



Sgt. 1st Class Josh Richmond, U.S. Army Marksmanship Unit, fires at one of the hundreds of clays he needed to hit to earn the final double trap seat on the U.S. Olympic Shooting Team during the 2016 Shotgun Olympic Trials Part II in Tillar, Arkansas, May 19. Richmond will join two other USAMU Soldiers at the 2016 Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro in August.

THIRD U.S. ARMY MARKSMANSHIP SOLDIER HEADING TO 2016 OLYMPICS

By Brenda Rolin

U.S. Army Marksmanship Unit

After seven months of speculation and uncertainty, Sgt. 1st Class Josh Richmond, U.S. Army Marksmanship Unit (USAMU) double trap competitor and shooter-instructor, is now headed to the Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

Richmond earned the last double trap seat on the 2016 U.S. Olympic Shooting Team May 19 during the 2016 Shotgun Olympic Trials in Tillar, Arkansas.

Richmond, of Hillsgrove, Pennsylvania, won the gold medal in the 2015 Fall Selection match in Tucson, Arizona, in October. That match was one of two Olympic trials for shotgun, and he has been in a waiting game since

then to finish what he started.

Richmond said it was hard to describe the level of competition he faced at Tillar.

“I just kept trying to stay in the present, stay in the moment and continue my routine and just hit more targets than the rest of them,” he said.

Richmond’s win in Tucson in October also put him in direct competition with two of his USAMU teammates — Sgt. Derek Haldeman of Pendleton, Oregon; and Sgt. 1st Class Jeffrey Holguin of Yorba Linda, California —



Sgt. 1st Class Josh Richmond, U.S. Army Marksman Unit, accepts congratulations after winning the final double trap seat on the U.S. Olympic Shooting Team during the 2016 Shotgun Olympic Trials Part II in Tillar, Arkansas, May 19, 2016. Richmond also competed in the 2012 Olympic Games in London, England. (U.S. Army photos by Brenda Rolin)

who won the silver and gold, respectively.

Although each one of them planned to win the nomination to the Olympic Team, Richmond, who also participated in the 2012 Olympic Games, said the three continued to train and prepare for this day together.

“We are only as strong as the weakest member of the team,” he said. “We have a strong bond and sharing this brotherhood of the Army takes it to another level. We are all happy to see each other succeed.”

Four-time Olympian and U.S. Olympic Shotgun Team coach Todd Graves said natural talent and the opportunity for Olympians to train together often gives them an edge. For the USAMU double trap team, he said this is especially true.

“As a group, being able to train together when you’ve got two or three of the top double trap shooters in the world, it helps when you get to train with them,” he said.

As for whether Graves had a favorite, he said this was a win-win situation.

“With these guys, you could have put their pictures up on a board and thrown darts at them, and I would have been happy with any of them,” he said.

Despite high hopes for skeet shooter Spc. Hayden Stewart, who is also assigned to USAMU and who tied for the gold during the 2015 Fall Selection Match, none of the USAMU skeet team members won enough points during competition to secure the final skeet position on

the 2016 U.S. Olympic Shooting Team.

Though Stewart of Columbia, Tennessee, was one of the favorites to win the remaining skeet position after tying with U.S. Team member Frank Thompson in the Fall Selection Match in Tucson, Thompson ended up winning the coveted seat on the Olympic Team. Stewart finished 3rd overall.

Three other USAMU skeet team members also competed: Spc. Mark Staffen, Spc. Dustan Taylor and Pvt. Christian Elliott.

Staffen was in top form and won the gold in the skeet competition at the Shotgun Olympic Trials in Tillar.

However, Staffen didn’t have enough points from the Fall Selection Match to earn the skeet position on the Olympic Team and ended up in 5th place overall. Taylor of Shawnee, Oklahoma, and Elliott of Bedford, Indiana, finished 11th and 12th respectively.

Staffen, from Lewis Center, Ohio, said he was very happy to win the Tillar event, and he would not be shooting in the Olympic trials without the Army behind him.

“The Army has helped me a lot with getting my skill level up and providing resources to shoot at this level,” he said.

Richmond is the third Soldier from USAMU to make the U.S. Olympic Shooting Team.

He will join teammates Sgt. 1st Class Michael McPhail and Sgt. 1st Class Glenn Eller at the Games this August. McPhail, an International rifle competitor, won an automatic berth for 50-meter prone rifle Sept 3, 2015. Eller won an automatic berth for double trap Sept. 14, 2015.

McPhail of Darlington, Wisconsin, and Eller of Katy, Texas, earned their automatic berths on the U.S. Olympic Shooting Team through high finishes in international world shooting sport events in the year prior to the Games.

Soldiers competing on the world stage in international shooting competitions and the Olympic Games are a testament to the skills and training American Soldiers receive and develop.

USAMU Soldiers translate their shooting skills and lessons learned from competitions into training for other Soldiers in preparation for missions across the globe.



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