

Instructors Email Addresses

We are grateful for the following instructors who are willing to share their knowledge with our students. If your instructor is not listed here, please contact Donna at 719-846-5724 and she will have the instructor contact you.

[Dean Batchelder dean.batchelder@brownells.com](mailto:dean.batchelder@brownells.com)

[Bob Campbell robert.campbell@trinidadstate.edu](mailto:robert.campbell@trinidadstate.edu)

[Tom Hirt best to call him at 719-372-9399](tel:719-372-9399)

[Rich Machholz r.machholz@gmail.com](mailto:r.machholz@gmail.com)

[Howard Massingill hmass18z@msn.com](mailto:hmass18z@msn.com)

[Ryan Newport ryan.newport@trinidadstate.edu](mailto:ryan.newport@trinidadstate.edu)

[Steve Rollert countrybladesmith@gmail.com](mailto:countrybladesmith@gmail.com)

[Robert Sanchez robert.sanchez@trinidadstate.edu](mailto:robert.sanchez@trinidadstate.edu)

[Logan Schmit logan.schmit@trinidadstate.edu](mailto:logan.schmit@trinidadstate.edu)

[Fred Weisenborn weismetals@gmail.com](mailto:weismetals@gmail.com)

Please note that our full-time instructors ([in blue type above](#)) may not be available for questions between semesters. If you are unable to reach any of the instructors above, please feel free to call Donna at 719-846-5724 and we will try to contact them on your behalf.

INSTRUCTOR BIOGRAPHIES

(in alphabetical order)

Dean Batchelder:

Dean Batchelder graduated from Colorado School of Trades in 1992 and in 1997 had his own shop and did bluing and general repair. In 2001 he started at Brownells as a Technical Support Gunsmith, and since then he has taught yearly classes on the AR15 and on Alternate Finishes to the students at various Gunsmithing Schools and also at NRA Summer Schools. If you have any questions about the class, you may contact him at dean.batchelder@brownells.com

Bob Campbell:

Bob Campbell graduated with an AAS degree in Gunsmithing from Trinidad State College in 2009. He worked for the Williams Gun Sight Company as a Gunsmith from 2011 to 2019. In

The Fall of 2019, he joined Trinidad State as a full time instructor teaching Stock Making, Conversions, and Metal Finishing.

Robert.Campbell@trinidadstate.edu 719-846-5533



Bob Campbell

Tom Hirt:

Tom Hirt is old-fashioned guy who does things the old-fashioned way. You might call him a throw-back to a bygone era-that time when h and cowboys and craftsmen took care of business with their hands. Hirt continues that tradition to this day as a hat maker who makes superior-quality beaver felt hats one at a time by hand. Known as the hat maker for the movies, he has designed hats for many famous clients including Val Kilmer, Sam Elliot, and Sharon Stone. His credits include Tombstone, the Quick and the Dead, Conagher, and many others. After almost 20 years, he is considered one of the West's most notable and most established hatters. [Hats of the West](#) or email Tom at info@tomhirt.com 719-372-9399



Tom Hirt

Rich Machholz:

Rich was a ballistic technician at Sierra Bullets for over 25 years and a long range Benchrest competitor for over half that time. He began hunting at a very early age and reloading followed shortly thereafter. In the early 1980's he got an idea, made some drawings, hired an attorney and eventually received a design patent for case spinners. He resurrected his old Sportsman Supply Company, which was a retail sales company but soon developed into a small manufacturing company building portable shooting tables, rifle rests, target stands and the SSC Case Spinners. That eventually lead to freelance writing and later got him in the door at Sierra Bullets.

r.machholz@gmail.com



Rich Machholz

Howard Massingill:

Howard Massingill is an alumnus of Trinidad State College. Howard enlisted in the US Army in 1981, spending the next 26 years in the Army, retiring as a Sergeant Major in 2007. In 1987, Howie chose to attend the Special Forces Communications Course, graduating in 1988 and joined the 10th Special Forces Group (Airborne) serving as a SF Communications Sergeant, on Operational Detachment-Alpha (ODA) 071, A CO, 3/10th SFG(A) at Fort Devens, Massachusetts, deploying to Saudi Arabia for Operation DESERT STORM and Northern Iraq for Operation PROVIDE COMFORT. Howie later served with ODA 073 (MFF), traveling to Russia, performing MFF training with the Russians, and being awarded the Russian Military Free-Fall badge. He continued his career at the United States Army Special Forces Command (Airborne) Fort Bragg, North Carolina, with duty at B CO, 5/19th SFG(A) as an active-duty Operations Sergeant from 1994 to 1997. After attending the Special Forces Operations and Intelligence Course in 1997, he returned to the 10th SFG(A) Fort Carson, CO, serving as Team Sergeant, and Operations Sergeant at the Company and Battalion levels. Howie also served as 1SG for the Group Support Company in January of 2001, holding that position for over two and a half years before being selected for Sergeant Major, being assigned as the Group Operations Sergeant Major. After graduation from the United States Army Sergeants Major Academy Howie returned to Fort Carson, Colorado and continued to serve as the 10th SFG(A) Group Operations Sergeant Major. Howie ultimately completed his career as the Company Sergeant Major for Alpha Company, 2nd Battalion, 10th SFG(A). During Howie's career, he participated in Operations DESERT STORM, PROVIDE COMFORT I AND II, RESTORE HOPE, JOINT GUARD, JOINT GUARDIAN, SHARP GUARDIAN, and Operations IRAQI FREEDOM (OIF) I, III, and IV.

Howie's Military education includes all Non-Commissioned Officers Educational Schools, to include Class 54 of the United States Army Sergeant's Major Academy, the Basic Airborne and Freefall courses, Jumpmaster course, Mountain Warfare School, Special Forces 18E Qualification Course, Special Forces Ops and Intel Course. His civilian education includes Associate Degrees from Excelsior College and Trinidad State Junior College.

Howie is a Lifetime member of the Special Forces Association, and has served in numerous positions in Chapter 4-24, where he is currently serving as the Chapter President.

Howie is also a Gunsmithing Instructor at Trinidad State, teaching Introduction to Gunsmithing for Veterans class during the Summer School classes there, and is the instructor responsible for training all Department of the Army Armorers and Logistical Assistance Representatives (LARS) in a Gunsmithing Certificate Program. Howie is also on the Advisory Council for the school. **hmass18z@msn.com** \



Howard Massingill

Ryan Newport:

Ryan Newport is an alumnus of Trinidad State College. After graduation he spent several years working as a repair gunsmith for Browning Arms on their high end line of shotguns and rifles. Ryan returned to TSC in 2011 as an Associate Professor of Gunsmithing teaching Bench Metal, Firearms Conversions, Firearms Metal Finishing, Alternative Metal Finishes, Shotgunsmithing, Custom Pistolsmithing, and Firearms Repair.

ryan.newport@trinidadstate.edu office # 719-846-5525



Ryan Newport

Steve Rollert:

Steve Rollert has been making knives for over 40 years, starting with a Burr King grinder in the spare bedroom of a duplex in Denver, Colorado in 1980. Steve's interest in knifemaking started while attending Skunk Hollow Blacksmithing School. After graduation Steve sought out Japanese Swordsmith, Kuzan

Oda, then in Colorado Springs. Kuzan taught Steve the Japanese mindset and disciplines of knifemaking necessary to produce knives of enduring quality and value. Steve has progressed to producing Damascus Steel and hand forging fine blades in his large shop in Keenesburg, CO. He is well known for his quality pattern welded Damascus and his earlier work in cable welded Damascus. In 1999 Steve started Keen Edge Knives in response to a number of requests for high quality training knives from his fellow martial artists. Over the years Steve has strived to provide the best quality product possible at a reasonable price.
countrybladesmith@gmail.com 303-732-4858



Steve Rollert

(Photo property of the Ft. Morgan Times newspaper)

Robert Sanchez:

Robert Sanchez is the full-time welding instructor for TSC. Prior to working at the college, Robert worked for Topar Welding as a gas field welder. He has been welding since 1998 where he started out as a structural welder working on schools and other buildings.

robert.sanchez@trinidadstate.edu 719-846-5566



Robert Sanchez

Logan Schmit:

Logan Schmit is the Machine Shop Instructor for the Trinidad State Gunsmithing Program. A 2010 *summa cum laude* graduate of the program, Schmit had also attended the Brownells Trinidad American Firearms Technology Institute. It was during this time that he was recruited by George Gardner to join GA Precision, located in North Kansas City Missouri. At GA, employed as a Precision Bolt Rifle Specialist, fitting and chambering of barrels became a specialty for Schmit. Additional areas of expertise included barrel fluting, bedding, final assembly, and blueprinting actions. During this time Schmit completed several builds at the request of Team GA members. His work was also featured in the 2014 advertising brochure for Manners Composite Stocks LLC and highlighted on their banner at Shot Show in Las Vegas.

In December 2014, Schmit was asked to join the Mile High Shooting Accessories team to continue to develop and grow the custom side of their successful firearms business. As Senior Precision Rifle Builder and Director of Barreling and Custom Builds, Schmit oversaw a growing custom rifle-building department where, along with producing precision custom firearms to fulfill MHSA client requests, he had developed programming specific to the needs of the facilities CNC equipment. In 2017 Schmit was honored to complete barrels for Dave Walls, Ady Newberry and Scott Seigmund of Accuracy International, for their team in the 50 Cal World Championship on the 2000 yard range.

A native of Central Wisconsin, Schmit began his career in rifle building by enrolling in the NRA Summer Program at Trinidad State. Surrounded by experts in the field and students from across the United States and around the world, Schmit's interest was ignited. His choice for a degree program was Trinidad State where, in 2009, he formally enrolled and was accepted as a full-time student in the two year Gunsmithing Degree program. Every summer he augmented his education with a series of NRA summer classes. Since experiencing his first NRA Summer Program class in 2007, Schmit has immersed himself in the exciting and challenging profession of rifle building in particular, and the firearms industry in general.

In August 2018, after teaching two NRA Summer Program classes, Schmit was offered the opportunity to join the faculty at Trinidad State as a full time Gunsmithing Instructor. This experience offers Schmit the ability to share his knowledge of firearms manufacture with a new generation of students and to continue, and further the long and exceptional history of the Trinidad Gunsmithing program.

logan.schmit@trinidadstate.edu 719-846-5632



Logan Schmit

Fred Weisenborn:

Fred Weisenborn grew up in the Ozark hills of Missouri, where his father introduced him to the art of blacksmithing. As a teenager, Fred joined the local blacksmith association, where he worked with artists and craftsmen throughout the country and developed a passion for creating things from metal. He spent the summer of 2002 at the Touchstone Center for Crafts in PA, where he was able to work with many master smiths like Raymond Rybar and Bill Fiorini. When the time came to choose a career, Fred decided to attend Trinidad State College's gunsmith program. In the next two years, Fred was taught everything from basic machining to building his own 50 caliber rifle. After college, he worked for two years as a gunsmith for Gander Mountain in Foreset Lake, MN. He decided to make a career change in 2007 and moved to the St. Louis area in the hopes of more career opportunities in the firearm business. In 2010 he began working for Midwest Gun Works in Pevely, MO as a gunsmith. Fred enjoys the daily challenges that come with his trade, and believes that through hard work and the ability to collaborate with others, no problem is too big to solve. Fred designs and makes knives and pens in his spare time and still enjoys creating work over the forge. He sells items online as well as at local craft shows and consignment shops.

If you have questions for Fred, please contact Donna Haddow 719-846-5724 or donna.haddow@trinidadstate.edu



Fred Weisenborn