

## **New Service Pistol Shooter's Guide**

Enclosed in this document you will find information to get you started as a member of the Army Reserve Service Pistol Team. First off, there is a section on expectations for team members as well as performance goals. Then you'll see a number of articles written by some of the top Bullseye Pistol shooters. I encourage you to read these articles and see what you find helpful. Also here is a list of several books and web sites you may find interesting to reference during your Bullseye Pistol shooting career:

*With Winning in Mind* by Lanny Bassham

*Competitive Pistol Shooting* by Dr. Laslo Antal

*Sixguns and Bullseyes and Automatic Pistol Marksmanship* by William Reichenbach

*The Pistol Shooter's Treasury* compiled articles by Gil Hebard

*Three Gun Bullseye Shooting* ed. By Ellen Ross

[www.bullseyepistol.com](http://www.bullseyepistol.com) has many articles on the sport

*Pistol Marksmanship Training Guide* by the Army Marksmanship Unit

You will also find within this document a number of drills that can help you practice and learn. Also, there are several appendices at the end that have helpful things like a printable target center formatted for 8-1/2 x 11" paper, a worksheet to track your scores at practice sessions and local matches, etc.

I hope that you find all of this helpful, and be sure to reach out to some of the more experienced members of the team with your questions.

PATRICK G. SLEEM  
LTC, IN  
USAR SERVICE PISTOL OIC

## **EXPECTATIONS FOR USAR SERVICE PISTOL TEAM MEMBERS:**

All team members are expected to adhere to generally accepted standards of good behavior, both while on orders and at local matches. We expect team members to project positive examples of what the USAR represents. That means we expect team members to be polite, respectful and tolerant of other competitors, match officials and event attendees.

**Physical security:** You are expected to safeguard all team equipment at all times, especially guns and ammunition. Never share ammunition without authorization – it is for your use and not for giving away. Under no circumstances can it ever be shared with or sold to a non team member, especially civilians. Guns must be secured at all times IAW physical security policies (see applicable regulations). When we are traveling, guns must be secured in locked gun boxes when in vehicles, and the box must be chained and locked to a seat frame or another non-removable part of the vehicle. If you have been issued team equipment, you are expected to turn in a monthly signed inventory.

**Performance Standards:** Team members are expected to maintain a certain level of proficiency in the precision pistol discipline. Expectations get higher the longer you have been on the team, but the general expectation right off the bat is that Soldiers who are allowed a spot on the official team (the people on the team memo) should be able to produce a score of at least 225 points on the National Match Course of fire (10 rounds slow, 10 rounds timed, 10 rounds rapid fire) at any time.

**Equipment:** Team members may be provided team equipment (pistols) but are highly encouraged to seek out their own personal equipment. You will be much more successful in this sport if you have your own customized match-grade guns. It also cuts down on property accountability concerns and hassles. Unfortunately, this is not an inexpensive hobby. However, the amount of money a competitor might spend on their guns typically pales in comparison to the amount of money the Army Reserve will spend on you in terms of travel, pay, and ammunition issued. Team members who have been issued team equipment are required to submit a monthly inventory (see current inventory SOP) in order to maintain accountability. The minimum equipment needed to shoot Bullseye pistol is a 22LR caliber semi-automatic pistol, a semi-automatic centerfire pistol (either 9mm or 45 ACP), and a 45 caliber semi-automatic pistol. If desired, the same pistol can be used for both Centerfire and 45 matches, if it is chambered in 45 ACP. Red dots are authorized and encouraged for shooters who are shooting at least an 800 on a particular gun. Team members should work with their mentor to determine what their equipment needs are. An aggregate score in a 2700 match comes from the total of scores shot during three matches – 22, centerfire and 45.

**Participation:** Team members are expected to work on their skills on their own time with the goal of being selected to attend the Interservice pistol match and National Matches. Your goal should be to do well enough in local, state and regional matches that you are invited to shoot Interservice and Nationals. Team members are expected to participate in local or regional/state matches throughout the year in order to develop and maintain their skills. Team members are expected to make themselves available to participate in the Interservice match (June) and National Matches (July). The more matches a Soldier participates in, the better chances that

person has to be considered for a spot on the roster or invited to Interservice and/or Nationals. Everyone is also expected to volunteer for and participate in at least one MTT (Mobile Training Team) mission per year. You really should participate in as many as you can, as these events are often Regional rifle/pistol matches where you can get the chance to shoot in EIC matches and earn points towards your Distinguished Pistol badge, which is a permanent military award.

Team members are expected to recruit new shooters and mentor shooters who are new to the team. This includes but is not limited to talking to them, going to the range with them and helping them with equipment selection and training plan development. We are continually building our future roster through recruiting efforts.

## Standards for being on the team roster

Individuals will be chosen to be on the USAR pistol team roster based on a variety of criteria. From year to year it may be more difficult for an individual to earn a spot on the roster. If an individual is not included on the official roster on any given year, they remain eligible to be placed on the roster in future years if their scores or other metrics improve. This roster shows some of the criteria that team leadership uses to determine who to carry on the Service Pistol roster:

	Marginal	Good Prospect	Preferred
EIC NMC Score	212 +	225 +	250 +
NMC Red Dot Score	230 +	243 +	270 +
2700 Score	2300 +	2500 +	2600 +
Number of Recruits being mentored	0	1	2 +
Participation	Any	Interservice or Nationals	Interservice and Nationals, local or regional matches
Equipment	Team Only	Mix of team guns and personal	Personal owned equipment

Minimum cutoff score for earning a spot on the team roster will vary from year to year but everyone on the roster will be expected to be able to produce the minimum National Match score (usually around 225) on demand using iron sights (see matrix). Team members are expected to shoot a National Match Course of fire once per month and submit scores for review. This requirement can also be satisfied by submitting local/regional match scores. (see below)

Team members are expected to develop and maintain a certain level of proficiency in the precision pistol discipline. There is a certain amount of extra time that team members need to be prepared to devote to practice in order to be prepared to compete at a high level when called to attend events in Annual Training (AT) status. Prior to coming to an AT event (i.e. Interservice, Nationals, Regional matches), each team member should have spent a number of hours in practice working on their skills. The amount of time necessary will vary from one individual to another, but most people will need to practice at least weekly in order to develop or maintain skills.

Monthly Score reporting: In order to help select team members to attend competitive shooting events, all team members are expected to send scores to the team NCOIC on a monthly basis. Shooters who shot a 2550 or higher at a competitive event within the last 6 months are exempt from this requirement but are still encouraged to send in scores if they have time. Scores should be submitted via email or text message in one of the following formats:

(local practice format – scores shot on your own at 25 yards, self-scored)

Name: SFC John Doe

Date: 11 March 2018

Location: Trigger Time Range, Atlanta GA

Slow: 85

Timed: 93

Rapid: 92

Total NMC score: 270

(Match format – scores from a local 900 or 2700 match)

Name: SFC John Doe

Date: 11 March 2018

Location: South River Gun Club, Atlanta GA

22: 870-14x

CF: 840-12x

.45: 835-13x

Total: 2545-39x

As with any sport, serious thought needs to be given as to what your goals in the sport are. Some are happy just to show up and enjoy the company of fellow shooters. Others may progress to a certain level of proficiency and are comfortable remaining at that level. Others still may want to excel and compete at the highest level of achievement in the sport. If any shooter intends to improve, they must first set goals. The first thing you need to do is to set goals for yourself and identify milestones towards achieving those goals. Your goal should follow the S.M.A.R.T. goal setting method. S = Specific (Like: I want a higher score using iron sights in the National Match Course) M = Measurable (So you can tell if goal has been reached – i.e. I want a 270 or better) A = Attainable (If you set the goal too high, your only result will be that you'll be demoralized) R = Realistic (for example, you can't lose 10 pounds in a week, just like you can't add 10 points to your average in a month) T = Time based (i.e. I want to achieve my goal in 9 months, by the 1<sup>st</sup> of April). From there once you have defined your goal, you need to plan activities that will help you towards achieving that goal. Your goals should be reviewed periodically and progress recorded. You need milestones in between you and your goal that so you can identify progress. For example, the goal of breaking 270 could have a milestone of 'I shot a 90 slowfire' or 'All shots in black in timed fire' or 'I have added 5 points to my National Match Course average score.'

Example:

**Goal:** I want to shoot a 280 in a match with my service pistol using iron sights during the National Match EIC course of fire. This goal is achievable because I currently shoot 270+ consistently. I want to achieve this goal within the next 12 months, by next September.

**Activities:** Practice weekly by shooting a National Match Course of fire at the local range. Dry fire practice at home twice a week for 20 minutes. Shoot in an actual EIC match at least once every 90 days.

**Milestones:**

- Shooting a in 95 slow fire
- Shooting all shots in the black during Rapid Fire
- Cleaning Timed Fire with a score of 100
- Shooting 275+ in the NMC twice in a row

Remember – the difference between a dream and a goal is when you write it down. Our dreams rarely come true, but we can achieve our goals if we put our minds to it.

**Helpful Articles follow on the next pages. Remember that these articles are based on personal experience and personal opinions. Your experience and the experience of others may be different. Be sure to ask more experienced members of the team what they think about some of these articles – you may learn a lot from hearing their thoughts.**

## How to shoot better bullseye scores. (Immediately)

- 1\*\* Accept your present wobble area rather than trying to reduce it.
- 2\*\* Standardize your thought process during raising the arm and shooting.
- 3\*\* Apply steady pressure straight back on the trigger while not altering your firm grip on the pistol.
- 4\*\* Keep this pressure mounting until you feel the trigger go up against its over travel stop. Then release.
- 5\*\* Immediately start mounting pressure straight back on the trigger again even though the gun is at peak recoil.
- 6\*\* Continue applying trigger pressure steadily while recovering from recoil at a rate that will cause the shot to leave the barrel sometime while sights or dot are in your aiming, wobble, area.
- 7\*\* Repeat the process when the trigger stops in its over travel and the gun recoils.

Dave Salyer 2/26/2012

### Back-up Comments on each step.

1\*\*

Your hold ability or wobble area will be a certain size on a given minute, hour or match day. Accept it. You can improve on it in a training session of dry firing or holding/gripping exercise on another day. No need to try and hold tighter than what's comfortable on match day. Struggling will cause trigger errors. Shots that go outside your comfortable wobble area are the result of trigger errors! Again, accept your comfortable hold and smoothly apply ever increasing trigger pressure straight to the rear. The shots will land within your hold area and cluster to the middle.

2\*\*

Talk to yourself! Preach the same sermon before each shot in slow fire and before each string in sustained. This will trigger your conscious and subconscious mind to concentrate on the exact same things for each shot. Some top shooters go through the commands from, "Is the line ready?" to "Ready on the firing line.", before each shot or string.

3\*\* and 4\*\*

Notice that this instruction does not mention shoot or shot. This is an important point! You do not want to know or decide exactly when to shoot. Your job is to pressure the trigger straight back until the trigger stops. The shot will happen somewhere between starting the trigger pressure and when the gun recoils. Your job is just to actuate the trigger somewhere within the window of time that the sights have entered anywhere into the wobble area. Follow through will be achieved.

5\*\*

As soon as the gun recoils restart the above process of applying pressure to the trigger and moving the sights or dot into the aiming area. This is recovery, not follow through

In slow fire, stop the recovery process there.

In sustained fire keep applying pressure to the trigger until it is stopped against the frame. Some call this keeping the trigger moving. If this is done without hesitation there will be plenty of time to squeeze off five shots in rapid fire without being rushed.

6\*\*

We often worry about time especially in rapid fire. We often take too much time trying to refine our aim in slow as well as timed. The hesitation associated with this causes trigger errors and bad shots. Each time the trigger pressure is stopped and restarted, the gun's angle changes away from the center of the target. Emphasize smooth unhesitating trigger pull rather than consciously emphasizing aiming. Your subconscious will help you do the pointing.

### Hand to eye coordination

We hear a lot about this being good for athletes. It doesn't work too well with shooters because we must do it backwards. We must take what we see and do hand and finger coordination to cause a shot to leave the barrel at the right time and direction. This is not so precise because what we think we are seeing is not real time but is actually recent history. Plus, it takes a finite amount of time for what's happening to reach the eye, move to the brain for processing and send a message to the trigger finger to pull the trigger. By the time the shot fires the sights have moved around somewhere else in the aiming area. (Hopefully)

So, again, we must start and continue trigger movement before we see a perfect sight picture.

We can achieve almost perfect sight alignment with our eye by choosing the same grip on the pistol for each string. Then sight picture can be the less precise but adequate to keep our shot(s) inside our aiming area. Nature and statistics will make most hits cluster in the middle of our area.

Dave Salyer 2/26/2012

# ***TOP PISTOL SHOOTERS' BEST KEPT SECRET***

BY DAVID C. SALYER

DRY FIRING IS MORE BORING THAN WATCHING GRASS GROW. MOST EXPERT SHOOTERS DO IT SOMETIMES AND MOST SAY IT IS GOOD FOR SCORES.

HOWEVER, ALMOST **NOBODY** DOES IT ENOUGH TO GAIN ALL OF THE POTENTIAL BENEFITS IT OFFERS.

SOMEONE SAID RECENTLY THAT, "**WHAT A TRUE CHAMPION DOES AND WORKS ON IN PRIVATE IS WHAT SETS HIM OR HER APART FROM THE OTHER COMPETITORS**".

**COULD THIS PRIVATE ACTIVITY FOR PISTOL SHOOTERS BE DRY FIRING?**

MAYBE SO... MOST OF US CANNOT AFFORD THE AMMUNITION TO SHOOT ENOUGH TO REACH OUR POTENTIAL. QUICK ACCESS TO A RANGE AND THE SETTING ASIDE OF TIME FOR THE RANGE AND TRAVEL CAN ALSO BE A PROBLEM FOR MANY OF US.

FAMOUS ATHLETIC COACHES ARE KEENLY AWARE THAT PROPER TRAINING IS ESSENTIAL TO DEVELOP CHAMPIONS. AN IMPORTANT PART OF PROPER TRAINING IS DOING **ENOUGH** OF IT. DOING ENOUGH CAN ENSURE THAT ACTUAL COMPETITION SEEMS EASY COMPARED TO THE TRAINING.

MAYBE THAT FRIEND YOU PRACTICE WITH AND TRAVEL TO MATCHES WITH, WHO IMPROVES FASTER THAN YOU MOST OF THE TIME, IS "SNEAKING" AND

DRY FIRING AT A SPOT ON HIS SITTING ROOM WALL WHEN HE HAS A FEW MINUTES OF FREE TIME??

DRY FIRING CAN DO THE FOLLOWING TO IMPROVE SHOOTING ABILITIES:

- \* TEACHES THE CONSCIOUS AND SUBCONSCIOUS MIND WHAT THE PROPER SIGHT PICTURE SHOULD LOOK LIKE.
  
- \* ALLOWS ONE TO LEARN TO APPLY A POSITIVE AND STEADILY INCREASING PRESSURE TO THE TRIGGER WHILE MAINTAINING CORRECT SIGHT ALIGNMENT AND SIGHT PICTURE.
  
- \* ALLOWS ONE TO SEE UNWANTED MOVEMENT AS THE HAMMER FALLS. THIS SUDDEN MOVEMENT IS THE SINGLE MOST PREVALENT ERROR CAUSING BAD SHOTS FOR NOVICE AND MASTER ALIKE.
  
- \* IT CAN TEACH PATIENCE AND DILIGENCE REQUIRED TO MAKE GOOD SHOTS.
  
- \* BUILDS UP THE MUSCLES THAT ARE MOST PRONE TO FATIGUE DURING A STRING OF FIRE OR MATCH.
  
- \* TONES UP MUSCLES AND TRAINS NERVES TO ALLOW ONE'S ARC OF MOVEMENT AND TREMBLES TO BE REDUCED. TO PROVE THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS, JUST TRY TO MAINTAIN GOOD SIGHT ALIGNMENT AND SIGHT PICTURE WITH THE PISTOL IN YOUR WEAKER HAND.
  
- \* ALLOWS ONE TO LEARN TO GRIP THE PISTOL PROPERLY TO PREVENT

LATERAL OR OTHER MOVEMENT AS THE SEAR SEPARATES FROM THE HAMMER NOTCH.

\* WHEN PRACTICED HUNDREDS OF HOURS OVER A SEVERAL WEEK PERIOD, DRY FIRING WILL TRAIN ONE TO NOTICE THE SLIGHTEST ERRORS IN GRIPPING THE PISTOL. (IT JUST WON'T FEEL RIGHT UNTIL IT IS PERFECT.) THE GRIP CAN BE A PERSONAL PREFERENCE IF IT MEETS THE GENERAL REQUIREMENTS, BUT IT MUST BE CONSISTENT SHOT TO SHOT AND STRING TO STRING FOR TOP PERFORMANCE.

\* IT CAN RAISE YOUR CONFIDENCE LEVEL AND IMPROVE YOUR WINNING ATTITUDE.

\* ONE'S SCORES, ESPECIALLY IN THE SLOW FIRE STAGES, WILL GO UPWARD. ALL HIGH MASTERS THAT I KNOW SHOOT HIGHER SLOW FIRE SCORES THAN THE REST OF US.

THE AUTHOR CAME TO THESE CONCLUSIONS RECENTLY AFTER AN 18 YEAR PERIOD OF COMPETITIVE SHOOTING AND DRY FIRING.

DURING THE LAST YEAR AND A HALF THE WRITER HAS DONE **MUCH** MORE DRY FIRING AND ALMOST NO SHOOTING! DRY FIRING IS NOT QUITE SO BORING

IF YOU LIVE IN A SOCIETY WHERE PRIVATE OWNERSHIP OF AMMUNITION, MUCH LESS GUNS, CAN GET YOU THE DEATH PENALTY!

THE WRITER IS AN AMERICAN EXPATRIATE WHO WILL COMPLETE A TWO TO THREE YEAR ASSIGNMENT IN MAINLAND CHINA IN 1996.

YOU MIGHT ASK, "HOW CAN YOU DRY FIRE WITHOUT A GUN?"

IT WASN'T EASY, BUT IT CAN BE DONE... MY WIFE BOUGHT ME A COUNTERFEIT (TOY).45 "GOLD CUP" WHILE WE WERE ON VACATION IN HONG KONG. IT IS MOSTLY PLASTIC BUT HAS ENOUGH STEEL AND LEAD ALLOY PARTS TO MAKE IT ABOUT THE SAME WEIGHT AS THE COLT GOLD CUP. THE TRIGGER AND HAMMER ACTION FELT ABOUT LIKE AN OFF-THE-SHELF "GOVERNMENT" MODEL. I LIGHTENED THE PULL TO 3.5 LBS. BUT MADE NO ATTEMPT TO MAKE THE ACTION SMOOTH. WHEN I VISITED CAMP PERRY LAST JULY I BOUGHT AN AIMPOINT 3000 ELECTRONIC DOT SIGHT FOR IT. MY FRIEND DAVE CRUMP OF ROCK HILL S.C. MADE A MOUNT TO FIT THE "PISTOL". (MR. CRUMP SPECIALIZES IN MAKING .22 CALIBER MATCH BARRELS FROM HART PRECISION BLANKS TO FIT MOST TARGET PISTOLS.) DRY FIRING WITH THE AIMPOINT WAS A BIG IMPROVEMENT OVER OPEN SIGHTS FOR THE WRITER DUE TO THE AGE OF HIS EYES AND THE LOW WATTAGE RESTRICTIONS ON HOME LIGHTING "ENCOURAGED" BY THE CHINESE GOVERNMENT.

EXTENSIVE DRY FIRING HAS BEEN PRODUCTIVE FOR THE WRITER. HE CAN HOLD HIS ARM OUT AND SNAP THE "PISTOL" FOR UP TO 3 HOURS AT A TIME WITH LITTLE FATIGUE. THE AIMPOINT ALLOWS HIM TO VERIFY THAT HIS ARC OF MOVEMENT HAS REDUCED SIGNIFICANTLY, AND UNWANTED MOVEMENT AS THE HAMMER FALLS IS GREATLY REDUCED.

IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN IF THE INCREASED CONTROL CARRIES OVER

TO CAMP PERRY IN JULY. CONFIDENCE IS HIGH IN APRIL!

4/25/95

An Explanation of Area Aiming  
Dave Salyer  
www.bullseyepistol.com

Question: I am a relatively new pistol shooter who reads everything I can on the art of pistol competition. Please explain the term "area aiming" in ordinary, everyday terms to help me get a better grasp of its meaning.

Answer: Area aiming is a term used by better pistol shots to describe an important part of the process of firing a well-aimed shot, with confidence that it will end up in or near the center of the bullseye. Aiming area can be described as the area projected on the target by the front sight or scope dot as viewed by the shooter. For example, you point an electronic red dot sight at a target down range and make a mental note of the extreme movements of the dot. Maybe it is moving back and forth and up and down inside an approximate circle the size of the 7-ring. The area of this observed imaginary circle would be your personal aiming area capability on this day.

The 10-ring is so small it is nearly impossible for any shooter to hold his front sight, or red dot inside an area the size of that circle for an entire competitive event. So, the shooter has two choices. He/she can try to fire the pistol as the sight moves into the 10-ring, or place the center of his personal aiming area over the 10-ring and carefully apply pressure to the trigger until the shot leaves the pistol.

Area aiming is the more logical choice for just about all pistol shooters, but this requires some explanation. It is sad that so much has been written about the six-o'clock hold, which defines an infinitely small spot. Sounds great but is not practical for off-hand shooting. The reason is that no mortal can hold the pistol absolutely still, or consistently "grab" a shot when the sight is momentarily on the exact desired spot.

The good news is that it is not at all necessary to hold the pistol still, even though it is desired. Area aiming means that you just hold the pistol within an arc of movement that is COMFORTABLE and EASY for you! Of course, you want to center your personal aiming AREA about the target center.

Shouldn't I always be trying to reduce my aiming area while in competition?

NO! Absolutely not during competition! This will cause anxiety and distracts from proper trigger movement resulting in those awful shots that land outside your personal, comfortable aiming area. This is when and where most points are dropped.

Remember this. Nobody can consistently shoot a group smaller than his personal minimum arc (or area) of movement. Even the handful of people who can hold ten-ring and follow through at 50 yards will shoot a few nines due to minor trigger control errors and bullet dispersion. These few shooters are the 2670 shooters, because they can control the hammer drop while keeping the front sight in their comfortable area of hold. They don't disturb pistol sight alignment or target picture as they actuate the trigger/hammer mechanism.

The saving grace for the rest of us is that the bullets tend to cluster about the center of our personal aiming area. Nature invented statistical distribution to do just that. For example, If a golfer is within reach of a hole and swings comfortably, the ball is more likely to go into the cup than any other single, random point you can pick. In bullseye shooting, with a zeroed pistol the bullet is more likely to go into the x-ring than any other random spot you can pick.

So, hold the dot within your personal comfortable area centered about the x-ring. Press the trigger smoothly toward the web of your hand until the bullet has safely hit the target. Then return the dot or front sight to that aiming area immediately. This will help ensure a habit of following through. Let nature do the hard work for you.

Can you explain why the shots will tend to cluster in the middle of my aiming area?

The front sight or dot will move randomly in your aiming area. As it approaches the outer edge of your "circle", your mind will immediately tend to send it back across the middle toward the other extreme. Kind of like a star pattern of movement. As it crosses the middle of the target, your subconscious (or conscious mind) will not be trying to correct anything. Thus the dot or sight will spend more time in the middle than at the extreme edges of your aiming area. The shot is more likely to break during this time, than at the edge of your area. You must not decide to help the shot fire at this time as you are very likely to change the angle of the pistol, slightly. This is my definition of "grabbing" for a 10 and getting a 6.

When should I try to reduce my aiming area?

This must all be done in training rather than in competition! This is important! Do most of this after you have improved trigger control by dry-firing and exercising your arm, wrist and hand with a 5 pound weight. Dry-firing, while standing at the 50 yard line, is the best way to do this. You can measure (observe) your improvement by watching the front sight or red dot move around in this area.

Shooting does less to improve your hold, compared to dry-firing where you can see what is happening. Fortunately, dry-firing costs less! Unfortunately, It is so boring that few heed this advice religiously. If you want to be a champion, follow this advice! I honestly believe that the basic secrets are in this spiel.

I hope this inspires you to become a champion!

## Another version of Shooting Fundamentals: **B.R.A.S.S**

1. **Breathe**

Your breathing should be steady, and each time you fire the gun, try to be at the same point in your breathing cycle, whatever is most comfortable for you. For example, some people feel comfortable letting the trigger “break” when they are [briefly] holding their breath after taking a deep breath and exhaling 1/3 of the air out of their lungs.

2. **Relax**

You must relax by doing some deep breathing before you shoot, and by thinking positive thoughts. Relax your body and take a comfortable stance relative to the target, holding your gun the same exact way each time and touching the same part of your finger to the trigger. Grip the pistol firmly, as you might shake someone’s hand, but not too hard.

3. **Aim**

Remember to **focus on the front sight post**, not so much on the rear sight post or the target. Focus intently on the front sight post, and you will shoot more accurately.

4. **Squeeze**

Squeeze the trigger (do not pull it or jerk it) straight back towards your body. This should be a smooth, constant motion. Once you have your sights lined up with the target, start squeezing the trigger firmly until it “breaks” and the shot goes off.

5. **Surprise**

You should be surprised when the shot goes off, as you are focused on the front sight post and not on the target, the rear sight post, or on the trigger. Remember, the law of averages says that if your sights are lined up correctly on the target, you will hit it most of the time. So, your main goal is to let the weapon remain aimed at the target while the trigger squeeze is happening.

Now, let's talk about sight picture.

A perfect sight picture. Notice, only the front sight is in clear focus.

If the sights are aligned and pointed at the target, you will hit it. With a pistol, a small error in sight alignment means you will not hit your target, so pay attention to the **FRONT SIGHT**.

Here are some examples of sight pictures that need improvement:

## The Wheel of Misfortune

Every day of the shooter's life brings a new lesson. Identifying errors are crucial in order that these lessons be learned. The following chart can help pinpoint such basic flaws in a shooter's technique by analyzing group locations. As printed, it is for a right-handed shooter. (A left-hander's chart would be mirrored horizontally.)

### Top Ten Bad Habits of Shooters

1. Not Looking at the Sights. This quite frequently is listed as "looking at the target." A shooter may be focusing his eye on neither the sights nor the target, but since he does not see the target in clear focus he assumes he is looking at the sights. You must concentrate on **THE FRONT SIGHT POST**.
2. Holding Too Long. Any adverse conditions that interrupt a shooter's ability to "hold" will cause him to delay his squeeze, waiting for conditions to better. As soon as you are on target, begin your trigger squeeze process. If you try and "wait" until the sights are in the exact center of the target, you will be doing something counter-productive. By the time your brain receives a signal from your eye, processes the fact that the sights are perfectly aligned, and sends a signal to your finger to squeeze the trigger, it is very unlikely that your sights will still be aligned in the dead center of the target. "Trust your wobble" and focus on smooth trigger squeeze and try to disturb the sights as little as possible while you do it.
3. Inconsistent Grip or Position. Your grip has a dramatic effect on the consistency of the position of your trigger finger. Suffice to say that you cannot fire a decent score with any gun at any range if you continually change your grip or position.
4. Finger not placed correctly on the trigger. You must apply pressure to the trigger straight to the rear and wait for the shot to break. Be certain that the gun is centered in your grip, with your finger resting comfortably on the trigger. If your grip causes your trigger finger to be placed too "deep" into the trigger well or not deep enough (too "shallow"), this can cause you to put more pressure on one side of the trigger than the other, causing deflection of the barrel off to the opposite side and causing a miss.
5. Jerk or Heel. The application of pressure either with the trigger finger alone or in case of the heel, pushing with the heel of the hand at the same time.
6. Anticipation. Anticipation can cause muscular reflexes of an instant nature that so closely coincide with recoil that extreme difficulty is experienced in making an accurate call. "Flinching" before the shot is one symptom of anticipation. In order to eliminate anticipation, you must SMOOTHLY make the trigger "roll" straight to the rear, and make the trigger "surprise" you to a

certain degree when the gun goes off. It shouldn't be a total surprise (you loaded the gun, you pointed it at something, you squeezed the trigger), but you must be increasing trigger pressure smoothly (read: slowly) enough that the EXACT MOMENT the gun goes off is not easily predictable to you.

7. Loss of Concentration. Remember that concentration is important. If you are feeling flustered, nervous or overwhelmed, unload the gun and put it down. Rest, get your head together and try again in a few minutes.

8. Anxiety. You work and work on a shot, meanwhile building up in your mind doubt about the shot being good. Finally you shoot just to get rid of that particular round so you may work on the others. Be patient, and RELAX. Just "let it happen," don't try and force it to happen.

9. Laziness. This is a mental fault more than a physical one, which results in your accepting minor imperfections in your performance which you could correct if you worked a little harder. The end result being you hope you get a good shot. Just like you hope you will get an extra tax refund, and you will get one just about as frequently as you get the other.

10. Lack of Follow Through. Follow through is the subconscious attempt to keep everything just as it was at the time the shot broke. In other words you are continuing to fire the shot even after it is gone. Follow through is not to be confused with recovery. Merely recovering and holding on the target after the shot is no indication that you are following through. Think of this as what a pitcher does each time he throws the ball – he always ends up in the same consistent position after the pitch, which helps with his consistency in placing the ball inside the "strike zone." Basketball free-throw shooters, who depend on a high percentage of well-aimed shots, also place a large emphasis on follow-through; you can see them hold their hands in a "follow-through" position for several seconds after they release the ball.

**This section contains a variety of drills that you can use when practicing. Most of the best drills are all about self-discovery and finding things out.**

At home exercise: Weight training

Purpose: Build up arm strength for match endurance and Improve fine muscle control

Task description: With a small dumbbell (3-5lbs), lift with shooting hand to your standard aiming position. Make small elongated vertical figure-8 for 20 seconds. Rest. Repeat but make a small elongated horizontal figure 8. Repeat above description 20 times or until arm is tired.

At home exercise: Dry fire drill (any caliber) Purpose: Train hand and arm muscles to pull the trigger.

Hammer should fall without disrupting sight alignment

Task description: In a safe area, make sure gun is not loaded and insert a dry fire plug/snap cap in chamber of pistol. Align stance to point at blank wall. Visualize perfect sight picture and trigger squeeze through hammer drop. Raise pistol and aim at wall. Maintain sight picture and squeeze trigger without disrupting the sight alignment just like you visualized. Repeat above description 20 times per session, twice a week minimum

At the Range Drills:

1) The Classic Blank Target Drill. This drill is all about trigger control. Place a full sized target backwards in the frame at fifty yards (or 25 if that's as far as your local range goes). You shouldn't be able to see anything on its face; no bullseye or scoring rings. Then shoot 10 slow fire shots on it for a minimum group. Simply shoot at the center of the target. What the shooter needs to do is pretend they're dry firing, but the gun's LOADED. Every attempt should be made to make each and every release well executed.

This drill forces you to know what your actual spread is during slow fire. Over the course of several weeks, you'll slowly start to see an improvement in group size. Don't look through the scope during this drill, put it away. And if for some reason you can see a pattern while shooting, never start chasing holes. You want to walk up to the target to see your results.

Compare with a repair center ... 93-2X?

A shooter who can't manage their group size will never do well during slow fire. As well, it forces the shooter not to chase their shots or use Kentucky-windage. It reinforces the process of good trigger control regardless what's seen within the sight picture.

By the way, this drill is so dull and boring its mind numbing. But, it works.

2) The One Shot Drill. As mentioned above one shot drills work handily for anyone not getting their first shot off timely and accurately.

At the 25 yard line, simply set the target timer for a 2 seconds face. Your mission is to release one round into the 10-ring. It should be done leisurely but without hesitation. Be emotionally prepared on the firing line but don't force anything.

Sounds simple enough, right? Just keep doing it until you can shoot 10 consecutive shots, one shot at a time, into the 10-ring. And if you can't, just keep at it until you can.

Expect to fail. But once you mastered this drill not only will your sustained fire scores increase, so will your confidence while on the short line.

3) **Shooting Thru the Donut Hole.** Regardless whether you're using a .22 or .45 this drill enhances your ability to quickly get up to speed on the short line.

Cut out the 10-ring from several sustained fire repair centers. Then place one on the backer at 25 yards with a corresponding hole. Yes, daylight should be seen through the target. Then go about and shoot some timed and rapid fire. Aim into the open area in either timed or rapid fire fashion.

Your goal is to try and avoid hitting the 9-ring.

Most novice shooters are quickly surprised to find out the vast majority of their shots fly right through that big gaping hole. And it does look like a big hole by simply viewing it from the firing line.

Many shooters using this drill discover their skill levels are much better than currently perceived. And it's a confidence builder that easily translates to future matches.

Will there be an occasional failure? Sure. But the shooter's attention should be placed on how well they performed with most shots. Shooters who use this drill sometimes get a unique epiphany. [I won't ruin it for ya. You've got to find out for yourself.]

4). **Last shot no Pew.** In your magazine when shooting timed and rapid fire drills, load one dummy snap cap round and four live rounds on top of that. When you get to your 5<sup>th</sup> shot, you'll be able to clearly see if the sights are moving or whether you are moving the gun as the hammer falls. This is a great self-discovery exercise.

5). **10 10's Rapid Fire.** Goal of this drill is to build confidence on being able to deliver 10's during Rapid Fire. Shoot 10-second strings of 5 rounds each, checking the target after 10 rounds. Fire additional 5-round strings until you have 10 10's on target. Repeat drill until you can get 10 10's in a row with just 2 strings of 5. The goal is to be able to get 10 10's in a row. Even if you don't make the goal your scores will improve. This drill can also be used for Timed Fire improvement.

6). **National Match Course.** This is a simple drill but can be used to track your improvement and see where you are in your development. During your practice session, shoot 10 shots slow fire, followed by 10 timed fire and 10 rapid fire. Remember that the timed and rapid fire should be 2 strings of 5 shots each. Do the slow fire even if you're at a range that only goes to 25 yards. Just use the timed & rapid fire repair center. Once you get bored with doing this drill, try some variations. In one variation, you can keep score just by counting the 10's, and compare your 10-count to last session's count. In another

variation, you can go backwards and shoot rapid fire, timed fire, then slow fire last. See if your score changes when you do it that way. Your goal as a new shooter should be to get your National Match course of fire (30 rounds) up to above 260 with iron sights. A shooter who has got the fundamentals down should be in the 270's. An experienced shooter should be breaking 280 regularly. And a master of the sport will occasionally be in the 290's with iron sights.

7.) **Rapid fire one shot drills.** Purpose: Establish mental program and develop a routine involving the line commands and delivery the first shot. Task description: Fire at a 25 yard target center. Shoot one shot at a time. In your head, go through the starting sequence for timed or rapid fire – i.e. “is the line ready...” (use a phone app to hear the commands if possible) and fire one shot. Observe group after 10 rounds. Fire additional drills until 10 hits have accumulated in the black. Your goal should be 10 consecutive rounds with all shots in the black.

8.) **Rapid fire two shot drills.** Purpose: Establish mental program and develop a routine involving the line commands and delivery of the first two shots. Task description: Fire at a 25 yard target center. Shoot two shots at a time. In your head, go through the starting sequence for timed or rapid fire – i.e. “is the line ready...” (use a phone app to hear the commands if possible) and fire the first shot, then recover and fire a second shot. Observe your group after 10 rounds. Fire additional drills until 10 hits have accumulated in the black. Your goal should be two consecutive 10-rd targets with all shots in the black.

9.) **Reduced Size target training.** Purpose: To reduce group size and confidence when firing on normal sized targets. Task description: At 25 yards, use a smaller than normal target (pretty much anything you pick up at the local range will work). Fire on the smaller target for both slow timed, and rapid fire. Count the number of hits in the black only. Fire a National Match course (SF, TF, RF). Replace with standard sized 25-yard repair center and fire 3 sets again (SF, TF, RF). Compare number of hits in the black (i.e. 25 out of 30) on the small target to the number of hits in the black on the normal sized target.

10.) **Mental rehearsal:** Once equipment is arranged on bench, at shooting point:

1. Visualize perfect performance of upcoming stage. Check Natural Point of Aim
2. "load" Start your breathing cycle with holding deep breaths for 3 to 5 seconds to calm you down
3. "is the line ready?" Remind yourself in your head what you need to do (i.e. “Rapid Fire”)
4. "the line is ready" Slow and steady breathing to calm yourself and oxygenate your blood
5. "ready on the right" raise gun, image of perfect Sights, continue breathing cycle
6. "ready on the left" let gun/body settle, imagine a picture in your mind of a perfect shot group.
7. "ready on the firing line" start trigger pressure, focus on the dot/sights, relax
8. Target turns, let first shot break, recover, find the dot/sights and continue the string of fire.

## List of Drills from the AMU:

### SHOOTING DRILLS

- **D-1 CISM, SP, IP      Holding Drill – Horizontal line:** This exercise can be done on or off the range. During this drill you put up a note card with a line or use duct tape on a target at 10,25, or 50 meters. When using a note card in a safe environment insure the line is at the same height, as it would be on the range using a regular target. Bring the pistol up and hold the sights on the line making every effort in preventing the sights from moving up and down. The duration of hold is dependent on the physical ability of the shooter. Start with short periods of time and increase the time as ability increases. Do 5 to 10 repetitions (one set) of this exercise and take a 15-minute break between sets.
- **D-2 CISM, SP, IP      Holding exercise:** Get into firing position and hold on target trying to have as little movement as possible for the entire holding time frame. Holding times depend on the physical condition of the competitor. Start with 30 seconds and move up to 1 minute. Try to think of slowing your arc of movement down as much as possible. You will have to breathe but this is working on the endurance of the arm. This exercise is mainly used during the off season or early in the shooting season to assist in conditioning.
- **D-3 CISM, SP, IP      Holding exercise with shot:** This exercise can be done at 10,25 or 50 meters. Get into firing position and hold on target trying to have as little movement as possible for the designated time then fire a shot at the end of the time frame accurately. Holding times start short and build up with ability. 10,15,20,25, and 30 seconds.
- **D-4 CISM, SP, IP      Holding Drill – Vertical line:** This exercise can be done on or off the range. During this drill you put up a note card with a line or use duct tape on a target at 10,25 or 50 meters. When using a note card in a safe environment insure the line is at the same height, as it would be on the range using a regular target. Bring the weapon up and hold the sights on the line making every effort in preventing the sights from moving left and right. The duration of hold is dependent on the physical ability of the shooter. Start with short periods of time and increase the time as ability increases. Do 5 to 10 repetitions (one set) of this exercise and take a 15-minute break between sets.
- **D-5 CISM, SP, IP      Holding Drill –Plus sign:** This exercise can be done on or off the range. During this drill you put up a note card with a plus sign or use duct tape on a target at 10, 25 or 50 meters. When using a note card in a safe environment insure the plus sign is at the same height, as it would be on the range using a regular target. Bring the weapon up and hold the sights on the center of the plus sign making every effort in preventing the sights from moving up, down, left and right. The size of the movement represents the arc of movement you can expect to see during training and competition. The duration of hold is dependent on the physical ability of the shooter. Start with short periods of time and increase the time as ability increases. Do 5 to 10 repetitions (one set) of this exercise and take a 15-minute break between sets.

- **D-6 CISM, SP, IP Double and Triple shot Drill:** During this drill you will fire either two or three shots at every attempt to fire. Prior the shooting make sure you have made the commitment on the number of shots to be fired. This drill helps in developing confidence in applying uninterrupted trigger control during slow fire. Timing per shot is similar to that of Timed Fire. This technique can be used during periods of windy conditions in a lull.
- **D-7 CISM, SP, IP Out of Position Drill:** This drill is to give the shooter confidence that even though having natural point of aim is important you can shoot good shots from any position. This drill is conducted at 25 or 50 meters. Fire the shots from different positions starting from your normal position and making a slight adjustment left or right until it begins to feel out of position. During this exercise you should feel uncomfortable from your normal position and that is to be expected. You should still be able to deliver well-aimed shots in the center of the target.
- **D-8 CISM, SP, IP Group shooting:** The shooter sets up a target at 10,25 and 50 meters. The idea behind this drill is to use all capability in shooting every shot accurately. Shoot the slow fire string of 10 shots with out looking through a scope between shots. Pay attention to what is happening at the muzzle of the gun and back. Concentrate on the technique for each shot. See the sights lift from the target. After each group the competitor may scope or go down range to look at the shot group. The main purpose is to shoot each shot with out concern for each result.
- **D-9 CISM, SP, IP Dot Drill:** Paint a round black dot on the back of a full face target or piece of paper the same size or similar in size to a 50 meter repair center (nine inch in diameter). Using the dot as the aiming area, fire slow fire shot groups on the dot without the distraction of keeping score after each shot.
- **D-10 R, ALL Shooting into the back stop:** In this exercise the idea is to allow unhindered performance. All aspects of shot performance are applied.
- **D-11 CISM, SP, IP Shooting through a hole in target:** Cut out the center of a target to the 1 ring. Work on shot performance shooting through the hole in target. Begin to develop confidence in shot delivery by having the patience to wait for a clean break. No shots should hit paper during this exercise. As confidence is established, Cut out target in decreasing size and continue to develop confidence. Continue this process until only the 10 and 9 rings are cut out.
- **D-12 CISM, SP, IP Slow Fire, Dry Fire Drill:** At every attempt to fire a shot in slow fire, scope to insure shots are inside shot call. If shot is off call, clear the gun and dry fire 5 times before reloading and continuing the drill. The intent is to allow a clean application of the shot plan.
- **D-13 R, ALL Moving Front Sight:** Imagine your front sight is on a rail and while you are applying pressure on the trigger the front sight is moving toward the rear sight. Since it is on a rail the sights remain aligned. The idea is to keep your mind occupied with sights and trigger pressure to stay focused on the shot delivery. This drill will aid in becoming more acquainted with the front sight and trigger pressure. Another aspect of this drill is to remove any match pressure by concentration on the shot.

- **D-14 CISM, SP, IP Horizontal line on blank paper drill (1000 rds per week):** The sights are adjusted so round impact is below or above horizontal line. 20 ten shot groups working on minimizing hold and waiting for shot to fire. 20 ten shot groups with 20 second pause between shots. The group may be wide but should be narrow in height. Follow this drill until groups begin to shrink to the size of the 10 ring in height. This drill will also develop strength and endurance, by the end of the first week groups should begin to shrink. By the end of second week, experienced athletes are ready to start the next drill. Inexperienced athletes may have to continue another week of training. Progression is required in order to advance from this drill.
- **D-15 CISM, SP, IP Inverted T on blank target drill (1000 rds per week):** the object is to minimize side movement. The shooter continues to make every effort to hold at the intersection of the inverted T while attempting to fire a well delivered shot. Sights should be adjusted so as to not impact on the vertical line. During this drill the athlete makes every effort to allow the shot plan to work. The inverted T is only there to give the athlete a specific place to focus his attention on delivery. 20 ten shot groups with 20 second pause between shots. The athlete can shoot as many groups back to back as long as there is no appreciable increase in group size.
- **D-16 CISM, SP, IP Bull's-eye Target with Horizontal Line at 6 O Clock (1000 rds per week):** More than ever it is very important the athlete allows the shot plan to work. More than ever, trust in the shot plan. All elements in place, the focus on the front sight is very clear, the hold is very steady and the trigger control is aggressive and smooth. Trigger control is initiated at the best window of opportunity. Zero in the first two 10 shot groups insuring there is 20-30 second pause between shots allowing the mind and body to recover from previous shot. There comes a time when trusting is an aspect of shooting and not just a thought. So, begin to train in trusting by allowing everything to work as planned without concern for score.
- **D-17 R, ALL Evaluate shot plan: (1000 rds per week):** Shooting on a standard target is used to evaluate the shot plan. It is more important to follow the established shooting plan than anything else. Trust is a big factor. Just be aware of the **caution flags** as they may arise. A clean application of the shot plan results in a 10 performance. On occasion shots just outside of the 10 ring can be results of an excellent performance. Look for shots to break inside the arc of movement. Few athletes have a 10 ring hold, but all are capable of maintaining a 10 ring hold 85 % of the time. Therefore there is an 85 % chance of shooting a 10. Most if not all experienced athletes are capable of holding inside the 9 ring. So, no shots should ever leave the 9 ring.
- **D-18 CISM, SP, IP Trusting the Arc of Movement:** One of the most challenging aspects of shooting a well aimed shot is accepting and working with the Arc of Movement. Athletes try to deliver a 10.9 thinking that, that is the only place they have a chance of shooting a 10. The problem with this idea is, attention is taken away from the shot plan and disaster follows.

Everyone has an arc of movement and is affected by the individuals' habits. What ever the arc of movement is for that time, accept it and move on.

- **D-19 CISM, SP, IP      Portable Target:** The purpose of this drill is to become accustomed to shooting on a target as opposed to a blank target. Sights should be adjusted so shot impact is below aiming point. Start with target at 15m; shoot 10 shot groups until shot groups are inside 1 inch circle. Continue until 3 consecutive, 10 shot groups are obtained. Move to 20m and start over working toward a 1 ¼ inch circle. 25m-1 ½ 30m 2 in, 35m 2 ½ in, 40m 3 in, 45m 3 ¼ in, 50m 3 12in.
- **D-20 CISM, SP, IP      Countdown Shot Drill:** After the arc of movement has settled, starts the countdown from 5, 4,3,2,1 as the numbers decrease, increase trigger pressure. By the count of 1 if the shot has not fired, lower the gun and pause for 20 seconds and start over again.
- **D-21 CISM, SP, IP      Five Shot Drill:** In this drill the attempt is to shoot five shot groups without concern for value until the shots are complete. Do not scope or look at the monitor until all shots are complete. When the shot plan is executed correctly, all shots should be touching or at least close together.
- **D-22 CISM, SP, IP      Holding Exercise on small dot:** Using a post it note page, place a tiny dot in the center then stick the page on the wall at eye level and attempt to do a holding exercise on the dot. Position yourself so the muzzle of the gun is slightly off the paper. Make every effort to slow down the movement as the dot passes your front sight. The reason for the small dot is to check the amount of movement you are experiencing and strive to limit the movement. The larger the dot, the less perceived movement observed.
- **D-23 R      Stance: Olympic Rapid Fire:** Establish a shooting stance with the position directed toward the left of the first target. The torso is then directed to the first target without moving the feet. As each shot is fired the upper body remains rigid and the body unwinds to the next target.
- **D-24 R      First Shot Drill off target & Dry Fire:** During this exercise the shooter sets up a target but, only for reference. The drill will take place just off target. On command or signal lift quickly to a point just below the center of the imaginary target (bottom of burm to just below center). As the gun reaches that point, begin to obtain sight alignment and start trigger control. As the sights are aligned and trigger control begins the gun will slow and begin the slide into the center of target. Quick and smooth movement is necessary during this drill. The shot should break as the center is reached, if the shot is not fired, wait for it.
- **D-25 R      First Shot:** In rapid fire one of the most important drills to practice to perfection is the first shot. The movement from the 45 degree position to the point where the sights are picked up is quick and smooth. Somewhere between the bottom of the burm and just below the center the sights are picked and sight alignment is obtained. Trigger control begins when sights are picked up. As the sights are picked up and the trigger control begins the movement slows to

a slide into the center of target. Sight alignment and trigger control should be complete as the gun comes to a stop at center of target.

- **D-26 R Transition to second target:** As the first shot is fired use the recoil to move to the second target. Dry fire this drill until complete control is achieved. After several hours on this drill, continue to move to target 3,4.5 and follow the movement away from the last target.
- **D-27 R First and second shot:** As the first shot is fired use the recoil to move to the second target. Fire the second shot and dry fire the third shot and continue to move to each remaining target. After several hours on this drill, continue to move to target 4.5 and follow the movement away from the last target.
- **D-28 R Maintain sight alignment in cadence fire:** Rapid fire pistol has a tendency to establish a rhythm when each segment is shot. The 8, 6 and 4 second series all have their own distinct rhythm. Once it is established, work on following the pattern. As the rhythm is being used strive to maintain sight alignment and make distinct stops as the gun moves to each target.
- **D-29 CISM, SP, IP Shot Group Plotting Board Training Method**  
The “Shot group training method” is designed to check the shooter’s ability to call a shot group. You begin by ensuring that the proper stance, position, grip, sight alignment and trigger control are used. A shooter can use a 50-yard repair center (B-6c P) for this exercise and any caliber competition pistol. The shot group training exercise is for slow fire training and can be fired at 50 or 25 yards with the appropriate target. **Do not** use a spotting scope to examine each round as it is fired. The spotting scope may be used after all shots have been fired in order to evaluate the shot group. During this exercise the shooter should make every effort to accurately call each shot. A clear focus on the sights or dot is necessary to accurately call a shot. After the shot has been called, the shooter will then indicate on the shot plotting board (50 yard repair center) where the shot should have impacted on the target. The shooter will continue this training until 10 shots have been fired and marked on the plotting board. Upon completion the shooter will verify the shot group by comparing the plotting board marks with the actual shots on target. If the shooter paid close attention to detail while firing each shot the shot group should be relatively close to the plotting board group. This training exercise will help a shooter pay close attention to sight alignment and smoothness in shot delivery. The shooter should evaluate the shot group for tightness and shape. The shot group should be tight and in a rounded pattern. Oblong or angular patterns indicate that additional movement was present during the delivery of the shot. With this feedback the shooter can identify what the problem is and make the necessary corrections.

Note: Calling a shot is what the shooter does when the shot is fired to identify where the shot should have impacted on the target. In order to do this the shooter must pay close attention to the front sight or dot during sight alignment as the shot is fired. The shooter should be within their minimum arc of movement during this sighting process. By paying close attention to the front sight or dot the shooter can tell whether the shot was left, right, low or high in their holding area when the shot was fired.

In addition to the “Shot Group Training Method” an individual can train them selves by using the “Individual Shot Training Method. The shooter will follow the same general method as with the

Shot Group Training Method. The difference is in scoping each shot. In the Individual Shot Training Method every shot is scoped after the shot is fired. The shot however should be marked on the plotting board prior to scoping. A good way of doing this is by using two different color markers to indicate perceived hit and actual hit. Called shot (perceived hit) is marked in Red and actual hit is marked in green. As each shot is marked on the plotting board the shot should be labeled in the order they are fired.

Another way of using the Individual Shot Training Method is by using the buddy system. Your shooting buddy scopes the shot while you call the fired shot using the Clock for direction (6:00 O Clock 10, 7:00 O Clock X). Prior to calling the shot you mark the plotting board and the spotter does the same to compare plotting boards after the drill.

By using these training methods a shooter can greatly improve their ability to maintain focus in sight alignment and increase slow fire score.

- **D-30 CISM, SP Dry Fire Buddy Assist:** Dry fire as usual except you have someone assist by working your slide while you dry fire. The buddy is looking for any movement when the hammer falls, as is the person dry firing. This drill is a good way of getting some dry fire training in timed and rapid fire. The shooter trains not only in dry fire, but recoil control and recovery back to the center of the holding area.
- **D-31 CISM, SP Recoil recovery back to aiming area:** With every shot, the shooter makes every effort in recovering back to the center of the holding area as quickly as possible. Solid arm control and steady position will assist in fast recovery.
- **D-32 R, CISM, SP, IP Aggressive Stance:** An aggressive stance will help in fast recovery and minimize movement. The non firing hand should be immobilized and close to the body to eliminate any excessive movement. Some shooters like to place the non firing hand in the pocket or across the waist hooking the thumb to the belt.
- **D-33 CISM, SP, IP 1<sup>st</sup> Shot Drill:** The first shot drill is a good way to develop confidence in starting the sustained fire string of fire. During training start out slow on a faced target. Once the first shot becomes easy on non turning targets, start training on turning targets at 4 seconds and decreasing the time until the time is 2 seconds or less and still hitting the center of the target.
- **D-34 CISM, SP, IP 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Shot Drill:** The 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> shot drill is a good way of training to shoot timed and rapid fire without using lots of ammunition. The process used in shooting two shots is the same as shooting five shots. The time for accurately shooting two shots is 4 seconds.
- **D-35 CISM, SP, IP 5 Shot Drill:** Is used to confirm the process is working well. All shots should hit the center of the target.

- **D-36 SP Faced Target Drills:** The shooter should start out training on a faced target until all shots can be placed in the center at timed or rapid fire pace. Start out shooting slow and pickup the pace as the ability of the shooter increases.
- **D-37 R, CISM, SP, IP No Concern Shots/ Trusting Drill:** During this exercise the shooter shoots every shot with out concern for the value of the shot. Trusting in your shot plan is very important. The only effort is to deliver every shot as accurately as possible.
- **D-38 R, CISM, SP, IP Solid Arm Control:** Helps the shooter recover quickly and waist no time away from the holding area and also assists with recoil management.
- **D-39 R, CISM Sight acquisition and trigger presentation to target:** Lift the gun quickly from the ready position to a designated point just below the center then pick up the sights. The lift will quickly slow down as aligning the sights becomes more important. During the alignment period the trigger pressure begins and is continued until the gun reaches the holding area. The shot is fired at the stop or shortly after.
- **D-40 CISM, SP, IP Maintain focus:** In firing a shot, maintain focus on the front sight through entire shot process to include follow through for the next shot.
- **D-41 R Positive Trigger Control:** Always insure smooth trigger control is applied, do not allow sight alignment to dictate how the trigger is manipulated.
- **D-42 CISM, SP, IP Hold Improvement:** The object of this exercise is to reduce the hold area. Put a dot on the wall. The dot should be the size of a pencil tip. The dot is used as a reference point for how fast your sights go past the point. Hold on the dot without squeezing the trigger. Hold as long is comfortable. Focus on slowing down your movement. Each hold should be at least 30 seconds on the dot. At least 20 minutes should be dedicated before shooting to warm up the holding muscles.
- **D-43 CISM, SP, IP Trigger Improvement:** The object of this exercise is to improve trigger squeeze without disturbing the sights and hold. Put a dot on the wall. The dot should be the size of a pencil tip. The dot is used as a reference point for how fast your sights go past the point. Without cocking the pistol hold on the dot and squeeze as fast and smooth as you can without disturbing the front sight. Squeeze the trigger as many times as you can in one hold. Each hold should be at least 30 seconds on the dot. At least 20 minutes should be dedicated before shooting to warm up the holding muscles.
- **D-44 R, CISM, SP, IP Record Match:** At the start of training the shooter will shoot a partial match for record. If shooting AP/FP the first 20, 30 or 40 shots will count for record. If shooting RF the first half course will be recorded. In Spt ,CF precision and rapid will be considered separate matches. Example- If shooting precision in the AM, shoot the rapid fire match in the PM or the next day.
- **D-45 R, CISM, SP, IP Identify Recovery Strategy:** During this exercise the shooter will start a competition as usual then purposely stop several times for different reasons. Before

continuing the match, the shooter must use a different shot plan to continue the competition. Having more than one way of recovering from a break, distraction or bad shot will give the shooter a better chance of getting back on track sooner.

- **D-46 IP    Remain in position:** During training remain in shooting position for extended periods of time to test and develop your stamina. There may come a time when you may have to remain in position longer than usual to complete a match. Knowing what your limitations are can help you identify the strategy to finish without concern.
- **D-47 CISM, SP, IP    # 1 Shooting in a rhythm SF:** During this exercise each shot will be timed. Set your timer to a comfortable time frame in which to deliver a well executed shot. The time should allow lifting the gun into your holding area, settling, and firing a shot. After the shot is fired and the gun is lowered back to the bench, start your second timer. Set your second timer to 30 seconds, this will be used to limit your break between shots. During the break, reaffirm your shot plan, visualize the next shot. At the end of your break start the shot sequence timer for the next shot. Continue this procedure for the duration of the days training or for a specific amount of rounds. Limit the time for shot sequence to develop a more aggressive pre shot routine.
- **D-48 IP    Shooting Finals :** During this exercise the shooter will prepare and fire two shots in 75 seconds. Each shot will be called out for score.
- **D-49 R    Develop rhythm RF:** Beginning shooters can develop rhythm by using one target to learn the first shot and shooting the remaining four shot on the same target. Continue this drill until rhythm is developed in the eight second series with confidence, fifties should be the norm. Once eight seconds is mastered on one target, allow the second target to develop the transition. Shoot the remaining four shots on the second target. Shooting 50s on a regular basis is the standard. Continue to allow another target until five targets are used and the standard is met. Once eight seconds is mastered, move to six then four seconds following the same drill.
- **D- 50 CISM, SP, IP    Tennis Drill:** During this exercise athletes are matched to skill level. The lead shooter is chosen by flip of the coin or other means. First shooter shoots one shot or series of shots, it's the next shooters turn to outscore the first shooters score. The winner of the shot or series of shots goes again. The winner of each attempt always starts first. Set a score limit to earn points i.e....you must shoot 9.5 or higher in free or air pistol to earn a point. Or in rapid fire 8 seconds set the score of 49 or higher to earn a point. Tied scores do not earn points.
- **D-51 CISM, IP    Irregular Pause:** During this exercise have a predetermined pause after every series of fire. Recommend setting a time for each series, i.e.... after the first series wait 7 minutes before the next series is started. On the next wait 11 minutes, and so on. The idea behind this exercise is to be able to perform on demand and not always in the normal consistent conduct of a match. Things happen that often prolong the match, this drill can help in developing a strategy to overcome this situation.
- **D- 52 IP    Noptel:** The idea behind this drill is to make the green square as small as possible and keep all shots inside the square for all 60 shots.

- **D- 53 CISM, SP, IP Off center groups:** Shoot 20 shots on the right side of the center, then shoots 20 shots to the left, then 20 shots under the center. After all groups are complete use a template to check possible score.
- **D-54 CISM, SP, IP Identify arc of movement size:** Using a large black dot at distance 10,25,50 meters, shoots groups until all shots consistently fall inside the dot. After groups become easy to achieve, make the dot smaller until keeping all shots becomes difficult. Measure the size of the dot to identify the size you are capable of holding. This now becomes your accepted ability of holding.
- **D-55 CISM, SP, IP Steel Plates:** Once arc of movement is identified set up steel plates at distance and shoot groups of 20. At every shot there should be a report of plate hit. Use a blank paper backer to silhouette the steel plates.
- **D-56 CISM, SP, IP Steel Plate:** The Pepper Popper type of steel target can be used to develop the Rapid Fire part of Center/Sport pistol. The steel target can be setup directly behind the paper target so the shooter can continue to use the paper target as the reference. The Steel target behind will give the report of the hit as the shot strikes. The idea is to have consistent reports of the steel target.
- **D-57 R, CISM, IP Soda Cans:** Use empty soda cans to practice the skills of accurately hitting the can starting from the ready position. As the skill is improved, increase the speed in coming up from the ready position and hitting the can. This drill will aid in improving accuracy and speed in lift from the ready position.
- **D-58 CISM, IP Controlling 7sec pause:** During the rapid fire shooting of Center Fire and Sport Pistol the seven second pause can be controlled by using the countdown as soon as the shot is fired. I.e... the shot is fired and you recover back to the target holding area, begin countdown from 5,4,3,2,1. you must be back in the ready position and motionless before the light turns green. So, by to count of 2 move to the ready position. Another way of controlling the time, is after recovering back to the holding area, take a deep breath and one shallow breath. Start lowering back to the ready position and release your breath slowly with the shallow breath. As you come to the ready position the light will turn green, take in a short breath as you begin the lift, or simply stop the breathing until the shot is fired.
- **D-59 R, IP RF 1 Min Prep time analysis:** In this drill you are managing the one minute load time by each of the following elements. Loading, Position, Grip, Body Alignment, Mental Prep, Mental/Physical Connection. Each element requires consistent time to include the difference and arrangement of the elements in each series 8, 6 and 4 seconds.
- **D-60 R, IP RF Warm-up Phase (Arrival to the Range):** In this drill you are recording and perfecting the amount of time you are spending on each of the following elements. The necessary time prior to live fire. Stretching, Lifting, transition, mental prep, visualization, Relaxation. This phase is preparing you mental and physically for a successful start.

- **D-61R, CISM, SP, IP Performance On Demand:** Shoot partial match for record (10, 15,20,25,30,35,40,45 shots) as prescribed or designated prior to drill.
- **D-62 R, CISM, IP Pie Plate Drill:** During this drill, replace the Rapid Fire targets with the precision targets to simulate a steel plate. The idea behind this drill is to hit the plate instead of trying to shoot a center shot on the regular rapid fire target. By using a smaller target, in his case the precision target it's like trying to hit a steel plate. The smaller target helps in centering the sights as you move from target to target. And since all you are trying to do is hit it, it is much easier to allow the basic skills to work. During normal rapid fire shooting the shooter is supposed to apply a high level of intensity in marksmanship skills. This drill forces the shooter to attain a higher level of intensity without the shooter feeling like he/she is trying harder. This drill will enforce the correctness in shot delivery.
- **D-63 R, CISM, SP, IP Dry Fire and Live Fire Match Evaluation Analyze:** During this drill each step will be analyzed and then evaluated to be given a score. From the score you are able to identify weak areas to work with. This drill can be done leading into a practice match giving the shooter a skill area to focus on.

**Example Chart of Evaluation:**

	8	8	6	6	4	4	T
Lift	1	10	1	10	1	10	60
Smoothness	0		0		0		
Sight Acquisition	9	10	9	10	8	10	56
Mental Focus							
Target Transition							
Sight Picture							
Sight Clarity							
Muzzle Control							
Trigger Control							
Muscle Tension							
Recoil Recovery							
1 <sup>st</sup> Shot Time							
4 Shot Cadence							
Transition 1 <sup>st</sup> and 2 <sup>nd</sup> shot							

Follow Through							
Shot to Shot Completion							
St/ Pos/ Gr							

- D-64 R, CISM, SP, IP Muzzle Control, Grip and wrist strengthening drill:** This drill is to increase control of the forward weight of the pistol, by refining the fine muscles in the grip and wrist necessary to control the muzzle during rapid or cadence fire. During this drill you will need your pistol in your firing hand. Lock elbow into position against your side using it as an anchor point. Start your initial grip pressure that is required for controlled live fire. Start movement keeping your elbow in place, raising and lowering the pistol from 2 to 5 O Clock at a control rate of 2 to 3 lifts per second. Speed of movement will dictate grip pressure needed to keep the muzzle of the pistol perfectly straight in relationship with the wrist. Movement should be continued until burning fatigue. The second movement will be done from left to right at same cadence. The third and fourth movement will be done on short circles clockwise and counter clockwise. A 10-30 second pause should be taken between each exercise drill movement. (This drill can be used in moderation as a warm up exercise but should primarily be used at the end of the day. This drill should not be continued when you can no longer maintain control of muzzle)
- D-65 CISM, SP, IP Trigger reset drill:** In this drill the shooter will strive to reset the trigger in recoil, using the rearward motion to assist trigger reset. This process should also be used in precision fire to assist follow through and the uninterrupted shot process of cadence fire.
- D-66 CISM, SP, IP Zeroing exercise:** In this drill the shooter should be assisted by another person. The assistant will count a specific amount of clicks of elevation or windage off of the pistol, and the shooter will re-zero the gun with a predetermined amount of shots.
- D-67 R, CISM, SP, IP Last man standing:** This drill can be used in all pistol sports. On command all shooters will fire one shot in a given amount of time. After the shots are fired the low man will sit down. The sequence will repeat itself until there is one man standing.
- D-68 CISM, SP, IP The Game: Phase 1-** The game is a shooting drill which can be used by precision and rapid fire shooters. The idea is to get to level 10. A level is a well executed shot or series of shots. The intent is for the athlete to execute an excellent performance within his capability. When that execution is accomplished the effort is achieving the first level in The Game. When the athlete feels he did not execute a good performance, he starts all over again until he reaches level ten. Score is not considered during this drill. Each athlete has a level of experience that is unique to them, so poor shot value is not an indicator of a bad execution. Good shot value is also not an indicator of a good execution. Using Suis Ascor Targets should be in sighter mode, when you have to start all over push the match button twice to get back to sighter mode.
- D-69 CISM, SP, IP The Game: Phase 2-** The game in phase 2 is played similar to phase 1, except in phase 2 the acceptable range of perfection comes into play. A well executed shot

should fall well into the acceptable range of perfection, if not the process starts over again even though the athlete may have thought, the effort was acceptable. By not accepting the mistake places more demand in achieving the positive results he is expecting. Using Suis Ascor Targets should be in sighter mode, when you have to start all over push the match button twice to get back to sighter mode.

- **D-70 CISM, SP, IP Head to Head Competition:** During his drill the monitors will be turned off. The object of this drill is to have a head to head competition with other competitors. Give handicaps where appropriate to level the playing field. Allow sighter shots for a certain period of time then have a 10 shot match with the monitors off.
- **D-71 CFT Sight adjustment after each shot:** After each shot in Slow Fire, make a one click sight adjustment toward the center. The only shot not adjusted is the one that is a 10.9. The intent in this drill is to develop confidence on making sight adjustments during competition. As the drill proceeds you will notice that a one click change has little movement on the target.
- **D-72 CFT Specific Aiming Area:** The current Sport Pistol Finals require a 10.3 hit to receive a hit. So, finding a very specific area to aim on the target becomes more important. Aiming at the light is one way of finding a specific aiming point. Another might be to use one of the white centering line. Ultimately trigger control must become perfect. Getting to your aiming area and cleaning it up while trigger control is in progress.
- **D-73 CFT Dry Fire.** Looking at the gun from the side, notice if there is any movement while the trigger is being applied. Hold the gun still and at one point decide to pull the trigger. Notice if there is any movement in the barrel area. Once the gun remains still during the trigger pressure, you are ready to hold on your aiming area and again observe if there is any movement during trigger pressure. Become comfortable in holding and applying trigger pressure on demand.
- **D-74 CFT # 2 Establishing a Rhythm:** As a competitor there comes a time when you find yourself shooting in a rhythm. Shooting in a rhythm isn't something that happens on occasion it's something that can be learned and applied on demand. The rhythm begins with the first shot and continues for a set period of time. You start by shooting 10 shots in a row with no distractions. Start your stopwatch and start shooting each shot. Pay close attention to your shot plan during shot delivery. Once the shot is fired, do a quick analysis as to whether the shot was in your ARP (acceptable range of perfection). Once confirmation is made, load the next shot, take a breath or two, mentally go over your shot plan, raise the gun and shoot the next shot following your shot plan. This procedure will be followed for each shot. When 10 shots are complete, note how long it took. This drill should be done for at least 100 shots. The next time increase to 12 shots and so on, until you find how many shots you can shoot without fatigue. Once established, use your stopwatch to control your shot timing. For example, if it takes 13 minutes to shoot 15 shots, never go more than 13 minutes at a time even if you only got off 13 shots. Shooting more than 15 shots in 13 minutes is OK.

## **Packing List for a Match:**

Pistols

Magazines (minimum 3 per gun)

Pistol box, bag or case

Chain and padlock (for securing box while traveling)

Ammunition (practice ammo and match ammo, always bring extra)

Tools to adjust sights

Batteries for red dot sights

Spotting scope, monocular or binoculars for spotting round impact at 50 yards

Lubricant

Cleaning kit/supplies

Pens (for scoring)

Calculator (for scoring)

Clipboard (for scoring)

Stapler

Staples

White/manila Target pasters (also can use manila colored masking tape)

Rain gear (for you)

Rain gear (for your equipment)

1-gallon ziplock bags (for your score cards, if it rains)

Sunscreen

Water and snacks

Brass deflector (optional)

Sight black or sight smoker

Folding chair

Uniforms

Team hat

Score Tracking Chart:

Printable 25-yard Timed and Rapid Fire target center