

2016 World Championships

August of 2016 saw the USIMLT traveling behind what was once the Iron Curtain, to Sarlozpusta, Hungary. The team flew into Budapest, then drove down to Kecksemet where we had made hotel arrangements.

Hungary was a very interesting place to visit. We spent the first few days getting adjusted to the local time zone, and playing tourist in Budapest. Which is a pretty city – the view on the Danube River is all that it is claimed to be. But much smaller than the Western European capitals we have grown accustomed to flying into. Budapest is a small, friendly city, not a massive megalopolis like London or Paris.

But we spent most of our time outside of Budapest. Hungary proved a very nice country to operate in. A surprising number of the Hungarians spoke some English, and several USIMLT shooters attempted Hungarian...which is not an easy language. And prices were quite reasonable. Anyone looking for a European vacation could do a whole lot worse than a trip to Hungary.

The range itself was midway between Budapest and Kecksemet, at a resort that the European teams had fully booked. We wound up with a 40-minute drive each way, but it wasn't an unpleasant trip. Shooting facilities were simple but satisfactory, with rifle and pistol events held on a single firing line that had targets at 25, 50, and 100 meters. Very convenient for shooters who had to switch between events. The shotgunners had a separate set of fields on the property, but close enough not to be an inconvenience.

Opening ceremonies dispensed with the "Death March" in hot weather that had become all too familiar in the last few Worlds. They simply gathered the teams around the podium and made the customary speeches. This Worlds appeared to have serious Hungarian government interest and support.

And then the competition began...
On the pistol range, things went moderately well.

In Cominazzo, Bob Lineaweaver was the top American with a 7th place finish in the Original division. Which went well with his 7th place finish in Colt. Bob also took top honors in Kuchenreuter Original, finishing 13th.

Mariette, the replica revolver match with the largest participation of any MLAIC event, saw Todd Wenzel and Mike McDaniel tied for 8th place. And the U.S. team of McDaniel, Lineaweaver, and Gene Kinnel pulled out Silver in the Peterlongo team event, beating the French team on tiebreakers.

Tanzutsu, long a strong point of the U.S. Team, saw Lineaweaver and Bob Peloquin finish 4th and 5th, respectively.

But it was on the 50 meter line where the real magic was happening. Bob Lineaweaver hammered the target for an incredible 87 points in the Original division of the Donald Malson 50-meter revolver match – a score equaled only by the Gold medalist of the Replica division. It was enough to not

merely win that match with a new World Record score, but put him into second place for the Remington revolver aggregate. A truly impressive bit of shooting.

And to finish it all off, the Hungarians held a special match – a revolver event limited to open-top revolvers. Lineaweaver took second place, using a revolver he'd borrowed from Mike McDaniel (who had loaned out every Colt he owned to the rest of the USIMLT for this match).

Over on the rifle range, the USIMLT had a much harder time.

At 50 meters, the only American finishes of note in the normal MLAIC events were Bob Peloquin's 9th place in Tanegashima Original and 10th place in Hizadai Original.

Fortunately, the Hungarians decided to hold the Gettysburg event. Rifle-musket, shot in uniform. Deprived of the support of modern shooting jackets and boots, the Europeans stood no chance against Ed Schneemann, who took gold by a convincing four-point margin.

On the 100 meter line, things brightened up. Gene Kinnel took silver in the Original Whitworth event, matched by Mary Peloquin's silver in Walkyrie Original.

The shotgun squad has long provided some of the brightest moments in USIMLT history, and maintained this standard in 2016. Dunc Dawkins took silver in the Original division of the Manton match after forcing a shootoff with the eventual gold medalist. This clearly left Dunc very, very unhappy, and he took it out on the clays in the Lorenzoni Original match. When he finished, the only thing left to do was to put the gold medal around his neck and play the "Star Spangled Banner".

He wasn't alone in shooting well. Buddy Townsend took 5th in the Repro Manton event, a creditable performance against a larger field. Rob Langdon took 6th in Lorenzoni Original.

And the U.S. Team of Dawkins, Langdon, and Bob Pence won silver in the Batesville team Lorenzoni match. An outstanding finish for an outstanding shotgun squad.

There's one other thing that deserves mention – the Hungarian Muzzle-Loading Association managed this event very skillfully. The stage-management of the awards ceremonies by Balazs Nemeth was particularly praiseworthy – somehow, he managed to take what normally took two hours a night and compress it down to 60 minutes or less. Without short-changing any of the medalists. Truly a work of art. I have no idea how he managed to pull off running the match, much less shoot for a medal while he did it.

In any event, I think we all took away some very fond memories of Hungary...and a willingness to shoot there again.