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The Applesseed Project: Saving America, One Rifleman at a Time

By Lee Arten

In October 2007, I heard that an Applesseed Project Shooting Event was scheduled at Shiocton, Wisconsin. I tried to get there, but the family schedule wouldn't bend. In 2008, we'd decided to make a trip to Appleton for a Memorial Day weekend event when I discovered that another Applesseed Event was scheduled on the Lake Park Rifle Range in Shiocton. Doing two events on one trip was too good a deal to pass up.

The Applesseed Project is a mix of marksmanship and history. The name comes from John Chapman, the early American pioneer nicknamed Johnny Applesseed. Chapman traveled the American frontier planting apple trees for future settlers to find. Applesseed Events also connect to the events of April 19, 1775, in Lexington and Concord. Without "the shot heard round the world," fired that morning, we'd probably still be speaking with funny English accents.

The Applesseed Project is the brainchild of Fred of Fred's M14 Rifle Stocks and More.

The project is the brainchild of Fred of Fred's M14 Rifle Stocks and More (www.fredsm14stocks.com). A long-time advertiser in *Shogun News*, and a high-power rifle shooter, Fred decided he didn't like the way the country was going. He'd come to believe that too many citizens were more interested in a couch to sit on than American principles to stand on. Fred thought our Founding Fathers would have done something about that, so he figured he should do something. Teaching marksmanship was something he could do, and it would reinforce – or teach – self-reliance and citizenship. Fred believes enough of those two things can save the country. I like that idea a lot better than many I've heard from politicians!

The Applesseed Program got going at Fred's home range in Ramseur, North Carolina. Soon it spread across the country. The event in Wisconsin was the nearest to me.

There were 39 shooters at the Shiocton Applesseed. The event was held at the Lake Park Rifle Range on the edge of town. Eight boys, below the age of 20, shot for free. (Military personnel also shoot for free.) Fathers and sons shot together, and an uncle and his nephew were also on the line. Costs for the adult shooters were \$45 for one day of instruction and \$70 for

two. That's a bargain for the amount of information presented and shooting done.

Applesseed Shooting Events begin with the basics of good rifle marksmanship. Shooting starts at 25 meters with a "Redcoat" target. A redcoat has "head and shoulders" targets like those used for sighting in military M16s. They are printed in red and sized to simulate shots at 100, 200, 300 and 400 yards. Shooters load 13 rounds, sling up, and fire three shots on each target. Most shoot from prone.

Groups on the different head-and-shoulders targets indicate whether the shooter is competent at 100 yards, or farther. There is one shot of the 13 left for a red, one-inch-square target. This square simulates a 250-yard headshot. Tim Murphy – a sharpshooter with the American Army at the Battle of Saratoga – made such a shot, killing British Brigadier General Simon Fraser.

I used my M1A for this target. My troubles began almost immediately. Although I've used peep sights for years, and have shot accurately with them, I had trouble seeing the smaller marks on the Redcoat target. Several other shooters did well. Some, including my son, made the Tim Murphy shot.

Almost the whole rest of the first day was spent on a target with six one-inch black squares. My 16-year-old son, Ethan, shot this one well, although he had to adjust the zero of my AR. I had trouble seeing the black squares, too. One of the instructors suggested it was time for me to "move up to a scope."

I'd have done so immediately, but I hadn't brought a scoped rifle along.

The Applesseed Project is based on the use of iron sights like those on the M1 rifle, or M1A. I saw several shooters with aftermarket peeps made by Tech Sights installed on Ruger 10/22s. (The manufacturer describes these sights as "CI Type" Aperture Sights.) However, the Applesseed Project aims to make good shooters out of people using the rifles they have. I saw scoped .22s made by Marlin, Savage and Ruger, and some scoped centerfire rifles – including one FN/FAL – on the line. Among the iron-sighted rifles present, the M1A was well represented, as

was the M1 Garand. I also saw one AK clone and a couple of SKSs. When I go again, I'll be shooting a scoped 10/22 to start.

Proper use of the rifle sling is taught at Applesseed Shooting Events. As a former High Power match shooter, I figured I knew the sling – I was wrong. Guy, one of the instructors, demonstrated a way to use a "hasty sling" that I'd never seen before. Prone, sitting and kneeling positions were also demonstrated, along with the Natural Point Of Aim (NPOA). Safety is also heavily stressed.

I was out of shape before the Applesseed Event, and knew it. Attempting to remedy that, I walked, rode a stationary bike and lifted weights for two months before the shoot. What I neglected was practicing the rifle positions, despite suggestions to do so on the Applesseed website.

That oversight – and some health problems – took a toll, and I didn't shoot all of the exercises. Instead, I watched my son shoot and listened to the instructors discuss results on the targets and Revolutionary War history.

Late in the day, I was able to step up and shoot the offhand part of the second Redcoat target. I'd put away the M1A by then and was shooting a Winchester 52. A target rifle made in the 1930s, the 52 has peep sights similar to those on the 1903 Springfield and a sweet trigger. It fits me and shoots almost any 40-grain .22 bullet well. Although I had to concentrate hard to beat fatigue, I got five hits in each of the two head-and-shoulders offhand targets shot at 25 meters. Nothing hurts when I shoot offhand, but I will practice position shooting before attending another Applesseed.

Marksmanship is important, but the history presented at an Applesseed Event may be more so. The historical portions of the Shiocton Applesseed Event began with the explanation of the headshot on the Redcoat target. It went on to cover the signal from The Old North Church, the Revere and Dawes rides that roused the American populace, and the shots fired at Lexington and Concord.

Some of the information presented had the hair standing up on the back of my neck. I'm pretty sure the 11- and 12-year-olds on the firing line do not hear this history in their public-

school classes. Then, history took a break for more shooting and lunch. After lunch there was more shooting. Late in the afternoon the instructors covered Meriam's Corner, "Where the Revolutionary War really began...."

Before that, the instructors said some of those who fought the British on the morning of April 19 would have hung, and some would have gone to prison. Those who only defended their homes might have been excused, because even under English law, "An Englishman's home was his castle. He could defend it against anyone."

At Meriam's corner, things changed. Americans, who had no direct connection to towns that had just been invaded, fired, and looted, opened fire on British troops in support of other American militiamen. Then the die was really cast. (At some Applesseed Events, reenactors – or buckskinners – have demonstrated firing Brown Bess muskets or replicas of Revolutionary War-era cannon.)

The Applesseed Project's goals for 2009 are 200+ events and 8,000 shooters.

An Applesseed Event is a two-day affair. The first day can be shot exclusively with a .22 rifle. The second usually involves longer-range shooting – if the range can handle it. Rifleman shoot and qualify as far out as 300 or 400 yards. I was unable to attend the Shiocton Applesseed on Sunday. I'm sure I would have gotten a lot out of it.

On April 19, 2008, Applesseed Events were held simultaneously in 14 states. There were 527 shooters, and 54 of them qualified as riflemen by shooting 210 or better on "Fred's Quick 'N Dirty AQT" target. Plans are already in progress for more shoots on April 19, 2009. In the meantime, Applesseed Events are being held throughout the year all around the country.

The Applesseed Project's goals for 2009 are 200-plus events and 8,000 total shooters. Goals for 2010 are more than 400 shoots and over 16,000 shooters. Fred said on the website he hopes to see the program double each year. I'm impressed with what the Applesseed Project has done so far, and hope Fred's goals will be reached.

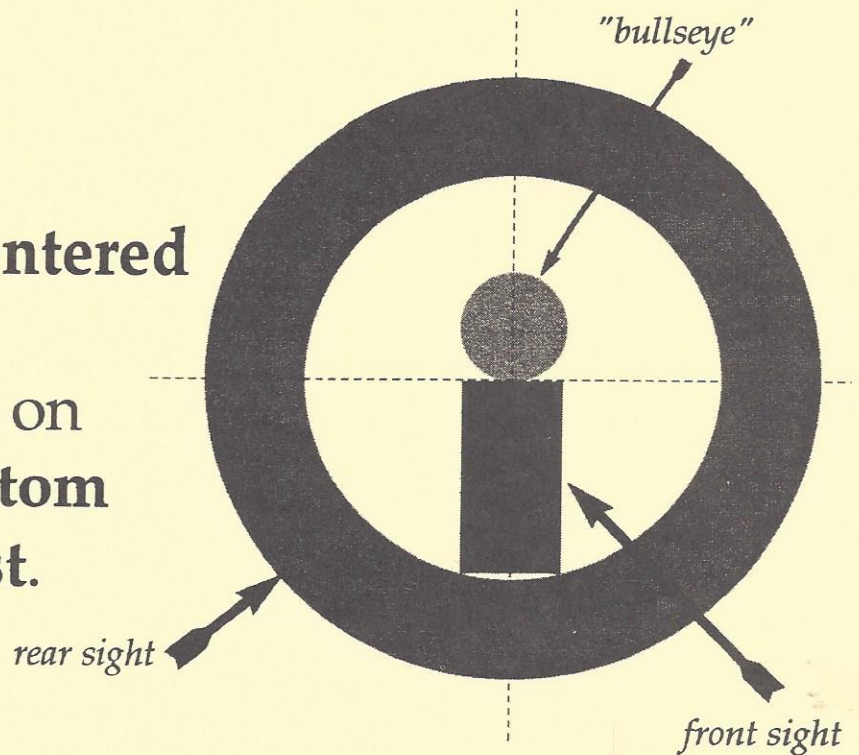
Schedules and other information about the Applesseed Project can be found at the project's website, www.rwa.org.



CORRECT SIGHT PICTURES

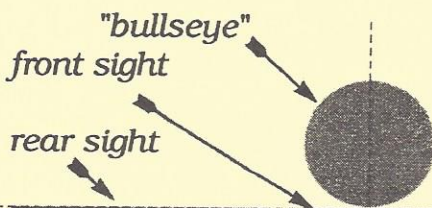
"PEEP"

1. Front sight **centered** in rear aperture.
2. Bull **centered** on front sight with **bottom edge tangent to post.**



"OPEN"

1. Front post **centered** in opening of rear sight.
2. Bull **centered** on front post with **bottom edge tangent to post.**



Sight Alignment

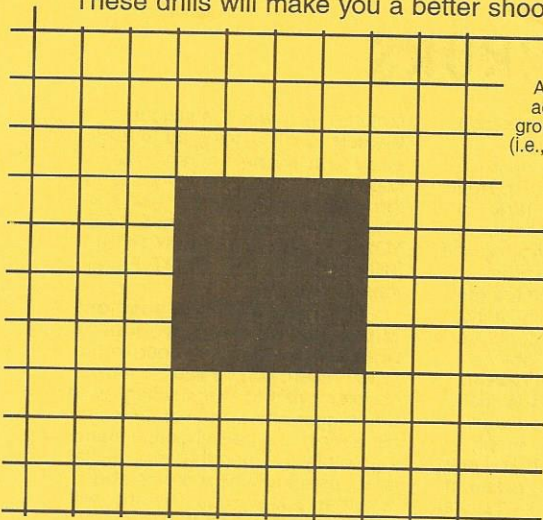
Critical to accurate placing of the bullet is that the front and rear sights be *aligned precisely*.

To aid in this, focus on the **front sight** to keep it sharp and clear. Let the bull go 'hazy' while you **keep the sights aligned - and vertical.**

25-Meter Drill Targets

[82 ft.]

These drills will make you a better shooter!



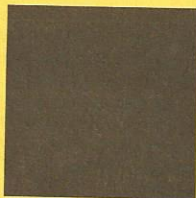
1/4" grid = 1 MOA grid
Aim 6 o'clock on square,
adjust sights so center of
group is on center of square.
(i.e., 2 MOA above Point of Aim
[POA])

1-Round Drill - Position and NPOA

Fire 5 successive shots on this target from prone or sitting. In between each shot, break your position, stand up, and then, after loading another round (safety 'on'), quickly reassume the position and reacquire your NPOA, and fire another round. After 5 rounds, check the target. If you are doing everything

right - position and NPOA reacquisition - your group should be under an inch. (This assumes you can already regularly keep your groups at 25 meters to an inch or under. If you can't do it, practice the basics until you can.)

Alternative drill: 5 rounds as before, single-loaded, but stay in position.



2-Round Drill - Mag Change

Practice in smooth mag changes without disturbing position or point of aim (NPOA).

Take up a prone or sitting position and load with one round in your mag. Fire a round. Reload with another single-round mag. Repeat three more times. Check your target to verify your five-round group is under 1-inch. If it is, now you repeat the drill, to practice changing

mags smoothly and rapidly.

If it is not under an inch, you are probably losing position or NPOA in the mag change. Practice, making sure you observe all the position requirements, and verify your NPOA reacquisition, until you group under an inch, consistently.

Persistence - without it, you never get where you want to be.



4-Round Drill - Fast Cadence Test

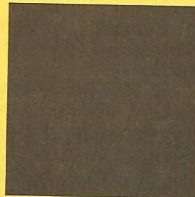
Practice in changing mags without disturbing your group, and practice/verify firing the first shot out of each mag in 'rapid fire' mode, not 'slow fire' mode.

With two mags, each with 2 rounds: load the first and fire two rounds, from prone or sitting. Reload and fire the other two rounds. Check the target. All four shots should be in the same sub-1-inch group.

If they are not, but the 2-round drill is OK, chances are

you have one or two shots 'out of the group', and that these are the first rounds of each mag. In other words, you are firing the first shots out of each mag at a slow-fire cadence, and the second at a rapid-fire cadence. You want to practice this drill, focusing on a rapid-fire shot out of each mag, until the group size is under an inch, and placement of all shots is in the group.

Note: A Rifleman fires **every** shot 'rapid'.



Ball & Dummy Drill

The 'ball and dummy' drill works because you do not know for sure whether a round is actually loaded when you pull the trigger.

Have a friend 'load' (either a live round or nothing) and hand you the rifle, keeping the muzzle pointed in a safe direction, or mix dummy and live rounds in the mag, so you don't know what's next in the mag.

Fire five shots, which means you'll 'fire' at least five or more 'dry' shots while getting the live ones off. When you are done, compare the size of the group with your groups above. If it is significantly smaller, you prob have a flinch, which you cure with more 'ball & dummy' until the rifle is perfectly still when you 'fire' a dummy/empty rifle.



HOW TO FIRE THE SHOT

1. GET INTO POSITION

Start with the prone position because that is where you normally sight-in, and sighter shots are usually the first shots you fire when you shoot. It is also the steadiest position, once you get used to it - but also a real muscle-stretcher. **Be ready to try prone a few times before it really gets comfortable.** Just have a little patience, get the early 'adjustment' behind you so you can get to the real shooting - that is, 'firing the shot'. Best way to do this is to practice at home before you ever come to the range - just lie down, get a good prone position with this checklist, and 'dry fire', going thru each of the six steps in firing the shot until you have 'em down cold. Save that valuable range time for real shooting! P.S. The Rifleman **NEVER** shoots off the bench.

Prone Checkpoints: ✓ **Trigger hand** should have a firm grip on the stock and pull it back smartly into the shoulder. ✓ **Trigger finger** should contact trigger on the middle of the end pad of the finger or at the first joint, and the finger should be curved so that it clears the stock at all points. ✓ **Your cheek** should be pressed firmly against the stock.

✓ **Arm holding the rifle up:** ✓ **Hand** initially should be relaxed and not grip the rifle - simply a platform on which the rifle rests. Later, after achieving Rifleman, you may want to try lightly gripping the rifle and pulling it back into the shoulder. Standard instruction in highpower rifle shooting says this hand should be relaxed, not grip the rifle, and be a 'platform' on which to rest the rifle. But in field shooting, your sling will not be as tight as it is on the firing line, and you will find that a slight positive grip helping that trigger hand pull the rifle back into the shoulder will steady up the rifle.

✓ **The sling** should be adjusted so it just supports the weight of the rifle; i.e., tight, but not so tight you are really hurting. If the rifle will stay in your shoulder while supported only by the forward hand under the forearm and the sling, without any help from your trigger hand, it is tight enough. ✓ **The elbow** should be as close to vertical under the rifle as possible. A check: take a deep breath in; let it out, and watch the front sight: if it dips and rises vertically - good! If it dips and rises on a slant, you're not there yet - get the elbow under the rifle [it may take several times at the range before you are successful on this - but have patience - it will come!]. Then ✓ **get your NPOA** (See 'Common firing Line Errors' #3), repeating the process of acquiring it until you open your eyes and the sights are lined up on the target. Follow the "Goldilocks' Rule" [not too tight; not too loose; everything just right]:

Everything should be tight, but not so tight that muscle tremor, fatigue or severe discomfort results. After the initial adjustment period is over, this position should be comfortable - if it is not, you are doing something wrong, and need to go back and review the basics. Now we are finally ready to

2. FIRE THE SHOT

■ **1. Line up the front and rear sights.** Simply center the front sight in the rear sight (a scope does it automatically for you). (*Sight Alignment*)

■ **2. Keeping the sights lined up,** bring them **onto the target.** Most people set the target on top of the front sight like a 'pumpkin on a fence post'. (*Sight Picture*)

■ **3. Take a deep breath in.** The front sight will dip. Let your breath out, watching the front sight rise until it barely touches the bottom of the bull's eye - now **hold your breath** (*Respiratory Pause*). Use a natural act - breathing - to establish your correct elevation. (*Now's* when you get your NPOA!)

■ **4A. Focus your eye on the front sight.** It may be a little hard to do at first - you naturally want to look at the target - but focus on the front sight. This will be hard for some shooters past 40, and some may need to switch to a scope because of inability to focus on the front sight.

■ **4B - Focus your MIND on "keeping that front sight on the target".** This is the most important one on this list. Do it - or miss!

■ **5. Now the only tricky part.** While you are doing step 4, **take up the slack and squeeze the trigger straight back - but keep your concentration on the front sight!**

Don't let the front sight wander off the target. You are trying to do two tasks at once, and the more important is to **KEEP THE FRONT SIGHT ON THE TARGET!** This is where practice pays.

■ **6. When the hammer falls:** 1) **keep your eyes open,** 2) **take an 'instant' mental photo** of where the front sight was on the target when the hammer fell (*Call the Shot*), and 3) **hold the trigger back** (*Followthrough*). In field shooting you want to quickly observe the impact of the bullet on the target and the target reaction. If the shot is a miss, try to spot any bullet splash so you can correct the next shot.

Now **RELAX** and enjoy the shooting. Keep at it and the positions will actually become comfortable - and 'by the numbers' will become automatic! Trust me.

Practice until you can consistently group 1" or less at 25 meters (82 ft).

Periodically do "ball & dummy" to detect and correct flinching.

Shoot Smart - Shoot Safe!

From 25 meters, with your sights 2 MOA above POA, to get your 200 yard zero, come up 1 MOA. To get your 275 Battlesight Zero, come up 3 MOA.

For 300 yards, come up 4 MOA from 25m.

For 400 yards, come up 7 MOA from 25m.

For 500 yards, come up 11 MOA from 25 m.

Always confirm the zeroes at actual distance, if possible.

**THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR
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LEARN TO SHOOT IN FOUR [EASY] STEPS

Fred's gonna take all the excuses out of it for ya.

So you can learn to shoot that many-hundred-dollar rifle you've owned since Noah's Ark...

So let's get started on a simple program to get you shooting like a Rifleman. A man right in the mainstream of the American tradition of rifle shooting.

It's a simple set of **self-programmed goals**. And be patient, take it slow and methodical, and do it right. Don't get anxious and worry about how fast you are progressing. Simply PERSIST. Later, after you become a rifleman, you'll look back and smile at how easy it was!

Step One: Learn the basics of the prone position, NPOA, and Firing the Shot - at home. Overcome the discomfort of the position by getting in it enough to stretch muscles until it gets comfortable. Three times a week, for say, ten minutes. Stay at it until the position is comfortable and familiar, however much time it takes. You've got plenty of time - all the rest of your life. Simply *persist*. Persist until you have it down pat - forward elbow under the rifle, trigger hand gripping the rifle and pulling it back into the shoulder, sling adjusted so forward hand is a mere platform, relaxed, not gripping the rifle, trigger leg pulled up tight to help absorb recoil.

Here's a test to see if you have 'prone' down pat: Get in prone, all slinged up, line up your sights on the dot on the wall, take a deep breath in, and slowly out (Step #3 in "Six Steps of Firing the Shot").

If you are doing it right, if you have your forward elbow under the rifle, your sights will travel up-and-down in a vertical plane. If they are moving on a slant, you don't have it right yet.

Don't hurry things. Take your time. There's no rush. And even as you work to get the sights to where they move in the vertical plane only, your body is adjusting to the position, so it gets comfortable, which is a main goal.

While you're at it, practice getting your Natural Point of Aim [NPOA] until it's second nature to you. In prone, line your sights up on the target, close your eyes, relax your body, take a deep breath in and slowly let it out, then open your eyes. If your front sight is not on the target, you don't have your NPOA. Simply shift your body around with your forward elbow as a fulcrum, keeping it in place, until your sights are back on the target. Then repeat the test, shift again, etc, until finally, when you open your eyes, your front sight is right there, on the target, where it should be. **Now** you have your NPOA. Do not move that forward elbow, else you lose, and must reacquire, your NPOA.

Every time you get in prone, nail down the six steps of firing the shot, by dry-firing. So while you are learning the basics of the prone position, stretching your body to make the position comfortable, and learning NPOA, you are also practicing firing "by-the-numbers". Thereby killing three birds with one stone - mighty efficient, if I do say so.

Efficient in the sense that ten minutes, three times a week, will save you hours of frustration getting started at

the range.

If the Marines, the world's best rifle shots, can spend a week just dry-firing, you can spend a few minutes a week ripping a page out of their playbook.

The Goals of Step One: Learn the prone position and get comfortable in it.

Learn how to get NPOA. Learn by heart, and practice, the "Six Steps in Firing the Shot" until you can do 'em in your sleep.

Once you have these down cold, proceed to Step Two.

Step Two: 'Rubber meets the road' time. To the range. First trip, focus on learning to adjust your sights, otherwise known as **zeroing**, a basic rifleman skill.

Naturally, you'll be putting into practice what you learned at home: prone position, NPOA, firing the shot 'by the numbers'.

Here's where you get your first feedback on how well you did your homework. Your first 'trigger-time' on the road to becoming a rifleman. The criteria is a one-inch, 3-shot group at 25m - or 4 inches at 100 yards [4 MOA].

Sure, there's going to be nervousness. There may even be a recurrence of the discomfort you initially experienced the first time you 'slung up' in prone. Don't let it bother you. It may take you a few rounds to settle down. It will certainly take a few unexplained 'out of the group' shots to piss you off and get you to finally settle down to some serious 'by-the-numbers' shooting.

Continue **shooting by the numbers** until your group is consistently under 4 MOA. 'Consistently' means 5 out of 5 times.

Now is not the time to slack off. If you don't fire every shot by the numbers, you'll never be a Rifleman. So it's simple - fire each shot by the numbers. EVERY time.

As you go thru this, you are simultaneously sighting in, a specialized task basic to every rifleman's education. You can't sight-in with half-dozen rounds, you can't claim to be a rifleman. Simple as that.

"Inches, minutes, clicks" is the mantra for zeroing at RWVA. And for every rifleman. You check and your group is off COT? You don't *eyeball* it; you *measure* it. To get 'inches'. Then you convert the inches to 'minutes' [MOA] because your sights are adjusted in MOA. Then you convert to 'clicks', so when you walk back up to the firing line, you're not saying "I need to go a bit to the right" or "...a bit up". No sir, you go back to the firing line **KNOWING** that if you move your sight X clicks right or up, your next group **WILL** be COT. Got it?

The Goals of Step 2: Learn to zero. Learn to shoot 4 MOA consistently.

Step 3: Trouble-shooting/diagnostics - the road to good marksmanship is usually more or less rocky. You may hit a stretch where your shooting gets worse, not better. Or where you have reached a plateau beyond which it seems impossible to go. Now's the time to find out what you are doing wrong. For you ARE doing something wrong. More than likely, it's one of the six steps of firing the shot you are overlooking or doing incorrectly. And if I

had to guess, I would guess something to do with the trigger.

To test yourself, use Ball & Dummy to find out if you have a flinch or poor trigger control. B&D will diagnose as well as cure either problem. It's where a friend loads your rifle, only he often leaves the round out, and you never know which time is for real and which time is an empty chamber.

Add the 1-rd, 2-rd, and 4-rd drills, drills designed to make you a better shooter.

Plus, add the help of others.

An example: Recently, at RWVA's Wednesday night 'Learn to Be a Rifleman' informal shoot, one struggling 'would-be' started off with a poor standing score of 36 ('poor' if you want to shoot your first rifleman score).

[This 'would-be' got off to a rocky start by showing up with just a bit of pig-headed stubbornness. Like, it was his third time down before he used a sling. But to give him credit, as soon as he tried it he recognized instantly the value of the sling and was a convert to sling shooting.]

[So you could say this guy was on a dual track. Not only learning the basics of shooting, but learning that the people there helping him knew what they were about. And when they said he should do it this way or that way, that he'd shoot better if he did what they said.]

This particular evening, after finishing the Stage Two rapid-fire early, I had the chance to watch him as he finished Stage 2. What I saw was every time he'd pull the trigger, he'd immediately release it and stretch his trigger finger out straight, some residue of ill-considered reading up on CQB, no doubt (he arrived at our range the 1st time with a gimmicked AR-15).

It told me he was 'snatching' the trigger, not squeezing it, and definitely not following through (Step 6).

I mentioned that to him when he was done shooting Stage 2 (a not-so-bad score of 41). And he *listened*. And turned in a 47 prone-rapid! And on the last stage, on those tiny postage-stamp-size targets, a stage he doesn't do well on - he turned in a 90! For a total of 214 - and his first Rifleman score. Was he one happy person? You bet. And he got there because he *listened*. And also because someone was there to see and tell him his mistake.

Once the barrier is broken, once you've been there, it's MUCH easier to get there again.

And it points up the value of shooting with someone else, as our guy was not aware of his Step 6 failure (and, inadvertently, Step 5 also). He was doing just enough, just well enough, to hit a sub-rifleman plateau of just beneath 200, in the 180-190 range. A lot of people get to that point and, like the early attempts at supersonic flight, find there's a barrier, an unknown invisible barrier, keeping them from going faster or shooting better.

For some rifleman candidates, it's psychological. For more of 'em, it's not adhering to one or more of the *Six Steps in Firing a Shot*. Like the guy Wednesday, you think you have it under control, when you don't. Like the guy Wednesday, you just need a little help from an outsider, a minor adjustment, someone to hand you an afterburner you can kick in to penetrate the barrier.

That's at least one reason (not the

most important, either) for the next step.

The Goals of Step Three: To equip you with the diagnostic tools you need - B&D, 'round' drills, and let you learn you'll do better with a buddy to help you.

Step 4: Teach someone else to shoot. A rifleman - even a rifleman wannabee, a rifleman in training, wants others to learn to shoot a rifle. It's a sharing thing. A protection thing. And a freedom thing. Even a learning thing.

Who wouldn't want to teach someone to shoot? Who wouldn't want to share the fun? Who wouldn't want to save his country by making a few rifleman?

Okay, don't care for that BS? Then someone who, learning to shoot along with you, can watch you and help you figure out what you are doing that is preventing you from breaking into Rifleman-land.

Is instructing easy? Not for most of us. From the RWVA forum:

I have some level of embarrassment to get over when training people. It has to do with the fact that most of the people I am training I perceive to be better shots and more knowledgeable about shooting than I am. The question that runs through my mind is "Since they are better shots than I am what do I have to offer in the way of advice?" Basically, I need to stop thinking this way. When I go through the six steps of firing a shot, how to use the sling, how to sit, how to set up prone, or how to adjust the sights, I see almost instant improvement.

Part of the problem can be seen in this comment. "Better shots" is not an accurate statement. We often perceive others as more competent than ourselves when they really are not. Proof of this is the later comment about "instant improvement" after instruction. If they were 'better shots' they wouldn't show improvement; they'd already have this stuff down pat.

Take it from Fred: even shooters with decades of experience; even shooters who shoot 'decently' - doesn't matter, it's extremely unlikely they've had more than rudimentary instruction, if any at all.

And like anyone who's learned it 'on his own' they could sure use some instruction on the stuff they never picked up.

And you, learning to be a rifleman, even if you fired your first shot yesterday - or today! - are superior to them, because you have the knowledge which, with practice, leads to a skill far beyond what the regular person can pick up on his own.

Send us an SASE for your free copy of "Six Steps in Firing the Shot" along with "Twelve Common Firing Line Errors" - to get you started. We'll even throw in some hints for instructing others! Or for \$16 + UPS you can order the AQT targets and get the expanded "Fred's Guide to Becoming a Rifleman" along with a slew of drill targets for free.

Fred's

www.fredsm14stocks.com 919-663-2027 M-F 9-4 EST

SGN Column, 9/20/05 issue

POP QUIZ FOR RIFLEMEN

OK, you've read the stuff, and you've been to the range, practicing until you finally made it - a rifleman at last. So now, just for fun, you'll want to score yourself on a little 'pop quiz' to check and see if you know as much as you think you do. To keep it fast and easy, let's make it multiple choice, and keep it short:

1. **The most important attribute of a rifleman is:**

- his shooting skills
- his ability to work as a team
- his willingness to pledge life, home and fortunes to defense of liberty
- All of the above

2. **If your sighter shot at 300 yards is 8" low and 5" right, you should move your M1A rear sight:**

- 3 clicks up and 2 left
- 5 clicks up and 3 right
- 9 clicks up and 6 left
- any of the above

3. **You sight-in at 25 meters. Your group is under an inch, and is 1.5 inches high and .75 inches right. You want to adjust your sights to your 275 yard BSZ.**

What changes do you make? [This may seem a hard one, but a rifleman will crank it out - all in his head. If you need help, see the box below - but only after you try to work it out yourself.]

- 1 click down and 3 clicks left.
- 6 clicks down and 3 clicks left.
- 10 clicks down and 6 left.
- 4 clicks down and 3 clicks left.

4. **The most important act in firing the shot is to:**

- Hold your breath.
- Squee-e-eze the trigger.
- Keep your front sight on the target.
- Hold breath AND squeeze trigger.

5. **As a rifleman, your most important goal is to:**

- Keep your skills fresh, and, more important, improving.
- Train other riflemen into a team.
- Read the Constitution and respect it.
- Keep your eyes open when you fire a shot, so you can call it.

6. **The toughest job facing a rifleman in the field is:**

- Target detection.
- Estimating the range.
- Firing an accurate shot.
- Moving without being detected.

7. **Every shot you fire should be:**

- Fired at your 'rapid' cadence..
- fired with your eyes open.
- Be the 'only' shot you concentrate on.
- All of the above

8.. **The key to defending your freedoms is:** [pick all that apply]

- Keeping your skills honed.
- Being ready.
- Persistence.
- Getting friends and neighbors into shooting.
- Keeping abreast of network news.
- Getting kids into shooting.

9. **The best drill for every Rifleman or would-be Rifleman:**

- The 'one-shot' drill.
- The 'two-shot' drill.
- The 'mag change' drill.
- 'Ball and dummy' drill.

POP QUIZ FOR RIFLEMEN - CONT

10.. **The best sling for you is:**

- The leather match sling.
- The GI web sling.
- The GI nylon sling.
- Any sling.

11. **The 'soft' crisis is:**

- When things aren't too urgent.
- When you don't have to worry so much about your rights.
- The most important thing in your current battle for freedom.
- None of the above.

12. **Why does the Rifleman need to be effective out to 500 yards?**

- To outshoot potential opponents.
- To show and prove his skill.
- To make use of the capabilities of his rifle.
- To impress potential new shooters..

13. **What is the first rule of the Rifleman?**

- Be a safe shooter.
- Take no unnecessary risks.
- Practice regularly.
- Move without being detected.

14. **Your sighter shot at 100 yards using your BSZ is 1" high. You called it a good shot. What should you do?**

- It's a good shot: Move your sights UP 4 clicks
- It's a good shot: Move your sights DOWN 4 clicks.
- Fire 2 more shots to confirm the group.
- Make no change. An inch is close enough.

15. **The American Rifleman is:**

- A defender of the state.
- A defender of liberty.
- An obsolete concept.
- An American tradition.

16. **"Getting to Know Your Rifle" means:** [pick all that apply]

- You determine the battlesight zero [BSZ].
- You determine rapid, slow, hot, cold, dirty, clean, supported and unsupported zeroes.
- You learn how to clean and lube it.
- You know the serial number.

17. **Your shot at 300 yards hits 6" low in the dirt in front of the target. What do you do?**

- Go up 5 clicks.
- You called it a good shot, so you raise your point of aim.
- You called it "low", so do nothing.
- You failed to call the shot, so you do nothing.

18. **Essential items of equipment:**

- Sling, bandoleers, canteens.
- Camouflage, shovel, food.
- Cleaning kit, spare parts.
- Extra shoe laces.

19. **The fight for liberty involves:**

- YOU must act - NOW.
- One-minute contacts of your reps.
- Recruiting others.
- Working on a team.

20. **At 400 yards, you group 6" low and 1" right. Sight changes?**

- UP 6 and 1 LEFT.
- UP 3 and 0 LEFT.
- UP 1 and 0 LEFT.
- Fire another group.

21. **NPOA is:**

- The difference between new and old shooters.
- Essential to firing a good shot.
- Makes firing a shot easier.

POP QUIZ FOR RIFLEMEN - CONT

22.. **The MOST important safety rule:**

- Unloaded and grounded.
- Finger off trigger.
- Know your backstop.
- Muzzle always in safe direction.

23. **The key to rapid fire is:**

- Attitude.
- Well-aimed shots.
- Taking your time.
- None of the above.

24. **Why does the Rifleman fire all shots 'rapid'?**

- To avoid taking too long on a shot.
- For consistent shots, every time.
- To avoid a cadence zero change.
- It's excellent training for the real thing.

25. **Flinching, bucking, and jerking can be cured by:**

- The 'one-round' drill.
- The '2-round' drill.
- 'Ball and dummy' drill.
- The '4-rd' drill

26. **You can only zero at 200 yards. Where should your BSZ group on the target?**

- 3" high
- 6" high.
- Center of target.
- 4" high.

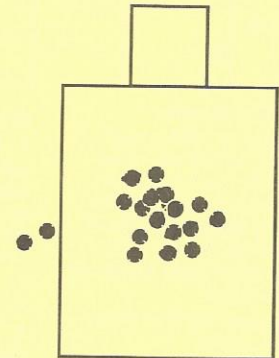
26. **The greatest threat to freedom in America today is:**

- Apathy of gunowners.
- Ignorance of history.
- Inability to team up with others.
- Love to grip, don't want to act.

26. **If gunowners lose their gun rights, they:**

- Have only themselves to blame.
- Deserve to lose them.
- Aren't worth shooting.

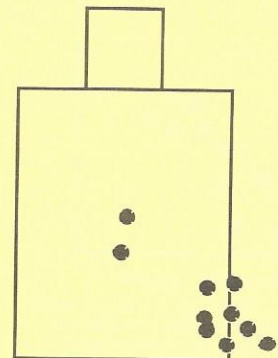
Target Analysis



Probable Causes:

- The two shots out of the group are caused by firing the first shot out of each rapid-fire mag at a slow-fire cadence.

Solution: Fire ALL shots, including the first shot from each magazine, at the same rapid cadence



Probable Causes:

- During the rapid-fire stages of the AQT, losing NPOA during mag change. The shots from the 2nd mag may be in any direction off the center.
- Firing first shot of each mag (assuming a mag change) at slow fire cadence, and balance at rapid cadence - eight rds will be at your rapid fire zero, and two rounds at your slow-fire zero..

Solution: Never move the elbow under the rifle while changing mags. Once you get that NPOA, KEEP it!

Fire each shot - and every shot - at your rapid fire cadence.

#3 answer explained: Assuming your 25 meter zero is identical to your 200 yard zero, your 275 yard BSZ will be 2 clicks above your 200 yard zero. Here you are 1.5 inches high ("inches"), which is 6 MOA high ("minutes"), which is 6 clicks high ("clicks"). Ordinarily you would move 6 clicks down to zero, but here we want out BSZ, so we move down only 4 clicks, leaving us 2 clicks high, or at our 275 BSZ, right where we want to be. We want to move windage 3/4" left ("inches"), which is 3 MOA ("minutes"), which is 3 clicks left on standard sights ("clicks").

Answers to Pop Quiz: 1. d - an easy one! 2. THREE UP and TWO LEFT 3. d - LEFT 3, no question. Down 4, assuming your 200 is the same as your 25 elevation. 4. c. The rest are important, but c is THE important one. 5. I say b, but a. is also acceptable. 6. Target Detection! 7. d - clearly, all of the above. 8. All except e apply! 9. d - but that is not the choice here, and the best sling, and therefore the best answer, is c. 11. The answer is c, because win it, and the 'hard' crisis never has to be fought! 12. a is the best choice, although c is a minor truth. 13. All the answers are good, but b is the answer [see "Tactics of the 2nd Amendment Rifleman"] 14. c - while you can zero in one shot in an emergency, you don't want to change your BSZ based on one shot. 15. d is correct, but b is the correct answer, being the more important concept. 16. All are correct. 17. b, c, d - All but a apply! 18. a, b, c - and d is not too bad either! 19. Easy! All of them! 20. c - moves you UP 4" 21. ALL 22. d 23. abc 24. abcd 25. c 26. d 26 all 27. all

The Rifleman's Quarter Mile

The gray haired man followed their trail from Concord. He would ride his white mare toward the column until he was within range, then turn his horse, throw himself off, and aim with his long gun resting on the saddle. The aim was said to mean sure death and the Redcoats came to dread him. Whenever he was sighted, a warning cry went up: "Look out for the man on the white horse!"

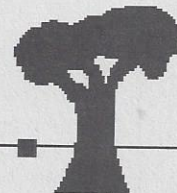
The man was **Hezekiah Wyman**, age 55, and a true **Rifleman**.

Why Shoot Long Distance? Because it is the proof that what you have learned works and that you are ready to be confident calling yourself a Rifleman. It is your inheritance to master!

Target Detection & Identification

The first and hardest task of the Rifleman is target detection & identification. No firearm owner would engage a target without knowing exactly what it was and intending to hit it. Simple tricks include:

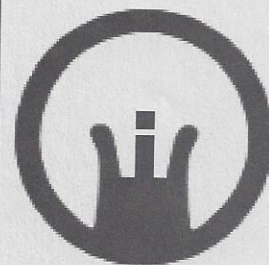
- **Color/Shine**- Hezekiah's task was made easy by those bright red coats. Deer don't wear coats so the hunter looks for color such as the white tail flashing against the backdrop of the woods.
- **Shape/Outline**- Look for distinct outlines.
- **Movement**- The human eye is drawn to movement and is especially sensitive at the edges of the field of vision; this is why a deer's natural immediate defense is to freeze and cease all movement.



Range Estimation

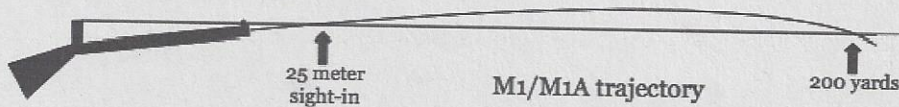
Range estimation also takes a lot of practice. You can estimate the range by:

- **Generic Estimation** – How many football fields away is the target? Each is 100 yards.
- **Predetermined Range** – Pre-measure the range from a known shooting point (deer stand) to known points (large rock, oak tree, pond) and make a range card for referencing with your target.
- **Front Sight Method** – Let's say that your front sight is roughly 7 MOA wide. So, if you're looking at a square that is 20" wide and it appears to be the same width as your front sight, then the square is about 300 yards away. Why? Because 20" at 300 yards is about 7 MOA, just like your front sight. If the 20" square is half the size of your front sight, you know the target is 600 yards away because 20" at 600 yards is about 3.5 MOA.
- **Scopes**- You will need to determine how many MOA your scope reticle subtends. One way to do this is to place a yardstick at 100 yards and look at it through your scope using the lowest, the highest, and the mid-range magnification. At 100 yards, the yardstick is 36 MOA. This will give you an estimate of the angle(s) that your scope covers, which you can then use for range estimation just as you would a front sight. Make sure you record this information!

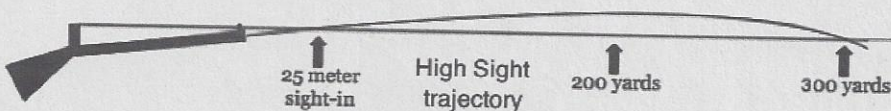


The Rifleman's Trajectory: 3, 3, 3, 4

The Rifleman has a simple tool for dealing with bullet drop; it is as easy to remember as "3, 3, 3, 4". These numbers reflect bullet drop out to 500 yds. From 100-200 yards your bullet will drop 3 MOA, from 200-300 yards it will drop another 3 MOA, etc. The diagram below illustrates the trajectory of a bullet fired from a M1/M1A zeroed at 25 m.



Since an AR-15 or scoped rifle's sights sit so much higher than sights of a M1/M1A, the trajectory is changed a little and extends the distance of the ballistic arc.



Sight Adjustments or "Come Ups"

As you can see, your rifle is zeroed at 25 m and 200 yds. (Approximately 300 yards for an AR-15). To hit the target at either distance you aim as you would at 25 m. To hit a target at 300, 400 or 500 yards, you will have to adjust your sights if you want to use the same aiming point. For a rifle zeroed at 25/200, a sight adjustment or "come up" of 3 MOA is needed to make hits at 300 yds. Another 3 MOA come up is needed to get from 300 to 400 and finally, a come up of 4 MOA is needed to make hits at 500. So, if your rifle has been zeroed at 25 m and you want to hit a target at 500 yards, you need to come up 3 MOA + 3 MOA + 4 MOA = 10 MOA. Take your shot accordingly and confirm your point of impact.

Come Ups

100 - 200 = 3 MOA
 200 - 300 = 3 MOA
 300 - 400 = 3 MOA
 400 - 500 = 4 MOA

What About My Rifle?

The M1/M1A and AR15 are used here merely as examples. Every center fire rifle come-ups will be different, but these numbers are close enough to begin long distance shooting regardless of your particular rifle or ammunition.

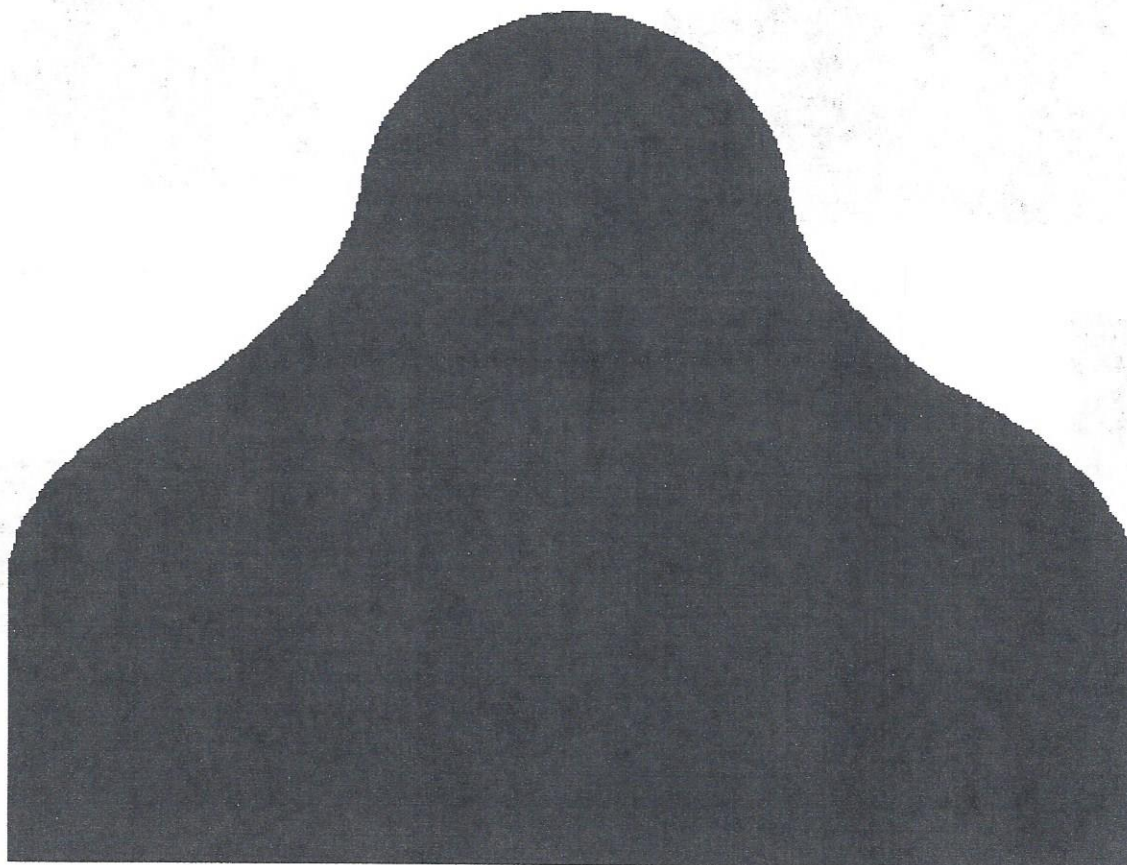
The Challenge: To be an American Rifleman

In other words; can you seize the Tradition of the American Rifleman... and pass it on?

The famed American Rifleman from the Revolutionary War could make an accurate shot at 400+ yards with a muzzle loading rifle and basic iron sights.

Certainly, with today's rifles, that American Rifleman could do even better... but can you meet the standard our founding fathers laid down over 200 years ago?

To find out, post this target in front of any safe back stop, 25 meters (82 feet) away. Using any rifle, take three shots at each target, from any position. The reduced-size targets mimic the sight picture from 100 to 500 yards. A rifleman can keep three shots on each target. **If you can't do it; you need to come to a weekend-long Appleseed, and learn how to become a Rifleman.** For an event near you; check the schedule at: www.RWVA.org



100 Yards

Here's what an Idaho Appleseeder had to say:

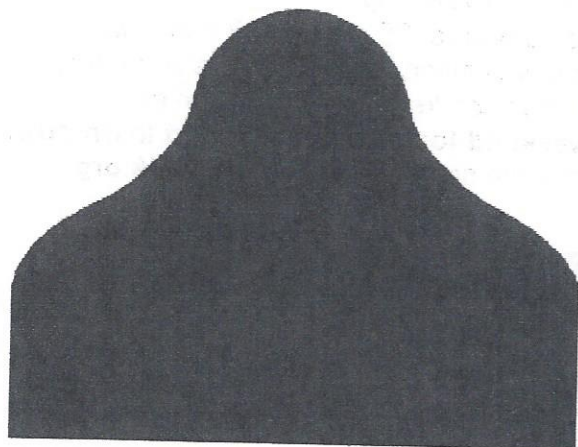
“But please go, no matter how good you think you are, check it out. All good people, lot's of kids (responsible enough to shoot) and wives/girlfriends too... I REALLY enjoyed our time there even when I got a little fatigued at the end of the first day. I would go again and recommend EVERYONE in the world go just for the history lessons alone.”

Plenty of more info. at: www.RWVA.org

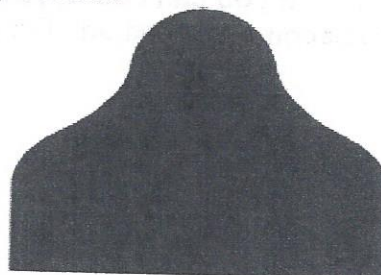
Copyright 2008 Project Appleseed: This target may be reproduced as long as it is not altered and this copyright notice remains with the target.

What do you need to bring? The main things are the same as it was in the old days; just you, your rifle, and ammo. Whether it's an old military surplus rifle, a .22 LR, or your deer rifle, you will be welcome on the firing line. In 2 action-packed days, Appleseed instructors will help you put you on the road to becoming an American Rifleman. For a complete list of items and tips on how to prepare, please see our website: www.RWVA.org

"There is no better way to spend \$70 and 2 days than to attend one of these events. It'd be a bargain at 10x the price. Guys, we need to pack this event. It's not expensive... you can shoot a .22lr if you want to save on ammo." -Missouri Appleseeder



200 Yards



300 Yards

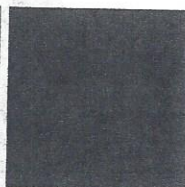


If you're using a Revolutionary War rifle, this is your expert mark!

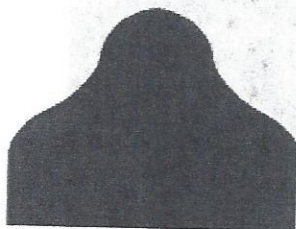
250 Yards

"I have found a renewed pride in the people of our country who are out there spreading the word... and it was great to meet other riflemen/women from around NY State." -New York Appleseeder

To graduate as an expert American Rifleman using modern firearms – and carry on the tradition of our founders – all three shots must consistently be in this square. Trust me. You CAN do it! All you need is a little patience, practice and persistence.



500 Yards



400 Yards

"Liberty cannot be preserved without general knowledge among the people" -John Adams

The American Rifleman has made his mark in our history. Are you an American Rifleman? Are you able to place all three shots on each target? Have you mastered the 'Rifleman's Quarter-mile', with all three shots in the 500 yard square?

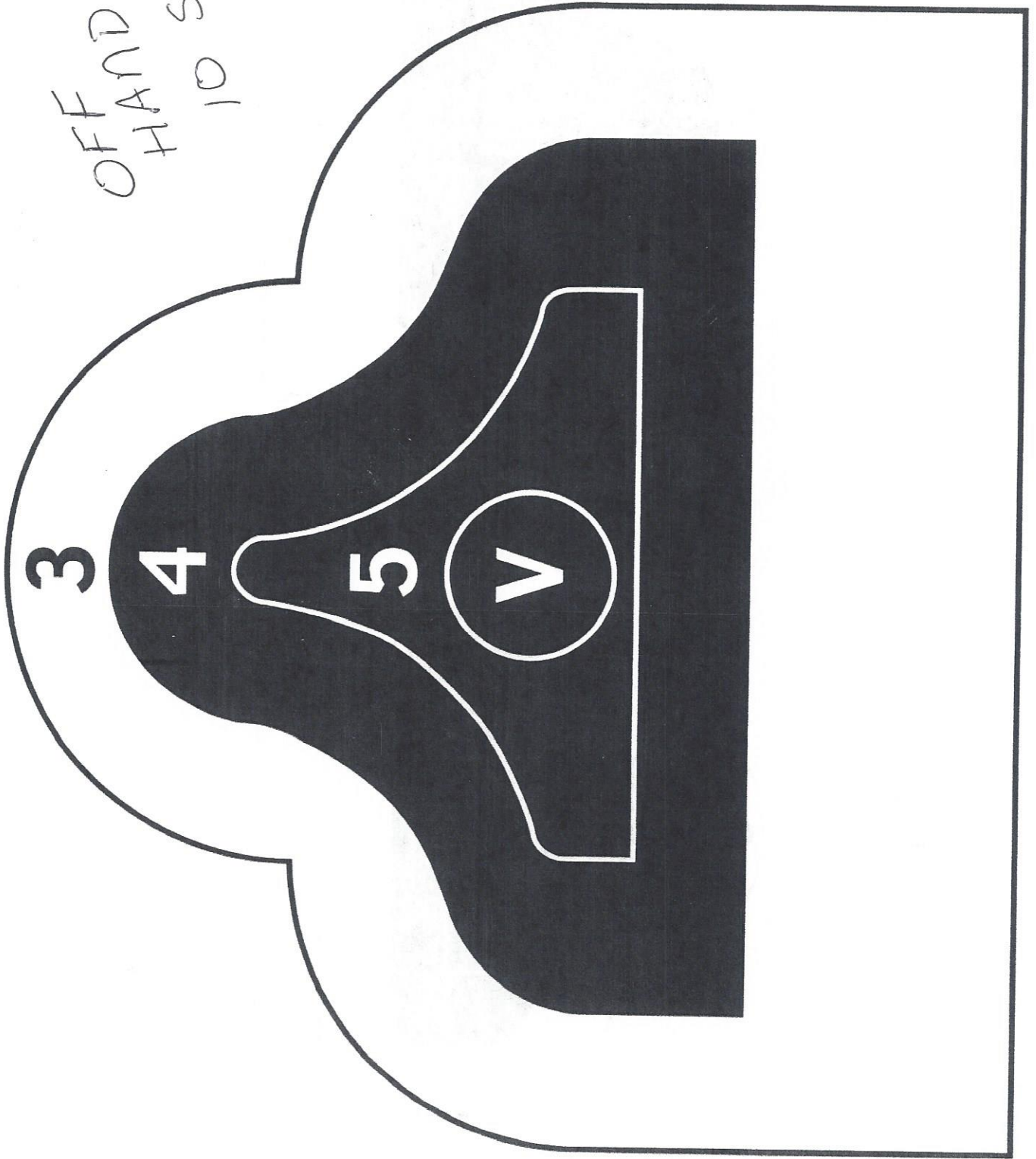
Appleseed can teach you how. See www.appleseedinfo.org/as_schedule for an Appleseed near you.

April 19, 1775 - The Day Marksmanship met History and the Heritage began. Liberty in America was secured through marksmanship. Help honor that fine tradition, by becoming a true American Rifleman. The Revolutionary War Veterans Association can help! The RWVA sponsors rifle marksmanship and American Heritage clinics around the country, through a program called "the Appleseed Project." Find out more at: www.AppleseedInfo.org

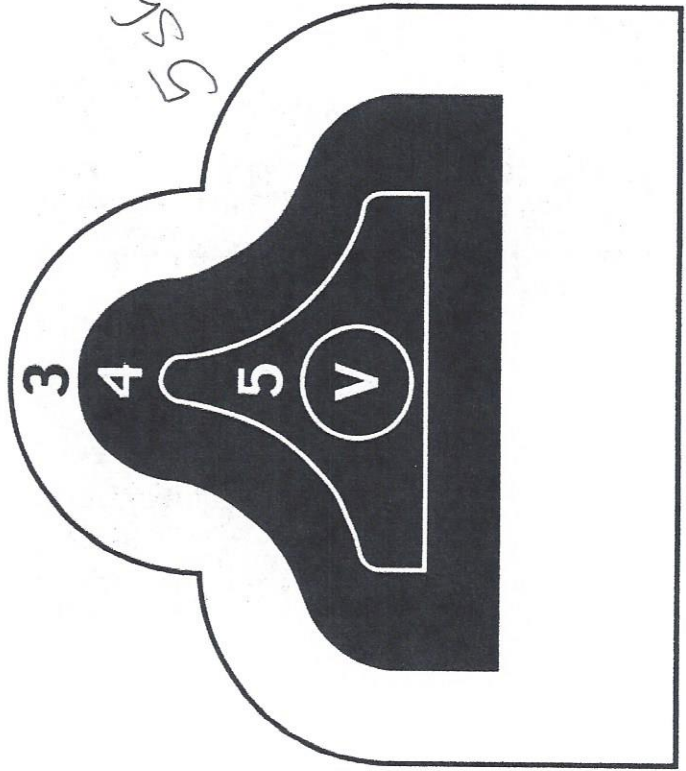
Appleseed - Continuing The Tradition of the American Rifleman

Plenty of more info. at: www.RWVA.org

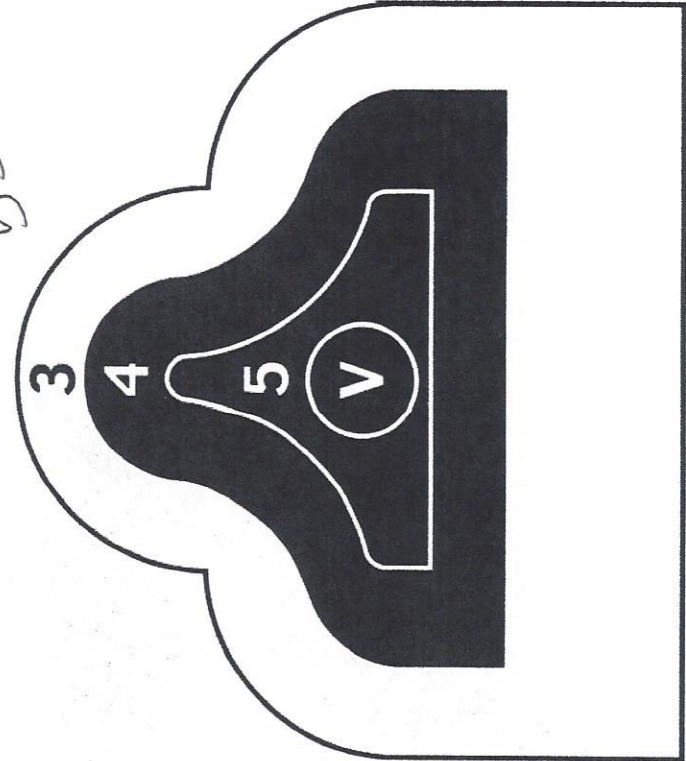
OFF HAND
HAND SHOTS
10



Sitting or kneeling 5 shots each
5 shots each
5 shots each
2 then
8

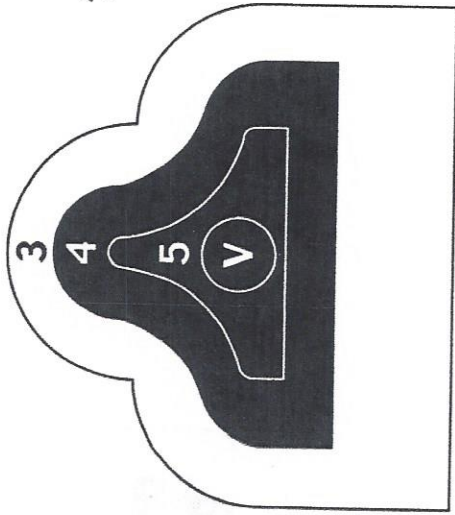


5 shots

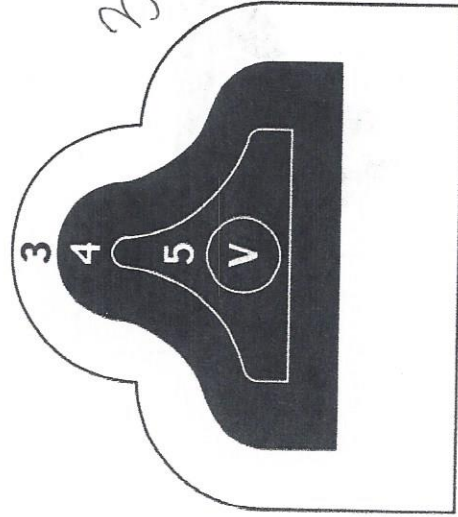


5 shots

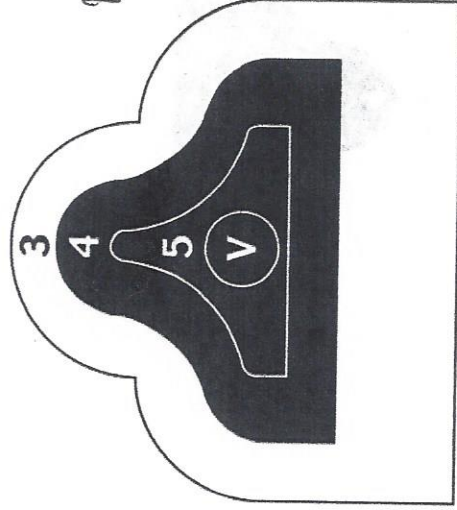
RAPID
FIRE
FRONT
with then &
may change



3 shots

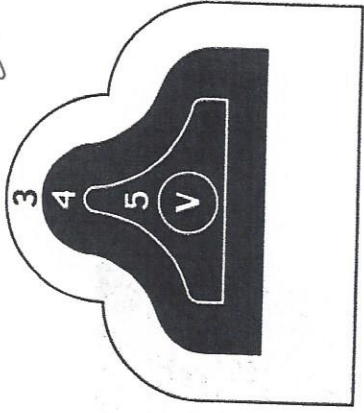


3 shots

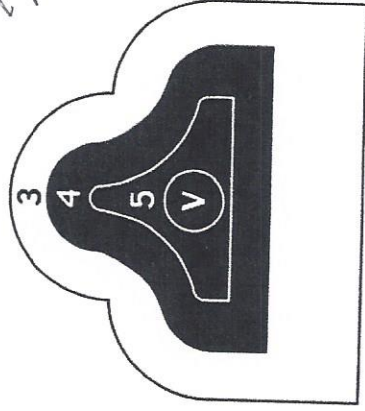


4 shots

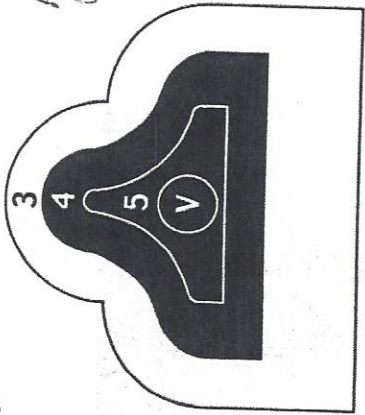
2 shots



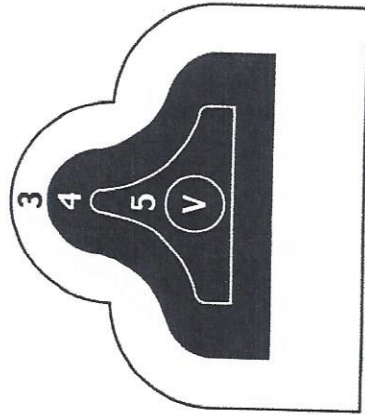
3 shots



2 shots

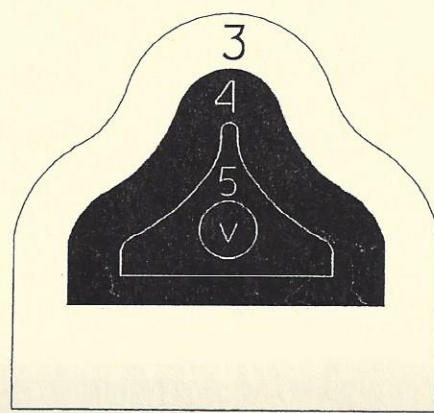
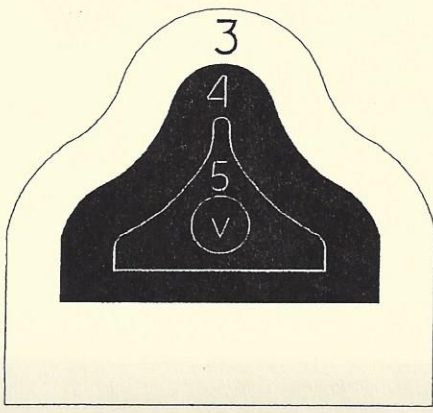
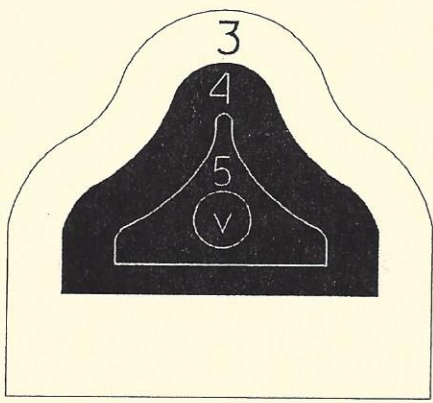
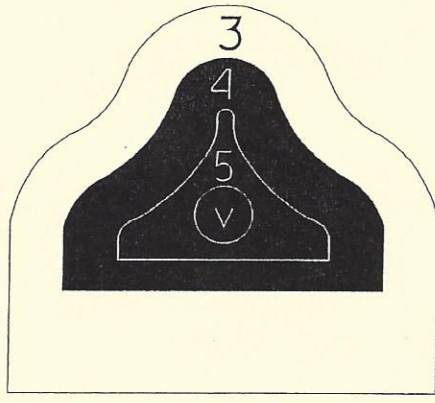
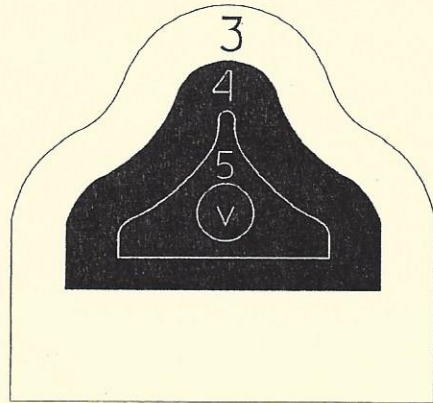
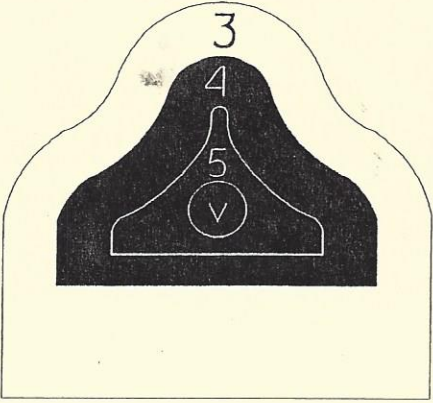


3 shots



1 round change
2, then

Practice Sheet



25M Drill Targets

(1/4" grid)

