

# L.E.A.D.

LAW ENFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES DIVISION



## Hemphill Wins Record 8th NRA National Police Championship *Hernandez New Woman Champion*

By Jorge Amselle and J.R. Robbins  
Photos by Lloyd Hill

Shooting in an environment that may have been as alien as the moon compared to his home range, Lt. Philip Hemphill of the Mississippi Highway Patrol shot a score of 2988-197X, out of a possible 3000-300X, to win a record eighth national title in the 44th NRA National Police Shooting Championships (NPSC).

"Someone said before last year that I had a home field advantage," Hemphill remarked. "Now I've won at Des Moines, Jackson and Albuquerque. I don't believe there is such a thing as home field advantage. You just do the best you can wherever you are. Each win is kind of like your children," he added. "Each has its own personality."

Held Oct. 1-5, in Albuquerque, NM after more than a dozen years in Jackson, MS, the event drew over 330 competitors, including officers from Germany, Russia, Canada, Venezuela and the Czech Republic. Shooters fired on a new, state-of-the-art facility in Albuquerque's Shooting Range Park, made possible with \$1.4 million in funding and vigorous support from New Mexico Governor Bill Richardson and Albuquerque Mayor Martin Chavez. The Albuquerque Police Department and hundreds of volunteers were instrumental in getting the range improvements completed on time and the match underway. Indeed, the additions to the range were a big part of the reason some competitors came to NPSC.



An ardent supporter of rank-and-file police officers, NRA Executive Vice President Wayne LaPierre (left) welcomed competitors to the National Police Shooting Championships. Among the attendees he met was NRA's Law Enforcement Officer of the Year for 2005, Officer James D. Niggemeyer of the Columbus, Ohio Division of Police.



NRA Executive Director of General Operations Kayne Robinson (right), a former Marine and career law enforcement officer, greeted General Peter Pace, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff upon his arrival at the NPSC Awards Banquet.

"I deliberately came here to shoot at the new range," said Sheriff James Wilson of Williamson County, TX. "It was a mammoth undertaking to improve this range. I have a tremendous amount of respect for what they've accomplished here in such a short amount of time."

Veteran NPSC shooters found the new venue drier than the matches held in Jackson, but not without challenges: high elevation, bright sunshine, and a little dust demanded the best that shooters had to give. Hemphill at first trailed U.S. Border Patrol Agent Robert Vadasz by two points after the revolver 1500 competition, but he managed to pull ahead in the semi-auto 1500 match to win the national title. The National Police Champion is based on an aggregate of the revolver 1500 and semi-auto 1500 championships. Customs and Border Patrol Agent Clay Tippit placed second overall with a score of 2982-206X, while Vadasz placed third with a score of 2979-197X.

With his eighth overall victory in this tournament, Hemphill became only the second competitor to win the police cham-

*Continued on next page*

pionship three times in a row. "I had a hard time finding the X ring because of the glare, but adjusting my blinders to account for the direction of the sun helped a lot," said Hemphill. He dedicated his victory to his wife, who was home recovering from recent surgery.

Representing the U.S. Border Patrol, Agent Gina Hernandez became the new Woman Champion with a score of 2950-159X. Hernandez previously won the Woman's Championship title in 2002. This year, she defeated defending champion Dorcia Meador of the Ft. Worth Police Department by a single point, with Meador scoring 2949-139X. Hernandez, from Roswell, NM, said, "I normally practice on a covered range so the high glare here was a challenge." She added, "I was so thrilled when I won. More than anything I was glad to know that I could do it more than once. That's what made it exciting."

In team competition, the U.S. Border Patrol teams nearly swept all the categories, winning the four-officer competition in semi-auto pistol and revolver, the two-officer semi-auto pistol category and the four-officer World Championship, ahead of Germany and Canada, respectively. The Mississippi Highway Patrol team won the two-officer revolver category and the two-officer World Championship.

The new range presented many advantages and some challenges to the shooters. The shooting area was extended on the 50-yard line so officers firing from the prone position would not have their muzzle blasts kicking up dust. Also the City of Albuquerque purchased a brand new mobile range tower, which can be raised or lowered based on need. Shooting points were also color coded in red, white and blue to help prevent crossfires, and large electronic display boards were present at either end of the range to help competitors identify the correct match and relay. Among the challenges, in addition to the ones previously mentioned, were the occasional dust devil or wandering tarantula. Many officers took advantage of a regional

match held before the national to acclimate themselves to the thin, dry air and intense sun.

David Det, of the Norman (OK) Police Department, competing for the sixth time at NPSC, said, "It's new so it's different than what we're used to. But my favorite part is the spacing. At Jackson, we were right on top of each other. Here, the shooting lanes are wide and there is plenty of space."

This year's NPSC competitors were also formally welcomed by a number of state and local officials. Governor Bill Richardson and Mayor Martin Chavez personally showed up at the event, along with Albuquerque Chief of Police Ray Schultz. In his welcoming remarks, Gov. Richardson said, "NRA puts on a first-class competition." He added, "I love to shoot, and I'm a big believer in gun safety. I commend NRA for its many gun safety programs."

Several NRA officers made it a point to be present at this year's NPSC, and a number of Board members with career law enforcement backgrounds acted as volunteers or came as spectators. Among those on hand were NRA President Sandy Froman, EVP Wayne LaPierre, 1st Vice President John Sigler, 2nd Vice President Ron Schmeits and Executive Director of General Operations Kayne Robinson. A special military guest was General Peter Pace, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, who served as keynote speaker at the awards banquet. In his remarks to the competitors, Pace said, "I take great pride in the way each of you serve your country. Marksmanship is about discipline and about dedication, and fundamentally about saving lives. I congratulate NRA for sponsoring this event and so many like it."

"We appreciate the importance of Governor Bill Richardson and City of Albuquerque officials, particularly Police Chief Ray Schultz, in bringing this famous police competition to New Mexico," commented Chief Kayne Robinson, Executive Director of NRA General Operations and a career

## "It is Truly an Honor to be with the Officers in this Room"

That remark, made by keynote speaker General Peter Pace, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, at the NPSC Awards Banquet on Oct. 4, spoke volumes about the longstanding connection between NRA, the military and law enforcement. For Pace to even steal time from his crushing schedule to appear at NPSC was viewed by all as a serious show of support for rank and file law enforcement officers.

"I applaud the NRA's longstanding commitment to training law enforcement officers and conducting marksmanship competitions especially for them," commented General Pace prior to the opening of NPSC. "As police officers, security agents and military police train for this event, they hone the demanding skills they need to protect our citizens and do their jobs."

General Pace is the 16th Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the first Marine to hold that position. He was commissioned in June 1967, following graduation from the United States Naval Academy. He holds a Master's Degree in Business Administration from George Washington University, attended the



*General Peter Pace, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, served as keynote speaker for the NPSC Awards Banquet.*

Harvard University Senior Executives in National and International Security program, and graduated from the National War College.

During his distinguished career, General Pace has commanded at virtually every level, beginning as a Rifle Platoon Leader in Vietnam.

In appearing at NPSC, General Pace joins a long list of Marines who have had a significant presence in NRA. Just a few examples include: Major General Merritt A. Edson, Medal of Honor recipient and former NRA President and EVP; Major General Lemuel C. Shepard, Commandant of the Marine Corps and Honorary NRA Life Member; Brigadier General, Governor, and Medal of Honor recipient Joe Foss,

former President of NRA; General David M. Schoop and General Wallace George, both speakers at NRA banquets. There are many other examples, of Marines and other military personnel, too numerous to mention here. Suffice to say that NRA, the military and law enforcement have a longstanding relationship in the cause of freedom.

law enforcement officer. He added, "The competition involves the finest police firearms instructors from the United States and many other countries. Hundreds of police instructors shoot and compare ideas and techniques, all of which improve local police training."

Sheriff James Wilson also commented on how officers benefit from this level of competition. "Police officers are competitive by nature," he said. "And when you put them in this type of situation, it creates self-discipline. And in turn they learn to handle themselves better."

The competitive nature of police was not limited to U.S. officers, either. With five other countries represented, the effort that some international teams made just to get to the event was noteworthy. It took the Germans 24 hours in travel time to reach New Mexico. Col. Victor Filippov, captain of the three-man Russian team, said they flew from Tyumen to Moscow, then another 12 hours to Atlanta. Then they changed planes again and flew into Albuquerque.

"This kind of shooting is just starting to grow in Russia," Filippov said, "so we lack a national competition like this. It's the best shooting range I've seen in my life," he added. "It is very beautiful."

Both the international and U.S. teams commented on the many vendor booths in the new exhibitor's building adjacent to the range, and on the number of prizes donated by sponsors. Enoch Smith of the South New Mexico Border Patrol, commented, "I'm impressed with the number of sponsors and the number of prizes they have for the winners. It's really a big deal."

It was a big deal for the vendors, too. Rick Johnson of Remington said, "We've walked hand in hand with NPSC and law enforcement for so long, it's like a marriage." And Jimmy Rae of Smith & Wesson added, "We've been coming here since Day One, so we've really been here to see the match grow. I can remember when the prizes were just a couple of guns and some awards. Everything is so much bigger today. NPSC has grown by leaps and bounds over the last 15 years."

## 2006 NPSC SCORE BOX

### National Champion:

Lt. Philip Hemphill, Mississippi Highway Patrol 2988-197X

### Woman Champion:

Agent Gina Hernandez, U.S. Border Patrol 2950-159X

### Revolver 1500 Champion:

Agent Robert Vadasz, U.S. Border Patrol 1496-107X

### Semi-Auto 1500 Champion:

Lt. Philip Hemphill, Mississippi Highway Patrol 1494-94X

### Stock Semi-Auto Champion:

Agent Clay Tippit, DHS 480-42X

### Service Revolver Champion:

Ofc. Victor Buccat, Boeing Security 480-40X

### Special Aggregate:

Agent Clay Tippit, DHS 6148-394X

### National Individual Service Pistol Champion:

Agent Clay Tippit, DHS 1435-110X

### Police Revolver Distinguished Match:

Col. Victor Filippov, Russian Federation 598-45X

### Police Semi-Auto Service Pistol Distinguished:

Det. John Pride, Los Angeles, P.D. 595-41X

### Shotgun Match Champion:

Sgt. Marc Cobb, Long Beach P.D. 550-4X

### Revolver Two-Officer Match Champion:

Mississippi Highway Patrol Red 1186-86X

Lt. Philip Hemphill, Ptl. Daniel Rawlinson

### Revolver Four-Officer Team Match Champion:

Border Patrol Blue 2371-151X

Agent Clay Tippit, Agent Robert Vadasz, Supv. John Poole, Supv. Jeff Morrison

### Semi-Auto Two-Officer Team Match:

Border Patrol Green 1182-62X

Arturo Velez, Supv. Kevin Worrell

### Semi-Auto Four-Officer Team Match:

Border Patrol Blue 2365-149X

Agent Clay Tippit, Supv. John Poole, Agent Robert Vadasz, Supv. Jeff Morrison

### World Two-Officer Team:

Mississippi Highway Patrol 1189-78X

Lt. Philip Hemphill, Ptl. Daniel Rawlinson

### World Four-Officer Team Match:

U.S. Border Patrol 2376-159X

Supv. John Poole, Agent Robert Vadasz, Supv. Jeff Morrison, Agent Clay Tippit

### Hi-Sheriff/Deputy:

Rngr. Michael Dowd, Co. State Parks, Pueblo, CO 2966-168X

### Hi-Reserve:

Ofc. James Ell, Overland MO PD, St. Charles, MO 2894-132X

### Hi-State Trooper:

Lt. Philip Hemphill, MSHP, Clinton, MS 2988-197X

### Hi-Conservation:

Rngr. Michael Dowd, Co. State Parks, Pueblo, CO 2966-168X

### Hi-Retired:

Sgt. Jack Ragsdale, Tampa PD, Lumberton, MS 2963-171X

### Hi-Retired (over 61):

Cpt. Ronald Busch, USBP, Chama, NM 2910-128X

# The Hub of NPSC

By Justin McDaniel

The move from Jackson, Miss., to Albuquerque's Shooting Range State Park was not the only change to take place at this year's NRA National Police Shooting Championships. Dale Kaufer, range director at NPSC for the past four years, was named match director for the 2006 championships, swapping job responsibilities with former match director Larry Mead of Columbus, Ohio.

Making the transition to a new facility would be a challenge for even the most experienced match director. As a rookie match director, Kaufer arrived in New Mexico a full month in advance of the championships to guarantee Albuquerque's revamped shooting range would be ready for the start of competition.

"I've walked up and down this range so many times over the last month, it knows me," he said with a laugh.

The Moon Township, Pa., resident worked innumerable hours training the Albuquerque Police Department in the nuances of NPSC's Police Pistol Combat format and ensuring that the range would be in top shape for the arrival of more than 300 police competitors. His work was far from administrative. Kaufer painted barricades, target numbers and lines – you name



*NPSC Match Director Dale Kaufer arrived in Albuquerque a month prior to the match to prepare for the tournament. NRA's Ron Kirkland called him "the hub of the whole operation."*

it – in the weeks leading up to the matches. And despite his hard work and the time spent away from his family, he would rather heap praise upon his staff than receive any personal recognition for a job well done.

"No one person has done it all," Kaufer said. "I can't take any credit. Everyone had to work together. It was a joint effort with everyone involved."

While also quick to spread credit around to other volunteers, Ron Kirkland, Director of NRA's Law Enforcement Activities Division, didn't hesitate to praise Kaufer. "Dale was an outstanding asset to NPSC," Kirkland commented. "He really became the hub of the whole operation. Everything revolved around him. He knew every aspect of that range long before the first shot was ever fired."

The allure of knowing that the best police shooters in the world participate at NPSC also keeps Kaufer, a retired canine sergeant from the Allegheny County (Pa.) Police, coming back year after year.

"I'm an old-time police officer and this is what I shot in the academy and back at home. It's great fun to be here, knowing we have the top competitors from around the country and world," he said. "As long as they ask me back and my health stays, I can't see ever leaving."

## OVERHEARD AT NPSC

"You never know what you're going to see in the field, but competitions like this sure do help. It's called police combat shooting for a reason. Anytime you're sending rounds downrange, it's going to help prepare you for action in the field."

Enoch Smith

South New Mexico Border Patrol

"I didn't expect this diversity. This event is truly an international competition. I was never in Jackson, so I can't compare the two. But I really like the range. It's great."

Gerald Vance

San Diego Sector Border Patrol

"The best of the best come here to compete. It's a great range. New Mexico is a very beautiful place."

Alex Manthei

Bavarian State Bureau of Investigation

"I have walked around the range and it is truly a world-class facility. NPSC gives you a heck of a base of contacts and lots of friends."

Sheriff James Wilson

Williamson County, TX

"We've always leaned toward the law enforcement market. So NPSC is a win-win situation for us. It provides good visibility for our product. We have a chance to work on guns for our customers. We think that everyone benefits. It's definitely a two-way street. And just look at this range. A lot of thought and attention was paid to developing the range. The competitors that I've talked to are very happy with the facility."

Jimmy Rae

Smith & Wesson

"It's nice being able to shoot and compete in such a friendly, supportive atmosphere. People here are competing against themselves instead of each other. We all pull for one another."

Chris McKay

South New Mexico Border Patrol

"Law enforcement is a market we've been involved with since the 1950s, ever since we introduced the Model 870 shotgun. That gun is still a staple in law enforcement, and sponsorship of events like NPSC is our chance to say thank you."

Rick Johnson

Remington Arms Company

# SCENES FROM NPSC 2006



*Mississippi Highway Patrol Lt. Philip Hemphill (center above, and upper right) won his eighth NPSC title. From left, NRA 2nd VP Ron Schmeits, NRA President Sandy Froman, 1st VP John Sigler and Col. Michael Berthay, Director of the Mississippi Highway Patrol, at the Awards Banquet.*



*Gina Hernandez of the U.S. Border Patrol (above) won her second Woman's Championship. With her at the Awards Banquet are, from left, NRA's Ron Schmeits, President Sandy Froman, and John Sigler. The new range boasted 102 shooting points (below).*



"I like the competitiveness. The best shooters come here. That's why I come back every year."

David Det  
Norman, OK Police Dept.





*Clockwise from top left: Range officers got a bird's eye view of the firing line from a new command tower. Various flags illustrate the international flavor of the match -- Germany, Venezuela, Russia, Canada and the Czech Republic were all represented. Color-coded shooting lanes helped prevent crossfires. Prone shooters were aided by a concrete pad just in front of their guns that prevented dust blowback. NPSC's many vendors set up shop in a new Exhibitor's Building.*

“We want to say a very big thank you to Todd Parkins and his staff, who helped our team to train for this competition. In Russia, we didn't have a proper range or enough money for ammunition. It has been a great experience and we are pleased to take part.”

Col. Victor Filippov,  
Tyumen (Russia) Regional Police Dept.



Photo by Glen Hoyer



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Oct 1-5	York, PA (southeast)
Oct 15-19	St. Charles, MO (at Defiance)
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### HANDGUN INSTRUCTOR

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Sept 10-14	Castle Rock, CO (public LE only)
Sept 17-21	Jackson, NJ

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Nov 12-16	Pittsburgh, PA

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