

A Brief History of Brassmasters

Brassmasters' was organized in the 70s by a group of dedicated pistol shooters because there were no public or private indoor or outdoor pistol shooting ranges available in the Buckhannon and Upshur County area during that era and they had the foresight to see the growing interest of folks wanting to improve their pistol marksmanship skills and become involved in competition pistol shooting within a structured and safe environment.

The organizers formed a formal club and became incorporated and then, were able to convince the Upshur County Commission to include Brassmasters as a recognized sport under the umbrella of the Upshur County Parks and Recreation Committee. This action enabled Brassmasters, with the support of the Upshur County Parks and Recreation Committee to approach the Buckhannon National Armory Board and gain approval to offer weekly shooting events at a nominal cost to participants. Upon gaining approval to use the armory, Brassmasters designed and built steel portable bullet traps, complete with lighted target areas. Use of the armory was restricted to .22 Caliber Rimfire and Thursday was established as the evening for the weekly shooting session. Each participant was charged a \$2.00 fee, which was used to cover the required cost of the armory janitor's wages and fringe benefits for the hours he was on duty.

Word traveled fast and soon additional firing relays had to be added to accommodate interested shooters from surrounding counties too. At its zenith, there were typically, three relays involving 75-100 weekly participants. This indoor shooting at the armory was only available during the winter months. However, from this genesis, the club decided to expand shooting opportunities to its members by locating a site for an outdoor range. Thanks to personal relationships between some of the charter members and Mr. Matthew Edminston, he was gracious and granted permission for Brassmasters to develop a pistol range on a parcel of his land West of Buckhannon on the Mudlick Road. 50 and 25 yard firing lines were established and a firing line cover was built complete with a concrete floor and a target storage building was also constructed.

For many years, Brassmasters held monthly Precision Pistol/Bullseye competition matches, attracting both civilian and military competitors from both in-state and out-of-state. During early 80s, Brassmasters also became involved in the then fast-growing sport of NRA Pistol Silhouette shooting and developed a silhouette range. Unfortunately, Mr. Edminston passed away and his heirs had planned other uses for the property that did not include a shooting range, and Brassmasters was forced to relocate.

Now, some thirty years and three ranges later, Brassmasters has been located at the White Horse Firearms and Outdoor Education Center (White Horse Center) at Peeltree for the past five years. Through an arrangement with the White Horse group, Brassmasters has been able to develop a first class pistol shooting facility encompassing four different pistol shooting disciplines: Precision Pistol (Bullseye), Cowboy Action, Silhouette and Concealed Carry practice & Plinking ranges. Brassmasters' members give of their time and talent to hold NRA Women on Target Clinics and Rimfire Challenge Events throughout the shooting season. Each year in addition to monthly NRA & CMP matches, Brassmasters' hosts the Annual Mountaineer Strawberry Regional Championships and the Annual Ed Williams' Memorial West Virginia State Championship.

Brassmasters is affiliated with the NRA, Civilian Marksmanship Program (CMP) National Shooting Sports Foundation and West Virginia State Rifle and Pistol Association. Membership in Brassmasters is available to U.S. Citizens' 18 years of age or older that are not prohibited by federal, state or local law from owning or possessing a handgun or firearm. Prospective members are required to submit a membership application along with the first year's dues which are calculated on a quarterly basis. The application is then brought before a scheduled meeting of the club's executive committee for their action. Membership grants access to all of Brassmasters' Pistol Ranges and key codes to target supply storage buildings during normal operating hours of the White Horse Center except when 1,000 yard matches are being held or Brassmasters' is holding a match or clinic, construction or maintenance is being performed on a particular range the member planned to use.