



RAMROD

A monthly publication, distributed approximately seven days before each shoot.

JANUARY ~ FEBRUARY 2011



SSAA-Victorian Muzzle Loading Club

ABN 86 186 186 714

Approved Handgun Target Shooting Club 562-290-00T)

PO Box 2170 Templestowe Heights VIC 3107

Web Site: www.vmlc.com.au

Email: hawkeye@vmlc.com.au

Executive Committee

President / Secretary	Jim Morraitis
Treasurer	David Tooth
Club Captain	Phil Baker
Fund Raising	Ken Fisher
Special Projects	Noel Howland
Nominated Officer	Grant Steel
Eagle Park Representative	Phil Groves

All enquiries should be directed to 03 9401 1955 (BH).

Disclaimer

The sometimes unusual views expressed in The Ramrod are not necessarily those of anyone, especially the Editor, and should not be taken seriously, except for the serious bits.

Warning

Due care is exercised regarding data and articles published, however no responsibility is accepted or implied for errors or omissions or damage or injury resulting there from.

Contributions

Contributions to The Ramrod are welcomed and encouraged. If you have any article that you think will be of interest to the members do not hesitate to submit the article for consideration.

Trading Post

Members! Got something to sell? Why not place an advert in The Ramrod, as well as the VMLC Web Site?

Change of Member Details

Advise the President of any change in member details.

Consumables for Sale

Quality Merchandise is available for sale to VMLC Members, such as Black Powder, VMLC DVDs, Percussion Caps and Pill Bottles. See David Tooth at the next shoot.

Executive Committee Meetings - 2011:

These will be held at Hawkeye's residence on Wednesdays at 7:30pm on the following dates:

January 12, February 16, March 16, April 13, May 25.

VMLC Buddy System

The VMLC Executive Committee realises that loading and shooting a muzzle loading style of firearm for the first time can be a daunting experience especially when you don't have anyone to help you. On occasions, a new muzzle loading shooter can be put off for life if early success / accuracy is not obtained with their muzzle loading firearm. To minimise this, and to help assimilate new members, the Executive Committee has adopted a Buddy System for new members, in particular, those who are new to muzzle loading.

Members who feel that they would benefit from a VMLC Buddy are requested to contact any member of the Executive Committee to make suitable arrangements.

*** Additional Support ***

If any member requires any assistance or coaching with their black powder shooting, please talk to me about your concerns, and I will personally make the time to assist you as best as I can.

Hawkeye.

The Ramrod CURRENT CLUB NEWS

incorporating

Other Bits of Information

which will surely educate and amaze!

CLUB NEWS

New Members and Club Membership

Club membership is steady at 65.

Results of the January 2011 Shoot:

	CSA	25 Precision
Aylen, Bruce	153	75
Ah Hand, Trevor	129	22
Liptak, George		27
McLeod, Ross		25
Morraitis, Jim	164	X
Mowbray, Roger	166	79
Rush, Gordon		52
Steel, Grant	117	61



Silly Section:

A Woman was out golfing one day when she hit the ball into the woods. She went into the woods to look for it and found a frog in a trap. The frog said to her, "If you release me from this trap, I will grant you three wishes." The woman freed the frog, and the frog said, "Thank you, but I failed to mention that there was a condition to your wishes. Whatever you wish for, your husband will get times ten!" The woman said, "That's okay." For her first wish, she wanted to be the most beautiful woman in the world. The frog warned her, "You do realise that this wish will also make your husband the most handsome man in the world, an Adonis whom women will flock to". The woman replied, "That's okay, because I will be the most beautiful woman and he will have eyes only for me." So, KAZAM-she's the most beautiful woman in the world! For her second wish, she wanted to be the richest woman in the world. The frog said, "That will make your husband the richest man in the world. And he will be ten times richer than you." The woman said, "That's okay, because what's mine is his and what's his is mine." So, KAZAM-she's the richest woman in the world! The frog then inquired about her third wish, and she answered, "I'd like a mild heart attack." Moral of the story: Women are clever. Don't mess with them. Attention female readers: This is the end of the story for you. Stop here and continue feeling good. Male readers: Please continue reading. The man had a heart attack ten times milder than his wife.... Moral of the story: Women think they're really smart. Let them continue to think that way and just enjoy the show.

PS: If you are a woman and are still reading this; it only goes to show that women never listen!

Thank You VMLC Sponsors:

On behalf of the members and myself, I take this opportunity to thank the VMLC Sponsors for their donations to the VMLC 2010 State Championships.

Hawkeye.

VMLC Sponsor - Forbes Wholesale Pty Ltd:

LGD 407-000-00F

Forbes Wholesale has been supplying the muzzle loading shooter since 1988, we import sell & the Pedersoli range of Black Powder Firearms, "Blackpowder No. 1"

Pedersoli offer the most comprehensive range of black powder firearms and accessories on the market today backed by a 12 month warranty on all product.

We also stock Euroarms military muskets in various configurations, 2 & 3 Band Enfield, Musketoon's, Volunteer & Whitworth rifles plus a range of American Civil War muskets.

We stock a wide range of accessories for sighting, cleaning and loading including moulds and reloading gear for black powder cartridge shooters. Moulds and loading dies for popular BP calibres in stock, we also keep some swaged projectiles from Taipan in stock for selected calibres.

Black powder and percussion caps are available in various grades and sizes.

Mail order available for most items other than guns, powder or caps which generally must be collected in person.

We deliver firearms interstate to dealers / armourers.

We have a range of second hand guns available.

Check out our website www.forbesws.com.au where you will find pricing information and links to the Pedersoli & Euroarms websites where you can see images of the products.

PO Box 589 Eltham VIC 3095.

Ph: 03 9439 6111 Fax: 03 9439 7288.

VMLC Sponsor - Stock Lock Antique Arms:

LFD 599 259 00F

* Western Action Supplies and consumables.

* Complete range of Black Powder supplies and consumables.

* Ammo boxes, gun bags, loading equipment, cleaning equipment, projectiles, ammo cases etc etc. Our range is forever growing!

* Mail order available on most items, we also have regular deliveries to Melbourne.

* Huge range of pre-owned black powder longarms and handguns available for sale, as well as Sporting, antique and collectible firearms.

* Special requests are catered for on all items.

Contact Roger C Mowbray, c/o Post Office, Katandra West, VIC 3634. Phone 03 5865 5583, Fax 03 5865 5565, or email: austoil@mcmmedia.com.au

VMLC Sponsor - Green River Rifle Works:

LGD 626 98Z

Green River Rifle Works has been under its current ownership since 1985 and is the largest Muzzle Loading shop in Australia. We are the only shop to offer a complete service to Black Powder Shooters and our Green River Custom Firearms which are built to customer specifications on the premises are famous.

We also sell factory assembled firearms and kits, accessories - many specially designed and manufactured by us, spare parts, books and magazines, do repairs and restorations to reproduction and antique firearms, in fact anything to do with Muzzle Loading and Buckskinning.

A large part of the business is Mail and Telephone Order and since our beginnings, we have enjoyed an increase in business each year. As a result of that in 1988, we moved from our humble beginnings in a back shed to our large shop come workshop where customers can visit, browse, chat and watch the Custom Guns being created all in the one large area.

We are proud to say that we can offer a complete service to Black Powder Shooters and all your requirements can be found in the one place. If we have not got what you want, we will do our best to get it if it is available.

Orders can be done by e:mail, mail or telephone and charged to your Credit Card for convenience. It is not quite the same as being here with us but we do our best to supply what you need. Phone and mail orders usually sent out the same day. 08 8293 3686.

www.grrw.com.au

VMLC Sponsors:

The VMLC Executive Committee recommends to Members that when you are looking to purchase a new firearm or accessory, your first and wisest choice of supplier should be one of the VMLC Sponsors: **Forbes Wholesale Pty Ltd; Green River Rifle Works; Stock Lock Antique Arms.**

Victorian Shooter:

If you would like to receive this magazine FREE, contact the SSAA (Vic) on 03 8892 2777.

Potential New Members & No Smoking:

Smoking is not permitted on SSAA (Vic) ranges within 6 metres of where black powder is being used or handled. Smoking is prohibited in all SSAA (Vic) owned or occupied buildings. Smoking is only allowed in appropriate and safe outdoor areas.

VMLC Members are requested to be on particular alert during our competition days, where a person/s from the "other end" of the main range may come for a "look at the muzzle loaders" whilst they are smoking; in instances such as these, Members will be required to immediately, and politely advise the smoker of the safety issue and to withdraw to a safe distance of 6 metres, or to extinguish the cigarette et cetera. (In the unlikely event where a smoker did not comply with our request, the matter should immediately be reported to the Range Officer.) In these circumstances, where a smoker has reasonably complied with our request, it would be in the Club's best interest to ask them if they would like to have a shot or two of a muzzle loader!

Members who already do this are thanked for taking the time to "convert" a shooter to muzzle loading!

***** HANDGUNS *****

Handgun Competitors:

It has come to the notice of the Club Committee that handgun licensed members have been or intend to allow unlicensed handgun guests to fire handguns at Club meetings. This practice is allowable under the following conditions:

1. The guest is over the age of 18 years.
2. The guest has been introduced to the Club President or Nominated Officers.
3. The guest's sponsor has completed the VP1120 form (obtainable from www.police.vic.gov.au) see "firearms – other forms". The completed form must be sent to Licensing Services Division, Victoria Police, GPO Box 2807, Melbourne, VIC 3001 (LSD) after the shoot has taken place. This form must also be used when qualifying club members for their handgun licence.
4. Guests, following the above conditions may only shoot on a maximum of 10 occasions.

Failure to observe these conditions could result in the sponsor losing their licence and or the Club losing its approved handgun target shooting club licence.

Handgun Competitors:

Many attempts have been made in good faith to ensure accurate records have been kept of handgun shooters attendance and competitions completed in accordance with LSD regulations; so far none have been successful and the result is that the Club's record keeper, currently Grant Steel has to chase information which he is no longer prepared to do. With effect from now, a clip board will be set up next to the daily programme board at the northern end of the range – ie where Grant and Jim normally find themselves. The clip board will have a form which will require handgun licensed members to provide the following information:

1. Date
2. Name
3. Handgun licence number
4. Licence expiry date
5. Competition(s) completed
6. Handgun used, to include:
 - a. Type, make and model
 - b. Calibre
 - c. Serial Number
 - d. Police Reference Number (PRN)

This information will be the SOLE source of data transcribed to be forwarded to LSD. Copies of records will be available to members at the January and February club days for member's perusal and will be forwarded to LSD on the 1st of March.

Handguns During a Cease Fire:

The SSAA (Vic) policy at Eagle Park is for the Handgun owner to holster/bag his/her unloaded handgun at a cease fire and take the handgun onto the Range (or wherever) but definitely not to leave it on a bench.

Total Fire Bans for the Central Area:

Black Powder shooting is not permitted at Eagle Park on a day of Total Fire Ban for the Central Area. For information regarding Total Fire Bans contact the Victorian Bushfire Information Line on 1800 240 667.

The Ramrod Trading Post

Anyone in need of a Rifle Stock?:

Hi Guys,

We are trying to get an order together for full-stocks from Pecatonica (half-stocks can come by post). We need to order a minimum of six stock and we have had a couple of people drop out and only have four at the moment.

Do any of you need a stock or know of anyone who would like to add a stock to this order?

Best Regards,
Allan & Jenny,
Green River Rifle Works.
08 8293 3686
vaisham@bigpond.com.au

For Sale:

Lead Shot, No. 7, 5kg for only \$28.00, see Barry K.

For Sale:

Reconstruction project. 1842 3 band Springfield percussion musket by J.B. Haliquet (Liege). No barrel, but otherwise complete wood and all metal bits including ramrod. Photos available by email. \$160. Contact Ian 02 6024 4530.

Items for Sale from the Estate of the late Jim Horner:

Rexel stapler c/w almost 5000 staples - \$10.00.
Arrow stapler c/w almost 2000 staples - \$10.00.
20 gauge cartridge belt - \$15.00. Gun bag 35" long - \$15.00.

VMLC Competition Days and Fees:

The VMLC shoots at the SSAA Eagle Park range near Little River on the third Saturday of every month except for May which is the fourth Saturday.

Apart from Range Entry fees, Competitors will pay a base competition fee of \$6.00 on the day. In addition, shotgun competitors will pay an additional \$2.00 when these competitions are held, and pistol shooters will pay an additional \$1.00 when their competitions are held. (A different fee structure is applicable to the State Championships.)

James Horner VMLC Library:

Detailed below is the collection of books in the library; please see David Tooth to make suitable borrowing arrangements.

Black powder guide 2nd edition - GC Nonte Jr.
Custom muzzle loading rifles - T Bridges.
First Winchester, The - J Parsons.
45/70, The - KF Schreier.
Gun digest, black powder loading manual - S Fadala.
Guns of the world - H Tanner.
How to be an expert at shotgun shooting - F Ettchen.
Illustrated encyclopedia of firearms, The - I Hogg.
Lyman black powder handbook - C Ramage.
Muzzle loading caplock rifle, The - N Roberts.
Pistol shooting - Antal & Skanaker.
RCBS cast bullet manual No. 1.
Shooting Colt single actions - M Venturino.
SPG black powder cartridge - Garbe & Venturino.
Straight shooting - J Pollard.
World's greatest guns, The - F Wilkinson.

The January 2011 Gathering:

After all the rain in Queensland, New South Wales and particularly in Victoria, there were some members who had doubts about whether they would make it to the range on Saturday 15th. A couple of members who travelled from Melbourne through Werribee reported that the road in the centre of Werribee (near the river) was awash. And those who stayed on the Geelong Road saw only a bit of water which was across Gifkin's Lane. So, no problems with travel it seems.

Well, 2010 has come and gone. It's hard to remember where it went, it seemed to go so fast. So here we are at the start of a new year. Something like twenty members arrived at the range on the day. Last year it was also about twenty. Some consistency there if nothing else!

As usual for January, there were two pistol comps; single action and 25 metres black powder pistol. Five shooters tackled the single action, with Roger Mowbray winning with 166. In the 25m pistol event there were eight competitors. Roger also won this one, this time with 79. Included in the eight was Ross McLeod (Ross the R.O.), who didn't come last. This should make him feel good, or at least not as bad as if he'd come last.

After these two comps, it was as the programme says, "practice, experimentation, instruction, and chit chat". There was certainly lots of the last one, and plenty of the others to be seen. Several members were seen practising with patched ball rifles. Several others were observed shooting cap and ball revolvers.

Shannon Smith was one such patched ball person, but early on had dropped the adjusting screw out of his rear sight. Somehow he later found it amongst the numerous empty .22 cases and other rubbish in front of the concrete pad, and could then proceed.

Gordon Rush had his cap & ball revolver and entered the 25m comp, gaining a third place.

Peter Robinson was seen with his patched ball rifle, and also with an old .22 repeater and, wait for it, a much older double barrelled pinfire shotgun. Pinfire firearms at VMLC shoots are about as rare as capping breechloaders and Snaphance guns. That is, something you don't see every day. Hope he doesn't plan to shoot it any time soon, as pinfire cartridge manufacture is something at which probably no VMLC members are skilled.

Grant Steel entered both pistol events, and was later observed in the unofficial shotgun comp.

Bucket entered the Single Action comp, gaining a second place, and later also fired off a few 12g cartridges.

Fishie was seen with his second flintlock rifle. Flintlock number one was evidently having the day off.

Trevor Ah Hang entered both pistol comps, but no places this time.

Joe Ewer had a conventional looking patched ball rifle, while Bernice Ewer was observed at one stage wielding an underhammer percussion rifle. Underhammers are unusual at our shoots, but not quite as rare as pinfires.

Past President Bazza was playing around with his Sharps replica, and later on fired off some 12g cartridges.

Noel Howland was observed with his .35-55 rifle, also with his Euro Arms 3 bander.

Julian Richardson was at one time using a .44-40 lever action rifle.

Bruce Johnson (Bruce II) was seen with a cap & ball revolver, but probably did other things at other times.

Bruce Ayles (Bruce I) entered both pistol comps and achieved a second and a third.

George Liptak entered the 25m pistol comp, and proceeded from there to practise with his revolver.

Jim Robins was seen firing a single shot .38-55 rifle.

Geoff Drever turned up with his trusty patched ball rifle.

Roger Mowbray entered (and won) both pistol comps. Doesn't matter if he didn't do any further practise, as he obviously doesn't need it!

Adrian Roads appeared with his extremely accurate 3 bander, and had in tow a number of hangers-on, who were being shown the marvels of black powder.

And somewhere down amongst the other mob was Ross McLeod, who entered the 25m black powder pistol event, and didn't come last!

And if I missed anyone, you have my deepest sympathy. You really do!

Mid afternoon they started to drift away, and we hope to see them all next month when rifle comps will begin, in addition to the usual pistol comps.

Next month it's two events for breechloaders, one for smoothbores, one for muzzleloading shotguns, and three for muzzleloading rifle. And of course, starting with single action and 25m precision pistol.

Piecrust.

Competition Programme February 19:

Handgun: Cowboy Single Action (9:00am start).

Handgun: Class 3 (Open): 25m Precision
(Concurrent with Breech Loading Rifle events).

Breech Loading Rifle:

100m Bench Rest, 100m Prone or Cross-Sticks.

Muzzle Loading Smooth Bore: 50m Offhand.

Muzzle Loading Shotgun: 15 Clays.

Open Muzzle Loading Rifle: 25m Offhand* 10 Shots Off-The-Body**, 50m Reverse**, Gong.

*** Off-The-Body Offhand events require that the competitor carry all loading materials, with the exception of a loading rod (ten point penalty shall apply). Powder may be carried in a powder horn or flask for these events. Spotting is not permitted. Events over which the monthly aggregate is taken are shown with **.**

Get Wells:

Geoffrey Drever and Campbell Walton have been ill of late; our thoughts are with them, and we hope they make a speedy recovery, and we all look forward to seeing them at our shoots very soon.

Member Assistance Required:

Every month at our shoots, there is quite often much setting-up work to be done, for example, gongs to be taken on to the range, clay thrower & clays to be moved from shed & set-up then returned to the shed, throwing clays, scoring clay & other competitions, target scoring &c &c. Unfortunately these things do not happen by magic, and more often than not they are left to the same few members month after month, year after year. All members are requested to offer a little help with these items; they will only take a few minutes and will make our shooting days more enjoyable for everyone. Please seek out Phil Baker to see where you can lend a hand. To those Members who are already helping out, your assistance is appreciated.

VMLC SCORE RECORDS - CURRENTLY HELD EVENTS - Updated 17th October 2010

	Event	Score	Date	Shooter
Breech Loading Rifle:	25/50 Rapid Fire / Cross Sticks	37	04/04	R Ainscow
	Above equalled	37	04/07, 04/08	J Morraitis, R Ainscow
	50m Bear Snap	67	11/07	P Groves
	50m Offhand	88	11/06	J Morraitis
	100m Bench Rest	95	04/08	P Groves
	Above equalled	95	04/10	N Howland
	100m Cross Sticks	95	11/08	P Groves
	100m Kneeling	82	04/07	R Ainscow
	100m Moses Stick	79	04/10	J Morraitis
	100m Offhand	79	06/08	J Morraitis
	100m Prone / Cross Sticks	89	06/09	N Howland
	Above equalled	89	02/10	J Morraitis
	200m Bench Rest	921	04/10	J Morraitis
	Class 1 Muzzle Loading Rifle:	50m Offhand	92	06/02
50m Snap		83	11/09	D Tooth
75m Snap		73	06/06	J Morraitis
100m 2 Position		74	11/09	A Roads
100m Bench Rest		86	11/06	D Hill
100m Offhand		81	06/07	A Roads
125m Bench Rest		71	06/07	T Bernhardt
Class 2 Muzzle Loading Rifle:	25m 5 Bull Snap	32	07/03	S Doig
	50m Offhand	92	07/10	C Kinder
	50m Snap	88	11/07	J Morraitis
	75m Cross Sticks	89	07/08	G Steel
	Above equalled	89	07/08	B Kitchen
	100m 2 Position	82	11/07	J Morraitis
	100m Bench Rest	86	11/07	P Groves
Class 3 (Open) Muzzle Loading Rifle:	25m Offhand (5 Bull Target, 50 points max)	35	02/04	J Morraitis
	35m Rabbit Offhand (50 points max)	43	09/07	T Kompar
	Above equalled	43	04/08	P Mahoney
	50m Bench Rest	98	10/09	B Kitchen
	50m Offhand	90	04/02	G Drever
	Above equalled	90	10/04, 10/04	A Roads, S Doig
	50m Reverse Target	88	08/03	S Doig
	50m Snap	93	09/07	J Morraitis
	75m Kneeling	82	10/03	A Roads
	75m Moses, Bison	34	04/08	P Mahoney
	75m Offhand	86	09/06	J Morraitis
	75m Snap	66	06/07	D Tooth
	100m Any Position	88	10/04	S Doig
	100m Bench Rest	90	08/02	J Horner
	100m Prone / Cross Sticks	83	08/06	J Morraitis
	200m Bench Rest (Big Bull Target)	89	11/09	J Morraitis
Class 4 Muzzle Loading Rifle:	100m Bench Rest	88	03/06	S Doig
	150m Bench Rest	75	03/06	J Morraitis
	200m Bench Rest (Big Bull Target)	87	03/04	S Doig
Flintlock Muzzle Loading Rifle:	35m Offhand Rabbit	41	09/09	D Hill
	50m Offhand	91	05/02	M Taylor
	75m Moses	75	09/07	K Fisher
	100m Cross Sticks	75	09/07	D Hill
	100m Bench Rest	76	11/04	M Taylor
Handgun:	25m CSA (10shots HG + 10 Rifle)	172	12/08	D Hill
	Above equalled	172	06/10, 10/10	R Mowbray, D Hill
	25m Precision Class 3	93	09/03	S Doig
	Above equalled	93	11/08	M Samson
	25m Timed Class 3	88	09/02	J Morraitis
	25m Bear 15 shots any handgun	106	11/04	R Ainscow
50m Precision Class 3	76	03/06	T Bernhardt	
Musket:	50m Offhand (flint)	70	02/08	D Hill
	50m Offhand (percussion)	81	11/06	P Groves
Shotgun:	15 Clays - Breech Loader	15	10/06	B Kitchen
	Above equalled	15	03/07	D Hill, J Morraitis
	15 Clays - Muzzle Loader	15	02/90	B Kitchen
	Above equalled	15	04/06, 11/07, 02/07	B Kitchen, J Morraitis, N Howland
	25 Clays (12Low & 13High) M/Loader	24	08/07	T Kompar
Above equalled	24	08/09	P Mahoney	

**SSAA-Victorian Muzzle Loading Club
Record Aggregates. Updated 11th December 2010.**

The following aggregate scores are from Monthly, and State Championships consisting of currently held events. Distances are metres.

Breech Loading Rifle:

	Score	Competitor	Year
Annual Championship: 100 Bench Rest, 100 Moses Stick, 200 Bench Rest, 25 / 50 Offhand / Cross Sticks, 100 Offhand	379	P Groves	2010
State Championship: 50 Snap, 100 Cross Sticks, 200 Bench Rest	229	P Groves	2008

Class 1 Muzzle Loading Rifle:

Annual Championship: 50 offhand, 75 Snap, 100 Offhand, 125 Bench Rest	313	M Taylor	2002
State Championship: 50 Offhand, 50 Snap, 100 Bench Rest, 100 2P	303	A Roads	2010

Class 2 Muzzle Loading Rifle:

Annual Championship: 25 Snap, 50 Offhand, 75 Cross Sticks, 100 Bench Rest.	312	B Kitchen	2008
State Championship: 50 Offhand, 50 Snap, 100 Bench Rest, 100 2P	325	J Morraitis	2007

Class 3 Muzzle Loading Rifle:

Annual Championship: 50 Offhand, 50 Snap, 100 Any Position, 200 Bench Rest	319	S Doig	2004
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Class 4 Muzzle Loading Rifle:

Annual Championship: 100 Bench Rest, 150 Bench Rest, 200 Bench Rest	225	S Doig	2004
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Muzzle Loading Rifle - Flintlock:

Annual Championship: 35 Rabbit, 50 Offhand, 75 Moses, 100 Cross Sticks	284	D Hill	2009
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Handgun:

Annual Championship: 25 Precision, 25 Timed, 50 Precision. (Excludes 25m any handgun, animal target which varies from year to year)	241	T Bernhardt	2006
State Championship: 25 Precision, 50 Precision	163	S Doig	2006

Muzzle Loading Shotgun:

Annual Championship: 25 Clays (12 high & 13 low) Above equalled	24/25 24/25	T Kompar P Mahoney	2007 2009
State Championship: 15 Clays	15/15	J Morraitis	2007

Sharpshooter Target Rifles with Telescopic Sights - continued:

The telescopic rifle sights he produced were between 3X and 20X power and considered to be the best available at that time; they had lenses ground for the "normal eye" or were custom ground for the person purchasing the telescopic sight. They were not adjustable and therefore the telescopic sight could generally only be used by the person for whom it was made unless your eyesight was "normal". I'm not sure what "normal" was at that time, I assume he calibrated the sight to someone he used for that purpose or perhaps to his own eye. I haven't found a description of what Malcolm considered "normal".

Non-achromatic lenses have a "halo" of rainbow colors around the edges of the view field and therefore are not as clear, but that is what other telescopic sight makers used at that time.

Another telescopic sight maker was L. M. Amidon of Vermont, a jeweler and expert rifleman, he also designed and produced telescopic sights before and during the war, although none of his telescopic sights had achromatic lenses, they were still considered very good scopes for their time.

Another unique item for accurate shooting is a false muzzle. The false muzzle was invented by a famous American telescope maker, Alvin Clark, while he was experimenting with early telescopic sight designs. The false muzzle was patented and licensed to a gun maker named Edwin Wesson (1811-1849), who also produced one of the finest muzzle loading rifles of his day.

The false muzzle covers the muzzle, and has a deeply chambered crown and tapered bore to start the bullet easily and precisely. The false muzzle must be made from the barrel blank, and rifled as part of the barrel.

After loading, the false muzzle is removed to allow the bullet to be fired from a perfect sharp edge muzzle, with no crown. A sharp edge muzzle has been proven to give the best accuracy. During the loading procedure a sharp edge muzzle is easily damaged by careless handling, a false muzzle helps preserve the sharp edge of a muzzle and thereby preserving the accuracy of the rifle.

False muzzles have a small post, called a sight block, which alerts the shooter if he has failed to remove the false muzzle before firing.

So, what did Berdans and other Sharpshooters have available for their use during the war?

There were many good gun makers during the 1850's and 1860's, some were very well known and others who only produced a few rifles for people near their town, are not very well known. But, I believe it is safe to make the assumption, that many of the telescopic sights used by the Berdans were probably made by James, Malcom and Amidon.

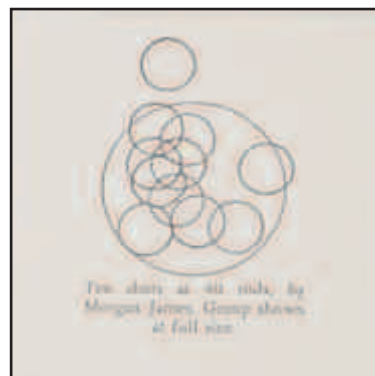
I doubt they would have used poorly made telescopic sights, even if the rifle was well made and accurate.

Globe sights were available at that time and helped to improve the sight picture, but did not increase magnification in any way.

So, how do we reenactors obtain an authentic looking target rifle, telescopic sight and mounts?

As I stated earlier, there are some reproduction rifles that are acceptable, I obtained the Lyman's Great Plains rifle kit and a reproduction of the Edwin Wesson rifle available with a false muzzle. The problem I still had was, how do I get a telescope sight and mounts that are correct for the Civil War period or before.

Fortunately for us, there is a gentleman who not only makes period scopes and mounts, but also can make a heavy barrel target rifle. He is a member of our company and our ordinance sergeant. For those of you who have not yet seen the rifles or the scope and mounts he has made, they are in the Third Corps March photo below. Top to bottom are a thirty-pound and fourteen-pound rifle made by him, third from the top is my Lyman rifle and the scope he made for it. He also used original lenses in making my scope, the scope has five lenses, the eyepiece is plated with imported German silver as many originals were, and has a very clear field of view. The period sight mounts he fabricated are adjustable for windage and elevation, with a period tool to adjust the rear sight mount. I don't believe there is anyone producing a scope comparable to his scopes at this time.



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