

8/10/2007 (Rev.)

## SUMMER 2007

# MINUTEMAN CROSS COUNTRY BIATHLON

(Run & Shoot)

(Plus: GPS/Geocaching, Map & Compass, Tomahawk Throwing, Silhouette Shooting, and Rifle Merit Badge/Venturing Qualification Shooting)

**OPEN TO ALL BSA TROOP, VENTURING CREW, & EXPLORER POST  
REGISTERED MEMBERS IN THE NORTHERN RIVERS DISTRICT**



## 1st Annual

**Date: September 1, 2007**

8-6 P.M.

Location: Hat Creek Rifle and Pistol Range  
(8 Miles East of Burney)

SPONSORED BY CREW 40 AND CREW 1006 OF NORTHERN RIVERS DISTRICT

## “Exercising the American Bill of Rights”

Here’s your chance to compete with other Venturers and Scouts in the **2007 MINUTEMAN CROSS COUNTRY BIATHLON**.

Test your skills as a marksman after running mountain terrain. Plus, test your GPS/ Geocaching, and Map & Compass skills. Try the Tomahawk throw. Plus, there will be silhouette shooting and Rifle Merit Badge / Venturing Qualification Shooting.

**WHO:** Registered Members of Venturing Crews, Explorer Posts and Boy Scout Troops registered in the Northern Rivers District.

**WHEN:** September 1, 2007.

**TIME:** Check in 7:00 A.M. to 7:45 A.M.  
**Gate closes and locked at 8:00 A.M. Plan to be EARLY. No Late Entries.**

**LOCATION:** Hat Creek Rifle & Pistol Range - Just Above Burney, CA (Map attached).

**UNIFORM:** Venturing Field Uniform, Crew Activity Shirt, Crew Uniform, or Matching T-Shirts - (Your Choice); Boy Scouts wear Field Uniform, BSA Activity Shirt, Crew Uniform, or Matching T-Shirts - (Your Choice).

**FOOD/WATER:** Each Crew /BSA Troop is responsible for their own LUNCH & water. There is NO running water at the range.

### **ACTIVITIES:**

1. GPS/Geocaching.



2. Mountain Run - Shooting Biathlon (Individual race format competition).
3. Tomahawk Throwing.
4. Three (3) separate Map & Compass courses - 1 mile each..
5. Silhouette Shooting.
6. Merit Badge / Venturing Qualification Shooting.
7. *NRA Rifle First Steps course* for those who need to qualify in order to shoot.

**Individual Race Format - Marksmanship - Biathlon Segment - Individual Shooters:**

Run / prone shoot

Run / standing shoot

Run/ prone shoot

Run standing shoot

**Course of Fire:**

For the Summer Biathlon, the rifles will be left in the range and NOT carried during the run.

Fire a .22-caliber rifle at five targets at a range of 50 meters, from both the prone and standing — known as the "off-hand" — positions – AS FOLLOWS:.

-Each shooter will start in 30-second intervals on a designated course. After completing the ½ mile circuit, each shooter will fire five rounds from a prone position.

-After completing the ½ mile circuit a second time, the shooter fires from the off-hand position.

-After completing the ½ mile circuit a third time, the shooter fires from the prone position.

-After completing the ½ mile circuit a fourth time, the shooter fires from the off-hand position.

***All Participants must participate in an NRA Rifle First Steps or NRA Basic Rifle Course.***

***NO EXCEPTIONS.***

***If you have already completed one of these two courses - you must provide a copy of your NRA Certificate. If you need to take the course, the NRA Rifle First Steps course will be provided at this event.***

**WHAT TO BRING:**

You may bring your own .22 Rifle provided it meets the BSA Policy as Follows:

Boy Scouts - Any .22 Action (Bolt , Pump, Lever, Semi-Auto, etc.) PROVIDED scout can only load and fire only 1 round at a time (as per recent revision to Guide to Safe Scouting).

Venturing/Exploring Scouts - Any .22 Action (Bolt , Pump, Lever, Semi-Auto, etc.).



# Venturing Crew 40 / Troop 40

*Exercising the American Bill of Rights*



## **Lassen Sharpshooter's Pledge**

*On my honor, as a Lassen Sharpshooter, Venturer  
/ Scout, I promise:*

***T***o always follow the rules of safe firearm handling and shooting;

***T***o seek to master those physical and mental factors essential to the firing of an accurate shot;

***T***o treasure my American heritage, the Bill of Rights, and do all I can to protect and preserve the Inalienable Individual Right to Keep and Bear Arms as guaranteed by the Second Amendment;

***T***o recognize such individual right as being justly considered as the palladium of the liberties of our republic and deterrent to, and defense against, tyranny.

**SUMMER 2007 MINUTEMAN CROSS COUNTRY BIATHLON**  
**Parental / Legal Guardian Firearm Authorization Form**  
**(For Youth under 18 years Old)**

Youth Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number (H) \_\_\_\_\_ (W) \_\_\_\_\_

As the Parent of, or Legal Guardian of, the above name Youth, I hereby give my written consent and permission for said Youth, while he/she is attending the 2007 Minuteman Cross Country Biathlon on September 1, 2007, and under the supervision of the Event Advisor, Crew Advisor, Scoutmaster, NRA Instructor(s), Range Safety Officer(s), and/or Consultant(s) to:

1. use firearms (including, but not limited to: rifles, shotguns, muzzleloaders, handguns, pistols, and revolvers), including those provided by the Event Advisor, Crew Advisor, NRA Instructor(s), Range Safety Officer(s), and /or Consultant(s); and to
2. possess live ammunition.

I further agree that the above named Youth is to comply with the following rules concerning transportation of firearms to and from authorized shooting activities; check in procedures; check out procedures; and removal of firearms from containers while at such shooting activities:

1. Firearms must be unloaded while being transported.
2. Rifles, shotguns and muzzleloaders must be transported to and from shooting activities in a gun case, and must be secured by a lock within the gun case in the event such case is not capable of being locked from the outside.
3. Handguns, pistols, and revolvers must be transported to and from shooting activities in a locked container.
4. Ammunition must be transported in a separate container from the firearm.
5. Upon arrival at a shooting activity, any youth bringing a firearm, must be accompanied by a parent or responsible adult who is over the age of 18, and both must check in with the NRA Instructor or Range Safety Officer upon arrival. Upon leaving a shooting activity with a firearm brought by the youth, any youth must first check out with the NRA Instructor or Range Safety Officer, and must be accompanied by a parent or responsible adult over the age of 18 before leaving with any firearm.
6. No firearms are to be removed from their cases and/or locked containers without prior instruction from the NRA Instructor or Range Safety Officer.

Parent / Legal Guardian

Youth Crew Member / Troop Member

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

(Please print)

(Please print)

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

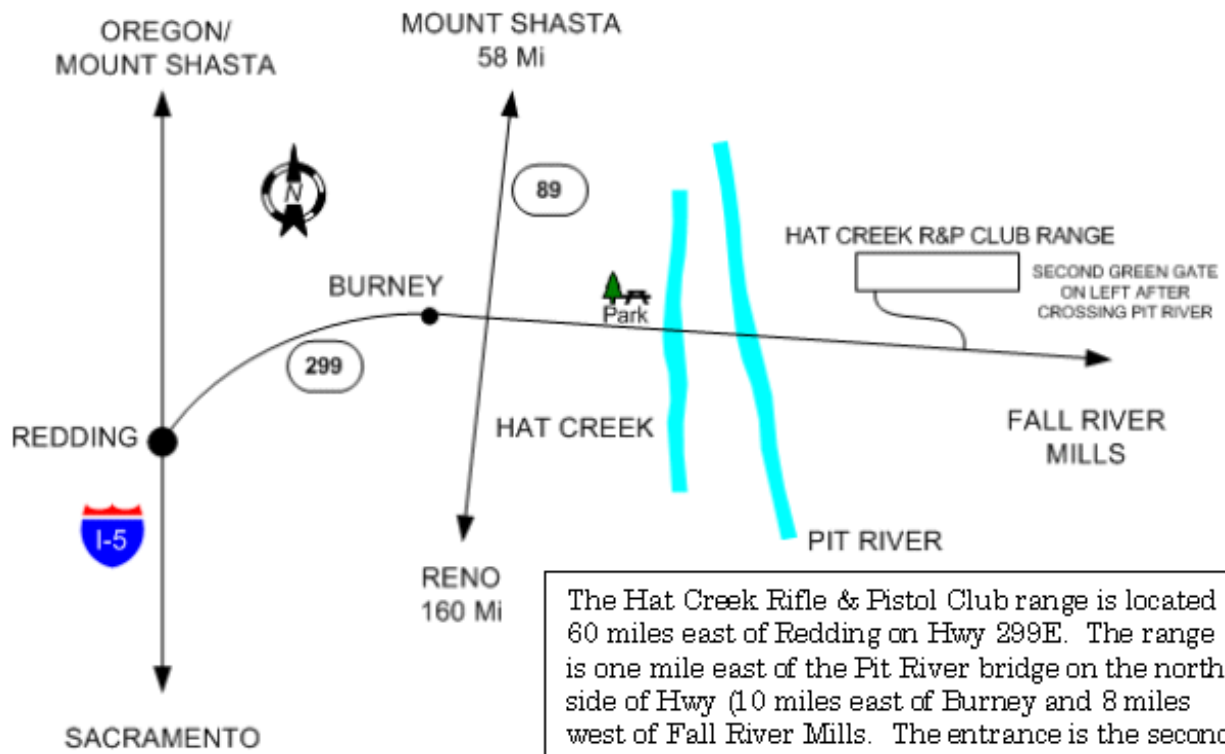
Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Version: 7/31/07

# LOCATION: Hat Creek Rifle and Pistol Range



The Hat Creek Rifle & Pistol Club range is located 60 miles east of Redding on Hwy 299E. The range is one mile east of the Pit River bridge on the north side of Hwy (10 miles east of Burney and 8 miles west of Fall River Mills). The entrance is the second green gate on your left as you travel east of the Pit River.

September 1, 2007 (VENTURING / BSA)

MINUTEMAN CROSS COUNTRY BIATHLON - REGISTRATION FORM

Instructions: Complete all Information Requested / Return Registration Form with Fees to address below / Each Unit Must File a Local Tour Permit

Crew # / Troop # \_\_\_\_\_ Name of Unit Contact Person \_\_\_\_\_
Address: \_\_\_\_\_
City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_
Phone: (w) \_\_\_\_\_ (h) \_\_\_\_\_
Unit Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Sponsor: \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

List Names of All Participants. . Make a Duplicate Copy for Unit's Records Registration. Fees are Non-refundable, but are Transferable within the Unit.

Table with 6 columns: Youth Names, Age, Gender, Youth Names, Age, Gender. Includes rows 1) through 8) for participant information.

LIST ADDITIONAL NAMES ON REVERSE SIDE OR USE EXTRA SHEET

ADULTS: BSA National Health & Safety Standards require a minimum of two adults to be present at all Times.

Table with 3 columns: Adult Names, Day Telephone #, Gender (M - F). Includes rows 1) and 2) for adult information.

All Participants must participate in an NRA Rifle First Steps or NRA Basic Rifle Course. NO EXCEPTIONS.

If you have already completed one of these two courses - you must provide a copy of your NRA Certificate. If you need to take the course, the NRA Rifle First Steps course will be provided at this event.

Youth Registration # Youths for NRA First Steps Rifle Course \_\_\_\_\_ X \$10.00 = \_\_\_\_\_
# Youths Registration Fee \_\_\_\_\_ X \$10.00 = \_\_\_\_\_
Adult Registration #of Adults Registration Fee \_\_\_\_\_ X \$ 5.00 = \_\_\_\_\_
Total Payment: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

TIME: Check in 7:00 A.M. to 7:45 A.M. No refunds unless event is cancelled

Gate closed and locked at 8:00 A.M. Plan to be EARLY. Late arrivals will not be allowed in. No refunds unless event is cancelled. Registration and fees must be received by August 23, 2007 (5:00 P.M.), unless other arrangements have been made. Drop off Registration and payment at the Scout Office in Redding, CA - Attention Crew 40.

\*Adults will shoot only if space is available. Priority is given to youth participants.

\*\*\*Registration must be received by August 23, 2007\*\*\*

Make checks payable to: Crew 40.

Please call Nathan Zeliff 530-474-3267.

# Linden Media

22037 Sweetgrass Drive

Bend, OR 97702

(Tel) 541-382-1726 541-317-2933 (FAX)

## Personal Media Release & Waiver

I. I hereby consent to being photographed/videotaped by Linden Media Management LLC and their subcontractors, and grant Linden Media Management LLC the right to use, publish, distribute, exhibit, advertise and copyright my name, picture, portrait, likeness, voice, on and off camera interviews, and any other material provided by me and my dog(s) in all audio and/or visual media, now known or hereafter devised, throughout the universe in perpetuity, including but not limited to, in and in connection with the television series produced by Linden for Boy Scouts of America known as Scouting USA., concerning my participation in the Summer 2007 Minuteman Cross Country Run and related events taking place on August 31, 2007 through September 3, 2007 and this Media Release & Waiver pertains to and is limited solely to such event(s).

I am appearing at no charge, and agree that Linden Media Management LLC and subcontractors are under no obligation to compensate me in any way for my appearance.

I represent and warrant that any statements made by me while being photographed/videotaped are true and to the best of my knowledge.

II. I agree that all photographs and videotape of me used and taken by Linden Media Management LLC or their subcontractors are owned by them and that they may copyright material containing the same. If I should receive any tape, print, negative or other copy thereof, I shall not authorize its use by anyone else, nor shall I use it for any commercial or promotional purpose without specific written authorization and granting of copyright by Linden Media Management LLC.

III. I agree that no material need be submitted to me for any further approval and Linden Media shall be without liability or obligation whatsoever to me for any creative use of the publication or exhibition of my picture, voice, statements, portrait or likeness.

IV. I warrant and represent that this license does not in any way conflict with any existing commitment on my part.

V. Nothing herein will constitute any obligation on Linden Media Management LLC to make any use of any of the rights set forth herein.

VI. In the event of any breach by Linden Media the person signing this Release shall be permitted to [his/her] remedy at law for damages, if any, and shall not have the right to terminate or rescind this agreement or any of the rights granted hereunder or in any way to enjoin or restrain the production, exhibition, broadcast, distribution, advertising, publicizing of any work containing any of the material referred to herein.

This consent and grant of rights is irrevocable so that Linden Media Management LLC may proceed in reliance thereon.

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Name

---

Address

---

Phone

---

City, State, Zip

---

Location

### CONSENT OF PARENT OF GUARDIAN

I, the undersigned, hereby warrant that I am the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_  
a minor, and have full authority to authorize the above Release which I have read and approved. I hereby release and agree to indemnify Linden Media Management LLC from and against any and all liability arising out to the exercise of the rights granted by the above Release.

---

Signature

---

Name (Print)



# Venturing Shooting Sports Outstanding Achievement Award

While working on the Ranger Shooting Sports elective, you are required to complete one of the following disciplines: air pistol; air rifle; archery; muzzle-loading rifle; shotgun; pistol; or small bore rifle. However, if you go beyond the basic requirement and complete five of the seven disciplines, you will earn the Venturing Shooting Sports Outstanding Achievement Award. This beautiful medal and certificate are sponsored by many companies and organizations in the shooting sports industry to recognize outstanding achievement in shooting sports.

*Application (please print or type)*

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_ Gender \_\_\_\_\_

Crew No. \_\_\_\_\_ Chartered Organization \_\_\_\_\_

Council \_\_\_\_\_

*Advisor's approval*

Advisor's name (print) \_\_\_\_\_

Advisor's signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Advisor's daytime phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

City, state, zip code \_\_\_\_\_

Medal and certificate will be mailed to the advisor

*Please complete both sides of this application and mail to:*

**Venturing Shooting Sports Achievement Award**

S211

Boy Scouts of America

PO Box 152079

Irving, TX 75015

## Discipline Completion Verification

*Do five of the following:*

**Air pistol**      Completion date \_\_\_\_\_      Advisor's verification \_\_\_\_\_

**Air rifle**      Completion date \_\_\_\_\_      Advisor's verification \_\_\_\_\_

**Archery**      Completion date \_\_\_\_\_      Advisor's verification \_\_\_\_\_

**Muzzle-loading  
Rifle**      Completion date \_\_\_\_\_      Advisor's verification \_\_\_\_\_

**Shotgun**      Completion date \_\_\_\_\_      Advisor's verification \_\_\_\_\_

**Pistol**      Completion date \_\_\_\_\_      Advisor's verification \_\_\_\_\_

**Small bore rifle**      Completion date \_\_\_\_\_      Advisor's verification \_\_\_\_\_

Note: Completion of a requirement can be supervised by a certified NRA instructor, however, the instructor must provide written verification of completion to the crew advisor who signs this form.

# BS - Rifle Shooting Merit Badge

1. Do the following:
  - a. Explain why BB and pellet air guns must always be treated with the same respect as firearms.
  - b. Describe how you would react if a friend visiting your home asked to see your or your family's firearm(s).
  - c. Explain the need for, and use and types of, eye and hearing protection.
  - d. Give the main points of the laws for owning and using guns in your community and state.
  - e. Explain how hunting is related to the wise use of renewable wildlife resources.
  - f. Obtain a copy of the hunting laws for your state. Explain the main points of hunting laws in your state and give any special laws on the use of guns or ammunition.
  - g. Identify and explain how you can join or be a part of shooting sports activities.
  - h. Explain to your counselor the proper hygienic guidelines used in shooting.
  - i. Give to your counselor a list of sources that you could contact for information on firearms and their use.
  
2. Do **ONE** of the following options:

## **OPTION A --- RIFLE SHOOTING (Modern Cartridge Type)**

- a. Identify the three main parts of a rifle, and tell how they function.
- b. Identify and demonstrate the three fundamental rules for safe gun handling.
- c. Identify the two types of cartridges, their parts, and how they function.
- d. Explain to your counselor what a misfire, hangfire, and squib fire are, and explain the procedures to follow in response to each.
- e. Identify and demonstrate the five fundamentals of shooting a rifle safely.
- f. Identify and explain each rule for safe shooting.
- g. Demonstrate the knowledge, skills, and attitude necessary to safely shoot a rifle from the bench rest position or supported prone position while using the five fundamentals of rifle shooting.
- h. Identify the basic safety rules for cleaning a rifle, and identify the materials needed
- i. Demonstrate how to clean a rifle properly and safely.
- j. Discuss what points you would consider in selecting a rifle
- k. Using a .22 caliber rimfire rifle and shooting from a bench rest or supported prone position at 50 feet, fire five groups (three shots per group) that can be covered by a quarter. Using these targets, explain how to adjust sights to zero.
- l. Adjust sights to center the group on the target and fire five groups (five shots per group). According to the target used, each shot in the group must meet the following minimum score:
  1. A-32 targets - 9
  2. A-17 or TQ-1 targets - 7,
  3. A-36 targets - 5.

Note: It is not always practical to adjust the sights (i.e. when

using a borrowed fixed-sight rifle). For requirement 21, you may demonstrate your ability to use the shooting fundamentals by shooting five shot groups (five shots per group) in which all shots can be covered by or touch a quarter and then explain how to adjust the sights to zero the rifle.

### **OPTION B --- AIR RIFLE SHOOTING (BB or Pellet)**

- a. Identify the three main parts of an air rifle, and tell how they function.
- b. Identify and demonstrate the three fundamental rules for handling a rifle safely.
- c. Identify the two most common types of air rifle ammunition.
- d. Identify and demonstrate the five fundamentals of shooting a rifle.
- e. Identify and explain each rule for shooting an air rifle safely.
- f. Demonstrate the knowledge, skills and attitude necessary to safely shoot a target from the bench rest position or supported prone position while using the five fundamentals of rifle shooting.
- g. Identify the basic safety rules for cleaning an air rifle, and identify the materials needed.
- h. Demonstrate how to clean an air rifle safely.
- i. Discuss what points you would consider in selecting an air rifle.
- j. Using a BB gun or pellet air rifle and shooting from a bench rest or supported prone position at 15 feet for BB guns or 33 feet for air rifles, fire five groups (three shots per group) that can be covered by a quarter.
- k. Adjust sights to center the group on the target and fire five groups (five shots per group). According to the target used, each shot in the group must meet the following minimum score:
  1. BB rifle at 15 feet or 5 meters using TQ - 5 targets - 8.
  2. Pellet air rifle at 25 feet using TQ - 5 target - 8, at 33 feet or 10 meters using AR-1 targets - 6.

### **OPTION C --- MUZZLE - LOADING RIFLE SHOOTING**

- a. Discuss a brief history of the development of muzzle-loading rifles.
- b. Identify principal parts of percussion and flintlock rifles and discuss how they function.
- c. Demonstrate and discuss the safe handling rules of muzzleloading rifles.
- d. Identify the various grades of black powder and their proper use.
- e. Discuss proper safety procedures pertaining to black powder use and storage.
- f. Discuss proper components of a load.
- g. Identify proper procedures and accessories used for loading a muzzle-loading rifle.
- h. Demonstrate the knowledge, skills, and attitude necessary to safely shoot a muzzle-loading rifle on a range, including range procedures.
- i. Shoot a target with a muzzle-loading rifle using the five fundamentals of firing the shot.
- j. Identify the materials needed to clean a muzzle-loading rifle safely. Using these materials, demonstrate how to clean a muzzleloading rifle safely.
- k. Identify the causes of a muzzle-loading rifle's failing to fire and explain or demonstrate proper correction procedures.

- I. Discuss what points you would consider in selecting a muzzleloading rifle.
- m. Using a muzzle-loading rifle of any caliber and shooting from a bench rest or supported prone position, fire three groups (three shots per group) that can be covered by the base of a standard size soft drink can.
- n. Center the group on the target and fire three groups (five shots per group). According to the target used, each shot in the group must meet the following minimum score:
  - 1. at 25 yards using NRA A-23 or NMLRA 50-yard targets - 7;
  - 2. at 50 yards using NRA A-25 or NMLRA 100 yard targets - 7.

Source: BSA Advancement ID#: 123

Requirements last updated in: 2002

Pamphlet Stock Number: 33330A

Pamphlet Revision Date: 2001

Source of Above: - Worksheets are also at this: <http://usscouts.org/mb/mb123.asp>

# The Individual Right to Keep and Bear Arms

"A well regulated militia being necessary to the security of a free state, the right of the people to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed". **Amendment II - U.S. Constitution.**

## On the subject of - what is the militia?

"I ask, sir, what is the militia? It is the whole people, except for a few public officials."

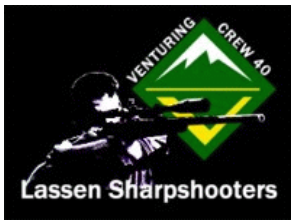
— George Mason, in *Debates in Virginia Convention on Ratification of the Constitution*

§ 1890. The importance of this article will scarcely be doubted by any persons, who have duly reflected upon the subject. The militia is the natural defence of a free country against sudden foreign invasions, domestic insurrections, and domestic usurpations of power by rulers. It is against sound policy for a free people to keep up large military establishments and standing armies in time of peace, both from the enormous expenses, with which they are attended, and the facile means, which they afford to ambitious and unprincipled rulers, to subvert the government, or trample upon the rights of the people. The right of the citizens to keep and bear arms has justly been considered, as the palladium of the liberties of a republic; since it offers a strong moral check against the usurpation and arbitrary power of rulers; and will generally, even if these are successful in the first instance, enable the people to resist and triumph over them.<sup>2</sup> And yet, though this truth would seem so clear, and the importance of a well regulated militia would seem so undeniable, it cannot be disguised, that among the American people there is a growing indifference to any system of militia discipline, and a strong disposition, from a sense of its burthens, to be rid. ( COMMENTARIES ON THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES; WITH A PRELIMINARY REVIEW OF THE CONSTITUTIONAL HISTORY OF THE COLONIES AND STATES, BEFORE THE ADOPTION OF THE CONSTITUTION. BY JOSEPH STORY, LL. D., DANE PROFESSOR OF LAW IN HARVARD UNIVERSITY.)

## Examples of the Right to Keep and Bear Arms in Action

April 19, 1775 - Patriot's Day

The Battle of Athens, Tennessee (1946)



## IN THE SPIRIT OF PATRIOT'S DAY

### The Shot Heard Around the World

# APRIL 19, 1775

Remember, that as wayward children of King George, we (as British subjects), were commanded by our government (at that time) to surrender our guns and powder.

**The actual British order to seize and destroy the American's guns and supplies, for that day, reads as follows:**

"Having received Intelligence, that a Quantity of Ammunition, Provision, Artillery, Tents and small Arms, have been collected at Concord, for the Avowed Purpose of raising and supporting a Rebellion against His Majesty, you will March with the Corps of Grenadiers and Light Infantry, put under your Command, with utmost expedition and Secrecy to Concord, where you will seize and destroy all Artillery, Ammunition, Provisions, Tents, Small Arms, and all Military Stores whatever ..." (Per Order of General Gage to Lt. Colonel F. Smith, of the Kings Troops. *The Minute Men The First Fight: Myths and Realities of the American Revolution*, by John R. Galvin, at page 100).

**At Concord, house to house searches were conducted by the British to carry out the above order. Remember, the possession of powder, cannon, and other supplies of war might have meant arrest for revolutionary activities. The supplies of arms were substantial:**

"Within the town, scattered through the cellars and attics and outbuildings of at least twenty-five houses, the provincials had concealed ten tons of musket balls and cartridges, thirty-five half barrels of powder, 350 tents, fourteen medicine chests, eighty barrels of beef, eight and a half tons of salt fish, seventeen and a half tons of rye, 318 barrels of flour, 100 barrels of salt, ... hundreds of axes, canteens, reams of cartridge paper ... and ... a substantial number of cannon and gun carriages of varying sizes... ." (emphasis added). *The Minute Men the First Fight: Myths and Realities of the American Revolution*, by John R. Galvin, at page 140).

On April 19, 1775, the Americans were prepared to, and did, fight for their liberty and freedom. What would you have done?

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## **The Battle of Athens, Tennessee**

### **As Recently As 1946, American Citizens Were Forced To Take Up Arms As A Last Resort Against Corrupt Government Officials.**

Published in **Guns & Ammo** October 1995, pp. 50-51

On August 1-2, 1946, some Americans, brutalized by their county government, used armed force as a last resort to overturn it. These Americans wanted honest open elections. For years they had asked for state or federal election monitors to prevent vote fraud (forged ballots, secret ballot counts and intimidation by armed sheriff's deputies) by the local political boss. They got no help.

These Americans' absolute refusal to knuckle under had been hardened by service in World War II. Having fought to free other countries from murderous regimes, they rejected vicious abuse by their county government.

These Americans had a choice. Their state's Constitution -- Article 1, Section 26 -- recorded their right to keep and bear arms for the common defense. Few "gun control" laws had been enacted.

These Americans were residents of McMinn County, which is located between Chattanooga and Knoxville in Eastern Tennessee. The two main towns were Athens and Etowah. McMinn County residents had long been independent political thinkers. For a long time they also had: accepted bribe-taking by politicians and/or the sheriff to overlook illicit whiskey-making and gambling; financed the sheriff's department from fines-usually for speeding or public drunkenness which promoted false arrests; and put up with voting fraud by both Democrats and Republicans.

The wealthy Cantrell family, of Etowah, backed Franklin Delano Roosevelt in the 1932 election, hoping New Deal programs would revive the local economy and help Democrats to replace Republicans in the county government. So it proved.

Paul Cantrell was elected sheriff in the 1936, 1938 and 1940 elections, but by slim margins. The sheriff was the key county official. Cantrell was elected to the state senate in 1942 and 1944; his chief deputy, Pat Mansfield, was elected sheriff. In 1946 Paul Cantrell again sought the sheriff's office.

At the end of 1945, some 3,000 battle-hardened veterans returned to McMinn County; the GIs held Cantrell politically responsible for Mansfield's doings. Early in 1946, some newly returned ex-GIs decided to challenge Cantrell politically by offering an all-ex-GI, non-partisan ticket. They promised a fraud-free election, stating in ads and speeches that there would be an honest ballot count and reform of county government.

At a rally, a GI speaker said, "The principles that we fought for in this past war do not exist in McMinn County. We fought for democracy because we believe in democracy but not the form we live under in this county" (Daily Post-Athenian, 17 June 1946, p.1 ). At the end of July 1946, 159 McMinn County GIs petitioned the FBI to send election monitors. There was no response. The Department of Justice had not responded to McMinn County residents' complaints of election fraud in 1940, 1942 and 1944.

**FROM BALLOTS TO BULLETS**

The primary election was held on August 1. To intimidate voters, Mansfield brought in some 200 armed "deputies." GI poll-watchers were beaten almost at once. At about 3 p.m., Tom Gillespie, an African-American voter was told by a sheriff's deputy that he could not vote. Despite being beaten, Gillespie persisted. The enraged deputy shot him. The gunshot drew a crowd. Rumors spread that Gillespie had been shot in the back; he later recovered (C. Stephen Byrum, *The Battle of Athens*, Paidia Productions, Chattanooga, TN, 1987; pp. 155-57).

Other deputies detained ex-GI poll-watchers in a polling place, as that made the ballot counting "Public" A crowd gathered. Sheriff Mansfield told his deputies to disperse the crowd. When the two ex-GIs smashed a big window and escaped, the crowd surged forward. The deputies, with guns drawn, formed a tight half-circle around the front of the polling place. One deputy, "his gun raised high...shouted: 'If you sons of bitches cross this street I'll kill you!'" (Byrum, p.165).

Mansfield took the ballot boxes to the jail for counting. The deputies seemed to fear immediate attack by the "people who had just liberated Europe and the South Pacific from two of the most powerful war machines in human history" (Byrum, pp. 168-69).

Short of firearms and ammunition, the GIs scoured the county to find them. By borrowing keys to the National Guard and State Guard armories, they got three M-1 rifles, five .45 semi-automatic pistols and 24 British Enfield rifles. The armories were nearly empty after the war's end. By 8 p.m. a group of GIs and "local boys" headed for the jail but left the back door unguarded to give the jail's defenders an easy way out.

Three GIs alerting passersby to danger were fired on from the jail. Two GIs were wounded. Other GIs returned fire.

Firing subsided after 30 minutes; ammunition ran low and night had fallen. Thick brick walls shielded those inside the jail. Absent radios, the GIs' rifle fire was uncoordinated. "From the hillside fire rose and fell in disorganized cascades. More than anything else, people were simply shooting at the jail" (Byrum, p.189).

Several who ventured into the street in front of the jail were wounded. One man inside the jail was badly hurt; he recovered. Most sheriff's deputies wanted to hunker down and await rescue. Governor McCord mobilized the State Guard, perhaps to scare the GIs into withdrawing. The State Guard never went to Athens. McCord may have feared that Guard units filled with ex-GIs might not fire on other ex-GIs.

At about 2 a.m. on August 2, the GIs forced the issue. Men from Meigs County threw dynamite sticks and damaged the jail's porch. The panicked deputies surrendered. GIs quickly secured the building. Paul Cantrell faded into the night, having almost been shot by a GI who knew him, but whose .45 pistol had jammed. Mansfield's deputies were kept overnight in jail for their own safety. Calm soon returned. The GIs posted guards. The rifles borrowed from the armory were cleaned and returned before sunup.

## **THE AFTERMATH: RESTORING DEMOCRACY**

In five precincts free of vote fraud, the GI candidate for sheriff, Knox Henry, won 1,168 votes to Cantrell's 789. Other GI candidates won by similar margins.

The GI's did not hate Cantrell. They only wanted honest government. On August 2, a town meeting set up a three-man governing committee. The regular police having fled, six men were chosen to police Etowah. In addition, "Individual citizens were called upon to form patrols or guard groups, often led by a GI... To their credit, however, there is not a single mention of an abuse of power on their behalf" (Byrum, p. 220).

Once the GI candidates' victory had been certified, they cleaned up county government, the jail was fixed,

newly elected officials accepted a \$5,000 pay limit and Mansfield supporters who resigned were replaced.

The general election on November 5 passed quietly. McMinn County residents, having restored the rule of law, returned to their daily lives. Pat Mansfield moved back to Georgia. Paul Cantrell set up an auto dealership in Etowah. "Almost everyone who knew Cantrell in the years after the Battle' agree that he was not bitter about what had happened" (Byrum pp. 232-33; see also New York Times, 9 August 1946, p. 8).

The 79th Congress adjourned on August 2, 1946, when the Battle of Athens ended. However, Representative John Jennings Jr. from Tennessee decried McMinn County's sorry situation under Cantrell and Mansfield and the Justice Department's repeated failures to help the McMinn County residents. Jennings was delighted that "...at long last, decency and honesty, liberty and law have returned to the fine county of McMinn.. " (Congressional Record, House; U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 1946; Appendix, Volume 92, Part 13, p. A4870).

## **THE LESSONS OF ATHENS**

Those who took up arms in Athens, Tennessee, wanted honest elections, a cornerstone of our constitutional order. They had repeatedly tried to get federal or state election monitors and had used armed force so as to minimize harm to the law-breakers, showing little malice to the defeated law-breakers. They restored lawful government.

The Battle of Athens clearly shows how Americans can and should lawfully use armed force and also shows why the rule of law requires unrestricted access to firearms and how civilians with military-type firearms can beat the forces of government gone bad.

Dictators believe that public order is more important than the rule of law. However, Americans reject this idea. Brutal political repression is lethal to many. An individual criminal can harm a handful of people. Governments alone can brutalize thousands, or millions.

Law-abiding McMinn County residents won the Battle of Athens because they were not hamstrung by "gun control " They showed us when citizens can and should use armed force to support the rule of law.

**SUMMER 2007**

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