

How to Become a Long Range National Champion By LCDR Ted Janacek, USN

In the spring of 1999 a Navy sailor saw an article in the base newspaper about the local shooting club and became interested in the shooting program. He completed certification as a NRA Pistol Instructor, but was intrigued by the sport of High Power Rifle. He decided to meet with one of the Club Officers (with whom the writer is well aquatinted with) to discuss aspirations of becoming a rifle shooter. The sailors' ideas included using his rack grade M1 Garand, and in fact developed his initial skills with that 30.06 M1. With his appetite now whetted, MM1(SS) Jamie Mordarski sought out a match grade AR-15 and began some serious practice at the local club in Connecticut. He was now being groomed as the New Shooter for rifle for the SUBASE New London Marksmanship Team to enter at the Atlantic Fleet Championship match, Dam Neck VA in May 1999. His diligence, practice and skill were sufficient to place him on the Large Command First Place Rifle Team and recognition as the High New Rifle Shooter for 1999. Not bad for the new kid on the Block!

Following this impressive showing at the Atlantic Fleet matches, he attended the Interservice Rifle Championships at Quantico VA. This was his first opportunity to tryout his AR at the 1000 yard line. Using his 80 grain handloads, and following the Marine guidance for sight adjustment by, "coming 3 full revolutions down on the front sight post and coming up 7 minutes from your 600 yard zero", he was on paper for the 1000 yard practice day. In fact, once on paper he shot 7 more shots all 10's and X's. Boy was he pleasantly surprised. He was ready for tomorrow's competition. However, tomorrow came with all its splendor and his bullets happily found the 7 and 8 ring quite readily. A poor performance indeed compared with a clean practice round.

The next try at the 1000 yard line was at the National Championships, Camp Perry OH. The Porter Cup is the first day of the two day 1000 yard competition. This day MM1(SS) Jamie Mordarski decided to try a M14 off the Navy Armorers Van to use. He was handed a "rattle battle" M14 since it had a good 600 yd zero. (Little did he know that a Distinguished Navy Rifleman had said that rifle had a shot out barrel!) This was his first time firing a M14. This match was a learning experience as you can imagine! He learned a lot that day, and would try again tomorrow.

The next day is the Farr Trophy Match. Although MM1(SS) Jamie Mordarski used the same elevation he had on the day before, his first shots were not on paper. In fact his first 12 shots were not on paper. With the help of a Marine and a large team scope, he finally got on paper, but by now he low on bullets and time. Competitors have 30 minutes to fire 20 shots for record. He had 9 minutes left and 20 shots for record to go! He laid down and shot quickly, finishing 30 seconds before the end of authorized time. Although tired and aching, he posted an impressive 186-4x, which was the best for his relay with the service rifle. He now qualified for the shoot-off to become the match winner. As the relays 2, 3 and 4 finished, the roster for the shoot-off grew. In the service rifle category there is MM1(SS) Jamie Mordarski, and Army Marksmanship Unit shooter and the family duo of Chris Stark Sr. and Jr. Following he individual match the 1000 yard teams fire and there is a several hour wait until the shoot-off event. During this time the elation among the Navy shooters is high as one of our own has made the shoot-off. JO1 Mark Overstreet made the shoot-off the prior day, ETC(SS) Kevin Gross made it in

1998, MM1 Russ Carr, CDR Jim Adell and LCDR Joe Sopko have been in the running for the last 5 years. But this time true excitement fills the air as a potential Navy National Champ is stepping up to the plate. Remember, this is only the fourth time MM1(SS) Jamie Mordarski has shot at the 1000 yard line, and second time firing the M14 (with a reputed shot out rattle battle gun, with a web sling and issue M118 ammo, the new 175 grain stuff).

As the shoot-off starts, the area has been roped off to keep the spectators at a distance from the shoot-off competitors. LCDR Joe Sopko (retired) is the Official Scorekeeper for MM1(SS) Jamie Mordarski. Myself and ETC(SS) Kevin Gross hustle down to the pits as official pit pullers. The course of fire is 3 sighting shots and 10 shots for record. Jamie's first sighter is a 6 high and left (wind is blowing from the right). The second sighter is a 7 low and left. I silently tell Jamie from the pits to crank on some more right windage! Third sighter is a 7 high and left again. First record shot is a 7 in the same place. At this point I am frantic, "he needs to put on more windage, can't he see the spotter! We got the target down and up in 3 and one-half seconds!".. I am told later that he was putting on more windage, but the wind was picking up. The second shot for record is an 8 at about 10 o'clock. I tell ETC(SS) Kevin Gross, "the rest of the shots will be centered". Sure enough, 10, 10, X, 10, 10, X, then the next shot is a 9, by this time the other service rifle shooters have finished, and Jamie is in the lead. As long as his last shot is an 8 or better he'll win the match. His last shot is 10 for a 94 and 2X, he had won the match! His competition that day was stiff, Chris Stark Sr. is an exceptional long range shooter, but since he and his son were sharing the same rifle, he had to borrow one for the shoot-off, his first 3 shots were misses. Chris Stark Jr., a midshipman at the University of Kansas, had won the Porter Cup the day before, and the AMU shooter just had trouble keeping that 80 grain bullet on track through the wind at 1000 yards.

It was truly an accomplishment for MM1(SS) Jamie Mordarski to become National Champion for the 1000 yard Farr Trophy!