Leather Holster Making

This class has been created to teach students how to construct quality gunleather using methods and techniques requiring a minimum number of leather tools. Since the work is by hand (no sewing machines, etc.) reasonable hand strength and dexterity is necessary for class participation.

Students will learn the methods I used to design, layout, stitch, wet mold, edge, burnish, apply oil or antique finish, and basket stamp holsters. As the class progresses, each student will construct two holsters for guns of their choice. I would suggest a pancake holster for a semi auto (model 1911’s are great) as well as a revolver holster of either a conventional or western design. You will have the opportunity to basket stamp one of these holsters if you so desire. Students may wish to bring two personal handguns to use in constructing these holsters (no scoped handguns, please). If time permits, we will discuss construction of gunbelts, cartridge loop sewing, magazine cases, saddle scabbards, and knife sheaths.

Robert (Bob) Calkins is an active shooter, hunter and firearms collector who has been making gunleather for himself and friends for over 50 years. In 1990 he and his wife, LaVon, decided to establish 3 Cross Custom Gunleather as a part-time business. Upon retiring from the Department of Interior in 1994, gunleather became a full-time occupation. Bob crafts gun rigs for cowboy competitors, which has included State, National and World Champion shooters. Leather for hunters, outdoorsmen, casual shooters, and concealed carry holders, make up the balance of his business. At age 71, Bob has cut back on hours working, but still produces several holsters and gun belts every week. In his opinion there are numerous good leather craftsmen, however he believes it takes an individual with a true appreciation of firearms and their use to build a truly functional piece of gunleather.

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Bob Calkins

Leather Holster Making Tool List

Leather will be available through the TSJC Bookstore – please contact Sandra Rodman at 719-846-5610 for information

- ¼” light weight electric drill
- Dremel tool with sanding drums
- Clear safety glasses
- Sponge and quart size water container (large butter tub is great)
- Straight edge ruler
• 16: x 20” piece of ¾” plywood with smooth side
• Exacto knife with blades
• Rawhide #4 Mallet (such as Tandy #3300-04)
• Craft Tool Leather Shears (such as Tandy #3050-00)
• Grooving tool (such as Tandy 8074-00)
• Edging tool (such as Tandy #8077-03 or Osborne #127-4 preferred)
• Craft tool Overstitcher #6 (such as Tandy 8079-06)
• #14 Punch (such as Tandy 3777-14)
• #9 Punch (such as Tandy 3777-9)
• 12” x 12” Granite piece (minimum 1” thick)

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