



AROUND THE AGENCY

ON TARGET DOMINANT FOR DECADES

BORDER PATROL COMPETITIVE SHOOTERS
SPEARHEAD THE SPORT

By Paul Koscak

Even among the best challengers, taking on the Border Patrol's handgun team is typically a losing game.

The Border Patrol has produced the nation's most renowned pistol shooters since the early 20th century. They've triumphed at myriad local and regional contests, earned multiple first-place prizes at national competitions and even hold international records.

"We've won so many events, I can't even count them," said Border Patrol Agent Robert Vadasz, consistently one of the world's top three shooters, who entered the sport in 2004 and was featured on the cover of American Rifleman, the National Rifle Association's signature magazine.

In November 2016, Vadasz set a new record as the world's best metallic pistol shooter by winning the metallic division at the NRA's World Action Pistol Championship in New Zealand. It's a significant feat because metallic competitors use a non-modified pistol with only standard metal sights. Earlier that year in May, he placed second in the metallic division at the NRA's U.S. National Championship Bianchi Cup in Missouri.

Border Patrol target practice at Camp Chigas, El Paso, Texas, during the 1930s. Photo courtesy of CBP History Program collections



Considered the best marksmen in pistol-shooting sports, the Border Patrol's 10-member national pistol team with their monogrammed black hats are noticed when arriving at an event. "We're the most recognized team within the competitive shooting community," Vadasz said.

Winning legacy

Competitive shooting and Border Patrol culture go hand-in-hand with a legacy that reaches back almost to 1924, when the unit was formed. Back then, sharpshooting agents competed in local "bull's-eye" contests and national matches at Camp Perry, Ohio.

Agent Charles Askins emerged as the Border Patrol's top shot and the 1937 national pistol champion.

"We cleaned up locally," Askins later wrote in an article. "We were the champs of Texas and felt pretty cocky, so we went to the national matches." Askins also helped create the Border Patrol's first firearms training program and agent qualification standards.

More champion agents—Elmer Hilden, Joe White, Bill Toney and others—followed during the 1950s and 1960s, earning several individual and team national titles. One of those agents, Harland Carter, became the Border Patrol chief in 1950 and served as the National



Left. Border Patrol championship pistol shooting team, El Centro, California, during the 1930s. Photo courtesy of CBP History Program collections

Right. The 1954 Yuma Sector Border Patrol champion pistol shooting team. Photo courtesy of CBP History Program collections

