

THE
UNITED STATES ARMY
MARKSMANSHIP
UNIT



PROFILE OF A
champion

FOREWORD

These articles were written by members of the Army Marksmanship Unit who have demonstrated an individual standard of excellence within either the National and/or International levels of competition. SO YOU WANT TO BE A CHAMPION.....In reading these articles certain personal qualities are mentioned by many as important or essential in climbing the ladder of success.

Dedication, establishing intermediate goals, personal sacrifice, desire and mental/physical discipline are deemed necessary to achieve the ultimate which is National Champion or Gold Medalist in World Competition. As pointed out by many, "Winning isn't everything, its the only thing" and a true champion must develop this attitude or he will become satisfied with less.

Competitive shooting is a participant type sport and personal acclaim is rarely commensurate with achievement outside the "shooting community". Therefore the competitive shooter must be even more dedicated to "pay the price" for success. You are not born a champion and only you can decide if you should become one.

It is hoped that you as an aspiring shooter and hopeful future champion can personally benefit by the inner-thoughts and driving forces of some of those who have successfully negotiated the road to "championship." As you ponder the tips these contributors are sharing with you--consider, don't they really apply to personal achievement in any competition in life???



WINSTON A. DAHL
LTC, US Army
Commanding

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CHAPTER 1

INTERNATIONAL RIFLE

INT'L SHOOTING ACCOMPLISHMENTS - MAJ FOSTER

1960	Member U.S. Olympic Team - 7th 300 Meter.
1961	World Champion Running Deer Doubles. Member two Silver Medal Winning Teams.
1962	Silver Medal Running Deer Singles (World Championships). Member two Silver Medal Winning Teams.
1966	World Champion (with World Record) 300 Meter Kneeling. Bronze Medal - 300 Meter Free Rifle Aggregate. Member two Gold Medal Winning Teams.
1968	Member U.S. Olympic Team - 4th 50 Meters, 7th 300 Meters.
1970	World Champion (with World Record) Army Rifle. Silver Medal - 300 Meter Free Rifle Aggregate. Silver Medal - 300 Meter Free Rifle Standing. Member three Gold and five Silver Medal Winning Teams.
1972	Championship of the Americas. Member one Gold and one Silver Medal Winning Team.
TOTAL	Nine Gold - 13 Silver - One Bronze - Individual or Team World Level Medals.

WHAT MAKES A CHAMPION SHOOTER - MAJ FOSTER

I began shooting when I was 16 years old, an age that I now feel is about five years too late. I lived about a block from the town rifle range and had been observing the local shooters for several years. I had received a BB gun when I was six and a shotgun when I was twelve, however, I was forbidden to own or use a rifle. I am sure that it was in rebellion that I began rifle shooting.

My personality is such that if I have a hobby, I must be totally committed to it. Shooting was no exception. Soon after I began learning the fundamentals from members of the local club, several articles about international shooting and equipment appeared in the American Rifleman. I decided at that time that international shooting was the ultimate form of the sport and that I would concentrate on that segment of the shooting game.

For a beginner my shooting progressed very rapidly. After about one and a half years I entered college. Although my major was forestry, I selected the University of Montana primarily on the basis of its having a good shooting program. Looking back, I now feel that I wasted most of my four shooting years in college. True, I averaged about forty hours a week in practice and shot 20 or more matches each year, but there was very little advancement in my scores. My physical ability increased but my mental attitude did not. I was able to win a good share of my matches so I had little incentive to improve.

It was not until I was assigned to the Army Marksmanship Unit in 1958 I realized how insignificant my scores were, and what the truly good shooters were capable of. I then had to reorientate my thinking entirely in order to become competitive on an international level.

I believe there is one trait common to all champions, no matter what sport or activity they compete in. This trait is an overwhelming and all consuming desire to succeed.

This desire is so great that a champion will let nothing stand in his way. Money, practice time, equipment, all become available due to sacrifice somewhere in the champions life. Everything is geared towards, and rationalized towards his shooting goal. He goes to certain schools, takes certain jobs, lives in a particular location, all to further his shooting. Thus must be the degree of desire possessed by a champion.

In most cases this desire is carried through and becomes a desire to win. I feel this is the best attitude a champion can have, however, in my own case, I was never able to attain this. I have channeled my desire towards a perfectionist attitude in my shooting. Winning or loosing is virtually immaterial to me. My goal is to shoot a certain score (dependent on my training level at the time) and to constantly reduce my technical errors. I am much more disappointed when I shoot a poor score and yet win the match than when I lost a match but shoot an excellent score.

Since it is improbable, at this time, that I will shoot 120 technically perfect shots, there is always some disappointment in any score. No matter how good a score is, there are always shots that I know I could have done better on. This is what drives me on.

The technical and physical aspects of position shooting are usually learned in a few years of concentrated practice, usually during the college years. To develop to champion status, however, requires many more years of mental development.

Most foreign countries that develop champion status shooters have a national team concept or, in some Eastern bloc countries, the good shooters become quasi-students in a sport university. The closest the U.S. can come to this is the military marksmanship unit concept. Here an individual is assigned for a normal three year tour and is given the opportunity to associate with a team of champions. I cannot emphasize enough the importance of being able to associate with other good shooters. To become a champion requires total involvement and this means you eat, sleep, and live shooting 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for years. This is the only way you can hope to develop the concentration and hunger to compete.

There are many things in life that I am sure I have missed, but 20 years ago I decided to devote myself to my shooting. Consequently, I have no friends or deep interests that are not associated with shooting. My wife is a champion rifle shooter in her own right and I would not have considered marriage with anyone not associated with the sport.

Unlike most champion shooters who are what I call "trigger men", and are interested only in their shooting ability. I have a broad interest in shooting. I enjoy rifle, shotgun, and pistol shooting. I reload most of what I shoot in matches and I read everything I can find concerning the history and development of firearms and marksmanship. Perhaps it is because of my diverse interest that I must devote myself 100% to the sport. I have not concentrated my attention and resources only on the aspect of shooting the position rifle.

Both of my world records and most of my winning scores have been scores higher than any I ever fired in practice. I think this is due to my concentration focusing on each shot as it is fired and being unaware of what my total score will be. If I have proper concentration, I am not keeping mental score and only know that I have done poor, fair, or good when I finish.

If you want to become a champion you should now be aware that it doesn't come easily or by accident. It is because of a carefully calculated plan that calls for many sacrifices over a long period of time. Since, in the United States, there are no material rewards and very little personal glorification in the shooting sports a champion must be satisfied from within. The satisfaction is knowing that you have performed to the best of human ability and you have mastered your body and mind as no one else has ever done.



JOHN R. FOSTER

MAJ, US Army

International Rifle Division, USAMU

SHOOTING ACCOMPLISHMENTS - MAJ LONES W. WIGGER, JR.

Holds, co-hold or held fourteen World Records which includes ten team and four individual.

Members of eight major United States International Shooting Teams which includes: Olympic Team 1964, 1968, 1972; Pan American Games Team 1963, 1971; World Championship Team 1966, 1970; and Championship of the Americas 1973.

Won thirty medals in international shooting, eighteen team and twelve individual, and is second on all time list of total medals won by American shooters. Medals include seventeen gold, eleven silver and two bronze.

Member of three Council International Sport du Militaire military teams in 1969, 1970 and 1973. Won eleven CISM medals which includes nine gold, one silver and one bronze.

Has won twenty two National Championships which includes:

Seven - National Smallbore Rifle Position Championships at Camp Perry, Ohio, 1963, 1965, 1966, 1968, 1969, 1971 and 1973.

Two - National Smallbore Rifle Prone Championships at Camp Perry, Ohio, 1963 and 1973.

Two - National Indoor Gallery Rifle Championships 1965 and 1966.

Four - National International Free Rifle 300 Meter Champion 1969, 1970, 1972 and 1973.

Two - National International Smallbore Rifle 3-Position Champion, 1969 and 1970.

Two - National International Smallbore Rifle English Match Champion 1965 and 1969.

Two - National International Air Rifle Champion 1970 and 1972.

One - National International Army Rifle Champion 1969.

Also has been awarded:

Distinguished Service Rifle Badge.

Distinguished International Shooter Badge.

Distinguished Smallbore Rifle Position Badge.

Distinguished Smallbore Rifle Prone Badge.

Bronze Leg on Distinguished Service Pistol Badge.

President's Hundred Tab.

RESUME OF WORLD RECORDS AND INTERNATIONAL MEDALS WON:

1963	Pan American Games, San Paulo, Brazil Gold - Smallbore Rifle English Match Team Silver - Smallbore Rifle English Match Individual
1964	Olympic Team, Tokyo, Japan Gold & World Record - Smallbore Rifle 3-Position Individual Silver & co-holder World Record - Smallbore Rifle English Match Individual

1966 World Championships, Wiesbaden, West Germany
Gold & World Record - Smallbore Rifle English Match Team
Gold & World Record - Smallbore Rifle 3-Position Team
Gold & World Record - Free Rifle 300 Meter 3-Position Team
Gold - Smallbore Rifle Kneeling Team
Bronze - Smallbore Rifle Standing Team
World Record - Smallbore Rifle Prone Team
World Record - Free Rifle 300 Meter Standing Team

1968 Olympic Team, Mexico City, Mexico

1969 CISM Team, Granada, Spain
Gold - Army Rifle, Standard, 300 Meters Individual
Gold - Army Rifle, Standard, 300 Meter Team
Gold - Army Rifle, Military, 300 Meter Individual
Silver - Army Rifle, Military, 300 Meter Team

1970 World Championships, Phoenix, Arizona
Gold - Free Rifle 300 meter 3- Position Team
Gold - Free Rifle 300 Meter Standing Team
Gold - Smallbore Rifle Standing Team
Silver - Smallbore Rifle 3-Position Team
Silver - Smallbore Rifle Kneeling Team
Silver - Smallbore Standard Rifle Team
Silver - Free Rifle 300 Meter Kneeling Team
Silver - Army Rifle, Standard, 300 Meter Team
Silver - Air Rifle Team
Silver - Free Rifle 300 Meter Prone Individual
Bronze - Smallbore Rifle 3-Position Individual

CISM Team, Fort Benning, Georgia
Gold - Army Rifle, Standard 300 Meter Individual
Gold - Army Rifle, Standard 300 Meter Team
Gold - Army Rifle, Military 300 Meter Team
Bronze - Army Rifle, Military 300 Meter Individual

1971 Pan American Games, Cali, Colombia
Gold - Smallbore Rifle 3-Position Team
Silver - Smallbore Rifle 3-Position Individual
World Record - Smallbore Rifle Prone Team

1972 Olympic Games, Munchen, West Germany
Gold - Free Rifle 300 Meter 3-Position Individual
World Record - Free Rifle 300 Meter Standing Individual

1973 Championship of the Americas, Mexico City, Mexico
Gold & World Record - Smallbore Rifle 3-Position Team
Gold & World Record - Smallbore Rifle 3-Position Individual
Gold - Smallbore Rifle Prone Individual
Gold - Smallbore Rifle Standing Individual
Gold - Free Rifle 300 Meter 3-Position Team
Gold - Free Rifle 300 Meter Standing Individual
Silver - Free Rifle 300 Meter 3-Position Individual
World Record - Smallbore Rifle Prone Team
World Record - Smallbore Rifle Kneeling Team
World Record - Smallbore Rifle Standing Team

CISM Team, Stockholm, Sweden
Gold - Army Rifle, Standard, 300 Meter Individual
Gold - Army Rifle, Standard, 300 Meter Team
Gold - Army Rifle, Military, 300 Meter Team

MEDALS

	GOLD		SILVER		BRONZE		TOTAL
	TEAM	IND	TEAM	IND	TEAM	IND	
Olympic Games		2		1			3
World Championships	7		6	1	1	1	16
Pan American Games	2			2			4
Championship of the Americas	2	4		1			7
CISM	5	4	1			1	11
TOTALS	16	10	7	5	1	2	41

WHAT MAKES A CHAMPION SHOOTER - MAJ WIGGER

Shooting is a unique sport because it is not necessary to have exceptional strength, size, athletic ability or natural ability to become a champion. The learned attributes are much more important than the God given ones. Champion shooters are made up of both sexes, come in all sizes and from all walks of life. However, there are certain criteria which contribute toward the development of a shooting champion. Although these vary according to the individual I believe the most important factors are: better than average intelligence; learning to shoot at an early age; complete dedication to the sport with definite goals; an ideal environment which provides the opportunity and necessities needed for an individual to learn, progress and achieve goals; the development and training of the mental aspects needed; and the necessity of competitiveness and desire.

Intelligence is a key factor in developing a champion shooter. It is important during both the mechanical and mental learning phases of his development. During the mechanical learning phase the shooter must be able to think for himself, analyze fully the techniques involved, weigh all courses of action and make the right decisions concerning his development and training. In the mental learning phase he must train himself to exercise complete control over his mind to cope with match pressure in order to produce the results necessary to become a champion. The more intelligence an individual possesses the more quickly he will develop because he is able to utilize this intelligence more fully.

I believe an individual has a much better chance of eventually becoming a champion if he can start his learning process at an early age during his formative years. His father or first coach is also very important because he must be available to render all the physical support possible such as proper equipment and hopefully be qualified to give the needed technical assistance necessary for his development. It is very easy for the father or coach to make the mistake of pushing the young shooter or demanding too much of him rather than letting him progress at his own rate, within his own learning ability so he develops his own desire to excel rather than the desire of his father or coach. Target shooting must remain personally rewarding, fun and challenging for the young shooter. Many young shooters or for that matter youngsters in all sports lose interest or become turned off by over zealous fathers.

I was introduced to the sport by my father at an early age. A good competitive shooter in his own right and a competent coach, he was able to instill in me the desire to want to learn and was careful enough to not push me beyond my learning capability or to the point where I rebelled. He was very instrumental in developing in me the personal desire, will to win and competitive spirit so necessary to excel in the shooting sport.

To be a champion in any sport requires complete dedication and definite goals. The shooting sport is no exception. During my collegiate years I learned of the United States Army Marksmanship Unit and their efforts in Olympic and World Championship type shooting. Although I had harbored a secret goal since I began target shooting of someday participating in the Olympics, I never really allowed myself the illusion of accomplishing this goal until I attended a USAMU international shooting clinic conducted by known name shooters at a collegiate tournament. I was very impressed by these instructors and realized my goal might be reached if I was able to somehow locate myself with that group of shooters in Fort Benning, Georgia.

I then made the decision to completely dedicate myself to the shooting sport with the immediate goal of becoming a part of USAMU and ultimately representing the United States in international competition. In my opinion this decision played the most important role in my life and later in my success as a shooter. Dedication to a sport is the mark of a true champion although it may not require the completeness I have demonstrated, it certainly contributes to and enhances the chances of an individual. Little did I realize the hard work and sacrifice my family and I would have to make for me to realize my goals.

Environment also plays a key role in the development of a shooting champion. Intelligence, background in shooting and dedication are of little use to an aspiring young champion with the availability of equipment, facilities, atmosphere, support and time needed to develop these aspects. Although the U.S. Army did not provide me the complete sterile environment preferred, it was the best in the United States and gave me the opportunity to take advantage of the many means of support USAMU possessed.

After several learning, struggling years at AMU I came in contact with the second most influential man in my shooting career, William C. Pullum, who became head coach of the international rifle team. Although not a coach of the mechanical aspects of shooting he was very instrumental in creating a conducive atmosphere for the shooters, recognizing a shooters performance in competition is directly related to the atmosphere provided him. He believed each shooter was an individual with individual problems that had to be treated as such. He stressed shooting as being about 90% mental and thinking, psychology and mental discipline is what really produces champions. Bill Pullum was very instrumental in instilling in me the importance of mental training and had a profound effect on my development and performance. Under his expert guidance U.S. Army trained shooters dominated international rifle shooting 1964-1970.

The performance level and rate of development of a shooter is also determined by other aspects of his environment. A shooter who has the opportunity to train with and learn from champion shooters has a distinct advantage over individuals who train by themselves. USAMU has had many champions and I attribute part of my success to these shooters who I associated, trained and competed with while with the unit. Associating with champions makes you think like a champion.

As individuals, most shooters recognize their problems and know how to solve them. Each shooter must determine his own training program because he is the only one who knows what he needs. For instance, running or organized physical training is detrimental to some shooters because they believe it hurts them. Others think it is very beneficial so for them it is beneficial. In my opinion organized athletics and team sports practiced in moderation are the best means of physical training because they inspire competition, aid reflexes and coordination, encourage teamwork and do not build unneeded muscles. A shooter needs muscle tone, not strength. The best exercise he can do is live fire practice on the range because only then is he using the muscles necessary for training.

Many hours of practice including dry firing and live firing on the range are necessary for a shooter to develop the techniques and correct shooting positions necessary to become proficient. However this type of training must be supplemented with match competition in order for the shooter to learn to shoot. I believe practice time is for experimentation and development of fundamentals; but you learn to shoot by competing in matches.

For the aspiring international shooting champion it is not only imperative he compete in all the local matches, but whenever possible he must compete with shooters from foreign countries as well. Part of the reason United States shooters have fared so well in Olympic and World Championship type shooting is because the U.S. Army's Marksmanship Unit provided the opportunity for them to compete against the best shooters in the world. Once we learned the best could be beat in insignificant matches we were able to beat them when it counted. Learning to shoot under match pressure can only be accomplished by competing against the best.

It is difficult for a shooter to entertain aspects of becoming a champion without the help of an environment such as provided by USAMU. It requires two-three years of daily, intense training of the most qualified collegiate shooters available to school them in the mechanical phase of shooting (techniques and fundamentals) before they reach the level of proficiency needed to compete on a world level. To effectively utilize the time, effort, training and money expended on an individual and for him to realize his potential he should have the opportunity to remain in this or a similar environment for six to eight years. Conditions which exist other than this make it extremely difficult for a shooter to become an international champion.

As stated before mental training is probably about 90% of shooting. The mechanical learning phase is important and necessary but practice scores do not win matches. Unfortunately the only score that counts is the one produced on match day. Learning to control your emotions, reactions and mind in a match is the key to combating match pressure. One way to learn this is by developing your ability to concentrate. Complete concentration or total involvement of the mind on your shooting will raise the level of your performance in matches as well as practice. Any outside distractions or problems such as financial, family or office will affect your ability to concentrate thereby hurting your performance.

A second part of developing mental training is learning to have confidence in your ability, equipment and yourself. All champions in any sport have confidence in themselves and their ability but not to the point they are overconfident. Concentration and confidence are not learned overnight. They are learned through years of hard work and effort in training and through match experience. An indication of this is found by examining statistics which show the average age of Olympic shooting champions to be thirty one. Most shooters are mechanically capable of top level performances long before they are mentally capable. They do not reach their top level mental capability performance wise until they have many years of match experience.

Desire or will to win is the last attribute I want to discuss. Some champion shooters have more desire than others but it is a necessary and imperative part of the makeup of all successful shooters. Those that lack in natural ability or the mechanical aspects have to makeup for their deficiencies with desire.

I have never believed I was blessed with an exceptional amount of natural ability. In order to excel, my approach had to be different from others. My desire to win is much stronger and more hungry than most. I thrive on competitive shooting and my only feeling of satisfaction is found on winning. To me, winning fairly is not only everything, it is the only thing. In my opinion you can only finish in two places in a match, first or last. I hate to lose more than anything and losing is not in my psyche. When I lose I will not accept this as final and will work that much harder and strive to improve myself so it doesn't happen the next time. I try to be a gracious winner and although I am not a bad loser neither am I a good loser. I believe in the saying, "good losers usually do."

There is one other factor that should be mentioned. Although some shooters don't necessarily believe in luck, I do. I think luck is very important. I have always considered I have had luck on my side and have been very thankful for it. Some people believe you make your own luck and there is a saying, "the more you practice the luckier you get." This may be true but however you get it, it is a necessary part of being a champion.

A potential international shooting champion must prepare himself for a lifetime of dedication to the sport. This will mean days and days of hard work, training, practice, personal sacrifice and if married, require a wife who understands and appreciates his dedication and desire. Target shooting, unfortunately, is not an accepted sport by the news media and because of its lack of spectator appeal is not a professional sport. Therefore there is little chance of notoriety, personal gain or compensation derived from it. His compensation is the personal satisfaction of winning, knowing he has beaten the world's best and perhaps the most important aspect of all, being the true master of his mind.



LONES W. WIGGER, JR.
MAJ, US Army
International Rifle Division, USAMU

SHOOTING ACCOMPLISHMENTS - CPT GOLDSBY

1964 President's Hundred - Service Rifle.

1965 National Junior Service Rifle Champion.
Distinguished Rifleman Badge.
President's Hundred.

1966 President's Hundred - Service Rifle.

1967 National Collegiate Bolt Rifle Champion.

1970 President's Hundred.

1971 Member winning team National Trophy Team Match.
Rifle Champion - Central Treaty Organization Matches (CENTO).

1972 Bronze Medal 3-Position Smallbore Rifle First Benito Juarez Mexico.
Individual Silver, two Team Gold, CISM, Cairo, Egypt.

1973 Individual Silver, two Team Gold CISM, Sweden.
Individual Gold, Standard Rifle, Individual Bronze Air Rifle, Team Gold Standard Rifle, Team Silver Air Rifle, First Championship of the Americas, Mexico.
Member winning 10 Man Team Match, Interservice Service Rifle Championship, Quantico, Virginia.

WHAT MAKES A CHAMPION SHOOTER - CPT GOLDSBY

What does it take to become a champion? I don't know that I can answer this question because in my own mind I haven't achieved this status. However, I feel that I am beginning to see what it does take to become a true champion and perhaps I can relate some of the steps I have taken thus far.

I started competitive type shooting when I was fifteen in a junior rifle club. My father was very interested in guns and shooting and therefore I grew up familiar with both. I remember that it was very satisfying to me to shoot good and get recognition for it. This was incentive to do better. Desire to shoot and to win grew quickly. I believe this is an important point, learning to accept and even to expect winning. Once you have won or once you have done everything right one time it is much easier to do the second time.

Later that year (1962) I started high power shooting and realized a goal of attending the National High Power Matches at Camp Perry, Ohio. Camp Perry was something that I looked forward to from summer to summer. In early 1964 I set a goal for myself of the National Junior High Power Championship. I fell short by one point coming in second to a boy from Texas but did manage to make the President's Hundred and get a "leg" toward the Distinguished Rifleman Badge. This defeat made my determination stronger and with much more concentrated practice I was able to win the Junior Championship the next year. Since then I have shot in a variety of matches from bolt action high power shooting, to smallbore indoor competition to combat type field firing in the CENTO Matches in Europe with the M16 rifle, steel helmet and web gear.

In late November of 1971, I was assigned to the United States Army Marksmanship Unit in the International Rifle Division. I had had little experience with smallbore shooting and one with international type outdoor shooting. I did not realize how difficult and demanding this sport is. After two years of concentrated effort, I think I am beginning to see some real progress but at the same time I also understand how much harder I will have to work and how much more devoted I will have to be to ever have a chance of making it to the top. Being a winner isn't being the champion. Being the champion is being the best there is and being recognized as such by other shooters of the world.

What does the potential champion look like, act like and think like? Top shooters seem to fit all sorts of body conformations and their techniques vary so much that it is difficult to say what is best, yet there are a couple of things that seem to be common of all. All international champions I have observed are of above average intelligence and use their minds to analyze their techniques, performance and positions. They plan, set goals for themselves and work toward those goals as opposed to an average person that comes to the range day after day and just fires rounds never progressing to a point of being a serious threat. The second thing the top shooters have is desire. It's not a desire to just do good but a desire to be the best and when he's the best, he drives on to be a world record holder doing something no one has ever done before. The desire becomes stronger as he begins to improve and determination moves him toward his final objective. Some people seem to have all the desire in the world yet they never make it. Want won't necessarily give the victory. On the other hand, I don't believe there has ever been a champion that has not wanted the win. What is the difference then? Perhaps the champion is a person that will not accept defeat and drives himself to the win. "Winning isn't everthing, it's the only thing." I think this is more the attitude of the old established champion while a person on the way up may tend more to harness his efforts and turn his desires toward intermediate goals using these as stepping stones to the top.

No matter how much desire a person has, he won't be a champion until he can combine this with several other factors most of which can be summed up by how well he can learn to control his mind. Concentration must be developed to a very high level. Some shooters try to concentrate for the entire match. Others try only to hold it during the brief period when the shot is released. Both methods, however, require intense concentration. Self confidence plays an important role in the development of a champion. Sometimes you might see a top shooter seem disappointed in himself even though he won the match, and some people look on him as conceited person trying to brag on himself. This is not the case. He is just trying to keep his confidence up by telling himself that he can do better and thereby keep improving. Positive attitude goes along the same lines as confidence but even more specific. In shooting the individual shot, positive as opposed to negative thinking is a must. The thought train must be "I am going to shoot a ten", not, "I am not going to shoot a nine or eight." The theoretical score in the two statements is the same but in actuality the positive shooting of a ten will win. Determination links it all together and goes into the making of a champion.

Natural ability is another subject that has been discussed at great lengths. I believe that having natural ability only tends to speed up the process but does not make a champion. People who state to themselves that they do not have natural ability have in fact become champions.

The United States Army Marksmanship Unit provides a place and a means to develop the best international rifle shooters in the United States and the world. International rifle shooting is an individual effort to a great extent. I strongly believe that a young potential champion must spend as much time as possible on the range as long as he is benefiting from it. That is not to say he must spend eight hours a day on the range, but he must gauge himself to shoot as much as possible without going past a point of diminishing returns. I believe consecutive days of training are perhaps more important than the quantity of rounds fired on a given day. If a person is to become a champion, the shooting must come first. He will utilize his time so that he can shoot at every available opportunity even to the extent of making time to shoot. I have heard it said that a lay off will not hurt you that much but then how can it help you? While a potential champion has a chance to progress, I believe it is a crime for him to stand still by not shooting. The only time a lay off might benefit him is when he is not learning from shooting and not putting his mind to it, thereby developing bad habits. Again I do not believe that a break in training hurts the old established champion as much as it does the young shooter on the way up. Another point is that when a person is shooting he needs to have his mind only on what he is doing and not a portion of it on something else.

Physical training is another important aspect of a top shooter's makeup. What is the goal here? I think it is to be in good condition, to have good muscle tone, and to have the endurance to perform at his peak throughout his course of fire. Running is a very good form of physical training. Team sports also accomplish the desired results with a side benefit of developing a competitive spirit. Shooting itself is in fact physical training. I think a combination is probably the best but whatever you use keep in mind the goal you want to achieve.

To be a champion requires many sacrifices and, therefore if a person wants to be the best he must set priorities. In that period when he is striving to achieve championship status, he must be also totally dedicated. My purpose for being at the Marksmanship Unit is to be a world champion and this takes precedence right now over what I will do for the rest of my life.



BOYD D. GOLDSBY

CPT, US Army

International Rifle Division, USAMU

SHOOTING ACCOMPLISHMENTS - CPT BASSHAM

- 1962 National Junior Service Rifle Champion.
- 1963 National ROTC Service Rifle Champion.
- 1966 Collegiate All American, University of Texas at Arlington.
- 1967 Collegiate All American, University of Texas at Arlington.
- 1968 Collegiate All American, University of Texas at Arlington.
- 1969 Collegiate All American, University of Texas at Arlington.
Distinguished Rifleman Badge.
- 1970 World Championships, Phoenix, Arizona, three Silver.
Distinguished International Badge.
World CISM Champion, Rapid Fire, 3 Gold, 1 Bronze.
- 1971 Pan American Games, one Gold.
National Free Rifle Champion.
World CISM Champion, Precision, 3 Gold, 1 Bronze.
- 1972 Olympic Games, Silver.
World CISM Champion, both Precision & Rapid Fire, 4 Gold.
- 1973 Championship of the Americas, 2 Gold, 2 Silver, 4 World Records.

WHAT MAKES A CHAMPION SHOOTER - CPT BASSHAM

The terms "Champion" and "World Class Shooter" are synonymous and can be defined as one who on any given day can outscore anyone in the world in his event. He has earned this title only when he has medaled often enough to cause his competition to anticipate his winning the match.

Terms that single out a shooter as "the best in the world" are not applicable in international free rifle shooting. There are Olympic gold, silver and bronze medalists and world record holders, but these are the first to admit that if the competition had been held on another day that the names on the medals and records could quite possibly change. Therefore the term "World Champion" is shared by an elite "group" of men and women who have beaten each other often enough to be mutual holders of this elusive title.

What makes a champion? How does one become "one of the best in the world in shooting." In its simplest terms it is the ability to rise to world class level competition by making a U.S. team and defeat your competition on the day of your event.

The United States International Shooting Team competes in only four shooting events that are recognized by the International Shooting Union. Only one of these matches are held each year and they alternate in a four year cycle. They are the Championship of the Americas, the World Championships, the Pan American Games and Olympics. Only the Olympics and the World Championships are actually World meets as the others are only open to countries in North, South and Central America. An individual medal in either world competition automatically rates world class recognition; however it is rare that a shooter medals individually in these meets without having been a member of the Pan American or Championship of the Americas team in the previous years.

These teams vary also in their makeup. It is much more difficult to make the Olympic team than any other because only four rifle shooters are chosen, two shooting in each event. Therefore one must finish either first or second in the tryout to make the team. In the World Championships all six rifle events are fired and four men shoot in each event. One's chances of making this team are much greater as the top four position shooters make the trip. The slots in the Pan Ams and Championship of the Americas are selected basically the same way as the World Championships. The tryout for these teams is conducted annually a few months prior to the event by the National Rifle Association at their National International Championships.

The tryout is the most important match of the year for everyone. The shooters train for peak performance in this match and only after they have made the team do they think about the world meet ahead. For eleven years I thought about making the 1972 Olympic team. I did not think about the medal until I had made the team three months prior to the match.

The United States world teams are selected entirely on the scores of the tryout and previous team members must prove their worth annually against all comers. To become a world-class shooter one must finish no lower than fourth in non-Olympic years and second in Olympic years in this tryout. This country has many active world-class shooters all trying to make the team. If one is to become a champion in the United States he must beat established champions on his way.

Now to the question of "How." How do you outscore an established champion and take his place on a world team. One way is to analyze your competition. Determine how they became champions and program your life to duplicate their success.

Of the ten best shooters in the U.S. today all have remarkably similar backgrounds. Most started shooting very young, shot on college rifle teams and earned degrees and all were trained by the United States Army Marksmanship Unit at Fort Benning, Georgia. Obviously the AMU provided the atmosphere whereby these marksmen could develop themselves into world class champions. In fact unless you are wealthy and can train without regard to earning a living I believe it is all but impossible to make a world team without being assigned to AMU.

This unique unit provides three basic needs of the serious shooter. (1) AMU shooters because of their job descriptions have good range facilities available to them almost daily. (2) Excellent shop and testing facilities are available to maximize weapon accuracy. (3) To train properly one must shoot often against good shooters and the best are at AMU.

Given that you are assigned to AMU or you can duplicate its advantages what then separates the champion from the good shooter. There are four factors that come together in the tryouts to dictate success. They are technique, mental control, experience and the desire to win.

Technique is the ability to hold the rifle in the ten ring and activate the trigger without disturbing the shot. This factor is almost entirely a function of practice and physical conditioning. The best practice for shooting is the act of shooting itself for only then can these unique procedures be developed. Running helps some shooters by strengthening their lungs and legs and lowering the resting heartbeat. The use of proper equipment and training habits are of vital importance here. If you are able to beat your competition, especially if he is more experienced it must be done by out training him and developing a better technique. Technique is the first factor to deteriorate and cause a world champion to be an ex-world champion.

Mental control is the ability to shoot as well or better under pressure as in practice. Many young shooters attain remarkable results in practice only to shoot poorly in the match as they yield to match pressure. This control comes with experience but it cannot totally be realized until the thinking processes become as automated as loading and unloading. In my experience as a shooter I have felt this automation but as yet I have still to control it completely.

Perhaps the reason why the best shooters tend to remain the best is due to experience. It takes an average of four years of exposure to international shooting before even an exceptional shooter can hope to make a world team. Even then the shooter is a rookie when he makes his first team and as a rule rookies do not fire well. Lack of experience will keep the average shooter always on the defensive and he has yet to make the mistakes and learn from them as has his experienced competitor.

The most important of these factors is the desire to win. It is this will to win that makes a man train until exhaustion day to day, year after year to develop his technique. It is desire that pushes him mentally to endure the pressure of competition, to try harder and harder. It is desire that causes him to reach beyond his experience level to defeat the existing champion.

Perhaps this feeling can best be explained by a personal example. I had been assigned to AMU only a few months when LTC Bill Pullum (AMU Coach) asked me if I was enjoying my practice. I said that I always enjoyed shooting very much. His reply was "Then enjoy this because you will never know the joy of winning!" I pondered this statement for weeks until I realized that to train properly you must work beyond personal enjoyment to the point of discomfort and beyond. Since that time my training has often been painful and rarely enjoyable but I have made every team I have ever tried out for and I have medaled in every meet. I was fortunate to have been taught this principle early by Bill Pullum. Without his help, it could have taken years for me to have realized it on my own. It is therefore with caution that I encourage others to reach for world class status. In my experience I have rarely seen success without sacrifice. In training for the Olympics I developed a running program to increase not only my physical well being but to improve concentration as well. This required running until it became extremely painful to continue. I would then concentrate on the act of shooting a ten and run on. As the pain increased, I would ask myself "How badly do you want this? Go on, go on!" This form of crisis training is extremely helpful in building confidence for the match. I felt that I had worked harder than anyone else, endured more and deserved to win.

One cannot win without this form of sacrifice. Yet, there is no guarantee it will be enough to win. It is probable that you will train your heart out and still lose because others have worked harder. Many good shooters cannot accept this and look for excuses for a champion's success. "This guy shot over his head!" "He was just lucky!" "I don't know how he does it!" The champion was simply better prepared.

Winning is sacrifice, dedication to purpose and the result of an earnest belief that the challenge is worth the effort. In my case it is being able to say "I am accepted as an equal by the worlds best shooters and the master of my being." That's what it's all about...



LANNY R. BASSHAM

CPT, US Army

International Rifle Division, USAMU

CHAPTER 2

PISTOL

SHOOTING ACCOMPLISHMENTS - CPT MERRITT

- 1964-1968 Member, Pistol Team, U.S. Military Academy, West Point, New York.
- 1966 Member, 1st All American Pistol Team, Collegiate Pistol Champion, Camp Perry, Ohio.
- 1967 Member, 1st All American Pistol Team, Collegiate National Trophy Pistol Champion, Camp Perry, Ohio.
- 1968 Team Captain, Pistol Team, West Point. Member, 1st All American Pistol Team.
- 1969 8th Infantry Division Pistol Champion.
- 1970 Commanding Officer, U.S. Army Europe Marksmanship Unit.
- Distinguished Pistol Shot.
President's Hundred.
2600 Club.
Member, U.S. Army Team, Camp Perry, Ohio.
- 1972 Officer in Charge, Pistol Division, U.S. Army Marksmanship Unit, Fort Benning, Georgia.
- 1973 Member, National Indoor Championship Team.

WHAT MAKES A CHAMPION SHOOTER - CPT MERRITT

I started shooting pistol competitively in 1964 at the U.S. Military Academy, West Point, New York. Until then I was totally inexperienced with firearms. After initially making the team at West Point, I was content to merely keep my place on the team. I subconsciously set a low standard--to keep all slow fire shots in the black on the gallery course. As the shooting season progressed, I noticed other teammates excelling; they were shooting better scores than I.

I assumed that they had more ability until one day late in that first season, it dawned on me that I was accepting any slow fire shot so long as it was in the black. So I shot many sevens and did not mind. With this realization came the determination to tighten my slow fire groups. The following season, with higher standards, I became a member of the varsity team, scoring in all team matches for the remaining three years of my cadet career. In retrospect, I am always amazed when I consider how much effect that single negative thought/low standard had on my scores. During my nine years of shooting, I have often seen competitors who were satisfied with marginal performance--it is a common pitfall.

One of the unique aspects of the shooting sport is that the age of the competitor has very little effect on performance. Experience is far more significant--I have seen a fifty-year old man break 2650 for the first time and set open national records. The physical aspects of shooting are apparently only important insofar as they permit the shooter to hold the pistol steady. Looking at a number of champion shooters makes it obvious that unusual strength or size is not a prerequisite for this sport.

If age is unimportant and exceptional physical attributes are unnecessary, then, by elimination, the discriminator which separates champions from losers must be the mental element. A strong will to win, intense concentration, a thorough knowledge of the fundamentals, and self-knowledge..these are some of the noteworthy aspects that comprise the champion's mental attitude.

It has been my privilege to be the Officer-in-Charge of several exceptional pistol teams. Last summer (1973) the U.S. Army Blue Team won all team matches at Camp Perry, Ohio. As a result of this association with some of the best pistol shooters in the country, I have developed several attitudes based upon observation that are perhaps worthy of mention.

Shooting is basically an individual sport, contrasted with a team sport such as football. Therefore, emphasis must be placed upon the natural development of each individual separately. To stereotype shooters and prescribe the same training program for all is to tend toward mediocrity. That is to say that a good coach will give each of his shooters individual assistance and will be able to accommodate each individual's training needs so far as is practical. One man may not feel that he should practice during a given training session. He should generally be entrusted with this decision; his judgment should be respected. When a man shoots, he should want to shoot. One particularly valid generalization is that all pistol champions enjoy shooting.

Coaching a shooter, especially during an actual team match, can either help or hinder performance. I have seen good, bad, and indifferent coaching. The most important attribute that a good coach has, I believe, is a keen awareness of everything concerning the members of his team. He will observe and know many things about a shooter that are unknown to that shooter. For example, a team member may have better scores on the second relay than on the first; he may shoot much better with one man than with others. The coach must be aware of his personal problems on his team. Any external worries or problems must be excluded from his team as much as possible. Certain words said to one shooter might upset him, while those same words could have no effect on his teammate. That is what I mean by awareness.

An aware coach must then be able to tactfully communicate with his shooters. Animosity among the coach and his team should be minimized. An observant coach can spot potential problems in this area and tactfully correct them. The shooters on a consistently successful team will generally have a rapport among themselves. When one shooter does poorly, causing the team to lose, he should never be told that he dropped the team. If he is embarrassed by the coach, he will feel uncertain in the next match. Also, the other shooters will worry that they might receive the same treatment should they score low. If a coach detects something specific which may have caused the low score, he should tactfully inform the shooter. Ideally, I think, a shooter would be more interested in making his coach look good in the team match, than in his own particular accomplishments. In my shooting career, I have had only one coach that instilled this attitude in me.

One final consideration, which may be obvious, is that a shooter must enjoy shooting for its own sake. The satisfaction he derives from willing his mind and body to shoot competitive scores should be sufficient. If he has other purposes, such as policing everybody's brass, trading guns, winning enough awards to pay for his entry, etc., then his chances of becoming a champion approach zero.


ROBERT L. MERRITT
CPT, US Army
Pistol Division, USAMU

SHOOTING ACCOMPLISHMENTS - SFC ANDERSON

1961	Distinguished Pistol Shot 2600 Club
1964	Alternate, Olympic Free Pistol Team
1967	International Free Pistol Champion First Place, World Games Team Interservice Int'l Free Pistol Champion International Distinguished Pistol Shot Two Gold Medals, Pan American Games
1968	Interservice Free Pistol Champion
1969	Interservice Free Pistol Champion
1971	One Gold, One Silver Medal, Pan American Games National Int'l Free Pistol Champion
1972	Int'l Free Pistol Champion Member, U.S. Olympic Free Pistol Team
1973	National Champion One of four shooters to fire over 2670 in National 3-Gun Aggregate.

CURRENTLY HOLDS FOLLOWING RECORDS:

.45 Caliber Slow Fire	200X8
.22 Caliber Short Course Aggregate	896X43
Indoor Gallery Aggregate	896X40
.22 NMC Interservice	300X18
.45 Caliber Service Pistol NMC	298
.22 Caliber Short Course Slow Fire	200
.22 Caliber Short Course NMC	299X16
Short Course Grand Aggregate	2674X118
.22 Caliber Indoor Slow Fire	199
.22 Caliber Short Course	200
 Air Pistol Co-Holder	 387
Standard Pistol (Co-Holder)	587

One of two U.S. Pistol shots who has made every U.S. International Pistol Team at least once.

PROFILE OF A CHAMPION

The method I use to shoot the free pistol is actually the same I use to shoot any weapon in competition. There are certain points of the fundamentals that are peculiar to the free pistol, but then that is true with each individual gun.

To shoot tens (10's) consistently with the free pistol I tried to analyze each of the fundamentals as it applies to international competition.

I started with the stance, trying each way I'd see other shooters use, methods taught by various instructors. Feet close together, far apart, points in between. Finally I determined that I had to find the stance that would be completely comfortable and hold my body movement to an absolute minimum. With my eyes closed, hands in pockets, I tried to relax my shoulders and concentrate on the movement. For me, the result was my feet were approximately shoulder width apart, leaning just slightly forward, leg muscles just tense enough to keep me erect, stomach muscles relaxed no muscle strain across the shoulders, back or chest.

Once I developed my stance to my satisfaction I practiced it until it became second nature to me. I also started taking my shooting hand and arm out of my pocket and raising it as if holding the pistol, striving to work a natural position right in with my stance, still keeping uppermost in my mind that the movement must be held to the absolute minimum. Having a target up or picking out a point a point to use as a target I extend my arm in the direction of the target area still with my eyes closed, I turn my head as if to look at the sights insuring that there is no muscle strain in the neck or shooting arm. Opening my eyes I look down my arm and hand to see what relation my body has with the target area. If my body is not in proper relation I lean forward on my toes and shift my heels until I am in the proper position. I do this rather than shifting my trail foot because I feel that this method keeps my stance more stable.

I continue to mention the fact that constant effort must be made toward motionlessness, I do this because I feel that it is of the utmost importance. I knew that to shoot consistently in the ten (10) ring I had to stop as much movement as I could from the tip of my toes to the end of the barrel of my weapon.

The method I use, in addition to the fundamentals to train myself to hold the pistol as still as possible is as follows. I draw a cross on a piece of paper and hang it on a wall. I assume my stance and position not cocking the weapon or attempting to apply pressure to the trigger, and concentrate on aligning my sights and holding the weapon perfectly still. The farther away from the cross the less movement is noticed, so I stand as close to the cross as I can without touching it. Mentally I measure the amount of movement in relation to the vertical and horizontal lines, striving to reduce it. The objective is to stop all movement of the sights in relation to the cross, keeping my sights aligned all the while. I try not to accept any movement at all.

The free pistol, more so than any other pistol used in competition, has grips that hinder natural alignment of the sights and position. Each shooter must add to or take away, or both, on the grips as suits his own hand and body conformation. By assuming the proper stance, position and grip, aligning the sights and drawing a picture of the relationship between the target and sights several times will give the shooter a pretty good idea of where some should be added or taken away to give natural alignment. Sight alignment must be natural and the pistol grip must conform to the hand to assist in achieving this. There must be no adjustment of the wrist, arm, hand or whatever to achieve alignment.

Breath control is very important to shooting the free pistol, as it is with all shooting. But with international shooting the opportunity to shoot in countries all over the world brings about various conditions. On many occasions high altitude, such as in Mexico, throws many shooters out of kilter. In high altitude I always take two or three deep breaths and then wait some ten or fifteen seconds after the last before attempting to shoot. If I tried to shoot prior to that I would feel slightly dizzy and my eyes would not be completely clear. Under normal conditions I use breath control in the following manner. I load and cock the pistol, the grip and slight alignment assumed naturally, bring the weapon up while I take a deep breath. When the sights cross the center of the target I cut the breath off and let the pistol rise to its maximum height. As the pistol comes back down on target I exhale slightly until the sights are a little below center of target. Then I inhale, bringing the pistol back up to center hold and cut the breath off. This is where I bring the fundamental of trigger control into play.

The thing about trigger control and sight alignment is that they are so closely related that they are practically impossible to separate while shooting. Naturally, they are spoken of, taught and thought of as separate items while not shooting. But when I shoot they work as one. That's the way I must explain it.

First, I want my sights sharp, even lined and the rear sight without serrations or marks. A serrated rear sight blends too much with the front sight. I like to look at straight line when aligning my sights and not uneven rounded or rough edged lines. In a trigger I like a sharp, crisp trigger with my trigger stop set real close. In guns other than the free pistol I also want a little slack or travel in the trigger.

Sight alignment to me is the same as with any shooter; the front sight centered in the rear sight notch and level with the top of the rear sight. My point of concentration is not on a particular place on the front sight just the sight as a whole. If I have shots out that I can't call I watch the light on that side of my sight. I don't argue the point of center hold as opposed to any other holds. Center hold works best for me and when someone tries to argue the point of other holds and how well it works for them I just ask how many tens (10's). That determines how well does it work for them in comparison to mine.

I prepare my self mentally, before, during and after firing a shot or shots because this sequence makes me perform the best. As an example, the evening before I'm scheduled to shoot I make myself concentrate on a mental image of perfect sight alignment. In my mind's eye I visualize this sight alignment and my trigger finger applying pressure to the trigger making the weapon fire--hence a ten (10). On the firing line, especially if I feel that I'm not shooting the way I should, I close my eyes and concentrate until I visualize this image and make myself shoot a perfect round. Mentally firing a shot is just as important as physically firing one.

When concentrating my point of focus on the front sight my trigger finger works in exact coordination. I see the sharp, even lines of the front sight in perfect alignment and my brain waves sends the signal to my trigger finger to move straight to the rear evenly and firmly. If my eye does not see perfect alignment of the sights the movement of my trigger finger seems to go into slow motion. Sometimes it may even stop until I can see perfect alignment. Once seen, the finger starts to the rear once again. Of course, if it takes too long to get the shot off I bring the weapon down, go over the sequence mentally again, then start anew.

In a way it is difficult to explain to a fine point because I have worked, concentrated and trained so hard and long until it is habit. This, of course, is what is most desirous.

Some call this type of shooting precision shooting. There are few people in the shooting world who can precision shoot and it is definitely not recommended for any shooter to try to shoot this way. It is something that must come about naturally and through training. Concentrated effort and training condition the brain to accept only perfect sight alignment before allowing the trigger finger to reach the point of no return and firing the shot. Both the image of perfect alignment accepted by the brain and the signal of final movement of the trigger finger must peak simultaneously.

As can be seen from reading the preceeding information my training is a great deal mental. The physical aspects of the fundamentals are applied now through habit, primarily, because I have developed them that way. When I first began shooting it took a great deal of trial and error to get the position, stance, grip, etc the exact way they best conformed to me. It took many hours of practice to be able to accomplish these items physically and in the proper sequence, but once I got them down they had also become a part of my mental makeup. If one of the basic fundamentals is not working as it should a mental light comes on and then I must re-examine all my fundamentals until it falls into place and I'm again at peace mentally.

The mental makeup of a shooter is going to determine just how well he will shoot. The attitude that a shooter takes toward his performance, and the performance of others, will produce championship scores. Worry over who you must beat at a match, your ability to compete with the guns and equipment of others or just your own ability to perform as a champion leads to a defeatist attitude. There is definitely no room in the winner's circle for this type individual. The attitudes of others, your own negative past attitudes must be eliminated and a positive winning attitude must be adopted and maintained!

A winning attitude has certain goals and standards that help to simplify the positive approach or attitude. When I first started shooting I would set my goal to shoot just above the highest score I had ever fired for that course. Now my goal is to fire every gun for the maximum possible score. I know full well in my mind that I have the ability and by my mental effort I will one day realize this goal. To consider anything less is sheer nonsense.

An unprepared shooter can be found up and down any firing line. "I would have cleaned that string but, like a bombshell it hit me. I was clean up to that last shot and I told my self to settle down and not get out of the ten (10) ring. Don't goof up and drop a nine (9) and guess what my next shot was?"

There were two things that got to this shooter. Negative thinking and so-called "match pressure." I do not allow myself to think negative thoughts. I do not allow myself to be touched by this "match pressure." Let the pressure and negative thinking stay with those who doubt they can win, who doubt they can shoot a ten (10) each shot.

I concentrate all my mental and physical effort toward a positive attitude and I thereby eliminate all negative thoughts and approaches. My total concentration is geared to the mental sequence of perfect performance in each and every match. I have a great deal of mental conversation with myself, telling myself exactly how to shoot for each score and at the same time mentally picturing it actually being done. My mental guard against any type of negative thought or performance must be up at all times.

Although most of what I have related seems to be geared for individual effort this is not entirely true. Over an aggregate there is a possibility to pick up a point or two that I dropped due to some malfunction in my mental process, however, this cannot be done in team matches. After all team matches are really what it is all about, aren't they? ?

Knowing that team performance gives no room for picking up lost points, my mental and physical performance seems to become more finely concentrated toward the maximum goal. Knowing this I seem to perform better during a team match. One of my greatest efforts is to train myself to bring this fineness of mental attitude and physical performance of team matches to my individual effort. One day I will achieve it.

I believe that all this information boils down to one main item. Mental discipline, mental attitude, mental preparedness--whatever tag you want to put on it. There is, of course, a great deal of physical effort that must be put forth, particularly in the initial preparation of becoming a shooter. But you can stand knee deep in brass seven days a week with the best stance, position, grip, breath control and all the rest of the fundamentals and not have the proper mental control over yourself and you will not shoot consistent championship scores. It all must work together hand in glove, inseparable, to produce such scores.

Sometimes, as it seemed here for awhile, it gets extremely difficult to tell exactly what I do to shoot good scores. Then, just like the cartoon, a light appears over my head and it dawns on me. Proper positive application of each of the fundamentals and a definite, strong, positive mental attitude and discipline toward myself and performance is how it all comes about.

Hershel L. Anderson
HERSHEL L. ANDERSON
SFC, US Army
Pistol Division, USAMU

SHOOTING ACCOMPLISHMENTS - SFC HARMON

Center Fire National Champion, August 1965.
Instructor at various clinics, 1966-1969-1971-1972.
2650 Club, 1966.
Pan American Games, CF Team Member, 1967.
International Shooting Badge, July 1967.
.22 Caliber National Champion, August 1969.
Team Member, National Pistol Records, .45 Caliber Service Pistol, 1170-40X, Nov 1967, 1172-44X, 1969.
Mid Winter Pistol Champion, 1968.
Second Place CF, Bucharest, Romania, 1969.
Second Place CF, U.S. International Championships, 1969.
Mayleigh Cup, High Firing Team Member, 295 - 1969.
Sniper School, Nov-Dec 1969.
1971 CISM Rapid Fire holder new record.
1972 All Army Champion.
1972 Georgia State Champion.
1972 Florida State Champion.
1972 Interservice Champion.
1972 .22 Caliber National Champion.
1972 National Champion.
1972 Individual Service Pistol Champion, 293-14X.
1972 Service Pistol & .45 Winning Team Firing Member, National Matches.
1972 CISM Team Member.
1973 CISM Champion.
1973 Tennessee State Champion.
1973 Team Member, National Record, .45 WC, 1185-74X.
1973 Team Member, for National Team Championships with .22 Caliber, CF and .45 WC.

PROFILE OF A CHAMPION - SFC HARMON

Why do I shoot the way I do? When I am asked this question, I find it not easy to answer in one sentence of 25 words or less because many physical and mental factors contribute to my ability to shoot rather well.

In 1962 I was introduced to competitive pistol shooting, green, no experience, and didn't know what to expect. In 1963, I was a new shooter all the way and that year I was awarded the gold Distinguished Pistol Shot Badge. In retrospect, more emphasis was on service pistol than any other pistol, but now I realize it takes strong emphasis with each pistol in today's type of competition.

In my tyro years, a pistol match didn't excite me like it does now. In my younger years, a pistol match was somewhat considered just another military duty with no significance. This was a result of inexperience, youth, and attitude. But with seniority comes experience, and with experience comes wisdom (hopefully).

Climbing the ladder to reach the elite 2650 group, periodically I would shoot a single gun aggregate that was considered excellent. I found it difficult to mass all three gun aggregates that represented any degree of winning. I would either shoot a winning score with the .22 Caliber or .38 Caliber and fall flat with the .45 Caliber or I would shoot a mediocre score with the .22 and .38 and shoot a hot score with the .45 Caliber.

I am convinced that the problem was that if I shot a winning score with the .22 or .38 I was overjoyed, overwhelmed (not having won too often), and I oversimplified the remainder of the shooting match, settling for just one gun aggregate. However, if I won only the .45 Caliber, I believe it was because my attitude changed to a more aggressive form of determination.

The longer I shoot the more I realize I must set my goal high and be determined to reach that goal. That's how records are broken. My technique of reaching this goal is to shoot just one point higher than the best score I ever fired with that particular gun.

Attaining these standards for myself I find it necessary to know each and every one of the basic fundamentals, how each works, and why. I must have confidence in my weapons. I feel more comfortable if I can handle my weapons the night before a match to reaffirm that certain feel, because each weapon fits differently in my hand. I like to feel and dry fire my guns the night before a match. I feel more close and intimate; I call it shooter and weapon relationship. The two are inseparable.

When I train, I need or would like to train as close as possible to actual match conditions. This method eliminates major changes in physical or thought processes. I also need to train sufficiently with a gun until I'm having no problems with the trigger or grip, to a point where I am confident. On the other side of the coin, I can reach a saturation point because of too much practice beyond that point of confidence. When time permits, I prefer to practice three days before a pistol match, having a day off prior to the match for weapons cleaning, reaffirming my zero, and working on any shooting problem that might have developed during practice.

When I know the exact date of a match, my preparation starts then and slowly builds up as the match date advances. I also like to know the level of competition, so I can adjust my psychic preparation. Knowing who I must beat helps me to develop a proper attitude toward winning.

I try not to change my regular daily routine. I try to get 6-8 hours sleep prior to a match when possible. I always eat a hearty breakfast 1 1/2 to 2 hours before the match starts. I take natural vitamins each morning and at evening meals. I eat a light lunch and what I want at the evening meal. I never drink alcohol to the point of being intoxicated at least 3 days prior to a match.

Experience has taught me. The most damaging and detrimental state of being for me is the loss of sleep. I find the loss of sleep causes a feeling of fatigue, with reaction time slowed down and an unstable feeling.

I would advise any new or young upcoming shooter that it isn't the act itself but rather it's the pursuit of fulfillment that will agitate and lessen your ability to win and think clearly.

I find experience in shooting NRA and international events helps a great deal. In general, 9 times out of 10 an individual firing for the first time in an important match will find himself rather nervous and tense.

I remember my own experience in the 1967 Pan American Games (first big international match). I was nervous and even scared because people were watching, pictures were being taken, and because of lack of experience, I paid more attention to my surroundings. I now know I should have envisioned the small details pertaining to shooting. Match pressure never really leaves me completely, but experience helps to ease anxieties.

I try to create a state of tranquility in my domestic affairs. Observation and personal experience proves to me a shooter can't put all his effort into competitive shooting if his wife is constantly nagging about his shooting, money, TDY, children sick, etc. My wife encourages me to win and is happy as I am when I do win. I never leave on a TDY trip with domestic possibilities dangling as loose ends. My wife never annoys me with petty phone calls.

After having learned how to use the basic tools for shooting and having won a victory, I find it similar to a child's first taste of ice cream; they like it. I like to win because it gives me a feeling of accomplishment. One victory creates a desire in me to win again and/or be a part of a winning team. The prestige and recognition further stimulates my attitude toward achievement.

Travel to foreign countries is another incentive for me to shoot well. The thought of competing against another country always stimulates my psychic-circuit to the point where I want to try a little harder.

The many contributing factors that enable me to shoot the way I do are:

1. Understanding the basic fundamentals.
2. Good training habits.

3. Taste of victory developing the proper approach to attitude.
4. With a positive attitude a desire to win is developed.
5. The incentive of winning is a large motivating factor.

It is my conviction that, if I know how to apply the fundamentals, have a positive attitude, and high spirits, I have more time to devote to the small, delicate, and preplexing details of shooting one shot or 5 shots.

My mental preparation consists primarily of a technique I call "visualization" combined with know how, experience, and confidence. The visualization technique consists of formulating a mental picture of what you want to accomplish, whether it be one single shot or a 5 shot string, it can be used to train yourself to stand still and hold still, to see your score in increments of 100 or 300, or to visualize your entire aggregate. This is not a new technique, but it is not really used too often in shooting. However, I do believe it's used more often than the shooter realizes.


Some days this technique works better than other days with due respect to your physical and psychological well-being and attitude.

Mental discipline, I believe, is developed in the process of good sound training techniques. Also paying particular attention to small details, such as small errors and not accepting these errors when it's possible to correct them.

Recognizing an error can be corrected only if I am aware of the mistake, if I am aware of the error, I can either stop--correct--or shoot the shot. If I shoot a shot while being aware of an error, I have either lost concentration, patience, or mental control--generally the latter. Prior to shooting a shot or a series of shots I try to hold a vivid picture of the preconceived mental picture of the end result desired, which is, of course, a 10-50- or 100, after each shot or series. I must reaffirm this mental picture each time. Having faith in my own abilities is derived from having fired good scores in practice for the last match.

This technique of visualization is always accompanied with confidence, desire, mental discipline, and faith in my convictions. I suppose I could base my philosophy of thought on an age-old cliché "The end result desired is equivalent to the degree of faith you have in your thoughts", and "that which cannot be conceived in the mind's eye first will have much difficulty in materializing".

In conclusion, the tools I find necessary for shooting good scores are: Sufficient practice with each weapon I will fire in the match, test-proved equipment, mentally preparing myself by keeping my goal in mind, developing positive attitude toward these standards and formulating a mental picture of what I want to shoot, which is one point higher than I've ever fired. And keeping my mind, body and psychic spirit on the infinite details of shooting one shot or five shots.


BONNIE D. HARMON
SFC, US Army
Pistol Division, USAMU

SHOOTING ACCOMPLISHMENTS - SFC RENNOLDS

NATIONAL PISTOL RECORDS

1. .22 Rapid Fire Open June 66.
2. .22 Rapid Fire Service June 66.
3. .22 Free Pistol Team Service Record Feb 67.
4. .22 Free Pistol Team Open Record May 71.
5. .22 Free Pistol Team Service Record May 71.
6. .22 Free Pistol Team Open Record Nov 71.
7. .22 Free Pistol Team Service Record Nov 71.
8. .45 Pistol Team (Short Course) Open Record Nov 71.
9. .45 Pistol Team (Short Course) Service Record Nov 71.
10. .45 Pistol Team (Short Course) Open Record Jan 72.
11. .45 Pistol Team (Short Course) Service Record Jan 72.
12. .45 Pistol Team (Full Course) Open Record Nov 73.
13. .45 Pistol Team (Full Course) Service Record Nov 73.

INTERNATIONAL MILITARY SPORTS COUNCIL (CISM) CONSEIL INTERNATIONAL DU SPORT MILITAIRE

1. CISM CF Rapid Fire Team, 1971.

USA STANDARD PISTOL

1. Standard Pistol Championship, 1973.

Became 2600 Shooter, 13 Sep 59.
Became 2650 Shooter, 1973.
Became Rifle Distinguished, 1954.
Became Pistol Distinguished, 1958.

WINNER

1. Far Southwest Regional (Rifle), Jun 59.
 2. Southeastern Regional, 1973.
 3. Far Southwestern Regional, 1973.
1. USARPAC Champion, 62.
 2. 4th Army Champion, 64.
 3. 8th Army Champion, 69.

STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS

1. Utah State, 1964.
2. NRA State Pistol Team Postal Match, 22 states participated, Texas won, 1964.

GEORGIA SHOOTING ASSOCIATION

1. Winner South Africa Postal Matches, 1971.

WINNER NATIONAL MATCHES

1. .45 Service Pistol Team, 1962.
2. .45 Aggregate, Orton Trophy, 1971.
3. .45 Service Pistol (Custer), 1971.
4. CF Team, Smith Wesson Trophy, 1970.
5. 3 Gun Team Aggregate, GEN Twining Trophy, 1972.
6. .45 Team, Colt Trophy, 1972.
7. .22 Team Hi Standard Trophy, 1973.
8. CF Team, Smith Wesson Trophy, 1973.
9. .45 Team, Colt Trophy, 1973.
10. 3 Gun Team Aggregate, GEN Twining Trophy, 1973.
11. Service Pistol Team, 1973.

PROFILE OF A CHAMPION

I started my pistol shooting career in January 1958. My battalion told me I would be in charge of training a pistol team. I drew 4,000 rounds hard ball and put out bulletins for volunteers. No one came out to shoot so I had 4,000 rounds of hard ball ammo to shoot each month. This all took place in Fort Sill, Oklahoma, where it was extremely cold. Using Arms Room Weapons I came out each day to shoot. Of course, I did not have any training with pistols before so I got off to a bad start. I did not have the training as a new shooter on the proper use of fundamentals. I sure shot a lot of ammo and in March we had the Pistol Matches to select the personnel for 4th Army Tryouts. We shot a 900 aggregate with hard ball and I won the first match (slow fire 20 rounds) with a pair of 82's which gave me 164 total. This 164 I fired beat the best shooter in 4th Army, which at that time was Major Dunn. This was not a high score to be winning a match, but the adverse conditions were: We had a 30 to 40 MPH wind, no cover, cold, raining, and I had all the shots on the target. As a result, I was 20 points ahead of my nearest competitor.

No one had told me about the proper use of the fundamentals, so I would squeeze the trigger when I was in the black and quit squeezing when the wind blew me out. As a result, I won the match as a new shooter and placed third in the aggregate (900).

At this point I was selected for the 4th Army Team and got the proper instruction on the fundamentals of pistol shooting.

At this time I had decided on some goals to shoot for and it took many years to accomplish these:

1. To become a Distinguished Pistol Shot (1959).
2. To become a 2600 Pistol Shot (1959).
3. To win a match at Camp Perry (1970).
4. To win a National Record (1966).
5. To later become a 2650 Shot (1973) 2662.

When you are a new shooter starting at the bottom, just becoming a Distinguished shooter is like climbing a high mountain. You learn a lot by listening to the old shooters and gaining small bits of information. They will help you add a little more to the fundamentals and enable you to shoot better. When you stop at a certain level of shooting you have to find some means to pull yourself a little higher and progress further.

Every person who shoots does not become an outstanding shooter. Some do not have the time or the desire. Others do not have the power of concentration.

To become one of the top shooters in a particular field you have to develop a technique that fits you. What works for one does not always work for another.

Let's talk about my technique. I am short and heavy and I have small hands. My stance is about the same as stated in the book, about 45 degrees from target, feet should be wide. My grip is modified to fit my small hand. To get a good grip I place my three fingers around the front of the receiver (2d joint) and hold while I pull my hand and thumb around to get a firm grip which will not shift in my hand while firing. Try to keep the 2d joint directly in front and under the trigger guard. I do not jam the grip safety tang down into my hand, as you can not squeeze the trigger without moving the pistol. In slow fire I do not grip as hard or tight as when I shoot timed and rapid. I grip tighter in timed rapid because it aids me in recovery with my arm locked up. I also shoot very fast slow fire. I have a good fast even squeeze which I have perfected in my technique. Very often I will shoot two shots in slow fire before coming down. If I have trouble squeezing, I shoot the same as if I were shooting timed fire and concentrate on trigger control. This also helps me when I shoot in the wind. When the wind comes down to its lowest level it is several seconds before it picks up again. If you practice this, it is not a new technique when you have to use it.

In timed fire use a firm grip, locking arm, wrist, and hand so recovery is faster. You have to be very aggressive so as to start your shot, shoot and follow through, and repeat for four more shots. You have to have faith in your hold, depending on sight alignment and trigger squeeze.


In rapid you have to speed up the technique you developed for timed fire. You can squeeze a trigger fast and with even pressure in one to 1 1/2 seconds, allowing you to align sights in same period of time.

Let's talk a little about preparation time. The night before you should get together what you will need to shoot the next day. Get the proper amount of rest. Don't strain your eyes by watching TV or movies.

Some of the things I do to enable me to keep up with the top shooters are:

1. The night before a match, I get a good night's sleep.
2. No smoking during the matches.
3. No coffee except decafenated.
4. No carbonated drinks (due to gas on stomach and some have caffeine).
5. No strenuous exercise or work before or during matches.
6. No alcoholic beverages before or during match.
7. To prevent eye strain, no movies or late TV.
8. I do not eat till after each day's matches.
9. I read between strings of slow fire because I shoot so fast (approximately 2-3 minutes). During my shooting I concentrate on one shot or one string. This reading helps me keep my mind from building up so much match pressure.

Regardless of what method you use and technique you perfect you have to master the fundamentals of sight alignment and trigger squeeze that will not misalign the sight while waiting for the shot to break, recover, analyze and correct mistakes. By making less mistakes you are able to win over your competitors.


HARLAND V. RENNOLDS
SFC, US Army
Pistol Division, USAMU

SHOOTING ACCOMPLISHMENTS - SFC HILE

First WAC to be assigned to Marksmanship Unit - 1962.
First Woman to fire a possible 250 on the old rifle target.
First service woman to become distinguished with rifle - 1964.
Set eleven National Records (Individual) with rifle. All broken or out dated.
I set 12 National Records (Individual) with pistol. Nine of which still stand and co-holder of one that still stands.
I was a firing member of Ladies Teams that set six National Team Records (Ladies).
First and only woman Double Distinguished - Service Rifle and Service Pistol.
First and only woman Trip Distinguished.
Won Woman's National Service Rifle title six times.
Won Woman's National Pistol title three times.
Silver Medal (Individual) 1970 World Games (Ladies Smallbore).
Team member of U.S. Ladies Team in 1970 World Games that won Gold, Silver, and Bronze Team Medals.
Distinguished Rifle - 1964.
International Distinguished Pistol - 1970.
Distinguished Pistol - 1971.

PROFILE OF A CHAMPION - SFC HILE

My shooting career started in 1959 shooting the service rifle until the finish of the Nationals in 1967. September 1967 I switched to the pistol.

In the training period preparing for the National Matches I try to do the same as I would while firing in the matches. Two habits I change are not to smoke until I have finished the day of shooting and to change my morning coffee to the decaffeinated type. I like my day to start with good thoughts and hoping that I won't let anything make me upset. To keep my confidence up I think of the things I must do in order to shoot a good shot or string of shots and tell myself I can do it. Before I get to the range I check equipment, to include scorecards, squadding ticket.

At a pistol match during my three minute preparation period I choose my stance and position, which are from the book. I am more comfortable with my feet placed approximately shoulder width apart and the weight equal on both feet. It is easier and less fatiguing to keep my head and shoulders erect and to look straight out of my eye.

The grip I use is one that is firm enough not to allow the pistol to move in my hand when the pistol fires. Also I make sure that this grip allows my trigger finger to work without rubbing on the grip.

I do not lock my elbow and wrist to any great degree, but keep them straight and do not allow them to break during recoil.

In getting the sights aligned, I must tell myself to align the sights and keep them aligned because the gun is going to fire. At the same time I try to really be aware of the front sight and keep my face on it. I find it easy to let the eye be lazy and look at the sight, but at the same time I'm not really aware or truly seeing the sight. " So I must constantly tell myself, "Be aware, see the sights and keep them aligned. " For sustained fire I tell myself "sight" and follow it in recoil, knowing that I must get the sights aligned and back to the center of the target quickly.

I think trigger only to get the trigger started then my concentration goes back to sight alignment knowing the gun will fire without my thinking about it.

In breath control, I take two medium breaths. With the command, "The firing line is ready, " I'm letting out the last breath and stopping it while I settle into my aiming area. When firing International Center Fire I use a breathing technique to time the turning of the targets in the duel portion of the course. When the targets turn away I take two slightly deeper than normal breaths, when I let the second breath out and stop I know that momentarily the targets will face and I will have three seconds to move my arm up and fire one shot.

While changing target or between relays I must be aware mentally of what I must do when I resume firing.

Some thoughts that I try to keep out of my head are: "If I clean the next string I will break the record." or "I've got to shoot at least a 870 to break 2600." It is best for me to not know what a certain record is or check a scoreboard to see what someone else shot until all shots have been fired-- then it's time to check these things out.



BARBARA J. HILE
SFC, US Army
Pistol Division, USAMU

SHOOTING ACCOMPLISHMENTS - SSG SICINSKI

1960 2600 Club
1960 Distinguished Pistol Shot
1970 Won Fiesta of Five Flags, Pensacola, Florida
1970 Member, .45 Colt Trophy Team, Camp Perry, Ohio
1971 Winner, MP Trophy, Camp Perry, Ohio

PROFILE OF A CHAMPION

In the year of 1958 I was a nonfiring member of a Division Pistol Team. Prior to the USAREUR Matches I attended three days of Marksmanship School, which was mandatory for all participants in that competition.

At this Marksmanship School I heard the instructors emphasizing strongly: Stance, position, grip, breath control, sight alignment and trigger control, known as basic fundamentals.

After the school and the matches I went back to my unit. Shortly after my return I started practicing pistol shooting and employing those fundamentals. To my amazement I discovered that it worked. Two months later I won the Battalion Matches and later on the Division Shoulder to Shoulder Matches, also third place in the 7th Army Matches.

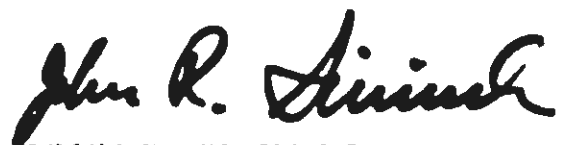
The knowledge that I gained from this Marksmanship School helped me greatly at the beginning of my shooting career.

In competitive pistol shooting basic fundamentals must be applied; if they are not applied the results are disappointing; when applied correctly and carefully the results are fulfilling.

I would like to explore one of these very important basic fundamentals: Sight alignment is the most important fundamental to delivery of an accurate shot. There are two kinds of correct sight alignment: The vertical sight alignment assumed by correctly gripping the pistol and assuming correct stance and position; the other is the horizontal sight alignment assumed partly in gripping and maintaining it visually.

Before raising the arm to deliver a shot, sight alignment as a thought can be used as a mental control factor during delivery of slow fire shot as well as in timed or rapid fire string.

It helps to keep the focus on the front sight where it must be maintained during the shot. It is a sort of mental self hypnosis. It works.



JOHN R. SICINSKI
SSG, US Army
Pistol Division, USAMU

SHOOTING ACCOMPLISHMENTS - SGT BLACK

1962 Distinguished
1967 Won Fourth Army Matches
1967 Winning Team, National Matches, Hard Ball
1969 National Record, Standard Pistol
1970 Winner Standard Pistol, European Championships
1970 Record Team, .22 Caliber Short Course Team
1970 Record Team, .45 Caliber Short Course Team
1973 Winner All Army Matches
1973 New Record Team, .45 Caliber NMC
1973 Record CF NMC Individual

PROFILE OF A CHAMPION

I first started shooting in 1962. That same year I became a Distinguished Pistol Shot. I didn't fire again until 1967, when I was on the winning USAMU team at the Nationals. That same year, I won my first match, the Fiesta of Five Flags at Pensacola, Florida, with a 2640. I was assigned to the USAMU in 1968. I made some changes in my hold, the biggest being the shift from a six o'clock hold to a center hold. I broke the 2650 barrier that year. In 1969 I shot the national record in the standard pistol event with a score of 584. I might add that this score has since been broken at least ten times.

In 1973 I rejoined the USAMU, where I had the biggest day of my shooting career at the National Matches, Camp Perry, Ohio. I shot a 300-20X Center Fire National Match Course, tying the National Service Record, and winning the Center Fire Aggregate with a score of 886.

I feel the main reason for my success is having a full knowledge of fundamentals and developing a fairly good system for applying them.

The main reason for having a system is to have control of your mental processes. Then, if you get off the right track, you have a plan to get yourself going again. My system has taken a long time to develop, and I'm still changing a lot of small things.

Pressure is my foremost enemy, a problem I am sure every shooter has. The most successful way to combat it is to practice. Frequent practice builds confidence in yourself and your equipment. Three or four days before a match, I try to regulate my time of practice to conform to the times I'll be firing the match. I try to keep my daily routines the same at the match as when I'm home and work. If I get the right amount of sleep at my usual time, I perform much better.

Practice does this for me--it confirms my zero, gives me confidence in my trigger control and increases my ability to hold still.

In summary, I credit my success to the following things:

1. A good working knowledge of the fundamentals.
2. A system for applying them properly.
3. Frequent practice, which increases my confidence in my equipment and my ability to apply what I know.

Marvin D. Black
MARVIN D. BLACK

29 SGT, US Army
Pistol Division, USAMU

CHAPTER 3

SERVICE RIFLE

SHOOTING ACCOMPLISHMENTS - MSG MCQUIEN

Won USAREUR Championship - 1961.

Won Virginia State Championship - 1963.

Was new shooter on record setting team at the Nationals - 1963.

Two time All Army Champion - 1968-1971; both of which were records but have since been broken.

Was a member of the winning and record setting team at the Nationals - 1969.

Two time winner Texas State Championship - years and dates not remembered.

Won Arizona State Championship - year and date not remembered.

Won Quantico Regional - 1972.

Was a member of winning and record setting team at the Interservice Matches - 1973.

Current holder of the National Long Range Course (A) record score 495-28X fired with a Service Rifle. Old record was 494-33X fired with a bolt gun.

Current holder of three All Army records.

1. 200 Yard Rapid Fire.
2. Individual National Match Course
3. Individual Rifle Excellence-in-Competition.

Was a member of at least three other teams that hold National Records.

Have won a number of smaller post level aggregate championships such as:

Fort Benning, GA

Fort McClellan, AL

Camp Bullis, TX

Fort Hood, TX

Cherry Point MCB, NC

Camp LeJeune, NC

Boulder City, Nevada

Oak Ridge, TN

Member Infantry Trophy Record Holding Team.

Have shot on the first team, Service Rifle, in every match that USAMU has shot in every year since 1963 with the exception of one time when I was in school, when I was ineligible and the one year in Vietnam.

PROFILE OF A CHAMPION - MSG MCQUIEN

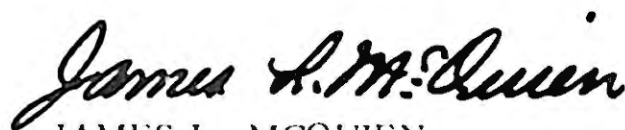
There is a lot of reasons why most shooters are not consistent in their shooting. One of the reasons I think is that they don't pay enough attention to detail. If a shooter has been shooting for any time at all he should know the fundamentals but too many of them take them for granted. However, in shooting nothing should be taken for granted. He should make sure that he uses the correct fundamentals each time he goes on the firing line. For example, natural point of aim, it does not seem so important but a shooter must make sure he has it each time in order to shoot a consistently good score. A shooter should get in the habit of being consistent about the things he does before he shoots. This also has a bearing on his scores. Being mentally prepared is one of the most important things a person can do toward shooting a good score. If you can out shoot him mentally most of the time you will out shoot him on the firing line. A shooter should not worry about other shooters scores. It is much better to let the other shooter do the worrying. Don't make mistakes, such as wrong sight setting, firing on wrong targets, missing relays, etc. The least amount of mistakes the better your chance of winning. A shooter should watch his everyday habits such as smoking, drinking and night life. A shooter should do whatever he does in moderation. He should get plenty of rest. While he is on the firing line be honest with himself and perform because it is only for a few minutes and performance can really tell the difference between a good score or a bad one.

I think some of the main reasons that I shoot consistently is that I keep a record of all my shooting and that is very important to me. I like to go on the firing line knowing what I am doing and not have to guess. Therefore I keep a record so I will know what my zero is and what the changes are from firing line to firing line. A short pencil is much better than a long memory.

I believe if anyone is going to ever shoot well enough to be a champion, he must have confidence in himself and his equipment. Having confidence is one of the biggest killers of match pressure and match pressure is what causes so many mistakes and it is very hard to win when you make mistakes. I don't believe there is anyone that does not feel some match pressure at one time or other. I know that I do even though I have confidence in myself to the extent that I believe I can shoot as good if not better than anyone in the match so when a person feels match pressure, in order to shoot a good score he is going to have to do away with the pressure. The way that I do away with match pressure is a few deep breathing exercises, stretching and limbering up exercises and after all that some good constructive thinking to get myself mentally prepared. Once I get on the firing line, I dry fire as much as I can to make sure that I am ready.

A person has to have the desire to win. I myself believe that even though I do everything else right if the desire to win is not there, I will not win. I have a strong desire to win in anything that I do and in shooting the desire is stronger than any other type of competition. In shooting there is nothing to help you except your own ability. Everything else is against him, all the elements such as light, wind, mirage, ammunition, weapon and all the other shooters. I feel that if I can win over all that then I have really done something but a person cannot win on desire alone. Desire has to work with all the rest of shooting. I have known many shooters that I know have the desire to win but just don't win because of other factors.

Last but not least, I think that a champion should have the knowledge of what it takes to be a champion and be the type of person in mind and body to put everything he needs together so he can win. That is the type of person or goal that I have set for myself to reach. I am not a glory hunter but also I hate to sit back and watch someone else get it all.



JAMES L. MCQUIEN
MSG, US Army
Service Rifle Division, USAMU

SHOOTING ACCOMPLISHMENTS - SFC EDMONDSON

1965	Infantry Trophy Winning Team, USAREUR.
1965	President's Hundred.
1968	Distinguished Rifleman Badge.
1969	National Trophy Winning Team (Record Score).
1970	Alabama State Championship.
1970	Interservice 600 Yard Match (Record Score - Div B).
1970	Interservice 600 and 1000 Yard Aggregate Match (Record Score - Div B).
1972	National NRA Individual Champion (Record Score).
1972	National Trophy Winning Team.
1973	National Trophy Winning Team.

WHAT MAKES A CHAMPION SHOOTER - SFC EDMONDSON

How do I go about attaining the scores that I shoot? Well I must say that the answer to this question is very hard to write down on paper. It is even hard to explain to someone in common talk or gestures, but I suppose it would be best explained in the way I feel toward competitive marksmanship and the personal satisfaction that comes from winning a match in a field of equally capable shooters.

First I might say that I am a complete believer in the fundamentals of marksmanship. In being able to apply these fundamentals I have found that there are other personal habits that I have to adhere to so that I can give full mental and physical concentration to the job at hand.

I try to eat as close to normal as I can. In saying that I mean that when I go to eat I try to eat a well rounded diet of three meals a day whether on the road, in training or at home. About the only time I deviate from this schedule is when there is no dinner break during a match or phase of a match. When this happens I just get enough of most anything to hold me until I can go eat.

I also try to get a consistent amount of sleep each night. Generally I try to go to bed around 10 or 11 each night. This will give me a sufficient amount of rest to be able to fully concentrate on shooting and not be sleepy eyed and wishing every few minutes for more sleep. I think that loss of sleep is one of the most distracting things I know of when it comes to trying to concentrate on shooting a ten and all you think of is "Boy, I sure wish I could have slept longer" or "I sure wish I had not stayed out so late". So with all of this on my mind there is no way I can be mentally prepared to shoot and perform at my best.

I have found that I cannot perform under any type of alcohol drink. I don't mean to say that I am a drinker but I do not drink during a match or to any degree during practice. I normally don't drink at all but if I do, I usually limit it to one or two beers in the evening before going to bed. Also for me coffee is something I cannot drink. It makes me very nervous even so far as to make my hands shake. Therefore, if I were trying to shoot a shot and my hands were shaking it would completely break my chain of thought.

I try to keep my personal affairs in order where I have no worries as to whether my bills are paid and my family has a good place to live and plenty to eat.

I suppose what I am trying to say is that anything that is distracting to my mental process of shooting causes me to shoot low scores.


I have not set any certain match goals which I must attain. I feel that when I go to the range or enter a match I must shoot the very best score possible and if it wins then I have performed to the best of my ability under the circumstances. If not then there are two possibilities. One is that I have performed to the best of my ability and was beaten by a better score or that I did not shoot the best score that I was capable of shooting; therefore, I need to examine myself and my equipment (myself being foremost) to see why I did not shoot as well as possible. I cannot ever remember going into a match with the burning thoughts of I must win this match. I simply go into a match with the thought in mind of shooting the best score that I am capable of and then come what may.

The things that I have found that cause the most problem in attaining good scores is the mistakes a shooter can make on the range. These mistakes are not setting sights correctly, firing on the wrong target, missing a relay or forgetting some piece of equipment that is essential to shooting and having to borrow some one elses. All of these things I try to correct or make sure I don't forget them by physically checking every item each time I go to the range and every time I go to the firing line to shoot.

Then there is match pressure. When I started shooting, match pressure seemed to always build up as I started down range to shoot in a team match. I have never been aware of any great amount of match pressure in an individual match because the out come only pertained to me, but in a team match when the coach and five other people are depending on me to perform to the best of my ability then is when I have been so pressured up that I have been sick to my stomach. To combat this I have found that if I talk to someone about anything not related to the match and try to relax I can fight off the pressure to a certain degree. I don't think I am ever completely without pressure. When I shoot a match I have also found that if I stamp my feet or flex my legs or just anything to shake out the tenseness I can resume my mental and physical process of shooting a good shot. I guess what I am trying to say, is anything you can do to put the tensions aside and resume mental control over yourself should be done so you can beat match pressure and perform correctly once again.

To do all of the things I have mentioned you must have complete confidence in yourself and your equipment. If you are distracted by either of these things you cannot perform to your utmost.

I feel that the best training method is to shoot as much as possible without over training to the point of exhaustion in practice and shoot as many matches as possible so that you can learn to understand the meaning of all that I have talked about and be able to personally overcome your own match pressure and anxieties.


MARTIN D. EDMONDSON
SFC, US Army
Service Rifle Division, USAMU

SHOOTING ACCOMPLISHMENTS - SFC FLOYD

1970 Florida State Championship.

1971-72 Early Bird Match, Oak Ridge, Tennessee.

1971 Southeastern Regional.

1972 Team member winning team National Matches, Camp Perry, Ohio.

WHAT MAKES A CHAMPION SHOOTER - SFC FLOYD

I think what makes a champion shooter is maximum use of the basic fundamentals of marksmanship. A lot of times, after a shooter has been in the shooting business a long time, he finds himself forgetting some of the fundamentals and, as a result, shoots lower scores than he is capable of shooting. In my opinion, a good shooter goes back and reviews the fundamentals periodically and tries to determine what he can do to improve his performance. Most of the time, after reviewing, he will find some improvement in his scores.

Just fundamentals is not all there is to making a good shooter. A good shooter keeps records of all his firing. Most good shooters keep a scorebook for each rifle he shoots. He keeps a detailed account of each string of shots that he fires, for every type of weather condition. In this way, he can always look back on a past performance and know what changes he will have to make for certain conditions. When you see a shooter on the line with his scorebook, studying it, you know he is performing and will do good in the match.

A competitor can't win by just going to the range and firing the prescribed number of rounds and going home. He has to have a desire to win. A strong desire, and a positive attitude. If a competitor goes in a match with the attitude "All the best shooters are here, I don't have a chance", he will not have a chance. He must have confidence in himself and his equipment. Quite a few times I have felt my rifle inferior to some of the other competitors' rifles. This feeling will do nothing but put you at a disadvantage from the start.


I usually feel some match pressure when I go in a match. The pressure gets to me more in the standing position than anywhere else. To combat this pressure, I do stretching exercises and breathe deeply a few times. This reduces the pressure somewhat, but there is still pressure there. I think the best way to reduce match pressure is to get in enough practice to increase confidence in yourself. The more confidence you have, the less pressure you have.

Confidence goes further yet. I think that if I have great confidence in myself, the less mistakes I will make. The least mistakes made is usually a winner. There is a lot of mistakes that can be made to cause the loss of a match. Shooting on the wrong target, forgetting to set sights, missing relays, and generally not thinking of what you are doing causes a lot of matches to be lost. While I am in the assembly area on the range, I try to get all my equipment in order and then double check myself after I get on the firing line. This cuts down on the mistakes I make. A shooter that is in a rush is more likely to commit errors than one who takes his time and thinks what he is going to do.

I try to keep myself in fair physical condition and muscle tone for shooting. I don't do any strenuous exercise, but just enough to keep my shooting muscles in shape. Shooting is very tiring, both physically and mentally. After shooting a double National Match Course, if a shooter has performed like he should, he is exhausted and ready for some rest. I think some regular dry firing helps keep the muscles toned and in shape for shooting. In some marksmanship units, we were allowed to take our weapons home and dry fire at night. This was a big help, but this was discontinued sometime ago. However, if an individual has a personal weapon at home, dry firing would be beneficial.

As far as daily living goes, I think you should do the same thing before a match as you normally do every day. I am not a drinker in daily life, so I don't have to worry about changing my habits before I go in a match. If a shooter does drink, I think he should drink moderately, if at all for two days before a match. I try to get plenty of rest before a match, so I'm up to par and don't tire out before the match is over.

I get a lot of satisfaction from winning a match, especially if it is a big match, with big name shooters. I set a goal for myself and strive to win every match I am entered in. As with everything else, it doesn't always work out as I plan, but I still do the best I can, and usually do fairly well in a match.


GEORGE FLOYD
SFC, US Army
Service Rifle Division, USAMU

SHOOTING ACCOMPLISHMENTS - SSG SKINNER

I've won a number of matches in Oak Ridge, Tennessee, and also in Texas.
I set a new Interservice Record at 300 Yards in 1973 at Quantico, Virginia, score 200-10X.
I was a member of the team that set a National Record at Camp Perry, Ohio, in 1969.
I was also a shooting member on the team that set a Long Range Record at Oak Ridge, Tennessee, the same year.


WHAT MAKES A CHAMPION SHOOTER - SSG SKINNER

I think the most important step toward becoming a champion shooter is mastering the fundamentals of marksmanship. After this you must put maximum effort on mental preparation and conditioning. I find that when I go into a slump if I review the fundamentals that I can eventually determine what was the cause and take corrective steps.

To get myself mentally prepared I study my scorebook to give myself confidence in my weapon and zero. A couple of days before the match I make sure that I get my required amount of rest and eat foods that I have found to be agreeable to my digestive system. I try to keep from thinking of the level of competition in any match. Instead I try to get myself in the proper mental state to have a good individual performance. In other words I try to shoot as well as I possibly can. I avoid the scoreboards and try to keep range rumors and influencing my concentration or performance. While actually on the firing line I try to shoot each shot as a separate match. The most important round that I have to shoot is the one in the chamber. If I think of any shots that I have previously fired I try to remember the good ones and what I did to make them be good and try to disregard any bad shots. I never feel I have been beaten in a rifle match until the last round has gone down range.

To physically prepare myself I try to dry fire in areas that are giving me a problem. In the past we were allowed to keep our weapons at home and I think this was very important to me, because I could dry fire on my own. The exercises that I find are the most beneficial to me are ones that strengthen the arms and shoulders. However, the best thing that I have found is actual range firing.

I think the best training vehicle for a competitive shooter is match shooting. Without this I can't condition myself to the pressures of match competition.


HARVEY SKINNER
SSG, US Army
Service Rifle Division, USAMU

SHOOTING ACCOMPLISHMENTS - SSG COVINGTON

- 1971 Team member on winning team at USARPAC Matches.
- 1972 Won the Fort Benning, Rifle and Pistol Club Monthly Match.
- 1973 Team member on winning team at the National Matches, Camp Perry, Ohio.
- 1973 Distinguished Service Rifle.

WHAT MAKES A CHAMPION SHOOTER - SSG COVINGTON

To be a champion one has to live shooting. By living shooting you have to watch your night life. By this you have to know how late you can stay up and still be able to shoot good the next day. You also have to know how much you can drink. No one can party all night and shoot a good score the next day. The second day is always worse than the first.

I like to go out just as much as anyone. But I'll never go out and drink a lot the night before a match or even two days before one. Drinking will never help anyone to shoot good scores.

When I know I'm going to be shooting in a match, I start preparing the day before. I make sure all my equipment is in good condition.

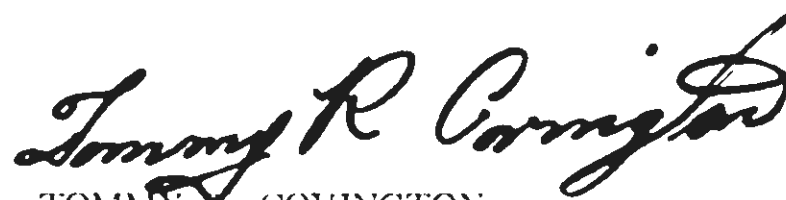
During a match most of the time you have at least ten to twenty minutes before you go up to shoot. I use this to set my zero and study my scorebook, to make sure I have the right zero. Also I use this time to mentally prepare myself. To do this I think about what I'm going to do on the firing line. Like what I have to do to put every round in the ten ring. I think if I can only beat my practice score by one or two points I'll win, "and most of the time this will work". Sometimes I set my goal to beat another shooter. During this time do anything that will help to relax yourself.

By doing these things it helps to relieve some of the match pressure. Everyone gets match pressure. The thing is knowing what to do about it. Some other things I do are: I try not to think about how someone else is doing. I don't watch the scoreboard and never listen to rumors. If you have confidence in yourself and equipment, then the match pressure you feel won't be as bad as most.

Another thing that has helped me a lot is dry firing. This is real good to help build a good position. This is one of the three most important parts of shooting. By dry firing you will build good trigger control. This you need most of all.

I try and work on trigger control every time I'm on the range, and a lot off it. On the range shooting is the best practice you can get.

Most of all to be a champion one has to have the desire to be a good shooter. He can never give up because of a bad day or the weather. There is a lot of those bad days and weather. Also a champion has to have the ability to learn and apply the fundamentals of marksmanship.



TOMMY R. COVINGTON
SSG, US Army
Service Rifle Division, USAMU

SHOOTING ACCOMPLISHMENTS - SP5 STAWSKI

- 1971 Women's Service Rifle Championship.
- 1972-73 Women's National High Power Rifle Championship.

WHAT MAKES A CHAMPION SHOOTER - SP5 STAWSKI

I can't really add the title champion to my name yet because I have only been shooting for a very short time. Unlike many shooters I never so much as touched a rifle when I was growing up. My shooting experience only goes back to 1971 when I first started shooting on the post team at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. I wasn't even interested in shooting at the time but a friend of mine suggested I try out and I have been shooting ever since.

I learned to shoot "from scratch" so to speak. I had a coach thoroughly teach me the positions before I even fired a round. The first match I ever shot in was the first time I ever fired a round in the standing position. I don't think my coach ever thought I would amount to much as a shooter. He didn't look on it as a feminine sport, but I worked along side everyone else and tried to put into practice the fundamentals they were teaching me. I came down to Fort Benning a few short weeks after I started shooting to participate in the Third Army and All Army Matches. I was picked up for summer training and participated in the Interservice and National Matches. I won the Woman's Service Rifle Championships that first year. I really didn't feel like I had won anything that special because there was only one other girl I was competing against in the service rifle category. I knew that if I really wanted to feel like a shooter I would have to try and shoot along with and as well as the men. There is no feeling about trying to be better than the men. I try to keep it a person against person sport because the majority of the time I shoot only against the men. In 1972 I managed to beat all the women, including those shooting bolt rifles. The title that year made me feel I was progressing because I bettered my score from the year before by some seventy-four points. I began to feel that there was a chance to make a name for myself in the sport of shooting. The Nationals of 1973 helped me along. I wasn't even thinking about competing against the men, I was concentrating on the Women's title and beating the women's record. For some reason I felt more pressure in this match than ever before. I think that is what made me shoot and perform better than I ever had before.

I feel it is easier to teach a person who has never shot before than one who has. This is because the beginner hasn't picked up any bad habits as yet. He is ready to learn the basic fundamentals without having to try to forget bad habits. I was fortunate in being a new shooter and learning everything from the beginning. I still haven't progressed to the stage however where after a long layoff I can just pick up a rifle and resume shooting. The positions are all out of alignment and there are quite a few bugs I have to shake out. It usually takes me a full three months training before I am really ready for important matches.

I look on shooting as a game of perfection, aiming for the perfect center of the target. That is the way I go into it each practice day, trying to get each shot as near to the middle as I can. I also try to keep myself mentally and physically prepared for training and I try to do the same when I am going into a match. I don't smoke and never drink to excess either in training or the night before a match. An alert mind is just as important as an alert body. I also try to get at least eight hours of sleep every night in training and matches. I take each position and shoot them one at a time. I try to blank out everything else from my mind except the target down range and putting each round as near the middle as I can possibly make it. If I am having some problem with any position I ask one of the really good shooters to watch me and tell me if he can detect what I am doing wrong. If it is something I know I am doing wrong I ask him to give me a few tips on how to correct it. I put all the basic fundamentals together along with a few variations on them. Sometimes I might have to modify or change something just the slightest bit because it isn't working out. I never change the basic fundamentals however.

For a shooter to be any good he or she must want to excel. The basic desire to win must be there, not just the desire to stay even with everyone else. I would like to win every match I shoot in, from the smallest post match on up to the Nationals. With that desire to win and performing all those fundamentals a person makes a champion.

Joanne R. Stawski

JOANNE R. STAWSKI

SP5, US Army

Service Rifle Division, USAMU

CHAPTER 4

RUNNING TARGET

SHOOTING ACCOMPLISHMENTS - LT THEIMER

May 1973	Interservice Championships (Fort Benning, Georgia) - 2 Bronze Medals.
June 1973	U.S. International Championships (Phoenix, Arizona) - 2 Bronze Medals.
October 1973	First Championship of the Americas (Mexico City) - One Gold Medal & One Silver Medal.

WHAT MAKES A CHAMPION SHOOTER - LT THEIMER

I began my competitive shooting during my sophomore year in High School Junior ROTC. The first two years were spent learning the basic techniques of smallbore position shooting. By my senior year I captured the city championship. Competition although was limited to only the surrounding city rifle teams and my desire for more competition led me to my first NRA Regional Match where I won the High ROTC Individual Match.

After graduation from high school I began collegiate competition on a Senior ROTC Rifle Team at Midwestern University. To my benefit I had an outstanding coach who never allowed me to be satisfied with any score no matter how near perfect it was. Once in practice I fired a 98 standing and when I showed him the target, grinning from ear to ear, he just looked up at me and said, "where did these two mines (9's) come from." Whenever I tried to make an excuse for shooting poorly he would recordedly say, "It's all between your ears!" And he was always right. Gradually over the few years that followed and as my match experience increased, my ability to control mind and body progressively increased. It's impossible to describe the personal satisfaction that is felt as a shooter learns control over mind and body which produces a "bulls-eye".

To be a champion a shooter must be able to analyze himself truthfully and objectively. Some shooters lie to themselves and ignore their bad shots. Instead of studying their bad shots and learning from their mistakes they continue to make the same mistakes over and over and therefore never progress to become champions.

Going back to the quote "It's all between your ears," a shooter's emotional state and environment plays a large part in overall performance in a match. Outside problems, pressures, anxieties, etc., cause lapses of concentration and physical strains that must be taken into consideration. A dedicated shooter must believe in moderation. It has been medically proven that alcohol, tobacco, drugs and coffee produce side effects detrimental to physical and mental control.

It's often asked how much physical training and what kind of physical training is needed. A moderate physical training program is necessary to maintain proper muscle tone, but the best physical training comes from hours of regular on the line practice. Only here do the critical muscles get properly exercised and conditioned.

Further development and experience comes from competition with the best. Seek out the best competition. Shooting against only those you are able to beat will increase your ego, but decrease your motivation to excel. At the same time the will to win should not induce emotional reactions. I have witnessed many capable shooters destroy themselves from an emotional outburst over a lost point or an infraction of rules by another competitor. You must maintain control of your emotional balance until that last round goes down range. In other words "Keep Cool". When you go into a match don't think in terms of beating the next guy, but rather beating yourself and attaining the goal you have set for yourself which is just a little higher than your best.

So you want to be a Champion? It's a long hard road and sometimes discouraging. There is little or no material gain, except the personal satisfaction of being a Champion which cannot be described.



LOUIS M. THEIMER, III

2LT, US Army

Running Target Section, USAMU

SHOOTING ACCOMPLISHMENTS - SFC CHARLES DAVIS

- 1956 I Corps Service Rifle Championship (Korea).
I Corps Rifle Championship Team.
- 1957 8th Army Rifle Championship Team.
High New Shooter All Army Rifle Matches.
- 1958 New Mexico Service Rifle Champion.
- 1959 National Individual Trophy Winner (Daniel Boone Trophy).
Nevada Trophy Team.
Critchfield-Herrick Trophy Team.
President's Hundred Match (3rd Place).
- 1960 CISM Grand Championship Rifle Team, Athens, Greece.
U. S. International 10 Man Smallbore Rifle Team that won World Championship Postal Match.
- 1961 National Service Rifle Champion (DuPont Trophy).
Roumanian Trophy Team.
National Navy Cup (2nd Place).
Interservice Championship 10 Man Team.
- 1963 Pan American Games Rifle Team Alternate.
National Rifle Record Prone 50 Meter Any Sights Service Record of 400-37X in Tennessee State Smallbore Prone Championships.
CISM Rifle Team, Lathi, Finland (3rd Place Team).
- 1964 Individual Service Rifle Aggregate Southeastern Regional and winning team.
South Pacific Regional Rifle Match winning team.
Texas State Rifle Match winning team.
Interservice Coast Guard Trophy.
Enlisted Men's Trophy Team.
- 1965 Interservice Individual Long Range Championship (tied match record).
Interservice Individual 1,000 Yard Match.
Interservice Individual Rifle Championship (3rd Place).
Interservice Rifle 10 Man Team Championship (new match record).
- 1967 National Match Course (Indiv) U. S. Army Rifle Championship.
Herrick Trophy Team at National Long Range Matches.
- 1968 U. S. Army Running Boar Team beat the National Teams of West Germany, Italy, Sweden and Finland.
Leech Cup and Wimbledon Cup
CISM Grand Championship Rifle Team, Fontainebleau, France.
Slow Run Running Boar Interservice Championship.
- 1969 U. S. Army Running Boar Team won Nordic Running Deer and Running Boar Championship against Norway, Sweden and Finland.
U. S. National Running Boar Championships (2nd Place).
- 1971 Interservice Running Boar Normal Run Winner.
Interservice Running Boar Championship (2nd place).
National Championship Running Boar Mixed Runs.
Wimbledon Cup.
National Trophy Rifle Team.
- 1972 Interservice Running Boar Championship.
National Running Boar Championship.
Member of Olympic Team.

1973

Interservice Running Boar Championship.

National Running Boar Championship.

1st Championship of Americas Running Boar Gold Medal Team in Standard Runs and Gold Medal Team in Mixed Runs.

World Moving Target Championships Running Board Bronze Medal Team in Standard Runs and Bronze Medal Team in Mixed Runs.

WHAT MAKES A CHAMPION SHOOTER - SFC DAVIS

A Running Target Champion must establish a program of training that includes physical and mental conditioning. The physical training consists of conditioning exercises such as running and light calisthenics to give the body good tone. This enables a shooter to master the physical skills and perform well for a sustained period of time without fatigue (such as in a championship fired in the 105°-110° heat of the Arizona desert). Once good muscle tone is achieved, the conditioning exercises should be taken in moderation.

I believe mental discipline is developed through the continuously repeated execution of well aimed shots. Uniformity and confidence are developed in this manner. Being able to control your own thoughts and concentration helps in the control of match pressure. Intense concentration on the aiming point and thoughts of hit and call should occupy ones mind and leave no room for anxiety. When bad shots are fired, stay in control of your emotions and bring up your performance. Through mental discipline we have the control and emotional stability needed to become a champion.

The rifle used should be one built especially for running target. The action time should be as short as possible. I believe the trigger should be very consistent and have a pull weight between 22 and 28 ounces. The rifle stock and cheekpiece must be a perfect fit. The thumbhole stock gives a lower hand position and a straighter pull on the trigger. The rifle must be accurate enough to shoot a minute of angle or less.

Trigger control, a conditioned reflex, is developed through lots of dry firing and actual shooting. No conscious effort should be made in activating the trigger finger. Developing good trigger control is essential in becoming a champion.

I believe that the sighting system should be kept as simple as possible. This will eliminate a lot of variable problems that occur when complicated sighting systems are used. The scope reticle should have mass such as a dot, square turned on edge or a post. I prefer a square turned on its edge. This mass is important especially in the fast runs where the shooter's eye concentration is on the aiming point and the reticle is brought to the aiming point. My aiming point on the slow run is six o'clock on the eye. The fast run aiming point that I use is the tip of the nose.

My stance points my natural point of aim at the middle of the ten meter opening. In the ready position the barrel of my rifle appears to be about one and a half meters off the edge of the opening. When the target appears, my eye concentrates on the aiming point. I immediately bring the rifle to the shoulder letting the reticle come to the aiming point. I anticipate catching the aiming point at the end of the first third of the ten meter opening. I track the aiming at the same speed of the target and shoot as quick as possible. As soon as I fire and follow through, I put the rifle down on the bench and reload. It is important to keep the weight of the rifle out of the arms as much as possible. After reloading I look at the scoring clock.

I believe a shooter may eat lightly before shooting a match. Jello or raw oatmeal with orange juice over it will hold a shooter through a match. Dry toast can also be used this way. Coffee, tobacco, alcohol and drugs should not be used at all.

To sum up what it takes to become a Running Target Champion. I think these are the important factors. Maintain a state of physical fitness, strive for uniformity in your performance through a constant study of your technique. Shoot in as many matches as possible but remember that the quality of performance is more important than the number of rounds fired. Learn to control match pressure by developing mental discipline.

To become a champion with the service rifle, I would stress recording the different yard line zeros in a scorebook and studying the scorebook daily to learn the many different zeros of the rifle.

On the same yard lines there will be different zeros according to different light conditions. Getting to know the rifle and developing good positions through much practice are about two of the most important points that I could pass along.

The basic elements of marksmanship were given to me by CWO Coats Brown U.S. Army retired. Chief Brown was a National Service Rifle Champion in his day and one of the best Service Rifle Coaches that the Army Team ever had.

If you desire to become a successful thousand yard shooter it is important to keep a scorebook. In studying the pattern of the rifle you may find that the pattern may have as many as three stages to its movement of shots caused by heating of the barrel from fired rounds. A base temperature should be established and elevation will be added or subtracted according to the base temperature. Light conditions will also effect the elevation. Mirage and wind conditions should also be studied.

Charles D. Davis

CHARLES D. DAVIS

SFC, US Army

Running Target Section, USAMU

SHOOTING ACCOMPLISHMENTS - SFC MOELLER

- 1968 Won Running Boar Match, Hamburg, Germany.
 Won Running Boar Match, Eskilstuna, Sweden.
 Finland, Running Deer Match.
 Won Running Deer Match, Finland.
- 1969 Nordic Championships Winner, Running Boar & Deer, Oslo, Norway.
- 1971 Won U.S. Championships.

WHAT MAKES A CHAMPION SHOOTER - SFC MOELLER

I was fortunate to be assigned to the USAMU when the unit needed running boar shooters.

The team started from what was left from the running deer shooters.

The rifles we had were made in the unit shop. We didn't really know what would make a good running boar rifle. We made minor changes to the rifles, more weight was added to the end of the barrel, and the stocks were made wider.

The telescopes we used were made up with a single dot diamond. The three dot system didn't come in until a year later.

The period from 1966-1969 saw many changes take place in running boar equipment. Many of the features that are now built into the rifles on the market today were first built and tested by this unit.

After an individual has made a try-out period and has most of the qualities to make a running boar shooter, he will need a rifle that fits him perfectly, along with the best trigger on the market.

He will also need a telescope system that will give him the right lead for every legal speed the target will run at. Also a stop watch that will break a second down in tenths so the shooter will know what setting he will place on his scope for that speed.

The shooter will also need a shooting jacket that will give him that solid feeling when he places the rifle to his shoulder. It must be made so that it doesn't roll up, or get caught on the stock when he places the rifle into position.

Competitive experience will help considerably. I had some competitive experience in service rifle shooting when I started shooting running boar. I had won one high power match and three smallbore matches all at post level. This was the extent of matches I had won.

After I had shot running boar long enough to shoot winning scores I had trouble winning that first match in competition. It took me two years to win my first match in running boar.

Most of my problems were knowing what the other shooters had for a score. Also not enough confidence in myself under match conditions. A competitor must shoot in enough matches to build up this confidence. The more matches he wins, the more confidence he gets in himself, his performance and his equipment.

Sticking to the fundamentals of shooting running boar.

The shooter has to have a system to deliver each shot.

1. Feet position so he can swing with the same ease each way, and not try to move his feet after each shot.

2. Point at the same place when in the ready position.

3. Come into position at the same speed each time.

4. Move with the target. As the target appears you have to point at the aiming point and get the body moving at the same speed as the target. You do this by looking so hard at the aiming point that the body moves right with the target. Once the body gets moving at the same speed as the target, and the dot gets close to the aiming point you have to squeeze the trigger until the shot goes off while keeping all concentration on the aiming point and follow through as the shot goes off. He must use the same system to deliver all shots.

Edmund O. Moeller Jr.
EDMUND O. MOELLER, JR.
SFC, US Army
Running Target Section, USAMU

SHOOTING ACCOMPLISHMENTS - SFC BOYLE

1966 Member National Championship Team (Service Rifle).
Interservice Long Range Champion.

1969 National Champion, Running Target Mixed Runs.
CISM Team Member.

1970 Interservice Running Target Champion.

1973 Interservice Champions (Service Rifle).
Distinguished Riflemans Badge.
President's 100 (5 times).

WHAT MAKES A CHAMPION SHOOTER - SFC BOYLE

Many essays, books, and opinions have gone into the subject of what it takes to become a champion. One must believe that every champion has had to learn, control, perfect and execute the many factors that have made him a champion.

When a shooter has decided to set his goal on becoming a champion, he is faced with many difficult factors he has to overcome, personal goals he must aim at, total dedication towards his goals, and a supreme confidence he will succeed in the end!

I can only explain and emphasize the key factors that I believe a shooter must learn, control, perfect and execute to become a champion.

First, I believe you must have an earnest interest in shooting whether it is at an adolescence age or in your junior years. If at that time you are fortunate to continue on to greater things in shooting, your interest and motivation should increase. Your earliest competitive years are where you build the character trait foundation necessary to help you later becoming a champion shooter. These character traits of course involve determination, dedication, a winning attitude, an ability to control inner pressures and seek out any mental or mechanical aid that will put you ahead of the rest in later competitive years.

As you progress up the shooting ladder you encounter other factors such as match pressure, the need to perfect your own individual technique, the goals you set for yourself, and many other factors that have to be met head on. It is well known that an intelligent person can absorb, comprehend, analyze, and solve a problem much quicker than a less intelligent individual. Chances are if a shooter is above average in intelligence he will have a greater chance to succeed, due to the fact that he will have the capacity to absorb greater quantities of information, decipher it and use some of it as a plus factor in attaining his goals.

One of the most important points to make is one that involves making a young or new shooter aware of the goals he can or attempt to attain. This is best done by exposure, telling a shooter what can be attained (goals) if he should choose to dedicate himself to achieve them. In this way a shooter is aware of what he is aiming at, and he sets about setting his sights on personal goals for himself. Of course clinics to Army areas, ROTC units, civilian gun clubs and saturation of the news media on unit and individual accomplishments are all related to exposure.

Another important consideration to consider is that a potential champion must be encompassed in a shooting environment if he is to progress rapidly. The USAMU here is of course the nearest to the ideal environment a shooter can hope for. If a shooter after a period of time does not progress gradually upward to the champion level, chances are the shooter does not quite have what it takes and will probably never attain champion status.

Possibly one reason a shooter never reaches champion status is that he does not possess a winning attitude. To achieve this attitude one starts early by winning a few matches or reaching a few of his small goals. This instills a self confidence in him that he can attain any goal he sets his mind to. To some the attitude of a champion appears to indicate overconfidence and in some cases arrogance! This attitude is developed through years of practice and match experience, brought to a peak

by the individual psyching himself up to control great pressure. A shooter can only hope to attain those results that he is presently physically and mentally capable of attaining. In other words, a R/T shooter who has only been able to shoot a 560X600 in a practice situation, cannot truthfully expect to shoot a 580X600 in a match pressure situation. It is true that some champion shooters do not psyche themselves up in a practice session and therefore shoot scores lower than he will fire in a match situation. Other champion shooters use practice to experiment new techniques that will be used later to raise their match scores. Whichever method a shooter uses toward obtaining a winning attitude is in most cases personal and if it works for him it is the correct one. A person with this winning attitude does not anticipate losing and thusly does not prepare himself mentally for losing. This is why a champion is not a good loser. To sum up a winning attitude and quote the great past coach of the Green Bay Packer football team, "Winning isn't everything, it's the only thing"!

Even when a champion attains his higher goals, he has to realize that to stay where he is at he may have to dedicate himself even more to achieve higher goals. He then utilizes all his experience, technical know how, in improving his score potential by possibly devising or evaluating newer training techniques, new or better equipment, anything that will give him the edge over the rest of his peers. In actuality the champion had to practice these factors to some degree all along the way to become a champion.

In the past paragraphs I have explained what I believe are key factors in becoming a champion. If you are one of the selected few who become a champion, you can look back and realize deep down a tremendous inner satisfaction, a satisfaction attained only after in some cases years of hard work and set backs. The opportunity for a shooter to become a National, World, or Olympic Champion is open to most everyone but usually only a few will have the fierce drive, determination and dedication necessary to achieve one of these titles. This is what becoming a champion is all about!

Patrick J. Boyle

PATRICK J. BOYLE
SFC, US Army
Running Target Section, USAMU

SHOOTING ACCOMPLISHMENTS - SGT REIBER

- 1963 National Junior Service Rifle Champion (Camp Perry).
Member of Two Man Team winner of Jackson Trophy.
- 1964 Member of Two Man Team winner of Jackson Trophy (broke National Record).
Team member winning team Minuteman Trophy (Camp Perry), 3d Army ROTC.
- 1965 National Collegiate Service Rifle Champion (Camp Perry).
- 1968 National Collegiate Service Rifle Champion.
- 1971 8th Army Champion (Service Rifle) and winning team.
Hawaii Regional Winner.
- 1973 Member of National Records Teams Running Target.
- a. 40 Shot Normal Run Team.
 - b. 40 Shot Fast Run Team.
 - c. 40 Shot Standard Running Boar Team.
 - d. 40 Shot Mixed Run Team.
- Distinguished Service Rifle.
Twice member of President's Hundred - 1963-1965.

WHAT MAKES A CHAMPION SHOOTER - SGT REIBER

Champion shooters of Olympic caliber are never born as such. They may have a gifted ability where by they excel in the sport rapidly, but there are definite factors which contribute to becoming a champion shooter. These include opportunities, training, dedication, competition and desire.

Opportunities are an important aspect of becoming a champion shooter. He must have the opportunity to begin at an early age since all great athletes are never born overnight. It takes time to develop individual traits in becoming a champion. This was my case. At the age of twelve my dad introduced me to the sport. He never tried to push me along, but let me progress at my own pace. Young shooters should never be pushed.

The needs of the shooter are very important. By needs I mean the environment in which he has to develop within. He must have the equipment which he feels will give him that extra edge over fellow shooters. New shooters should never start out with equipment they cannot handle.

Facilities also play an important role. The shooter must have some place where he can practice, as much or little as he deems necessary. New shooters tend to shoot too much without paying attention to the basic fundamentals. They feel the more they shoot the better they become, but usually they tear down what they have learned. A practice session where fundamentals are applied and a shooter concentrates on what he is doing pays off more in the long run. The shooter must be able to devote almost all of his time to shooting and not be bothered with unnecessary paperwork and scheduled meetings. His mental attitude must be directed toward a performance level and that alone. Constant interruptions only hinder ones performance level. In other words, training schedules should be tailored to meet the needs of the shooter. This unit provides that atmosphere for developing shooters and has contributed to a relative amount of my success.

Not only must a shooter have the opportunity, facilities and equipment, but he must also have the dedication it takes to become a champion. He must work long and hard, and gain almost no recognition. He must work into his schedule match experience to combat that unexpected pressure associated with competition. He must learn to control his nervousness through continuous participation in competitive

events. He must be able to think for himself, make timely decisions and carry out all fundamentals known to him. When an individual can obtain these factors, he may then in time become a champion.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "James M. Reiber". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "James" and last name "Reiber" clearly legible, and "M." as a middle initial.

JAMES REIBER
SGT, US Army
Running Target Section, USAMU

CHAPTER 5

TRAP AND SKEET

SHOOTING ACCOMPLISHMENTS - MAJ GILBERT

Started shooting competitively as a rifle shooter in 1957. Was a member of the U.S. Army Rifle Team until October 1961, then switched to skeet shooting. Because of duty assignments I quit shooting competitively in 1964 and started again in 1970. The following is a brief highlight of my shooting career.

- | | |
|------|--|
| 1962 | NSSA World 12 Ga Champion Skeet. |
| 1970 | Member U.S. International Skeet Team. Silver Medal Team Event. |
| 1972 | Runner Up Champion NSSA International Skeet Championships. |
| 1973 | Captain of the All American International Skeet Team. |
| 1973 | Interservice Champion, International Skeet and Trap. |
| 1973 | Member of the U.S. Skeet and Trap Team, World Moving Target Championships, Melbourne, Australia. Silver Medal Trap Team. |
| 1973 | Member of the U.S. Skeet Team, Tournament of Americas, Mexico City. |

WHAT MAKES A CHAMPION SHOOTER - MAJ GILBERT

How many times have you heard someone say, "he was born a champion," I don't believe that anyone was born a champion but became one as a result of his efforts and hard work. International Shotgun shooting is a unique sport because it doesn't require an exceptional amount of strength or size. I do feel that it requires a certain amount of athletic ability and coordination. International shotgun shooters are made of all sizes and shapes and is not restricted to a particular sex.

There are many factors that contribute toward the development of an International Shotgun Champion. These factors will vary from shooter to shooter but I feel the most important ones are: Learn to shoot at an early age; proper training during the initial stages of learning; competitive experience and finally complete dedication to the sport with definite goals.

I believe that a shooter will have a better chance of becoming a champion if he starts shooting early in life. I feel this is true because of the years of hard work and training that it takes to become a champion in any form of shooting. It is important that the young beginner has a competent coach or someone who has a great deal of knowledge about International shotgun shooting to teach the proper fundamentals and techniques. Habits or techniques learned during the early stages, be they good or bad, will continue throughout a shooters career. The young shooter should progress at his or her own pace and not be pushed beyond their capabilities. If pushed too hard, as is the case in some father child relationships, the beginner will lose interest and the desire to continue. The desire to compete and to be a winner must be instilled in a shooter in the early stages of his training.

Proper training in any type of shooting is vitally important if one is to be successful. It makes no difference whether he is the young aspiring champion or one who has years of experience and has proven his ability.

It is my feeling that training should be divided into two categories. Fundamentals and techniques of shooting and mental discipline or the training of the mind. Each one is just as important as the other.


There are certain basic fundamentals that will apply to just about all International Shotgun Shooters, however some of the techniques will not. It is during the training periods that the young shooter finds what works best for him and strives to perfect it. The International Shotgun Shooter must apply himself just as hard in practice as he does in actual competition if he is to succeed. If a shooter cannot apply himself one-hundred-percent both mentally and physically during training, then I feel that he should stop for that particular day. If he doesn't apply himself then he is accepting less than he is capable of doing and this will carry over into his competitive shooting. Can one over train? I feel that he can. The amount of training necessary will vary from one individual to the other, but when a shooter trains too much, he is tired mentally and physically. To continue under these circumstances will cause mistakes, and loss of confidence. Records of progress should be kept and especially a record or means of identifying problem areas. These problem areas should receive special attention during training. The International Shotgun Shooter should not hesitate to try a new idea or technique if he thinks it will improve his performance.

Mental discipline or training of the mind is probably the most important factor in the development of a shooting champion. I've seen shooters lose a match just because they were not able to control their emotions or the pressure of competition. Anyone who competes feels this pressure or nervousness. The champion shooter has learned to control this so that it does not affect his performance. Learning to control your emotions, reactions and mind during a competition is the key to combating pressure. A shooter has to develop his ability to concentrate completely on his performance and not let any outside interference break this concentration. Mental training involves learning to have confidence in your ability and your equipment. Mental discipline and confidence is not learned overnight but through years of hard work and experience.

Match experience is most essential to the developing champion. It is during competition that he learns to apply fundamentals, techniques and mental discipline under pressure. He learns to adjust to different situations such as light conditions, background, speed of the targets. He gains confidence in his ability to perform under match conditions and learns to make adjustments to cope with problems in his performance. Attending matches gives the shooter the opportunity to observe and talk to other competitors good and bad and from all walks of life. This is the opportunity to pick up the new ideas and techniques.

The final factor that makes a shooting champion is his dedication to the sport and intense desire to win. He is willing to sacrifice whatever is necessary to become a champion. The champion shooter hangs in there during periods of poor performance when the average shooter would get discouraged and quit. He doesn't give up until the last shot is fired. He loves competition and is happy only when he wins. The champion shooter sets his goal and does not let anything interfere with his achieving that goal.

So what you hear someone say that a shooter is a "born champion" don't you believe it. He is a champion because he has worked long and hard to be one.


KENNETH D. GILBERT
MAJ, US Army
Trap and Skeet Division, USAMU

SHOOTING ACCOMPLISHMENTS - CPT WHITAKER

- 1971 New York State Champion.
Holder or co-holder of five National Records.
- 1972 Interservice Champion.
- 1972 NSSA International Champion.
- 1972 Olympic Team Alternate.
- 1972 Pennsylvania State Champion.
- 1972 Member, Sports a Field All American International Team.

WHAT MAKES A CHAMPION SHOOTER - CPT WHITAKER

The graduation process from shooter to winner and from winner to champion is one that evolves through all the subtleties of the mental aspects of shooting, ability assumed as a common factor.

Every aspiring international skeet shooter is continually searching for that secret formula of instant success-- that short cut to stardom, particularly when he transfers to the international circuit from the domestic one after having enjoyed winning scores. Basically, we are too impatient!

Many champions have expressed their criteria for success within the shooting community, and invariably the key factor or underlying theme revolves around concentration, or control of the mental faculties. If there does exist an instant success package marketable for immediate consumption, it has to be concentration. As the ability to "tune out and turn on" is such a personal one, and is equally as diversified as our individual personalities, the secret of how to accomplish the task is a quest each shooter must resolve for himself. I have found it just as impossible to learn the how from them as you, the reader, will learn from me, for I can't relate to the how as expressed by them. I obviously have not perfected my own omnipotent control as I do not hold the title of The World Champion. I will attempt to describe my observations and reflections in retrospect during those instances when I have been successful.

Every time the opportunity arises to practice under less than ideal conditions, do so. Obviously a shooter must apply himself in practice just as he would under match conditions, yet the ability to learn how to concentrate is better accomplished when the mental exertion is required due to real or imagined conditions. That perfect round in practice is much more significant when you had to force your attention from other mental distractions, than the one you enjoyed when you were one bundle of shooting enthusiasm.

Establish definite goals in practice--have a purpose when you walk out on the practice field. If your objective that particular day is to concentrate on station practice, or problem birds, do so, and don't be influenced into shooting a round "with the fellows." Similarly, there exists a point in time when you must strive for aggregate score to reinforce a mental relationship in a match. If you have never compiled four perfect rounds in succession in practice, and the requirement exists to do under competitive conditions, a situation exists which you can't relate to, and mentally you are defeated because of an inability to associate with a significant learning experience.

Concentrate on one bird at a time. This simple mental fundamental can't be overemphasized. Don't think aggregate, standing within the field of competition, or the bird you just missed. Concentrate on each target in succession. I have found that when I'm shooting my best, I'm all but oblivious as to what particular station I'm on. I've actually experienced mental blanks as to whether or not I've shot all the required targets from one particular station, and done so in proper sequence. I would like to expand the opening sentence of this paragraph to read don't think! I'm convinced that the perfect skeet shooter would be the one who could turn the mental toggle switch to the "off" position, and walk out on the field a complete void. My personal experience is that if I mentally remind myself of a particular performance on a given station it has a negative effect, i. e., "be sure and follow through at high 4...lost!"

Be hungrily aggressive; there is a certain degree of reckless abandon that is a manifestation of a positive attitude. So many times I've watched shooters who radiated or telegraphed a miss prior to calling for the bird--a visible effect of a mental uncertainty they experienced at that time.

Don't be influenced by the presence or absence of the 'heavy-holders' at any given match. You are the shooter against whom you are competing--there exists no one-on-one physical confrontation with your competition in skeet shooting. If you shoot the best score, you are the champion; similarly, if you are complacent in the fact that you can defeat any of the shooters present, your concentration is broken by a relaxed mental attitude. Strive for a record breaking score, if necessary, to fabricate your own competitive environment.


Don't psych yourself out by the importance of the shoot. It's another skeet field, and the rounds are shot in the same sequence in accordance with ISU rules...just another two or three hundred bird match.

I think it is worth looking at the Russian shooters with respect to their attitude towards the game. The only time you are aware of their presence is at the range, be it practice or match day. You don't see them involved with any of the potential social distractions that invariably surround a shooting trip away from home. All sight-seeing, shopping, socializing and celebrating is done after the competition. They are present to win! This is the type of dedication that all of us must submit ourselves to if we are truly striving to be world champions.

I would like to relate an experience I witnessed by The World Champion, Eugene Petrov of the Soviet Union. The shooting conditions in Moscow were perfectly horrible with respect to target irregularity. Petrov was working on a perfect score for the day, and was shooting doubles at station seven. The low house bird jumped straight up approximately a foot and half just as he shot, in an obvious irregular attitude not attributed to wind conditions. All of us on the squad were outraged at the referees ruling of lost and felt the bird should have been repeated; at the end of the round I told him I felt he had been cheated, and fully expected him to protest the ruling. He merely shrugged his shoulders, as though nothing had transpired, and proceeded to apologize to us for the quality of the referees. The man's emotional stability and obvious mental prowess characterize that necessary to win consistently at the world level.

I have covered some of the fundamental emotional and mental conditions that I feel will describe the character of the champion. They are basic, necessary, and have been expounded by former

Good Shooting,


JAMES P. WHITAKER
CPT, US Army
Skeet Division, USAMU

SHOOTING ACCOMPLISHMENTS - SP4 SMITH

1973 Holder of four National Records.
1973 Co-holder of two National Records.

WHAT MAKES A CHAMPION SHOOTER - SP4 SMITH

Wanting to be a Champion at International Skeet is not any different than wanting to be a winner at any challenge. It is an individual effort based upon the degree of perfection one is willing to strive for, the sacrifices he is ready to make and the goals he has set out to achieve.

He must be an individual at all times realizing what it takes to establish the mental characteristics of disregarding all things except the singleton target.

At times, he must isolate himself into extreme egotism but always retaining good sportsmanship.

He must be able to organize his mind the instant it is needed avoiding all conditions which are distracting and learn to work each target individually.

Being able to analyze every move made while in the act of shooting be it practice or competitive, is definite.

He must be able to motivate his controls into constantly improving; never to concede and impressing only himself.

He is always deliberate, competing entirely against himself.

Creating a champion can only be accomplished by the individual, in his own way, so he may be able to successfully establish or master whatever ambition he has chosen.

I am not as yet, the ultimate champion in International Skeet...as it is my supreme objective. But I hope I have touched upon something that will enlighten you as it has me.

Good Shooting,



DAVID N. SMITH
SP4, US Army
Skeet Division, USAMU

CHAPTER 6

COACHES

SHOOTING ACCOMPLISHMENTS - MR. KRILLING

1955	Service Rifle Distinguished.
1957	1st CISM Team, Athens, Greece. Europe Service Rifle Champion.
1958	CISM Team, Arnheim, Holland. Record Setting Service Rifle Team.
1959	Joined the International Rifle Team, Fort Benning.
1960	CISM Team, Brazil.
1961	CISM Team, Athens, Greece.
1962	CISM Team, Brazil.
1963	Silver Medal, Pan Am Games, Sao Paulo, Brazil. International Distinguished.
1964	National 300 Meter Champion.
1964	National English Match Champion.
1965	National Prone Champion. First Man in History to Shoot 3200 Smallbore.
1966	One Gold Medal, 2 Bronze Medals, World Championships, Wiesbaden.
1967	National 3 Position Int'l Smallbore Champion.
1968	CISM, Fontainebleau, France. Gold Medal 3 Position Smallbore.
1969	CISM, Granada, Spain.
1970	Coach of U.S. World Team in Phoenix.
1971-72	Coach of Mexican National Team.
1973	Coach of International Team, Fort Benning.
	During shooting career I was on 67 national individual and team records.
	Four Gold, one Silver and two Bronze Medals in International World Competition.

WHAT MAKES A CHAMPION SHOOTER - MR. KRILLING

Some people believe the champion shooters are born with a rifle in their hands and have the natural ability to become a champion without a great deal of work. This is far from correct. It has been proven that it takes at least eight years of shooting experience before an individual can be expected to win a medal in International competition.

We also find that although size, and shape don't have a great deal to do with the final outcome in a shooter's career, his intelligence, desire, determination, and confidence have a great deal to do with it.

All medal winners in International shooting are above average intelligence. They have a confidence, that in some cases makes them seem almost overbearing or obnoxious. They have a determination and desire that drives them through all the hard work and pain that is necessary to become a champion.

Where does it all start? A person may not be born a shooter, but he may be lucky enough to have parents with a shooting background that will start him at the young age that is necessary to give him time to develop into a champion. The important thing here is that he learns in a way that he enjoys what he is doing because there are so many other things he can enjoy doing with much less effort.

The next step is when he starts into high school and starts shooting on the school team. At this level, shooting no longer becomes fun, but more of a challenge, because you have goals to reach. The first is making the team; the second shooting on the team to beat other schools, and the third becoming the high individual. During his four years in high school he has learned basic International positions and some of the techniques needed to develop himself toward being a champion.

In college he has four more years to develop himself. In some cases a little better level coach is available, and a little better equipment, but here he has one more goal he must reach in his step up the ladder and that is to become All American, because by becoming All American he is noticed nationally and may get a chance to come to the AMU, where the best International shooters in the world receive their final development.

The AMU provides them with the support that is necessary for the shooter to develop into a medal winner. Here he receives the best equipment, ammunition and shop support available, but even more important, he is able to shoot with the best shooters in the world, as well as receive advance coaching and guidance. He will learn the most advance positions and techniques, but even with every thing available at this level, we find that it still takes at least two more years of hard work to develop into a champion.

He gains confidence through a well planned training program. Here he plans his goals and he learns to reach these goals one step at a time. He soon develops to a point where he starts setting national records, becoming nationally distinguished and a National Champion. These are the final steps that are necessary before your step into the international picture. At this point a training program is laid out for him that requires more psychology, confidence, desire, hardships and just plain hard work than any other time in his shooting career.

Your sights have been raised toward that World or Olympic Gold Medal but to get there you first have to make the final tryouts for the team and then make the U.S. Team.

We find it is better to make a team at the level of the Pan American Games first. There he has a much better chance to win a medal in his first international competition. The level of competition may not be as high as the Olympics or the World Championships, but it gives him a great deal of confidence and he learns the lessons that he needs to know to medal in the higher levels. In this competition he also can reach one more goal and that is becoming International Distinguished which he does by placing in an international competition.

After the Pan Am Games you take everything you learned in all previous competition along with any changes you have to make in order to increase your score and you start a step by step training program toward the World Championships or the Olympics each which require the maximum effort.

There will be times when you will wonder if it's all worth it? The years of developing, the pain and agony and the separation from your family.

All this has to be weighed against the final goal, being a gold medal winner and a World Champion.

This is all answered when you step upon the stand to receive your gold medal after winning and they play the National Anthem. Then you know it's all been worth it and already your mind is working on the plans necessary to win in the next competition.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "William E. Krilling". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "William" and last name "Krilling" clearly legible.

WILLIAM E. KRILLING

GS-09, DAC

Coach, International Rifle Division, USAMU

SHOOTING ACCOMPLISHMENTS - OSCAR K. WEINMEISTER

Oscar K. Weinmeister, Sr., a Department of the Army civilian employee with the U.S. Army Marksmanship Unit has been shooting and coaching competitive handguns for the past three decades.

Weinmeister entered the Army at Atlanta, Georgia, in November 1934 and served on combat duty during World War II. For his military service he has been decorated with the Legion of Merit, Bronze Star Medal and Army Commendation Medal. He was awarded the Distinguished Pistol Badge in 1951 for his outstanding pistol marksmanship.

While serving 30 years active duty with the Army, Weinmeister fired competitively in National type .22 caliber, Center Fire and .45 caliber. He fired in his first match in company level competition in 1937 and became a member of the U.S. Army Infantry Pistol Team in 1940. He won the Georgia State Pistol Championship in 1952 and 1953 in three-gun competition. In the same years he fired on the .22 caliber team which won the championships of the National Matches at Jacksonville, Florida, and the Kentucky State Championships where they established a .22 Caliber Team National Record. He also held the NMC National Record with Center Fire in 1953 with a score of 298, fired in Coral Gables, Florida.

Weinmeister was a member of the 1962 International Center Fire team in the Conseil du Sport Militaire (CISM) Matches held in Buenos Aires, Argentina and was a member of the Army "Blue" team in three-gun competition during the years 1951 through 1956.

Prior to his retirement from the Army as a Chief Warrant Officer W4 in 1965, Weinmeister served as Head Coach for the U.S. Army Pistol Team from 1958 through 1965. The U.S. Army Pistol Team made its first clean sweep of the National Matches in 1962. Since his retirement he returned to the Marksmanship Unit where he authored and compiled several of the Marksmanship Training Manuals. He served as Officer in Charge of the U.S. Army Pistol Team in 1969-1970. He is now serving in the USAMU as the Coordinator of Marksmanship Training for the Continental United States. His duties now include administering the Active Army, Army Reserve and National Guard Distinguished Marksmanship Award Program.

TO BECOME A CHAMPION SHOOTER

There is no substitute for knowledge and experience in becoming a shooting champion. This fact establishes the need for a marksmanship training program that will improve the shooting skill, provide increased knowledge of shooting techniques and motivate the individual and team competitor to continuously strive toward producing the winning score. Marksmanship skill of championship caliber has never been acquired quickly. The champion shooter is the result of astute coaching, possession of a commanding knowledge of how to employ the fundamentals of marksmanship, manual and mental dexterity, a consuming desire to excel and a willingness to work hard during the long hours of practice and preparation for match competition.

There are four phases in the development of a shooter to be a champion; exploring, questioning, organizing, and accomplishing his goals.

First, the new shooter finds himself becoming interested in the skill of marksmanship by association with competitive marksmen or a shooting coach. The tyro senses that he is involved in a challenging, skillful endeavor. In his limited experience, he has learned that this is a dynamic sport and embraces certain vital factors that arouse his curiosity. His continued participation is sustained by the encouragement and help he receives from his contemporaries. He has lasting interest only if he is able to improve or feels that he has the potential to become a contender.

Secondly, initial exploration is followed by inquisitive expansion of his knowledge of the fundamentals and techniques of shooting. A new shooter's learning possibilities are limited if he is left alone to ponder the multitude of factors that make up the framework of shooting skill. Beyond a certain point, if he is to gain an understanding, he must ask questions, look for the answers to his problems and devote extensive discussion to the methods of employing the fundamentals. Real conversation begins when the developing shooter does not fully grasp or accept the answers he is getting. A meeting of minds results and there ensues an exchange of ideas and information between coach and shooter. During this period the shooter may veer toward excessive self doubt or lean in the direction of overconfidence. The skillful coach however can bring him back to the middle ground of solid progress. Less and less the shooter is merely probing, he repeatedly convinces himself that he is approaching a new plateau of performance from which he will not retreat. He has now materially expanded his knowledge of marksmanship.

Thirdly, intelligent coaching then helps the shooter to hurdle the next important challenge, organization of his shooting knowledge into a technique of operation. Organization of a full grasp of the fundamentals, factors and principles of marksmanship contributes to the shooter's ability to attain control of his performance. His system of operation is peculiar to him and now he can progress on his own at a rate suitable to his capacity. There has come into being a degree of personal accomplishment that generates confidence that the goals will be achieved; winning in competition.

Fourth and last, the consummation. Personal coaching becomes a sustaining factor when the inducement to accomplishment is reached. Instruction is replaced by counselling and guidance. If the established method of operation is momentarily disrupted, the resourceful coach and the enterprising shooter will devise a corrective action to overcome the error in performance. The relentless adherence to a system that produces unswerving control will result in consistently high scores. By exercising skillful judgment, the shooter can overcome variations of the will, of the weather and of the competition. He has now developed a determination of how he will accomplish his end. The degree of accomplishment depends upon the peculiar nature of this entity he has created. The limitations, if any, lie in the ambition, force of character, completeness of knowledge, confidence, enthusiasm and his response to group incentive. Whether he will fulfill his desire to become a champion is ultimately only his business.

Oscar K. Weinmeister

OSCAR K. WEINMEISTER
GS-09, DAC
CONUS Coordinator, USAMU

SHOOTING ACCOMPLISHMENTS - MR. KEIFER

- Distinguished Pistol Shot
- USMA Pistol Team '40-41-42-43
- U.S. Constabulary Pistol Team '47-48-49
- U.S. Army Pistol Team '50-52-53-54-55
- CISM Pistol Team '57-59
- Champion First Fiesta of Five Flags '52
- Fort Benning Pistol Champion '55
- Adjutant '64 Olympic Team
- Adjutant '67 Pan American Team
- CISM Pistol Team Captain '68-69
- NRA & ISU Referee

WHAT MAKES A CHAMPION SHOOTER - MR. KEIFER

On the verge of victory, many falter and fail to demonstrate the courage and greatness that separates the participants, really merely a matter of degree...from the winner, for there is only one winner and he is called the champion.

In spite of the thousands of words on the subject of champions, like an iceberg with only 10% visible, probably more remains to be learned about their development than is presently known.

The list of traits must remain forever incomplete since we must consider each as an individual. What may make one person a winner does not necessarily apply to another champion.

Two traits, ATTITUDE and CONTROL play a most important part in the makeup and personality of any champion. Without these two basic ingredients, he will never be one.

Being a champion is an attitude in itself...a winning frame of mind. In competition, his will to win is greater than that of all others competing. A passionate overwhelming desire forced him to pay the price, make the sacrifices, endure the monotony, pain and drudgery along the road to the pinnacle. He knows loneliness as well as exultation for he has experienced them to a greater degree than you or I.

Many fine competitors drop out because they did not have this singleness of purpose that was greater than all else in life. To win IS LIFE for the champion. It is not unrealistic to call a champion a fanatic. To him winning is not the most important thing. Winning is the ONLY thing.

The will to win, since it is an attitude, is more important than ability. Ability can improve with work, practice and coaching, but the attitude must be there as part of the body, soul, and brain since it is the motivating drive that forces him onward and upward. Attitude makes the work and practice worthwhile and meaningful. He is WIN oriented and blind to distractions.

Included in this attitude of the champion is confidence gained by careful, meticulous preparation of himself and equipment. He is a true professional. He makes fewer mistakes. He remembers. He knows what he has to do and does it because it is important to make not even one mistake.

• The champion has control, physical and even more so, mental. He can stand the heat of pressure. He is emotionally conditioned to win. He will not let a moment of carelessness or loss of concentration occur.

- Most shooters know how to shoot a good shot. The higher the level of competition, the more it becomes a battle of nerves between the top contenders. The champion will be the one who maintained control of himself to the highest degree.

The perfect score fired in practice may be important for it instills confidence, but it does not count for record. Practice for the champion is a compass to point to areas of improvement and to give him an equipment status check. The champion strives to control his training so as to be at his strongest during competition. Many do not become champions because they fire their best scores in practice. They cannot stand the strain of competition.

Many traits are found in champions. The list is unlimited. All are important but in varying degrees according to their personalities. The man with the resolute ATTITUDE and CONTROL, actually WILLS himself to be the winner and CHAMPION. He refuses to settle for less.

.....and there he will remain until someone with greater will, greater control, more resolute attitude, wills otherwise.



FREDERICK J. KIEFER

GS-11, DAC

International Coordinator, USAMU

SHOOTING ACCOMPLISHMENTS - MSG SMITH

1955	Member U.S. Army Team, Camp Perry, Ohio.
1956	Member U.S. Army Team, Camp Perry, Ohio.
1957	Member U.S. Army Team, Camp Perry, Ohio.
1958	Member U.S. Shooting Team, World Championships, Moscow.
1959	Member U.S. Shooting Team, Pan American Games, Chicago. Gold Medal, International Center Fire, Individual; Gold Medal, International Center Fire, Team; Gold Medal, International Rapid Fire, Team.
1960	Member U.S. CISM Team, Athens, Greece. Gold Medal, International Rapid Fire, Individual.
1961	Member U.S. Army Team, Camp Perry, Ohio.
1962	Member U.S. Shooting Team, World Championships, Cairo, Egypt.
1963	Member U.S. Shooting Team, Pan American Games, Sao Paulo, Brazil. Gold Medal, International Rapid Fire Team.
1964	Member U.S. Army Team, Camp Perry, Ohio.
1965	Member U.S. Army Team, Camp Perry, Ohio.
1966	Member U.S. Army Team, Camp Perry, Ohio.
1967	Member, U.S. Shooting Team, Pan American Games, Winnepeg, Canada. Gold Medal, International Rapid Fire Team.
1969	Member U.S. Army Team, Camp Perry, Ohio.
1970	Member U.S. Shooting Team, World Championships, Phoenix, Arizona.
1971	Head Coach, U.S. Army Team, Camp Perry, Ohio.
1973	NCOIC, Pistol Division, U.S. Army Team, Camp Perry, Ohio.

PROFILE OF A CHAMPION - MSG SMITH

There are many types of competitive shooters in the United States: The weekend shooters, the two hour a night shooters, shooters who are satisfied with being second or third place, and the champion, the shooter who will accept nothing short of winning. The weekend shooter is usually not dedicated or motivated. It's a hobby to him. He is usually satisfied with just shooting along with the champion. The two hour a night shooter is a little more dedicated but after his two hours he goes home and forgets shooting altogether. He will never be a champion. Shooters who are satisfied with a second or third place do not have much more going for them. They will never be champions. Champions are never satisfied. They are a hungry lot. They live shooting day and night. They make many sacrifices and their loved ones make many sacrifices. For example, he might enjoy two or three cups of coffee for breakfast but he knows coffee isn't good for shooting so he either cuts down or quits. The same goes for tobacco and his bad drinking habits. His wife and children will also make sacrifices. Their every day lives must be formed around his every day living.

My shooting career started in 1954. Ever since I was a child guns always fascinated me, so it was very easy for me to get into the competitive shooting program in the U.S. Army. I began shooting on a battalion team and I was a winner in my first match. Winning that match gave me the boost to drive myself toward becoming a top competitive shooter. I remember shooting much more than my friends. I was always the first to the range and the last to leave. I couldn't learn fast enough. I constantly sought out shooters with experience to learn more about shooting, and learned quickly to accept everyone's techniques of shooting. I always had an open mind and still do. I believe all shooters should keep eyes and ears open. Maybe an inexperienced shooter will help you in some phase of your performance.

During training a shooter should work on one phase of his technique. Too many little things can be wrong with your performance; it is very difficult to correct them all at once. In training I never shoot for score. I try to perfect my technique. If a shooter can perform in all phases of shooting, the good scores will come. At all times think performance; concentrate on delivering a well controlled shot each time the gun fires. If he can do this in training and it becomes a habit, it will carry over in competition. Never underestimate the aid of dry firing. During dry firing a shooter can see all errors he is making and easily correct them. All phases of shooting can be perfected by dry firing and this includes building confidence in yourself. If a shooter does not have confidence that he can fire well controlled shots at any time, he will never become a champion.

I believe in shooting in as many matches as possible. I think a shooter can learn more by shooting in one match than he can with ten training sessions on the range. If possible, shoot with as many top competitors as you can. Sure, you might get beat, but defeat will give you that drive to learn more to become a better shooter. Defeat makes you hungry; learn from it. This also helps your confidence. You might think "The winner didn't beat me by too many points, he didn't learn anything--I did." You are motivated to work harder and train more to perfect your technique and you are building confidence in yourself. Confidence combined with lessons learned, good training habits, and determination will allow you to perform at your best.


In the shooting sport, I believe, physical conditioning is over emphasized. Physical exercise should be on an individual basis. A shooter should do any exercise he thinks will make him hold the gun still. For example, if a shooter feels that running helps him, let him run. The only exercise I ever did was a few pushups each day and hold the gun and arm extended for as long as 30 or 40 seconds. What I'm saying is I don't believe one particular exercise will help 3 or 4 different shooters. I believe in each shooter doing his own thing. It has been tried in the Army to train a shooting team like a football or baseball team. It just doesn't work. Again I say find an exercise that will help you hold a gun still and stick with it.

My last competition was the 1970 World Championships in Phoenix, Arizona, and I can't say that I've missed it. First of all it gave me an opportunity to devote full time to coaching. I've always enjoyed teaching and coaching so I was constantly observing other coaches; how they performed their duties and applied their techniques in certain situations. I felt, with all my years of shooting experience and the knowledge I've gained from observation, that I could become the best coach in the world. I quickly found out that experience and knowledge are only a small part of coaching. I learned that each shooter must be coached in a way that you can reach that individual. If you have a team of four shooters or forty you are dealing with four or forty individuals. That means a different approach to each shooter.

A good coach must be a salesman; a persuader. First a coach must sell himself. Convince the shooter that if we work together as a team, his scores will rise. Some shooters are set in their ways; therefore, they are hard to get to. But never give up on a person--there is always a way to reach each individual. If you let it be known that you have given up on an individual this will be seen by other shooters on the team, with the result that some of them could lose confidence in you as a coach.

Although I believe you approach each individual in a different way, there are times when a team must be treated the same. For example, you might have a 2670 shooter and a 2550 shooter. These two shooters must be given the same treatment off the firing line. If not you will have a split team. A split team will never perform up to its capabilities. A coach must always be on the alert and prevent preferential treatment to the few top shooters. There are other ways to award the champions.

I have been a firing member of three United States World Championship Teams and three Pan American Teams and on not one of these has there ever been a coach. This I cannot understand. A pistol shooter needs a coach to help him if and when he's in trouble and to encourage him along when he is going great. Many times during the matches I mentioned I wished that I could have looked back and there was a coach available to give me encouragement and to know he would stick with me regardless of the results. All the U.S. Teams that I've been associated with were not teams, we never trained as a team, we were a group of individuals who gathered together to shoot a match, When the United States shooting officials realize that top coaches are needed for training the shooters as a team, the United States will be back on the top in world competition.


AUBREY E. SMITH
MSG, US Army
Pistol Division, USAMU

COACHING ACCOMPLISHMENTS - MSG ROY COMBS

1. Won USAREUR Team Match - New Record - 1962.
2. Won Third Army Team Match - 1963.
3. Won Third Army Team Match - 1965.
4. Was the coach of the Record Holding Long Range Team (Course A) - 1966.
5. Was the coach of the Winning Team Texas State Match (4 Times).
6. Was the coach of the Record Holding Team Long Range at Interservice Matches - 1967.
7. Was the coach of the National Record Holding Team Infantry Trophy and Record still stands - 1967.
8. Was the coach of the Record Holding Team at the Nationals in 1969 (still stands).
9. Was the coach of the Winning National Trophy Team - 1969, 1971, 1972, 1973. Was in Vietnam in 1970.
10. Was the coach of the Record Holding Team (10 Men) at the Interservice Matches - 1973.

WHAT MAKES A CHAMPION SHOOTER

As Head Coach of the Service Rifle Team, USAMU, the first thing I look for in a shooter is a clean cut man with a lot of discipline. One that is willing to work hard and has a strong desire to win. There are a lot of shooters on a team just to be there but they can be weeded out by a coach without too much problem.

The requirements for a shooter to make the All Army Team are:

1. Be willing to work hard.
2. Apply the fundamentals of shooting.
3. Keep an accurate scorebook on every round that is fired down range whether it be for practice or record.
4. Be dedicated to any coach that he shoots for.

There are many things a shooter must do to be a champion and the coaches at USAMU train them to be champions. The training program here is the best in the Army. The shooters are required to take warm up exercises each morning and dry fire each afternoon. As coaches, we make sure that all commands are given the same way so when a shooter goes from one coach to the other he is not confused. The coach makes sure that all plotting sheets are filled out correctly.

In my opinion, to be a champion shooter one has to be dedicated to shooting and apply the fundamentals of shooting. A shooter must watch his night life and drinking habits. Make sure he gets plenty of rest and this must be done day in and day out. One of the most important things I feel is for the shooter to be mentally prepared at all times no matter what the situation may be.



ROY H. COMBS
MSG, US Army
Service Rifle Division, USAMU

COACHING EXPERIENCE FOR RIFLE CHAMPIONSHIPS - MSG THARP

- 1966 Coached 2d Infantry Division to 8th Army Championship.
- 1967 Coached MTU Western Infantry Trophy Team to new record (1113) at Quantico, Virginia, Interservice Match.
- 1972 Coached MTU to High Service Long Range Team Match, Ohio State.
- 1973 Coached U.S. Palma Team to victory over Canada.

RIFLE TEAM COACHING - MSG THARP

A good Rifle Team Coach is never born such, although he may acquire that perfect coordination of brain, eye, and nerve, which will make it easy for him to excel in team coaching. I believe that a good team coach should have three primary essentials. These are coach-shooter relationship, coaching techniques, and the ability to read wind and mirage.

It is my first duty as a Rifle Team Coach to establish a good coach-shooter relationship between myself and my shooters, so that when working together we can produce the highest scores possible. The best way to establish this relationship is by the coach training his shooters to apply the proper shooting fundamentals and in doing so will gain mutual confidence as the training progresses.

A coach that practices the proper coaching techniques will be able to detect and correct bad shooting habits and will be able to hold mistakes to the minimum.


Along with the first two essentials, the one that gives the coach the most problem is that of reading the wind and mirage. ("Mirage" refers to the heat waves or the reflection of light through layers of air of different temperature and density as seen by the naked eye on a warm bright day.) With the telescope some mirage can be seen on all but the coldest days. I know that reading the wind and mirage takes a lot of experience and you must practice as often as you can with your team scope. The best time for you to practice reading the wind and mirage is when your shooters are on the firing line, and you are able to give them the correct wind dope, so they can make the correct sight change on their rifles to place the next shot in the center of the target. By following the above essentials, you also can be a good rifle team coach.

For myself I have been shooting or coaching about 10 years, and one of the goals I have set for myself, is to become one of the best rifle coaches in the Army. I try to keep myself in good physical shape at all times. I smoke but no more than normal. One of the habits I have never gotten into was drinking too much. I never have a drink of anything stronger than water, starting three days before any rifle match. My normal bed time falls between 8 to 9 P.M. and 11 P.M. This gives me at least seven hours of sleep per night.

When I am training for a rifle match and I know that I am going to coach a team during this match, I mentally set a goal to win this match. I start looking at the shooters I am going to fire on the team. Along with observing the shooters firing, I will be looking for the shooter that I know practices good shooting habits. I do not want a shooter that drinks or parties the night before the rifle match.

For the past two years I have been selected as the coach for the U.S. Palma Team, to represent the United States in the Palma Team Matches, held in Canada in 1972 and in the United States at Camp Perry, Ohio, in 1973. In the Palma Match in Canada the U.S. lost the match by 15 points, but with the experience I gained in Canada in 1972, I was able to come back in 1973 at Camp Perry to coach the U.S. Palma Team to victory over Canada by 180 points.

The U.S. Palma Team was selected from the best 20 long range shooters that competed in the National Rifle Matches held at Camp Perry, Ohio. After the team members are selected for the Palma Team, the coach of the team has no training time with the shooters. The only thing I had to go on was the experience of the shooters and my own experience as a rifle coach.



HARRY C. THARP
MSG, US Army
Service Rifle Division, USAMU

SHOOTING ACCOMPLISHMENTS - SFC GUNNARSSON

- 1958 International Match Winner (Meister Trophy), National Matches, Camp Perry, Ohio.
- 1959 Member of Pan American Team fired in Chicago, Illinois. Gold Medal Team - English Match.
- 1963 Member of Pan American Team fired in Sao Paulo, Brazil. Gold Medal Team and new World Record 300 Meter.
- 1964 Olympic Games, Tokyo, Japan. Bronze Medal 300 Meter Individual.
- 1965 Interservice International Champion, 300 Meter.
- 1966 Member of World Championship Team, Wiesbaden, Germany. Bronze Medal Army Rifle Team.

Distinguished Service Rifle and International Rifle.

WHAT MAKES A CHAMPION SHOOTER - SFC GUNNARSSON

Shooting, from my viewpoint, is very similar to most other competitive sports in that to become a champion, the individual athlete must master the mechanics of his sport and train his mind for the demands of his sport. It is on the various aspects of these two factors that I base my success in international rifle competition.

Mastering the mechanics or techniques of a sport is an extremely difficult task which few athletes achieve, and international rifle shooting is no exception. In the early years of training the shooter must be willing to spend hours upon hours of concentrated practice on the rifle range thus sacrificing a great deal of social and family life.

It is necessary to have a covered outdoor range to use in training. This permits the shooter to concentrate entirely on his performance and not have wind and other weather factors hindering and complicating his analysis. If a shooter must train with inferior range facilities, his training can become a frustrating experience from which there is little benefit.

Certainly there is no substitute for excellent rifles, ammunition, and facilities. Without the support of the United States Army Marksmanship Unit, my achievements never would have been possible. In fact, I know of no one in recent years that has become a champion without support of the kind provided by the AMU.

In my early years of shooting the guidance of my coach was very important. If an individual is to master the mechanics of shooting it is extremely important that he use correct techniques and positions in his training. Using incorrect shooting methods will only hinder and delay progress toward the shooter's ultimate goals. A coach can provide the guidance necessary to keep the shooter on the right track toward mastering the shooting mechanics. During most of my international shooting career I was not fortunate enough to have a coach knowledgeable in international shooting. Certainly, lack of this type of coaching during these years slowed progress toward my ultimate goals. The coach can also help in setting up a training program. However, a blanket program is of little value. Each shooter's program must be somewhat unique. No one knows better than the individual shooter his own shortcomings and the areas that he needs to improve upon.

By being assigned to the AMU or a similar such organization I also learned a multitude of information by just being able to mingle, ask questions and watch the more advanced shooters. I feel that this provided a form of indirect or self coaching which was extremely important to my shooting advancement.

When a shooter's performance standards and scores do reach or approach those of championship caliber, there is little that a coach can do as far as the mechanical aspects of shooting; however, a coach can still be of great value. From time to time any shooter will have trouble with his technique or positions and the coach can provide the assistance to get him back on the right track in a minimum amount of time. Whenever I encountered problems I would ask questions, have other shooters observe my training to point out errors and try to iron out my difficulties the first thing in the morning when my body was rested and my mind was sharp. A coach can also be of assistance by taking care of routine administrative work, and keeping menial tasks to a minimum, thus keep the shooter in a near sterile environment. His concentration can then be devoted entirely to his shooting objectives. This is of particular importance just prior to an important match.

One very big help to me in gaining proficiency in the techniques of shooting was my shooting diary. I feel that a diary is a must to insure progress in an orderly and direct manner. One purpose of the diary is to keep track of rifle adjustments, sling positions, placement of the feet and so forth. This is particularly important when a shooter fires three positions and uses several different rifles to participate in as many as six different events. The most important use of the diary is more abstract. Immediately after firing in a position, I would analyze my performance, jot down my feelings, sensations and anything that I felt contributed or detracted from my performance. Intangible factors such as hand or cheek pressure, muscle tension in various parts of the body, and the type of trigger control used are just a few factors which may deserve comment. Mental and concentration thoughts are also important and should be noted. I write down everything that would help me in duplicating or bettering my next training session. Before getting into position for my next training session, particularly if I was working on a new position, I read the diary and analyze what I had accomplished in that position previously; then make my plan of attack. After getting into position I will not start shooting sighting shots before I sensed that my position and hold were right.

To become a champion shooter the mental aspects or psychology of shooting is extremely important that the worlds' best shooters and coaches feel that after becoming proficient in the mechanics that shooting actually becomes more mental than physical.

Proper mental conditioning encompasses several aspects including the ability to fully understand the complexity of international shooting and continuously analyze training progress. Probably the most important factor to becoming a champion is complete dedication to the sport and a compelling desire to win.

Part of my mental training includes planning for important matches. A very important match, to me, is the tryouts for any world team. I always look forward to the next tryout and plan backwards. I know how many days I have to prepare before the tryouts so I set my standards and goals that I want to reach and plan my training schedule accordingly. The tryouts are the most important match because you can not win a medal in world competition if you do not make the team.

Match experience is not only invaluable but necessary to become a champion. Past records indicate that medal winners in world class international rifle competition are very experienced and rookies very rarely win. It is important to compete against the best shooters available and as often as possible to gain the necessary experience. It is through match experience that a shooter learns to handle match pressure. To succeed under the severe strain of world competition the shooter must be able to maintain complete concentration. This requires extreme self discipline of the mental processes involved while shooting. Certainly all champion shooters feel pressure; however, they have the ability to cope with it. Match pressure can actually work for you. Nervous energy can help the shooter be more alert and thus prevent making some errors that cause bad shots. I feel that my mental ability to handle pressure contributed significantly to my success in shooting, particularly on the first day of a three day tryout of multi-day match. Many of the best shooters turn in a relatively poor performance on the first course of fire due to their emotional reactions of the match and by giving a good performance on the first course of fire I often was in excellent position to make the team, whereas many other good shooters had to come from behind to reach their goals.

The sacrifice, dedication, and work required to become a champion is unmeasurable. But when you do stand on the winners platform with a medal around your neck, the American flag being raised and the National Anthem being played for your accomplishments and what you represent you feel proud. This is the moment you have been working for and indeed it does all seem worthwhile.



MARTIN I. GUNNARSSON
SFC, US Army
International Rifle Division, USAMU

SHOOTING ACCOMPLISHMENTS - SFC TIPTON

1958	Distinguished Pistol Shot. Member All Army Team.
1959	Member National Trophy Team.
1960-61	Member All Army Team.
1962-63	Won Second Army Commander's Match.
1963	2600 Club.
1964	Member USARPAC Team.
1969	Coached 3d Army ROTC Rifle Team, which set a new record at Camp Perry.
1972	Line Coach for All Army Team.
1973	Head Coach of the All Army Team.

COACHING CHAMPIONSHIP SHOOTERS - SFC TIPTON

A good coach, in my estimation, is an essential part of every team. The only problem is, again in my opinion, that the majority of the shooting teams do not utilize the coaches position to the greatest advantage. Too many times he is just a figurehead, a hanger-on that is a nice guy to have around, do errands or tell jokes.

A coach must be a carefully selected individual who has an exceptional working knowledge of shooting, a good personality to maintain the proper rapport with the team members as well as all the support personnel along with many other personal qualities that could be listed on and on. But above all he must be completely dedicated to his job, his team and his organization.

I strive to learn every scrap of knowledge from every available source to further my education of shooting and shooters. That is the only way I feel that I can do my job as a coach. The only way that I can be of any benefit to my team and unit.

In order for me to relate how to coach champion shooters and teams is to say exactly how I personally feel about it, what I attempt to do as a coach. My methods, as with any method for any field of endeavor, are not fool-proof nor right all the time. However, I think I have a pretty average going for me.

I do not mean to imply that it is all my doing because without the full cooperation of each individual I come in contact with the job could not be accomplished.

The coach starts off his job by being a buffer zone between the shooter and all administrative matters. This is to allow the shooter to have his mind and actions strictly on the job of shooting. The only time that the shooter comes in contact with these matters is when it is absolutely necessary for direct contact.

Right off this seems to give the indication that the coach pampers the shooter and in a sense that's quite true, to a limit. That I'd like to take up a bit later as I come to dealing with individuals.

Teams as a whole must be dealt with according to the mission, winning, and the good of the whole team. Providing the best instruction, the best equipment, the best conditions available is all part of the coaches job. Training programs are set up to insure that each member receives the most benefit for individuals.

It's hard many times not to play favorites but team morale would hit bottom if any coach does. Every action of a team coach must be impartial, stressing these actions to be toward the good of the team.

Keeping team meetings, as an example, to a minimum but insuring that each one is beneficial. I try to relay all administrative matters twice a day if at all possible and bring out pertinent shooting points either from a shooter or from observation of good points or errors noticed. I keep these meetings short and to the point.

The coach puts in a lot of hours analyzing every action he observes, the scores, training sessions, operation of equipment, conditions, etc. I get together with all other coaches after a days training and we talk over all that has happened that day and if there are changes to be made in team makeup or training I implement it when and where I feel it best. Talking to other coaches and shooters brings about many good ideas that produce winning scores. No one man can lay out a program and his own ideas alone and consistantly produce a winning team.

The coach has quite a bit of administrative work to take care of and many times he puts those duties ahead of his team effort. If at all possible the coach should try to schedule his administrative duties after the days training so that he can be in constant contact with the shooters.

Believe me, I'm not trying to imply that the coach is overworked, taken advantage of, spending all his waking hours doing paperwork and such. The shooter, as every shooter knows, has many hours work after the training day ends. It's all part of the game. If a man is dedicated and has the love for shooting necessary for championship scores, be he shooter or coach, he doesn't mind the time and effort put forth.

Coaching a team as a whole could go on and on. It is all very important but I feel that actually dealing with the teams and individual shooters is the important item to be discussed here.

A line coach, the coach who stands on the firing line with his team while they produce record-breaking scores is the backbone of any coaching staff--should your team be fortunate enough to be so staffed. He must know each individual shooter, better than his own mother does; his likes and dislikes, his moods, his complete individual makeup, his equipment, his family, what irritates him under what conditions--in other words just what it takes to assist that individual to produce that winning score.

Don't get me wrong. The coach cannot make a shooter put those rounds in the highest scoring ring, but he can see to it that the conditions are as right as rain for him to do it.

Knowing how a shooter reacts to various methods of coaching on the line while shooting is a must for the line coach. As an example, a particular shooter was on the line and his first round was a six (6) at twelve (12) o'clock. He thought about it for a minute and decided to come down two (2) clicks. His next shot was a six (6) at six (6) o'clock. He turned to his coach and asked what he should do. Immediately the coach shot back at him to take one click off and that would bring him in. He did and it did. Another shooter might have required a long discussion to arrive at what he thought would correct the errors. That particular shooter wanted an immediate answer from his coach and got it.

Some shooters need to be constantly told how well they shoot, others want to discuss fundamentals. Some don't want to discuss a thing, some want to be told exactly what to do. Each shooter must be dealt with as an individual and the coach must know how to meet his individual needs. I do want to emphasize that the coach, in meeting these needs, must not let the shooter use him as a crutch because he will not be able to perform in the individuals or without the coach standing by his warm side. This will take away from the shooter's confidence in his ability.

That brings about one of the most important functions of a coach. That of the mental attitude of his shooters. If their attitude is negative he must eliminate that and make it positive. If it is positive he must insure that it stays that way. The coach must always put forth the image of absolute confidence in his ability and that of his shooters, true or not. Nothing is more detrimental to a team than a hesitant or wishy washy coach.


I try to get together with all the coaches and the most experienced and respected shooters and relay my ideas to them. Telling them that I would like for them to say nothing to the whole team, complaining or disagreeing with my methods until they check back with me. There is a good chance of ironing out any misunderstanding before dissension sets in the entire team. If there is still a disagreement after that then I had rather bring it out than have mumbling among the shooters.

If I feel that I'm right over a matter that others disagree on I stick to my guns until proven wrong. If it is wrong I admit it to the team and do my utmost to correct it. That is the understanding I have with my shooters and the other coaches. It seems to work rather well.

No coach should hesitate to bring to the attention of a shooter mistakes he notices. It is the manner in which it is done that keeps his positive attitude. A positive approach by the coach leads to a positive acceptance by the shooter to constructive criticism.

Never, never should a coach look down on a shooter, experienced or novice. The sole existence of that coach is to assist the experienced shooter in producing championship scores and to develop the novice or new shooter into becoming a champion. His entire approach toward this goal, and particularly the results of these efforts, will readily show the worth of that coaches methods.

I could go on and on, as I have previously stated, on coaching and its methods. Again, I speak for myself. I love shooting to the point that I live, eat, breathe and sleep shooting and any step that I can take to improve my ability and further the team effort I gladly do it. That is my recommendation for anyone who wishes to shoot or coach.


CHARLES H. TIPTON
SFC, US Army
Pistol Division, USAMU

PROFILE OF A CHAMPION - MR. BROWN

In the game of life, the drive is the body; the approach, the mind; the putt, the spirit. The human body, with its intuitive wisdom, furnishes man his drive. The mind provides the plan. It plots the method of approach toward the objective; the analysis of the problems to be faced; the selection of the road to be taken; the strategy of movement to be employed. The spirit puts on the final scene in the building of a champion--the triumph or defeat. If a man has faith in the power of his mind, it will help bring him success and peace of mind. Realizing this--a man or woman desiring to be a Champion (marksmans, tennis player, or golfer) must condition his or her body to make it strong. A strong healthy body usually contributes to the making of a keen, quick thinking--healthy mind.

When I entered the Army in the summer of 1935, I immediately became interested in marksmanship. In the fall of the same year, my company went for annual qualification with the rifle (M1903 Springfield) and the automatic rifle (BAR). I qualified as sharpshooter with the rifle and expert with the automatic rifle.

During the range season I was told by my corporal that to be able to shoot accurately was the most important thing a young soldier could learn to do--so seeing how much emphasis was placed on shooting I decided to embark upon a self training program that would eventually make me a champion. This in mind, I will endeavor to list some of the things that helped me attain my goal:

1. Positive Thinking: MENTAL CONTROL.

a. Retained only the thing that I did right each day. Analyze the things I did wrong then dismiss them from the mind.

b. I taught myself to keep my mind on my business--not to get involved in others problems (this was before I started coaching).

c. Not to bother myself with scores, not to even add up the score until I was through firing at the different ranges.

d. Record and study the results. This was followed very strictly all during my shooting and coaching career.

2. Physical Condition:

a. Eat moderately of a well balanced diet.

b. Refrain from excesses in food, drink and other things that would cause the system to be sluggish.

c. Walked at least five miles every day--good brisk walk. (I even walked in the rain.)

d. I practiced with the rifle every day for at least ten minutes. (Dry firing and muscular conditioning.)

e. Smoking, coffee and tea was no problem for me I didn't ever like to smoke and didn't drink coffee or tea until WWII.

3. Equipment:

a. I always kept my equipment in the very best of condition. It was cared for before anything else--shower, food, or whatever else came up. My equipment always came first.

b. One must have faith in his or her equipment, realize its capabilities and your capabilities then strive to perfect both.

c. I never criticised my equipment to myself or to others--if it needed repair. I either repaired it or took it to the proper person to have it repaired for me.

d. Spot checked shooters equipment every day when coaching. Good check once each week.

4. Truthful with Ones Self:

a. I always followed a policy to be absolutely truthful with myself. This is the only way a person can be a real champion. A person might be able to fool his or her fellows but one cannot fool himself.

b. I always tried to call my shots and plot my hits in the scorebook just as truthfully and accurately as possible. This was the answer when setting sights and etc.

By following the program I set for myself there on the range at Fort McClellan while a young soldier in Company K, 22d Infantry, I am able to list some of the results:

1936 - High man in Regiment with the Rifle, BAR, Machinegun (.30 Caliber Water Cooled) and the 37-mm Gun.

Was sent to represent the Regiment in the National Matches at Camp Perry, Ohio. While there obtained my first leg toward the distinguished riflemans medal. Upon returning I organized, coached and fired on the Regiment Smallbore Team. We fired eight matches--won six.

1937 - Came to the Infantry Team tryouts at Fort Benning. Finished the Benning phase in 14th place out of 67 shooters. (We walked, and carried our equipment from the first quadrangle out to Fiske Range (old) every day--there and back). The Benning phase was completed 30 May--movement to Camp Perry--started shooting 4th June.

a. Won another leg toward the distinguished medal.

b. Won high individual in match between the Infantry, Calvary and Engineers--304 competitors.

c. Won rapid fire and long range match in Frankfort, Indiana.

d. Won five rapid fire matches at Wakefield, Massachusetts, against the Infantry squad and 78 Marines.

e. Alternate for the National (Dogs of War) Team during the Nationals at Camp Perry.

f. Member of the President's Hundred.

g. Back at Fort McClellan assisted with the range qualification--resulting in four additional young soldiers going to the nationals with me in 1938. Same Smallbore teams during the winter--organized three ten man teams--marksmanship improved.

h. Promoted to sergeant by Regimental Commander for my work.

1938:

a. During January was selected to become a member of a group that was testing the M1 rifle.

b. Finished the Benning phase of the Infantry team tryouts in 5th place.

c. Won the Ohio State Match - 231 competitors.

d. Won the Governors Match, State of Indiana.

e. Won long range (1903 rifle) match, State of Indiana, was tied with a member of the Calvary team at the end of the match; had to shoot 36 more fives to win the match.

f. Won the grand aggregate United Services Matches of New England (Marines, Infantry, Calvary and Engineers, also civilians).

g. Back at Camp Perry--firing member National Trophy Team. Obtained two legs toward the distinguished medal.

h. Had the four new shooters from the Regiment with me at Camp Perry.

i. Back at Fort McClellan--range season--maneuvers--hiked from Fort McClellan to Fort Benning--corps maneuver--hiked back to McClellan.

1939:

a. Same Benning phase of training.

b. Won Governors Match, State of Indiana again.

c. Won three rapid fire matches, State of Indiana.

d. Won four rapid fire matches, State of Ohio.

e. Won two rapid fire matches and two long range matches, United Services of New England, Wakefield, Massachusetts.

f. Won Alexander Hamilton Match (Rapid Fire) Camp Perry (National Matches).

g. Shot 100 X 100 Service Rifle Division in the 1000 Wimbledon Match (Nationals).

h. Won the National Individual Rifle Match (3004 started the match--2027 completed). (The goal I set for myself on the range at Fort McClellan in 1935, realized.)

i. Firing member National Trophy Team.

j. Distinguished Marksman (Rifleman).

k. War clouds over Europe.

l. Worked hard helping with the range qualification for the Regiment highest number of qualifications ever recorded in Regiment.

1940:

a. Same Benning Phase.

b. Was hospitalized to remove metal from right eye soon after arriving at Camp Perry. Recovered in time to shoot in Nationals and win a place as firing member of the National Trophy Team.

c. The M1 Rifle first used in competition in two special matches.

d. Team disbands after the Nationals--WWII. Many fine riflemen killed in action.

1951:

a. First competition after WWII held at Camp Matthews Marine Base, California. I coached a ten man team, equipment was left over M1 Rifle with AP ammunition. I fired and coached. California civilians won everything.

1952: Placed 11th w/big bore and 16th smallbore in Olympic Tryouts.

a. National Matches held at Fort Benning. I fired and coached--six man team was used in the National Trophy Match. My team won the match over the Marines. First met Sergeant Krilling in a smallbore match.

b. I'm ordered back to Europe.

1953:

a. Won European Championship with the .45 Caliber Pistol.

b. Won high individual in annual qualification w/rifle, pistol and carbine.

1956:

a. Return to U.S. assigned to Fort Bragg.

b. Ordered by General Adams to form a rifle team--bring team to 3d Army Matches here at Fort Benning. My team won practically everything. All members remained for the All Army Matches. I coached the 3d Army Team in the All Army and won. Personally commended by General Wyman and General Adams.

1957:

a. Ordered by DA to coach the Army Team (the Army hadn't won at the Nationals since 1952). I won 1000 Yard Individual Match, State Matches of Texas.

b. Set up training program--trained at Fort Niagara, NY. Won the Eastern Regionals.

c. My team wins several individual matches plus the National Trophy Team Match at Camp Perry.

1958:

a. My team set new records in the Eastern Regionals.

b. New records in the Nationals--the Army was winning.

c. Positive thinking, record and study, physical training was showing results.

1959:

a. Same results--only more Army shooters showing winning ways.

b. Ordered back to Europe after 1959 matches. Too busy with other duties to shoot thus ended my shooting career.


COATS BROWN
GS-07, DAC
Training Specialist

