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SPORTS & RECREATION

MARCH 4, 2010

50-Bird Skeet Shoot scores a hit

Randy Scales
Frontline Contributor

Just before the clouds set in to take the temperatures down for the morning, the 2nd annual 50-Bird Skeet shoot was underway at the Fort Stewart Skeet Range near Holbrook Pond, Feb. 27.

The drop in temp did not deteriorate the shooters from taking aim and firing their rounds at the small frisbee-shaped disks, known as birds, whizzing through the air at lightening quick speed. Regardless of how fast the birds flew, many of them were clipped from the front, side, or the rear, which is really the objective of skeet shooting.

In the mix for the day, shooters aiming their various gauged weapons included Col. Kevin Milton, Fort Stewart-Hunter Army Airfield Garrison Commander; Chap. (Lt. Col) Curtis Prewitt, 3rd Sustainment Brigade-rear chaplain; members of both the Marne Trap and Skeet Club from Stewart and the Mossy Oaks Gun Club from Hunter; other Soldiers, civilians, youth, and retirees.

Even though many things operate smoothly in the garrison, leaders still need ways to unwind and just have some fun. "I like to shoot any chance I get," said Col. Milton. Pig, deer, dove, even the most recent pheasant shoot have been in the barrel sights of Col. Milton when he got a chance to come out and relax and enjoy the camaraderie.

The 3rd Sustainment Brigade-rear chaplain enjoys the sport also. "I may come out once a week," said Chap. Prewitt. "This is a sport for all ages."

Gary Hadden, an employee of Slone Construction Company on Stewart and president of the Marne Skeet Club, agrees with both Col. Milton and Lt. Col. Prewitt. "This is a sport where a person, no matter what their age, can develop self-confidence. The more you practice, the better you become."

Hadden also added that you can't beat the price either. "MWR (Morale, Welfare, and Recreation) has kept the prices low," said Hadden. "You can either take your Family of four to the movies for about \$65, or bring them out to the range for about \$40. Plus, it gets the kids off the couch."

There are different types of people who come out for the sport, said Robert Ackman, retired Army. "You will find the avid trap and skeet shooter, regular hunters, bird hunters, shotgun shooters, and those who want to learn. If you can hold a shotgun, you can shoot skeet," he said.

Just ask Ryan and Gavin McGowan, who won in the youth shooting and have only been shooting for about six months.

Mike Moore, MWR shooting sports manager, invites everyone to come out and take advantage of the range. The range is open every Thursday and Saturday. Members of the Marne Skeet Club open the range 10 a.m. on Sundays for those who want to practice also. For more information, call Moore at



Photos by Randy Scales

Colonel Kevin Milton, Stewart-Hunter garrison commander prepares to shoot during the 50-Bird Skeet Shoot competition held at Fort Stewart's skeet and trap range near Holbrook Pond, Feb. 27. The competition is a big hit with hunters, seasoned shooters and those who just want to learn to shoot.



Jennifer Scales, DoD Civilian, prepares to shoot during the 50-Bird Skeet Shoot competition held at Fort Stewart's skeet and trap range, Feb. 27. Scales took 1st place in the ladies division.

435-8219 or 435-8061.

The next skeet shoot is scheduled in 60 days, so by that time, everyone could have saved up their \$20 entrance fee, plus have come out to the range to get some practice.

Winners of the 50-Bird Shoot, Feb 27 were as follows:

Expert: 1st Place: Walt Straub
2nd Place: Jay Smith
3rd Place: Reid Hadden

Intermediate: 1st Place: Scott Idleman
2nd Place: Jack McDonald
3rd Place: Allen Harvey

Novice: 1st Place: Robert Ackman
2nd Place: Chad Ackman
3rd Place: William Lambert

Ladies: 1st Place: Jennifer Scales

Youth: 1st Place: Ryan McGowan
2nd Place: Gavin McGowan

87th CSSB repeats at Stewart basketball champs

Jennifer Hartwig
Fort Stewart Public Affairs

For the second year in a row, the team from 87th CSSB closed out the Fort Stewart Intramural Basketball season as champions.

This time, they did it by defeating MEDDAC 49-27, with shooting guard Shawn Watkins leading the way with 13 points.

"Our game plan was like any other game - come out with man-to-man defense and team ball," said 87th

CSSB coach Barion Freeman.

MEDDAC jumped out to an early lead, forcing 87th CSSB to play behind until the final minute of the first half, when they took a one point lead, which they took into the locker room.

"We started pressuring them in the second half, moving the ball and playing team ball like we're supposed to," said Freeman.

In addition to Watkins, 87th CSSB is led by team captain Terrance Clark, and co-captain Jermaine Williams.

"Our team, the guys are interchangeable; we don't have one dominant player," Freeman said. "On any given play, anyone can lead us in scoring or blocked shots."

Leading the team on the boards was D'Anthony Rosser.

"He's our athletic big man. He's a very important factor in why we're heading back to Hunter," Freeman said. "He (Rosser) controlled the boards - he is my captain on defense with (George) Askew. He makes sure everyone's in their spot on defense."

After winning the Fort Stewart championship last year, but falling in the Stewart-Hunter championship to 603rd ASB, the team added some valuable personnel that they hope will lift them to victory Thursday against U.S. Coast Guard-Savannah.

"We won last year, and our focus was to win again. We set the goal to win again last year. We wanted to get back to Hunter this year (for the championship)," Freeman said. "We added a few more personnel to make us stronger."

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Sgt. 1st Class Tyrone C. Marshall Jr.

First Lieutenant Valerie Aquino, executive officer, Headquarters and Support Company, 209th Aviation Support Battalion, Task Force Wings, fires her weapon at Short Stop Range during TF Marne's first biathlon competition, held at Contingency Operating Base Speicher, near Tikrit, Iraq, Feb. 27.

TF Marne elite compete in biathlon

Sgt. 1st Class Tyrone C. Marshall Jr.
25th Combat Aviation Brigade Public Affairs

CONTINGENCY OPERATING BASE SPEICHER, Iraq - There are those that choose to accept what is the basic norm and those that decide to challenge themselves, pushing their bodies to the limit.

Forty-two of the toughest Soldiers Task Force Marne has to offer competed in a grueling test of wills as they participated in the task force's first biathlon held at Contingency Operating Base Speicher, near Tikrit, Iraq, Feb. 27.

These select Soldiers were hand-picked by their respective chains of command to represent their unit in the biathlon, essentially pitting their Soldiers against the other elite biathletes from across the task force.

The 42 Soldiers involved in the biathlon

were representative of each unit across United States Division-North. The categories were broken down to first through third place for male and female competitors. There was also a category for overall male and female with the most points.

The scoring system was a combination of the Soldiers' efficiency at the range combined with their run times after negotiating the muddy, wet 7.4-plus mile, round trip run.

"It was a test of their endurance and how well they could shoot," explained Maj. Dennis O'Reilly, 3rd ID deputy division surgeon, breaking down the events. "They had to run over 3.7 miles to the range, put on all their protective gear that they wear in combat, fire 10 rounds at a [25-meter] target, then drop their combat gear, and run back, all done in Army combat Uniforms and boots [with rifles]."

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The new players on the team include Watkins, center/forward Eric White, and point guard Joseph Phillips.

“Phillips has the quickness and speed that we didn’t have last year,” Freeman said.

The 87th CSSB won with a balanced attack, according to their coach. Since there are no star players, each player relies on the other to block the other team's shots and score for their team.

Rounding out the 87th CSSB team are Mickey Warren, forward Mickey Campbell, and “grinder” Horrace Bright. Freedom is confident his team will perform well in the championship game tonight.

“We want to come out loose, come out man-to-man and use our defense,” Freeman said of his team’s game plan. “As long as we play team ball like we have been, we should have no prob-



Coast Guard beats 416th QM for Hunter title

Sgt. Brittina Williams, Hunter Public Affairs

Sergeant Antonio Coleman, 416th QM Bn., attempts to score a jump shot, trying to reclaim his team's winning reputation. The U.S. Coast Guard's Air Station Savannah won the 2010 championship basketball title at Tominac Fitness Center on Hunter Army Airfield, Feb. 25, beating 416th QM, 64 to 43.

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The biathlon, a vision of Maj. Gen. Tony Cucolo, the USD-North commander, was planned by Soldiers across the task force.

“We had lots of help,” said Maj. O’Reilly. “TF Wings ran the range. I told Wings ‘We are going to have 42 to 60 Soldiers show up, shoot, then run off the range. Go ahead and figure that out.’ And they did a great job doing that. The ‘Ready’ Brigade did a great job as the run coordinator.”

Ultimately, when the winners were announced, the competitors from 25th Combat Aviation Brigade, TF Wings, led the way. First Lieutenant Valerie Aquino, Headquarters and Support Company, 209th Aviation Support Battalion, and Spc. Douglas Long, Company E, 2nd Battalion, 25th Aviation Regiment, both of TF Wings, led all competitors with a combined 363 points. First Lieutenant Aquino also had the highest individual score of any competitor, scoring 185 points.

“It feels great,” said 1st Lt. Aquino, on her accomplishments. “I’m glad it’s over, but it was very exciting. My goals were to not give up, and to hopefully win. I’m very happy I had a chance to represent my unit.”

Most of the biathletes felt the same way. Many didn’t expect to perform as

well as they did and were surprised by the outcome.

“I was surprised. I didn’t think I was going to place,” said Staff Sgt. Desiree Browning, from Co. B, 26th Brigade Support Battalion, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd ID, who took third place in the female category with 99 points. “I was just going to do my best and try to finish the race.”

First Lieutenant Samuel Freeman, Battery B, 1st Battalion, 9th Field Artillery Regt., 2nd BCT, 3rd ID, and second place winner for the males with 166 points, also had no expectations prior to the race.

“I wasn’t expecting to get second place at any point,” 1st Lt. Freeman said. “I came out here and did a lot better than I expected to do. I’m not much of a distance runner. The most I’ve run is probably a little over six miles. Running in boots and ACUs was extremely difficult.”

Some of the biathletes had their own goals whether it was motivating their Soldiers or showing their commitment to physical fitness by finishing the event.

“This definitely raises the bar for my Soldiers,” said Staff Sgt. Browning.

Specialist Long, first place winner for all male biathletes with 178 points, also



Sgt. Jonathan Jobson

The inaugural group of biathletes takes off during Task Force Marne’s first biathlon at Contingency Operating Base Speicher, near Tikrit, Iraq, Feb. 27.

weighed in on his reason for competing.

“I think it just shows how dedicated I am to physical fitness and keeping myself healthy. Running in ACUs, boots and with a weapon ... it really changes the dynamics of running,” he said.

Staff Sergeant Lawrence Smith, who won third place for the men with 161 points, shared a few of his goals in competing. He also placed in the recent Operation Iraqi Freedom Great Aloha Run, Feb. 1.

“One goal was just to finish it because it was something I’ve never done before.

And the other was being one of the top runners. My goal was pretty much to come up here and have fun,” he said.

A triumphant finisher, Spc. Long discussed his pride in being involved in the task force’s first biathlon, knowing the stiff level of competition.

“It feels pretty good,” Spc. Long concluded. “All that hard work paid off. I knew it was going to be tough. Every unit was going to send their best. So winning certainly felt good. And knowing that you were selected to represent your entire brigade was pretty cool.”

TIME OUT! Where do they go from here?

Commentary by Jennifer Hartwig
Fort Stewart Public Affairs

First, I have to start off by saying that I love the Olympics. Every two years I get just giddy with anticipation of two-straight weeks of sports on 24/7. Sure, in the Winter games some of those sports are skeleton, curling, bobsled or Nordic combined, but I'll even watch those during the Olympics.

I've found that not all people share my enthusiasm for the Olympics, especially of the Winter variety. Maybe it's because we live in Georgia, and there aren't too many skiing mountains close by... or bobsled or luge tracks... or ice skating rinks... or pretty much anything resembling a winter sport.

Maybe it's because we only see these athletes once every four years. It's not like the NBA or NFL, where we see them nearly year-round, either competing on their sports, or as the stars of national ad campaigns.

For those Olympic athletes who aren't in the spotlight, what do they do now?

Michael Phelps used his record-breaking gold medal performances in 2008 to earn world-wide recognition and a Subway deal that's kept him in the national spot light.

Apolo Ohno was a huge star during the 2006 Olympics; then he went on Dancing with the Stars and became well-known to Americans who don't even know what speed skating is.

Shaun White makes millions of dollars a year as a snowboard and skateboard pitchman, and for the use of his likeness in video games.

These athletes used the Olympics as a jumping-off point to fame and, ideally, fortune. Most Olympics athletes, however, are not so lucky.

This year, I had a vested interest in the Games – my friend from high school was on the U.S. Olympic Bobsled team.

How, you ask, does one get into bobsled? Pretty much by falling into it, as is the case with my friend Steve Langton. He was an all-conference sprinter in college, and that combined with his size apparently makes for a perfect bobsled pushman. Go figure.

Anyway, Steve's sled came in 10th in the two-man sled and DNF in the 4-man after a crash in their second run. Steve won't be on a Wheaties Box, and you won't see him in a Nike commercial. He'll come home, and go back to his normal life.

Sure, he'll have a few weeks of accolades, be a bit of a hometown hero... but then it will be back to normal. That's how it is for most Olympic athletes.

They spend two weeks at the Olympics representing their nation, maybe even winning medals, but then they return home, and its back to normal life, not unlike you or I.

A perfect example: one of his Steve's teammates, Steve Holcomb who won the gold medal in the 4-man bobsled, is a former Army World Class Athlete who works part-time at Home Depot.

For those world-class athletes who aren't in the national spotlight outside except once every four years, the Olympics are their two weeks to shine. They work their entire lives, under the radar, for the chance to represent their country.

When you think about it, it's not that different from being a Soldier. You all work your entire lives, much of it physical, for your country. You don't get accolades too often, and you don't get too much recognition. You do it because you love your country, and because you believe in what you do.

They don't do it for fame and fortune because, realistically, 99.9 percent of them won't get it. Phelps, Ohno and Shaun White are the exceptions. Steve Langton, John Shuster, Johnny Spillane, Erin Pac or Katherine Reutter (look them up) are the norm. They don't train for the money or the game. They do it to be the best; they do it for love of their sport and of their country.

Former Soldier Holcomb drives USA I to Olympic gold

Tim Hipps
FMWRC Public Affairs

WHISTLER, British Columbia – Former U.S. Army World Class Athlete Program bobsledder Steven Holcomb ended Team USA's 62-year gold medal drought in Olympic bobsleigh competition by driving Justin Olsen, Steve Mesler and Curtis Tomasevicz to victory in the four-man event, Feb. 27 at Whistler Sliding Centre.

Holcomb, 29, of Park City, Utah, piloted "The Night Train" sled designed by former NASCAR driver Geoff Bodine down the fastest bobsled track in the world to a four-heat combined time of 3 minutes, 24.46 seconds. They lowered the track record in each of their first two runs, Feb. 26, leaving it at 50.86 seconds.

"It's incredible," Holcomb said. "We've been working so hard the last four years, and it's finally paid off. It's kind of overwhelming. It's been stressful but awesome, kind of all over the place."

Five-time Olympic medalists Andre Lange and Kevin Kuske teamed with Alexander Roediger and Martin Putze aboard Germany I to win the silver medal with a time of 3:24.84. The Canada I quartet of Lyndon Rush, Chris Le Bihan, David Bissett and Lascelles Brown claimed the bronze in 3:24.85, marking the first time in 46 years Canadian bobsledders have medaled at the Olympics.

Team USA's .38 margin of victory is considered a landslide in the sport of bobsleigh.



Tim Hipps

Former U.S. Army World Class Athlete Program bobsledder Steven Holcomb and teammates Justin Olsen, Steve Mesler and Curt Tomasevicz bite their gold medals, Feb. 27 at Whistler Medals Plaza after winning the Olympic four-man bobsled crown earlier in the day at Whistler Sliding Centre.

"We came out here to show we're the best team in the world," Holcomb said. "It was a full team effort. We have fun together, and that's why we come out and dominate."

Team USA I blasted out of the blocks with start times of 4.75, 4.73, 4.77 and 4.76 for runs of 50.89, 50.86, 51.19 and 51.52 seconds.

"We had four great starts and four great runs," Holcomb said. "We started the weekend with the start record, which was huge. We wanted to make a statement and make sure they knew

we were here to play."

Warmer temperatures slowed the track by nearly one second for the final two heats. Heavy snowfall during the first two heats Feb. 26 contributed to six crashes, including USA II driven by WCAP bobsled pilot Sgt. John Napier with WCAP brakeman 1st Lt. Chris Fogt, Chuck Berkeley and Steve Langton aboard.

Team USA physicians convinced Sgt. Napier to bypass the final two heats because of limited neck mobility he sustained from the crash.

"This really hurts," Sgt. Napier said as he watched Holcomb's third run on television monitors at the finish line. "Yesterday was my last race of the season."

U.S. bobsled head coach Brian Shimer, a five-time Olympian, was not overly concerned.

"I told John that he did an awesome job and that this is just the beginning," said Shimer, a 2002 Olympic bronze medalist.

"He has a bright future ahead of him, and I'm proud to be his coach. Their team had a big start yesterday, and they were flying down the course, so this is really hard for them to take. But we look forward to a great future for John in this sport. He may be the one to break my record of five Olympics, and I hope I'm able to share his success with him in the upcoming years."

Army National Guard Outstanding Athlete Program Sgt. Mike Kohn drove to 13th place with Jamie Moriarty, Bill Schuffenhauer and Nick Cunningham aboard USA III in 3:27.32.

"I'm thankful they kept fighting, because I kept fighting," said Sgt. Kohn, 37, of Chantilly, Va., who plans to retire from the sled and deploy soon to Afghanistan with his National Guard unit. "We're just thankful we got down safely."

"It's been more than a difficult race; it's been a difficult season for us. The moral of the story is keep fighting because you never know what's going to happen."