



Coach Profile

Delmar Calvert, Maitre d'Armes

Authors Note: This is the first in a series of "Coach Profiles" for individuals that have helped to make the Oregon Division so successful. We are pleased to start this series with Delmar Calvert. For those who do not know him, we hope this short biographical sketch will give you a better appreciation for this remarkable man.

By J. Stephen Barnett, April 30, 2006

Accomplishments

- Chevalier of the Légion d'Honneur (Knight of the Legion of Honor)
- Recipient of the French "Croix De Guerre - 2 Stars"
- Fencing Master with French and American accreditation
- U.S. Team Coach at numerous World Championships and a former member of the National Coaching Staff
- Former U.S. Olympic Squad Coach
- U.S. Team Coach for Senior and U20 Pan American Games
- Former U.S. Olympic Squad Coach
- Personal coach for 17 National Champions (and nine silver medalists)
- Numerous students on U.S., Pan Am, and Olympic teams
- Coach at the L.A. Athletic Club for 20 years.
- Coach at California Institute of Technology for 15 years
- Coach at University of California-Santa Cruz for eight years
- Maitre d'Armes, Fencing Center Salle Trois Armes
- Guest Coach, Northwest Fencing Center

Biographical Sketch

Delmar Calvert was born in California, and moved at the age of three with his family to France. At the age of 14, Delmar and his older brother joined the French Foreign Legion. Delmar fought on horseback with the *Regiment Etranger de Cavalerie* during World War II against the Germans in France.

Following France's surrender to Germany in 1940, Delmar traveled to Tunisia, and then to Morocco. He competed in national and international competitions for the French Army Fencing Team, and was a successful competitor and coach in Europe. Delmar also received the Silver Medal by the French Government's Ministry of Youth and Sports. As a Fencing Master, Maitre Calvert holds French and American accreditation.

When the U.S. forces began their invasion of North Africa in 1942, Delmar was under the command of a pro-Nazi officer. He decided to lead a group of soldiers who surrendered to the U.S.-led invasion force (white flag and all). After surrendering, he was recruited by the U.S. Military Intelligence, but requested a fighting unit and was assigned to General Patton's 7th Armored Division for the invasion of Tunisia and Sicily. After the occupation of Sicily in 1943, Delmar was recruited by the Office of Strategic Services. He participated in Operation Justine as a Special Commando, and parachuted behind enemy lines into the Vercors region of France. Delmar fought with a small group of 15 men who teamed up with the Maquis (French Resistance) to wreak havoc on the German Army.

Following the war, Delmar returned to the U.S. and taught fencing in Southern California for several years with Ralph Faulkner. He moved to Chicago to study music at DePaul University and the Sherwood Conservatory of Music, and graduated in 1955. Following graduation, Delmar worked as a Fencing Master at Salle Calvert in Chicago, while keeping a day job as a social worker. Delmar's salle won (on several occasions) the Midwest Championships - both team and individual events in all three weapons.

Delmar was given the position of Fencing Master at L.A. Athletic Club (LAAC), and moved to California. In 1965, the National Fencing Coaches Association of America awarded him an American Master's Degree. He continued to teach fencing at LAAC, as well as the California Institute of Technology and UC Santa Cruz until his retirement in 1991. During this time, he was the personal coach for 17 National Champions and nine silver medalists. Because of his excellent record, he was appointed coach for numerous national teams in all three weapons.

Recently, Delmar was awarded the title of *Chevalier of the Légion d'Honneur* by French President Jacques Chirac for his service during World War II. Although Delmar has been knighted, he says that you don't need to call him "Sir".

While Delmar has retired from his full-time coaching responsibilities, he is currently the Maitre d'Armes at Fencing Center Salle Trois Armes in Portland, and a Guest Coach at Northwest Fencing Center in Beaverton, Oregon. Delmar lives in Lake Oswego, Oregon, with his wife of 47 years.