

3 USAMU Soldiers make US Olympic Shotgun Team

*By Mary Beth Vorwerk
USA Shooting*

KERRVILLE, Texas - The 2008 U.S. Olympic Team Trials for Shooting (Shotgun) concluded March 16 with Pfc. Vincent C. Hancock of the U.S. Army Marksmanship Unit of Fort Benning, Ga., Sean McLelland of Mission, Texas, and Kim Rhode of El Monte, Calif., earning spots on the 2008 U.S. Olympic Team in Skeet.

In Men's Skeet, Hancock, the 2007 World Cup Italy Champion and world record holder and 2007 Pan-American Games Gold Medalist, earned a berth to his first U.S. Olympic Team finishing with a total score of 511 targets. McLelland and USAMU's Staff Sgt. Mark L. Weeks were tied at 478 targets going into the final, but McLelland earned the spot on the 2008 U.S. Olympic Team shooting 24 targets to Weeks' 22 targets in the final. McLelland finished with a total score of 502 targets, while Weeks finished with 500 targets.

Jon Michael McGrath of Tulsa, Okla., finished in the fourth spot with 497 targets. 2004 Olympian Sgt. 1st Class Shawn C. Dulohery of USAMU finished in fifth place with 496 targets, while Frank Thompson of Alliance, Neb., took sixth place with 495 targets.

In Women's Skeet, Rhode, a three-time Olympic medalist, earned a spot on her fourth consecutive U.S. Olympic Team, finishing with a total score of 497 targets. Pan-American Games Gold Medalist Haley Dunn of Eddyville, Iowa, finished right behind Rhode in second place with 496 targets. Two-time Olympian Connie Smotek of Bryan, Texas, took third place with 493 targets. Emily Blount of Tucson, Ariz., the 2007 Junior World Clay Target Champion, finished in fourth place with 471 targets, while Brandie Neal of Spencer, Ind., and Jaiden Grinnell of Port Angeles, Wash., finished in fifth and sixth place with 467 and 461 targets respectively.

Army Marksmanship Unit Soldiers Pfc. Walton Glenn Eller III and Spc. Jeffrey G. Holguin were selected to the 2008 U.S. Olympic Team in Double Trap March 15.

Eller finished the competition in first place with a total score of 615 targets, earning a spot on his third consecutive U.S. Olympic Team in Double Trap. Eller's USAMU teammate and 2007 Pan-American Games Silver Medalist Holguin shot a perfect score of 50 targets in the final to earn his first berth to the U.S. Olympic team. Holguin finished with a total score of 612 targets.

"I expected to make it, so when you see it over and over again in your mind, it really helps," Holguin said. "I felt really confident coming into this match in the position I was in."

Fellow USAMU members Sgt. Joshua M. Richmond, the 2007 Pan-American Games Champion, and 2000 Olympian Staff Sgt. William H. Keever, finished in third and

fourth place respectively with 606 and 596 targets. Jared Fodor of Centerburg, Ohio, finished in fifth place with 570 targets, while Bryce Gearhart of Freeburg, Pa., finished in the sixth spot with 564 targets.

The Trap portion of the Shotgun Olympic Team Trials concluded March 12 with retired Army Sgt. 1st Class Bret E. Erickson, Air Force Reserve Maj. Dominic Grazioli and Corey Cogdell of Eagle River, Alaska, being selected to the 2008 U.S. Olympic team in Men's and Women's Trap.

Retired from the U.S. Army Marksmanship Unit, Erickson, a three-time Olympian, will represent the USA on his fourth Olympic Team in Beijing this August after finishing the U.S. Olympic Team Trials in first place for Men's Trap with a final score of 499 targets. The second U.S. Olympic team spot for Men's Trap came down to the final shot between Grazioli and John Mullins of Bremerton, Wash., with Grazioli claiming the spot with a total score of 491 targets, while Mullins finished in third place with 490 targets.

Three-time Olympian and 1996 Bronze Medalist Lance Bade of Vancouver, Wash., finished in fourth place with 488 targets, while Staff Sgt. Matthew T. DePuydt and Sgt. Matthew T. Wallace of the U.S. Army Marksmanship Unit finished in fifth and sixth place with 485 and 484 targets respectively.

In Women's Trap, Cogdell, the 2007 Pan-American Games and World Cup Korea Bronze Medalist, held on to her lead to win the competition and secure a spot on the 2008 U.S. Olympic team in Women's Trap with a final score of 475 targets. Sgt. 1st Class Joetta R. Dement of the Army Marksmanship Unit finished in second place with 463 targets. Susan Sledge of El Cajon, Calif., took third place with 457 targets.

Kelsey Zauhar of Lakeville, Minn., finished in fourth place with 454 targets, while 1996 Olympian Sgt. 1st Class Theresa E. DeWitt of the Marksmanship Unit took fifth place with 453 targets. Collyn Loper of Indian Springs, Ala., a 2004 Olympian, finished in sixth place with 447 targets.

Top shotgun shooters from around the United States were vying for spots on the 2008 U.S. Olympic Team at the 2008 U.S. Olympic Team Trials - Shooting (Shotgun) March 8 to 16 at the Hill Country Shooting Sports Center. Shotgun athletes were selected to the 2008 U.S. Olympic Team based on the aggregate score from both the Fall Selection competition, which was conducted in August and the 2008 U.S. Olympic Team Trials - Shooting (Shotgun).

There are eight spots on the U.S. Olympic Shotgun team - two in Men's Skeet, two in Men's Trap, two in Men's Double Trap, one in Women's Skeet and one in Women's Trap.

For complete 2008 U.S. Olympic Team Trials - Shooting (Shotgun) results, visit www.usashooting.org.

(Formed in 1956 by President Dwight D. Eisenhower to raise the standards of marksmanship throughout the U.S. Army, the Army Marksmanship Unit is assigned to the Accessions Support Brigade of the U.S. Army Accessions Command. For more information on the U.S. Army Marksmanship Unit, contact the Public Affairs Office at (706) 545-5436, Paula.Randall@usaac.army.mil or www.USAMU.com. USA Shooting is recognized by the U.S. Olympic Committee and the International Shooting Sport Federation as the national governing body for the Olympic and international shooting sports in the United States. For more information on USA Shooting, contact Public Relations Manager Mary Beth Vorwerk at (719) 866-4896, MaryBeth.Vorwerk@USAShooting.org or <http://www.USAShooting.com>.)