

# AMERICAN SURVIVOR

SURVIVAL INFORMATION FOR THE NEW AMERICAN



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**IN THIS ISSUE: Zip-Guns and Improvised Weapons of the 1950s, Swiss Army Knife vs Multi-Tool, How to Call 911, Battery Powered Fans, Preparedness Expos, Annual Meeting, Medical Skill Class, more**

## Zip Guns and Improvised Weapons of the 1950s

By James C. Jones, EMT/CHCM

This may come as a shock to any of you younger than fifty, but up until the 1960s there were virtually no “gun laws”. You had to be 21-years of age and you could no longer buy a full-auto Tommy gun, but that was about it. You could just walk in to K-Mart (then known as Kresge’s) and buy a rifle or handgun and carry it home. I bought my first rifle that way and carried it six-blocks home with no problems. As a kid in the late 1940s and through the 1950s we all had slingshots, bows and arrows, BB guns, and (yes) 22 caliber rifles. In fact there are ads for Iver Johnson™ rifles in my 1948 issue Boy Scout Handbook. Gasp! We kids would walk down to the vacant lot and shoot cans. The cops always reminded us to be careful. At the same time Criminal use of firearms was restricted to a small number of “gangsters” and career criminals, but the streets were safe and random shootings were unheard-of. Drugs were not socially acceptable or excusable so no gangs, no territories, no cartels, no money to buy guns. No gang/drug culture and no families tolerating

and covering for criminal activities. This meant no children getting recruited and armed and shooting each other. The police were respected and life (all life) was respected.

Now kids will be kids and inventive kids will make things so making so-called zip guns was not uncommon. The knowledge came through the grapevine (not the internet), but my friends and I made a few improvements. Ours had a primitive trigger mechanism and tended to be more durable. The primary components were a wood frame, a door bolt, a door spring and some kind of tubing for the barrel. The usual barrel was from an automobile radio antenna. I fear that many of these were stolen, but I bought the ones that I used at the auto-parts store. When you bought the components the guy at the hardware or auto-parts store would chuckle. He knew you were just kids and intended no harm. Not like today! It is important to note that no one ever shot at anyone with live ammunition and no-one thought about using zip guns (or any guns) in criminal activities. We did have “wars” in the nearby

woods using wax bullets. Yes, it was still pretty dangerous. Did I mention that we were kids? We had no protection so if you were hit it hurt. The wax would go right through your clothing and leave a nice welt. Paint Ballers are sissies! Oh ya: we also tossed firecrackers at each other and the occasional bottle rocket.

Everything changed in the 1960s. All of the liberal political and social upheavals destroyed communities and gave birth to the drug and violence culture that prevails today. Instead of defending the culture of responsibility, family and community they attacked the right to self-defense and gun ownership. The NRA and other shooting sports organizations were caught off-guard. Draconian gun laws were initiated at all levels of government. Chicago was the worst. Chicago passed a gun registration law and then simply never printed any registration forms. If you took your gun to the police station they either confiscated it or told you "go home, we never saw that gun". We thought that guns and ammunition of all types would be banned and confiscated within a few years. There was a great deal of interest in alternative and primitive weapons such as black powder, crossbows, and slingshots. There was also a lot of work in how to make improvised firearms, powder and ammunition.

### **Resistance weapons:**

These were homemade firearms produced during World War Two in Europe. Most of these were pretty primitive and may have been the predecessors of the zip guns. There were also plans sold for making more sophisticated firearms including the famous Sten full auto submachine gun. Formulas for making various substitutes for gunpowder and

primer explosives were available in magazines. Interestingly, some of the best alternative reloading ideas came from Russia where they had used these methods under the German occupation and then under the communist regimes. The method for reloading 22-caliber, rim fire ammunition was often taught at early survival group meetings.

During this time I recreated the old zip gun designs in non-firing models and used them at gun show exhibits to illustrate the futility of gun laws. The BATF came by one day and thought they had me, but the barrels are wood and the bolts are one-sided. Fortunately, we have retained most of our gun rights and the amount of arms and ammunition stocked by the American public is much greater than it was back in the 1960s. Still, you never know what the future will bring, so I gathered some material from our old "Alternative Weapons" class and the old zip gun models to share with you.



Chicago Shotgun made from pipe. Actually a version of European resistance design. The forward section would be much longer. A shotgun shell was placed in the rear end of the open pipe and this end went into the capped pipe. Slamming the long-pipe back would cause the shell primer to strike the sharpened bolt in the cap (simulated here)

and boom! Yes, it was a pretty dangerous device for the user as well as the target.



This simple short-rifle uses a modified piece of metal and a bolt. A spring or heavy rubber-bands would provide the force to fire the rim-fire cartridge

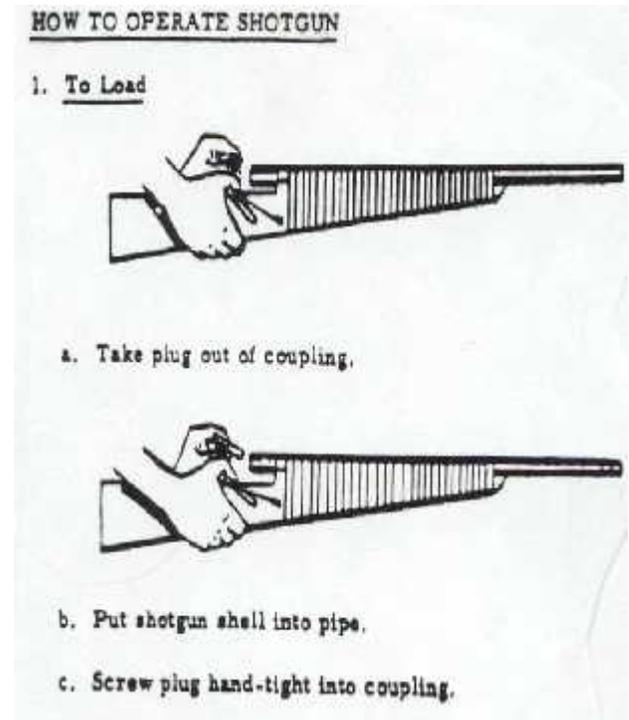


This pistol features a trigger mechanisms made from coat hanger wire and eye-bolts

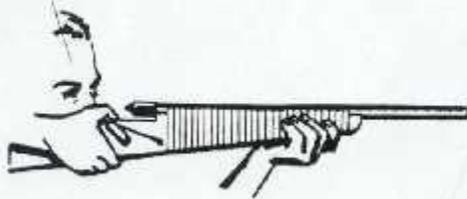
to hold the barrel in place. Usually 22-short ammunition was used as the thin metal of the antenna barrel could burst if used with Long-rifle cartridges.

### Other Improvisations

Below are some of the illustrations used in improvised weapons classes. The method of using match-heads (phosphorus) as primer was common. Back when everyone smoked these kinds of matches were more common. There are kits available for reloading 22-caliber ammunition today\*. The shotgun is much like the short-rifle above, but with a pipe barrel. Though the illustrations are from US Army "improvised Weapons" manuals, they are identical to what we made back in the 1950s.



2. To Fire



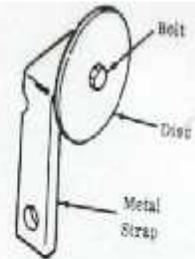
- a. Pull strap back and hold with thumb.
- b. Release strap.

3. To Unload Gun

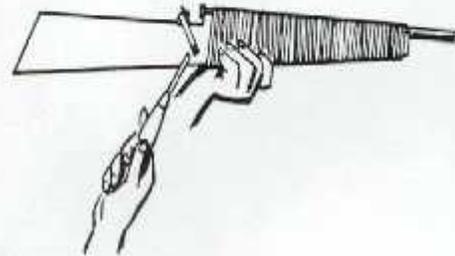
- a. Take plug out of coupling.
- b. Shake out used cartridge.

Instructions continued

9. Attach metal disk to strap with nut and bolt. This will deflect blast from hole in end cap when gun is fired. Be sure that head of bolt is centered in hole in end cap.



10. Attach strap to stock with wood screws.



Below are instructions for the uses of match heads in alternative firearms.

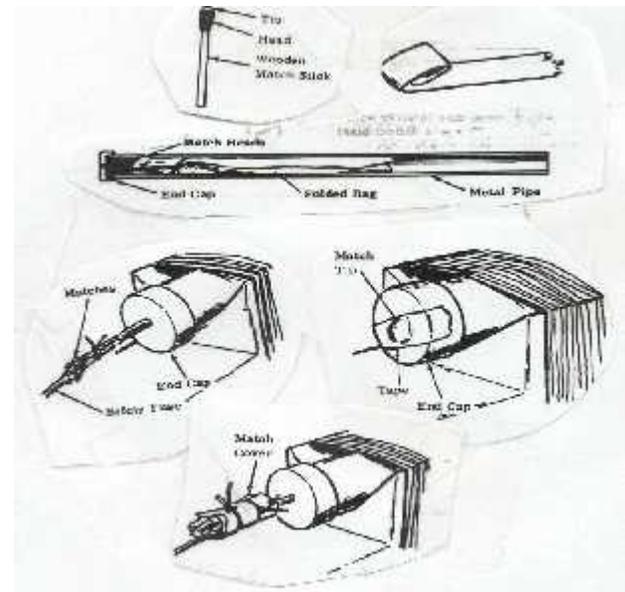
11. Place screw on each side of stock about 4 in. (10 cm) in front of metal strap. Pass elastic bands through notch in metal strap and attach to screw on each side of stock.



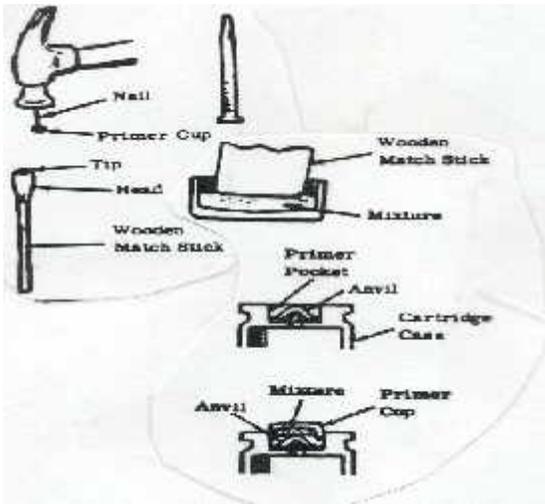
HOW TO USE:

A. When Toy Caps Are Available:

1. Cut off match heads from 3 books of matches with knife. Pour match heads into pipe.

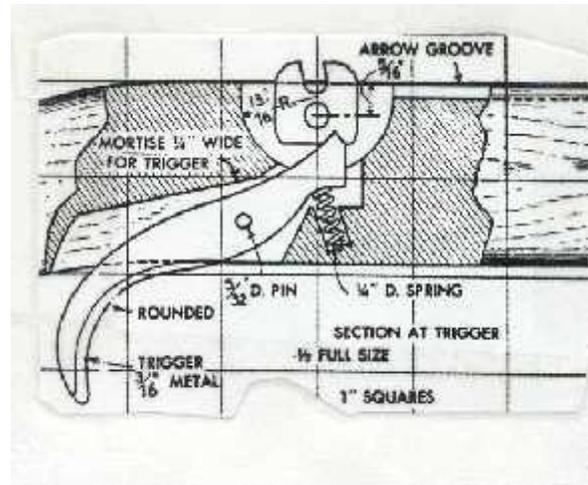


These illustrations are from Department of the Army manual TM-31-201, titled "Improvised Munitions".



### Cross Bow Mechanism

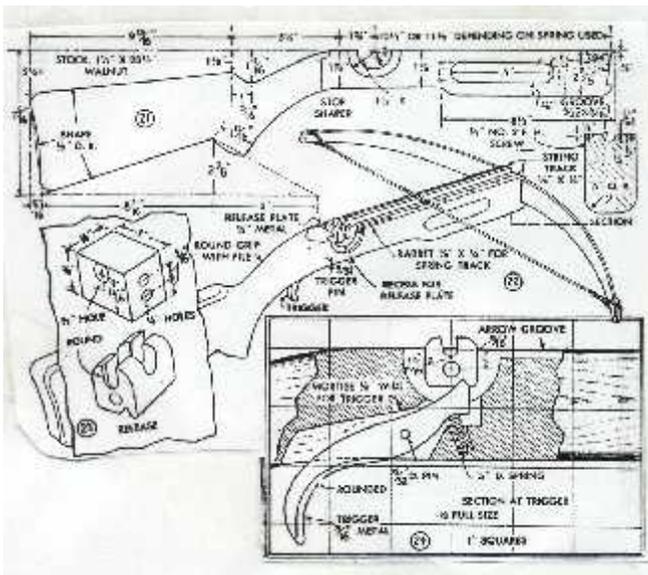
Last, but not least is the basic mechanism of a cross bow. This is straight out of old Popular Mechanics magazines. We kids made lots of devices using this mechanism. It is simple to make. We made them out of aluminum and even hardwood. We could use bows made of wood or saw blades, or slingshot rubber to propel bolts or even ball bearings. Obviously the basic trigger system could release a firing pin as well.



We made the stock out of wood. The moving parts out of aluminum (with saw and file) and the small springs came from ball-point pens. They worked great!

### Conclusion

Hopefully we don't have to resort to such improvised and often risky devices for defense in the future, but I think it's good to have the information out there, just in case. The manufacture of any of these devices is illegal and dangerous and this article in no way advocates that you attempt to construct improvised firearms



**\* Authors Note:** There is a reloading kit available for 22 Long-rifle cartridges. The kit sells for \$74.95 and includes crimper, bullet mold, powder dipper and funnel, and instructions. A resizing die for 22 long-rifle 22 long and 22 short can be purchased for \$59.95 and additional repriming compound can be purchased for \$19.95. Go to [www.22reloader.com/store/](http://www.22reloader.com/store/) for details.

### How to Call 911

Obviously, you push the "9" button once and the "1" button twice, but there's more to it than just dialing. First of all, don't depend on calling 911 to save you in all cases. Possession of a phone or even

emergency App's is no substitute for emergency planning, knowledge of CPR and first aid or possession of a fire extinguisher, firearm or other self-survival devices and skills. The police, fire department and medical services may take several minutes or more to reach you. In severe situations they may not be able to respond at all. Being able to escape, self-rescue, defend yourself and provide immediate self-aid is critical in many cases.

While calling 911 should be done immediately in most cases, there are some situations where seconds count and safety comes first. If caught in a burning building or home getting out immediately may be more important. If a tornado is coming you need to take shelter first. If an assault is in progress, self-defense, taking cover and escape are your top priorities. If someone has stopped breathing or has arterial (spurting) bleeding, then initiating CPR or directed pressure and/or a tourniquet must be done immediately. In many cases you may be able to dial 911 while taking these actions or be sure that someone is calling 911 while you act.

When we call 911 we are usually going to be anxious and upset. Our adrenaline rush and the "fight or flight" reaction has been triggered. We are in what is known as an "unsafe mental state" It is not unusual to have our minds go blank on simple facts like our address, someone's name, etc. 911 operators often get panicked callers screaming incoherently and are unable to send appropriate responders quickly enough. Here are some guidelines to remember when calling 911.

1. **Try to calm yourself.** Take a deep breath or two before you dial so you can provide clear and coherent information to the operator. Answer

the dispatcher's questions as they are asked.

2. **Stay in contact.** If you do not get through immediately or you have to disconnect to render aid or to escape, call back immediately. Once in contact with the dispatcher answer all questions and stay on the line until told to disconnect and/or help arrives
3. **Provide your location to the dispatcher.** While land-line phones provide a location in most cases, cellphone call do not automatically provide your location to the dispatcher. You must provide a street address, road location, and floor, apartment, nearest intersection or other specific location information. Be sure to: have a large address number on your home that is visible from the street at night. Be aware that even cellphones that are not activated to a service will call 911 if the battery is still charged.
4. If you call is about a crime, try to **provide as much descriptive information as possible** such as.
  - The number of suspects
  - Any scars, tattoos, or unusual features (limp, etc.)
  - The age, sex, race, build, clothing of suspects
  - If they were armed and what kinds of weapons
  - The location or direction of movement of suspects on foot or in a vehicle
  - If there was a vehicle describe the model (SUV, truck, van, sedan, etc.) color, age (new, older) and any full or partial license plate information

5. **Let the dispatcher know immediately if someone needs medical attention or rescue.** If the medical situation is the result of violence (stabbing, shooting, assault) or and dangerous situation such as electrocution, gas leaks, etc. This must be communicated.
6. **If you are in a situation where you cannot talk freely** such as a domestic assault, intruder, active shooter etc. You can just call 911 and let the dispatcher hear what's going on. They are trained to recognize breaking glass, fights, gun shots and other sounds. They may ask you to rank the threat level from one to ten by pushing a phone button.
7. **If you wish to remain anonymous,** just tell the dispatcher that. Dispatchers are required to respect your wishes.
8. **If you accidentally call 911, don't hang up.** Stay on the line and explain that it was a mistake. If you just hang-up they will usually send a police officer to investigate.



## Battery Powered Fans

I recently purchased a small, battery powered “camping fan” from the NRA Store. While they seem like just a small comfort device in the tent, they could be a real help in a home survival situation. The first rule of home survival energy is to “think small”. Sure, your gas generator may be able to run your air conditioner or a few big fans, but for how long. How much fuel can you safely store? Think small. We only need to have the fan blow on us not the whole room. Batteries can be constantly recharged with a solar panel charger. Adequate hydration, shade and a fan can prevent hyperthermia.

An even more critical need for such a fan is heat distribution in cold weather. If you have a stove, heater or fireplace, you need to move the hot air around the room or rooms. Without circulation most of that precious heat goes up the chimney or gathers near the ceiling. I have a circulating fireplace that can heat my whole house when its fan is running. If the power goes out, I can use this fan to push air in one end and out the other end of the heat vent. I also have an LP gas and a Kerosene heater that will be more effective with a fan if needed. These fans are often available in camping stores. I found a smaller fan at [www.budk.com](http://www.budk.com) that uses “AA” batteries for just \$9.99. Amazon list a variety of battery powered fans running from \$9.99 to \$50.00. Some also have recharging adapters. Something to consider



This fan takes two “D” cell batteries and also has a light

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## Swiss Army Knife vs Multi-Tool

The TV program “MacGyver“ has reemerged after several decades and with it the Swiss Army <sup>TM</sup> knife. The classic Swiss Army Knife became popular with survivalists and self-reliance fans in the 1970s. The original MacGyver TV show made them somewhat famous as an all-purpose, must-have tool. Throughout most of my career as a safety manager, I carried one in a leather pouch on my belt. I was often chided about it, but more often asked to use it or loan it to someone for a task. The so-called multi-tool was introduced by Leatherman <sup>TM</sup> more recently. While the Swiss Army knife is an expanded version of the traditional pocket-knife such as my old Boy Scout knife, the Multi-Tool is a completely original device based around a folding set of plyers rather than a folding knife. I carry a Swiss Army knife in some cases and a Multi-Tool and a separate folding knife on other occasions. This article will compare the two survival devices.

The Swiss Army knife is more compact than the comparably bladed multi-tools. It can comfortably fit in the pocket or in a small belt pouch. The primary knife blade is more easily deployed and used. It’s a knife first and a tool second. Currently these knives come in a huge variety of blade configurations ranging from the basic five or six bladed models for \$25-\$35 to bulky designs with over a dozen tools for about \$100.00. Some recent models include fire starters, flashlights, and magnifiers. All of them include the seldom used corkscrew. These knives are pretty durable, but the plastic outer covering can crack if dropped.



My basic 1970s Swiss Army Knife include a large and a small blade, can opener, bottle opener, awl, two screwdrivers (on the openers), the corkscrew and a small pair of scissors. My first Multi-Tool has eight tools and the plyer/cutters device. The blades and tools are unaccusable when the device is closed.

Multi-Tool devices or primarily folding plyers with a lot of added functions. The early designs required unfolding the plyers to get at the various blades and tools. My new one has most of the blades on the outside ready for use like a traditional folding knife. Much better. As with the Swiss Army knife, the Multi-Tool comes in a wide variety of sizes and tool options. The

small Wingman™ model has 14 tool and sells for about \$40.00 while my 33 function Wave™ set me back \$85.00. Real Leatherman™ tools are high quality and parts are replaceable if worn or broken. My Wave™ is a bit bulky and definitely not a pocket item.



Newer Multi-Tool on left has 33 tool functions with the primary tools and blades deploying while the tool is closed. The older model on the right has 12 functions and must be opened to get at the devices.



This tiny multi-tool from Cabela's has lots of handy functions and fits in the pocket or purse, but must be supplemented with a more substantial knife.

## Conclusion

Both of these devices are first-class survival tools, and far more versatile than just a pocket knife alone. Which one you chose and how many blades and tools you want depends on your anticipated uses and budget. The Swiss Army knife is definitely an always carry item. The Multi-tool can be carried, but is a must for the survival kite or bugout bag. Avoid buying low-quality knockoff versions. Official Swiss Army™, and Leatherman™ are dependable. Other name-brands such as SOG™, Gerber™ and Cabela's™ versions are also good.



Left to right: Swiss Army™ knife at left. Note the cracked cover. Early issue Leatherman™ Multi-Tool, New Leatherman Wave™ 33 function Multi-Tool, and compact multi-tool from Cabela's

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## Two Preparedness Expos Canceled!

We had looked forward to meeting many of our members and supporters at the recently canceled Illinois Prepares to Survive expo at Grayslake IL on November 4-5, 2016. We were only notified of its cancellation by the sponsors on November 2<sup>nd</sup>. We immediately posted to cancellation on our website and sent out an Email to

those on our list, but many folks did not get notified in time. Apparently the financial support for the event was withdrawn at the last minute and the facilities had not been paid for in advance as it should have been. We informed the sponsors that Live Free USA would not participate in or list any further events that they schedule. They have canceled the planned Indiana Prepares to Survive Expo that was scheduled for June 2017 in northwest Indiana. We are sure that a properly organized, financed and advertised preparedness expo in northwest Indiana and in northeast Illinois would be well attended and successful. **Live Free USA has contacts with several major exposition sponsors in the region, and we are working to bring major and**

**reliable events to these areas in 2017. Watch this publication and our website "Events" tab for listings.**

**Tennessee Scouts Plans Training**

The Tennessee Scouts Chapter is having a HAM radio Technician Licensing class on Jan 14, 10am at the Interpretative Center, Edgar Evans State Park, Silver Point, TN. Max. 10, 3 spots are already taken. If we can fill up the class, we will arrange for testing for the whole class. We will also have a knot tying class with a challenge and a map reading class for those that come with someone taking the radio class. We will be having chili for lunch. The classes are free but donations are always welcome. Sign up now, contact. Cameron Beal at thebeals@twlakes.net or 931-644-1122 and leave a message.

## EIGHT LIFESAVING MEDICAL SKILLS



**Sunday February 12th, 1:00 PM till 3:00 PM**

**CABELA'S Sporting Goods Store, Second Floor Conference Center, 7700 Cabela Drive, Hammond IN, Just South of I-80, at the Indianapolis Blvd. Exit**  
**The program focuses on recognition and response to eight medical emergencies that can result in death if not treated immediately. Lecture and hands-on practice will be combined to teach basic, immediate and effective care, including CPR, AED, tourniquet application, and other skills. Participants will be invited to attend meetings of the Survival Medics Team and other training events.**

- Respiratory Arrest
- Cardiac Arrest
- Arterial Bleeding
- Heat Stroke
- Cold Exposure
- Sucking Chest Wounds
- Shock
- Severe Dehydration

**This class is provided free to members and non-members, but contributions are always appreciated and are used for providing more public service programs**

## ***PRESENTERS and INSTRUCTORS WANTED***

Live Free USA will be sponsoring a bigger, better Camp Independence later in 2017. This event is the longest running survival and preparedness gathering in the USA. Past events have hosted some of the most knowledgeable survival and emergency skill instructors in America. The location will be a Boy Scout camp in northern Indiana where indoor and outdoor field training can be combined. Full details will be available in coming issues and on our website at [www.americansurvivor.org](http://www.americansurvivor.org). We are currently lining up our speakers and instructors. Anyone interested in presenting indoor or outdoor courses related to field survival, self-reliance, sustainable living, and back to basics, alternative living, self-protection, emergency preparedness or related subjects is encouraged to contact Jim Jones at [survivorjj@aol.com](mailto:survivorjj@aol.com).



**AMERICAS FUTURE DEPENDS ON  
PREPARED AND SELF-RELIANT FAMILIES**

**Plan Now To Attend!**

## **LIVE FREE, USA 49<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL MEETING**

**Sunday March 19th, 2017, 1:00 PM**

**CABELA'S Sporting Goods Store 7700 Cabela Drive, Hammond IN  
Just South of I-80 at the Indianapolis Blvd. Exit**

**Open To Live Free USA Members, Families and Supporters**

### *ACTIVITIES WILL INCLUDE*

Videos, Exhibits, Speakers, Presentations, Awards, Election of Officers, State of Live Free USA Report and Planning for 2017 and 2018. Chapter and Affiliated Group Support. Training Events, Camps and Expositions.

This year the President, Recording Secretary and two directorships are up for election and additional directors may be added. Send Nominations and Proposals to:

[Survivorjj@aol.com](mailto:Survivorjj@aol.com) before March 1<sup>st</sup> 2017

### Schedule

Come at noon and have lunch from the adjoining cafeteria while networking with others and viewing photos, of survival training education activities from past years. Live Free USA caps, patches, shirts and other items will be available. The meeting will start promptly at 1:00 PM. There will be time after the meeting for chapter meetings, team meetings and networking

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