

The FBIRA Possible Club --A Perfect Score

Between 1936, when the firearms training course was initiated, and 1939, only seven Special Agents and one National Police Academy (NPA) graduate had attained a perfect score in the shooting course. This prompted SA I. E. Nitschke's suggestion that a "Possible Club" be formed solely for Agents, but consideration could be given to granting NPA graduates membership also. He felt it would stimulate interest and act as an incentive to attain better scores in shooting.

The Executive Conference at Headquarters met the following month in January, 1940. Of the eight members in attendance, five were in favor of the suggestion and three believed it would not stimulate interest in improving marksmanship, and since no special privileges would be granted, it would be an empty honor. Director J. Edgar Hoover agreed with the five who approved of the suggestion. Other names -- The Century Club, The FBI Century, and The FBI Century Club -- were also considered, but the Executive Conference felt Nitschke's title best described the purpose of the club, which was to honor those who shot the highest possible score on the firearms range.

Soon after an announcement in "The Investigator," June, 1940, that the possibles must be shot at Quantico in order to qualify for membership, letters to the Director were written by field office Agents. Many expressed their belief that Seat of Government, Washington Field, and Richmond Agents had a greater opportunity to be scored for Possible Club membership than those in the field. Field Agents could only make their official attempt during their In-Service Training held once in four years, often during inclement weather, while those in the Washington area used Quantico regularly for their field training. In 1963, however, favorable consideration was given to counting possibles scored during a scheduled shoot in field office ranges. Contributing to the decision were the facts that field instructors had become very competent, many having once instructed at Quantico, and by then, field ranges were measured uniformly, rather than by a certain number of unstandardized paces.

Attaining the best possible score is

not at all easy, as evidenced by the fact that approximately 4% of the SA complement receive this esteemed goal. The excitement of walking towards a target with a cluster of hits in the K-5 area is usually deflated as the one or two strays which just missed appear when the shooter gets closer.

Criteria for membership in the Possible Club:

1. Alibis are limited to the following:
 - a) Weapon malfunctions
 - b) Ammunition malfunctionIf alibi occurs, shooter must start course over in another relay.
2. Only 60 rounds are to be carried by the shooter.
3. Only one 6-round bullet pouch is permitted.
4. No speed loaders are permitted.
5. Only Bureau-issued or Bureau-approved revolver with barrel length not exceeding 4 inches must be used.
6. New unaltered targets must be used.
7. All 60 hits must be within or touching the K-5 boundary line.
8. The possible must be fired in the presence of a qualified firearms instructor, scored by the observer, and certified by the firearms instructor that the possible was attained within the prescribed times.
9. Membership is attained by firing a possible during any regularly scheduled outdoor shoot.
10. The observer goes forward with the shooter for safety purposes and is not permitted to pick up any rounds for the shooter that may be dropped while firing the course.

SA John A. Cimperman, then a Supervisor at FBIHQ, became the first Possible Club member on May 14, 1940. Since then, there have been 857 additional SAs (as of August 10, 1977) who have received their membership medal, including Director Clarence M. Kelley, Number 26, on April 10, 1943, and Associate Director Richard G. Held, Number 108, on October 15, 1947. SA I. E. Nitschke, whose suggestion it was to form the club, never became a member.

Membership in the club was originally based on the perfect score on all Single Action other than the 7-yard line, but was later changed to a Double Action course. In January, 1976, the Practical Pistol Course was eliminated from Field Firearms Training, and thus the Possible Club, in favor of the Tactical Revolver Course (TRC) which better meets today's needs. A plaque on the Possible Club wall separates those men who attained a possible on the

Practical Pistol Course and those who achieved it on the Tactical Revolver Course. Phase I of the course was reduced from 4 minutes to 3 minutes, 15 seconds, when the TRC was adopted for all four outdoor Field Firearms Training Sessions. During Phase I, the shooter stands behind the 60-yard line. When the whistle blows, he or she goes to the 50-yard line and fires prone, 6 rounds. Next, 6 shots are fired from the 50-yard line, around a barricade with the weak hand, and repeated with the strong. The Agent then reloads and kneels behind a short barricade at the 25-yard line to shoot 6 rounds each of kneeling, strong hand; standing point shoulder; and kneeling, weak hand. Phase II allows the shooter 30 seconds to fire 12 rounds, point shoulder shooting, from the 15-yard line. In Phase III, 12 rounds, hip shooting, are fired from the 7-yard line in 25 seconds. A total of 60 shots is fired and all must hit in the K-5 area.

A separate Possible Club for National Academy graduates was formed in the mid-1960's. To qualify, an NA graduate must shoot his possible at a scheduled FBI shoot, not at his or her own range.

After many trials, an Agent may become one of the distinguished few who shoots a possible. A letter from the Director is received which commends the person on the accomplishment and encloses the Possible Club membership key. The reverse side of the medal displays the shooter's number and the Agent's name is added to the Possible Club wall at Quantico. When an Agent appears with a perfect score target in "The Investigator," that individual has worked hard to perfect his marksmanship and is well deserving of the honors received.



A key is presented to those who qualify for membership in the club.