

BUILDING BONDS ACROSS THE BORDER

June 2013

It was a good weekend for shooting, and an even better time for seeing old friends, making new ones and reinforcing relationships across the border. Against the beautiful backdrop of Pioneer Peak and The Twins, a team of six Mounties outshot their Trooper counterparts by a close margin of 36 points out of 12,000 possible points, or less than four rounds, to win the team competition of the 53rd Annual International Law Enforcement Pistol Competition in Palmer June 22-23. After losing two years in a row to the Alaskans, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police edged the team of Alaskans to take the team trophy back home with them. However, the Commissioner's Cup, which pits the two top ranked officers from the RCMPs in the Yukon Territory and Alaska Department of Public Safety, will stay in Alaska for the fourth year in a row after Commissioner Joseph Masters beat Chief Superintendent Peter Clark. In addition, for the first time since 2000, a team of Trooper wives won the Significant Other Shoot Off (SOSO) against a team that consisted of mostly RCMP wives, a girlfriend and a daughter. First-year competitor, RCMP Constable Stephen "Archie" Archibald, took the top overall individual shooting honors while Alaska Wildlife Trooper Investigator Brent Johnson won the tactical portion. Katherine Hood, wife of AST Sgt. Tim Schoenberg, was the



Story and photos by Beth Ipsen
AST Public Information Officer

top shooter for the ladies.

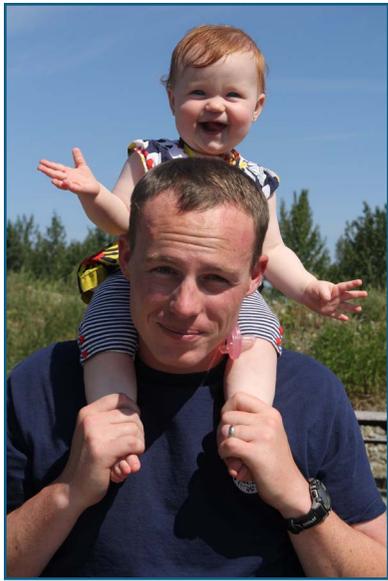
However, the bonds forged and strengthened throughout the weekend ensured everyone went home a winner. While the event is built up around a shooting contest, the occasion is more about camaraderie between the Troopers and Mounties and their families. As RCMP Corporal Ryan Hack who supervises the RCMP post in Faro, Yukon, put it, it's a gathering of northern law enforcement brethren that also happens to have a trophy at stake. The stories swapped over the weekend sound similar regardless of what side of the border they happened or color of uniform worn. The RCMPs and Troopers deal with the same issues – domestic violence,



(Top right) Alaska Wildlife Trooper Investigator Brent Johnson uses a sniper rifle to pick out a specific color of balloon down-range in the tactical portion on June 23.

(Left) Johnson's wife, Mariah, concentrates on the target before she and Kelly Goeden and Katherine Hood fire the AR-15 during the SOSO on June 22. (Right) Royal Canadian Mounted Police fire their shooting partner's .40-caliber Glock during the target competition on June 23.





(Left) Alaska Wildlife Trooper Ernie Brent and his daughter, Adelyn, enjoy the nice weather during The Shoot's practice day on June 22.

(Right) Alaska State Trooper Sgt. Tim Schoenberg and Royal Canadian Mounted Police Constable Patrick Poulin exchange duty weapons before shooting their counterpart's course of fire with their partner's pistol.

alcohol- and drug-fueled crimes. The biggest difference between the stories was the occasional long “o” and the “eh” in the conversations.

The Shoot as it is usually referred to, is the longest running international shooting competition. Shortly after Alaska became a state in 1959, Inspector Joe Vachon, commanding officer of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, wanted to find a way for the Mounties and Troopers to get to know each other better on a personal basis as well as strengthen their working partnership. The Shoot gives them an opportunity to establish and strengthen those long-standing relationships.

The other element to the weekend is not only the relationship between the Troopers and Mounties, but also the inclusion of their families. Spouses and children, including toddlers, and even a few of the Troopers' parents filled the spectator section at the range. A few Department of Public Safety employees and members of the public also watched from a safe distance. Several shooters on both teams have competed over the years giving it a reunion feel as friends and families met up again for the friendly event. Sgt. Tim Schoenberg, who works at Fairbanks Judicial Services, estimates he's compet-

ed 20 times in the Shoot and has a closet full of awards to prove it. He has probably competed more often than anyone else in the history of The Shoot. He was paired with rookie Constable Patrick Poulin, whose wife, Natalie, traveled from Quebec to participate. But fellow Shoot rookie, Archibald, who recently did well at a national RCMP shooting competition, proved to give the Mounties the edge. He won the individual title despite shooting with a metal rod in his wrist and only 20 percent hand strength in his shooting hand from an injury while he was assigned as a rider in the mounted cavalry drill regiment called the RCMP Musical Ride. He also came in a close second to Johnson in the tactical shoot. Archibald's time through the course was faster, but Johnson was more accurate and won due to some penalties assessed against Archibald at the different target stations.

Both teams were a mixture of seasoned veterans and rookies. Troopers from all over the state – whether they wear blue or brown shirts – must qualify for the team every two years while the Mounties in the Yukon Territory qualify every year. Nikki Toll, widow of Alaska



(Left) Royal Canadian Mounted Police Corporal Ryan Hack aims an AR-15 at a target during the tactical course on June 23.

(Right) RCMP Chief Superintendent Peter Clark and DPS Commissioner Joe Masters share a laugh as Clark scores Master's shooting during the target portion of The Shoot on June 23.





(Above) RCMP and Trooper wives, girlfriends and RCMP Sgt. Glenn Ramsay's 11-year-old daughter, Madison, are all suited up and ready for the Significant Other Shoot Off on June 22. For the first time since 2000, the AST wives won the contest.

(Bottom left) DPS Commissioner Joe Masters and Alaska Wildlife Trooper Ernie Brent fire the RCMP 9 mm Smith and Wesson during the RCMP course of fire on June 23.

(Bottom right) RCMP Cst. Stephen "Archie" Archibald takes aim at a target during the practice portion on June 22.

A member of the Alaska State Troopers team draws encouragement on his shooting partner's target after the Mountie was struggling with the AST Glock during the practice portion of The Shoot.

State Trooper Tage Toll, watched the competition on Sunday. Her husband submitted a qualifying target and probably would have made the AST team if he had not died in a helicopter crash while on duty on March 30. She would have been there alongside the women in the SOSO, who took over the range Saturday afternoon. The ladies first shot the service weapon normally used by their husband, boyfriend or for 11-year-old Madison Ramsay, her father, RCMP Sgt. Glenn Ramsay. Then, much to their surprise, the Troopers handed over their AR-15s and guided the women through target shooting with heavier long guns. For most, it was the first time they had shot the semi-automatic rifle. For many, the SOSO is the only time of the year they get to target practice. Their husbands calmly coached them through the steps, showing them how to position their feet, to lean forward, to slowly squeeze the trigger and most importantly, reminding them to breathe. Hood needed no coaching through the handgun portion of the shoot, but listened to her husband's instructions for the AR-15. She routinely wins the SOSO individual title.



RCMP Course of Fire

Stage one - five meters - six rounds strong hand unsupported - magazine change - six rounds weak hand unsupported - 20 seconds.

From the holster fire six rounds strong hand unsupported, tactical magazine change, fire six rounds weak hand unsupported in 20 seconds.

Stage two - seven meters - two rounds - 3 seconds - repeat once.

seven meters - two rounds - magazine change - two rounds - 12 seconds.

seven meters - two rounds - 3 seconds - repeat once.

Stage three - 15 meters - six rounds - 12 seconds.

From the holster fire six rounds in 12 seconds. Strong hand can be supported by weak hand.

Stage four - 25 meters - six rounds kneeling strong hand unsupported - magazine change - six rounds kneeling left hand barricade - magazine change - six rounds right hand barricade - 90 seconds.

From the holster go to the kneeling position fire six rounds strong hand unsupported; the barricade can not be used; tactical magazine change; kneeling left side barricade fire six rounds; tactical magazine change; kneeling right side barricade fire six rounds.

Stage five - 50 meters - six rounds standing strong hand barricade - magazine change - six rounds prone - 60 seconds



But the spouses usually play a bigger role in the annual Shoot. Mariah Johnson, whose husband, Brent, is the lead organizer for each of the years The Shoot takes place in Alaska, was the backbone to her husband's efforts. Many other wives on both sides of the borders lend invaluable assistance to give The Shoot its family-friendly atmosphere and to strengthen that support system for fellow spouses of law enforcement officers regardless of what side of the international border they live on.

Despite the friendly atmosphere, there is still a bit of battle for bragging rights and even a little mischief that accompanies the event. Certain prized items sometimes disappear and reemerge on foreign soil. However, an international crisis has never emerged from this pleasant competition or the accompanying hijinks.

List of Winners

Winning Team - RCMP
High Score for Commissioner Cup - DPS
Commissioner Joe Masters
Tactical Shoot "Top Gun" - AWT
Investigator Brent Johnson
Winning team for SOSO Trophy - AST
Highest Individual Score - RCMP Cst.
Stephen Archibald
Highest Individual SOSO Score - Katherine Hood, AST wife
Highest Score for AST Course of Fire (COF) by AST - Sgt. Chad Goeden
Highest Score for RCMP COF by RCMP - Cst. Stephen Archibald
Highest Score for AST COF by RCMP - Cpl. Ryan Hack
Highest Score for RCMP COF by AST - Sgt. Tim Schoenberg
Highest Aggregate Score by AST - Sgt. Chad Goeden
Highest Aggregate Score by RCMP - Cst. Stephen Archibald

AST Course of Fire

All stages, except those starting from the guard position, will start standing with the weapon holstered and snapped, hand clear of weapon. The first round of every series will be fired double action. (No extra time or alibis will be allowed for malfunctions in semi-automatics – the shooter must clear any malfunction and complete the stage within the allotted time.)

Stage 1- two yards -3 rounds -3 seconds (PERFORM TWICE)

From the guard position, fire two rounds center mass followed by one round to the head.

Stage 2 - seven yards - three rounds - five seconds (PERFORM TWICE)

From the holster, fire two rounds center mass followed by one round to the head. Score and tape target. Head shots outside "A" zone count only one point for stages 1 and 2.

Stage 3 - 25 yards -12 rounds - 45 seconds

From the holster, fire six rounds kneeling, weapon hand, strong side of barricade; reload; then fire six rounds, support hand, support hand side of the barricade. The barricade may be used for support.

Stage 4 - 25 yards -12 rounds- 45 seconds

From the holster, fire six rounds standing; reload; then fire six rounds. The barricade may not be used for support.

Stage 5 -10 yards -12 rounds --35 seconds

Fire six rounds with weapon hand unsupported; reload; fire six rounds with support hand unsupported.

Stage 6 - seven yards - 2 rounds -3 seconds (PERFORM THREE TIMES)

From the holster, fire two rounds center mass.

Stage 7- two yards -2 rounds - 2.5 seconds (PERFORM THREE TIMES)

From the holster, fire two rounds center mass.

