



MMA TIMES

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USAMU Gets a New Commander

By Lt. Col. Michelle Lunato

October 3, 2024



The Home of Champions welcomed a new commander, Lt. Col. Christopher Thielenhaus, and bid farewell to Lt. Col. Casey Mills during a Change of Command Ceremony at Fort Moore, Georgia.

Mills said of the AMU, "I am honored to stand in this company." Overall, the contributions the AMU makes to the Army are impressive.

"We've got multiple national and world champions. We've got President's 100 Champions from both pistol and rifle. We've got National Trophy Individual Champions from rifle and pistol. There's a two-time national 3-Gun Champion in here, who I don't even think is old enough to drink alcohol yet, or maybe just turned this year. What a career he is going to have in front of him."

Mills went on to thank the AMU civilians who selflessly serve the Soldiers behind the scenes so they can be successful.

As the incoming commander, Thielenhaus came up to address the crowd, but first, he spoke to Mills.

"I can say with absolute confidence that you have left this unit in probably the best state that it's been in many, many years. And that has been echoed to me by many people who have worked in this unit before...I don't think you could have done a better job."

To the Soldiers, Thielenhaus confessed that he had to be up front.

"I picked this unit as my number one choice for three reasons. And that's because you guys represent the three things that I am most passionate about in the Army. That's the importance of winning, Soldier lethality, and telling the Army story. And that's the things you guys do on a day to day basis. One of those three things happens here every single day, and that's why I am so excited to take this unit."

MMA President's Report



Greetings fellow members,

Success!

I shared in the last MMA Times edition that we were seeking to raise \$25,000 to help fund the creation of a permanent AMU museum display at the National Infantry Museum (NIM). Well, what has transpired over these past few months has been truly amazing! The NIM received a total of \$66,500 in AMU-designated donations, enough to guarantee all the project costs are fully funded!!!

In all, NIM received 43 donations from generous MMA members and friends. Thank you so much to those who were able to donate and fund the creation of a permanent AMU exhibit. What a legacy for the AMU! Four (4) \$10,000 donations were particularly noteworthy. Special thanks to Dave Erickson for donating \$10K to match the first \$10K donated by MMA members, to Don Harmon for donating \$10K, and to Ellen and David Ross III for

donating \$10K in memory of Sue Ann Sandusky. In addition, thanks to corporate donations from the Civilian Marksmanship Program (CMP) as they donated \$10K from the proceeds their rifles generated in a special on-line auction, and to U.S. Sugar for donating \$7.5K.

What's in this edition?

This edition of the MMA Times features the recent Change of Command Ceremony in which LTC Christopher Thielenhaus assumed command of the AMU. In addition, there is an article about the new AMU Command Sergeant Major, Michael Ramon M. Dang, an article about the AMU winners from Summer 2024, and an "In Memoriam" article that highlights a well-respected and extremely accomplished former member of the Reserve International Shooting Team, retired Colonel Sue Ann Sandusky. After a stellar collegiate rifle shooting career, Sue Ann enlisted in the Army Reserves so she could join the Reserve International Shooting Team. What followed for Sue Ann was a truly remarkable journey as she ascended in rank from SP5 enlistee to Colonel.

This edition also features retired SSG David Kimes in the "Where are they now" section. David had quite an illustrious shooting career, including being named to the USA Shooting Hall of Fame in Colorado Springs and winning 14 World Shooting Championship medals! In the article, you'll also see where David's professional work experience included the North American Rockwell-Apollo/Shuttle Program – yes, apparently, he was/is a true Rocket Scientist!

As this edition goes to print, we are advised that a Past MMA President, retired LTC Phillip Cannella, Jr. has recently passed away. See the "In Memoriam" section. Phil was an extremely well-decorated Vietnam veteran whose illustrious career included a stop at USAMU from 1974-81. My four-year tenure at USAMU overlapped with LTC Cannella. I recall him being a top-tier rifleman (particularly in CISM matches) and a well-respected leader in the USAMU, Service Rifle Section.

**** Request for Shooting Artifacts **** As the AMU Museum Display project has completed the Fundraising Phase, the focus now shifts to the collection of content for the museum display. Though the AMU has access to much display content, we are requesting anyone who has a historically significant firearm and/or shooting memorabilia please consider contacting the National Infantry Museum to see if they are interested in it.

Ron Plumb
MMA President

USAMU Commander's Report



Fellow MMA Members,

I am absolutely thrilled to be taking command of the US Army Marksmanship Unit and continuing the spectacular legacy set by Casey and our predecessors. Having been in the job now for about three months, I'm continually amazed by the Soldiers and Army Civilians working here. Everyone lives the values of this unit and truly dedicated to our four goals: 1) Win in competition; 2) Make Soldiers more lethal; 3) Tell your Army story; and 4) Make better Soldiers and stronger families. I am looking forward to telling the story of AMU to the people of the United States and being part of this great legacy.

It's been an exciting time to be in command at the USAMU. In October, U.S. Army Olympians and Paralympians, consisting of USAMU's SSG Maddalena, SSG Hinton, SSG Nguyen, and SGT Roe, met with Deputy Secretary of Defense Kathleen Hicks. Their visit encompassed a tour of the Pentagon, engagements with senior civilian and military leaders, and a panel discussion and interview with Assistant to the Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs Christopher Meagher.

USAMU Olympian, SGT Ivan Roe, along with fellow Olympic and Paralympic Team USA members were invited to tour the White House and be recognized by the President of the United States for their accomplishment of making the 2024 Olympic Team

USAMU recognized SFC Josh Richmond for accomplishments over a 20-year career with the Shotgun Team. SFC Richmond was presented the coveted USAMU Bullet plaque and inducted into shotgun section Hall of Fame. SFC Richmond's achievements include becoming a 2-time Olympian, 2-time World Champion, World Cup Final Champion, and 5-time World Cup winner. USAMU wishes SFC Richmond and family the very best as they move into the next chapter.

In November we hosted the Interservice Pistol Competition, where we welcomed teams from the US Coast Guard, Navy, and Army Reserve. Despite fierce competition, SFC Ryan Franks of the Service Pistol Team swept the field, winning every individual competition as well as the overall prize. The entire Service Pistol Team performed to exacting standards, winning every event.

We are also thrilled to welcome our new Command Sergeant Major, CSM Mike Dang and his wife Ionela into the USAMU family. CSM Dang has already impressed with his experience, openness, and eagerness to serve in this storied unit. I am certainly glad to have an NCO of this caliber in the command team. Going forward, I'm excited to meet more members of the MMA out there at competitions and here at Fort Moore. The level of commitment to USAMU from current and former members is what makes the unit strong. I am exceptionally glad to be welcomed into this community of world class shooters, leaders, and veterans.

Home of Champions,

Chris

Commander

U.S. Army Marksmanship Unit

USAMU Welcomes New Command Sergeant Major

By Lt. Col. Michelle Lunato

November 20, 2024



Soldiers and civilians of the U.S. Army Marksmanship Unit welcomed Command Sgt. Maj. Michael Ramon M. Dang as their battalion command sergeant major today during an Assumption of Responsibility Ceremony.

Lt. Col. Christopher Thielenhaus, commander of the USAMU, said he normally preferred to speak off the cuff at ceremonies, but he had prepared a few points because this event deserved it.

“We are absolutely thrilled to have you,”

Thielenhaus said to Dang. “In the short time you have been here, you have already made it clear that you’re excited to be at the Army Marksmanship Unit and you are eager to get to know the Soldiers.”

Dang, who has deployed numerous times, comes to the USAMU after last serving as the brigade operations sergeant major for Joint Multinational Training Center in Hohenfels, Germany.

Thielenhaus said Dang’s perspective as an experienced senior noncommissioned officer will be invaluable here at the Home of Champions.

“I’ve seen you demonstrate knowledge of your craft already, and I can tell that you will continue to impress,” he explained.

Dang stepped up to the podium to address the crowd as the new battalion command sergeant major.

“It is both an honor and profound privilege to stand before you, and I am truly humbled by the trust placed in me,” he said.

Aware of the USAMU legacy, Dang told the Soldiers that he was committed to upholding the high standards that define the Home of Champions through winning competitions, enhancing the Army’s readiness, and telling the Army story.

Looking out over the crowd, Dang took a moment to thank his family and friends in attendance, as well as those watching online. Dang noted the importance of their support, from military peers to a high school friend he had not seen in 27 years. To his brother, retired Command. Sgt. Maj. Ramon M. Dang (senior), Dang acknowledged the years of mentorship his brother had provided throughout his career.

“I remember always trying to catch up to you. Well, I caught up,” he said as the audience laughed.

With that, Dang said he was ready to embrace this new journey with humility and enthusiasm and looks forward to helping the Soldiers ensure the unit remains the Home of Champions.

In Memoriam



Retired U.S. Army Colonel Sue Ann Sandusky, Ph.D., passed away peacefully on October 29 at the Willow Ridge nursing home in Bluffton, OH.

Sue was born January 20, 1952, in Houston, Texas, to Samuel C. and Dorothy D. Sandusky, both of whom predeceased her. She is survived by her brother Tim (Sher) Sandusky of Silver Spring, Maryland, her aunt Marilyn June (Deer) Kindsfater of Greeley, Colorado, and numerous cousins. She is mourned by her colleagues from her trail-blazing 37-year Army career, the competitive rifle shooting community, academia, and her many friends and associates in Africa, especially Sidnomo “Christophe” Konkobo, who worked in her household for many years and became a dear family friend.

She began her academic career at Texas Christian University, graduating in 1974 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Journalism and Government. Sue was a Rotary International fellow at the University of London School of Slavonic and East European Studies and completed a Master of Arts degree in Soviet and East European Area Studies in

1977. She completed a Master of Philosophy degree in Political Science from Columbia University in 1982 and a Master of Strategic Studies degree from the U.S. Army War College in 2002. In 2020 she earned her Doctor of Philosophy degree in Higher Education Administration from Bowling Green State University.

Sue began competitive rifle shooting with the Findlay junior rifle team during high school. As a sophomore at TCU, she joined the university rifle team, and through hard work and devoted, disciplined practice, became one of the top competitive shooters in the country. She was a three-time All-American at TCU and was named TCU’s top female athlete of the 1970’s. She has been inducted into both the TCU Athletic Hall of Fame and the Hancock County (Ohio) Sports Hall of Fame.

Upon graduating from TCU, Sue enlisted in the U.S. Army Reserve and was a member of the U.S. Army Reserve International Shooting Team from 1975 to 1982. In 1977, she won three gold medals (two team and one individual) at the Championships of the Americas in Mexico City. In 1978, she repeated the feat with three golds (two team and one individual) at the World Shooting Championships in Seoul, Korea. Regrettably, Sue missed her chances to compete for Olympic gold, first in 1980, when the U.S. boycotted the Moscow Olympics, and then in 1984, when she missed qualifying for the U.S. Olympic Team after a tie-breaking shoot-off. She was especially proud of the Distinguished International Shooter Badge, the Distinguished Rifleman Badge and the President’s Hundred Tab she earned during her Army career.

In 2003, she was detailed to civil war-torn Liberia, where she and her team, under the leadership of U.S. Ambassador John W. Blaney, confronted and negotiated with heavily armed rebel forces to ensure passage for humanitarian aid to the besieged capital of Monrovia. Ambassador Blaney has described her as “heroic” and “brilliant,” and has written that this “frontline breakthrough” led to a peace that saved “uncounted lives,” averting the disintegration of Liberia and preventing the area from potentially becoming an “incubator for terrorists” in West Africa. Ambassador Blaney ascribes much of the success of their mission to the actions of Colonel Sandusky.

Sue served as the Director of African Studies at the U.S. Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania, from 2006 to 2007. In 2007, she became the first woman to be appointed Commandant of the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center, Monterey, California, an assignment that she considered her dream job. In 2010, she returned to the U.S. Embassy in Liberia as Senior Defense Official and Defense Attaché, serving until 2012.

During her career as an attaché, she received the National Exceptional Human Intelligence Collector Award from the Director of Central Intelligence (1998) and the Defense Intelligence Agency Director’s Award (2004), as well as numerous citations from the U.S. Department of State. She was inducted into the Defense Attaché Hall of Fame in 2008.

Sue was known for her acute analytical skills and her prowess as a writer. In the conditions of armed conflict and political violence in which she served, she was known as a skilled negotiator. It was said that as the level of chaos around her grew, the calmer she became. As accomplished as she was, she avoided talking about her achievements. If asked, she was humble and self-deprecating, deflecting praise and credit away from herself and on to her team.

In Memoriam

Retired U.S. Army Colonel Sue Ann Sandusky Continued

Throughout her shooting career and later in the military, she championed the right of women to equal treatment whether in athletic competition or military career fields.

Upon her retirement from the Army in 2013, Sue returned to Findlay to oversee the care of her aging parents. In the meantime, she enrolled at Bowling Green State University, where she earned a teaching certificate in French prior to completing her Ph.D. She taught as an adjunct professor at Tiffin University until her illness made that impossible.

An inveterate adventurer, at the conclusion of her assignment in Korea she took the Siberian Express from Beijing to Moscow where her brother was on diplomatic assignment at the U.S. Embassy for the Department of State. In Africa she climbed Mt. Kilimanjaro, canoed the Zambezi River, trekked to Timbuktu and saw the headwaters of the Nile. Sue took great joy in interacting with and generously supporting a variety of individuals and causes in the African nations where she served. She amassed an extensive collection of African art and loved the four distinctive African village dogs that she brought to Ohio.

Sue was a member of Trinity Episcopal Church in Findlay where she served on the vestry and as Senior Warden. A funeral service took place on November 7 at 11:00 a.m. at Trinity Episcopal Church, 128 W Hardin St., Findlay, OH 45840. Arrangements for interment at Arlington National Cemetery are pending.

LTC Phillip F. Cannella, Jr., USA Ret

The MMA announces the sad loss of LTC Phillip F. Cannella, Jr., USA Ret. He passed away on December 16, 2024.

He served in Korea and then in Vietnam with MACV in 1967 -1968 (Tet), where he became a decorated veteran highlighted by a Bronze Star with 2V, Air Medal 4 OLC, MSM 5 OLC, VN Service Ribbon, VN Cross of Gallantry (4) and the Combat Infantryman Badge, Master Parachute Badge and Aviator Badge. He did a tour at USAMU from 1974 to 1981. Previous assignments included the Ranger Dept at Fort Benning, Psychological Operations at Fort Bragg and Okinawa, then again to Korea and Fort Eustis, VA before retiring.

A member of many teams at AMU that set new records. His Infantry Trophy and Interservice 10-Man Rifle Teams at Quantico were champions that worked hard to pull together and win. His teams at Camp Perry were constantly able to carry the winning flags of the Army at the National Matches. As Chief of Competition, he inherited the responsibility of organizing the All Army Matches and the Small Arms Firing School at Camp Perry. He and his team also conducted training of soldiers, law enforcement and civilians in sniper and counter sniper duties. In 1979, at age 46, using an M-14 NM rifle, he shot a standing score of 200x11x at Quantico, VA. The record stood for 10 years. During his career, he made 9 CISM teams, twice becoming individual champion, where he excelled in 3-Position Rapid Fire. Being a well-rounded competitor, he also had fine results with an Air Rifle and the 1,000-yard Magnums. He continued supporting the AMU as a Past President of the Military Marksmanship Association.

LTC Cannella will be missed.

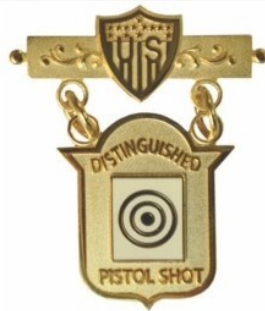
Congratulations to the USAMU Winners Summer of 2024



Private 1st Class Amber Kingshill of the U.S. Army Marksmanship Unit captured the 2400 Service Rifle Aggregate win with an impressive score of 2373-111X at the 2024 CMP New England Games.



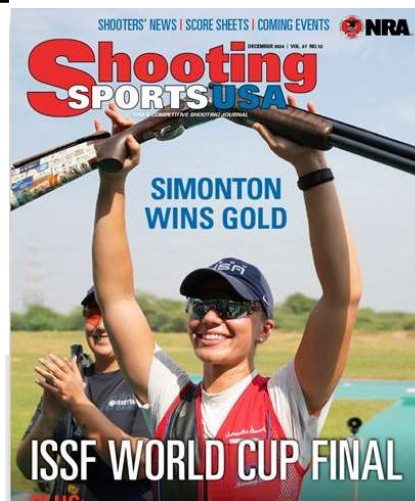
The U.S. Army Marksmanship Unit's Service Pistol Team wins the overall team championship and poses with their trophy at the 2024 Inter-service Pistol Championships at Fort Moore,



Distinguished Pistol Shot Badge
 #1739 Curtis Radford, Lee Summit, MO
 #1740 Jeff Hall, Wellesley Hills, MA
 SFC Douglas Costello, ARNG, Mountain Top, PA
 SFC Brian Bleuer, ARNG, Emmetsburg, IA
 SFC Casey Mills, USA, Fort Moore, GA
 SSG Colin Ryan, ARNG, Sutherland, VA
 SSG Bradley Holloway, ARNG, Sheridan, WY
 SFC Christopher Brookens, ARNG, Newark, DE
 SSG Evan Bayer, ARNG, Harvest, AL
 CPT Andrew Leupp, USA, Nekoosa, WI

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usamu1956 We recently honored Spc. Danton Faulkner for his contributions to the USAMU Custom Firearms Shop and the USAMU Service Pistol Team. This year the @thecmporg National Trophy Pistol Matches 2700 Aggregate was won by Staff Sgt. Christopher Hudock with a gun Faulkner built. Staff Sgt. Hudock also shot the first 1920 in Production Optics in The Bianchi Cup with Faulkner's craftsmanship. Faulkner rebuilt 60 National Match pistols during his time at USAMU, directly supporting the Service Pistol Team and helping them to secure 25 national titles and 78 regional or state championships. We wish this Soldier luck on his next adventure!



Sgt. 1st Class Ryan Franks, an Instructor/Shooter assigned to the U.S. Army Marksmanship Unit's Service Pistol Team, lifts a M-1 Garand over his head as the 2024 Interservice Pistol Champion at Fort Moore,

Where are they now? – SSG David Kimes

David Kimes, MMA Life Member since 2005, was a two time All-American at the University of California, Berkley in 1961 and 1962. During the Vietnam War era, he was drafted as a Private into the U. S. Army in November 1963. He served at Fort Ord, CA and then the Fort Benning Army Marksmanship Unit, where he was a barracks mate of Jim McHugh (AMU McHugh Field) until 1966. He subsequently continued with the Army Reserve Rifle Teams until retirement as a Staff Sergeant in 1993. He has Distinguished Badges with the Service Rifle, International Rifle (#172) and NRA Smallbore Rifle Prone and Position. He qualified for the President's Hundred Tab at Camp Perry, Ohio. He was inducted into the USA Shooting Hall of Fame in Colorado Springs in 2017.

David Kimes has an amazing accomplishment of being a member of six straight World Championship Teams for the United States: 1966 Germany, 1970 USA, 1974 Switzerland, 1978 Korea, 1982 Venezuela and 1986 Sweden. He has 14 individual and team World Shooting Championship medals in Smallbore Rifle, Air Rifle and 300 Meter Rifle. He also has Gold Team Medals from the Championship of the Americas in Mexico in 1973 and 1977. He was on the 1979 Pan American Games Team. He took leave from his job at the North American Rockwell-Apollo/Shuttle Programs for three years to train daily and was successful in making the 1980 U. S. Olympic Team, only to suffer the disappointment of the USA boycotting those games in Russia. He has numerous National Records and National Championships, but his career highlights were the Individual Gold Medals in 300 Meter Standard Rifle at the World Championships in 1974 and 1978, establishing a New World Record each time.



Twice World Champion, David Kimes, has given back to his sport. He served on the U. S. Olympic Committee Athlete's Advisory Council representing Shooting from 1980 to 1988. From 2011 to present, he has coached the U. S. Navy Safe Harbor wounded warrior Teams to the (wounded) Warrior Games. He also served on the NRA International Competitions Committee. He is a solid source of help for the current USA Teams and has been an Assistant Coach at regional clinics and at the World Shooting Championships in Germany in 2010. He is also Distinguished with the Modern Crossbow, having medaled in five World Crossbow Championships in Europe. He served as the Continental Vice President of the International Armbrust Union from 1981 to 1987.

David lives in California and coaches juniors at the Los Angeles Rifle and Revolver Club and regularly comes to AMU reunions.

