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JULY/AUGUST 2022

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# The Appleseed Project Hits the Mark

BY EVE FLANIGAN

**A**ppleseed Project is a national non-profit community dedicated to teaching the classic skill of rifle marksmanship to its attendees, along with instilling a sense of civic and personal responsibility. Although many other programs with that theme have developed in the 14 years since the organization received its charter, the "core" of the Appleseed experience remains a two-day weekend of learning rifle fundamentals. It's a mixed format of lectures by the organization's highly trained volunteer instructors and live-fire practice on a 25-yard range with targets of graduated difficulty.

Achieving a minimum score on the Appleseed target, inspired by the U.S. Army's 1930s-era qualification standard, gives a shooter the once-in-a-lifetime award of the flag-motif "Rifleman" patch. The patch has become a badge of honor of sorts in communities where the program has been conducted. It's an indication of competence around a rifle, sans electronically aimed optical equipment or bipods at the entry level.

Appleseed has always been accommodating with pricing and is especially welcoming to families, women, law-enforcement officers, and community-specific organizations. The program's curriculum is standardized, so an attendee at a Florida event has much the same learning experience as one in, say, California. Casual lunchtime stories of documented but lesser-known details of the events of April 19, 1775,



leading up to "the shot heard 'round the world," take up the sack-lunch hour, and memorable snippets of the same are shared on breaks. By the conclusion of the weekend, participants have learned safe rifle use and marksmanship fundamentals, the effective use of a sling to improve accuracy, and shooting in prone, sitting, and standing positions. They also eventually experience the challenge of shooting accurately under time pressure. As a result, they gain a new understanding of the power of one ordinary person to change the course of history for the better. In short, it's a challenging and empowering experience regardless of whether a shooter leaves with their Rifleman patch.

Although all rifle types are welcome (except full auto), the most popular are .22-caliber semi-autos, as they're easy on the feed bill and easy for



most anyone to shoot all day. Appleseed Project is serious about the "most anyone" part. People with physical challenges for positional shooting are welcomed. And even before the onset of these contentious times, the program had a clear rule that historical content stays apolitical.

It's no secret that shooting is commonly described as empowering by women who learn the skill. And Appleseed is doing its part, with a growing cadre of female instructors and shoot bosses that have come up through its ranks. There are now more "Ladyseed" events on the calendar than ever—clinics in which attendance is limited to women. Currently, there are 15 Ladyseed events scheduled for 2022 in nine states spanning several regions of the country.

To learn more about the Appleseed Project or schedule yourself, friends, or family to experience a memorable weekend of shooting and learning, visit [appleseedinfo.org](http://appleseedinfo.org).

(APPLESEEDINFO.ORG)

