

Tom Marshall's Weekly News, May 19, 2008

A Spoiled Young Man, 1941: When this writer was 17, the days of the week fell on the same dates as in 2008 (May 19, 1941, was a Monday). He was spoiled because he could go trapshooting with his father almost every weekend and attend the Penn-Del Twilight League shoots on Tuesday evenings as well. A 17-year-old is capable of some spectacular, if not consistent, shooting. The sky was the limit. Some poor scores were recorded in between, but the good ones are always remembered.

On Tuesday, May 6, he broke the only 50-straight at the Penn-Del League shoot at the Brinton Lake Gun Club near Concordville. The next Tuesday at West Chester his score was terrible (41). On Thursday, May 15, practice day at the upcoming Delaware State Championships, he broke 98 out of 100 at the Wilmington Trapshooting Association (WTA) on Basin Road near New Castle, where 25 of the 100 were shot from 23 yards ("handicap" distance from the trap; normal shooting was from 16 yards). That evening at Ned Touhey's hilltop trap just off Benge Road in Yorklyn, he broke 25 straight with ease. On Friday, May 16, breaking 97 and 95, respectively, in the 200-target State Championship, he tied with a new shooter named Everett Reed of Lewes, a Delaware River and Bay pilot. In the shoot-off, this spoiled young man broke 24 (out of 25), while Mr. Reed broke 23. This was not a high score to win the state championship, but it still stands as the record for the youngest shooter ever to win in Delaware. Everett Reed and the youngster became fast friends, and from 1947 through 1950, they traded the state championship, one or the other besting all others. The younger man stopped shooting at the end of the 1950 season, and his good friend died of a heart attack in 1955 at the age of 47.

On Saturday, May 17, 1941, the juvenile shooter, driven to the shoot by his father in his 1913 Stanley Model 76, won the Doubles Championship (two targets thrown together) with a score of 96. Leonard Lynam of Newport was runner-up with 84. In the Stanley, we drove around the historic town which was celebrating the *very first* "Day in Old New Castle." With the possible exception of World War II years, this event has been held the third Saturday in May every year since! After a poor handicap score of 84 from 23 yards, the total of 372 out of 400 targets was enough to win the All-Around Championship, which the youngster had also won in 1940 with a score of 369.

On Tuesday, May 20, this same spoiled young man broke 50 straight in the Twilight Shoot, also at WTA on Basin Road. On Friday and Saturday, May 23 and 24, 1941, the Eastern Zone Championships (covering 12 States, the District of Columbia, and Ontario) were held at Yorklyn. The 17-year-old in question was runner-up in the Doubles Championship on a very windy day, having broken 81 to winner Paul Holloway's 86 and was runner-up in the All-'Round with 354 (194-81-79) to John D. Rowland's 356 (196-77-83). Since everyone who knows about these things is long deceased, this aged and egotistical writer, searching for something worthwhile in his past, has now bored you with stories of two weeks in May 67 years ago. In those days, Memorial Day was celebrated on May 30, which in 1941 was Friday.