



MMA TIMES

MILITARY MARKSMANSHIP ASSOCIATION, INC.

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Olympic Gold Medalist Returns After 36 Years

USAMU PAO

An Olympic Gold Medalist has come home to the U.S. Army Marksmanship Unit. John H. "Jack" Writer, 60, was hired as a civilian reloader with the Ammunition Section of the Custom Firearms Shop in April nearly 36 years after he left in 1969 as an Army first lieutenant. As an Army officer, Writer won two Olympics medals - the Gold Medal in Three-Position Free Rifle in the 1972 Olympics and a Silver Medal in Three-Position Free Rifle in the 1968 Olympics.

As a reloader for the USAMU Ammunition Loading Section, Writer, and his coworkers, are responsible for the thousands of rounds of world-class match ammunition produced each day for the Soldier-athlete shooters of the USAMU. The reloaders produce ammunition for rifles and pistols and test each cartridge case, propellant, primer and bullet.

"We're very excited to have someone with his level of experience here on our team," said Troy Lawton, chief of the USAMU Ammunition Section. Writer and his coworkers not only get to work on the ammunition for the world-class shooters of the Marksmanship Unit, but they also work on ammunition development and testing, which has led to ammunition improvements for the warfighter.

The USAMU's high-velocity 77-grain ammunition is being used by 3rd Infantry Division Soldiers in Iraq in their USAMU produced Squad Designated Marksman rifles and in Afghanistan by Special Forces in the Special Purpose Receiver rifles.

Writer joined the Army in 1967 and after completing Basic Officers School at Aberdeen Proving Ground, Md., he was assigned to the Army Marksmanship Unit as an international rifle shooter. He competed with the USAMU International Rifle Team until August of 1969, then as a captain in the Army Reserve, he shot with the Army Reserve Shooting Team until 1976.

When he left the Army, he returned to Illinois and ran a manufacturing firm that

made metal finishing equipment and supplies and a bicycle shop, and before rejoining the USAMU, he worked in a gun shop. Writer built his own guns and loaded his own ammunition for more than 40 years.

"As a boy, I loved shooting my BB gun and .22-caliber hunting rifle," Writer said. "When I was about 12 years old, I found out that shooting was an Olympic sport after watching the 1956 Olympics. After a couple of years of pestering my parents, they bought me my first target rifle.

"Even though I did not know anyone who competed, I had made up my mind that I wanted to win the 50-Meter Three-Position Rifle event in the Olympics" he continued. "That early goal was probably the main reason I was successful in achieving that accomplishment in the 1972 Olympics.

"As a junior shooter in high school, I would train seven to nine hours a day all summer and as much as I could over the winter," Writer said. "In college, I had a key to the range so that I could get all the training I needed. Over the years, I always felt that there was never enough time to train; there was always too much to do."

Writer, an Illinois native who began shooting in 1959, has numerous marksmanship accomplishments including more than 30 medals in international competition; he also set four world records and won 11 open national championships.

He was the 1974 Three-Position Free Rifle World Champion, the 1970 Standard Rifle World Champion, earned the International Distinguished Badge and is a member of the USA Shooting Hall of Fame, USAMU Hall of Fame and the West Virginia University Sports Hall of Fame.

He and his wife, Ginger, were married in the Fort Benning Post Chapel in 1967. They live in Columbus, Ga., with their son Randy, 17; their daughter, Kimberly, and three grandchildren live in Illinois.

"We always liked it here," he said, "so being back is like coming home again."

MMA President's Report

Bruce Meredith

I am happy to announce the dates of the reunion to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the founding of the U S Army Advanced Marksmanship Unit. They are 18-21 October 2006.

The rough outline of events is arrival and registration on Wednesday, 18 October. Meet and dine with your friends on that date at your convenience. Thursday the 19th will be evening meals by section (Service Rifle, Running Target, etc.). Friday the 20th will be inductions into the Section Halls of Fame and an afternoon BBQ at the AMU. Saturday, 21 October will be an evening meal at the Columbus Convention & Trade Center (The Iron Works), 801 Front Ave. The unit Hall of Fame inductions will be at that time. Make your travel & vacation plans now.

We hope to have range activities each day with displays, demonstrations and fun competitions. Certainly we will need some of you to come in early and help with the activities. I urge you to start getting the word out to those you know and get them to join the MMA and come be a part of a memorable event. Recruit! The current membership stands at 518. There is no reason why we can't have a thousand or more people for the event. Help get the word out.

There are many of you who have not submitted a brief biography for the 50th Anniversary Book. It costs you nothing to send in a photo or two and a short synopsis of your shooting history and accomplishments. If you were a member of the AMU, the Army Area, Region Teams, or Post Teams, you need to be in the book. I encourage you to buy a book for yourself and/or your children. There are a great number of people who are not aware of this book. Talk it up.

In response to those of you who have been asking why the MMA does not offer a Life Membership option, I am pleased to announce that the Board of Directors has voted, at our last meeting, to authorize a Life Membership. It is available now. The cost is \$300. Sorry, it is not an authorized tax-deductible contribution. A plaque is being designed for award to each MMA Life Member.

The USAMU and USA Shooting hosted a Rifle and Pistol World Cup this last month. It was the first selections for the 2008 Olympics. MMA members working as organizers, range officers, jury members, and volunteers were Tom Moore, Lloyd Crow, Bill Krilling, Judy Boyd, Earl Waterman, Will Henderson, Wanda Jewell, Bob Mitchell, and the members of the USAMU. Sorry if I missed anyone. There were over 50 nations and 300 plus shooters. Several World Records were set.

USAMU 50th Anniversary Reunion
October 18-21, 2006

USAMU Commander's Report

LTC David J. Liwanag

The 2005 shooting season has started off with what we hope are many successes and victories yet to come.

SFC Jason Parker tied his 10-meter air rifle world record at the Changwon, Korea ISSF World Cup, earning the first AMU-won United States quota slot for the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing. SFC Todd Graves earned another at the ISSF Shotgun World Championships in Lonato, Italy. PV1 Josh Richmond is the World Junior Double Trap Champion.

The International Pistol Team and Service Pistol will combine into one Army Team to compete in the National Matches at Camp Perry. They have had an awesome start due to SFC Coffey's leadership and Ray Arredondo's coaching. I expect you will be very pleased with the team's performance this summer.

Service Rifle is set up to once again dominate the Interservice and Nationals. We have an exceptionally deep team of talented and driven young Soldiers and NCOs, and some equally talented summer pick-ups.

Action Shooting's SSG Max Michel and SPC Travis Thomasie are the United States Practical Shooting Association's National Open and National Limited Pistol Champions, respectively. Michel was selected to be the youngest US Team Captain in the history of the sport, and will lead Team USA at the International Practical Shooting Confederation's World Championships in Guayaquil, Ecuador.

We have several new leaders in the Unit. Sergeant Major Vidal Ybarra is reporting from an Active Component/Reserve Component assignment in Oregon, preparing them for their rotation to Iraq, and Captain James Barrows, the new Headquarters Detachment Commander and S3 is reporting from battery command at Fort Sill. SGM Ybarra is an experienced paratrooper and Ranger, and CPT Barrows is a Master Class IPSC shooter (CPT Barrows also shot the 2005 All-Army and won a new shooter trophy for pistol).

Master Sergeant Rod Pinkston earns the unit money every weekend. He is traveling and shooting the Sporting Clays circuit with Army Recruiting colors, brochures, banners, and posters, making contact with those "Influencers" who have a big say in whether or not a family will support a young person's choice to join the Army. The Shotgun and Service Pistol Teams are setting the standard for calling ahead and coordinating with Recruiters to help them convince those who might be on the line about joining up.

Major General Freakley, Commanding General of the

Coats Brown, A Legacy

Ken Hamill

This series is about the life and times of a shooting legend who became the first Service Rifle Head Coach of USAMU in 1956. If you shot or worked with Coats Brown, please send any memories you have of those times to the Editor so the membership can share or relive those memories.

Fort McClellan, Alabama. Payday came once a month in the old Army, usually midmorning on the last day of the month. Each company in 3rd Battalion conducted paycall in the company dayroom. The Commanding Officer was the pay officer. He sat at the pay table with the First Sergeant at his side. The troops formed a line in the hallway leading to the dayroom without regard to their job or rank. The first man to line up, remained first in line, Private, Corporal or Sergeant. First Sergeant Johnson would call out the name of the next person in line. That soldier moved smartly to the pay table, stood at rigid attention and reported, "Pfc. Smith reporting for pay Sir". The C.O., Captain Winslow returned the salute and counted out the correct amount of pay in greenbacks. The soldier accepted his money without comment and moved away from the pay table. The First Sergeant would designate people to collect money owed. He provided them with a roster of soldiers owing money. All debts were paid immediately. Post Exchange bills and Theater tickets were paid for. Army Emergency Relief got 25 cents from each soldier every payday. Moneylenders waited down the hall and out of sight to be repaid. Usury was not allowed by Army Regulations and it was discouraged, but it still went on. Short arm inspections were usually conducted a couple days prior to payday. Payday procedure meant the afternoon off. Healthy men were allowed to go to town. Coats and two or three friends, all clean livers, went to town every payday afternoon. They would make a deposit in their savings accounts at the bank and then enjoy a milkshake at the drugstore.

In the spring of 1935, 3rd Battalion had marksmanship training. Training with the six infantry weapons and record firing lasted for approximately two weeks. Preliminary classes explaining how range training would be conducted were given in the company dayroom before going to the range. They marched the two miles to and from the rifle range each day. Rifle marksmanship training consisted of sighting bar exercises, trianglization, position work, dryfiring and live fire. Ammunition boxes were modified into sturdy trianglization supports. The boxes were filled and heavy and not easily moved. Slots were cut out to accommodate the rifles and wedges were used to secure the rifle into its cradle. At least three days were spent training with the soldier's basic weapon, the Springfield model 1903 rifle. One day or part of a day was spent qualifying with the Browning automatic rifle and .45 caliber service pistol. Two or three days were spent training and qualifying with each of the larger weapons, the water-cooled machine gun, 37mm cannon and Stokes mortar.

Marksmanship badges and bars were issued to qualifying soldiers for all six weapons each year. Soldiers commonly wore their marksmanship badges and bars. Some soldiers wore a Rifle Expert Badge with five bars representing expert qualification with the BAR, .45, MG, 37mm and mortar. Some soldiers wore an expert

badge, sharpshooter badge and marksman badge with the appropriate bars attached. Coats qualified expert with the Springfield 1903 service rifle on his first try. The expert marksman badge paid an extra \$5.00 per month. There are some misconceptions about the extra money paid for shooting well. Coats remembers the policy as; if a soldier qualified as sharpshooter, he would be paid \$3.00 extra each month for twelve months and the extra pay would expire. If later in his career he qualified expert, he would be paid \$5.00 extra each month for twelve months and the extra pay would expire. A soldier was allowed to draw the \$5.00 extra pay for shooting expert for one twelve month period during his career. Extra pay for shooting well was discontinued with the onset of World War II. Captain Winslow, the white haired K Company Commander brought his daughter to the barracks one day. She heard the men talking near the bulletin board about someone being promoted to Corporal. She asked her father when he was going to make Corporal. Winslow later made Colonel.

Welcome New Members

Martin Edmons

Neil Kravitz

Phillip Miranda

Douglas Ford

William Lange

Anthony Pursser

Two Good Friends and a Pistol

Delos D. Stolp

This is a story of two good friends on a trip back home from a Pistol Match. Bonnie Harmon and I were on our way back to Fort Benning, Georgia, from a pistol match in San Antonio, Texas. We had been on the road about three hours in my pickup with an overhead camper and Bonnie was getting bored, so he decided to clean his .38 caliber wad-cutter pistol. I wasn't paying much attention to him as I was trying to keep the pickup on the road, as it was very windy. When he got the pistol clean, he said he was going to test fire it and I said, "OK, just make sure you open the window first."

Well he did open the window and stuck his arm out the window and fired three rounds straight in the air. Pleased with himself that the weapon was working OK, he put it back in the gun box and we continued down the highway. About 15 minutes later I got to thinking and I pulled over to the side of the road, walked around to Bonnie's side of the pickup and looked up. Sure enough, there in the bottom of my overhead camper were three nice round holes.

When Bonnie saw what he had done he almost fainted, and could hardly stop apologizing to me. Well I thought it was funny. When we got back to Bonnie's house I got up in my camper, lifted up the mattress and there were three wad-cutter rounds stuck in the mattress. I filled the holes with caulk and went on my way home. He did have a good grouping and we often had a good laugh when we would talk about it.

Bonnie and I have been friends for years. I pray for him and wish him the best.

What's Going on in the Custom Firearms Shop

The AMU Custom Shop has had a busy spring. As you all know the shooting season has arrived and we now shall see results of our winter labors.

The biggest news is the hiring of John Feamster and Jack Writer for the Ammunition Loading Section headed by Troy Lawton. We welcome them aboard, as they are both extremely talented gentlemen who will quickly become great assets to all of the shooting sections. The Shop is also in the process of hiring 6 civilian GS9 Gunsmiths/Machinists which should be finalized by the end of summer. The additional manpower will be most helpful.

The Long Range Magnums have been stocked, barreled, tuned and tested at Maertens Range (1000 yards) with very pleasing results. Six-inch groups were common place with an occasional five. Real hammers!

We built a new test fixture for this testing which required the drilling of a ½" hole into a 2" ball bearing. This ball bearing has a Rockwell hardness of 65C and will polish a file to a lustrous bright finish if you have the patience. However with the proper carbide drill bit and a little finesse the mission was accomplished achieving a very accurate .500" hole with the accuracy and finish of reaming.

The evolution of the Beretta M9s continues as the Service Pistol gunsmiths prepare pistols for next season. They were able to incorporate the Fadal CNC mill center into their production, which allows more rigid machining of the receiver and slide. Previously all work was done on a manual Bridgeport. Plans are in the works for fixturing which will rotate the receivers on the fourth axis thereby allowing all machine operations to be performed without the need to change the part "setup". New 9mm ammunition developments have given us some very nice 1.75" groups.

The Machine Shop has been busy producing barrels, trigger guards, blooptubes (an extension allowing greater sight radius for the rifle) and fixtures as well as performing a variety of manufacturing activities in support of the shooting teams. They recently acquired MasterCam, a Computer Aided Machining software, which enables 3D modeling and machine programming. If you can draw it, you can machine it. This should be a great aid in the manufacturing of production parts and the design and development of prototypes in the future.

Service Rifle has been busy with rebuilding and fine tuning M16's for the start of the 2005 shooting season. The SR team and Gunsmith support just returned from Oak Ridge, TN where two 499's were fired. A new Ford F750 truck has arrived in time for the Summer Season and is awaiting the USAMU paint job. The big black tractor should do a fine job of pulling our 40 foot shop support trailers.

Good Shooting

COMMANDER / From Page 2

US Army Infantry Center and Chief of Infantry sent a memo to the Commanding General of the Training and Doctrine Command Futures Center regarding the Army's proposed Designated Marksman strategy. MG Freakley's memo stated that the AMU is the Designated Marksman Subject Matter Expert and should be the Army's DM trainers; the Infantry School will not be establishing a separate DM School; and the AMU should be called for all DM shooting skills trainers. The Civilian Marksmanship Program will be selecting qualified civilian volunteers to be trained by the Service Rifle Team to serve as augmentation instructors for AMU DM Mobile Training Teams. Qualifications such as Distinguished Rifleman's Badge or NRA Master/High Master rating helped as an initial screening criteria. Service Rifle will train the volunteers to present Soldier-specific tasks a KD shooter might not have (including range estimation, use of the Advance Combat Optical Gunsight, and other tactical information from both Army and Marine Corps doctrinal publications). AMU evaluations of student-prepared and presented blocks of instruction will further screen volunteers.

The AMU hosted several successful competitions including the All-Army, the ISSF Benning World Cup, and both Navy and CMP National JROTC Air Rifle Championships. For the first time in many years the AMU will host the Interservice Pistol Championships in June. The CMP's inaugural M16 Excellence-in-Competition Match at the 2004 National Trophy Matches (shot with an AMU rack-grade Small Arms Firing School M16 and ball ammo) was a big success, allowing those shooters without any EIC points to compete for a 4-point introductory "Leg." We will run it again this year, and we expect it to be a continuing match.

We are starting work on the book to commemorate the unit's 50th Anniversary, and we hope it will be worthy of your critical review.

The Army intends to grow 33 combat brigades to 44 to 48 brigades within the next five years. To do that (working within the Congressionally-mandated Army end-strength) requires the force to shake all the trees and move Soldier slots back to the killing Army. This required DA to mandate a Military-to-Civilian conversion plan that is well under way at the AMU. Many of our former Soldier support positions (including admin, supply, gunsmithing, and reloading) were changed to Civil Service and the Army slots were returned to the force. You will be impressed with the quality of the folks we have been fortunate to hire.

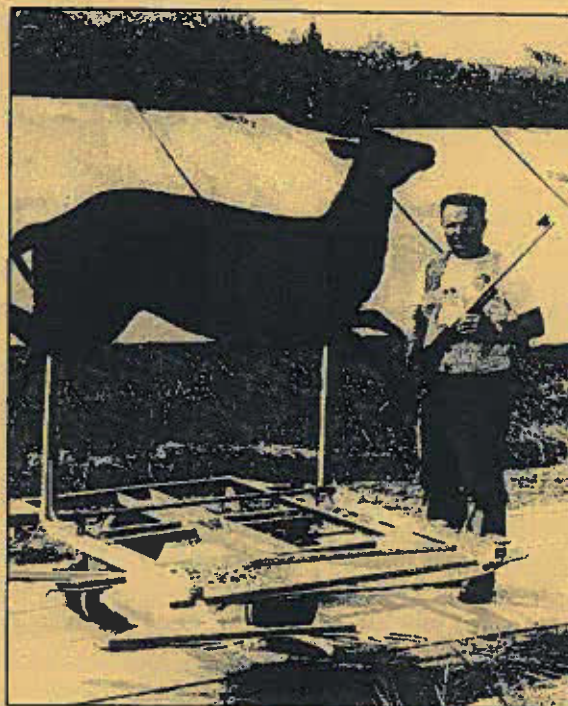
Like you, we're looking forward to seeing how well our shooters do this season, and we hope to have great news for you come this fall!

Stories needed: If you remember a funny, inspiring or interesting shooting experience, please share it with us, so we can share it with the membership through the MMA Times. MMA Times Editor, PO Box 52025, Ft Benning, GA 31995-2025.

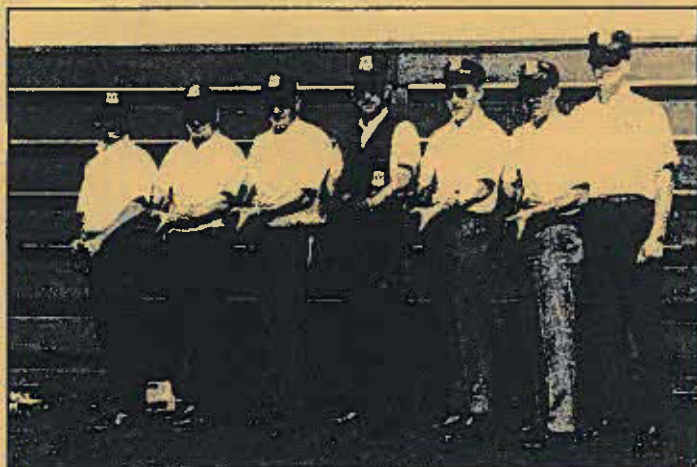
VINTAGE PHOTOS: USAMU Memories



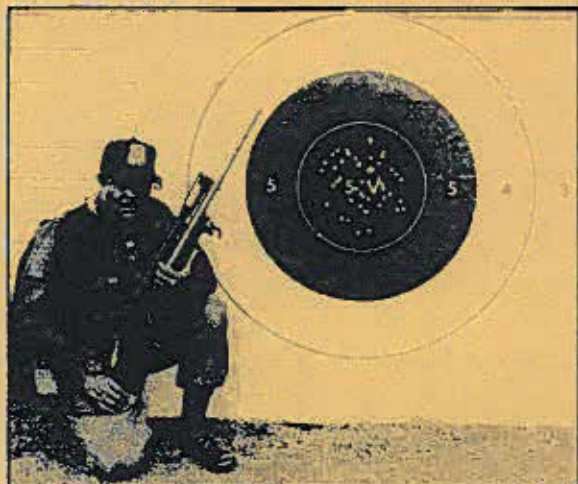
"Alibi, The Duck," was adopted by the 7th Division pistol team as a mascot, but the word got around that if they didn't win the match, they would eat the duck. So Alibi is a little worried as to the outcome of the 8th Army Pistol Matches, which were being held at Camp Saint Barbara, Korea. Here she paces the floor in her new modern duck home beside the firing line. 1 April 1958.



Loyd Crow on the Running Deer Range, 1963



September 1969-U.S. Army Skeet Team at the National Skeet Shooting Association World Championships, Rochester-Brooks Gun Club, New York. (L to R) LT Mernice Alkire, SP4 Larry Tiner, SSG Phil Provence, LTC Tom Gilmore, SP4 Jay Gerlich, SP5 Tony Rossetti, LT Mike Stackfleth.



1984 National Pistol Champion
SFC James R. I. Laguana

LEFT-SFC R.B. Green with his record seting 1000 yard target, 1970. Score 100-52Vs.

Conway Chronicles

Francis B. Conway

If any of you have access to Julian Hatcher's book "Pistols and Revolvers" printed in 1935, turn to the section in the back "Self Defense" and you will see Gen. Hatcher and Lt. Lawrence Gau in several photos of "How to defend yourself and disarm an armed opponent". Larry belonged to a Baltimore gun club in the suburb of Towson. The Towson gun club rented a room in the basement of the Odd Fellows Home. It was a long room split down the middle with a clubhouse on one side of a metal covered partition and a 50-foot range on the other. Firearms used were limited to 22 rf rifles and mid range match loads for the 38 special in handguns. One night, Larry came in with a gun case and said "Hi" to the card players and went around the corner to the range. No one else was shooting. All of a sudden there was lots of noise as he emptied a 50 round drum on a Thompson sub-machine gun in one long burst! The Odd Fellows were having a meeting directly above the range and it took several months of soft talk not to run the gun club off! Strangely enough Larry was not thrown out of the Club!

Tidbits

The **Military Marksmanship Association** received a United States Army Marksmanship Unit Certificate of Appreciation for supporting the 2005 All Army Small Arms Championships at Fort Benning in March. The certificate thanks Association members for their valuable service. This was only the second All Army since 1994 and would not have been a success without involvement and support of our members.

Robert Hanson writes in to say hello. He shot with the International Rifle Team in 1964, S3 Section/Small Arms Firing School in 1965, and then won the Distinguished Rifleman badge while shooting for the USAR. He was on the team that won the Rattlesnake Trophy in 1968. He spent 25 years in New York City as an investment banker and is now retired and he and his wife manage the 1,200 acre Four Bear Ranch at Wapiti in northwestern Wyoming. He has been able to travel a wide range of the world, considers himself a hand-loading nut and is looking forward to coming to the 50th reunion of the AMU at Fort Benning in 2006.

Thanks to **Arthur Klein** for the Alibi the Duck photo. Arthur is Double Distinguished (Rifle and Pistol) and President's 100.

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.



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