

60th
ANNIVERSARY

WINNIPEG POLICE

REVOLVER CLUB

By Rod Hutter, Secretary

(Inc. 1959)



During the spring of 1959, Winnipeg Police Constable Don Thorsteinson was a shooting instructor who trained Winnipeg Police recruits in the basement range of the “CPS” (Central Police Station) on Rupert Avenue. At the time, officers were taught to shoot “Olympic Style” which consisted of firing 10 rounds in five minutes, one handed, at a bulls-eye target situated 20 yards away. Side arms of the day were primarily Webley revolvers that fired a .38 short, though some detectives had .38 caliber Colt revolvers which they purchased themselves.

Constable Thorsteinson happened across a magazine article by the University of Indiana Center for Police Training, which promoted a new style of “combat shooting” that appeared to be more oriented towards Police officers. This handgun course also moved away from the bulls-eye target, and instead used a man-sized target developed by Colt which had point values assigned to various areas.

The university, located in Bloomington Indiana, planned to host a competition sponsored by Colt Manufacturing to teach this type of shooting over the week-end of May 22, 23, and 24 (1959). Thorsteinson felt the Winnipeg Police should attend on the chance it would greatly advance the organization.

By way of a written “Special Report” to Chief Taft, Constable Thorsteinson requested permission to assemble and fund a team of 6 officers to attend the



Constable Stan Smyth

University and learn this new combat shooting. The request was granted, and “shoot-offs” were held at the Miller Road Range to find the most qualified individuals who would be sent. When scores were tallied at the end, six officers were selected and became the first Winnipeg Police Shooting Team which consisted of: Detective-Inspector Norm Stewart (later Chief of Police), Detective Ron Truesdale, Constable George Robert (Bob)

Taylor, Constable Don Thorsteinson, Constable Stan Smyth and Constable Stan Miner.

With a budget of \$900 provided by the department, and transportation consisting of a Volkswagen van loaned by the Winnipeg Police Association, the six departed Winnipeg and drove to Bloomington, Indiana. They were away for a total of 9 days, and joined 429 Police officers from across the United States, and 4 from Puerto Rico, for the first ever U.S. National Police shooting Championships. During the shooting competition, the Winnipeg officers won first place in the category of “Highest Police Team West of the Mississippi” (highest scoring).

The impact of this type of shooting was such, that the Winnipeg Police Revolver Club was formally incorporated in the fall of 1959 to begin promoting the new combat shooting for all Winnipeg officers. Through the club, Winnipeg Police teams began attending various shooting competitions held across Canada and the United States where they won numerous awards. Concepts of this “combat

shooting” (which emphasizes instinctive shooting) were soon adopted as part of regular firearms training, making the Winnipeg Police the first department in Canada to adopt this style.

Around 1968, the Winnipeg Police Revolver Club assisted in building the Cadboro Range along with the Fort Garry Police Department under the leadership of Chief Art Bridgewater. The club used this facility to sponsor many shooting competitions before and after it was turned over to the Winnipeg Police Department upon amalgamation in 1974. Of interesting note, the range tower used to be the north guard tower of the Stony Mountain Penitentiary, and the original wooden building was previously the Southwood Golf Course Clubhouse. This original building was replaced by another more modern one in 1993. The Club also possessed a mobile home at Cadboro that was donated by the Transcona Waterworks and hauled in from their yards.

All these buildings were destroyed when the Cadboro Range was decommissioned and sold for the development of Waverley West. The club still continued hosting competitions that were now hosted at the new Winnipeg Police gun range constructed on Wyper Road.

2019 marked the 60TH Anniversary of the Winnipeg Police Revolver Club which continues to host shooting competitions to this present day. These events have many categories to accommodate both veteran and novice shooters alike, and are open to members of the Winnipeg Police Revolver Club or any other shooting organization associated with the Canadian Police Combat Association (CPCA). Of particular interest, the “Duty Gun” category was created for members to use their Police issue pistols and requires no other equipment aside from an issue belt and holster. Costs to enter are low and prizes consist of cash back awards.

Anyone interested in joining the Winnipeg Police Revolver club can approach the Museum for the Club contact information.



*First Canadian Police Pistol Team - Bloomington, Indiana, 1959.
Stan Smyth, Bob Taylor, Stan Miner, Ron Trusdale, Norm Stewart,
Don Thorsteinson*

