

The MUZZLEBLAST

MUZZLEBLAST

One of Florida's Largest Gun Clubs with well over 3,000 members

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Spring Update 2024

By Bill King, President

In our last issue we discussed maintenance on the range. We have rebuilt several baffles that were showing their age, completed a rebuild of a sandbox on the 100-yard rifle line, tore down a storage building that wasn't repairable, and mined lead from the berms as well as smoothed the roads where equipment caused damage. We also filled in potholes until we ran out of material.

A problem this year is a shortage of materials needed to do work. Timbers for the sandbox were not available from our usual sources. The material we use in the roads is more expensive, when it can be found. There was a time they would give this stuff away if you would take it. We are searching for the things used in regular maintenance and will buy it when available so we have an inventory.

The lead mining is a bright spot. Lead is tracked to be sure it is disposed of properly. The berms also have to be rebuilt and treated so the proper Ph level is maintained. All of this information is filed with any other hazardous waste information so we can prove proper practices are being followed.

One of the tasks for 2024 was tearing down the trailer across the street and removing the septic tanks not being used. This was supposed to happen early in the year and was disrupted when the condos in the Jacksonville sports district burned down.

Our contractor went to that job and wouldn't answer our calls, so another was found. This took time but we now have an agreement and the work will be scheduled next month.

The new storage building to replace the one we tore down is in place and just needs some final work before it can be used.

Another continual task is maintaining the security camera system. We continue to do upgrades and repairs as needed.

The roof on the admin building will be repaired this month. When inspected, surface rust and damaged fasteners were found. The work will neutralize rust, repair any leaks found and install a new surface to protect the roof. I'd rather fix a roof than buy a roof.

Membership is steady. Daily shooters are following our projections. The summer doldrums will be here soon, so this is a good time to come out if you want the range to yourself! We have people waiting when the gates are unlocked in the morning but by afternoon, not many shooters. The fans we installed a while back really help, but numbers are still down in the heat of the afternoon.

We need new maintenance workers. One retired this year, and another has chronic illness. We are using labor pool people as needed but need regular employees. If you know anyone who fits the bill get them in touch with John Whitten. We also need another cashier.

We had a meeting with the Port Authority folks about work they are doing on the property around the range area. They are going to harvest trees but will leave a buffer zone around the club. We showed them the things we have in place to keep rounds in the range and they were impressed. It's important to maintain communications and be a good neighbor to prevent problems.

A bit of good news is that incident reports are down. Last year was challenging and efforts in signage and range officers work are paying off. We have a lot of new shooters, and it is important to help them when you see an unsafe condition. Of course, always be courteous. That's all for now, see you at the range.



Firearms Training at Gateway

Are you new to firearms ownership? Are you looking for some training to feel more confident with your firearm? Maybe you have owned a gun for years but want to up your skills. Are you new to concealed carry and want to learn defensive shooting fundamentals? Would you like to take a course on concealed carry to apply for your Florida CWL? Classes and one-on-one training are available at Gateway. Please reach out to Sue Carter, suzcarter@reagan.com, or Willy Tordorsky, willywhiskers@yahoo.com, for more information.

Gun Writer Myths #6, More on the Colt Python

By Randy Erickson

For those of you who have not been following these articles in previous issues of the Muzzleblast, this is a series commenting on the overall poor technical content of most gun magazine articles. Much of what you are reading is a glorified advertisement designed to get you to buy the product and is all too often flat out technically wrong.

In this article, I'm going to continue with the Python theme and share thoughts on the Python's legendary reputation for accuracy and on its reputation for having an action prone to going out of time.

First, accuracy: The Python has a long-standing reputation for being the most accurate of the 357 double action revolvers. Back in the days of my youth growing up in the Midwest, NRA Bullseye (now self identifies as "Precision Pistol" even though hardly anyone calls it that) was very popular with almost every town having a weekly league. Back then, by far the most common 22's were High Standards and Smith 41's, 45's were an accurized Colt 1911, and while there were a few Smith 52's and 1911 conversions to 38 special, by far the most common gun used for 38 centerfire was the Colt Python. Also, in NRA Police Pistol Combat (PPC), back when that sport actually was shot with revolvers to reflect what the police carried at the time, the Python was the gun to beat. One more data point: back when I was working to get my Distinguished Revolver (DR) Badge, I used a Python to get 2/3rds of my points. When the DR program first came out, the NRA required that you use 158 gr lead semi-wadcutter or round nose FACTORY ammunition in the spirit of the ammo that police were issued in the early days of police double action revolvers (before hollowpoints were allowed).

This severely limited our ammo options. So, a bunch of us Gateway pistol guys ordered a sample of every offering of factory ammo that met NRA requirements and tested it. Well guess what? Most of that ammo shot from marginally ok to pretty good at 25 yards but at 50 yards most of it wouldn't even hold the bullseye or 8 ring. I also tested with every 357 double action revolver that I owned including a Ruger GP100, 4 Smith 686's and 2 non collectable/shooter grade Pythons and guess what? Both Pythons were hands down the best guns for 50 yards. Now I'm not saying Rugers and Smiths don't shoot, I own more than a few of each and I don't keep equipment that doesn't perform. I'm just saying that Pythons are generally more accurate than similar revolvers.

Slight digression here. Someone is obviously going to ask why I didn't get ALL my DR points with the Python. Well, at the Nationals at Camp Perry one year, my thumb slipped on my Python's checkered hammer during rapid fire. This is a stage where you have to shoot 2 rapid fire strings of 5 shots in 10 seconds per each string (which is kind of high pucker factor with a revolver) and I ate (slang for lost) a round and 10 scoring points resulting in no match points for my DR badge. About the same time, the NRA changed the rules to allow hand loaded 158 gr SWC or LRN and I found a hand load that actually shot really well in one of my Smith 686's at 50 yards. This 686 also has a wide target style spur hammer with AGGRESSIVE checkering that will draw blood if you are not careful, so I switched to it and have not slipped up in a rapid fire string with it yet. Now get this, this 686 shoots my DR load great, but won't shoot the classic 148 gr HBWC's target bullet. Another of my Smith 686's shoots 148 gr HBWC's great but won't shoot my DR load. Go figure.

So, why does the Python have the well-deserved reputation for being so accurate? Here we go, in no particular order:

Accuracy Factor #1 - Barrel twist:

The Python has a 1 turn in 14 inches (1:14) twist for the barrel rifling, both the old ones and the new 2020 Model (per Colt's data sheet). Rugers generally use 1:16 and Smiths use 1:18 3/4 (nice round number-not). Many folks believe the faster twist helps stabilize bullets at 50 yards and that makes a lot of sense. It's very much like shooting rifles at long range. Often you can get by with a slower twist at closer range, but will need a faster twist for extra stability at long range. I had a 1:9 twist AR15 barrel which shot Sierra 223 80 gr bullets great at 200 yards even though 1:9 is not supposed to stabilize 80's, but that barrel wouldn't shoot 80's for beans at longer ranges. You need at least a 1:8 twist or faster for 80's at longer ranges. This also lines up with revolver experience as Rugers, Smiths and Pythons shoot about the same at 25 yards, but at 50 yards the Pythons usually have an edge. In case you're wondering, NRA Bullseye, PPC, and DR all have stages at 50 yards.

Accuracy Factor #2 - Barrel Groove Diameter:

The Python has a .355 inch groove diameter for shooting .357 diameter bullets. Most revolvers use .357 inch groove diameter barrels for shooting .357 bullets. So, Pythons are nominally .002 inch tighter than most barrels. Now before anyone freaks out about concerns over high pressures due to the barrel squeeze on the bullets remember that Pythons have been shooting high pressure loads for many, many decades with zero issues relating to pressure. And, if one thinks about it, the bullets get mashed down a lot more by the .004-.006 inch lands around the perimeter of the barrel. By the way, at least one of the major ammo manufacturer's 148

HBWC loads uses .360 diameter bullets to get better accuracy, probably for the same reason. Debate it all you want; the results speak for themselves so Colt clearly got it right.

Accuracy Factor #3 - the Python Action:

With most revolver actions like Smiths and Rugers, the hand has a single step that engages a notch in the cylinder ratchet and starts the initial rotation of the cylinder. (The hand is the part that pokes out of the back of the cylinder window in the frame to engage a notch in the ratchet and turn the cylinder. On Rugers this is called the pawl but since this article is about Pythons I'm going to use the Colt terms.) After rotating about halfway, the ratchet notch slides off the top of hand and the side of the hand pressing on the ratchet actually finishes rotating the cylinder through to lockup with the bolt. (The bolt is the part that pops up out of the bottom of the cylinder window in the frame to lock the cylinder in alignment with the barrel. S&W calls this the cylinder stop and Ruger calls it the cylinder latch, we'll go with the Colt term: bolt.) This generally works pretty well as Smiths and Rugers have a long successful track record. That said, all things wear with use and the clearances between all the parts involved, especially the hand and its slot in the frame and the bolt and its slots in the frame and the cylinder. That's why when looking at buying a used revolver, it's a good idea to gently try to rotate the cylinder to see how much clearance or slop is in these parts as that slop will adversely affect accuracy. In severe cases, the cylinder may not be rotated into lockup resulting in misalignment between the chamber and the barrel forcing cone. This can result in the revolver "spitting" shavings of bullet lead or jacket material which can be dangerous. If you have a revolver that spits metal shavings when you shoot it, STOP SHOOTING, and get the timing checked/fixed by a gunsmith. By the way, that's why they make oversize

hands and bolts to either fix timing issues or tighten the cylinder slop for these revolvers, especially Smiths.

Pythons (and their gun relatives with similar actions like the Officers Match, old Troopers, Diamondbacks, new Anaconda's, et al.) are different. The hand has two steps, sometimes called an upper and lower hand. The upper step engages a notch in the ratchet to begin rotating the cylinder and the bottom step takes over about halfway and finishes rotating the cylinder into lock up. Now, here's where it gets interesting. At the end of the rotation, the bottom step is still engaged with the ratchet as the cylinder locks up on one end and the other end of the hand is moved by/attached to the trigger. So, as you pull the trigger, the hand puts some pressure on the ratchet/cylinder and takes all the slop out of the parts mentioned above. So, when you are pulling the trigger on a Python, the cylinder is snug and aligned with the barrel the same way for each and every shot. To see this, take an UNLOADED Python and hold the trigger back when you dry fire it, then gently try to rotate the cylinder and you will find it doesn't move. Colt used to call this "Band Vault Lockup". When you do this with other revolvers, the end of the hand has nothing to push against so they always end up with some wiggle. In a way the hand acts like a trigger stop except that instead of the trigger over travel being limited by a set screw, it is limited by the hand pushing on the cylinder ratchet.

What's the downside to this? (Notice the smooth transition to timing reputation?) Well, it means the length of the hand must be exactly right. If the hand is too long, it's just like adjusting a trigger stop too tight and the trigger may not actually be able to disengage from and drop the hammer. If the hand is too short, it won't rotate the cylinder into lockup.

So, the Python might take a little more work to set the timing correctly but does this mean that the mechanism

is more fragile or prone to going out of time? Absolutely not! Here's data: the used (beat to heck old cop gun) Python I used in the DR matches was badly out of time when I bought it, but after fixing it, I put right at 36,000 rounds through it and the timing is still solid. (Yes, I'm that anal retentive, I have a logbook.) That number includes a fair number of 357 magnums from my "magnumitis" phase in my younger years and mostly stout 38 special loads for the 50-yard line in the DR matches. Very few were powder puff 148 HBWC's. So based on actual data, I believe the Python action is on par with other comparable actions for life and durability.

OK, so now your head is probably spinning and you're wondering where the reputation for timing problems comes from. Here's the shocker: a LOT of the OLD Pythons were built and shipped with marginal timing. Yup, I just said that. You would likely be shocked at the percent of new, right out of the box Pythons I looked at that were not properly timed. Here's why most folks never even noticed. If you pull the trigger fast in double action or cock the hammer briskly in single action, the cylinder gets up enough speed that it's inertia will carry it into lockup even if the hand was a little short. Plus, if the cylinder didn't quite lock up, pulling the trigger (which puts pressure on the hand) will usually rotate the cylinder into lock up before the hammer falls. It's only after firing very many rounds that the new parts seat in or wear and timing problems become apparent. Very few owners ever cocked the hammer super slow to check timing on a new gun. Here's more data: every single Colt factory replacement hand I bought to repair Pythons with timing problems was short and needed to be stretched to work. By the way, "stretching" the hand is a recognized approach to repairing timing issues and amounts to pounding the side of the hand to make it grow in length. The hand is pretty hard and this takes a lot of patience and pounding with a big hammer to stretch it just the

right amount and not break it. Now imagine the poor union assembler working at Colt trying to make his production quota. Do you think he is going to take the time to stretch hands to make them work or is he going to smartly cock the hammer during the Quality Control/function check and declare victory? So, the gun ships, new owner gets the gun and eventually he fires it enough that the new parts break in/wear a bit, the timing issue eventually shows up and he concludes that the action is weak and prone to going out of time.

Ok, there you have it, that's my informed opinion on the Python's accuracy and timing reputation. So, keeping with the theme of stupid things gun writers wrote in various articles on the new Python (paraphrased for brevity), here's a few for your amusement:

"The cylinder wiggle of the Python revolver was less than most revolvers but some cylinder wiggle is actually good." I couldn't believe this clown actually wrote this and don't know of any manufacturer that would brag about having just the right amount of wiggle on the cylinder lockup. This guy obviously never heard of the "Colt Bank Vault Lockup" and really should have done some homework before writing his article.

"The (old) Python is an inherently weak action as the only thing holding the cylinder in the frame is the hand." Seriously? The Python has a piloting stud on the cylinder latch and a bolt for primary lockup, just like all revolvers. The hand simply takes the slop out of the system for consistent cylinder to barrel alignment.

"Colt made the new Python stronger by making the top strap 30% bigger". First of all, Colt only made the area under the rear sight beefier, the rest of the top strap is the same. See the last Muzzleblast issue for my thoughts on that. Second, the strength of the frame was never an issue with the Python.

"The new Python is made of more modern materials".
News flash: unless you are designing blades for a gas turbine engine, there really have not been any revolutionary new/more modern metals, especially steels, in over 50 years and certainly none that are low enough in cost to use in guns. More on gun writer lack of metallurgical knowledge in upcoming article. Oh yeah, Colt made stainless steel models of the old Python too.

And here's my favorite: "The new Python action is redesigned to address the timing problems and is stronger than the old action". News flash: the key parts of the new Python action are essentially the same as the old action (see last issue's article for minor differences) and this is one decision that Colt really got right. This mechanism is responsible for the silky smooth feel of the Python action and they kept the "Bank Vault Lockup" which is a great feature. FYI, all the new Pythons I've examined so far have been built right and timed properly out of the box.

So, here's the bottom line: In my opinion, the Python, either new or old action, is the most aesthetically pleasing 357 double action revolver ever made and its silky smooth action is second to none. It is by far my favorite revolver, both versions. If you can afford it get one and go out and enjoy it by shooting it. And if you really want to enjoy shooting one of the new ones, get a trigger job and put Wilson sights on it per my last article. Just don't ask me to do trigger jobs as I made my vast fortune in gunsmithing and retired from it to do engineering for another 25 years because I enjoyed the corporate world so much (sarcasm alert, there's no real money in gunsmithing and corporations can suck the fun out of any fulfilling job).

2024 DIXIE NRA REGIONAL PISTOL CHAMPIONSHIP and NRA DAY

With Civilian Marksmanship Program Service Pistol & .22 Rimfire E.I.C. Match and National Rifle Association Distinguished Revolver Match

By Ted Carter

The 2024 Dixie Matches and NRA Day were held at Gateway Rifle and Pistol Club, Jacksonville, FL on April 19-21. This annual National Rifle Association (NRA) Regional Precision Pistol Championship continues to be a highlight for many Florida Bullseye shooters and was also attended by military and civilian competitors from eleven other states, and one competitor from Puerto Rico. There were 51 shooters competing. The weather was beautiful over the three-day match. The Army Marksmanship Unit (AMU) took the first and second place with Jason Gregoire (Midland, GA) firing a 2640-109X to take "Top Gun" honors, winning the NRA Regional Championship, and being named Dixie Match Champion. Coming in second, was teammate, Greg Markowski (Fortson, GA), firing a 2635-120X. Jordan Kramp (Fairfield, CA) finished third with a 2607-79X. Top shot in the High Master Class, was Wes Fleming (New Philadelphia, OH) with a 2588-105X. Top shot in the Master Class (Civilian) was Robert Fanucci (Mershon, GA) with a 2557-85X and AMU's Mate Standard (Service/Police) firing a 2582-84X. Expert Class winner was Reinaldo Gonzalez (Ponce, Puerto Rico) with a 2489-49X. The Sharpshooter Class was won by Jinsong Tian (St. Johns, FL) with a 2376-35X. Winning the Marksman Class was Jacob Milich (Jacksonville, FL) with a 2326-36X. Winning the .22 Caliber Only Aggregate was Rand Albrecht (Phenix City, AL) with a 2472-54X. Special Category Awards for High Civilian and High Veteran went to Jordan Kramp. Jason Gregoire won High Service and Open Division. Winning the Metallic Division was Jinsong Tian. High Women

went to Shelly Liu (Cary, NC). High Senior went to Nestor Pena (Winter Park, FL), and High Grand Senior was won by Tony Silva (Snowflake, AZ). Special recognition for tying a Gateway range record in the .22 Caliber Timed Fire Match with a 200-18X goes to Greg Markowski. Well done to all competitors!

A total of seven 2-Member teams competed. AMU won the overall team match (a combination of scores from the .22, Centerfire and .45 team matches) with a total of 1754-88X. Winning the .22 Only team match was Florida Sport Shooting Association firing a score of 1581-32X.

The NRA Distinguished Revolver Match had 19 shooters competing. Winning the match was AMU's Greg Markowski firing a 285-8X, followed by teammate Jason Gregoire with a 280-6X, and taking "bronze" was Chase Turner (Atlanta, GA) with a 263-5X. The CMP Service Pistol EIC Match had 28 competitors and was won by Jason Gregoire with a 295-13X, followed by Greg Markowski firing a 288-11X and Mate Standard (Waverly Hall, GA) finishing third with a 282-9X. The CMP's .22 Rimfire EIC Match also had 28 shooters competing. Winning the match was Greg Markowski with a 296-9X, followed by Jason Gregoire firing a 289-11X and in third place, Ames Evans (Columbia, MD) with a 284-11X.

Now in its sixth year, air pistol was offered as an additional event for the competitors. The 20-shot air pistol "fun" match and a "closest to the center shot" competition both had good participation. The air pistol events were fired in the Bill Craig facility. Proceeds from the match combined with donated prizes brought in over \$400 for FSSA's shooting programs.

The annual Dixie Match remains a well-attended Bullseye match. There were eleven first-time Dixie shooters, several from Florida, and several more coming from as far away as California, Pennsylvania, Maryland,

and Puerto Rico. Match Director was Ted Carter. Calling a superb line for all three days was Chief Range Officer Larry Watkins. Assisting Larry to ensure a well-run and safe line were Range Officers David Poole, Marion Estes, Dennis Faye, and Robert Fanucci. Randy Erickson assisted as Jury Chairman. Recording and posting all scores were Chief Statistical Officer Sue Carter, assisted by Emily Puckett. Emily also assisted with running the Air Gun range. There were many compliments from the competitors on the excellent facilities at Gateway and the friendly, professional and safety conscious staff.

Many thanks to all the competitors for their support, with the majority driving hundreds of miles to attend the match. A special Thank You to our sponsors: Pardini USA, Magpul, Swab-its, Hornady, Ransom International, Mission BBQ, Zero Bullets, Starline Brass, Clenzoil, My Medic, Esca Tech, Midway USA, NRA, Ruger, and Florida Sport Shooting Association for their generous support of our match. Finally, a well-earned thanks goes out to the Dixie match staff, the Gateway range officers, office staff, webmaster and the range maintenance folks who made this another great shooting event. Planning has already begun for the 2024 Dixie Match, and we are looking forward to another exciting competition.

For a complete listing of scores and plenty of match photos, please go to: https://grpc-jax.com/disciplines/outdoor_pistol.html.



Winning Team - US Army Marksmanship Unit NRA Regional Champions: Winner - Jason Gregoire, 2nd - Greg Markowski



2nd Place Team – Accuracy X
Wes Fleming and Lee Fleming



Winning .22 Only Aggregate team -
Florida Sport Shooting Association
Stephen Price and Marcella Price



Dixie Regional Champion –
Jason Gregoire



Nestor Pena - High Senior, shot a near
perfect target at 50 yards during Slow Fire



The Dixie Match was held in conjunction with NRA Day



Dinner at Mission BBQ was well attended and enjoyed



The Air Pistol fun matches were run all
three days and had good attendance



Match Dir Ted Carter presents Jinsong
Tian with High Sharpshooter awards



RO's Dennis Faye and David Poole ensured a
safe line and provided great competitor support

M1 Clinic and Antique Rifle Matches

By Randy Erickson

As promised, we held our first M1 clinic in a long time on September 30th. We had 10 students and about the same number of coaches. Most folks chose to shoot an M1 Garand, but there was at least one 1903 Springfield (WWI bolt action) and an M1 carbine (the Minie-Me version of the M1 Garand if you follow the Austin Powers movies). Pictures of the classroom setting, students and coaches on the line, and Treasurer Sue demonstrating her off hand technique are included below. The two common themes to student feedback were:

1. Everyone had a lot of fun.
2. These old guns are really cool. "I bought this thing years ago and never even shot it and now that I have, this is really fun."

Our President, Bill King, and Range Manager, John Whitten, sat in on the classroom instruction and afterwards the three of us were all talking about shooting the "vintage rifles". Years back, Gateway periodically had our own "M1 Match" which was restricted to vintage military rifles like the M1, M1 carbine, 1903 Springfield, 1917 Enfield, etc. There were no AR15 or match rifles allowed so everyone was shooting the same "class" of gun and this match was very popular. I remember times when we filled the 200-yard line and had TWO relays! Other clubs were offering similar matches like the "Vintage Rifle Match" at the Orange Blossom Regional. This was a side match with only one rule: the gun had to be a wooden stocked WWII era or prior gun. Not only were the above mentioned US military rifles popular, but there were also US 30-40 Krag's, British SMLE's, and many variants of Mausers.

Now days the CMP, Civilian Marksmanship Program, has embodied that theme in their GSMM (Garand, Springfield, Modern Military) match which is very similar to our old "M1 Match". Basically, it is a short, 30 round match for as-issued, unmodified military rifles all shot at 200 yards on the "SR" target with a very generous 13-inch bullseye.

Now here's the big news. You can shoot a GSMM style match at Gateway! On the second Sunday of each month at 8:00, we shoot an NRA style "Across the Course" high power rifle match which is 50 shots, but we let folks shoot a GSMM style match right alongside of us as it works with our range commands with zero issues. And it gets better yet: If you can't or just don't want to get into the torturous sitting and prone positions, you can shoot the entire match from the bench with sandbags or a simple bench rest, even for the rapid fire string (10 shots in 80 seconds with a reload which really isn't all that rapid). You'll just be in a separate category from the other competitors. AND, since this is fun match not subject to fancy sanctioning rules, you can even use a scope if you want. They make some really nice do-it-yourself scope mounts for Garands that don't require permanent modification to the gun that are pretty easy to install.

Can't make it to a Sunday match or don't want to shoot rapid fire? Then consider shooting our 3x20 prone match held at 8:00 on the second Saturday of each month. Same story, just shoot from the bench and shoot 3 strings of 10 or 3 strings of 20, your choice.

So, bottom line is if you've got an old vintage military rifle and want an opportunity to shoot it or an excuse to come out to the range and hang out with your buddies, come on out and join us. There is no prize, trophy or money to win, only bragging rights.



CMP Certified Instructor Mike Judd and his attentive students



Shooting on the line with the coaches. Is that a ZZ Top member or someone from Duck Dynasty on the line?



Treasurer Sue demonstrating Championship offhand form with a custom shooting jacket

Florida Sport Shooting Association

By Ted Carter, President, Florida Sport Shooting Association



The Florida Sport Shooting Association or FSSA, is your state shooting association. The FSSA is pleased to have a number of Gateway Rifle and Pistol Club members as state association members and Gateway Rifle and Pistol Club as an affiliated club. For those of you who may not be members, I invite you to consider joining.

Formed in 1986 as a Not-for-Profit Corporation, the Florida Sport Shooting Association (FSSA) is Florida's National Rifle Association (NRA) state association. In addition to affiliation with the NRA, FSSA is also affiliated with the Civilian Marksmanship Program (CMP) and USA Shooting (USAS). We also coordinate with the Florida Sports Foundation to schedule select shooting venues for the Sunshine State Games. The FSSA is a tax-exempt 501c (3) organization and does no political lobbying.

The FSSA strives to create a public sentiment of support for the individual possession of firearms by law-abiding citizens. We strongly encourage education and training in the use of firearms. An essential purpose of the FSSA is to encourage the proper organization, operation, and administration of member clubs, to promote and coordinate statewide activities related to the ownership and lawful use of firearms, and to cooperate with other organizations in the conservation of wildlife resources within the State of Florida.

Additionally, the FSSA fully supports and/or encourages:

- The constitutional rights of the individual American citizen to acquire, transport, possess, carry, and transfer ownership of arms.
- The promotion of recreational and sports shooting.
- The promotion and approval of State Championship tournaments and the promotion of other shooting championships and other competitions.
- The acceptance of marksmanship as a major competitive sport in the State's publicly and privately endowed school systems, both secondary and collegiate.
- The promotion and defense of hunter safety training, hunting as a shooting sport, and conservation, as viable and necessary methods of fostering the propagation, growth, conservation and wise use of renewable wildlife and natural resources.

The FSSA's website has a complete list of our Board members and discipline directors. These men and women give their time and expertise to support you and our other FSSA shooters. Their contact information can be found on the FSSA's website; <http://www.flssa.org/contact>.

Please do not hesitate to contact me or any of our officers and directors with any questions or comments, or for any discipline specific information. We are here to serve our members and our member clubs.

I encourage you to check out the FSSA's website; <http://www.flssa.org>. For Facebook users, check us out and like us at Florida Sport Shooting Association.

Annual membership dues are just \$25.00. Member dues and donations are allocated to actively support our various shooting programs. FSSA has awarded grants to shooters attending the USA Shooting Junior Olympics in Colorado Springs, Colorado, and other types of shooting events. Additionally, FSSA helps fund select championship events in Florida, and supports our state association teams at national and regional events. FSSA also supports programs that help encourage women to begin shooting. An example is the Ladies Day event at Gateway that hosted nearly 100 women for a day of shooting and firearms safety training.

The FSSA Directors and I are excited about the Association's ability to continue to support and promote shooting events throughout Florida. We are also optimistic about expanding our grant programs to include more Juniors, helping them realize their shooting goals.

But we need your help.

Please consider joining or renewing your FSSA membership at <https://flssa.org/join-us> or donating online at <https://flssa.org/http/www.flssa.org/donate>. FSSA accepts online payments for membership dues, or you can download an application or pick one up in the club store and send it in. Your dues and tax-deductible donations make it possible for the Association to continue to provide grants for our individual shooters, support state championships, and fund our teams during national championship events.

Thanks, and good shooting!

That's how I remember it, Bullseye Powder

By Randy Erickson

President Bill and I had been talking about content for the Muzzleblast Club newsletter that would trick, oops, I meant motivate, our members to read it on a regular basis and we hit on the idea of publishing some stories from years past about the Club, our members, shooting, or anything else I come up with that our members might find interesting. Since I can actually touch type, I got volunteered for this assignment. Also, all these stories are 100% true with no embellishment in any way on my part and I may or may not have changed the names to protect or minimize embarrassment to those involved. Anyway, here we go:

More than 30 years ago when I moved to Jacksonville and joined Gateway, I was just starting out with competitive pistol shooting, "NRA Bullseye" (now days they now identify as "Precision Pistol", but everyone pretty much still calls it "Bullseye"). Now I had been reloading my own ammo for a long time, but I was a total newbie to Bullseye competition and that was clear to everyone when I showed up for my first match with my stuff in a cardboard box as I didn't even have a "gun box" to put my gear in. Fortunately for me, the pistol competition match director decided to take me under his wing and share his extensive experience with me. Let's call him "Joe".

Now Joe was a stereotypical Italian and he could be a bit on the tightly wrapped side of things with his strong opinions. It was even rumored that if a lump of coal were shoved up his bottom, it would turn into a diamond within a week but I never asked Joe if that were true. That said, Joe really was helpful with getting me started.

I got all kinds of advice on stance, match preparations, rules, etc. and when it came to competition ammo, Joe made it crystal clear that I was to use "Bullseye" powder and only once fired brass cases for 50 yards.

Now many of you probably remember back when we had the double wide trailer at what is now our exit and we used to sell a very small selection of reloading supplies out of the trailer. Well back then, the club would place special orders for members and someone had ordered a case of the new shot gun powder "Winchester Super Target", WST for short. Turns out they never picked it up and that is why we don't place special orders for members anymore. Since we didn't exactly have a lot of shot gunners, the Club was selling it at cost just to get rid of it. It was so new there wasn't any pistol reloading data on it back then, but its burning rate was very similar to other 12 gage powders that would work in 45 ACP like Red Dot and 700X so being a "free thinker" (a label one of my bosses gave me, he said it was a compliment but I'm not sure) I thought I'd give the new stuff a try. Turns out I thought it was a really great powder. It metered fine, performed just like Bullseye, and burned way cleaner so I went back and bought the rest of the case. I didn't tell anyone about my new powder so I thought my secret was safe, but I underestimated Joe's powers of observation.

Joe was calling the next match which gave him the opportunity to watch everyone shooting. About half way through the match, he came over to me and confronted me: "ERICKSON! What the heck (except he didn't say heck) powder are you shooting?" I played dumb and responded "What do you mean Joe? What makes you think I'm not shooting Bullseye?" To which Joe responded "Don't be smart with me, your smoke plume is different than everyone else's on the line."

So what powder are you using?" At this point I gave in and confessed that I was using WST and I'll never forget his response: "THAT'S A SHOTGUN POWDER! EVERYONE KNOWS YOU SHOOT BULLSEYE POWDER IN BULLSEYE!" Then he added: "The only exception is you can shoot Winchester 452AA for 50 yards, it's a pretty good powder too, but you really need to shoot Bullseye".

Anyway, I secretly used up my supply of WST and over the years tried lots of powders in 45 target loads like Red Dot, 700X, 231, AA No. 2, Nitro 100, Titegroup, Titewad, Clays, and VV310 but I always found myself going back to Bullseye.

Now flash forward many years. Joe had passed away and I was the Pistol Director at the Dixie Regional Pistol Match with our NRA furnished Referee, Richard. One of the things I really like about competitions is meeting really interesting folks and listening to some of their stories and Richard was no exception. He was a Korean War veteran and really hard of hearing even with his hearing aids and he mentioned he lost most of his hearing while serving on a mortar crew. I responded by relating that my Dad was a cannon cocker in the Army (in Artillery) and while I certainly wasn't an expert, my understanding from Dad was that mortars weren't that loud in the big scheme of things. He responded that they weren't, except for when one of the rounds went off in the mortar pit just as it shot out of the tube....

Anyway, somewhere in our conversations we were talking about old Joe and I told him the story about Joe's reaction to me using WST instead of Bullseye powder. Richard started laughing his bottom off and he about fell out of his chair. While I asked him what was so funny, Richard responded that Joe was going to roll over in his

grave when he said this, but he said that WST and 452AA are basically the same powder and that Winchester just renamed it to "refresh" the product. How's that for irony?

OK, one more item for your amusement. Years back at the Florida State Bullseye Match, I was squatted next to this guy, "Bill". I didn't know him, had never seen him, never met him any of the numerous matches I had been to, but someone said he was a super great shooter who had just been away from competition for years and this was his first match out of shooting retirement. Anyway, I ended up scoring him and he cleaned everyone's clock. I don't remember his final score but I do remember him shooting NUMEROUS 100's at 50 yards and being ticked off at a score of only 97. Turns out he had been a national contender as a 2650 (out of 2700) shooter and a sponsored member of Team Springfield during Bullseye's heyday. Anyway, part way into the centerfire match, he said he wasn't picking up his brass and I could have it if I wanted it. As I'm picking it up, turns out it was the worst collection of 45 cases I had ever seen. It had mixed headstamps of every manufacturer you could think of, it was filthy and there were a bunch of split cases in the mix. So much for needing once fired cases for 50 yards....

Anyway, that's how I remember it.



Where To Shoot What at Gateway

By Randy Erickson

DAY MEMBERS and ANNUAL / LIFE MEMBERS: RANGES 1 & 2

RANGE 1, PISTOLS and REVOLVERS: Located to far left as you exit the club store.

No rifles or shotguns allowed

NO FIRING OF HIGH POWER RIFLE ROUNDS (i.e. 223, 556, 7.62x39, 308, etc.) ALLOWED ON RANGE 1

RANGE 2, as follows: Located slightly left as you exit the club store.

BENCH SHOOTING ONLY

RIFLES, CARBINES, AR and AK style pistols with arm brace: All positions except 27 & 28: All calibers including rimfires, pistol calibers, high power/centerfire calibers, and black powder. AR and AK pistols must be fired supported from bench.

SHOTGUNS with shoulder stocks:

Positions 1-26: For shotguns with iron sights or optics, i.e. not a "bead" only front sight and must shoot slugs or turkey loads

Position 27: This position is for "patterning" birdshot loads. Ammunition must be #6 through #9 shot.

Position 28: This position is for function checking. Ammunition must be #6 through #9 shot.

SHOTGUNS without shoulder stocks:

Position 28 only: This position is for function checking. Ammunition must be #6 through #9 shot.

ANNUAL AND LIFE MEMBERS ONLY: RANGES 3-8

PISTOLS AND REVOLVERS:

RANGES 5 and 7 including the 25/50-yard Bullseye range: Pistol caliber ammunition only.

NO FIRING OF HIGH POWER RIFLE ROUNDS (i.e. 223, 556, 7.62x39, 308, etc.) ALLOWED ON RANGES 5 and 7.

RANGE 4B: Barrels must be 2 inch minimum length. Pistol caliber ammunition only.

NO FIRING OF HIGH POWER RIFLE ROUNDS (i.e. 223, 556, 7.62x39, 308, etc.) ALLOWED ON RANGE 4B.

RANGE 4A: Barrels must be 10 inch minimum length.

HIGH POWER RIFLE CALIBER ROUNDS ARE NOT ALLOWED.

RANGE 3: Must be capable of accurate fire at 200-yards.

High power rifle caliber rounds ARE allowed.

AR15 AND AK47 STYLE PISTOLS WITH ARM BRACE:

RANGES 2, 4A, and 8: Must be supported/aimed fire from bench. High power rifle caliber rounds ARE allowed on Ranges 2 and 8, **PISTOL CALIBER AND BLACK POWDER ONLY ON 4A.**

HIGH POWER RIFLES:

RANGES 2 and 8: Firing allowed sitting at bench only.

RANGE 3: Firing allowed standing, sitting, prone and sitting at bench.

PISTOL CALIBER AND BLACK POWDER RIFLES AND CARBINES:

includes .17 and .22 Rimfire, .38, .44 and .45 but not .223, .556, 7.62x39, 30-30, 308, etc.

RANGES 2, 3, 4A, 4B, 5, 8, and 7 including 25/50-yard Bullseye line.

SHOTGUNS:

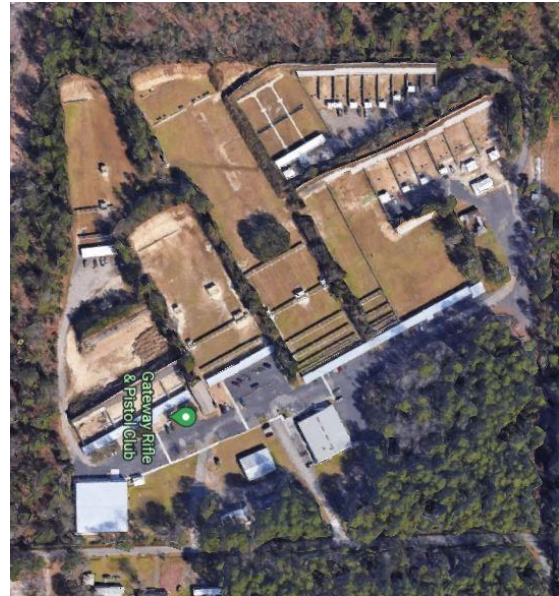
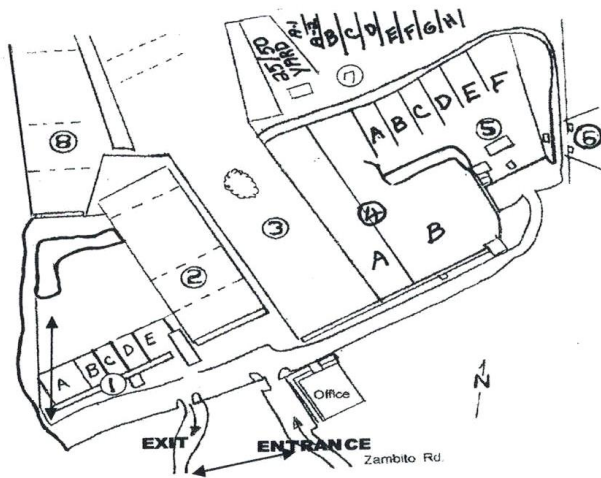
RANGE 6: Use clay pigeon targets and birdshot ammunition with #6 through #9 shot. Slugs, buckshot and #4 shot not allowed. **NO RIFLES OR HANDGUNS ALLOWED.**

RANGES 5 and 7: Use with paper targets, clay pigeon targets not allowed.

ARCHERY: RANGES 5 and 7

See the next page for a range map and details on the different ranges

RANGE MAP



Range Details:

Range 1: 7- and 15-yard pistol range, **Day members allowed**

Range 2: 100-yard line primarily for rifles, **Day members allowed**

Range 3: 200-yard line primarily for rifles

Range 4A: 100-yard line primarily for rifles, **pistol calibers and black powder only**

Range 4B: Silhouette range, **pistol calibers and black powder only**

Range 5: General purpose bays, **pistol calibers, black powder and shotgun only**

Range 6: Shotgun with birdshot only, **no pistols, black powder or rifles**

Range 7: General purpose bays, **pistol calibers, black powder and shot gun only**

NOTE: FIRING OF "HIGH POWER" RIFLE AMMO LIKE AR/AK .223, 5.56 OR 7.62x39, etc. ON THE 4B SILHOUETTE RANGE, OR RANGES 5, 6 AND 7 WILL LIKELY RESULT IN LOSS OF MEMBERSHIP

CLUB INFORMATION

Gateway Rifle & Pistol Club

9301 Zambito Ave. N
Jacksonville, FL 32210

904.771.2937

www.GRPC-JAX.com

Where to Shoot

Day Members or Annual and Life Members

Ranges 1 A-B-C-D: Pistols only with pistol calibers. Location: Far left (West) as you leave front office, 53 positions at 7/15 yards

Range 2: Rifles at 25-50 and 100 yards and shotguns on select positions

Annual and Life Members Only

Both of above two ranges, #1 and #2

Range 3: Rifle 50- and 200-yards and Pistols with 10 inch Barrels or longer chambered for rifle cartridges

Range 4A: Same as Range 3 except 100-yards only

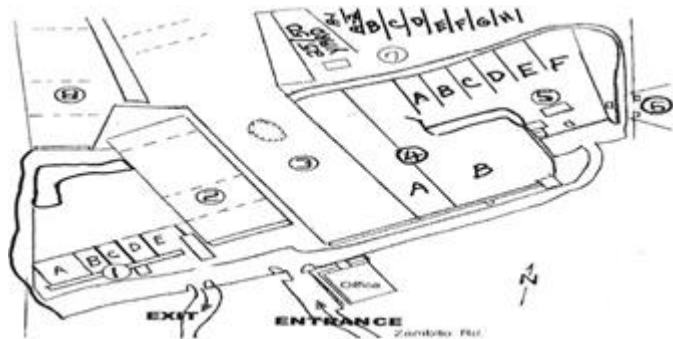
Range 4B: Rifles in rim fire .22 cal, .17 cal plus black powder rifles

Range 5 A-B-C-D-E-F: All-purpose ranges for Pistols and Rifles with Pistol Calibers

Range 6: Shotgun Skeet Range with only #6 to #9 Shot

Range 7 A-B-C-D-E-F-G-H: All Purpose ranges for Pistols and Rifles with Pistol Calibers, 25-/50-Yard Pistol Match Range, Pistols and Rifles with Pistol Calibers

Range 8: Rifle, 25-, 50- and 100-yard Rifle targets



ID BADGES

All Shooters:

Annual, Life, and Day Members must wear ID badges at all times when on the Club property.

2024 Slate of Officers		
Officer	Name	Contact Info
President	Bill King	pres@grpc-jax.com
Vice President	William Edwards	
Secretary	Randy Erickson	
Treasurer	Susan Carter	
Public Relations Officer	Charles Preston	

2024 Board Members	
Tim Allen	Doug Havens
Carl Berg	Gary Kight
Walt Gallahan	Alan Rosner
Don Hardeman	William Todorsky
Tim Hardy	
Emeritus Directors:	
Bill Craig	
Sam Grimes	
Allen Way	

Range Maintenance Schedule		
Day	Time	Range
Monday	0800-1100	100-yard Rifle Range
Tuesday	0800-1100	All Pistol Ranges
Wednesday	0800-1100	Silhouette Range
Thursday	0800-1100	200-yard Rifle Range
Friday	0800-1100	All Multi-Purpose Ranges and New 100-yard Rifle Range

Note: Subject to change based on maintenance need

Gateway Rifle & Pistol Club, Inc.

A private Club operated since 1965, providing a safe environment for the sport of shooting. We offer annual memberships allowing unlimited use of the shooting ranges and daily memberships for the occasional shooter limited to certain ranges. The Club is open 7 days a week from 8:00 am until near dusk except Easter, Thanksgiving, and Christmas. There are numerous pistol ranges at various distances for shooting paper targets and steel plates. The rifle ranges provide 25, 50, 100, and 200 yard shooting positions. For those interested in competition there are monthly matches for small bore, black powder, .22 50/50 Benchrest, bullseye pistol, 3x20 prone, NMC and Cowboy, etc.

There is an active junior program and women's program. The facilities include the rifle and pistol shooting positions, a large club house, meeting rooms, and a store selling those items you may need at the range including targets, ammunition, and eye and ear protection. There is a Range Safety Officer on duty at all times.

Tournament Schedule:			
Match	Range	Day	Time
ARA Rimfire	4B	3 rd Friday	Call range
Smallbore F-class	4A	1 st Saturday	0800-1100
22 Rimfire Benchrest	4B	1 st Saturday	1000-1400
Club 1800 Pistol	7	1 st Sunday	0900-1200
High Power Rifle Prone	3	2 nd Saturday	0800-1100
Black Powder	4	2 nd Saturday	0800-1100
High Power Rifle XTC	3	2 nd Sunday	0800-1100
NRA 1800 Bullseye	7	3 rd Sunday	0900-1200
Concealed Pistol/Home Defense Shotgun Match	5	3 rd Sunday	0900-
Smallbore Silhouette	4	4 th Saturday	0800-1400
Cowboy	5	4 th Saturday	0900-

Note: The above schedule is periodically subject to change: please check the website

Disclaimer

The Muzzleblast is published periodically by Lori Hallauer under the direction of the Gateway Rifle & Pistol Club. All newsletter content to be approved by the GRPC prior to publication. Technical and/or handloading data are for informational purposes only. No responsibility is accepted for results obtained by persons using such data, and all liability for any consequential injuries or damages is disclaimed. References herein to any specific commercial product, process or service by trade name, trademark, manufacturer or otherwise, does not necessarily constitute or imply endorsement, recommendation or favoring by The Gateway Rifle & Pistol Club, Inc., its Board of Directors, its membership, the editor, nor the Publisher. Letters to the editor should be brief, to the point, of firearm-related interest and contain the signature, address and telephone number of the sender. Letters to the editor do not necessarily reflect the views of the editor, publisher or Gateway Rifle & Pistol Club. Send submissions to: Gateway Rifle & Pistol Club, 9301 Zambito Rd., Jacksonville, FL 32210 or to the Muzzleblast editor at: redhawks1980@hotmail.com.

Thank you for reading! If you would like to submit information, articles, or match scores, please send them to:

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