetings, your Executive Board has been planning for the 46th Reunion. As you know, the dates have been set for 18-19 October. Reunion information and a Registration Form were mailed to current members on the 21st of August. Please return to us your Registration Form soonest so we can plan for numbers, meals, etc.

We lost another friend and outstanding shooter since my last update. SFC Elmer D. Mondon passed away on the 15th of July. His family told me he did not suffer and he left us with his usual humor. I can personally tell you, he was one of the finest marksmen during the period 1974-1980 and was a member on most of the winning USAMU teams at the Interservice Championships and National Matches. Some of my most cherished recollections of Elmer D. include him playing his guitar at team gatherings—especially the tune, “You Picked a Fine Time to Leave me Lucille” and visiting Elmer D. at his Interlude Lounge during oyster season. If you have not already done so, send the family a card or call them to pass on your personal respects. Elmer D. will be missed.

The officers and members of the association pass on their sympathy and condolences to Major (Ret) John T. Burke and his family. John lost Dulcie “Nickie,” his wife of 35 years, on the 9th of August. John served as the USAMU Service Rifle Chief, and as Chief, Range Control at Fort Benning. As some of you will recall, we opened and closed the ranges and maintained the targets (pits) through his office and crews for many years.

I had a nice chat with Mrs. Antonette Campbell. She and the family are doing fine and have appreciated all of our support shown her and the family since the passing of Raymond. An occasional card or call would be nice of you to show we really do not forget our own. In fact, we have several past members of the unit that would appreciate some contact. Take a moment to read down our membership directory - many of the names will bring back

memories. Let's not forget those who made USAMU a great organization, for example, Coats Brown, Bill Pullum, Jeremiah McKenzie, Bill Krilling, Burl Branham, and Stan Parmentier. Again, I ask you to keep in contact with the spouses or families of those past USAMU members who have now departed for the Big KD Range in the sky.

If you have not heard, another old friend, Tommy Pool was inducted into the USA International Shooting Hall of Fame on the 18th of June, in Atlanta. Accepting the honor was his wife, Nancy. Nancy will always be my candidate for the USAMU Hall of Fame. She is the corner stone of Building 243 (Sharpe Hall, Headquarters building). Thanks Nancy for all you do for the shooters of USAMU, and for helping the MMA at past reunions.

I also need to thank my old shooting partner, Joe Gapol, for the great smoked salmon, he sent me. Joe, the “Boo-Ray” gang appreciated it, too, and have passed on their thanks with, “We ain't to proud to ask for another CARE package of the same.”

I want to acknowledge the receipt of articles, photos, and other personal data from Francis Conway pertaining to Frank Palmer. Thanks, I will return the items soonest.

Thanks to Charley Davis and the family of LTC Ray Dobak for the personal data provided me about Ray. Charley drove to Washington State to shoot in the Hunters Pistol and Cowboy Rifle shooting events. While in the area, he visited the brother of LTC Dobak, Mr. Bob Dobak, of Grayland, WA. I am wondering if Charley drove the old Volkswagen and ate peanut butter along the way? I appreciate the input and hope Charley was successful in the match.

A recent phone call to Coats Brown reveals he is doing fine and he is hopeful of attending the reunion. I can also report that Clyde Chadwick is much improved since his recent hospitalization. Clyde says he cannot make this reunion, but he is looking forward to the 50th reunion.

As our 46th reunion approaches, I remind you again to return your Registration Form - make the commitment now! Hope to see you at the reunion. Take care and drive safely!

A Soldier Remembered

Phil Cannella

When I read the outstanding results of our young service rifle team, I recall my youthful days on a rifle range. I also recall a quiet man who did not say much, but was respected like no other soldier I knew. He was an unassuming man yet he radiated strength in all he did. He did not demand, but those serving under him could not give enough of their time, attention, and willingness to put forth their best shooting effort to please him. In doing so, his teams excelled - winning and setting records. Additionally, each team member developed into a better person and soldier. That soldier was Major Raynolds Dobak. Ray was born August 23, 1910, and lived in Missoula and Lacey, Montana, before moving in 1928 to Ortonville, Montana, where he attended high school. Ray served in the National Guard for 16 years and earned the rank of First Sergeant. His unit, Company L, 135th Infantry Regiment, 34th Infantry Division, was called to battle in February 1941, and served in North Africa. While involved in the North African campaign, he narrowly escaped death when the Vichy French torpedoed the destroyer he was being transported on. It was during the North African campaign, that he received a battlefield commission to 2nd Lieutenant for outstanding leadership.

Major Dobak was part of the early Army teams known in the 1930's as the Infantry teams. The teams would train at Fort Benning firing courses of fire patterned after the Olympic shooting events of that era. These teams were the forerunners of modern All-Army teams. Major Dobak was assigned to the USAMTU in 1957, and remained with the unit until 1963. It was during the early years of USAMU that the service rifle teams developed great teams and established the Army marksmanship competitive program. One of Ray's greatest accomplishments, as a coach, was when he and Coats Brown won the National Championship Dogs of War trophy in 1957. This was the first time an Army team had won the trophy since the resumption of the National Matches after WWII. Until then, the Marines reigned supreme in service rifle competition.

Major Dobak retired from the Army in 1970 with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. He returned to his beloved community in Grayland, Washington, where he engaged in commercial fishing. Mr. Marksman, as he was known, passed away at age of 88 on November 6, 1998.

VOLUNTEERS

Richard Pate

Judy and I have completed another year of volunteering at the National Matches. I saw quite a few familiar faces. Bill Blankenship served on the Pistol Protest Committee, said hello to USAMU Shop Officer W.O. Hardin, and got to visit with members of the "Over The Hill Gang". Two of them I haven't seen since the late 50s — Donald Jaynes and Marshall Anderson. Also read the MMA e-mail report about the success of the USAMU Hi-Power shooters at Perry. I would like to add that while SFC Grant Singley was shooting, his Father Gary, was volunteering in the pits. Gary and I were firing members with the old Third Army team during the late 50s. People ask us why we continue to volunteer at the Nationals each year. I think the above explains it all.

THANKS / DONATIONS

© Thank you to **Mrs. Judy Boyd** of Columbus, Georgia for donating several items of historical interest that had been the property of her famous husband D.I. Boyd. The Official History of the International Shooting Union 1907 – 1977 by A.J. Palmer O.B.E. of Great Britain. Commemorative Book – Games of the XXIIIrd Olympiad Los Angeles 1984 presented to D.I. by Gary Anderson of the NRA. A large National Rifle Association flag. A VHS video tape "Sending the USA International Long Range Palma Rifle Team to the World Championships, Bloemfontein, South Africa April 1999 by 1998 Palma Productions, Inc". An 85 page reproduction of a 1942 text entitled Equipment For The American Sniper by George Van Orden and Calvin A. Lloyd, U. S. Marine Corps. Six great 8" X 10" photographs. The first depicting William R. Lee shooting a bolt gun with scope on the old 1000 yard line range near Lawson Field, Fort Benning. A 1982 or 83 photo taken at the International Shooting Championships, Fort Benning depicting Joe Berry, Ditmor Chivaz, Randy Stewart, Todd Bensley and Martin Edmondson. Same championship with winners Randy Stewart, Todd Bensley and Mike English. A woman's pistol awards ceremony depicting the winning Army Reserve Team of Linda Labassi, Ruby Fox and Kim Dyer. A photo of 1984 National Pistol Champion SFC Laguana. The USAMU Black Team, winners of the Roumanian Cup composed of John Chubb, David Erickson, Strait, Tulua, Eric Uptagrafft, and including gunsmith Clyde Malphus.

Coats Brown, A Legacy

Ken Hamill

This is the first installment of a series about the life and times of Coats Brown. Ken Hamill spent many hours with Coats and has assembled a colorful essay of this shooting legend

Henry Kenneth Coats Brown was born 13 November 1908. He was named after his paternal grandmother who was a Virginia "Henry". The names Kenneth and Coats came from a family friend and In-Laws. The family name Brown is of Scotch heritage. He was raised in Marengo County, Alabama near the village of Myrtlewood, 130 miles north of Mobile and 60 miles west of Selma. The village was named after the numerous crepe myrtle trees in the area, thought by some to have been left by Hernando Desoto during his trek through the area on his way to Memphis. Coats lived with his mother, brother Robert who was two years older, and sister Louise who was three years younger. Coats lost his father at age four due to a construction accident.

The family owned a farm with a 6-room single story house, a barn, several acres of land and a second small house on the property. A resident sharecropper who was a very good man and his family lived there. He farmed the property, took care of the animals, and shared each harvest for several years. The Brown house had a deep well on the back porch and an outhouse at the end of the garden path 150 yards from the house. They farmed over 350 acres. Their garden plot for home use vegetables and fruit used about two acres. Their two main money crops were cotton and corn. They planted 200 acres of cotton which was later picked, ginned, baled and sold for cash. They planted 150 acres of corn, of which approximately 50% went for family use and animal feed and the remaining 50% was sold for cash. They had four

mules, three horses and approximately 75 head of cattle. They usually milked four cows for home use. The family drank a lot of milk and ate a lot of butter. They sold two or three cows each year. They sold four or five pints of vinegar each year at ten cents a pint. There were good years and bad years. The most devastating event was the flood of 1916, which ruined their corn crop. Fortunately they had enough ears of corn in storage to carry them another year. The kid's chores included drawing water, churning milk into butter, making ice cream when they had ice, fetching wood for the cookstove and also the fireplace if it was cold. When the kids became older, they helped pick cotton and harvest the vegetables.

The kids attended public school three miles distant, and walked each way barefoot. It was a four-room school with four teachers. The school had a deep well with a rope and bucket for drawing water. Students carried a lunch to school in a pail or sack. Mrs. Brown made homemade sandwiches for her children. Flour biscuits or corn meal johnnycake or mixed flour and corn meal biscuits were filled with a sausage patty, ham, or fruit preserves. Water washed down the meal. Coat's mother told stories of attending school under a big oak tree after the war, until a log school house was built. There were also boys and girls outhouses, each provided with a Sears and Roebuck catalogue. The classes spanned grades 1 through 12. Up to 4 grades were taught in a classroom. The typical number of students per class ranged between three and seven. The nine-month school year recognized four holidays with days off: Easter, Memorial Day, Thanksgiving, and Christmas. Robert E. Lee's birthday would be mentioned in school on that date, but it was not officially recognized. Students studied at night by kerosene lamp. Each family paid a 50-cent per month fee for the teacher's salary. Times were hard, everyone was poor.

Taps, Present Arms

Ralph J. Pack, 54, died August 2 in Anchorage, Alaska. He was a member of the USAMU Service Rifle Summer pick up National Trophy Group.

Archibald Vincent Arnold, Jr., 79, died August 26 in Kamas, Utah. He was the father of former USAMU Commander, Col (Ret) Arch Arnold, III.

Photos needed: If you have a 8" X 10" shooting photo of yourself or a team, please photo copy it, identify the event, date, people and send it to: MMA Historian, PO Box 52025, Ft Benning, GA 31995-2025. Photos received will be captioned, placed in document protectors & notebook binders and stored in the USAMU Photo Archives.

Information for the "Keeping in Touch" column needed: If you shot for the Army, your old friends want to hear about you. Send us a description of your experiences, when and where you shot, coached, accurized weapons, or other duties. When did you get out of the Army? What did you do? School? Work? When did you retire? What are your hobbies? Please jot down some information about yourself and send it to: MMA Historian, PO Box 52025, Ft Benning, GA 31995-2025.

Bits n' Pieces

In response to an earlier request for information on shooting generations at USAMU **Weldon Griggs** submitted the following:

FATHER

William Bassham
Lones Wigger, Jr.

Stanley Parmentier
Martin Edmonson
Phil Cannella
Jim Rose

CHILD

Lanny Bassham
Ronald Wigger
Deena Wigger

Gloria Parmentier
Martin David Edmonson
David Cannella
Tom Rose
Dave Rose

GRANDCHILD

Troy Bassham

Stuart Watkins informs us he is a candidate for the Arizona House of Representatives. He seeks reduced taxes, Trauma Center support funding, and better education funding and ideas. He added, he hopes he makes it.

Donald B. Williams of Oregon wrote that he would not be able to attend the Reunion due to going to New Zealand and Australia to participate in the World Masters Games. He's sorry he can't attend, but says the Games outweigh the Reunion. Can you imagine that!

CONWAY CHRONICLES

Francis B Conway

When the NRA Convention was in Seattle, I stopped to talk to the foreman of the Century Arms booth. I told him about a trip I had made with a friend into New Hampshire in 1940. We stopped in North Woodstock to see a gun dealer known as Shiff the Gunman. I had saved \$60 over the previous year and could see the war coming so I was determined to have a commercial auto. Old Shiffer had the guns! There was one wall with nothing but Model 94 Winchesters stacked 4 and 5 deep. Prices ranged from \$5 to \$500 for engraved guns. A traveling salesman from Massachusetts told us a story that had happened in the store a few years earlier. A man came in and bought a Model 94 and box of shells for \$15. The salesman and Shiff were talking and all of the sudden there was an explosion! The man with the rifle had loaded it and shot something in the yard! Shiff ran over to him and asked what happened. He explained that he wanted to be sure the gun worked before leaving the store and had shot a hole in a rusted bucket hanging in a tree in front of the store. Shiff went to his desk, took out a Colt Woodsman and shot out all four tires on the man's car. "That will teach you to shoot at my water bucket!" I walked out of Shiff's store with a GI 45, a commercial 45, a 9mm Luger, and a 30 cal. Luger for my \$60.



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