

TRAPSHOOTING

Edited by SAMUEL WESLEY LONG

The Classic Shoot

Mars' Hand Was Evident in Many Phases of the Great Shooting Tourney

(Photos by Nat'l Sports Syndicate)



G. A. H. WINNER

John Dean Henry, of Elkhart, Indiana, whose yearly average of 88 per cent. gave little promise of his winning the premier event in trapshooting

TIME was when a trap shoot was considered merely a form of recreation, but with word from "over there" of the deadly work the American shot gun is doing and stories of trapshooting having been made a regular part of the training of Uncle Sam's "Huskies," the public has changed its idea of the trap game and by common consent "the sport alluring" has been rechristened "the patriotic sport." Up to date no word has been received that professional trapshooting has been classed, as has baseball, as "non-essential."

In other days the Grand American Handicap has been referred to as "the battle of peace," "the peace battle," etc., with Americans battling among themselves for shooting honors; a sporting event pure and simple. But the Nineteenth Grand American Handicap, held at Chicago, August 5th to 9th, was viewed very seriously by the thousands of spectators as well as by the participants themselves. To all, the recent G. A. H. was a demonstration of the shooting prowess of America, an explanation of why Hun officers state that "it is impossible to stand against Americans." Too it was as a rainbow of promise of ultimate victory because the big shoot demonstrated that, thanks to trapshooting, the Yanks have not lost their "shooting eye."

Just as the names of Foch, Pershing and Haig stand out in news from the battle line in France and Flanders, so the name of John Dean Henry, of Elkhart, Ind., stands out in news from the trapshooting "firing line" at Chicago, for it was generalship of the Hoosier shooter which won the premier event—the Grand American Handicap—in the great shot-gun battle.

Henry's winning proved most popular because of the impetus given the sport by the top honor going to a virtually unknown shooter, a fact which will encourage many low-score shooters to enter the lists, and also because of the moral effect it will have by proving that shooting is an inherent art with Americans. A further reason for satisfaction is found in seeing a Yank, determined to do his best, win out against hundreds of others including the very cream of shooting ability. Being an 88 per cent. shooter, Henry was placed at the 16-yard line while others, because of higher averages, were handicapped all the way up to 23 yards. Naturally, but passing interest was shown in a shooter, who toed the 16-yard line and Henry's work at the traps was given scant attention until the scores on succeeding strings of 20 targets each began to show a total

equaling those of shooters touted to annex the G. A. H. title.

What appeared to the wise ones to be a deliberate attempt on Henry's part to trail along near the bottom of the list of shooters was his purchase of a new gun just before he went to the firing line. To the veteran trapshooter the use of a gun to which one is not thoroughly accustomed is little less than fatal to a good score. No doubt that rule holds good, so Henry's exception proves the rule.

When the scores had been compiled, it was shown that Henry had tied at 97 out of 100 with Henry J. Pendergast, of Phoenix, N. Y., a 22-yard entrant who for four successive years had held the championship of the State of New York. When it was announced that the New Yorker and the Hoosier would try conclusions in a shoot-off, the crowd looked for a "killing." Henry approached the line visibly nervous and frequently handicapped himself by unconsciously stepping back to the 17-yard mark. On the other hand, Pendergast, with the confidence of a skilled shot stood like an iron man, but Henry's consuming desire to win stood him in good stead and he won out.

Pendergast was the first to grasp Henry's hand and to sincerely congratulate him. However, the loser's keen disappointment was evident in his remark to Peter P. Carney, the sporting writer, to the effect, "I would give \$1,000 to shoot at those two targets again," for it was, by the narrow margin of a duece that the New York champion had lost his chance to satisfy the desire of a lifetime—to win the greatest of all shooting honors.

"It was the chance of a lifetime," Pendergast said, "and I thought the honor would come to me. It only shows how easily we are fooled. It has always been my ambition to win the Grand American Handicap and then when opportunity presented itself I could not take advantage

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GREET "BILLY" HEER
This shooter is "the champion of
champions"

of it. I won more than a thousand dollars this week and would gladly give it all to have another smash at those last two targets that got away."

Henry said nothing, for joy, like sorrow, is sometimes too great for expression. And no man on the grounds was so greatly surprised as was Henry himself.

Important as is the title event of the Grand American Handicap, yet from the classic angle the G. A. H. is really secondary to the National Amateur Championship. To be eligible to compete in that event an entrant must have won the championship of his home State or have qualified as runner-up in which case he represents his State in the absence of the champion.

In this year's competition for the national title were the State Champions or runners-up from 36 States. The contest was gruelling from start to finish and a number of those who had earned State Championships with high scores finished the national event with totals below their respective yearly averages.

The winner of the National Amateur Championship was William H. Heer, of Guthrie, Okla., whose 98 x 100 was the lowest score that ever tied for the honor. The shooter who matched Heer's total was Fred Tomlin, of Pennsgrove, N. J. In the shoot-off at 20 targets, Tomlin dropped a target while Heer turned in a straight. To be "the champion of champions" is a distinction which every shooter covets and Heer was justly proud of the honor.

Those who follow the trap game closely always expect to find among the winners of one or more of the important numbers on the program the name of Frank M. Troeh, of Vancouver, Wash. True to form Troeh starred in the G. A. H. by landing the National Amateur Championship at double targets.

The South Shore Introductory was won by H. J. Pendergast whose score of 198x200 was trailed by the 197 breaks made by Jean Pope, Moline, Ill., and the 195 total turned in by G. A. Smith, of Marshalltown, Iowa.

In the Chicago Overture, A. E. Chezick, Portal, N. D., Dave Fauskee, Worthington, Minn. and B. F. Elbert, Des Moines, Iowa, matched scores with 99 x 100 each. The shoot-off was won by Chezick.

E. J. Buck, of Davenport, Iowa, and E. F. Woodward, of Houston, Texas, made determined effort to lead the field in the Preliminary G. A. H. They finished with top scores and a shoot-off gave the honor to Buck. Both Buck and Woodward had broken 96 x 100 but the better luck or superior gunnery of Buck won out.

Homer Clark, the 1917-18 Professional Champion repeated this year and holds the 1918-19 title. Clark and R. R. Barber each finished the ten strings of 20 targets with 194 breaks out of a possible 200. The shoot-off resulted in a win for Clark. The Women's Amateur Trapshooting Handicap was an interesting feature which attracted the attention of the male contingent of trapdom also a big "gallery" or spectators. Mrs. Harold Almert, of Chicago, won the event.

The scene of the big shooting tourney was the grounds of the South Shore Country on the shore of Lake Michigan. No place could have been more ideal from any standpoint, and both shooters and spectators found in the characteristic hospitality of members all that could be expected of hosts.

While the G. A. H. was a splendid success under the able management of Elmer E. Shaner, tournament manager of the Interstate Association, yet there was prevalent a note of sadness due to the absence of so many members of the trapshooting fraternity who are either on the battle front or who are in camps waiting orders to board transports. Pride and longing mingled as fathers told of Jack,



Tom, Jim and others who have answered President Wilson's call to the freemen of the United States to battle with the hordes of autocracy. And now and then one hoard the almost whispered name of a boy who had "gone West."

Practical patriotism was in evidence in the use of Liberty Bonds and War Savings Stamps in part payment of purses. The patriotic spirit was further emphasized by an East and West shoot for the benefit of the Red Cross. More than \$2,000 was raised for the great charity. In this event the Western shooters defeated the Eastern gunners by but two targets. It was the first time in trap history that East and West ever met in a match race at a G. A. H. It is safe to say that in future Grand American Handicap Tournaments the East and West match will command steadily growing interest.

Eight soldiers and two sailors in uniform lent a military touch to the G. A. H. One of the soldiers was the State Champion of Indiana and was granted a leave to permit him to represent his State in the National Amateur Championship. The Indiana runner-up was a sailor who was present to compete in event of the absence of the Champion.

The "First Americans" were represented by Harry Little Bear, an Indian, of Pawhuska, Okla. Among other features of the G. A. H. was the appearance of

a nine year old boy; Miss Lucile Meusel, a 16 year old girl and Captain Andy Meaders, a 79 year old "boy" whose love of the trap game is irrespressible. All shot through the week's program.

The wide appeal of trapshooting both as a pleasurable and patriotic sport is but faintly indicated by the description of a shoot in cold type. Every indication points to a tremendous expansion of the sport at the close of the war when several millions of the sons of Democracy come back to peaceful pursuits.