



MMA TIMES

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USAMU Honors "Old Soldier" For Half Century of Service

USAMU PAO



MCS Award –
LTC Dan Hodne, USAMU commander, presents W.O. Harden the Meritorious Civilian Service Award at his retirement dinner at the National Infantry Museum.

FORT BENNING, Ga. — After serving the country for 20, 25, or even 30 years, settling into a relaxing retirement is the ambition of most. After more than 50 years, a civilian with the U.S. Army Marksmanship Unit said it's finally time to mow the lawn.

A career dedicated to ensuring that the American Soldier would be the most lethal war fighter on the planet came to rest when William O. Harden retired after serving this nation for 52 years.

"W.O.'s lifetime of service with the United States Army Marksmanship unit is almost a complete reflection of its history," said Lt. Col. Daniel Hodne, commander, USAMU. "He has been an instrumental part of every one of the unit's weapons development projects. A vital unit function to the Army in an effort to increase its combat readiness and a vital unit function to the nation as it is not always foreseeable when we may find ourselves fighting a long war."

Known as 'Papa' to those who work with him, Harden has been with the unit for 49 of its 53 years of existence. He entered the Army as a Soldier in 1957 and immediately showed his prowess with the rifle. His climb to the USAMU started on a company-level two-man rifle team and continued until a piece of paper came across his desk in 1960 that changed his life forever.

"When I got a set of orders assigning me to the (USAMU) you can't believe how high my morale was to know I was walking into a unit known worldwide, the 'Home of Champions'," Harden said. "You had to work your way from the bottom to the top to get to the great Army Marksmanship unit. That was everybody's goal—to get assigned to the (USAMU)."

He served a tour in Vietnam in 1967 before returning to the USAMU. He gradually made the move from the service rifle team to the custom firearms shop and

USAMU Commander's Report

LTC Dan Hodne



As we prepare for this Holiday Season, please keep our deployed Servicemen and women in your prayers. USAMU Soldiers have recently joined these ranks of deployed Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, and Marines. In my last Commander's Report I mentioned that our Soldiers continued to make history by showcasing the best of Army Soldier skills on the competition ranges. USAMU

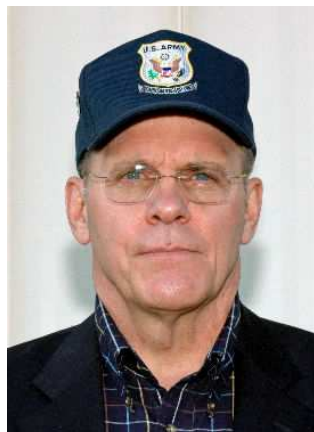
Soldiers have embarked on an unprecedented mission to support the War effort as well. The first six USAMU Soldiers that deployed to Afghanistan are the torchbearers for this distinct Unit as these Soldiers will be the first in our proud history to provide marksmanship training to *indigenous* forces. This deployment also commences the first *long-term*, persistent deployment of USAMU Soldiers to a theater of war since the Unit's involvement in Vietnam. During the Vietnam War, the Unit trained numerous US Army snipers at multiple USAMU-run Division-level sniper schools while also training recent arrivals on the fundamentals of marksmanship. USAMU Soldiers will make an invaluable contribution to the counterinsurgency effort in Afghanistan. Our marksmanship training program for the Afghan National Army will add to the distinct combat history of this Unit.

In the not so distant future, we'll see some marked improvements in the USAMU facilities. Sharpe Hall is currently undergoing renovation and that project's estimated completion date is in March of 2010. I'm happy to announce that our historical Patton Round House will soon undergo a refurbishment. The Secretary of the Army approved the Mellon Foundation gift for renovation of the Patton Round House on Hook Range. Fort Benning's Real Estate Specialist estimates execution of the license to be in mid-January or early February 2010 with a term of 18-24 months to complete the deconstruction and construction of the Roundhouse. This historical renovation project will add to overall USAMU capability and benefit Fort Benning and the Maneuver Center of Excellence as well.

Our ammunition test facility and gunsmiths continue their remarkable work and tremendous efforts in small-arms research and development. Recently, the USAMU debuted its 7.62mm cartridge for the M16A2/M4 chassis at the US Practical Shooting Association's 2009 U. S.

MMA President's Report

Bob Hoidahl



Ah Yes, it's that time of year again to watch football and eat turkey, not necessarily in that order. Again, I probably over-indulged on the eating side but everything looks so good. Hopefully, everyone had a superb Thanksgiving with family or friends. On behalf of the entire MMA Executive Board, I want to pass along our best wishes for a joyous Christmas season and a prosperous new

year!

MMA Annual Membership Meeting, 29 JAN 10, 1500

hours: The Annual General Membership Meeting date has been changed from January 22 to January 29, 2010. Make your calendars! MMA will recognize the 2009 "Soldier of the Year" and conduct our annual membership meeting at Pool Indoor Range. There will be a drawing for a \$100 gift certificate.

Columbus State University (CSU) Rifle Team: As I mentioned in our last MMA Times, the Executive Board received an overview briefing from CSU's Rifle Team Head Coach Mike Greene. Mike is very enthusiastic about CSU's new team and their introduction into Div I for the shooting sports. Unlike other sports, shooting competes on the same level regardless of the program size. CSU will compete against ALL colleges and universities in the country. In their first outing, CSU won both the small bore and air-rifle events over North Georgia College. Due to CSU's close proximity to Fort Benning and USAMU, MMA sees a close relationship developing between the shooters of CSU and USAMU. This close relationship should enhance both programs and possibly lead to recruiting a CSU shooter to USAMU. More information can be obtained about CSU's new shooting team at www.csucougars.com. If the mood moves you, monetary donations can be sent to the following address: CSU, 4225 University Ave, Attn: Athletic Director, Columbus, GA 31907. Make sure you designate for the "Rifle Team."

USAMU 50th Anniversary Commemorative Book: The USAMU store still has copies of the 50th Anniversary book for sale, \$50 (original publisher price was \$55.95) + shipping/handling of \$13 (\$63 total). Order on line through the MMA website or send Sam Hunter a short note. "Get them, while we got them."

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 them.

Fort McClellan: Training with the Infantry Team that summer and competing in the National Matches enhanced Coats Brown's shooting expertise. He became very interested in teaching and coaching rifle marksmanship. A good deal of position work and practice was accomplished in the attic smallbore range. K Company had .22 caliber replicas of the 1903 Springfield service rifle. Coats remembers the .22 replicas as a little lighter, but fine rifles. He worked one on one with anyone needing help using the techniques he had learned at Camp Perry. He coached several Fort McClellan soldiers. He worked with one old mess sergeant who in all of his years in the Army, had never qualified with his rifle. Perseverance and patience by Coats Brown and hard work by the mess sergeant resulted in a sharpshooter qualification. Qualified sharpshooters received three dollars extra each month. The old sergeant cried from happiness. He had always been motivated to shoot well, but needed some extra work. Attitudes about the value of marksmanship were very different in the 1930s. Officers and noncommissioned officers stressed the need for soldiers to shoot well. Every company-size unit on Fort McClellan had its own smallbore range. Seven units, seven smallbore ranges. Smallbore rifles and ammunition were available for the troops to practice with. Soldiers were encouraged to practice and become more proficient with their basic arm. The ranges of Fort McClellan were frequently used. Pistol practice was a little more difficult because .22 caliber pistols were not available through the military. Some soldiers purchased their own .22 pistols in order to practice in company smallbore ranges. Soldiers armed with the .45 caliber pistol could arrange to use a 50-yard outdoor range and were provided service pistols and ammunition for practice. When Coats was promoted to Sergeant, he was allowed to move into a two-man room in Headquarters Company. His roommate was Sergeant Simmons, who had a college degree and worked at Finance. Simmons ate in the messhall and kept his area neat and was at Finance working 6 days a week. He did not stand Saturday morning inspections.

Simmons owned a stuffed alligator about one foot long that he gave to Coats when transferred to Fort McPherson. The manager of the commercial dry cleaning establishment on Post would pick up items to be cleaned from the barracks. Coats prepared a bundle for the dry cleaners by stuffing several items into a pair of trouser legs. He then placed the stuffed gator in the bundle to get it out of the way for the upcoming inspection and forgot about it. The dry cleaning manager was upset with Sgt. Brown because all of his employees thought it was a real live gator that got shook out of his clothing bundle and caused some excitement at his place of business.

Until 1938 most companies had one officer for duty, the company commander. You saw him going to and from the unit, on special occasions, during Saturday inspections and when he paid you at the end of each month. Reveille and retreat were conducted every normal day by the First Sergeant. Corporals and Buck Sergeants conducted formations during the day. Platoon sergeants were three striped buck sergeants. Cross training was normal routine. Platoon sergeants became the supply sergeant, then the mess sergeant, then the first sergeant and perhaps the company commander for training. The first sergeant observed and supervised this cross training. Staff and Technical sergeants were assigned to Battalion and Regimental Headquarters. The Thompson Act, enacted around 1938 called up the Reserve Second Lieutenants for a trial period of two months active duty for evaluation purposes.

PRESIDENT / From Page 2 _____

MMA War Veterans Status: MMA remains a War Veterans Organization and consequently, any donations to our organization are tax deductible to the donor under IRS Code section 170 (c) (3). End of year gifting is in full swing so get your 2009 tax deductible donations into Sam Hunter, our treasurer, ASAP!

New MMA Life Members: I would like to recognize our newest MMA Life member: CPT (Ret) Glenn Dubis. Thanks for your commitment and dedication to our association. Hooah!

TAPS, PRESENT ARMS

SGM Max J. Barrington, a Service Pistol shooter, died November 20, 2009 in Malott, Washington. Max was assigned to the USAMU Service Pistol Team and shot on the Army Blue Team. He later became the NCOIC of the Pistol Team and served as the USAMU Sergeant Major. After his retirement from the Army, he continued to shoot competitively and in 1985, he won the NRA National Pistol Championship at Camp Perry, Ohio. Max was awarded the U.S. Army Distinguished Pistol Shot Badge in 1978 and in 2009, he was inducted into the USAMU Service Pistol Team Hall of Fame.

SFC Marvin D. Black, a Service Pistol Shooter, died November 21, 2009 in Columbus, Georgia. Marvin was assigned to the USAMU Service Pistol Team and was a member of the Army Blue Team. He shot both NRA 3-Gun competitions and International pistol disciplines. He was awarded the U.S. Army Distinguished Pistol Shot Badge in 1962 and the United States Distinguished International Shooter Badge in 1974. Marvin was the Center Fire Pistol Champion at the 1975 Pan American Games in Mexico City. Marvin served two tours in Vietnam and was awarded the Bronze Star Medal.

MSG Clyde W. Burns, a Service Rifle Shooter, died in November 6, 2009 in Jackson Mississippi. Clyde honorably served in the U.S. Navy, National Guard, and U.S. Army, and retired in 1969 from the Army. During WWII, he served in the Pacific Theater of Operations. Clyde was a two-time 1,000-yard National Rifle champion; in 1959, he coached the winning Infantry Trophy Team at the National Matches; from 1964 to 1968 he was the U.S. National Biathlon Coach; and coached the U.S. Biathlon Team at the 1966 World Championships and at the 1968 Winter Olympic Games. Clyde was awarded the U.S. Army Distinguished Rifleman Badge in 1961.

MSG John L. Davis, Jr., a Service Pistol Shooter and Coach, died September 23, 2009 in St. Peters, Missouri. John was a veteran of World War II and the Korean War. He was the NCOIC of the Fort Lewis and Second Infantry Division Pistol Team from 1955 until his assignment to the USAMU at Fort Benning in 1957. John was also awarded the U.S. Army Distinguished Pistol Shot Badge in 1957. He was one of the first pistol coaches assigned to USAMU and coached both the U.S. Army Blue and Red pistol teams. He was reassigned to Germany in 1960 then brought back the USAEUR Pistol Team in 1961 to compete in the "All" Army matches and the National Matches. John retired in 1965.

Dr. Carol Benthall Krelstein, M.D. died on October 18, 2009. Carol was the wife of MMA Life Member Mr. Ronald D. Krelstein.

SGT Gary D. Roberts, assigned to the Running Target Branch, died August 14, 2009 in Tupulo, Mississippi. In 1969, Gary was assigned as a Sniper with the 2nd Battalion, 47th Infantry Regiment, 9th Infantry Division in Vietnam. During this tour, he was awarded the Silver Star Medal, three Bronze Star medals (two with "V" device for valor and one for meritorious service), two Air Medals, and the Combat Infantryman Badge. Upon his return from RVN, Gary was assigned to the USAMU Running Target Branch.

MSG Charles W. Vinson, a Service Rifle Shooter and Coach, died April 16, 2009 in China Grove, North Carolina. Charley was assigned to the USAMU Service Rifle Team in the mid 1960's. He was awarded the U.S. Army Distinguished Rifleman Badge in 1959 and is remembered as a top service rifle coach. Charley served 23 years in the Army including tours in Korea and Vietnam. Upon retirement, he became a skilled carpenter and cabinetmaker.

RETIREMENT / From Page 1

became the noncommissioned officer-in-charge of the shop in 1975 until his retirement from the active Army in 1982 as a master sergeant. He was hired as the chief of the custom firearms shop six months later. Under Harden's tutelage, the custom firearms shop has equipped Soldiers with specially modified and accurate weapons to increase their effectiveness on the battlefield. He led teams that developed all of the M21 Sniper System for Vietnam, said Bob Aylward, executive officer, USAMU. He led the team that planned and supervised the testing and evaluation of 16 prototypes for the M24 Sniper system. The modified M16A4, designed by Harden's team for competition, has become the weapon of choice for special operations Soldiers.

"His ability to personally think, as well as form a team around him that could think for tomorrow, was extraordinary," said Aylward, who has worked with Harden since 1973. "His team is in the business of deeming what is needed in the future, developing the idea and in many cases creating the item and testing it."

Dedicated and hardworking are the two words Harden said he hopes people remember him by. He is very proud of how much he and his team stressed safety during his career, never having a catastrophic weapons or ammunition failure. His old-school demeanor may have scared a private or two at first but those that worked with him understood the real W.O. that many who met him briefly may have never known.

"The side of him I admired the most was when he would hear about one of his Soldiers or civilian employees having a hard time and very quietly give them help, with a threat to 'keep it quiet'," said Sgt. 1st Class John Haidu, USAMU custom firearms shop NCOIC. "He never helped anyone to get recognition for it. He was always there for his guys and sincerely cares about all the members of this unit and the Army as a whole. He is a patriot."

With the boxes in his office packed and the custom firearms shop now firmly in the capable hands of Haidu and Steve Young, who Harden took under his wing in 1991 and provided mentorship until his final day on the job, Harden isn't about to settle down in a recliner. Not if his boss has it her way.

"I'm going to complete the unit library and get it up to standard," Harden said. "But I've got some things I have to do first. My wife told me to go get a job. So I'm going to paint the house and do some yard work that I haven't done in years."

NEW LIFE MEMBER

Glenn A. Dubis

New MMA Member

Eugene K. Soboleski

COMMANDER / From Page 2

Nationals competition in Boulder City, Nevada. With a USAMU crafted 7.62mm barrel and bolt for an M16A2, and USAMU developed ammunition, SGT Horner (Action Shooting) dominated the field and became the 2009 US Multi-Gun National Champion for the second time. The gap between 1st and 2nd place was more than 300 points. Hundreds of spectators viewed SGT Horner's tremendous feat, while the Outdoor Channel's Shooting USA filmed the event as well for airing during the 2010 television season. To say that the blend of a 7.62 round and M16A2 was well-received during this competition would be a significant understatement; this combination has direct applicability as a potential future Soldier weapon system. Action Shooting is running perhaps the most exciting multi-gun match in the country, the 2009 Fort Benning 3-Gun Challenge, this month. That event will also be filmed by Shooting USA.

The USAMU's long road to the 2012 Olympic Games continues with marked progress; the unit hosted the "Champion of Champions" selection match at Fort Benning to determine the 2010 World Cup teams in International Pistol and International Rifle events. SFC Parker (IR), SFC Uptagrafft (IP), CPL Balsley (IP), and SPC Hein (IR) earned slots to compete in two World Cup events. Combined with the five USAMU Shotgun team members who recently earned positions, the USAMU will comprise a significant percentage of the 2010 World Cup shooting teams.

At the World Cup Finals in Beijing, SGT McPhail (IR) captured his first medal in a World Cup event, the Silver medal, in the Men's 50m Prone Rifle event during the 2009 ISSF Rifle/Pistol World Cup Final in Wuxi, China after he outshot the 2008 Olympic bronze medalist, who is currently ranked number one in the world in Men's Prone Rifle. SPC Hein (IR) won a gold medal in the 3x40 match, outlasting McPhail by one target. SGT McPhail also claimed a silver medal in the Men's 3x20 match and just beat out SFC Uptagrafft, who took home the bronze. In the women's 3x20, SPC Gallagher (SR) won the silver medal in the Women's 3x20 event. LTC Bright (IR) earned a bronze medal. SGT Hancock (Shotgun) withstood a driving snowstorm to earn the Silver medal on the same range where he was crowned an Olympic champion in 2008. SPC Holguin (Shotgun) earned the Bronze medal in Men's Double Trap. USAMU Soldiers continue to be a dominant force on the World shooting stage.

We should all feel very proud of what our unit's members are doing for the organization and for the Army. Happy Holidays and have a wonderful New Year!
ARMY STRONG!

Yosemite Sam

Bruce Meredith tells this story of his time in Korea in 1964. While assigned to the missile firing range on the Yellow Sea (where the tide goes out about half a mile) north of Kunsan Air Force Base, he was keeping an eye for notices in the daily bulletins for competitive shooting of any kind. When he was promoted to Captain, he was able to convince someone that a battery XO is a 1LT not a Captain. So he was transferred to the HQ of the 38th Artillery Brigade (Air Defense), Osan Air Force Base, which was like an assignment to heaven. The Air Force takes easy living seriously. The word was out that the 8th Army Championships were coming along and the Air Defense Brigade did not have a team. So Meredith convinced the Brigade Commander to enter a team. Meredith rounded up a Master Sergeant Kreps, who had a little pistol experience, to form and coach a pistol team. Those were .45 hardball days.

Meredith recruited some volunteers for rifle. Volunteers are the ones the battery 1st Sergeants wanted to be shed of. The Air Force small arms range was 25 meters. The Air Police used it for qualification. The arm for missile troops was the carbine. Not much of a future for competitive rifle shooting. But the basics of competitive marksmanship instruction were started with all new, really green, shooters. The pistol basics of watch the sights, not the target, and get the timed and rapid timing down, went OK. Rifle shooters had to learn the positions and the timing, to include reloading. The results were actually very successful on that little range. The team was given a little empty shed for team HQ. A nice sign was made and pride increased. Chairs and a table appeared. The weather was still warm and no stove needed.

Rack .45 pistols and ball ammo were obtained. M-1 Garands and .30.06 ball ammo were procured from some Korean War left over storage arms room. Banging those babies on that little range was a trip. But it worked. To get ready for the 8th Army Championships, Meredith decided the team needed to go to a match. The Air Force flew a courier shuttle over to Japan and back daily. Somehow Meredith found out about a match in Japan. He thinks it was Camp Zama. (He says he does not have a Coats Brown memory.) On the morning of departure from Osan Air Force Base, several of the rifle shooters were not released from their units and only four showed up.

Meredith decided to shoot and coach. But he and those four did not make a 6 man team, as required. The pistol team had five show up. A pistol team was four shooters. On the flight over the decision was made for an immediate transformation of a pistol shooter to a rifle shooter. The rationale was that all had been through basic training and should know how to shoot a rifle.

Pistol Coach, MSG Kreps, was instructed to give up one shooter and he coach and shoot on the team. The pistol shooter, now rifle shooter, felt confident he could do the job. He was a cocky little guy with red hair and a gigantic handle bar moustache. Meredith always recalls the guy as "Yosemite Sam", the Warner Brothers Looney Tunes Cartoon Character. (No real name here to protect the innocent)



During the rifle match, it was single, not pair firing. Meredith started off coaching and was going to shoot as the 6th man. Yosemite Sam was to watch each shooter to absorb technique and timing, to include the reload. The slow fire standing portion at 200 yards went well. (This next explanation is for shotgun and pistol shooters) For rapid fire sitting, the shooter starts in the standing position, loads the M-1 with a clip of 2 rounds. When the targets come up out of the pits, the shooter sits down and shoots the two. He then reloads, from the belt, the last clip of 8 rounds and finishes the string, in a total of 50

seconds. The coaching technique is for the coach to spot the 1st two hits and give a correction for the last eight during the reload. Meredith coached through shooter # 4. Another shooter coached Yosemite Sam, shooting 5th. Meredith was on the Ready Line slinging up and getting prepared to shoot last. He looked up to watch Yosemite Sam shoot.

The targets came up, Sam sat down and fired two shots. They were low. During the reload, the coach yelled to Sam, "Come up a minute". Sam stood up. The coach is yelling "SIT DOWN! SIT DOWN AND SHOOT". Sam yells back, "DAMN IT YOU JUST TOLD ME TO STAND UP." Needless to say that by the time the coach and Sam finished their screaming at each other, the targets were in the pits. Making a pistol shooter fire rifle seemed like a good idea. Then again? If you do not understand the tragedy and hilarity of this, go talk to your Service Rifle friends. So much for the saga of Yosemite Sam. Lots of hooting and laughing on the flight back to Korea.

Year of the NCO: NCOs the reason USAMU is the 'Home of Champions'

USAMU PAO

FORT BENNING, Ga. — Noncommissioned officers are the standard keepers for the military and provide a valuable service in training, leading, mentoring and caring for Soldiers. Nowhere is that more true than at the United States Army Marksmanship Unit, the "Home of Champions," whose NCOs train, lead and mentor more than just their own Soldiers—they do so for the entire Army and an entire nation.

The USAMU, formed in 1956 by President Dwight D. Eisenhower to raise the standard of marksmanship proficiency and combat readiness in the Army, is a unit made up of 91 Soldiers; 74 of those are NCOs and only two officers are assigned to the unit.

"I have had the privilege of serving in the special operations community for my entire Army career and the parallels of those units and the USAMU are remarkable," said Sgt. Maj. Martin Barreras, the USAMU senior enlisted advisor. "The NCOs in the USAMU take enormous pride in being the backbone of the unit and taking on duties normally associated with officers. They handle the scheduling and execution of training, the writing and implementation of doctrine, the professional development of their Soldiers, the establishment and management of their budgets and facilities—to name but a few of their responsibilities."

NCOs from the USAMU instruct more than 3,000 Soldiers each year— drill sergeants, trainers, and NCOs who take those lessons learned to train thousands upon thousands of new and deploying Soldiers. USAMU NCOs teach candidates in the Reserve Officer Training Corps, enabling future leaders to be proficient in basic rifle marksmanship before they enter the active Army.

"This Unit represents the heart and soul of marksmanship within the United States Army and the NCOs that make up the unit are dedicated in improving the combat effectiveness through our marksmanship training," said Sgt. 1st Class Charles Coffey.

USAMU NCOs conduct the annual small-arms firing school at Camp Perry, Ohio every summer, instructing more than a thousand novice shooters on the fundamentals of marksmanship. They hold junior clinics nearly every month of the year throughout the U.S. and their dedication, professionalism and expertise instill positive impressions of the Army that may help prospective candidates in their decision to enter the Army.

"Our NCOs understand the complexities of their mission which consists of not only competing or training, but assisting with accessions support wherever they go and in whatever they are doing," Barreras said. "They are well versed and knowledgeable with regard to their role as ambassadors for the Army to everyone who sees them and understand that they are the Army to many people."

NCOs are accomplished military professionals who have combined civilian and military education opportunities to become an exemplary model of "Army-strong" leadership. The NCOs at the USAMU thrive under the pressure of having to compete for an international title in China one day and the next ensure that a Soldier from the National Guard preparing to deploy in harm's way is groomed for proficiency in marksmanship.

"I believe that the NCOs in this unit understand that this is first a volunteer unit and second you must also be selected according to your performance level or ability to perform under pressure, no matter the discipline that you are a part of," said Coffey. "With the two things above in mind, all of us know that it a distinct privilege to serve in the unit and we put our hearts into doing the best that we can at all we do."

2010 Membership Directory

Our Membership Chairman, Dick Rebidue, is preparing the membership database for publication of the 2010 Membership Directory. Please renew your membership if it is not current or will expire in December 2009 or January 2010 so that your name will be included the 2010 Membership Directory. If you have an address, telephone, or e-mail address change, please mail your change(s) to: MMA, ATTN: Membership, PO Box 52025, Fort Benning, GA 31995-2025 or e-mail to: membership@militarymarksmanship.org not later than January 15, 2010.

MMA Annual Meeting

Pool Shooting Complex, Fort Benning

January 29, 2010 3 PM

Conway Chronicles

Francis B. Conway

Back to our Las Cruces Rifle and Pistol Club. We had a very active indoor rifle program. There was the Paso del Norte League with seven teams! You shot against each of the other teams twice before the holidays and twice after. This gave you 24 matches in the winter season. Our Las Cruces club was an excellent team but we had some serious competition. El Paso Rifle and Pistol, Texaco Oil Refinery, Texas Western (UTEP today), Fort Bliss, Texas A&M and quite unique, "The Cazadores del Norte" of Jaurez! Our local range was the attic of the old, now long gone, ROTC building at NMSU (the new music building is on this site). Above the gym, we had some plywood on top of the rafters for a firing line and some plywood at the other end for target holders and bullet traps. In between you walked on the 2" X 10" rafters and tried to keep from stepping through the ceiling of the gym! When a relay was firing, everyone behind the firing line had to be very still. In prone with a scope you could see your cross-wires move an inch on the 50-foot target if someone put his foot down rather heavy in the assembly area! Probably 60 – 70% of all matches were shot by all

teams at Fort Bliss indoor range. Military personnel at Bliss kept all the scores and records for the league. I had come to then White Sands Proving Ground from Aberdeen Proving Ground and had shot on the Town of Aberdeen Rifle Team in the Baltimore League, one of hottest leagues in the nation, with several of the US International shooters on the various teams- Art Cooke, Art Jackson, Swanson. When I transferred here, there were some make-up matches to go but I was second in the league as an individual. It took me almost two years to find out that we did in fact have a gun club in Las Cruces and that we also had an indoor rifle league. At that time it was restricted to iron sights and they shot four positions. Coming in as an "expert" I convinced the local shooters that we should drop the sitting position as using up too much time and to make an any sight program with an award for the high iron sight shooter. This matched what was just about standard nation wide. Some of the shooters from other than on our club that some of you might recognize are from Texas Western: Harry Luckner, Joe Deckert, P J Wright and Pinky Edwin. Though he did not shoot high power, a name you know, did shoot indoors with our team, John Mathis!

