



# MMA TIMES

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## Optics in Service Rifle Competition



Sergeant First Class Brandon Green takes aim with his optic equipped service rifle. U.S. Army photo by Michelle Lunato/Released

Rob Harbison

An eyebrow raising change came to service rifle shooting last year. Traditionally the domain of iron sights except for some long range competition, rule changes now allow the use of scopes in most service rifle matches. Beginning with the January 2016 competition season Civilian Marksmanship Program (CMP) rules allowed for the use of optical sights in Service Rifle competition. Changes to the NRA rulebook followed suit, allowing scopes in NRA matches including the National Matches, as well as CMP Excellence in Competition events, or "leg" matches, and interservice competition.

In a news release by the CMP, the purpose of the rule change was explained. "The decision to legalize optical sights on service rifles was taken after several years of discussion and recognition that U. S. military personnel no longer use anything but optical sights on their military rifles. CMP Service Rifle rules have traditionally tried to keep abreast of military rifle and training developments so opening Service Rifle shooting to optical sights became an inevitable change."

The U.S. Army has two standard issue optics for squad weapons, notwithstanding the plethora of rifle and optic variants that you may have used or seen in photographs from Iraq and Afghanistan. During the last fourteen years of combat, the Army allowed the purchase of or directly fielded numerous variants of rifle scopes. However, only two variants are standard issue. One is the M150 Rifle Combat Optic and the other is the M68 Close Combat Optic.

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## MMA President's Report

Rob Harbison



Greetings shooters!

The report from Fort Benning is that the Dogwoods are in full bloom and the shooting season is off to a great start. I hope you will enjoy some of the new material in this edition of the MMA Times. There is an article by yours truly on the addition of scopes in service rifle competition, after a full year of

the rule change in effect. I am delighted to introduce a new columnist to you. Harold "Hap" Rocketto authored the article in a new column that we have entitled, "Saved Rounds and Alibis". Many of you will be familiar with Hap's writing from his contributions to Shooting Sports USA, Precision Shooting Magazine (currently out of circulation), The Outdoor Message, the American Rifleman, the Civilian Marksmanship Program's website, and pronematch.com. Hap served on both the Connecticut National Guard and the All National Guard Rifle Teams where he was a member of numerous national championship teams, earning the US Army Distinguished Rifleman Badge and the President's Hundred awards. He is also a National Smallbore Record holder, a member of the 1600 Club and the Connecticut Shooters' Hall Of Fame. He was the 2002 Intermediate Senior Three Position National Smallbore Rifle Champion, the 2012 Senior Three Position National Smallbore Rifle Champion a member of the 2007 and 2012 National Four Position Indoor Championship team, coach and captain of the US Drew Cup Team, and adjutant of the United States 2009 Roberts and 2013 Pershing Teams. Hap is currently serving as an Assistant Rifle Coach for the rifle team at the U.S. Coast Guard Academy. I know that you will enjoy his witty reflections on the shooting sports and life in general as much as I do.

There has been a lot of activity on the international Olympic shooting front concerning program changes directed by the International Olympic Committee (IOC). Specifically the changes are related to gender parity for participation opportunity. The changes come from mandated sport alterations in the IOC's Agenda 2020. Among other initiatives, Agenda 2020 sets a goal of 50% participation from women in the

various sporting events. The International Sport Shooting Federation (ISSF) Executive Committee and Administrative Council met on 21 and 22 February of this year to review a subcommittee recommendation on the implementation of the IOC's Agenda 2020. The ISSF Executive Committee and the Administrative Council discussed and unanimously approved the recommendations of the ISSF Ad Hoc Committee concerning the implementation of IOC Agenda 2020 and its objective of achieving gender equality for Tokyo 2020. The approved recommendation includes replacing Men's Double Trap with a mixed gender trap team event, replacing Men's Prone with a mixed gender air rifle team event, and replacing Men's 50m Pistol with a mixed gender air pistol team event. The next step in the process is IOC approval of the ISSF recommendation scheduled for sometime this summer. A nice background explanation can be read on the ISSF website here

<http://www.issf-sports.org/news.ashx?newsid=2729>

The MMA Executive Board hopes to have an article on the changes in an upcoming issue once the IOC has formally approved the changes.

## OPTICS / From Page 1

The M150 is a fixed four power scope with a combination illuminated and etched stadia reticle. The M68 is a 1x or non-magnified optic with an electronic aiming dot. The USMC uses a nearly identical sight to the Army's 4x M150, the AN/PVQ-31. The Army and Marine variants are essentially the same thing for practical purposes, but according to representatives of Trijicon (manufacturer of the M150), there is a slight difference in how the services asked the manufacturer to compute the stadia lines or bullet drop compensation in the reticle.

The new rule limits magnification to 4.5x, which corresponds to currently fielded U.S. Army and USMC standard issue scopes. CMP rule 6.1.1 h, which is under the general heading "M16/AR15-Type Service Rifle", states, "The rifle may have an optical sight (reflective sights are considered optical sights) with a maximum power of 4.5X installed on the receiver. Variable scopes with a maximum of 4.5X are permitted. Only commercially manufactured scopes that were produced with a maximum magnification of 4.5X and have a maximum objective lens diameter of 34 mm may be used. If an optical sight is used, the same optical sight configuration must be used in all stages of a course of fire

## USAMU Commander's Report

LTC James R. Barrows



The New Year is well underway and as I write this, the 2017 U.S. Army Small Arms Championship or All Army has just begun at Fort Benning. We continue to use the All Army as a way to further improve Soldier marksmanship and the efforts of the USAMU continue to raise the standards of marksmanship proficiency across

the force.

March 3<sup>rd</sup> turned out to be, as CSM Tinker predicted, Awesome. The annual USAMU Ball proved to be a great opportunity for current members of the unit to come together as professionals and take part in some of the traditions that make being a Soldier special and unique. A good time was had by all in attendance and gave us all a chance to relax before things get very busy during the spring and summer. Thanks to all who were involved, but especially to SFC Ryan Hadden who planned and coordinated this year's Ball – Well Done.

The conclusion of the All Army begins our real start of the competition season and I know time only accelerates from here. From Spring Selection matches, Interservice Pistol and USA Shooting Nationals at Fort Benning to Camp Perry, World Cups and countless other events, teams will be all over the country and the world doing what we do best - Win. The Custom Firearms Shop has spent countless hours this winter rebuilding firearms and loading ammunition and continues to improve the capabilities of our equipment. Conditions are set and I look forward to watching our teams during another successful year on the range.

My time in command is flying by. CSM Tinker and I couldn't be more proud of this unit, our history, our people and the potential for great things to come.

### TAPS, PRESENT ARMS

It is with deep sorrow that we announce the passing of LTC (Ret) Winston A. Dahl and Jim Schatz. Obituaries may be read here

<http://www.mcmullenfuneralhome.com/obituaries/Ltc-Ret-Winston-Dahl/#!/Obituary>

[http://www.tributes.com/show/104587645?active\\_tab=obituary](http://www.tributes.com/show/104587645?active_tab=obituary)

## OPTICS / From Page 2

(changing sights or sight mount configurations is not permitted). The centerline of an optical sight shall be no higher than 3.5 inches above the centerline of the bore." The rule remains unchanged in the 2017 CMP Rulebook. Interestingly, rule 6.1.3 M14 Type Service Rifle and rule 6.1.4 M1 Garand Type Service Rifle did not change to allow for optical sights.

Despite some weeping and gnashing of teeth that the end was near, records in the Ten Man Team Match and the National Service Rifle Championship didn't fall last year to new marks with optics. Sergeant Nick Mowrer won the service rifle national championship with a score of 2381-114X, still a few points back from the national championship record set by Sergeant First Class Grant Singley in 2012.



Sergeant First Class Brandon Green with a Nightforce riflescope on his M16. U.S. Army photo by Michelle Lunato/Released

The interservice Ten Man Team winning score was 4900-174X posted by the Army Reserve. The AMU took second with 4879-151X. The Interservice record of 4933-206X fired by the USAMU (with irons) in 1999 still stands. The USAR also won the 2016 Infantry Trophy Match at Interservice with a score of 1393 to the Army's 1352 (good for third behind the Navy Team). These scores were also off the pace of the

interservice record of 1506 set by the USAMU in 2004. During the interservice matches, the Army Reserve was using optics but not the Army team. By the time the teams met again at Camp Perry the Army was using optics as well.

The winds of change are blowing through many shooting disciplines. Scopes are likely here to stay in service rifle. For those of you who have used the excuse of "I can't see the front sight anymore", perhaps this change will get you back out on the firing line.

## Saved Rounds and Alibis

A Shooting Character Straight Out of Shakespeare

Hap Rocketto

A couple of weeks ago I was idly leafing through some Shakespeare when a line from King Henry IV Part I leapt from the page and stirred my memory. The Bard's words "I saw...Harry, ...gallantly arm'd, Rise from the ground like feathered Mercury..." brought to mind a war story about one of the treasured old characters of high power rifle shooting.

When I first went to Perry in the mid 70s I saw a grizzled old bear of a man shamle up to the line carrying an M1 in his ham-like hands. He was wearing well-worn and faded fatigues, an old tan 10-X shooting coat that was adorned with a few ancient match brassards, his ample middle was cinched up tight with an ammo belt, and his head was crowned with a battered and sweat stained campaign hat that was rolled up fore and aft. To me it seemed as if the ghost of Perry's past has risen from the misty grass of Vaille Range.

I asked Roger McQuiggan if he knew the old duffer. He gave me one of those looks that are usually saved when one replies to a slightly addled nephew's inane questioning. "That", he replied in a slightly awed tone, "is Harry Secbarger." Roger went on to explain that Harry was a living legend, of sorts, in the high power community.

The New Jersey shooter had begun his quest for Distinction when the '03 was the service rifle. The campaign hat he wore was the original one issued to him as young recruit well prior to Pearl Harbor. In those days soldiers wore blue denim fatigues, "Daisy Mae" hats, leather belts, and the campaign hat was an article of issue not a drill sergeant's affectation.

When I first saw him Harry was a retired Master Sergeant, the veteran of some 100 or more leg matches, and

the owner of just six points! He was the personification of dogged determination. On top of all that he was a character and a curmudgeon. War stories about Harry were of epic proportions.

Most stories about Harry were considered to be apocryphal. However, I do know of one that is true, as the man that told it to me was involved and his integrity is not to be questioned. Some years ago, in the late 50s, at the First Army Matches Harry was squadded with this shooter. During the rapid fire sitting stage the shooter is required to rise from position and await the appearance of the target before returning to the sitting position and shooting. Many of us who suffer from "furniture physique", that is out chest has fallen into our drawers, usually undo our top trouser button and loosen the belt. Harry was full of years and his belly reflected his indulgence in the good life.

Upon responding to the command, "Shooters Rise!" he huffed and puffed his way to that unusual crossed legged crouch that the command requires. While waiting for the rest of the commands Harry's trousers fell about his knees. Bent over he leaned back and growled, "Hey, Kid! Pull them trousers up and hold them!" My friend, a mere Private First Class and a new shooter to boot, quickly followed the orders of his superior. He grabbed the belt loops of the trousers and held them up until the targets rose from the pits. As the target ascended Harry descended into his trousers, his sitting position, and immortality. The young PFC who served as Harry's valet that day so long ago at Fort Meade told this story to me. He retired from the Connecticut National Guard with 43 years of unbroken service. He is a national record holder, a Distinguished Rifleman, a winner of countless championships, and one of only three Connecticut residents to ever win the President's Hundred. But, everyone was young once. Even Dick Scheller was once a kid. Come to think of it, he probably still is one.



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