

Mother Lode Triumphant Over National Rifle Matches

Sixteen juniors and approximately thirty adults from California went back to the National Rifle Matches at Camp Perry Military Base in Port Clinton, Ohio for ten days. The matches were run entirely by the Civilian Marksmanship Program (CMP) this year.

The California Grizzlies won High Junior, the Magnificent Seven - Junior Infantry Team Trophy. The next closest six man junior team from Arizona was seventy-four points down, with the California Grizzlies still holding the National Record from 2009. They won the match with a score of 1222 with iron sights where several teams are now using scopes. California Grizzlies O'Connell was coached by Jim O'Connell, of Alameda and Captain Loet Van Hoven, of San Rafael. Firing Members were brothers Joe, Sam & Hunter Blacksmith from Valley Springs, Justin George, of Corcoran, Miles Grove, of Davis, and Nathaniel Nye, of Twain Harte.

New Grizzly member, Amber Kingshill of Sacramento, earned her first four points towards becoming Nationally Distinguished in the M16 EIC Match placing twenty-ninth out of 396 competitors. Sam Blacksmith earned an additional ten points in the National Trophy Individual Match (Leg Match) taking him half way to becoming Nationally Distinguished already having six points. Murray Moore, of Twain Harte, earned his first ten points.

Coach Robert Taylor II, of Sonora, placed third overall with 1108 total competitors in the President's 100 Match, after making the shoot off with the top 20 shooters. Three other Californians on the Adult team also made the top 20 shoot off and four more made the top 100. The President's Match Junior Standing out of 196 Juniors, Grizzlies placed 12th, Grove, 18th, Hunter, 22nd Joe, 28th, Sam, and 30th, Koa Van Hoven, of San Rafael.

In the National Trophy Individual Rifle Match David Bahten, formerly of Jamestown, now with the USAMU was 2nd overall, breaking a National record with a 499-21X with 1042 competitors. Out of 192 juniors in this match, the Grizzlies placed 3rd Grove, 9th George and 11th Sam.

In the Freedom Fire Match seventy-two junior teams participated with 4th California Grizzlies – RCBS with George, Grove and Coach Bob Gill, of Visalia, 9th California Grizzlies Hodgdon with Koa, Hunter and coach Morgan Owen, of Sonora, and 11th California Grizzlies White Oak with Joe, Nathaniel and coach O'Connell.

Winning the Col. Bill Deneke Trophy and a place on the 2017 National Junior Team was Grove in 5th. Others making the National Junior team were 1st McKenna, Liam of Warrenville, IL, 2nd Schoenemann, Brad, of Lodi, WI, 3rd Vitous, Alex of Martinton, IL, 4th Hanrahan, Josh of Green Bay, WI and 6th Graw, Jack, of Murrysville, PA..

The Adult 2017 National Civilian Rifle Team included 2nd place Jared Perry, of Porterville, CA, 3rd Taylor and 1st Utley, Justin of Mineola, TX, 4th Strickland, David of Marietta, OH, 5th Vaughn, James, of Bloomington, IL and 6th Vitous, Alex of Martinton, IL..