

BONDING OVER BULLETS FOR ANNUAL SHOOT

BY MEGAN PETERS, PIO



Colonel Audie Holloway helps Superintendent Dave Shewchuck tally up his score after a round of shooting.



Superintendent Dave Shewchuck takes careful aim at his target during the first day of the Shoot. Shewchuck reclaimed the Commanders Trophy for the RCMPs.



RCMP Cst. Ian Fraser, right, watches Trp. Steve Lantz shoot his way through the tactical portion of the competition while Capt. Hans Brinke, left, walks up on the competition.

On Monday, June 4, 2007 Troopers met up with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, their rivals and defenders for the 47th International Law Enforcement Pistol Competition.

This year, the two-day event more commonly referred to as “The Shoot,” was held in Fairbanks.

The competition was formed shortly after Alaska became a state in 1959. Inspector Joe Vachon, RCMP commanding officer, wanted to find a way for the Mounties and the Troopers to strengthen their working partnership. A friendly shooting competition was thought to be the perfect way to start a bond. A year later, the first competition was held, starting a lasting tradition between Troopers and RCMPs.

Every year the competition is different.

Day one is the actual competition. Each team makes up a “course” with segments made up with a combination of time, distance, weapon-type, precision and capabilities.

For example, at 15 meters and using the weak hand, draw your weapon, fire 10 shots — six to the body and four to the head — in 15 seconds.

Day two is the tactical shoot. The tactical shoot is more of an obstacle course and is considered the “fun part.”

This year, the tactical shoot started at

the top of a hill with a sniper rifle. The competitors had to take aim at a single balloon surrounded by many “hostage” balloons, all blowing in the wind. They had only one chance to shoot their target. After the shot, the competitors had four minutes to dispose of all the targets set up in the course.

A bit of history plays into part of the competition as well.

During the competition, Troopers and Mounties exchange service weapons as apart of each course.

For 47 years, it has served as a way for Troopers and Mounties to form a lasting bond of friendship and brotherhood.

This relates to a case years ago where the Mounties and Troopers were working together to track down a suspect near Hyder, a border community in Southeastern Alaska with a neighboring

Canadian community just across the international line.

Policy prevented the trooper from using his service weapon in Canada when the trooper crossed the border. The Mounties had to provide him with one of their weapons to use during the apprehension.

The Shoot — though revolving around a pistol competition, really has little to do with “shooting.”

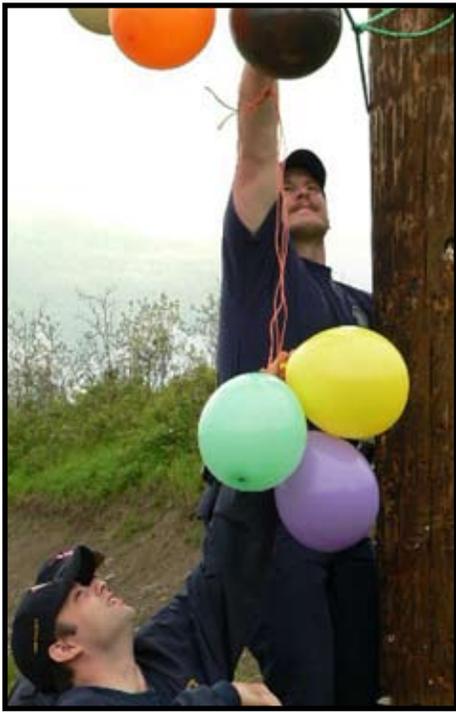
Instead, for 47 years, it has served as a way for Troopers and Mounties to form a lasting bond of friendship and brotherhood.

To drive that point home, upon asking the competitors “who has won the most Shoots,” the only response was a series of shrugged shoulders followed by, “I don’t know.”

This year the RCMPs took home the bragging rights — again.

However, according to the AST team, the victory wasn’t really a victory but rather Troopers allowing the Mounties to “feel good about themselves.”

RCMPs won the competition, the “Top Gun” and the Commander’s trophy. Both, however, took home an instilled sense of camaraderie. The bragging rights will probably never actually be used other than a few quick references to having trophies that took up too much room in the luggage — or



Sgt. Odean Hall gets a hand from his teammate, Trp. Nathan Duce, as he dangles balloon bundles for the tactical shoot. During The Shoot, competitors drew a balloon color and batch number. Shooters were only given one shot with a sniper rifle to "kill" their colored balloon. The wind made this a hard task.

so the Trooper team can hope.

The drive behind The Shoot is truly the competitors and their spouses. They all came together to help set up each course, act as field judges, plan barbeques, gather door prizes and find sponsors. Spouses even came out to watch the teams and offer up support.

This year's Trooper team included **Col. Audie Holloway, Sgt. Odean Hall, Sgt. Tim Schoenberg, Inv. Steve Lantz, Trp. Brent Johnson, Trp. Nathan "Duck of Death" Duce and Trooper Chad Goeden.**

The team's ace is easily singled out as Schoenberg, who brought home three small trophies for his performance on the range.

The RCMP team included Superintendent Dave Shewchuck, Sgt. Randy Fraser, Cpl. Glenn Ramsay, Cpl. Harland Inkster, Cst. Ian Fraser, Cst. Ryan Hack and Cst. Derek Turner. Cst. Ryan Hack was the top shooter for the RCMPs and helped to lead his teammates to victory.

Planning for next year's Shoot is already underway. RCMPs will host the 48th Annual competition in either Dawson City or Whitehorse, Yukon. If you are interested in joining the team and helping Troopers win the trophy or interested in assisting in any way, contact Capt. Hans Brinke at headquarters. ■



RCMP Cpl. Harland Inkster settles into position during the tactical portion of competition.

HOLLOWAY SETS HIS SIGHTS ON NEXT YEAR'S COMPETITION

Dear Disappointed Colleagues,

On June 4-5, representatives of AST/AWT (aka the He-done-ites) engaged in a pitched battle with the evil and warlike Canadians (aka Caananites) on the plains of Fairbanks (aka the beautiful gardens of Babylon). Unfortunately, in many people's eyes (the people who were laughing in the hallways), due to the poor shooting abilities of the chief hedonist, the Canadians prevailed in all categories.

We did, however, receive the good citizenship award, for showing up and politely and respectfully allowing the Canadians to whip up on us in a bad way. Those who were laughing and those team members who tried so hard to win and nearly did, fail to see that the Canadians were merely being lulled in to a false sense of security.

As my mentor, Inspector Clouseau once said, "And now, Cato, I have you right where I want you."



Colonel Audie Holloway takes aim during the tactical portion of The Shoot.

Seriously though, I learned that this competition was very important to both agencies. I think it is a bit of tradition and history that needs to continue, and I think that many more employees need to have the opportunity to participate over the next few years.

Capt. Hans Brinke put a whole lot of work into this competition and deserves a great deal of thanks for setting it up. He and I discussed some ideas to get more people involved. We will compose those ideas and

get them out shortly.

The spouses of the shooting team members also deserve a great deal of thanks for all the effort they put in to making this a successful effort. After seeing some of them shoot, maybe they should take my position next year.

Not only was it an event to improve inter-agency relations, it was a wonderful social occasion. Sometimes you cannot put a price on the importance of spending some time with your fellow employees and friends. And it only gets better when you get to shoot guns and watch airplanes.

I encourage all of you to keep up your shooting skills just for taking care of yourself, your colleagues, your families, and the citizens of this state. And if you are interested, improve those skills and take part in the competition. You won't be sorry, unless I am on your team. And I found out that the plastic toy gun actually shoots pretty well.

- Col. Audie Holloway ■