



## U.S. ARMY MARKSMANSHIP UNIT

# Unit Offers Training, Assistance

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When the 3rd Infantry Division deployed to Iraq in January, every squad included a designated marksman equipped with what appears to be a standard M16 rifle. The weapon may look the same on the outside, but underneath the front rail system, a heavier fluted barrel cuts down vibration so the bullet wobbles less as it leaves the gun. The new two-stage match trigger is tuned to the same standards used in competition shooting at the Olympics. The result is sniper-like accuracy for one Soldier in each squad — a Soldier who, on the surface, appears no different than any other to the enemy.

When Soldiers from the 3rd ID shot with the U.S. Army Marksmanship Unit (USAMU) at the Army Championships in the summer of 2003, they returned to their unit convinced that the improved competition rifles met an operational need.

Lieutenant Colonel John Charlton, who was the commander of the 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry, 3rd Brigade, 3rd ID at the time, was impressed with the demo rifle his scout platoon leader brought back from USAMU. “Based on my experiences as a battalion task force commander in OIF1, I thought these rifles would provide a great capability in combat and that we should begin a test program in 1-15 INF,” Charlton said.

Major General William Webster, commanding general for the 3ID, supported the test program and the unit began sending rifles to USAMU for conversion. USAMU converted 22 rifles, which meant one per rifle squad plus one for each spotter in the battalion sniper section. Based on successful fielding and training in 1-15 INF, the 3rd ID requested fielding across the division. The request went all the way up to the Army G3 and was approved in September 2003. USAMU immediately began building rifles, and a total of 240 went with the 3rd ID when they left for Iraq earlier this year.

The USAMU usually receives publicity for outstanding competition performance. This year the unit won every military rifle event in inter-service competition up through the 1,000-yard matches. They shot against 70 challenging teams from other services to achieve the record and fulfill the first tenet of their mission statement - to win inter-service, national and international competitions. They sent seven shooters to the 2004 Olympics, and the official U.S. Olympic team gunsmith was a member of the

USAMU.

Less well-known, but perhaps of greater interest to the infantryman, is the final tenet in unit’s mission statement — to give the war fighter advanced marksmanship training, and perform research, development and prototyping for improving combat weapons.

### Research and Development

In accordance with this mission, gunsmiths and machinists in the basement of USAMU’s headquarters at Fort Benning fine-tune firearms for exact levels of accuracy, eliminating every variable possible to improve the performance of the rifles, pistols, and ammunition. Barrels are machined and tooled in the gun shop to tolerances measured in hundredths of an inch. The weapons are handmade with the same materials used in standard Army issue guns, but the care and precision of the fitting and the intricate matching of parts produces a weapon that groups more accurately.

The shot pattern at 600 yards from the rebuilt rifles of the 3rd ID, using match-grade ammunition, was reduced to a quarter of the original shot group. With this degree of accuracy, a shooter aiming at a target has a more reasonable chance of hitting an enemy at twice the distance that Soldiers are normally trained.

“It’s the same rifle, it’s just fitted and better adjusted,” said Lieutenant Colonel David Liwanag, USAMU commander. “It’s almost like NASCAR. All the improvements are under the hood.”

The key combat capabilities Charlton and the 3rd ID were looking for in a rifle were:

- Accuracy to 600+ meters.
- A rifle based on an M16A4 — Soldiers would be familiar with its operation and no specialty parts would be needed.

- The ability to fire standard 5.56mm ball ammo as well as match-grade 5.56mm ammo.

- A multifunction rifle useful in clearing rooms, alleys, etc., yet still able to hit long-range targets.

- A low-power, versatile scope that would support short-range, reflexive shooting as well as long-range precision fire.

The USAMU took lessons learned from competition to build the Designated Marksman (DM) rifle Charlton needed. This



Courtesy photo

*The 3rd Infantry Division (Mechanized) deployed with 240 Designated Marksman rifles, which were built by the U.S. Army Marksmanship Unit.*

process is nothing new for the USAMU. During the Vietnam War, almost 1,400 competition M14 rifles became Army sniper rifles.

“What we hope is to keep showing that competition improvements can be cordoned and used for direct transfer into combat application. It doesn’t cost the Army anything more because we’re doing this kind of shooting anyway as part of our mission statement,” Liwanag explained.

Designated marksmen Specialist Michael Loveless and Private First Class David Kirk, with B Company of the 1-15 INF, took a 10-day crash course at the sniper school to prepare for deployment with the new DM rifle. “One of my favorite improvements on the weapon is the trigger squeeze,” Kirk said.

The new rifle requires only 4.3 pounds of pressure to fire a round compared to seven pounds on the M16 trigger, allowing the shooter to focus on keeping his weapon steady. “I like it a lot,” Loveless said. “It’s easy to operate, easy to shoot. It’s really exciting to be able to shoot that far.”

After training, Loveless and Kirk returned to their unit at Kelley Hill and began to pass along the techniques they learned to others in the company. They see this as part of their role as Designated Marksmen.

“And the information flow goes up and down,” said Sergeant First Class Earl Wilson of B Company. “Both of these guys have taught me things because I’m not qualified on the weapon.”

In November 2004, the Army G3 tapped the Soldier Battle Lab to Compare the DM rifle with existing Army weapon systems. Test results have not yet been publicly released, but Liwanag feels certain that the DA G3 tests and this rotation to Iraq will validate the importance of the DM rifle.

Charlton said the 3rd ID will collect feedback on rifle performance during their deployment to Iraq and provide that information back to the Infantry School and USAMU. “We believe strongly in the squad-designated rifle concept,” Charlton said, “and are sure that this rifle and the training our Soldiers received will be a tremendous combat multiplier for the 3rd ID and the rest of the Army”

Because the USAMU is not formally in the research and development cycle, Soldiers often learn of the group’s capabilities through seeing their weapons used in competition. Liwanag encourages units to send their Soldiers to the Army championships for exposure to the improved equipment. When a commander determines that the USAMU’s improved weapon fills a shortfall, the unit may submit a proposal, called an operational (or a war fighting) needs statement through the Army G3.

The Division. Master Gunner of the 82nd Airborne Division attended a DM Instructor Course and asked if the rebuilt capability applied to competition guns could be retrofitted onto their carbines.



Courtesy photo

*During a Squad Designated Marksman Course, instructors from the U.S. Army Marksmanship Unit assist students with advanced marksmanship techniques.*

Would it work on the shorter version necessary for jumping? The new gun designed for the airborne unit has almost the same capability as the longer rifle, but is two inches shorter.

One would expect the capabilities of the USAMU to be in great demand. Liwanag said the unit does not get more requests than they can handle, but they do get more than they can afford. “Unless it comes with resourcing or a check, I cannot fix the weapons for the entire force on my own budget,” he said. “It has to come from the Army, be approved by the Army, but I can make prototypes to show what is possible with off-the-shelf technology.”

The cost for the DM rifles for the 3rd ID with all the modifications and 500 rounds of match-grade ammunition was \$1,100 per rifle. The Army paid for all the modifications, and the USAMU completed all of them on budget a month early.

### Instruction

USAMU conducts both the Close Quarters Combat Course and DM Course at Fort Benning. It also offers blocks of instruction during Army championships. Courses teach a rifleman to shoot his M16 from seven to 600 yards. Most Soldiers are confident in short- to medium-range shots, but have never been trained or challenged to hit distant targets. In Iraq and Afghanistan they are discovering they can see a lot farther than they can shoot.

Training also focuses on advanced tactics and techniques developed by the USAMU — fighting while mounted in a HMMWV or truck, or engaging the enemy on foot while doing a cordon in search of buildings or homes. Instruction includes how to stay in the fight when a rifle or shotgun has a stoppage by transitioning to a pistol or to an AK-47 that a Soldier might find on the battlefield. The unit owns both Russian AK-47s and Chinese AK-47s — procured from U.S. Customs at no cost to the Army — for training purposes.

At the cost of a week’s absence from their units, Soldiers will

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return as trained trainers who will improve the level of marksmanship in their units. Because the USAMU has ammunition allocated for competition and training, in most courses, Soldiers will shoot many more rounds than they would at their home units or in a training platform.

USAMU also sends Mobile Training Teams (MTT) out to deployed units. A five-Soldier team went to Baghdad to give Close Combat Training to the 1st Armored Division. They were in six separate forward camps for three days each, teaching Soldiers accuracy skills that will allow them to survive the first 30 seconds of a gunfight.

The main function of the MTTs, as well as the courses taught at the unit's home, is not initial training. The unit trains NCOs who will return to their own units to train two or three generations of Soldiers. MTTs have been in Korea, the Sergeants Major Academy, Fort Leonard Wood and Fort Bragg in recent months. Last year USAMU trained cadets, students in ROTC and JROTC programs, and combat and line units from Fort Benning, Iraq, Fort Lewis, Fort Bliss, Fort Riley, Fort Jackson and Fort Campbell. USAMU would like to send more MTTs to the Soldiers forward in Iraq and Afghanistan for sustainment training to keep them on the edge, but teams go where they are requested.

To receive MTTs, a unit must send a request through their G3 either to TRADOC or to the USAMU. TRADOC then prioritizes where these teams will go. Scheduling also depends on the operations tempo at the home unit, whether the unit is in a shooting season or teaching Close Combat or DM courses.

"Lots of units out there don't know the marksmanship unit exists at all, or what services we can offer them," Liwanag says. "There are ways of requesting support directly through the Infantry School, but remember the Infantry School is in the business of providing qualified Soldiers. We provide advanced training above the entry level."

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# BOOK REVIEWS



*Some Survived: An Eyewitness Account of the Bataan Death March and the Men Who Lived Through It.* By **Manny Lawton**. **Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill, 2004 (paperback edition), \$14.95.** Reviewed by Randy Talbot, Staff Historian, TACOM.

"Hell is not a place but a condition," observes Manny Lawton in his memoir *Some Survived: An Eyewitness Account of the Bataan Death March and the Men Who Lived Through It*. "Many men ... simply gave up and died. That was painless, while living was terrible." Terrible is an understatement. Lawton relates the unimaginable cruelty he and fellow prisoners endured at the hands of the Japanese during World War II. Lawton's story of survival and the compassion exhibited by his fellow prisoners — as they faced death from starvation, dehydration, disease, beatings, and torture — is a testament to the courage, valor, and the intense will to live of these prisoners where "survival was an individual struggle." Although an individual struggle; hope, friendship, and the compassion of others helped Lawton and others survive as "no man could survive this madness alone."

From the infamous 65-mile Bataan Death March that claimed nearly 1,000 lives; imprisonment at numerous disease infested Philippine "death camps" like Camp O'Donnell, the Davao Penal Colony, and Cabanatuan; through "slave labor" camps in Japan (Camp #3) and Korea (Inchon); Lawton's 42 months of captivity graphically and emotionally describe a litany of inhuman atrocities committed against American prisoners of war. Although many former prisoners of war have written their memoirs and provided a collective experience of the "death march" and imprisonment, very few survived the terror and horror of the "hell ships" that were torpedoed and bombed by U.S. forces as part of the campaign against Japanese shipping.

Lawton's work adds a dimension in the

historiography of the Bataan survivors that very few prisoners lived through. Lawton was one of 271 prisoners from a group of 1,619 that survived transport on three of these "hell ships," (the *Oryoku Maru*, *Enoura Maru* and *Brazil Maru*) that departed from the Philippine Islands in December 1944. In a sad twist of irony, six weeks after Lawton and his group departed Cabanatuan prison for the "hell ships," U.S. Army Rangers conducted a daring raid to rescue the remaining captives held there.

Tightly packed like cargo in the holds of ships — one that had recently been vacated by horses — each transport vessel intensified the condition of hell for Lawton and his fellow prisoners. Lawton and more than 1,600 prisoners already weakened by starvation, dehydration, dysentery, malaria, and torture following 30 months of captivity, embarked upon their first "hell ship," the *Oryoku Maru*.

The atmosphere in the hold was horrific; madness intensified as fights broke out, prisoners slashed other prisoners, drinking their blood to quench their thirst. "Death was a welcome relief," while others "struggled for life." One day after boarding, Navy bombers attacked the ship; corpses littered the hold as doctors treated the wounded without medicine or bandages. Prisoners remained on the ship without food or water for another day before abandoning ship. Wounded and healthy prisoners swam 300 yards to shore; many drowned or died as machine guns opened up on them, a few made it ashore through the compassion and heroism of others. On shore at Subic Bay, a new level of cruelty waited the mostly naked prisoners. Placed on a cement tennis court in the blazing Philippine sun, the barely fed survivors added sunburn to their litany of miseries. Water and food, measured by the spoonful, made them "look like baby birds being fed by their mother." After five days of torture, surviving hunger, thirst, and shipwreck, the prisoners moved to San Fernando. There, the wounded were removed from the group

and executed as the living marched to the docks to board their second “hell ship,” the *Enoura Maru*.

For 10 days storms battered the ship. The prisoner’s daily rice ration was laden with flies as they stood “like beggars ...barefoot, unshaven, dirty, and befouled with diarrhea.” On January 9, 1944, American fighters near Formosa attacked the *Enoura Maru*. The prisoners hold took a direct hit, leaving dead bodies strewn everywhere. Following the attack, they remained on the ship without food or water for two days before transferring to their third “hell ship,” the *Brazil Maru*.

Weakened, dazed, and wounded, they walked, crawled, or sat in prepared cargo slings to board the *Brazil Maru*. Temperatures dropped to 20 degrees during the voyage as winter set in, and pneumonia added its crushing weight to their misery. Starvation, freezing, and dehydration took its toll, as an average of 27 prisoners died each day during the 16-day voyage to Japan. Landing in Moji, Japan after 48 days at sea, 75 percent who started the journey had died. Within 30 days, the number would rise to 84 percent.

Lawton’s book is poignantly graphic as he details man’s inhumane treatment of his fellow man; it is also a work that defines courage, valor, and a Soldier’s compassion for his fellow Soldiers. His recollection of Captain Walter Donaldson, suffering from broken ankles and sprained wrists, crawling on his elbows and knees across barges and up ladders to board another “hell ship” is inspirational. Despite suffering from disease and malnutrition themselves, doctors provided comfort to the wounded, and chaplains ministered to the dead and dying. Both show a deep devotion to duty and a conviction of their faith, even though near death themselves. Others rescued fellow prisoners that were lost at sea from other “hell ships,” determined to survive one more day. *Some Survived*, like other memoirs from the Bataan survivors, not only deserves to be read, it is an inspirational reminder of the sacrifices so many brave men and women gave in the service to their country.

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*Letters from the Battle of Waterloo. The Unpublished Correspondence by*

*Allied Officers from the Siborne Papers. Edited by Gareth Glover. Greenhill Books, London, 2004. 352 pp with illustrations, maps, and index. Reviewed by Christopher Timmers.*

Waterloo marked many events: it was the last time English and German troops in so large a number would fight on the same side (for well over a century), in which French and English troops would fight on opposite sides (until 1914). A French emperor would at last be vanquished and English supremacy on European terrain would be unchallenged until a century later (again, 1914).

On the morning of 18 June 1815 English, Dutch/Belgian, German, and, eventually, Prussian forces faced a resurgent army of Napoleon Bonaparte. By about 9 p.m. that day 40,000 men and 10,000 horses would lie dead or wounded on territory surrounding a previously obscure Belgian town. Europe would finally be spared a French hegemony but still faced an uncertain political and military future.

In 1830 General Lord Hill, General Commanding-in-Chief offered to support the construction of a complete topographical model of the field at Waterloo as it appeared at 7:00 pm on 18 June 1815 when the French Imperial Guard made its final attack on Allied positions. Young William Siborne, a British army lieutenant, sought and received a leave of absence to survey the battlefield to support the construction of this model. He suggested that the model should depict a representation of all troops on this day and at this time. Lord Hill approved and authorized the circulation of a letter from Siborne to all known surviving officers, requesting any information they could recall regarding their part in the battle. The letters are listed by source rather than by date of response. Thus we have first the General Staff King’s German Legion, followed by the 1st Cavalry Brigade, Artillery, Royal Horse Artillery, KGL artillery, and the Infantry. Glover also includes letters dealing with the construction of the model itself, and summations of letters not published in full due to their limited extent and historical value.

The response from the veterans was considerable and diverse. The letters

published in this volume include ones from a Private E Cotton (later Sergeant Major) of the 7th Hussars to Georges Mouton, a general commanding a division in the French 6th Corps. Remembrances are from 1835, 1840, 1829, 1842 ... over 200 in all. They contain a variety of recollections as to the exact positions of regiments and which colonel or aide-de-camp rode up at which particular time to redirect the focus of an attack or counterattack. A number of these include sketches of the battle area where their units were deployed. What impresses the reader is first, the clarity of these old veterans after a passage of more than 20 years and, simultaneously, the frank response of others:

P 140 Question: What was the particular formation of the Troop about 7 o’clock?

Answer: “Cannot say having been carried off the field wounded before that hour.” (Second Captain John Boteler Parker, Sir Hew Ross’s Troop)

The letter writers strike one as immediately honest and earnest in their attempts to add to young lieutenant Siborne’s quest to complete his model based upon historically accurate placement of various Allied units.

A fascinating addition to these narratives is Glover’s footnotes on the lives of these various letter writers (and one does wonder how he collected such interesting and detailed information and from where). I cite a typical incidence: the recollections of Ensign Henry Montagu. After Montagu’s recounting of his part in the battle, Glover tells us: “Montagu joined the army as an ensign in 1814. Afterwards he attained the rank of general, commanding the 1st Division in the Crimea. He became Colonel-in-Chief of the Scots Guards in 1875 and died on 25 May 1883.” And another: in an extensively detailed footnote from LTC Henry Murray, Murray’s response runs to more than nine printed pages and is followed by no fewer than 39 historical footnotes by Glover.

Gareth Glover has truly brought forth an exhaustively detailed account of a battle whose specifics may never be fully reconciled, but a battle key to understanding the development of future western political landscapes and military alliances.

***Terrible Terry Allen: Combat General of World War II – The Life of an American Soldier.* By Gerald Astor. Presidio, New York, 2003, 374 pages, \$25.95.** Reviewed by Lieutenant Colonel Harold E. Raugh, Jr., U.S. Army, Retired.

Army Major General Terry de la Mesa Allen was the hard-fighting, hard-swearing, unorthodox commander of two infantry divisions during World War II. One officer who served under Allen in North Africa was convinced that, “There’s no question about who was the greatest Soldier in the war, Terry Allen.” This sentiment was echoed by many of Allen’s peers and Soldiers.

Allen was born in 1888, the son of a 1881 West Point graduate and his wife. Allen entered West Point as a member of the class of 1911 but, due to general sloppiness and ill discipline, was turned back to the class of 1912. Academic failure and a possible honor code violation resulted in his dismissal in 1911. Undeterred, Allen graduated from a civilian university and received a Regular Army commission in the cavalry.

Allen served on the Mexican border and as a battalion commander in combat for a few months during World War I. His assignments during the 1920s were routine. In 1931-1932, according to author Gerald Astor, Allen served as an instructor at the Infantry School under the tutelage of Lieutenant Colonel George C. Marshall, the assistant commandant and later World War II chief of staff. This augured well for Allen’s future. With the rapid expansion of the U.S. Army after World War II began in Europe, Allen was promoted to brigadier general in 1940.

During World War II, Allen commanded the 1st Infantry Division, the “Big Red One,” in the landings in North Africa and Sicily and in subsequent fierce combat operations. While many people praised his leadership and his Soldiers seemingly idolized him, others were concerned that the “care” he gave his Soldiers caused ill discipline and misbehavior. While this resulted in Allen’s relief in 1943, he was later given command of the fledgling 104th Division. He led the 104th Division, the “Timberwolves,” in combat in Europe from October 1944, through its link-up with Soviet forces at the Elbe River in April 1945, until its inactivation at the end of 1945. Allen retired from the Army in 1946 and died in 1969, two years after his son was killed in action in Vietnam.

This biography of Allen contains many lengthy extracts from Allen’s own correspondence and other documents and many unattributed quotations, remarkably without a single footnote. This book also contains a number of factual errors, undocumented speculation and inferential leaps written as fact, as well as many annoying examples of incorrect military terminology and abbreviations. These items detract from the credibility and value of this study. Six maps and two dozen photographs supplement the text.

Allen, considered “the greatest Soldier” by many, deserves better.



Specialist Adam Sanders

*A Soldier with B Company, 2nd Battalion, 325th Parachute Infantry Regiment, walks along a sewage pond during a dismounted patrol in Mosul, Iraq.*

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