



NRA LAW ENFORCEMENT QUARTERLY

2017 NRA Law Enforcement Firearm Instructor of the Year

The NRA Law Enforcement Division is proud to announce that the 2017 NRA Law Enforcement Firearm Instructor of the Year is Sergeant Major (Retired) Bradley W. Smith of Combined Firearms Training in Williamsburg, VA.

After retiring from the U.S. Army with 20 years of service in Special Operations, SGM Smith has served as a Department of Defense contractor with Armed Forces Experimental Training Activity. In this role, he has provided weapons and tactics instruction for several federal agencies. SGM Smith's military time included deployments to Panama, Bosnia, Afghanistan and Iraq.

As the lead instructor for Combined Firearms Training, SGM Smith develops and conducts numerous Law Enforcement Officer training courses encompassing all aspects of officer safety and survival, from mindset and

equipment preparation/selection to advanced tactics in a dynamic environment. He is also a Virginia DCJS certified curricula developer and instructor.

From 2015 through 2017, Brad partnered with the Virginia State Police Tactical Operations Unit and the VSP Fusion Center to train several hundred state and local law enforcement officers. In this role, he provided free training seminars on fighting from patrol vehicles, which was reviewed and approved by the NRA Law Enforcement Division, and was approved by the Virginia DCJS for three hours of in-service training credit.

In 2017, Brad provided a tuition-free training class for the NRA Law Enforcement Division at NRA Headquarters for 30 law enforcement officers. He also conducted training at the 2017 Virginia Conference on Violent Crime.



Sergeant Major (Retired) Bradley W. Smith of Combined Firearms Training, NRA's 2017 Law Enforcement Firearm Instructor of the Year

Among his certifications, Brad is a certified NRA Law Enforcement Firearms Instructor and holds several NRA Civilian Instructor certifications.

Brad Smith's dedication to officer safety and training is best summed up by his own words: "It is an honor and privilege to be recognized within the LE community. While never sworn, I hold immense respect for my Law Enforcement brethren, and the challenges they face every day. This admiration was a driving force for the creation of CFT and our continued efforts to build our company into an affordable, accessible training source for local, state and federal officers. It has a source of enduring pride, as a CFT Instructor, to work with Virginia LE officers, and contribute to their safety and survivability."



Continuing Education for NRA Law Enforcement Firearms Instructor Recertification

In an effort to maintain the value, integrity and significance of the NRA Law Enforcement Firearm Instructor Certification, the NRA Law Enforcement Division adopted and implemented a mandatory 24-hour continuing education requirement.

Unlike many training organizations, the NRA LE Division does not require instructors to attend an NRA school to recertify. However, there are specific guidelines on what training is acceptable for continuing education.

Although the policies for instructor recertification and guidelines for acceptable continuing education are explained in our schools, and there is information in the "NRA Programs" chapter in the instructor manual, we understand that the students have a lot of information thrown at them during the school – and some of it doesn't stick.

In an effort to improve the process and reduce the number of returned recertification applications, we present a review of the necessary information.

The continuing education training must fall into one of two categories: firearms training or instructor development training. "Firearms training" means actual training in the use of firearms. "Instructor development" is training that is intended to make you a better instructor, not just an instructor in a different subject.

There are some restrictions on classes. Continuing education must be training you attend in person and as a student, not classes you taught or assisted as an instructor. The NRA LE Division does not accept computer-based or online training for continuing education credit.

To recertify as an NRA LE Firearm Instructor, you must submit proof of having obtained at least 24 hours of continuing education. This training may be completed any time during the three-year certification

period. This does not need to be one 24-hour class – it just has to add up to a total of 24 hours.

Documents required for recertification are: a certificate showing successful completion of training, a schedule showing how many hours you were in training, and a syllabus showing what was taught in the class.

Continuing Education training must be from a valid training organization other than your employer or co-workers.

Computer printouts of training records are not acceptable. They do not show who instructed the class or what was taught in the class.

We routinely have trouble verifying a training organization or instructor credentials and must ask for more information about the training, which slows down the whole process. For example: a certificate is received from "Uncle Tim's Great Firearms Training." A web search does not reveal an Uncle Tim's training organization nor information on the instructor listed by Uncle Tim. Additional information would be requested.

Also bear in mind that firearms-related training (such as a homicide investigation course) that does not involve actual use of firearms would NOT be acceptable. Although a TASER is shaped like a firearm, it isn't one, and TASER training is also not acceptable. Less Lethal training that involves firearm-launched projectiles IS firearms training and is acceptable.

Please remember: Firearms qualification is testing (not training) and is not acceptable as continuing education. If a certificate says eight hours training and qualification, we cannot give credit for any of those hours. However, if a class schedule is provided that shows six hours of training and two hours of qualification, six hours credit toward continuing education would be granted.

It is understood that a single 24-hour class may be costly, therefore the 24 hours

may be split into smaller classes. Of the 24-hour requirement, up to eight hours may be for law enforcement armorer's school and up to eight hours for participation at the NRA National Police Shooting Championships or any NRA Tactical Police Shooting Competition. Regardless of how many armorer schools you attend in a three-year period, only eight of the required 24 hours of continuing education can be for armorer training.

Tactical classes, such as Active Shooter/Threat, Swat/SRT and Tactical/Trauma Medic classes are acceptable – but supervisor/leadership, CPR/First Aid and defensive tactics classes are not acceptable. The tactical classes are acceptable because they directly involve firearms, while the leadership, First Aid and DT classes do not.

Attending training conferences is one way to get continuing education hours. Training conferences from NLEFIA, IALEFI, ILEETA, NTOA, and other similar organizations are accepted for continuing education. Also accepted is the Caliber Press Street Survival Seminar.

Instructor development training does not need to be related to law enforcement or firearms. Some instructors have submitted college classes on subjects such as public speaking or developing PowerPoint presentations. For college classes, actual training hours are counted, not just credit hours.

Continuing education classes should make you a better firearms instructor, not just an instructor in a different capacity. Credit is not given for classes just because they have "instructor" in the title. The training must be related to the operation of firearms or bettering yourself as an instructor.

Additional information and forms on recertification can be found at <http://le.nra.org/training/certification-and-recertification.aspx> or contact the Law Enforcement Division Certification Coordinator at (703) 267-1634.



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TRAINING WOMEN SHOOTERS

BY MARCUS CUSTER

The NRA Law Enforcement Division teaches firearms skills to law enforcement officers and military members. Many of these shooters – and the shooters they’ll train – are women. None of my previous instructor training dealt with teaching women. I was told to do the safe thing, the thing that most everybody has done since women joined law enforcement and the military: Treat everyone the same. The problem with that? While it may avoid EO complaints, it is not the best way to teach women to shoot.

Recent developments in imaging technology have revealed that the brains of men and women are physically wired differently. This could explain some of the stereotypical differences in male and female behavior. When you don’t understand a person’s logic, when their brain is constructed differently than yours, their decisions may seem incomprehensible.

If you’re a female instructor, you don’t need to read this, but it may help you understand why men are so irritating and dense. This article represents my best attempt to help my brothers teach the women in their units and agencies. Any offense you may take, I attribute to the fact that from your point of view, I have male-pattern insanity.

Not only do women have differently wired brains, they’re more likely to be cross-dominant. Most women do not have absolute eye dominance. Many females experience an indeterminate eye dominance with both eyes fighting for control. There is research indicating that the ratio of right/left eye dominance changes with different sports. This may indicate that eye dominance can be learned and changed.

Women have different body shapes: different upper-body strength, smaller hands, smaller waists, etc. The NRA says the most powerful words an instructor can say are “Let me show you.” Sadly, a left-handed, cross-dominant, five-foot-tall, 90-pound woman with tiny hands probably cannot shoot a drill the same way a right-handed, right-eye-dominant, six-foot-tall, 220-pound man with large hands does. The good news? She doesn’t have to shoot the same to shoot it well and perhaps to shoot even better.

As a firearms instructor, you must watch your shooters and listen to them. You must know several ways to do every

technique you teach, and you must be able to demonstrate it left- and right-handed. (If you are not naturally cross-dominant, shooting using your support side makes you cross-dominant. Welcome to the beginnings of empathy.)

Here is a sad and ugly truth (I apologize to all police academies and basic training instructors in advance): Most women go to their initial training and watch firearms guys demonstrate techniques they cannot perform without modification. The grip taught doesn’t work with small hands, the holster doesn’t fit the curve of their hips, and all the demonstrations are done right-handed. She probably didn’t get her eye dominance tested. Most women who pass the academy figured things out for themselves. Where is our value added? To be fair to these instructors, they were never taught how to train women. They were just doing the best they knew how. I am sure it is very frustrating when your best techniques don’t work on a third of your shooters. It is easier to just blame the student or gender.

I was just like those instructors until I ran my first ever women’s-only range. It didn’t seem to make any difference that I was there. I wasn’t shooting. It was amazing how different things were and how much better everyone shot. I don’t understand it, but I don’t need to. I can repeat it, and the rising qualification scores validate the technique. I am not saying qualification is proof of fighting ability, but it is a starting point – a learner’s permit to learn more. Shooting is simple, but it is not easy.

Again, I don’t understand it, but after building some trust, I asked them why it works. This is a composite of their answers:

“When I went to the academy, the techniques they taught didn’t work for me. I talked to other women and figured things out. I barely squeezed by, and my classmates and the firearms instructors looked down on me because I was a girl and girls can’t shoot. Every qualification, I was worried about my performance and felt the men in my group were judging my worth. They had no confidence in me because I didn’t shoot well. Every qualification, the voice inside my head was critiquing each shot and I couldn’t focus. At an all-women’s range, with supportive firearms instructors, I feel like I am not being judged and there is no pressure. I solved my underlying issues and now I go to qualification with confidence.”

Here are some of my best tips for teaching women:

If you are doing remedial training with women, do it individually or in a group of women shooters. Women are collaborative, not competitive. Watch a group of women shooting together and you’ll often see them cheer each other on loudly, and a lot. Watch a group of men shooting together and you’ll often see that they like to rib each other at times. Don’t kid women shooters! They won’t take it the way you would.

In addition to being female, women are also adults. This means they have adult learning styles and needs. They will prefer hands-on approaches to lecture. Make your class as active as possible. Adults want to have an opportunity to ask lots of questions. They learn by processing information into their experiences and by projecting information into possible future activities.

Women may need to use a different technique than the one in the book. For example, doing a magazine exchange, smaller hands may not be able to hold two double stack magazines simultaneously. If they can’t do it the way you do, help them work it out. In this example, they can remove the magazine from the gun, stow it, and then draw a full magazine and insert it. Mission accomplished. Ask them how they do things. You will be amazed at their work-arounds.

Initially, create a climate where success can be easily achieved. Set the targets close. There’s nothing like success to create enthusiasm for an activity. Move back as proficiency is achieved. (This works with men, too.)

Ninety-nine percent of my shooters have one major problem: anticipation of recoil. One drill I really like for overcoming is a technique the NRA calls “instructor finger.” The instructor has the shooter assume a good shooting stance at the three-yard line in front of a target with a one-inch-square aiming point. The instructor then puts his hand over the shooter’s firing hand. The shooter puts her finger on the trigger but it is relaxed. The instructor pulls the trigger. This shows the shooter she can ignore the motion she sees and validates her sight picture. It also models a proper steady trigger press. Normally, two of three rounds are touching. Many shooters have never shot a group like that. I say, “It is all

you; just pull the trigger like that and you will shoot like that all the time.” One female deputy sheriff with five years on the job shot this drill with me. She had a perfect group, but it was eight inches high. As I was scratching my head, she explained that in the academy, she jerked the trigger and shot low. Her instructors told her to aim eight inches high. I suggested that, now that she’d had competent instruction, she should aim at the target and not jerk the trigger.

Women come in all sizes and shapes. If the issued equipment available doesn’t fit, help them find equipment that does. The issue SIG holster is poorly designed for women, even though many women use it well.

Reduce discomfort on the part of the student by asking for permission before touching, when adjusting stance or hold. If she still seems uncomfortable, use verbal instructions instead.

Most women (and many men) do not come from a background of gun culture. Avoid jargon and pay attention to the directions you’re giving. An example of this is the direction to “squeeze the trigger.” If I handed you a lemon and told you to squeeze it, you would probably not apply steady pressure with your index finger. A new shooter may think she is being told to squeeze the whole hand when shooting. Never be surprised when someone does exactly what you tell them to do.

Consider eye dominance. Most instructors are right-handed and right-eyed shooters because most people are right-handed. But while 80 percent of men have dominant eyes that match their dominant hands, 80 percent of women don’t, and women are more likely to be left-handed. For all shooters, determine which eye is the dominant eye before shooting. This is frequently not detected in the academy or basic. If she’s left-eyed, have her try to shoot left-handed. It is easier to train a hand than to change eye dominance. Really, it’s okay: If a woman has never held a gun right-handed, it’s not going to feel awkward holding it left-handed. It’s just going to feel awkward, period. In some cases, though, matching trigger hand to the dominant eye may not be enough because they are either center-dominant (neither eye wins) or their dominance shifts back and forth. Some people put Vaseline or tape on the center of the lens on the support-side of the shooting glasses. It is not ideal as it blocks peripheral vision and they won’t have those glasses on the street. Closing one eye just before shooting works for most people.

Why do so many agencies hand a new shooter a gun with a long, heavy trigger

pull? With the wide variety of single-action guns on the market in 9mm and larger calibers, there is absolutely no reason to hand a beginner a double-action-only pistol. Here is a simple drill for male firearms instructors. Find a short piece of 2x4 board. Now, pretend it’s a pistol grip, and try to get a shooting grip. This is like our five-foot-tall shooter with a double-stack .40 cal. That is why she can’t shoot like you. Women may find that a handgun with an adjustable grip will provide a better fit.

If they’re allowed to set the pace, women will take breaks more frequently. Pay attention to your shooters; stop for a break before their performance diminishes.

Many women are running a constant loop in their head of negative feedback. Every criticism or comment made by past instructors is being replayed. Interrupt this with positive feedback. Look for something good to say. If there is a five shot group with two in the five ring, they look at the round farthest out. I say, “You hit the five ring twice. If you can do it twice, you can do it five times. Remember what those two felt like? Let’s work on your consistency.”

Wiring. I’m probably not the first one who’s told you that women are wired differently than you are, but here is the key to how their wiring pertains to shooting instruction. Women are very detail-oriented and literal. Explain why things work in detail, take nothing for granted, but do not sound condescending, hurried, or distressed.

Women take directions well. When learning a new skill, they actually want you to tell them what to do, preferably in a clear, easily understood manner. If they aren’t doing what you ask, you’re either being unclear or you’re asking the impossible and they’re too polite to tell you.

I once had a female shooter who struggled to pass basic qualification for a year. She was, quite literally, a genius and an ultra marathon runner. She took all the coaching I gave her, stance, grip, sight picture, trigger, and memorized it verbatim. She would recite it back to herself silently before each shot. While it was flattering that she paid such close attention, nobody has the time to shoot a qualification while their interior monologue reads a 100-step checklist. When I figured out what she was doing, I had to figure out something else. She was doing exactly what I said. I just said too much. She thought every step was critical. I said, “When you run, do you think about where you place your foot on each step?” She said “I could never run if I did that.” “Exactly,” I replied. There are only two mandatory things in shooting. Line the barrel up with the target and don’t move

it as you pull the trigger.” Suddenly freed from her checklist, she concentrated on her trigger press. She never failed a qualification after that.

Mindset is always important, but it is manifested differently in women. They might not have the same strong feelings of self-preservation that men do, but they have a protective drive which is off the charts. They need to be prompted to find their own motivations to stay in the fight and win.

Always end practice with a win. I never say, “This is the last drill.” I wait for something good and stop before it gets bad. I encourage the ladies to immediately make some notes on what they learned – different ways to do things. Even if they never read them, the act of writing makes it more likely they’ll remember.

This isn’t so much a how-to article as an invitation. If you can’t teach left-handed, you’re only half an instructor. Learning to shoot with your non-dominant hand and eye gives you insight into how others see the world. Think of yourself more as a coach helping adults find solutions to problems.

Women perceive the world in fundamentally different ways. Their bodies and brains are different. Find ways to collaborate with them and support them. You’ll learn more from them than you teach them.



Marcus Custer is an NRA Law Enforcement Instructor teaching Instructor Development Classes. A student of science and a competitive shooter, he seeks to break complex subjects down to their essentials. He previously served as a U.S. Army Green Beret and a criminal investigator in the U.S. Customs Service.



Thompson Submachine Gun Drum Magazine

NRA MUSEUMS



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- NRA National Sporting Arms Museum at Bass Pro Shops in Springfield, MO

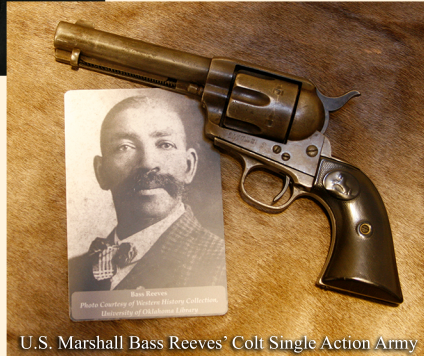
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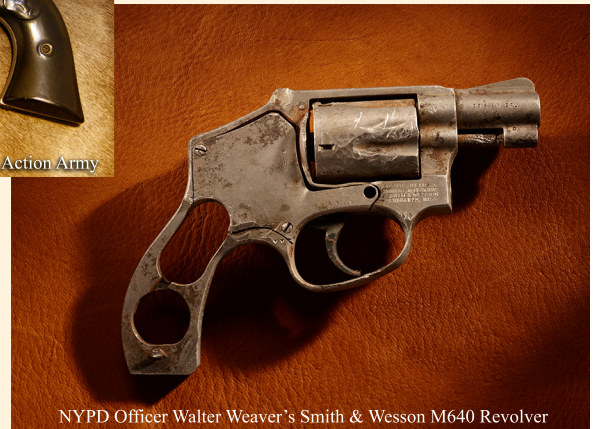
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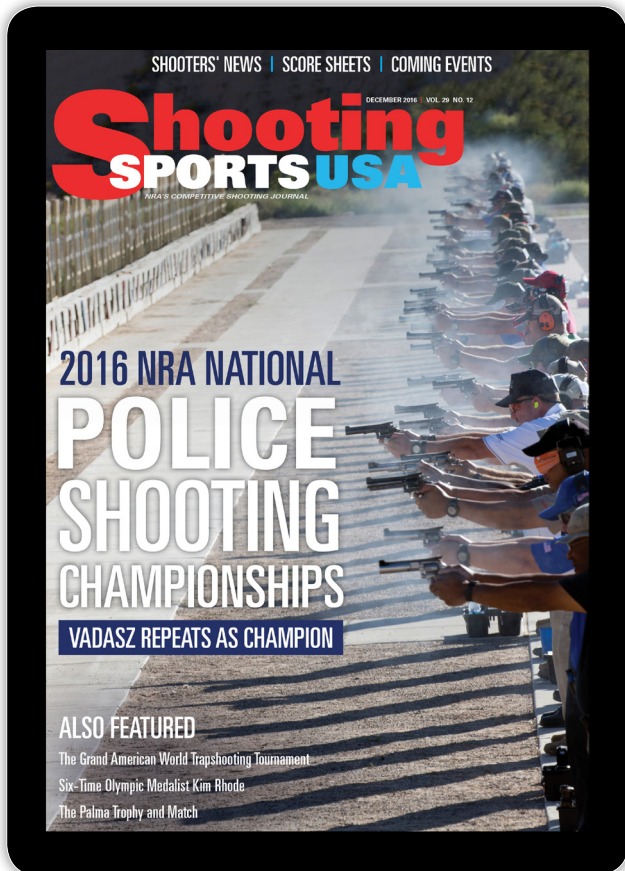
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Range fee, if any, is payable to some hosting agencies; amount varies.

NRA Tuition = \$645 per person

HANDGUN & SHOTGUN

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Mar 12-16 Fredericksburg, VA
Mar 19-23 Leesport, PA
Mar 19-23 Summerville, SC
Mar 26-30 Tuscaloosa, AL
Mar 26-30 Shreveport, LA
Apr 2-6 Lovejoy, GA
Apr 2-6 Columbus, MS
Apr 9-13 San Antonio, TX
Apr 16-20 New Smyrna Bch, FL
Apr 16-20 Parchman, MS
Apr 23-27 Frederick, MD (public LE & military only)
Apr 23-27 Holly Springs, MS
Apr 30-May 4 Monroeville, PA (public LE & military only)
Apr 30-May 4 Columbus, MS
May 7-11 Avondale, LA
May 7-11 Tupelo, MS
May 14-18 Tuscaloosa, AL
May 14-18 Coatesville, PA
May 21-25 Florence, AL
Jun 4-8 Garden Plain, KS
Jun 4-8 Pearl, MS
Jun 11-15 Florence, AL
Jun 18-22 Upper Marlboro, MD
Jun 8-22 Pass Christian, MS (public LE only)
Jun 25-29 Jasper, AL
Jun 25-29 Shreveport, LA
Jul 23-27 Columbus, MS
Aug 13-17 Florence, AL
Sep 10-14 Valhalla, NY (public LE & military only)
Sep 17-21 Lucedale, MS
Sep 17-21 Upper Marlboro, MD
Oct 1-5 Stapleton, AL
Oct 15-19 Columbus, MS
Oct 29-Nov 2 Sugar Creek, MO
Nov 5-9 Florence, AL
Nov 5-9 San Antonio, TX
Nov 5-9 Pearl, MS

HANDGUN

Apr 16-20 Florence, AL
May 7-11 Garden Plain, KS
May 21-25 Issaquah, WA
Jun 25-29 Lithia, FL (public LE & military only)
Jul 23-27 Egg Harbor, NJ
Sep 10-14 Florence, AL
Sep 24-28 Macomb, IL
Oct 29-Nov 2 Owasso, OK (public LE & military only)
Dec 3-7 San Antonio, TX

PATROL RIFLE

Mar 12-16 San Antonio, TX
Apr 2-6 Homestead, FL
Apr 2-6 Smithton, PA
Apr 9-13 Mesquite, TX
Apr 9-13 Garden Plain, KS
Apr 16-20 Florence, AL
Apr 16-20 Bethlehem, PA
Apr 23-27 San Clemente, CA
Apr 30-May 4 Allison Park, PA
May 14-18 New Smyrna Beach, FL
May 14-18 Sandston, VA
May 21-25 Lewisburg, PA
May 21-25 Shreveport, LA
May 21-25 Pearl, MS
Jun 4-8 Ozark, AL
Jun 4-8 Clarion, PA
Jun 11-15 Coatesville, PA
Jun 11-15 Holly Springs, MS
Jun 18-22 Tuscaloosa, AL
Jul 9-13 Garden Plain, KS
Jul 9-13 Parchman, MS
Jul 9-13 Alden, NY
Jul 9-13 Littleton, CO
Jul 16-20 Florence, AL
Jul 30-Aug 3 Egg Harbor, NJ
Aug 6-10 Tuscaloosa, AL
Aug 20-24 Leesport, PA
Sep 10-14 Avondale, LA
Oct 1-5 Summerville, SC
Oct 1-5 Macomb, IL
Oct 8-12 Florence, AL
Oct 8-12 Pearl, MS
Oct 22-26 Sugar Creek, MO
Nov 26-30 Pass Christian, MS (public LE only)

PRECISION RIFLE

May 7-11 Florence, AL
Jul 23-27 Garden Plain, KS
Sep 17-21 Tuscaloosa, AL
Oct 15-19 Shreveport, LA

SELECT-FIRE

Apr 30-May 4 Ozark, AL
May 21-25 San Antonio, TX
Jun 25-29 Valhalla, NY (public LE & military only)
Aug 6-10 Prescott, AZ
Aug 20-24 Lithia, FL (public LE & military only)
Sep 24-28 Bethlehem, PA
Oct 1-5 New Smyrna Beach, FL

TACTICAL SHOOTING

Mar 26-30 Leesport, PA
Apr 9-13 Lovejoy, GA
Apr 9-13 Frederick, MD (public LE & military only)
Apr 16-20 Lucedale, MS
Apr 23-27 Summit Point, WV
Apr 23-27 Bethlehem, PA
May 7-11 Emmett, ID (public LE only)
May 7-11 Kimball, MI
May 7-11 Florence, AL
May 14-18 Old Fields, WV
May 14-18 Gunnison, CO
May 21-25 Redding, CA
Jun 11-15 Tuscaloosa, AL
Jun 18-22 Allentown, PA
Jun 25-29 Oakdale, PA
Jun 25-29 Columbus, MS
Jun 25-29 Hamilton, MT
Sep 10-14 Parchman, MS
Sep 10-14 New Smyrna Beach, FL
Sep 10-14 Bethlehem, PA
Sep 17-21 Littleton, CO
Sep 17-21 Holly Springs, MS
Oct 1-5 Monroeville, PA (public LE & military only)
Oct 8-12 Ozark, AL
Oct 15-19 San Antonio, TX
Oct 22-26 Staunton, VA
Oct 29-Nov 2 Summerville, SC
Nov 5-9 Bristol, TN
Dec 3-7 Avondale, LA

TACTICAL SHOTGUN

Mar 12-16 Tuscaloosa, AL
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