



# ON THE MARK

THE NEWSLETTER FOR COACHES AND JUNIOR SHOOTERS © SUMMER 2021

## *Excelling On and Off the Range*

CMP Scholarship Committee Names Top 15 Overall Applicants

### Learn More:

- A Brief History of the CMP
- Competition Nerves: Smallbore

### Featuring:

- Junior Air Rifle Athlete Natalie Perrin
- Ontelaunee Jr. Rifle Team
- Kaiserslautern JROTC

### Meet:

- Zion Benton's Saylet Hernandez
- University of Alaska Fairbanks
- Top 15 Scholarship Winners

### Results On:

- Camp Perry Open
- JROTC/CMP Virtual Championships



## ON THE MARK

<https://thecmp.org/news-media/on-the-mark/>

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**ON THE MARK** is published quarterly by the Civilian Marksmanship Program. It is dedicated to disseminating news and information about junior shooting activities to leaders and coaches of junior shooting clubs, teams and camps. Its primary purpose is to help youth shooting leaders teach firearm safety and marksmanship more effectively.

**Subscriptions:** One free **ON THE MARK** subscription is provided to each junior club that is affiliated with the CMP, JROTC unit with a marksmanship program and 4-H Shooting Sports Club. Individual subscriptions to **ON THE MARK** are available at \$8.00 per year. To subscribe to **ON THE MARK**, contact: 419-635-2141, ext. 724 or email [onthemark@TheCMP.org](mailto:onthemark@TheCMP.org).

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**ON THE MARK Wants Your Input:** We want your correspondence and opinions. **ON THE MARK** will dedicate space to publish letters from readers. Though we may not be able to publish them all, we will make every effort to provide comments that will be beneficial to the broadest audience. If there is a story you feel we should cover, notify us. Send your comments or questions to: Letters to the Editor, CMP Headquarters, P.O. Box 576, Port Clinton, OH 43452 or email your letters or comments to [abrugnone@TheCMP.org](mailto:abrugnone@TheCMP.org).

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The Civilian Marksmanship Program is a non-profit organization chartered by the U. S. Congress to promote marksmanship training and firearm safety, with a primary emphasis on youth. The CMP is authorized to receive and sell surplus government rifles and ammunition that are suitable for marksmanship. Proceeds from these sales are dedicated to CMP programs. CMP enabling legislation requires that its highest priority must be given to "activities that benefit firearms safety, training and competition for youth." **ON THE MARK** is a vital part of CMP efforts to fulfill its mission to serve and develop junior shooting in the United States.

Information about the CMP may be viewed on the CMP web site, [www.thecmp.org](http://www.thecmp.org) or on the CMP on-line newsletter, **The First Shot**, at <https://thecmp.org/news-media/the-first-shot/>.

## © Sighting Shots ©

© **CMP COO Promoted to DCM.** The Civilian Marksmanship Program is pleased to announce the promotion of chief operating officer Mark Johnson to the role of Director of Civilian Marksmanship (DCM). "I would like to thank the CMP Board of Directors for promoting me to Director of Civilian Marksmanship," Johnson said. "I am honored to accept the job of DCM, and I will continue to work hard to move forward CMP's mission of providing every law-abiding citizen of the United States the opportunity to learn firearm safety and marksmanship, with an emphasis on youth."



© **Junior Clinics at the National Matches.** Registration is open for the 2021 National Matches at Camp Perry, Ohio! For those looking to improve their skills, there are several options designed for junior competitors who already have their own equipment. For new marksmen looking to get into the sport and may not have their own equipment, the Small Arms Firing Schools are a perfect choice. Learn more about all of the educational opportunities available by visiting the CMP website at <https://thecmp.org/registration-open-for-2021-highpower-adult-and-junior-clinics/>.



© **Upcoming Travel Games Events.** After the National Matches, look for CMP's other marksmanship events like the New England Games (September) and the Oklahoma Games (October). Each event features staple CMP competitions like the GSM, Rimfire Sporter, Carbine and Vintage Sniper matches, along with 80 Shot Aggregate competitions, a 4-Man Team event and a Service Rifle EIC matches. Several pistol competitions are also open to all ages and experience levels. Learn more about these upcoming events and others on the CMP website at <https://thecmp.org/>.



© **Marksmanship 101 Courses.** Have you ever been interested in learning how to shoot a firearm but didn't know where to start? Or, have you thought about formal training to improve your game on the firing line and didn't know where to turn? The Civilian Marksmanship Program has created a program with your needs in mind. CMP Marksmanship 101 Courses, held around the country throughout the year, offer fundamental training in rifle or pistol, with personal instruction from some of today's leading professionals. Read more about these courses here: <https://thecmp.org/experience-real-life-training-from-the-experts-at-cmps-marksmanship-101-courses/>.



**On the Cover:** Scott Rockett, 18, of Cary, North Carolina, was chosen by the CMP Scholarship Committee as the top recipient of the Carolyn Hines Memorial Scholarship for his academic and extracurricular excellence as well as his commitment to marksmanship.



# Virtual Junior Air Rifle Championship Results

## JROTC Virtual Championships:

Results of the 2021 JROTC Virtual Championships are now available online!

The postal-style event was hosted by the Civilian Marksmanship Program (CMP) and saw participation from over 670 sporter and precision air rifle athletes from Army, Marine Corps, Air Force and Navy JROTC High School programs.

Teams and individuals qualified for the Virtual Championships after competing in the JROTC Postal Championships earlier in the year. Typically, the Postal competition is followed by regionals Service Championships and an overall National Championship, but travel restrictions and other logistical complexities left these matches morphing into one final event of the JROTC season: the Virtual Championships.

"In what has been one of the most difficult years for everyone, I am proud we were able to put together a Championship for the JROTC cadets," said Brad Donoho, CMP smallbore manager and coordinator of the JROTC matches. "We would much rather host a shoulder-to-shoulder Championship, but this Virtual Championship gave most teams and individuals a chance to compete. Congratulations to the winning teams and individuals!"

Doubling as the 2021 JROTC National Championship, awards for the 2021 Virtual Championships were presented to the Top 5 overall teams in sporter and precision, the Top 10 overall individuals as well as the Top 3 teams and Top 3 individuals per service.

For a complete list of results, visit the CMP Competition Tracker page at <https://ct.thecmp.org/JROTCVirtualResults>.



## CMP Virtual Championships:

Likewise, the results are in for the 2021 Virtual Air Rifle Championships – a supplementary competition to the usual Regional Three-Position Championships.

The Top 10 athletes from each class were awarded medals, along with the Top 3 sporter and precision teams (graphic below). Those reaching qualifying scores in the Virtual Championship will move on to the in-person, shoulder-to-shoulder Nationals this summer.

A complete list of results for the CMP Virtual Championships can be found on the CMP's Competition Tracker page at <https://ct.thecmp.org/CMPVirtualResults>.

### TOP 3 SPORTER:

1. MAYA CAMERON, 17, NATION FORD HIGH SCHOOL, SOUTH CAROLINA
2. KAYLA KALENZA, 17, NATION FORD HIGH SCHOOL, SOUTH CAROLINA
3. SHELBY CARR, 17, GUNS R US 4-H, NEBRASKA

### TOP 3 SPORTER TEAM:

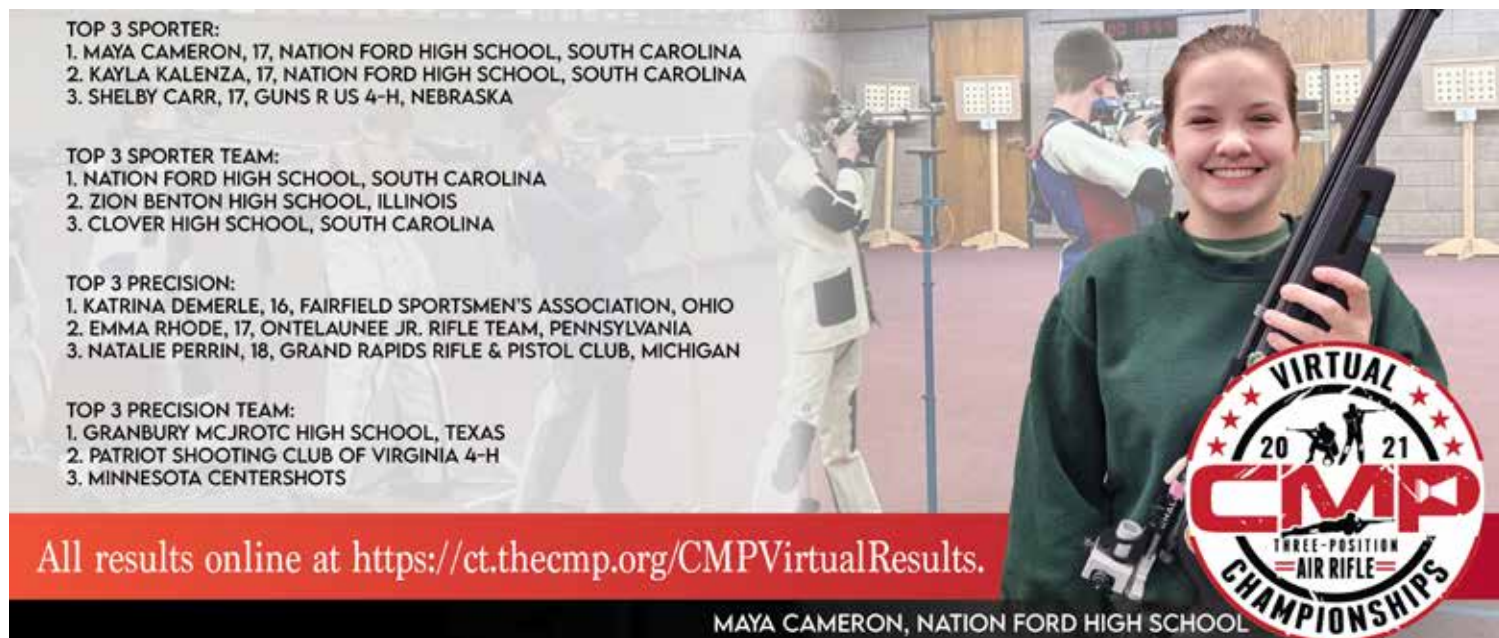
1. NATION FORD HIGH SCHOOL, SOUTH CAROLINA
2. ZION BENTON HIGH SCHOOL, ILLINOIS
3. CLOVER HIGH SCHOOL, SOUTH CAROLINA

### TOP 3 PRECISION:

1. KATRINA DEMERLE, 16, FAIRFIELD SPORTSMEN'S ASSOCIATION, OHIO
2. EMMA RHODE, 17, ONTELAUNEE JR. RIFLE TEAM, PENNSYLVANIA
3. NATALIE PERRIN, 18, GRAND RAPIDS RIFLE & PISTOL CLUB, MICHIGAN

### TOP 3 PRECISION TEAM:

1. GRANBURY MCJROTC HIGH SCHOOL, TEXAS
2. PATRIOT SHOOTING CLUB OF VIRGINIA 4-H
3. MINNESOTA CENTERSHOTS



All results online at <https://ct.thecmp.org/CMPVirtualResults>.

MAYA CAMERON, NATION FORD HIGH SCHOOL

# Butler Claims Wins in 3P Air Rifle and New Smallbore Event at 2021 Camp Perry Open

CAMP PERRY, Ohio – Bremen Butler, 16, of Fort Wayne, Indiana, made herself known at the Camp Perry Open marksmanship event (held Friday, May 21, to Sunday, May 23) by earning wins in both the three-position air rifle portion and the newly added 3x40 smallbore match.

The 2021 Camp Perry Open attracted more than 250 athletes from around the nation in Three-Position and 60 Shot Air Rifle, 60 Shot Air Pistol and 3x40 Smallbore Rifle competition. The annual event is conducted by the Civilian Marksmanship Program (CMP) at the Gary Anderson CMP Competition Center – located on the Camp Perry National Guard Training Base (also CMP Headquarters) in Ohio.

Typically fired in January, the 2021 Camp Perry Open was strategically moved to May in order to allow the 3x40 Smallbore Rifle portion to be added to the schedule for the first time. Over 60 competitors took to the firing line on Camp Perry's Petrarca Range to take advantage of the additional competitive opportunity, with Butler coming out on top.

"I was excited to be shooting on Petrarca. My first experience shooting Smallbore was on that same range during the 2019 CMP Summer Camp," Butler said. "I felt like I had come full circle after winning this competition."

Once Smallbore was completed, Butler went on to claim the overall win in the Three-Position Air Rifle match, fired the same day.

"I was happy with my performance in all three of this year's disciplines," she said.

Following the Three-Position match on Saturday and Sunday was the 60 Shot Match for air rifle and air pistol athletes. Traveling to the event and claiming the field by double-digit points in the air rifle competition was U.S. Army Marksmanship Unit member SP4 Alison Weisz, 26, with an outstanding score of 1261.9.

"The goals and expectations I had coming into this match were, really, to just perform and focus on performance – whatever the outcome was, it was going to be at the end of the day," Weisz said. "A lot of the things I've been working on is mental training and technical training skills. Ultimately, I just wanted to come in and put those into action."

She also admitted that the Camp Perry Open served as an avenue to work on her mindset and nerve control before she heads to this year's Olympic Games in Tokyo as a member of the U.S. Air Rifle team.

"I'm so excited," she said about her Olympic debut, with a smile behind her mask. "I'm so honored and blessed to



*Bremen Butler*

have the opportunity."

Another member of Team USA heading to Tokyo in 2021 who happened to also be at Camp Perry for the match was James Hall, 37, of Columbia, Missouri. Hall was the overall competitor in the air pistol 60 Shot event at the Camp Perry Open, with a commanding score of 1156-39x. He'll represent the United States in Air Pistol at the Olympics this summer.

Earning second behind Hall as the top junior air pistol competitor was Remington Smith, 16, of Ashburn, Georgia. Smith had never been to Camp Perry but said its reputation certainly precedes itself.

"All I knew about Camp Perry was that it's legendary and that it's the Zenith of shooting complexes in the country," he said with a grin. "Frankly, it was such an honor to get to shoot at such a range."

Speaking of his performance over the weekend, Smith went on, "I wanted to continue shooting my average and raise it if I could. I've never shot at this range before, so I didn't have any expectations, I would say. I was just hoping to take what I've learned at past matches and continue to grow upon that."



Other standout competitors of the Camp Perry Open included:

### **3x40\* Smallbore (Open and Junior):**

Bremen Butler, 16, Eel River Gun Club – 969-42x  
M'Leah Lambdin, 18, Team Winning Solutions – 965-36x  
Lara Spanic, 19, Southport Xception – 960-33x

\*Due to a range scheduling matter, competitors did not fire the last 20 shots of the 3x40 match. Results are based on the fired portions of the event.

### **Three-Position Air Rifle Individuals:**

#### **Sporter:**

Halie Creekmore, 17, Zion, Illinois – 555-24x  
Amarissa Jackson, 17, Winthrop Harbor, Illinois – 553-20x  
Jeremiah Vonzell, 18, Wadsworth, Illinois – 549-16x

#### **Precision:**

Bremen Butler, 16, Fort Wayne, Indiana – 598-53x  
Natalie Perrin, 18, Coopersville, Michigan – 596-52x  
Katrina Demerle, 16, Hamilton, Ohio – 594-46x

### **Three-Position Air Rifle Team:**

#### **Sporter:**

Zion Benton High School Team 1 (Halie Creekmore, Amarissa Jackson, Jeremiah Vonzell, Saylet Hernandez) – 2197-71x  
Zion Benton High School Team 2 (Cortney Berry, Kimberly Rico, Santiago Salazar, Nikolas Jackson) – 2089-48x  
Zion Benton High School Team 3 (Andrew Yoshii, Jasmine Butler, Kalinn White, Giovanni Salgado) – 1991-35x

#### **Precision:**

Deep 10's (Bremen Butler, Lillian Warren, Adrianna Beard, Braden Michalak) – 2330-140x  
Taunton Marksmanship Unit Ring Leaders (Mia Lee, Ashton O'Connell, Clara Lowe, Alok Joarder) – 2324-140x  
Reading Rebels (Andrew Duross, Henry McCurry, Olivia Reilly, David Clark) – 2316-133x

### **60 Shot Individuals:**

#### **Rifle Open:**

SP4 Alison Weisz, 26, U.S. AMU – 1261.9  
Molly McGhin, 19, Griffin, Georgia – 1250.2  
Emme Walrath, 15, Kenosha, Wisconsin – 1249.9



*Remington Smith*

#### **Rifle Junior:**

Molly McGhin, 19, Griffin, Georgia – 1250.2  
Emme Walrath, 15, Kenosha, Wisconsin – 1249.9  
Rylan Kissell, 19, Lakewood, Colorado – 1246.8

#### **Pistol Open:**

James Hall, 37, Columbia, Missouri – 1156-39x  
Remington Smith, 16, Ashburn, Georgia – 1141-34x  
Anthony Lutz, 32, Orient, Ohio – 1138-30x

#### **Pistol Junior:**

Remington Smith, 16, Ashburn, Georgia – 1141-34x  
Hunter Battig, 19, Colorado Springs, Colorado – 1131-28x  
Katelyn Abeln, 20, Douglasville, Georgia – 1128-27x

### **60 Shot Teams:**

#### **Rifle Open and Junior:**

The Unadoptables (Katrina Demerle, Natalie Perrin, Rylie Passmore) – 3722.5  
Akron Zips (Gavin Perkowski, Samantha Shultz, Kayla Andreoli) – 3705.0  
Southport Xception (Emme Walrath, Dylan Gregory, Anthony Hotko) – 3694.6

#### **Pistol Open:**

We Luv Emil Milev (Anthony Lutz, Samuel Gens, Katelyn Abeln) – 3401-86x  
Sharp Shooters (Hunter Battig, Suman Sanghera, Bhavjeet Sanghera) – 3345-67x  
Tri-State (Remington Smith, Johnathan Dorsten, Brennan Laing) – 3285-60x

## A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE CMP

# A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE CMP

## *The NBPRP, National Matches, DCM, the new CMP and America's Quest for Better Marksmanship*

*By Gary Anderson, DCM Emeritus*



*Shooting for the Beef, an early 19th century American painting by George Caleb Bingham. This scene depicts a marksmanship contest staged by American frontiersmen where they take turns shooting at the mark (on wooden slab, far right) for a prize beef (far left). The original is in the Brooklyn Museum.*

The history of the CMP is a story about America's quest for better marksmanship. This history begins with a government organization, the **National Board for the Promotion of Rifle Practice (NBPRP)**, that organization's primary program, the **National Matches**, and its executive agent, the **Director of Civilian Marksmanship (DCM)**. This is a history now being continued by the NBPRP's successor organization, the **Civilian Marksmanship Program (CMP)**.

The key word in this history is **MARKSMANSHIP**. Marksmanship is the human ability to use projectile weapons with accuracy, skill, safety and discipline. Marksmanship is the definitive word in the name of the organization, the **Civilian Marksmanship Program**. It is also the key word in the title of the official who administers NBPRP and CMP programs, the **Director of Civilian Marksmanship**. The

concept of marksmanship reflects a human motivation to not just use weapons to shoot projectiles at targets, but to use them with accuracy to "hit the mark" on those targets.

Marksmanship has been an American quest since the settlement of the 13 colonies and the opening of the western frontier. The *Shooting for the Beef* painting (shown above) portrays how American frontiersmen improvised shooting contests to test the marksmanship skills they needed to protect their settlements and put food on the table. Marksmanship with projectile weapons has played a vital role in human history from ancient bows and arrows, to the crossbows of the Middle Ages, to the flintlock and percussion rifles of the American frontier, to the rifles and pistols of the modern era. Marksmanship impacts civic defense as well as national defense; it plays vital roles in human survival and sports competitions and in fostering



human development. This history of the CMP considers how NBPRP and CMP efforts to promote marksmanship among USA citizens, and especially among American youth, has enriched our nation's civic defense, national defense, sports competitions and human development.

## The Beginning in the USA – 1903

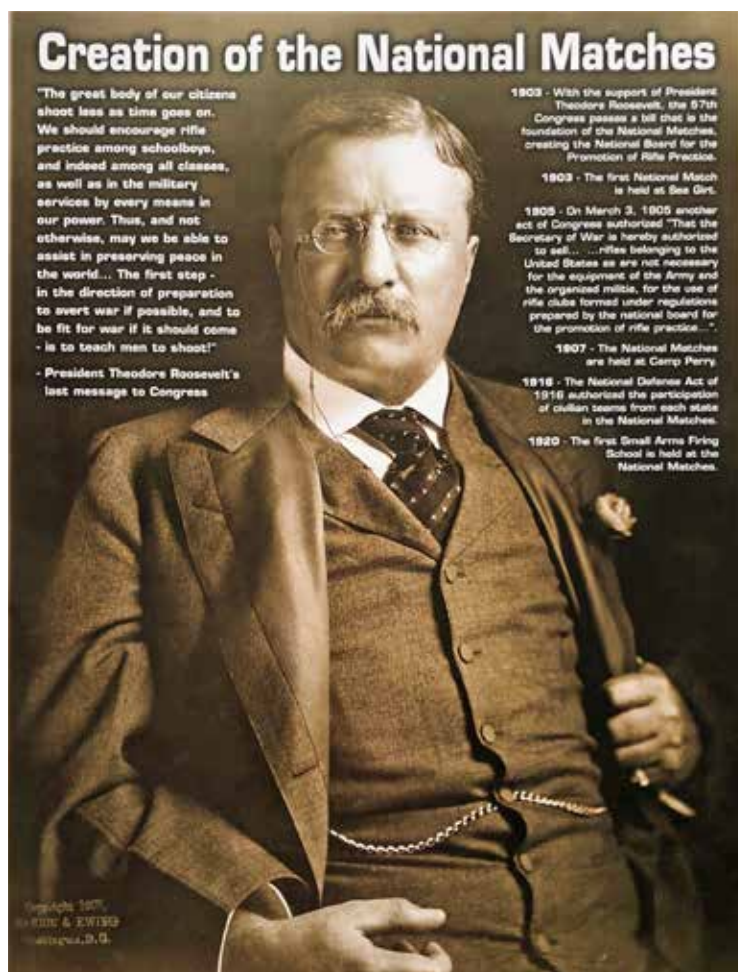
Marksmanship became a quest of the U. S. Government in February 1903, when Congress and President Theodore Roosevelt approved legislation that founded the **National Board for the Promotion of Rifle Practice** (NBPRP) and the **National Matches**. President Roosevelt was an enthusiastic advocate for government action to promote marksmanship. During the debates about whether to provide government support for marksmanship, Roosevelt said, *"We should encourage rifle practice among schoolboys, and indeed among all classes, as well as in the military services by every means possible."* Roosevelt said practicing marksmanship was *"preparation to avert war."*

Another influential lobbying force for this cause were the leaders of the National Rifle Association of America (NRA). The NRA had been formed in 1871 by New York National Guard officers who wanted to improve the poor marksmanship Soldiers displayed during the Civil War. By the turn of the century, NRA leaders had decided government support was necessary in order to make real progress in achieving that objective.

The answer to these concerns was to establish a U. S. Government program that provided direct support for rifle marksmanship. The NBPRP became the governing board for this effort. Its objective was to foster national defense by promoting marksmanship training and competition among military personnel and later among civilians who could serve in the military. Secretary of War Elihu Root appointed the first National Board that consisted of government, military and NRA leaders. The Board's primary initial program was the National Matches. Advocates of this legislation believed the most effective way to improve Soldiers' rifle skills was to have them use their rifles in competitions. Participation in the first National Matches was limited to active and National Guard teams, but by 1905 new legislation authorized the NBPRP to sell military rifles, ammunition and equipment to civilian rifle clubs so that their members could participate in the program.

## The National Defense Act of 1916

By 1916, the NBPRP was providing marksmanship support for civilian rifle clubs, but it was struggling to



*Theodore Roosevelt, U. S. President, 1901-1909, advocated rifle marksmanship practice as a means of fostering national defense preparedness.*

find its future direction. The **National Defense Act of 1916** addressed that concern. To give the program professional leadership and staff, this Act created the **Office of the Director of Civilian Marksmanship (ODCM)**.

*This is the National Trophy Congress commissioned in 1903. This trophy, popularly known as the "Dogs of War Trophy," is now part of the CMP's National Trophy Collection. It is presented annually to the winner of the National Trophy Rifle Team Match.*



## A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE CMP

The Act authorized increased distributions of rifles and ammunition to civilian rifle clubs, provided funding for military instructors to assist civilian rifle clubs and funding to transport civilian teams to the National Matches. That same year, civilians became eligible to compete in the National Matches. The NBPRP program was gradually becoming the “**civilian marksmanship program**” as it placed more and more emphasis on developing marksmanship skills among men who could serve in the military in time of war.

The NBPRP appointed the first DCM in 1917 and a succession of DCMs established the ODCM with a permanent staff for its programs. In 1922, the DCM started publishing an annual “*Price List of Supplies*” to institutionalize the ODCM sales program. During the program’s first two decades, the NRA Secretary had served as the NBPRP Recorder and the ODCM shared office space with the NRA in Washington DC. In 1924, the ODCM acquired its own offices, and the DCM became the Board Recorder.

As World War I ended, the NBPRP was reorganized to facilitate the reestablishment of its programs. Assistant Secretary of the Navy Franklin D. Roosevelt became the NBPRP Chairman. Among the programs now administered by the ODCM was the program that awarded Distinguished Rifleman and Distinguished Pistol Shot Badges. The National Defense Act authorized the creation of the Small Arms Firing School (SAFS). The first SAFS was conducted in 1918 in conjunction with a reinstated National Matches that had been suspended during the war.

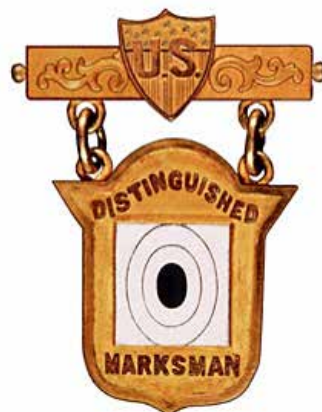


*Franklin D. Roosevelt, who was the Assistant Secretary of the Navy, became the NBPRP Chairman in 1918. This photo shows him on a rifle range, wearing a shooting jacket, with a sling attached to a M1903 Springfield Rifle as he prepared to practice marksmanship.*

### The National Matches – 1903-1967

A primary objective of the 1903 legislation was to establish the National Matches with rifle competitions aimed at improving Soldiers’ marksmanship skills. The first National Matches were conducted that same year at Sea Girt, New Jersey. The following year they moved to Fort Riley, Kansas and then back to Sea Girt for two more years. Pistol events were added to the program in 1904. A major objective during those early years was to find a more suitable site for the Matches. Ohio Adjutant General Ammon Critchfield answered that challenge by securing State of Ohio funding to purchase 350 acres of marshland on the south shore of Lake Erie. **By 1907**, a mile-long series of ranges and a massive temporary housing complex had been constructed and **the National Matches were conducted at Camp Perry for the first time**. Except for years when there were cancellations due to funding cutbacks or war, Camp Perry has been the home of the Matches.

Before World War II, the Department of War conducted the National Matches with military personnel who were assigned to that mission and led by military officers who served as National Match Executive Officers. The Matches were dependent upon annual Congressional appropriations. In lean years like 1912, 1917, 1926 and 1932 to 1934, funding cutbacks led to cancellations. The Matches were closed for the duration of World War II in 1941 and were not reestablished until 1951. They did not return to Camp Perry until 1953. When the National Security Act of 1947 established the Department of Defense as a successor to the Department of War, the National Matches support mission shifted to the Department of the Army. Executive leadership of the Matches then became a DCM responsibility.



*The Army awarded the first Distinguished Badges in 1884. Awarding Distinguished Badges subsequently became one of the popular programs managed by the ODCM.*



## CAMP PERRY, OHIO, BECAME THE HOME OF THE NATIONAL MATCHES IN 1907



*These photos of the Camp Perry, Ohio ranges (top) and temporary housing (below) were published in a 1907 edition of Harper's Weekly. The range configuration shown in the top photo is still a feature of Camp Perry ranges today.*

The National Match program, both before and after WWII, included service rifle and pistol events governed by the NBPRP, which became known as **National Trophy Matches**, as well as NRA National Championships, which benefitted significantly from government funding and support. Every year, several hundred military personnel were detailed to Camp Perry to serve as highpower rifle target pullers and scorers and to perform the many tasks necessary to conduct the month-long series of competitions.

In late 1967, due both to the financial and personnel pressures from the war in Viet Nam and to political pressures driven by gun control politics, the Secretary of the Army released a statement saying, "*the expenditure involved in conducting the National Matches is not considered essential at the time.*" This decision meant that the U. S. Government would no longer support the National Matches and that their future was in jeopardy.

### NBPRP and ODCM After World War II

During the war years, the NBPRP continued appointing DCMs, although most aspects of the program were

curtailed. After the war, rifle sales resumed, but numbers were limited. By the 1950s, with some Congressional funding restored, the ODCM became active in supporting junior rifle clubs, clubs and schools with junior programs and Boy Scout camps by loaning .22 cal. rifles and issuing annual allocations of rimfire ammunition and targets. The justification for youth-oriented marksmanship training was that by teaching marksmanship skills to young men who would become eligible to serve in the Armed Services they would be more effective in handling their weapons in combat. **The ODCM of that era served as a support organization that provided resources, rifles, ammunition and targets, to other organizations.** Except for the National Matches and SAFS, the NBPRP did not have marksmanship training or competition programs of its own.

NBPRP priorities were reflected in President Dwight Eisenhower's 1956 Executive Order that created the U. S. Army Marksmanship Unit and to the desire many military and marksmanship leaders had to respond to the Cold War challenge posed by the Soviet Union, which began to dominate Olympic and World Championship shooting

## A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE CMP



*This official photograph of the National Board was taken when it met at Camp Perry in 1956.*

competitions in the 1950s. Starting in 1958 and continuing through the 1960s, the NBPRP provided funding for USA National Teams that represented this country in international championships. The NBPRP awarded the first U. S. Distinguished International Shooter Badges to U. S. medal winners in the 1962 World Championship.

During this period, NBPRP and ODCM activities functioned under the authority of the Under Secretary of the Army. The National Board submitted recommendations to the Under Secretary who made final decisions. The Under Secretary appointed DCMs who were responsible for executing those decisions.

This was also when Army leaders began to question the need for a government-funded agency that trained American youth how to shoot. Many Army leaders concluded it was no longer necessary to have recruits with marksmanship skills because they believed those skills could be adequately taught during regular military training. In 1966, the Army commissioned the Arthur D. Little Company to examine the NBPRP's support for youth marksmanship. The study ended up contradicting Army conclusions and praising the program for producing military recruits who were more likely to use their rifles in combat, better prepared to use their rifles effectively and more likely to become military combat leaders. Army leaders were not dissuaded, and by the end of the decade, the NBPRP and ODCM could no longer officially justify their programs by producing youth with marksmanship skills that the Army did not want. NBPRP leaders and its DCMs were undaunted, however, because they also had seen how youth marksmanship training taught valuable life skills like

leadership, teamwork, discipline, gun safety, concentration abilities and self-control. **The program's justification for teaching youth marksmanship changed to supporting youth development through marksmanship.**

### The Birth of the New CMP in 1996

Congressional attempts to defund the NBPRP, ODCM and National Matches began in the 1960s as a result of national gun control controversies and public questions about whether government funding of marksmanship training and competitions was justified. Those efforts continued for three decades and were never successful, but there were many years when friends in Congress had to fight hard to save or restore funding. Congressional leaders who supported the NBPRP program concluded that the best way to give the program a secure future would be to privatize it. They worked with the Office of the Administrative Assistant to the Secretary of the Army to draft legislation that **created a new Corporation for the Promotion of Rifle Practice and Firearm Safety (CPRPFS) as a federally-chartered, 501 (c) (3) organization.** The Act was approved by Congress and signed into law by President William Clinton on February 10th, 1996. It transferred CMP Program assets and functions, including authority to conduct the National Matches and SAFS, from the Department of the Army to the new corporation. This organization quickly became known as the **Civilian Marksmanship Program (CMP).** The Secretary of the Army appointed its initial Board of Directors, which appointed the first civilian DCMs, and the new CMP began program operations at Camp Perry, Ohio and sales operations at Anniston, Alabama.

The new organization succeeded because its enabling legislation authorized 1) the appointment of a DCM to give it leadership and staffing, 2) the transfer of surplus U. S. government rifles and ammunition that the CMP could sell to U. S. citizens to give it a secure source of funding, and 3) the conduct of marksmanship, safety training and competition programs so it could become an effective program agency. A vital aspect of this legislation was language that specifically said, ***In carrying out the Civilian Marksmanship Program, the corporation shall give priority to activities that benefit firearms safety, training, and competition for youth and that reach as many youth participants as possible*** (36 USC, §40724). In 2001, the CMP Board adopted a new strategic plan and articulated a corporate vision "***that every youth in America has the opportunity to participate in firearms safety and marksmanship programs.***" This vision has driven many of the CMP's program initiatives since then.



## The National Matches after 1967

The most prestigious events in the National Matches were the President's Rifle Match, National Trophy Individual Rifle and Pistol Matches and National Trophy Rifle and Pistol Team Matches. These National Trophy Matches were competitions conducted according to rules established by the NBPRP and that awarded "national trophies." When the Army withdrew its support from the National Matches after 1967, the NRA stepped forward to keep them alive. In 1968, the NRA conducted the NRA National Championships at Camp Perry and NBPRP National Trophy Matches at the Black Canyon Range near Phoenix, Arizona. NRA staff managed the competitions, and a new cadre of volunteers replaced the military personnel who staffed previous Matches. Highpower rifle competitors had to pull their own targets and score for each other. Those competitions were significantly reduced in scope and size; in 1967, there were 180 teams and over 1,700 individual competitors in the National Trophy Rifle events; in 1968, there were 25 teams and 350 individuals in highpower rifle events at Camp Perry.

By 1969, the NRA Championships and the NBPRP National Trophy Matches were back together at Camp Perry, under the National Matches banner. The NRA, with limited support from the U. S. Army Reserves and Ohio National Guard, continued to conduct the Matches until the new CMP and its civilian DCMs began to take back control of the Matches after 1996. In 2000, the CMP started managing its own National Trophy Match entries.

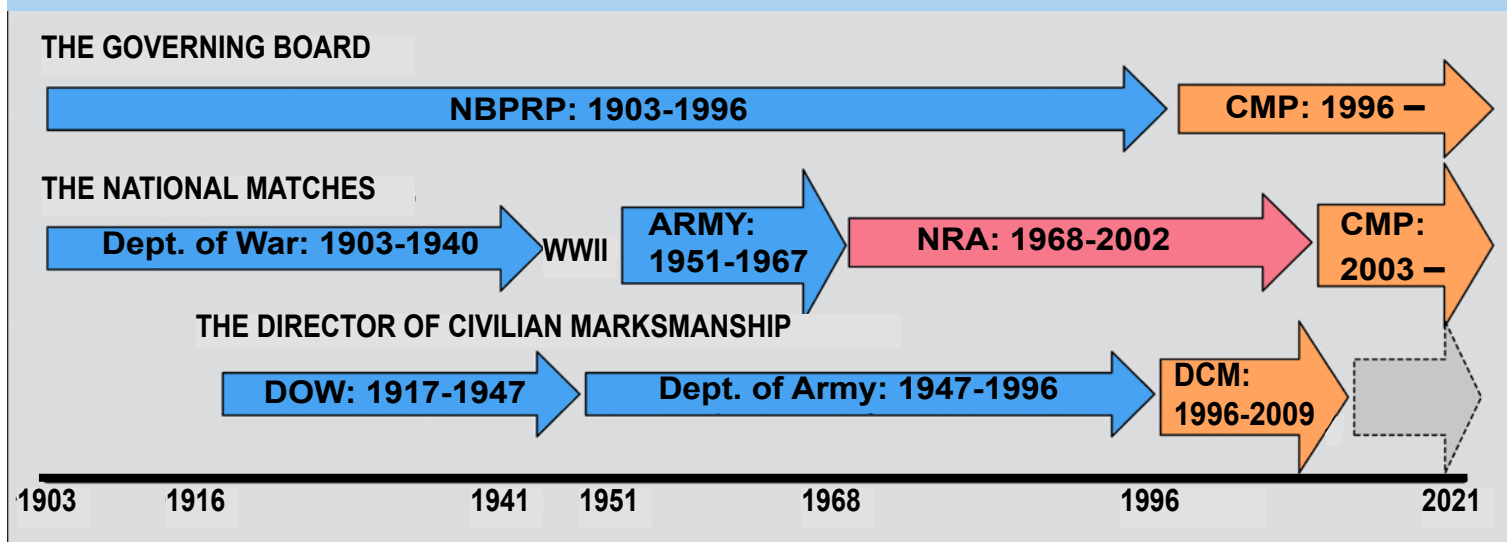


*A key aspect of the 1996 federal legislation was its expectation that the new CMP would emphasize youth marksmanship programs. The Nation Ford (Fort Mill, SC) MCJROTC rifle team pictured here won the 2019 CMP and National Junior Olympic Three-Position Air Rifle Championships.*

In 2003, the implementation of innovative Competitor Tracker software made it possible for the CMP to take over National Trophy Match statistical operations. To increase participation opportunities, the CMP began adding new events to the National Matches program by inaugurating the John C. Garand Match in 1999. By 2018, more than two dozen new CMP Pistol, Highpower Rifle, Vintage Military Rifle, Smallbore Rifle and Air Gun events had been added to the program.

The final change that gave the CMP full control of the National Matches came in 2017 when it introduced a comprehensive Range Officer Training Program that

## A TIMELINE FOR THE HISTORY OF THE CMP



*This graphic shows the timeline relationships between the U. S. Government's NBPRP, the privatized CMP, the National Matches and the Office of the DCM. It also depicts shifts in responsibilities for conducting the National Matches from the Department of War to the new CMP.*

## A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE CMP



*A greatly expanded sales program for government surplus rifles and ammunition provided equipment for program participants and secure funding for the CMP.*

### CMP SHOOTING EVENTS FOR ALL

Since 1999, the CMP has introduced several new marksmanship disciplines like these that are affordable, accessible and enjoyable!



**VMR:**  
Vintage  
Military  
Rifle



**Rimfire  
Sporter  
Rifle**



**3-Position  
Air Rifle  
Sporter  
Class**



**.22 Rimfire  
Pistol**

facilitated the staffing of a new CMP National Matches Support Team. This enabled the CMP, with continued support from the Ohio National Guard, to control all aspects of the Matches, including range operations. This transition was combined with NRA decisions to withdraw its National Championships from Camp Perry and the National Matches, which began in 2014 and were completed with the withdrawal of the last NRA Championship in 2020.

### The New CMP and Marksmanship Program Growth – 1997-2021

The 1996 legislation that created the new CMP turned out to be one of the most successful privatizations ever of a government program. The 21st century CMP instituted numerous program developments that changed marksmanship training and competition in America. This history highlights just some of those changes and their impacts:

**CMP Rifle Sales Program.** One of the first actions of the new corporation was to reestablish and expand its government surplus rifle sales program. Government surplus rifles, and now M1911 pistols, are transferred to CMP facilities at Anniston, Alabama. The CMP pays all government expenses connected with these transfers. Proceeds from the sales fund CMP programs. A dynamic military rifle collector community emerged as a result of the increased availability of these rifles.

**Permanent Endowment Fund.** The financial success of the rifle sales program made it possible to place a substantial portion of sales returns in a Permanent Endowment Fund that is managed so it can fund CMP programs for many decades into the future, after large numbers of surplus rifles are no longer available to sell.

**National Match Expansion.** The National Matches were transformed into a diverse national festival of marksmanship through the addition of many new championships and events for pistols, highpower rifles, historic military rifles, smallbore rifles and air guns as well as by technological innovations like electronic targets and computer vision scoring technology.

**Three-Position Air Rifle.** After WWII, junior shooting was in decline because of the loss of indoor shooting ranges. The CMP cooperated with the National Guard Junior Marksmanship Program to promote three-position air rifle shooting in schools and clubs; the CMP was a leader in establishing the National Three-Position Air Rifle Council as a unified governing structure for national youth-serving agencies that supported junior three-position air rifle competitions. This is now America's dominant junior rifle activity.





*The CMP opened the Talladega Marksmanship Park in 2016. This massive facility features a groundbreaking highpower rifle range with electronic targets at 200, 300 and 600 yards and a single fixed firing line.*

**JROTC Marksmanship.** The CMP cooperated with the Army, Marine Corps, Navy and Air Force JROTC commands to implement marksmanship instructor training and championship programs that now offer air rifle marksmanship training to all JROTC cadets.

**Affordable, Accessible Target Shooting Disciplines.** The CMP pioneered in developing new target disciplines for Vintage Military Rifles, Rimfire Sporter Rifles, 22 Rimfire Pistol and Sporter Class air rifles to give thousands of new participants access to target shooting events featuring affordable equipment and recreation-oriented courses of fire.

**New World Class Ranges.** The CMP established two world-class 10-meter air gun ranges at Camp Perry, Ohio and Anniston, Alabama and the nation's finest outdoor rifle, pistol and shotgun range complex near Talladega, Alabama.

**CMP Regional Competition Games.** These regional competitions make National Match quality competition experiences available to more participants in more parts of the country, with annual events conducted by CMP staff at Talladega Marksmanship Park, AL; Camp Butner, NC; Camp Ethan Allen, VT; Oklahoma City, OK and Phoenix, AZ.

**And Many More.** This is only a highlight list. During its first 25 years, the new CMP developed many other pioneering programs that further the marksmanship quests of American youth and adults. These included junior training camps, training courses for instructors and officials, publications, scholarships and many more.

**The Heritage of the New CMP.** The post-1996 CMP succeeded because it did some things differently. Those differences included:

- Emphasizing participation by all (grassroots), not just the elite.

- Keeping training and program focused on marksmanship, not just shooting.

- Having a service-oriented, accessible, friendly staff.

- Promoting shooting disciplines that are affordable and accessible such as Vintage Military Rifle and Rimfire Sporter for adults and Three-Position Sporter Class Air Rifle for juniors.

- Keeping the National Matches as a national shooting sports festival open to all.

- Placing constant emphasis on conducting well-managed events, providing great facilities, teaching real marksmanship, and respecting traditions that go back to the program founding in 1903.

In the future, America's quest for marksmanship will continue, evolve and produce positive outcomes under CMP leadership, just as it has for the last 118 years.

### About the Author

Gary Anderson is the Director of Civilian Marksmanship, Emeritus, and is the holder of two Olympic gold medals, seven World Championships and 16 National Championships. Mr. Anderson served as a Technical Delegate for Shooting during the 2012 and 2016 Olympic Games as well as for the 2014 and 2018 World Shooting Championships.

In 2012, the International Olympic Committee awarded Gary Anderson with the Olympic Order, its highest honor "for outstanding services to the Olympic Movement."



# Ontelaunee Jr. Rifle Team Gets Back to Competition with Strong Showing

The Ontelaunee Jr. Rifle Team, based out of New Tripoli, Pennsylvania, earned the overall precision spot in the Civilian Marksmanship Program's 2020-2021 Three-Position Air Rifle Postal event. Team members Griffin Lake, Emma Rhode, Natalia Siek and Lizzie Cacace combined their individual scores to record a 1169-77x total in the match – four points above the next leading competitors. For their performance, the team advanced to the CMP Virtual Championship in March.

Last year, though there was no formal National event held, the Ontelaunee Jr. Team earned the overall score amongst precision teams in the CMP Three-Position Postals. In 2018, Ontelaunee earned second in the National Championship – the team's highest finish since the CMP match began in 2013.

"The strength of our team over the years comes from its diversity," said coach Tab Rhode. "The range of ages also helps our team grow and gel. The older shooters act as role models to their younger teammates. This gives the younger ones someone to learn off of and helps motivate them to be more active in the sport."

Current Ontelaunee members come from different backgrounds, schools and even different states – some traveling over an hour from New Jersey just to participate in marksmanship with like-minded peers.

Though the CMP Three-Position Postal Match is an annual tradition for several junior air rifle teams around the country, seeing the 2021 posted results gave the Ontelaunee Jr. Rifle Team many reasons to celebrate – more than just for their outstanding performances on the firing line. The event also marked a return to normalcy and a year's worth of hard work and patience in and outside of the range.

"The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic had quite a few influences on our team," Rhode said.

When it began to expand its reach to the United States, the Ontelaunee practices were suspended. Matches the team usually attended, like the CMP Nationals, Junior Olympics and USA Shooting Nationals, were suddenly



*The Ontelaunee team members compete in several national-level events throughout the year.*

cancelled – with no clear inclination as to when they would be resuming.

It was a devastating reality for both the young athletes and their coaches.

"Motivation became a tough task. Longer-term and mid-term goals had to replace the non-existent short term ones," Rhode admitted. "Our team members trained hard for these matches the previous year, and they couldn't look forward to them anymore."

The club where the team trains was shut down for almost five months, with no activities permitted. Once finally back into the range, new obstacles emerged, such as limited range access for athletes at one time. The combination of Ontelaunee's range size of six firing points and social distancing requirements made finding time for everyone to use the facility a difficult undertaking.

Fortunately, some solutions to the issues they faced, like setting up assigned block times for practice, was advantageous in a way they had never realized before.

"We believe that we will continue this practice in the future because it allows things to run smoother," Rhode said. "We no longer have athletes waiting around the club for two hours for a chance to practice while they could be spending that time on homework or other activities."

He went on, "We, as coaches, also can tell who is coming to practice and when, allowing us to modify how we run practice."



Knowing the opportunities lost in 2020, the Ontelaunee Jr. Team members and coaches look to the future – ready to take advantage of every opportunity to compete. After earning fourth overall in the precision category of the CMP Virtual Championships, the team has been invited to move on to Nationals in July.

“Tom (Fister, another Ontelaunee Jr. Rifle coach) and I share the goal for all of the members of Ontelaunee’s team,” Rhode said. “We simply want to teach each athlete the knowledge, tools and skills they need to excel at the sport. And, if they so choose, to have the opportunity to continue shooting at the collegiate level and beyond.”

### **The Ontelaunee Jr. Program History:**

The Ontelaunee Jr. Rifle Team, a division of the Ontelaunee Rod & Gun Club, has been in existence for over 50 years, beginning in local smallbore prone matches. About 15 years ago, the team moved into three-position for those who were interested in learning the discipline – with involvement in air rifle developing five years later.

Tom Fister became coach of the team 12 years ago, when his daughters took interest in the sport, with coach Tab Rhode joining on six years ago to also help out the team after his own daughter joined the team.

In recent years, the program has produced athletes who have moved on to a collegiate rifle team, including Zach Strohl (Akron), Amy Fister (Memphis), William Dixon (Kentucky), Jennifer Plocinik (UTM), Jeanne Haverhill (Akron), Calista Smoyer (WVU) and Cecelia Ossi (Nebraska).



*Griffin Lake is one of the talented members who helped qualify the team for the 2021 CMP Virtual Championships.*

Learn more about all of the programs offered by the Ontelaunee Rod & Gun Club by visiting their website at <https://ontelaunee.org/>.

– By Ashley Brugnone, CMP Staff Writer



*The Ontelaunee Jr. Rifle Team has proven to be a diverse and adaptable group of young athletes.*

# Zion Benton's Hernandez Leads Sporter Athletes in CMP's Air Rifle Postal Event

Saylet Hernandez, 17, of Zion Benton High School in Illinois, was the overall leading athlete of the sporter class during the Civilian Marksmanship Program's (CMP) 2020-2021 Three-Position Postal Competition. Her score of 280-12x bested the field of over 500 other junior sporter competitors from around the country who participated in the national remote-style event.

Hernandez is currently in her Junior year and is a member of the Varsity rifle team. She has truly taken initiative toward enhancing her marksmanship skills, focusing hard during team practice and even spending many hours during the week and weekends training on her own rifle and backstop at home in her basement.

"As chaotic as this season has been, I plan to keep doing the best that I can and improve in my shooting skills," she said.

Playing an important role on the Zee-Bees air rifle team since her freshman year, the COVID-19 pandemic put Hernandez's 2020 season on hold for a few months, until June, when the school allowed athletes to resume practice.

Once back in the range, the new scene inside eventually became routine. Instead of the usual full firing line, now, Hernandez and her team members set up on every-other firing point and wear masks to stay socially distant and safe. She and her teammates are also given health checks before attending school and practice.

Despite the evolving procedures, Hernandez has been able to stay effectively motivated. Her exceptional performance in the Postal Competition will allow her to move on to CMP's Virtual Championship – a second round postal competition that stands as substitute for the traditional CMP Regional event fired each year. Top performers of the Virtual event will move on to Nationals, scheduled for the summer of 2021 at CMP's air gun facilities in Ohio and Alabama.

If Hernandez stays consistent with her scores, Nationals is exactly where she'll find herself for the second time during her marksmanship career.

Her initial interest in air rifle came somewhat by chance. While at her school's orientation, where clubs and other extra-curricular programs were being displayed, she approached the Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps (JROTC) table and decided to find out what offerings were available within the program.

"I had already signed up for ROTC, but at their booth, I was able to learn more about the program – which is when I learned that they had a rifle team," Hernandez explained.



"I instantly got interested and joined later on."

Her coach, Master Chief Dan Hackstein, started off new cadets with Daisy Avanti air rifles before moving up to the Crossman PCP Challenger rifle, which is what Hernandez currently uses in practice and competition.

"Saylet works hard on the range as well as in the classroom," said Coach Hackstein. "Her scores have really taken off this year."

Hackstein went on about his enjoyment in watching his young cadet grow, saying Hernandez has embraced a leadership role on the team this year. He says she has stepped up to become a training officer and is constantly staying after her own practice to help out the new shooters with all aspects of marksmanship.

"Saylet just seems to have a knack for teaching while on the range or in the classroom. She loves helping others out, no matter what it is," Hackstein said. "I couldn't be more proud of her for her accomplishments."

Outside of air rifle, Hernandez enjoys drawing and painting a hodge-podge of subjects on canvas and in her sketchbook. She also crafts art out of cans. When she isn't using her hands for creativity, she picks up the gaming controller to plunge within Tomb Raider, Zelda: Breath of the Wild and several other virtual adventures.

For the future, Hernandez has a goal in mind of finishing her senior year with an improved personal best high score. She plans to continue marksmanship after graduation and, as a lover of dying and styling hair, is aiming to join the cosmetology field.

"With all I do, I hope to do well and live without too much stress," she said.

– By Ashley Brugnone, CMP Staff Writer



# COMPETITION NERVE CONTROL FROM THE EXPERTS: *Smallbore*

*When it comes to marksmanship competition, skills can only go so far – having a strong mental game is also a key part of reaching success. In an effort to gain tips on better regulating the psychological aspects of competitive shooting, the Civilian Marksmanship Program (CMP) asked respected athletes to share their personal experiences from the firing line on what they do to control their emotions when nerves creep in and the pressure is high.*

## 1LT SARAH BEARD

1LT Sarah Beard, 29, of the U.S. Army Marksmanship Unit, began her shooting career back in 2006 in the basement of her home, practicing air rifle. The daughter of a marksmanship athlete with the U.S. Army as well as a 1984 Olympian, she quickly realized her natural talent for the sport and went on to compete at the state, national and global levels.



In 2009, she joined the Texas Christian University (TCU) NCAA rifle team, where she was repeatedly named first-team All-American in smallbore and air rifle and helped the team reach multiple NCAA National Championship titles.

As an individual, Beard was a gold medalist at the 2010 World Championships in the 3P Junior Women's event and also went on to receive several other accolades, like the 2013 USA Shooting National Champion title in 3P and Prone. Upon graduation from TCU, she continued to cultivate her craft as an athlete at the Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs.

In 2014, she earned gold at the USA Shooting National Championships in Prone and became the National Champion in Air and 3P in 2015. In 2017, she joined the Army Marksmanship Unit and travels the world competing and educating others. Her career still strong, Beard is now a five-time World Cup finalist and earned the 50m 3P Rifle Championship title at the 2019 Pan American Games.

### "Dealing with Pressure"

Pressure affects each person differently, so there is no single approach to perfect performance under pressure. I've heard many coaches insist that there is no difference between matches and practice; the distance, target size and equipment are all the same. While the requirements may all be the same, something always feels a little different when walking into a match.

Athletes begin to feel a difference before and during a big competition because their minds are busy trying to prepare them for every possible scenario. This is just the brain doing its job, but that can easily become a distraction.

Imagine you are shooting the best match of your life and preparing to shoot the last 10 shots. It would be very strange for you not to feel differently during those shots. Maybe your heart rate picks up, or your thoughts begin racing. The best way to handle that situation is to see it how it is—you are shooting well because you practiced hard to get there, and you want to do well. That's a good thing! The only thing to do is to trust your training and execute as well as you possibly can.

Easier said than done! I don't know a single athlete that has not lost some amount of focus during one of those moments. One thing I have found is that just because you may feel a change when you are nervous, that does not mean you should change something about how you shoot. Your goal is to always perform each shot as closely as possible to how you trained. That's what it means to trust your training.

If you are not confident that you can do that, then the best way to prepare for a match is to practice your shot routine under every circumstance you can imagine. It's important to remember that training for pressure is a gradual process. Start with the basics to make sure you do not lower your standards when the pressure arrives.

Begin with developing your shot process in a way that is clear to you. Breath count, relaxing, key words, sight alignment, trigger squeeze, follow through—you must build and memorize the sequence that allows you to shoot the most 10's.

Next, introduce distractions. Small ones to begin with, and then "level up" from there. You can ask a coach to play random music, make noise, count down your shots or any possible distraction they imagine. If you are on your own, you can require yourself to shoot a certain amount of

## ILT SARAH BEARD

CONTINUED...

shots under a slightly shorter period of time than normal (find your “time limit” for a good shot), challenge a friend to shoot against (even virtually) or make yourself report your scores to someone as soon as you are finished shooting.

Gradually build up distraction levels in training as you execute shots exactly the way you want. Making yourself uncomfortable during training may require some creativity, but it is possible. The key is to make sure that you are staying on task and performing shots how you want to without responding to distractions.

Like any other situation in a competition, it ultimately comes down to executing as many quality shots as possible. Don't be afraid to get creative with training for pressure, but also be open to trying different techniques to help you learn which ones help you stay on track. This could be mindfulness, breathing, key words or muscle relaxation.

Just remember that every shot fired in practice is for one purpose: to shoot as many excellent shots as possible, whether you feel pressure or not.”

## SFC HANK GRAY

*SFC Hank Gray, 41, has been a decorated member of the Army Marksmanship Unit, based out of Fort Benning, Georgia, since 2003. During that time, he has competed as a running target and international rifle team athlete, accruing several awards and recognitions through the military as well as on the competition stage.*



*As a junior, he claimed back-to-back running target titles at the USA Junior Olympics in 1997 and 1998 and went on to become a member of the winning team at the World Championship event in 2002. He holds numerous silver and gold medals from national- and global-level events and has even been a member of the U.S. National Team.*

*In 2010, Gray was deployed to Afghanistan to train Afghan National Army and NATO forces in marksmanship operations. In 2010, Gray earned the National Title in the National Rifle Association Conventional Prone smallbore match and helped set the Team National Record for Prone Iron Sights at Camp Perry in 2013.*

*Currently, Gray stands as the team chief and head coach of the international rifle team and travels the country instructing others on marksmanship fundamentals.*

**“What is pressure really?** For me, whenever talking about pressure and how to handle it in regards to competition, I like to have a little discussion about what it is, really. Webster defines pressure as the burden of physical or mental distress. Of course in shooting competitions, we are talking primarily about the mental side of things.

**Where does it come from?** We have decided that pressure is mental distress, but where it comes from might be more useful in our attempt to overcome it. There can be many sources, both external and internal, for pressure. External examples might be your parents telling you to ‘win or else,’ perhaps a coach threatening to kick you off the team or maybe a bunch of money as a prize. Internal pressure generally stems from your own desire to perform at your very best. Perhaps it is to avoid perceived embarrassment among your peers, an attempt to impress someone or the thought of how your life will change after this competition. Both external and internal pressure are linked together and frequently combine to create the overall feeling of ‘pressure’ during a competition.

**What does it do?** The next topic, then, is to discuss what happens when we experience pressure during a competition. Most people would probably agree that the biggest, most noticeable impacts are generally physical, like increased pulse rate and reduced steadiness. Mental impacts can occur as well, such as a change in your normal focus. All of these tend to result in a breakdown of the fundamentals, like a bigger hold and/or poor triggering. Unfortunately, the overall result is then a much lower score than expected. However, one thing we should discuss is that some of the physical changes are not all necessarily bad. Pressure can increase the amount of adrenaline in the body (where the increased pulse comes from), but it also improves your visual acuity and can enhance focus (which both help if used properly).

**How to deal with it?** Discussing all the previous points helps paint a better overall picture and prepare the background for actually dealing with the pressure. Most of the time, pressure comes from within your own self. While the external motivators are there, like money or maybe a





nagging coach, the way you feel/think/react to those things are generally self-inflicted. It may not do a lot to reduce the pressure, but knowing that it is coming from within can be beneficial in attempting to address it. Generally speaking, whether you win or lose in shooting sports, your family will continue loving you and your life will continue to go on. Realizing the overall big picture can help reduce the gravity of the situation you are currently in when feeling pressure.

One of my favorite techniques for dealing with pressure is to remember a time in my past in which I performed well during a pressure-filled situation. For me, one of the best examples of this was during the Superfinal at the Camp Perry Open one year. I was shooting against numerous members of the USA Shooting National Team (and future Olympians). As we got down to just a few people remaining, I was still standing strong and shooting very well. My heart was pounding, thinking about winning, and I easily saw the pulse in my sights. In fact, at times it seemed to match the beat of the very loud music perfectly.

I maintained my focus on my shot process and centered my hold on the target, in spite of the movement I was seeing. Clean triggering allowed me to take shots within my hold, and most of them were very deep. I shot something like a 104.7 over my last 10 shots of the Superfinal and ended up winning overall. It was a fantastic and amazing feeling.

I draw a lot of strength from that performance and use

it and others frequently during pressure situations. The biggest thing for me was the realization that in spite of my heart beating quickly and/or my hold moving more than normal, I was still able to take quality shots and achieve a high score. Remaining focused on the fundamentals and my shot process rather than getting caught up in the 'pressure' allowed me to perform well.

All you need is just one successful experience to use and then continually build more and more successes. While the pressure may never go away, having a tried and true technique to deal with it will become yet another item in your toolkit.

**How to increase pressure in practice?** This is one of the biggest challenges we face as shooters. It is nearly impossible to simulate the pressure one may feel at a competition during practice. How can you even come close to simulating the Olympic Games in practice? However, creating competitions in practice with some meaning to them helps to simulate the necessity of performing on demand.

Shooting against your fellow teammates and playing various games with them is the easiest way to do this. Of course, if you train alone, then you have to come up with some other ideas. There are a few games that can be played solo, but sometimes you might need the help of a

# COMPETITION NERVE CONTROL FROM THE EXPERTS: *Smallbore*

## SFC HANK GRAY

CONTINUED...

coach or parent to come up with other ideas. Try to create some consequences for not achieving a set of goals or rewards for superior performance.

A big key for the coach helping in this manner is to find the thing that motivates or creates pressure for each athlete because it is often different for different people. A few ideas for creating this pressure are consequences like making a shooter just do dry fires or holding for the rest of the training session, cleaning the range, betting money, physical exercise, etc.

Pressure is something that each athlete experiences differently and reacts to differently. However, one can learn

to deal with/still achieve high results in the face of it during competition. Drawing on past successful experiences and simulating it as much as possible in practice are the best ways to improve, along with putting yourself in those pressure situations often.

Don't be afraid to compete with someone or attend that match somewhere. Learn to embrace the pressure and try to enjoy those situations. Many of us began this sport because we enjoyed it upon our first introduction. Try to remember those times when you begin feeling the effects of pressure and hopefully you will learn to manage the pressure better.

## SGT TIM SHERRY

*Sherry proved his talents as co-captain of the University of Alaska Fairbanks Rifle team, where he competed as a member from 2012 to 2016. In 2014, he was the NCAA National Champion in smallbore – named the Alaska Nanooks Most Outstanding Male Athlete for the 2013-2014 school year. That same year, Sherry was the Junior Olympics Smallbore National Champion. He is a nine-time All-American and is an athlete on the U.S. National Team.*



*Sherry enlisted with the Army in 2017 and serves as a member of the Army Marksmanship Unit. Sherry was the 2019 USA Shooting National Champion in smallbore and won gold in smallbore at the 2019 Pan American Games (setting a new record for the event), while also placing eighth overall at the World Cup in Rio de Janeiro.*

"Like anything, I think it's worth practicing any strategies before you actually feel nervous. If I'm practicing strategies to use under pressure, I try to make myself uncomfortable. Two easy ways to get a little uncomfortable in practice are competing head-to-head with a teammate or forcing yourself to shoot in an uncomfortably short amount of time, say 10 shots in seven minutes."

Some of the biggest moments of pressure I've felt in shooting were at NCAA Championships, but I have had plenty of pressure-filled competitions throughout my career. I think it's worth pointing out that the feeling of pressure and nerves never completely goes away. We just might 'outgrow' some situations that used to make us feel nervous.

My best piece of advice for handling pressure is not fighting or being afraid of it. I know this sounds a lot easier on paper than it is in practice, but hear me out.

Every time I have felt nervous in this sport, it's because I'm on the verge of doing something really important to me. In other words, I'm right where I want to be. It may not feel like it when your heart is pumping out of your chest, but this is the situation you have been working so hard for. So, why not welcome the pressure as a sign that you're about to do something great?

Welcoming the pressure and nerves helps me think clearly and focus on what I need to. A lot of times, my heart rate will increase because of the nerves, so I focus on slowing my breath between shots. Other than that, my goal is to perform my shot process just like I have countless times in practice."



# CMP's 2020-2021 Top 15 Carolyn Hines Memorial Scholarship Recipients

*The CMP, along with the overwhelming generosity of the Garand Collectors Association (GCA), donated \$187,000 in scholarship money to 153 junior student-athletes in 2021 through the Carolyn Hines Memorial Scholarship.*

*Along with the \$1,000 scholarships awarded to each recipient, CMP staff and Board members chose the Top 15 who received \$3,000 for their commitment to marksmanship and other outstanding accomplishments. A \$5,000 scholarship was also awarded to the top overall recipient.*

*Here, learn more about each of the Top 15's exceptional attributes.*



## **Richard Block, Madison, Indiana**

Richard graduated from South Ripley High School with a cumulative GPA of 3.85. He was a member of the National Honors Society, the academic team captain and was a consistent Honor Roll student. He began competing in marksmanship five years ago and was a member of the Versailles American Legion Shooting Team. Focusing on sporter air rifle, Richard was the 2021 State Legion Postal Champion and served as his team captain. He's an avid hunter and says he will always be a lover of marksmanship. Richard hopes to continue shooting in college and would one day like to compete in a biathlon.

## **Joseph Brennan, Cottage Grove, Minnesota**

Joseph is a graduate of Saint Thomas Academy, where he finished in the top 10 percent of his Military Leadership Class. He was active in a variety of activities during his high school years, including baseball and marching/concert/pep band (percussionist). A scholastic air rifle sporter competitor for the last three years, he was part of multiple State Championship teams in CMP and NRA competitions. Joseph regularly goes shooting with his family and wants to help continue promoting the sport into adulthood. He hopes to one day earn a degree in engineering and will stay involved with the shooting while in college, whether with the school or on his own.

## **Jacob Vaagen, Devils Lake, North Dakota**

Jacob is a recent graduate of Devils Lake High School, earning a GPA of 4.0 as well as All-State academic and student of the year honors. He also served as his class vice president. Jacob was well-rounded in activities, with participation in cross country, track and field, band, choir and DECA (where he also served as vice president). He's been involved with marksmanship for the last 10 years as an air rifle sporter/precision, smallbore, rifle and highpower athlete on club and 4-H teams. He was the 2020 North Dakota State Junior Olympic smallbore and air rifle champion and was also the North Dakota 4-H sporter air rifle champion in 2019 and 2020. He also coaches younger 4-H programs. Jacob plans to attend North Dakota State University to earn a degree in civil engineering.

## **Andrew Duryea, Crossville, Alabama**

Earning an overall GPA of 4.0, Andrew mixed time between studying at Rosewood Academy and homeschooling. He has already spent much of his life involved with marksmanship, devoting the last seven years to club, 4-H and American Legion teams as an air rifle precision and smallbore athlete. Andrew has claimed several accolades over the years like a Junior Distinguished Badge and the 2021 USA Shooting Alabama State Championship title in air rifle and smallbore. He'll begin school at Murray State University in the fall and will participate as an NCAA athlete on the school's rifle team, while studying to become a veterinarian.

**continued ahead...**

### **Emma Dilbeck, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma**

One of three family members graduating from Mustang High School in 2021, Emma (a triplet) finished with a GPA of 3.93. She was a member of the Mustang Army JROTC sporter rifle team for two and a half years and was also an AP Scholar in the classroom. Outside of rifle, she participated in cross country (even running a half marathon in 2018), the National Honor Society, Spanish Honor Society and volunteered at a local food bank. She credits marksmanship for helping her to slow down and trust herself in life. Emma will be attending Southern Nazarene University where she'll work toward a career as a pediatric gastroenterologist.



### **Zachary Jackson, Madison, West Virginia**

Zachary was a student at Scott High School, where he finished with a 4.0 GPA. He earned a place on the Honor Roll list from Pre-K through graduation and was also a member of the National Honor Society. Zachary has been involved with smallbore and air rifle through his local club (the Putnam County Gun Club) for the last six years. He also volunteers at junior camps, where he advocates gun safety and recruits new lovers of marksmanship. Zachary has committed to Murray State University, studying pre-med, and will compete on the school's NCAA rifle team.



### **Elijah Esmeralda, Kapolei, Hawaii**

Elijah graduated from Island Pacific Academy with a 4.01 cumulative GPA. Academically, he was class president his sophomore year, treasurer his junior year and was a member of the National Honor Society. He was team captain of his school's rifle team – competing in both sporter and precision air rifle over the last four years. Elijah said being a part of a riflery team has taught him leadership skills and concentration. He plans to continue marksmanship while in college, even if it means starting his own team. For his future, Elijah would like to earn a doctorate degree in chemical engineering.



### **Clara Lowe, Halifax, Massachusetts**

Clara studied at Silver Lake Regional High School, where she was on the Academic Honor Roll, earned a 4.3 GPA, leadership service recognition in the school choir and was acknowledged for her excellence in computer applications. She also participated in volunteer service around her community. Clara has been involved with marksmanship for the last four years as a member of the Taunton Marksmanship air rifle and smallbore teams. She is a two-time USA Shooting Massachusetts State Champion and earned gold medals in smallbore competition. In the fall, Clara will attend West Virginia University, with the hopes of competing in rifle. She'll also be working toward a career as a forensic chemist.



### **Mindy Higa, Kaneohe, Hawaii**

Mindy attended the Mid-Pacific Institute, where she earned a 3.941 GPA and a place on the Honor Roll, National Society of High School Scholars and the President's List. She was also involved with Interact Club, Red Cross Club, Civil Air Patrol and was the vice president of the Japanese Club. Mindy has been a part of her school's rifle team for the last four years and served as team captain of both the Varsity Girls Sporter Team and the Mixed Precision Team. Next school year, she'll be attending the University of Oregon and the Lane Community College Professional Flight Program to work toward a career as a commercial airline pilot or an aviation lawyer.



### **Brandon Lum, Kaneohe, Hawaii**

Brandon is a graduate of the Mid-Pacific Institute, where he earned a cumulative GPA of 4.383 and was an Honor Graduate and member of the National Honor Society. He earned several academic awards, like the Dartmouth Book Award for intellectual leadership and the Na Ohana Pueo Award for excellence (nominated by faculty members). Brandon has been competing in marksmanship for the past four years on his school's air rifle sporter and precision teams, though he has been involved with the sport his entire life. He hopes to one day become a high school or collegiate coach after completing education at the University of Rochester, where he'll study to become a biomedical and materials engineer.





### **M'Leah Lambdin, Colorado Springs, Colorado**

M'Leah graduated from Coronado High School with a GPA of 4.2. In school, she was a member of the National Honor Society, Workforce Industry Training and was her platoon commander. M'Leah has been involved in marksmanship for four years as part of high school, club, 4-H and American Legion teams and earned a Junior Distinguished Air Rifle Badge. She was the Colorado State Standing Champion in 2020 and earned the title of Colorado State 3P Champion in 2020 and 2021. She enjoys mentoring and coaching younger athletes and hopes to one day become a youth coach. M'Leah will be attending the University of Mississippi, where she'll compete on the NCAA rifle team.



### **Alyssa Brewer, Preble, Indiana**

Alyssa attended Bellmont High School, where she excelled academically – reaching a cumulative GPA of 4.18. She was a Youth Leadership State Ambassador, earned three Academic Varsity Letters and received College Board Rural and Small Town Recognition Program honors. While in high school, Alyssa competed on the school's air rifle team for four years. She served as the team's captain and student coach – receiving Student Coach of the Year in 2018-2019. She hopes to continue on a club shooting team while attending Purdue University, majoring in computer engineering.



### **Hailey Forar, Littleton, Colorado**

Hailey is a recent graduate of Mullen High School, with a cumulative GPA of 4.14. She's been a part of marksmanship for the last nine years – a pistol and rifle athlete with the Jefferson County 4-H Achievers Club, where she is a youth leader. She has also been involved with archery and shotgun. She credits the sport of shooting as a significant part of who she is as a person, saying she can't imagine life without it. For her future, Hailey will be attending Norwich University and would one day like to have a military career in the Air Force as a sniper or within cybersecurity.



### **Anna Brinegar, Midlothian, Virginia**

Anna was a standout student, finishing with a GPA of 4.3 and involved with band (clarinet), cross country, German Club and National Honor Society. Anna is active in her community and participates in multiple litter pickups each year. A precision air rifle competitor for three years, she was named the MVP of the Alconbury High School Marksmanship team and has recently started smallbore. Along with being a member of her school's Air Force JROTC team, she was also involved with the Patriot Shooting Club. She hopes to continue shooting in college as she works to become a marine biologist or conservationist.



### **Danielle Vigil, Yorktown, Virginia**

Danielle graduated from Tabb High School with a 4.2 GPA. Academically, she was a member of the National Honor Society, DECA, National English Honors Society and Mu Alpha Theta. She was also involved in Beta Club, Key Club, Civil Air Patrol and served as Cadet Commander for over a year. Danielle has been competing in marksmanship for three and a half years on American Legion and 4-H teams as a member of the Patriot Shooting Club of Virginia, where she was named team captain. Danielle will continue competing as an athlete on the Morehead State team, with the hopes of qualifying for the NCAA Championships. She will be working toward a career as a doctor of physical therapy.



### **Top Recipient: Scott Rockett, Cary, North Carolina**

Scott graduated from Crossroads Flex High School with an overall GPA of 4.39. He was the student counsel treasurer, student ambassador and captain of the rifle team. Scott also organized charity projects and has raised donations for the homeless. Scott has been involved with marksmanship for almost a decade and has been a member of his high school team as well as his local club, 4-H, American Legion and Boy Scouts precision air rifle, smallbore and rifle teams. He earned his Junior Distinguished Badge in air rifle and placed at several national-level and World Cup events over his career. Scott will join the U.S. Air Force Academy rifle team as he studies aerospace engineering. His other ambition is to one day compete on the U.S. Olympic team.



# Junior Marksmen Stories...

## Junior Natalie Perrin Takes on the World and West Virginia University in 2021

Natalie Perrin, 18, of Coopersville, Michigan, has had one clear aspiration since she first got serious about marksmanship.

"I've always wanted to compete in college," she said.

On her 18th birthday, in November 2020, Perrin reached her goal by signing a National Letter of Intent with West Virginia University (WVU) Rifle – one of the premier collegiate marksmanship programs in the country.

Perrin, a talented junior athlete, received several letters from respected NCAA schools hoping to get her to join their programs. It was a tough choice, but after getting to know the coaching staff and team members of West Virginia, she knew where she wanted to continue her budding rifle career.

"I'm really excited to work with Coach (John) Hammond and Coach (Soren) Butler on a daily basis and to get to train with the team," she said. "I think it may be challenging at first to juggle rifle and academics, but I know I will have a good support system there for me."

Along with working with the team, Perrin says she's ready to experience all aspects of college life, like representing WVU and being a part of its atmosphere. Right now, she thinks the most challenging part will be acclimating to life in Morgantown, where WVU is located, and being away from home for an extended period of time.

But, that's okay. Perrin has never shied away from a challenge – and she usually comes out on top.

In 2019-2020 alone, Perrin shot the highest air rifle score in the state of Michigan, collected a pair of Junior Olympic gold medals and won the 2020 state smallbore title.

During the Civilian Marksmanship Program's (CMP) 2021 Winter Home Range Series event, she topped the precision 3×20 Air Rifle and 3×20 50-Foot Metallic Sight Smallbore (Open and Junior) matches, while finishing in the top three spots of the 60 Shot Smallbore Prone and 60



Shot Air Rifle competitions.

She can be found at several events throughout the year, like CMP's Monthly Matches at Camp Perry.

Perrin is also a regular to the Gary Anderson CMP Competition Center at Camp Perry, participating in the annual Monthly Match League. In 2020, she led the 3×20 Precision and 60 Shot Rifle matches in the final League results – staying steady at the top of the leaderboard each month she competed.

Not stopping there, she went on to become the top junior



competitor at Camp Perry during the 2020 USA Shooting Winter Airgun Championships, and she completely controlled the junior match during the two-day Dixie Double air gun event at CMP's South Competition Center in November. She marked her Dixie Double showing as one of her favorite career accomplishments, so far.

"It was just a really fun match and I think one of the firsts that we were able to all get together again and compete at a good size match," Perrin said. "This match also helped me get on the team to go down and compete in El Salvador, which is another favorite experience of mine."

The El Salvador Junior Grand Prix in March 2021 was her first time competing internationally. There, she was one of 12 USA juniors who were vying for earned quota spots for the Junior Pan American Games, firing later this year in Cali, Colombia. With nine medals overall, the team earned all of the available quotas.

"It was such an incredible experience and one that I will never forget," she said. "Everything was so surreal – from wearing the National Team Jacket to actually competing there."

Although she was nervous, all of the training she had done led her to that moment on an international range, and she knew exactly what to do.

"When I got on the line, I calmed down a little bit because it's always the same black dot," she said. "I am so grateful for that experience though, and I learned a lot about myself as an athlete and some good things to work on."

"It was such an honor to be able to represent the USA," she added.

She says one thing to remember when competing outside of the country is to trust yourself. Training enough to create muscle memory and allowing the body and subconscious mind to guide the performance can help calm the nerves.

"Of course, I would also say that the first time is always the hardest," she admitted. "While I've only had one international experience so far, I know the next one will hopefully be less nerve racking and scary."

Since the beginning of her career, Perrin has remembered to soak in each moment and relish in her experiences.

The sport piqued her interest when she saw it offered at her local county fair in 2015. She started with 4-H BB gun later that year and stayed with the discipline for two years – dabbling in sporter air rifle before moving on to precision air rifle and smallbore through her local gun club, the Grand Rapids Rifle and Pistol Club.

She has since connected with other junior programs, like

the Michigan State University Demmer Center Junior Team and Team Winning Solutions – a training opportunity led by former NCAA athlete and Olympian Lucas Kozeniesky. She's also a member of the USA Shooting Junior Team. Perrin trains with her Feinwerkbau 800 aluminum air rifle and an Anschutz 54.30 smallbore – readying herself for the several firing lines she finds herself on throughout the year.

"I try to compete as much as I can," she said. "I am a pretty firm believer that some of the best lessons you will learn in the sport is by competing and getting in range time."

In 2019, she was selected to be a National Rifle Association Youth Shooting Sports Ambassador, which opened her eyes to a new perspective on marksmanship.

"I really just want to share with people all the opportunities possible in the sport and all of the disciplines," she said. "So many people, like me, didn't know about everything that is possible in shooting sports, and I want to get more people involved."

Perrin says she has received helpful advice from many in the shooting community throughout her career. One particular piece of advice that was told her by her Team Winning Solutions coach, Kozeniesky, has stuck with her.

"The basics of what he said is that you can't focus on the past shot or series, and you can't focus on what the end score will look like – you can only focus on the present and the shot you have now," she said.

She went on, "Someone also told me, when I first started competing, to make training hard. When you push yourself and work hard in training sessions, matches can begin to feel less intimidating and more familiar."

Perrin's next goal is to someday make it to the Olympics. She plans to continue working within the sport after college, specifically with youth involvement and outreach.

"I enjoy any time I get to compete and see all of my fellow competitors and friends," she said.

Off of the firing line, Natalie has been a member of the Coopersville Future Farmers of America Chapter, where she has proven herself to be a gifted public speaker. She has competed in various public speaking contests, and in 2020, she won the Michigan State FFA Public Speaking Contest with a speech on ovine GM1 Gangliosidosis – an inherited nerve cell disorder in sheep. She also enjoys spending time with her family and traveling. At WVU, she plans to study advertising and public relations.

Good luck to Natalie as she prepares for West Virginia University and her future!

– By Ashley Brugnone, CMP Staff Writer

# UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA FAIRBANKS

The University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF) Rifle Team, founded in 1960, recently completed its 61st collegiate season. The historic program has won 10 team NCAA National Championships and 16 Individual National Championships. UAF has produced five Olympians, one Paralympian and three Olympic and Paralympic Medalists through athletes Matt Emmons, Jamie Corkish and Dan Jordan, respectively.

The Nanooks returned to the National Championships in 2021 for their 34th appearance on the national stage. The team finished in 5th place and, for the first time in program history, averaged over 4,700 in the regular season. The Nanooks named four All-Americans this season: Liam Eberhart, Rylan Kissell, Kellen McAferty and Daniel Enger. Coach Will Anti completed his first season with the Nanooks, with help of second year Graduate Assistant Randi Loudin.

## KELLEN MCAFERTY



**Hometown/Junior Team:** Littlerock, Washington; Capital City Junior Rifle Cup

**What is your major?** I am majoring in Mechanical Engineering because I like tinkering with things and learning how they work. My favorite class is unmanned aircraft systems, as we learn about different technologies in UAVs (Unmanned Aerial Vehicle).

**Favorite junior match?** The 2019 Junior World Cup in Suhl, Germany, because that was my first trip out of the country. It was a great experience to see shooters from other countries compete.

**What is a practice day like for you?** We practice three hours a day, five days a week. I frequently use SCATT systems, especially in air rifle to train my approach and hold.

**What has rifle taught you?** Perseverance. Rifle has taught me perseverance through hardships, as it takes a lot of hard work to get to the college level and to push beyond that.

## RYLAN KISSELL



**Hometown/Junior Team:** Denver, Colorado; National Training Center Junior Club

**What is your major?** My major is Business Administration, and I chose this because I would like to own my own charter fishing business. I love to spend time outdoors, and running my own business will help me be able to do what I love. My favorite class so far has been Modern World History

**What other hobbies did you have in high school?** I swam my freshman year of high school, and then after that I decided to stop doing two sports and just focus on shooting. I spend a lot of time fishing after school and going on hikes in the foothills.

**What is a travel match like for you?** For me, travel matches are a really fun and cool experience. I like being able to interact with the other team and experience shooting in some of the best ranges around the country.



# Q&A WITH ATHLETES AND COACHES

**Do you have a mantra?** What I like to say to myself on the line is “slow and steady.” It reminds me to keep a slow approach and center on the bull. My motivation is to make the 2024 Olympics, but also to be the best student-athlete that I can be.

**Advice for juniors?** If shooting is really what you want to do, then stick with it. There are going to be points when it doesn't feel like you're improving and it feels like a struggle, but don't give up. Persistence and patience are what make good athletes and students.

**Any other comments?** If you are looking to join a college team, make sure that you keep your grades up. Grades are a huge part of what coaches look at and they could be a determining factor for getting on a team.

## HALEY CASTILLO



**Hometown:** Albuquerque, New Mexico

**What is your major?** My major is in Homeland Security and Emergency Management. I chose this because it piqued my interest. While I had no immediate idea what I wanted to do after I graduated, I knew it would be somewhere in that area. I would say one of my favorite classes was Emergency Planning and Preparedness. This was a big eye-opener class for me. It helped me to realize the threats that we face and what mitigative measures can be taken to protect different parts of society.

**What do you do outside of rifle to better yourself?** As a team, we all do daily mindfulness outside of the range. I personally also try to do some imagery of a position that I am working on each night before bed.

**Future plans?** Border Patrol is my next step after I am done with school. While I do plan to continue shooting, I most likely will not be doing so competitively. However, I can't say for sure.

**Additional thoughts?** I came to UAF with one plan: shoot well. I work well on a team, but I saw the sport as only a one-man show at first. However, once I became a part of the team, I found that not only can I learn from my teammates, but that they also provide a strong support system on and off the line. The people you surround yourself with can influence your behavior, and I am glad for it. My teammates pushed me harder and gave me a better experience than I could have ever hoped for.

## JESSICA BOYCE



**Hometown:** Spanish Fork, Utah / Springville Rifle Junior Team

**What is your major?** My major is Sport and Recreation Management, concentrating in Sport Management. I chose this major because I enjoy sports, and I want the rest of my life to be involved with sports. Right now, I am really enjoying my Sports Analytics class.

**When did you start rifle, and what is your favorite?** I was 13 years old. I would say air rifle is my favorite, but I love both air rifle and smallbore. Standing is my favorite stage.

# UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA FAIRBANKS

## BOYCE CONTINUED

**What do you do outside of rifle to better yourself?** We work out as a team twice a week, and I practice mindfulness and breathing about three times a day.

**Future plans?** I have one more year of eligibility, which gives me another chance to help my favorite team go to the NCAA Championships. Upon graduation, I hope to find a career revolving around Sport Management.

## RANDI LOUDIN, ASST. COACH



**Hometown:** Post Falls, Idaho

**Were you an athlete before a coach?** I started shooting around 7th grade in northern Idaho and Western Washington before walking-on at the Ole Miss Women's Rifle Team. At Ole Miss, I received my Bachelor of Science in Integrated Marketing Communications, with a minor in Business Administration. I am getting my Masters of Business Administration while working with the Nanooks. While competing, I worked with five different coaches (two head coaches, three assistant coaches) and learned a lot. I

have seen the most success in shooting prone – one time earning a spot on the USA team for the 2018 ISSF World Shooting Championships in Changwon, South Korea, before the start of my senior season. Also, at Ole Miss, I set the prone record as the first Rebel in program history to shoot a 200-20x in the Smallbore portion of the match.

**Favorite reason for coaching?** My favorite reason for coaching is not only helping shooters learn new things in their shooting, but also recognizing their perseverance for day-to-day challenges. I loved, as an athlete, how challenges on the line mimicked the same challenges in my own life (planning, preparing, being honest with how I was doing), and I try to help others see those same correlations.

**What is a day like for your athletes?** Depending on the training time, shooters might start their day either in the classroom or in the range. Will went into the details of the day, so I'll leave that to him.

**What is your biggest challenge?** I think there are challenges, sometimes, in knowing what kind of support each person needs individually and adjusting to each person. Also, being a graduate assistant coach, I am always finding the balance of range work and schoolwork.

**Advice for juniors wanting to compete in college and to those already in college?** Big question! Something I would have told myself as a junior was that it's normal to be overwhelmed when trying to make all these big life decisions. Where you want to go to school (if you want to go to school), what are you going to major in, what do you want to do for a career, etc. The best thing you can do is just start setting yourself up with options, and then at the end of the day, pick whatever interests you the most.

Whether you go on to a shoot in college, attend college close to home or don't go to college at all – it's not whether you make the right decision, but rather that you're making the decision the right one for you by making the most of it.

Now, for the graduating college seniors... congratulations! You are almost there! I'm sure there have been many ups and downs along the way, but you're probably a pretty resilient person as a result. It's okay to be happy and sad all at once that school is ending. But now, whether you're still shooting or not after school, take the time to try something new! Shooting will always be there if you want to pick it up again.



# Q&A WITH ATHLETES AND COACHES

## WILL ANTI, HEAD COACH



**Hometown:** Fort Benning, Georgia

**Were you an athlete before a coach?** Yes, I was fortunate to be a member of West Virginia University's Rifle Team. In my senior year, I served as the captain of the program. I was also able to compete as a member of the U.S. Junior Team for several years and compete at various international competitions. Before coaching in college athletics, I was the National Team Coach for Paralympic Shooting with USA Shooting.

**Favorite reason for coaching?** There are a lot of rewarding aspects to being a college rifle coach. I take a lot of satisfaction in watching athletes grow as shooters and expand their knowledge. I like watching athlete's long-term progression.

**What is a day like for your athletes?** Our shooters train three hours a day, five days a week. The time of day is different for everyone and dependent on class times. When possible, I try to schedule them in groups of four or five at a time. I can get a lot more one-on-one time with them in smaller groups, versus having the entire team in at once. It's nice when we have a weekend practice or a Friday practice here and there, where we have everyone on the line at once. It's great energy. Day to day though, we aren't able to get long periods of technical work with a couple of shooters if we have the entire group on the line at once. We have team workouts twice a week. Next season, we are looking to add a third workout that will likely be yoga-based.

**What is your biggest challenge?** The biggest challenge in coaching is tailoring your coaching to 10 or more different athletes. In the beginning, you believe that one explanation, or phrasing, or method, will work broadly. You quickly learn that what resonates for one athlete might as well be German to another. You have to tailor your technical coaching and off/on the line dialogue, depending on the athlete. This is the biggest challenge, but when you see that something you have said clicks, it is extremely gratifying.

### Advice for juniors wanting to compete in college and to those already in college?

To junior shooters wanting to compete in college: Train as much as possible. A lot of the improvement at the junior level is based on getting reps in. Typically, the best juniors in the country are the ones with the most hours behind the gun – not necessarily the best equipment or best coaching.

College athletes: I would also say to take a little pressure off yourself. Almost every college coach was a junior shooter at one time and can remember how nerve-wracking it was to stand on the line with collegiate coaches evaluating you. Don't let us psych you out. At one point, we were all 16 and shaking in our boots because Jon Hammond was standing behind us at Junior Olympics.

For graduating seniors, it can be an overwhelming time of year. You are trying to finish your collegiate year while beginning to plan the first step of your professional career. Know that it is normal to be overwhelmed and unsure about your next steps. Be open to unexpected opportunities. And always remember to thank the people that have helped you accomplish this major milestone.

# Kaiserslautern JROTC Rifle Team Keeps Competitively Close From Overseas



*Kaiserslautern JROTC Rifle is based out of Germany and features a group of vibrant young athletes.*

The Kaiserslautern High School rifle team spends its time like most junior teams. Its members focus on the fundamentals and work hard on the firing line to improve their game, in the hopes of achieving victory amongst their peers. But unlike other teams whose rivals are right next door, their competition is a world away – well, more specifically, a country away.

Kaiserslautern High School, (formerly known as Rhine High School or Kaiserslautern American High School) is a private, Department of Defense-operated international school in Kaiserslautern, Germany, in the Kaiserslautern Military Community – the largest population of Americans outside of the continental U.S. and home to approximately 50,000 residents.

The school, also known as KHS or K-Town, hosts over 700 students and 68 full-time educators. KHS is located within the Europe East – one of three European school districts facilitated by the Department of Defense Education Activity (DODEA) system. A total of 13 schools from

Germany, Italy and the United Kingdom compete against each other as part of the DODEA athletic program, which includes Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (JROTC) scholastic rifle opportunities.

Coach Eric San Pedro, a retired MSgt with the U.S. Air Force, has led the Kaiserslautern rifle crew since 2019. Currently, the group holds 10 total junior athletes, with the top four members named to the school's nationals team.

"The strength of this team lies in their tenacity and determination to be the best they can be," San Pedro said. "They love to be in the firing range, practicing intensely. They understand the importance of practice."

This year's nationals squad is full of flair, with three juniors and a remarkable up-and-coming freshman, Hannah San Pedro – the coach's daughter. This is her first time on the marksmanship team, and, incredibly, she is already shooting at an elevated competitive level.

"Hopefully, she can continue to improve and prove herself," San Pedro said as a proud dad/coach.



Of course, Hannah's not the only K-Town marksman showing talent. She recently joined forces with teammates Jonathan Stricker, Vivian Dougherty and Aiden Malcolm to earn first place overall in the Air Force division of the 2021 JROTC Virtual Championship (this year's National event). San Pedro, whose team also came out on top during last year's Air Force JROTC National Championship results, says his athletes are consistently motivated and dedicated to enhancing their skills.

"What I appreciate from this team is their willingness to listen and have a coachable attitude," he said.

San Pedro went on to say that the biggest challenge of being an overseas school is the limited competitions they are eligible to participate in, since there are no local precision competitions available in Germany.

To find in-person matchups, the team typically competes stateside each year at the JROTC National Championship, VFW events and other U.S.-sponsored matches where they are allowed to compete. The onset of COVID-19 in 2020 struck KHS just as it did many schools and clubs within the United States – causing them to miss a significant number of competitions and practice on top of an already sparse schedule.

"Living in Germany is no different from the U.S. or any other country. It (COVID) has hit the entire globe in an unprecedented manner," San Pedro said. "COVID has impacted our marksmanship program in ways where our athletes have lost time to train and slowed down the process of becoming a sharpshooter."

Luckily, with organizations like the Civilian Marksmanship Program staying dedicated to providing competitive opportunities, Kaiserslautern was able to take part in a few matches throughout the year, in spite of the pandemic constraints. Postal competitions, where teams use mailed targets to complete a course of fire at their home ranges and return for scoring, made "gathering" athletes for matches safe and convenient.

"We are grateful that we were allowed to have a short marksmanship season, due to the fact that we can shoot Postals – even though we have to be compliant with COVID safety restrictions and policies, such as wearing the masks and social distancing while shooting," San Pedro explained.

The Kaiserslautern team has already accomplished one of its biggest goals for this year – a repeat Air Force National Championship title – but there's still more to be done. With



*Coach Eric San Pedro*

San Pedro behind them, the fierce athletes are ready for whatever challenge is next.

"This year's K-Town team is underrated and unknown, but they have the hearts of champions," he added. "Of course, they'll have to show this in the firing range!"

– By Ashley Brugnone, CMP Staff Writer



*The 2021 Air Force JROTC Virtual Championship Team, from left: Hannah San Pedro, Jonathan Stricker, Aiden Malcolm, and Vivian Dougherty*

## ON THE MARK

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