

ATF National Firearms Examiner Academy Graduates Class of 2012



WASHINGTON — In September 2012, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives' (ATF) National Firearms Examiner Academy (NFEA) graduated its class of 2011-2012 after a year-long training program. The NFEA program, which is conducted by ATF's National Laboratory Center (NLC), provides training for apprentice/entry-level firearm and toolmark examiners from federal, state and local law enforcement agencies. The curriculum serves as the foundation for supervised development of the participants into qualified examiners.

Members of the graduating class include: Charmaine Aniya, Honolulu Police Department, Honolulu; Amanda Burwell, Richland County Sheriff's Department, Columbia, S.C.; Molly Claus, Crime Laboratory, Omaha Police Department, Omaha, Neb.; Edward Gesser, Jr., Prince George's County Police Department, Landover, Md.; Nina Jefferson, Boston Police Department, Boston; Grant Lee, Montgomery County Police Department, Rockville, Md.; Melinda Raines, Crime Laboratory, Scottsdale Police Department, Scottsdale, Ariz.; Maria Rauche, Forensic Investigation Center, New York State Police, Albany, N.Y.; Dorothy Vernoy, Forensic Sciences Division, Maryland State Police, Pikesville, Md.; Karen Weimorts, Forensic Sciences Division, Greensboro Police Department, Greensboro, N.C.; and Cary Wong, Criminalistics Laboratory, Alameda County Sheriff's Office, San Leandro, Calif.

The NFEA class was held from October 2011-September 2012 and included instruction that dealt with laboratory protocol, safety and ethics as well as standards that govern the admissibility of expert testimony in court. Students received training in the history of black powder; the evolution of early firearms; modern ammunition and its evolution and manufacturing; and microscopy and instrumentation. Other classes covered firearm identification; manufacturing of modern firearms; preliminary examination of firearms; bullet examination and comparison; tool mark examination, comparison and identification; and restoration of obliterated markings. Instruction included terminal ballistics; gunshot residue; shot patterns; bullet path analysis; and

wound effects as well as the examination and comparison of cartridges; cartridge cases; shot shells; fired shot shells and other topics.

Upon successful completion of the program, NFEA graduates can independently and completely examine and compare physical evidence relating to firearms and toolmark identification; independently reach conclusions and render opinions; and provide expert testimony in a professional and impartial manner.

The NFEA's standardized program is funded by the National Institute of Justice and is conducted at ATF's NLC with continuing training at the students' home bases.

ATF is a law enforcement agency within the U.S. Department of Justice that is dedicated to preventing violent crime. More information on ATF and its programs is available at www.atf.gov.

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