

# BEST TARGETS

## ***BEST Targets Shooting Team After Action Report (AAR)***

**Event:** 2015 Mammoth Sniper Challenge, Open Division

**Date:** January 9-11, 2015

**Location:** Legion OTG, Blakely, GA

**Websites:** [www.mammothsniperchallenge.com](http://www.mammothsniperchallenge.com)  
[www.legionotg.com](http://www.legionotg.com)

**Shooter:** Chris Andrews with Scott Whitehead

**Gear:** Remington 700 5R .308, Surgeon DBM, SWFA 10x42 scope, Harris Bipod, SWA 175 gr SMK

### **Facility Notes**

Legion OTG is a 3000+ acre training facility in southern Georgia. The facility features both 1000+ yard known and unknown distance ranges, a shooting tower, a shoot house, many smaller rifle and pistol bays, a pro shop, 32 on site cabins and more. The facility is used for military and law enforcement training as well as civilian coursework and competitive events. In short the place is awesome. The ranges are configured so that they can almost all be used at once. On the weekend of the event the Georgia weather was cold and windy with highs in the mid 30's to low 50's over 3 days.

### **Event Format**

This event was again divided into three divisions – Open, Tough Man and Extreme Tough Man. Each division shot 3-4 stages per day. The Open Division is strictly a shooting event in which everyone drives from stage to stage, enjoys the heat of their vehicle and sleeps at a hotel or cabin every night. The Tough Man Division requires competitors to hike from stage to stage starting every morning and ending every night at the pro shop. The hikes between stages averaged 2.5+ miles and one must carry their gear all day. The Extreme Tough Man Division is exactly as named. Extreme competitors leave the pro shop Friday morning and don't return until Sunday afternoon after hiking 23 miles, shooting and camping out for three days and two nights. Open division shooters are scored individually. Tough Man divisions are scored as a team. Although we've shot several events since our first Mammoth Sniper Challenge we chose to shoot in the Open Division.

This year our Open Division squad had 12 shooters in it and once again we rotated through the stages over three days. Just like last year our squad was stacked with great shooters, many of them from the AMU or with military experience.

We shot 11 stages over three days. Each shooter got 4 minutes per stage to score as many points as possible. In general the targets were on the smaller side and distances ranged from 200 to 1140 yards with most targets in the 400 to 800 range. Targets were assigned point values based on distance and size. Many stages had bonus points available for first round hits. Compared to last year's event this year's stages included more additional physical challenges. Some stages included pulling a weighted sled some distance, loading logs into a 2.5 ton truck or crawling under barbed wire into position before engaging targets. We shot prone from the back of an SUV, standing offhand, off unstable barricades and from the back of a 2 ½ ton truck. Some stages required some movement to engage targets from two positions. All of the targets were of known distance and there was no mildot ranging required this year. One stage featured a stage gun from Accurate Ordnance that each shooter shot tow rounds thru for bonus points after their 4 minutes were up. There was a short range, fast paced "cowboy" stage that required engaging 5 targets from 5 positions spread out in a shooting bay full of obstacles and barricades. Only a couple shooters "cleaned" any stage and on the score sheets we saw quite a few score zero point totals on some stages.

### **Things Done Well**

With one year, four competitions and a few practice days experience under my belt this year's event felt amazingly different. The four minutes per stage seemed like much longer this year. I arrived with good DOPE on the rifle/ammo combination under much different conditions and the ballistic calculator converted that data to elevation settings for these conditions perfectly. I scored bonus points for a "first round hit" on several stages and even on several targets on one stage. We had prepared for and practiced the 90 degree canted position again but that challenge didn't show up in this year's event. Since last year's event I added Surgeon DBM to my rifle and using 10 round AI magazines was MUCH more enjoyable (and competitive) than top feeding my Remington 700. This was the first event that I ever used an armboard to keep DOPE and stage notes in and it was very helpful. My stage notes and range cards are much better than this time

last year and having all that info on my arm was huge. We saw many more armboards this year versus last year. Scott and I packed with Eberlestock bags this year and hauled them on the back of a Polaris Razor which was not only nicer than using a car but it was also a ton of fun. We used a digital countdown timer mounted to our spotting scope to help us manage the stages this year and it worked well for us. We were happy that after a few stages some of the shooters from the Army AMU asked if they could borrow our timer – once again everyone can learn something from everyone.

## Things Done Poorly

I knew I was going into the event at a disadvantage (again) shooting a .308 against the hotter 6 mm and 6.5 mm rounds but there were more .308's at the event this year. Tyler Payne finished second in Open Division shooting a .308. We saw fewer gas gun shooters in our squad this year versus last year. I used the SWFA 10x42 scope again. With this fixed power scope I sometimes found it difficult to find the targets again. I saw several competitors adjusting the magnification of their scopes to find targets and then zooming in on them to take shots. Read this and learn from my mistake(s): when making elevation adjustments that take multiple rounds of the turret be SURE to count and double check them. I made this mistake last year and after vowing to never do it again I DID. This time my spotter and I both realized something was wrong and I stopped to reset the turret. After resetting the turret I immediately scored a first round hit and then hit the next target. I struggled in the back of the 2 ½" ton truck to get into a good shooting position and scored zero points on this stage. Scott and I talked a lot this weekend about spotting. He would agree that I did a better job spotting misses and adjustments for him than he did for I. I feel like this lost me some points and also helped to score some for him.

## Results

I finished 18<sup>th</sup> in Open Division. This was a gain from last year's 23<sup>rd</sup> place finish. I was much better prepared this year and my performance was much more competitive. Brandon Green won the Open Division with 205 points. Tyler Payne finished 2<sup>nd</sup> with 130 points and Jonathan Smith finished third with 109 points. My partner Scott Whitehead finished 13<sup>th</sup> 10 points behind 3<sup>rd</sup>. I was only 12 points behind Scott. Many finishing positions were separated by only 1 point and with target values ranging from 1 to 6 points EVERY hit counted. I thought more about the targets I missed on the way home than the ones that I hit. Knowing what mistakes I made I feel like we could have finished in the top 10.

## Lessons Learned

Equipment is important but the shooter and spotter have to do their job. Someday I will install a better scope with more magnification and a better reticle. I was reminded again that you can spend as much as you'd ever like on gear but there will always be someone with something "better" and there will always be something new out. Practice and preparation are just as important. Never miss a chance to practice every scenario you can imagine for these events. Scott and I have both agreed to practice our spotting as well – this doesn't sound like as much fun as shooting practice but it's VERY important.

## Notable Names

We met many great people at the event and thank all of them for their help. Our RO and scorer did a great job with the stage briefings and score sheets. Jared Utter and Trip McInvale were in our squad again this year. Jared returned with an Accurate Ordnance .308 which was a huge upgrade to what he shot last year. You can't not pick up a helpful tidbit every time Trip McInvale is shooting around you. Tyler and Stephanie Payne were in our squad and Brandon Green brought his coach and wind caller Emil Praslick. Dan Kitchell and Tom Cuthbert were great guys and I'm sure we'll see them at events again soon. Shooters in our Squad 6 finished 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> in Open Division as well as 7<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>. I can't imagine being in a more stacked squad of awesome shooters and I learned a lot from each of them. I also had a quick chat with John McQuay from 8541 Tactical – we share Evansville, IN as a hometown but still haven't shot together.

This year Scott and I had several sponsors help us with our return to the Mammoth Sniper Challenge. The Last Stands target stands, Mechanix Wear gloves and SPEED Energy drink all contributed to our effort and we're very thankful.

## Summary

The Mammoth Sniper Challenge continues to be an awesome event and I'm looking forward to going back again next year. Legion OTG is an amazing facility. Although I was better prepared for the event this year there are still things I could have done better ... and there always will be. THAT is exactly what will keep me coming back again ☺.

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