



A Seal of Training Excellence

Pennsylvania Gunsmith School

# Gunsmithing Insights™

Volume XX Number 1

The Newsletter of PGS

[www.pagunsmith.edu](http://www.pagunsmith.edu)

## Quick Glance at PGS:

- A recent meeting of the PGS Program Advisory Committee (the industry leaders meet to recommend curriculum updates to keep pace with workplace changes) has resulted in an improved Semester II Stockmaking course.
- Single or married, toting pets ranging from golden retrievers to tropical goldfish, PGS students are always able to meet their unique housing needs and still enjoy a short commute. The fine reputation of past PGS renters makes local complex managers and landlords happy to accommodate the unique 16-month lease to complete our Master Gunsmithing program.
- Mastering highly employable skills, PGS graduates go on to all types of rewarding careers, including an inventor who designed an innovative firearm and more recently, a veteran who became Gunsmith to the U.S. Army Marksmanship Unit (see article at right).
- Visiting, applying and enrolling at PGS is easy through our new website. Request information, schedule a visit and even print out an application. PGS starts a new class of students every month except for July and December. Our Admissions Dept. can inform prospective students of availability.
- In need of a Gunsmith? See our graduates' websites under Gunsmith Links at our home page. You'll find shops all over the eastern U.S. If you're a PGS grad and want to be included, we tell you how at the web page.
- Mud, leaves and other debris can be dangerous at high pressures. Reduce this risk by completing a safety check and seeing your local Gunsmith. See back page article, From the Director's Desk.

## PGS Graduate Honored as Business Owner of the Year; Counsels Students on Opportunities



All eyes on him, Lou Patrick had the attention of every PGS student. "There are plenty of opportunities. You can open your own shop, work anywhere and have the work shipped to you," said the 2002 PGS graduate. Lou was recently honored as Business Owner of the Year, Mannington Main Street Awards program, personally presented to him by West Virginia Governor Joe Manchin in Charleston.

His remarks were part of a continuing series of guest speakers to supplement instruction and advise students on what to expect as graduates.

Lou possesses a winning combination of education and variety of work experiences. Previously owner of his own shop, he modestly says he was surprised at the high demand for his services, with work shipped from Wisconsin to Florida, and from Maryland to California.

"Much of my work came from referrals. Having a website is a great tool, and e-mail is more efficient than phone contact," he said. Recently, Lou joined Blackheart International, LLC as primary gunsmith in their firearms manufacturing division and is enjoying his new career move.

A quick look at Lou's biography on our website shows his recipe for success. In addition to his PGS diploma, he earned degrees in Applied Science from Marshall University and Machine Tool Technology from Robert C. Byrd Institute. He's also a nationally certified machinist.

His resume includes a 17-year career with the U.S. Army as an electronics specialist and recruiter. Lou first opened his own shop soon after graduating from PGS, but couldn't resist an 18-month stint with the USAMU (U.S. Army Marksmanship Unit), during which he challenged and honed his skills as a craftsman and Gunsmith.

"It was wonderful. I had the pistol of a seven-time national champion on my bench, and worked on firearms used in two Olympics," Lou said.

He also worked on long-range, 1000-yard rifles used overseas. When his wife's anticipated career transfer could not take place, Lou resigned his position to return home to West Virginia. He enjoys his frequent visits to PGS and welcomes the chance to give back to the students.

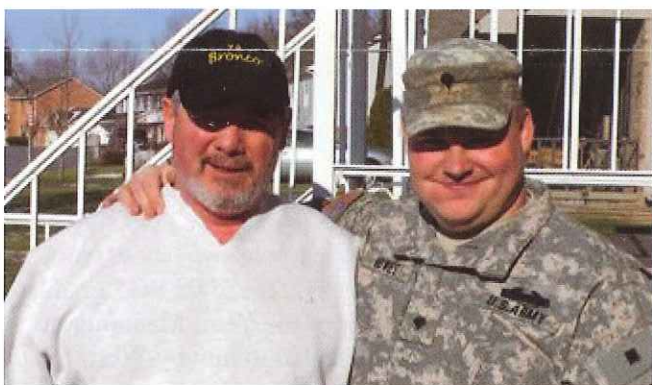
Interested in learning more about Pennsylvania Gunsmith School? Visit our web page, [www.pagunsmith.edu](http://www.pagunsmith.edu) and contact us at [PGS@PAGunsmith.edu](mailto:PGS@PAGunsmith.edu) or phone at 412-766-1812. School visits are welcome. Please schedule yours in advance so we can serve you better!

## PGS Grad Reaps Rewards of Dad's Service

Recent graduate Jeremy Howes was always proud of his father Ray's service as a Marine, and followed in his footsteps, enlisting in his state's National Guard in 2005 prior to enrolling at PGS in 2007 to fulfill his dream of becoming a Master Gunsmith.

Jeremy never considered that Ray's service would benefit him nearly 40 years later, as a recipient of a Marine Corps Foundation scholarship for children of Marine veterans.

With a combination of state and federal veterans education grants to help pay for his tuition and tool costs, as well as Chapter 16 benefits paid direct to him for living expenses, Jeremy's 16-month education at PGS was nearly fully funded.



With the receipt of the \$2000 Marine Corps Foundation Scholarship, all of his tuition, tools and living costs were now funded by financial aid! After graduation, Jeremy began his career as the Gunsmith for a Gander Mountain store a few hours from his southwestern Pennsylvania hometown.

Jeremy worked closely with PGS on his financial aid prior to enrolling. Through conversations with his mother Sandy, PGS learned about Ray's service and encouraged Jeremy to apply for the Marine Corps scholarship.

What happened to Ray? He came home safely from Vietnam and recently retired after a 39-year career in the mining industry and is pursuing his dream of restoring early Broncos.

PGS recently learned that Jeremy has been called up for service and will be returning to Iraq in a few weeks. Thankfully, his job will be waiting for him upon his return. Please keep Jeremy and all of our brave soldiers in your thoughts and prayers until their safe return.

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## More Good News on Student Financial Aid

New legislation passed by Congress increased the maximum Stafford loan limits for students by \$2000. Now, students who are dependent (as defined by the FAFSA) could borrow as much as \$5500 and \$6500 respectively for each of PGS' eight-month "academic years." For independent students, these amounts for our two-year (16 calendar month) program are \$9500 and \$10,500, if eligible (a total of \$12,000 for a dependent student or \$20,000 if an independent).

Federal Pell Grants (eligibility determined via the FAFSA form) also will see annual increases, and the interest rate on subsidized Stafford student loans will gradually decrease through 2012 from 6.0% to 3.4%.

Another piece of good news: Parent borrowers of education loans to help their dependent student (called PLUS loans) can now opt to defer payment. Previously, repayment began 60 days after funds were released by the lender.

It all begins by filing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) at [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov). For PGS to receive your FAFSA results, enter our school code: 016508.

## From the Director's Desk

Before going out on a hunting trip, to the range or any shooting venture, it's important that your firearm be in top condition so you can take that big game, and shoot accurately and safely.

Some hunters and shooters can field strip their guns to clean dirt and grime; however, most do not. While personal field stripping is good, it is wise to take those trusted rifles, shotguns and pistols to your local Gunsmith to have them professionally cleaned, lubricated and bench-tested before any shooting.

A Gunsmith can thoroughly clean the bore, replace rotten o-rings and check the functioning of the internal parts, often overlooked by the average gun owner.

Prior to any shooting, your safety check should include a thorough bore inspection. Even a small piece of lint, mud or cleaning patch can cause an inaccurate shot, or a blown barrel and possibly serious injury.

You will spend a good deal on shooting, licenses, transportation, hotels and food for your trip. Don't overlook your firearm, the most important part of a successful season. Take it to your local Gunsmith for a thorough check-up. It will be money well spent, especially when you are enjoying venison stew, or admiring those 10 rings or your newly mounted buck!



Bob Thacker  
Director