

AUSTRALIAN WOMEN'S SHOOTER

Helping out on the land

Ladies range day shines

Saluting military heritage

Hunting the 2024 deer rut

Talking 'shooting' to non-shooters

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Editorial

Rachael Oxborrow

Shooting is more than a sport that the general public sees on television once every four years for the Olympics, it is a part of life for millions of Australians. For Laetisha Scanlan it's her career, both as a competitor and a teacher, and she provides a lesson in regrouping when things don't go to plan. It's not an easy task to take a step back and assess the situation when you're invested in an outcome, so this is some good food for thought.

Kath Heiman has strong connections to shooting, hunting and the military, and she discusses her family's interesting history, detailing the firearms they used in wartime, namely the Lee-Enfield (SMLE) No. 1 Mk III*.

Adrienne Warren covers her first deer rut, which ends up being more than just a hunting trip. It's a week away with her children teaching them firearm safety and other skills in the field and it's a camping trip with friends. The mateship and the learned experiences that come with hunting build skills and memories that stay with you for life.

For many, shooting is a part of their lives through land management. Whether we own land or help someone with pest animal management, we make a significant contribution to the environment. In our 'Farmers friend' story, Christie Pisani details just what that relationship looks like for her and the connection is one both parties truly value.

Sharing the role shooting plays in our life can take on different forms. For SSAA Sunraysia Pistol Club in Mildura, Victoria, it can look like a 'Ladies Day' introducing beginners to the sport. These stories can also come via the conversations we have with friends, family and others and Jennifer Martens talks us through how these connections can be made.

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SHOOTER**

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Taking aim

with Laetisha Scanlan

Turning setbacks into success

In the unpredictable world of competitive clay target shooting, where the highs and lows are constant, mastering the mental game is essential. Champions in this sport stand out due to their exceptional mental stamina under pressure, resilience in the face of setbacks and relentless drive to succeed. Given the longevity of the sport, we must all accept that the highs and lows are inevitable.

Many shooters encounter career slumps, and from those who successfully navigate these downturns I've observed several key strategies:

Taking time away. A break to reset and reflect can reignite passion and clarify motivations. Reflect, reset, return - sometimes taking a step back is taking a step forward.

Avoiding panic. Time and time again I see shooters overshoot in practice, consequently creating more errors in the hopes that quantity will outweigh doubt. Confidence in thorough preparation and a positive mindset is crucial. Recognising that sometimes great practice doesn't guarantee competition success nor does bad practice doom it. Trust your process.

Returning to basics. Sometimes it can be as simple as a stock adjustment to see the world through a clearer lens. If you think you should be hitting targets that you're not, pattern your gun, see where it's shooting and adjust accordingly. Let the pattern board verify your doubts and ease your mind from assumptions that can potentially undermine performance.

Seeking professional guidance. Whether from an experienced coach or sports psychologist, external insight can address mental errors and elevate performance potential. You don't know what you don't know, so lean into those who can help you achieve your goals.

Embracing reality. Acknowledging that not every competition you enter will end in a victory, be kind to yourself and realise that you can't win them all. Accept that losing doesn't make you a loser, especially if you learn from it.

Remember, every setback is an opportunity to refine your approach and strengthen your mental fortitude. Embrace the journey, stay committed, and let each experience guide you towards becoming a more formidable competitor.

WOMEN'S-ONLY COMPETITION

Only female SSAA members are eligible to enter. One entry per member. To enter, simply write your name, address and membership number on the back of an envelope and send it to:

Australian Women's Shooter
PO Box 2520, Unley, SA 5061

or online at
ssaa.org.au/win



Competition closes September 30, 2024

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Blood on the ***battlefields***



These are Kath and Scout's
kind of 'tall poppies'.

Kath Heiman reflects on where her strong military history stands today

I didn't have any inkling about my military lineage while I was growing up. Life as a kid in Scotland revolved around lunchtimes playing 'British bulldogs' outside in the playground or being kicked-out of the school buildings when we tried to escape the dreary conditions of seemingly endless winters.

Summer was when the sun finally came out, particularly on our routine trips across the English Channel to holiday in France. Leaving Dover by ferry, we'd disembark at Calais with our family car bursting at the seams with camping gear.

The most memorable trip involved a week hunkered down in a farmer's hay field when our newly acquired Russian Moskvich sedan melted an axle within three days of our arrival. My brother and I spent the following days loitering around the tent trying to avoid sunburn, and sneezing - a lot (hay fever is a hell-of-a-thing when you're camped in a paddock full of straw). While dad hitched rides into town to sort out a 'Plan B' for our holiday transport, the locals would come by regularly to check on mum and the kids, invariably offering baguettes, cheese and fresh fruit over the field's walled fence.

When I reflect on it now, it never once occurred to me that my forebears had spent time in France, long before I ever went there. But their experiences were very

different to mine. They were in uniform, during World Wars One and Two, and they were being shot at.

It wasn't until mum started to explore our family genealogy in the mid-2000s that I became aware of the full extent of grandad and great grandad's service history in both Europe and India. For grandad, his military action saw him 'Mentioned in Despatches' by the King for distinguished service during Operation Dynamo. This was Winston Churchill's effort to evacuate British and Allied forces from Dunkirk in the face of an overwhelming German offensive. Grandad was a Private soldier at the time, so for his actions on the battlefield to have come to the attention of his seniors (who then reported it to the King), what he did must have really mattered. While I'll never know for sure, family lore has it that, as a machine-gunner, he was likely shooting at low flying German aircraft as they strafed the stranded soldiers on the beach. In an operation hailed by Churchill as a "miracle of deliverance," I think grandad was probably one of the last to be evacuated while keeping the Messerschmitts and Stukas at bay.

While I was largely oblivious to my family's military service in my youth, this situation has been amply rectified as an adult. Having joined the Australian Army myself over 25 years ago, and being married to Scott, a 30-year Infantry veteran, battlefield history is at

the forefront of our professional endeavours.

For nearly 15 years, Scott was a member of both the Army's History Unit and Unrecovered War Casualties Unit where, as senior investigator, he focused on locating Australia's missing servicemen from the WWII battlefields of Papua New Guinea.

Our small business now sub-contracts to the United States government in its efforts to find their missing-in-action and prisoners of war who failed to return home. Most recently, Scott's been leading battlefield tours, offering customers the opportunity to learn about Australia's most renowned WWII campaign on the Kokoda Trail in PNG.

While most people are broadly aware of the events that took place over the mountainous 96km of track between Owers' Corner and Kokoda, far fewer realise that the Kokoda campaign continued a further 160km by road to the northern beaches of Buna, Gona and Sanananda. Here, on just one day, more Allied soldiers lost their lives in combat than during the rest of the campaign put together. Scott's tour focuses on these military engagements and my daughter Scout and I took part in the trip last year. With just four females in a group of 16, we might have been excused for thinking that battlefield 'tourism' is the sole preserve of a group of military-oriented men of advancing years. And that may be the case. But I strongly feel that it shouldn't be.



A picture (and a diorama) paints a thousand words.

Kath and Scout at Dunkirk, where the beach seems peaceful considering its violent past.



Ridge, he knows that it's here that his maternal grandad, a Pioneer himself, fought to hold back the Japanese advance towards Port Moresby. Moments like these generate a palpable sense of connection to his past that nothing else can.

For my part, I'd known my maternal grandad and great grandad as men who kept their distance from us kids. In my memory, they were stern looking figures who inspired respect and a degree of fear. My brother and I would peer at them from behind the lounge when we'd visit their homes, careful not to make too much noise or to get in their way. If more mature, we'd have noticed a playful twinkle in grandad's eyes as he fixed us with his steely gaze. In reality, this was a man who was proud of us kids, but he'd spent too much of his life trying to mask undiagnosed wartime trauma to allow himself the freedom to be openly emotional.

Much as is the case among military veterans today, he didn't talk about his war experiences, instead bottling it up and spending too much time doing other things. The difficulties he had in keeping close relationships with his family would now be recognised as one of several symptoms of PTSD. Back then, mum simply knew him as a difficult man, but never really understood why.

Mum's childhood experiences shaped her outlook on life, and so inevitably played a strong part in who I am today. Visiting Dunkirk on a family holiday a few years back, the privations of warfare and its effects on the men and women who serve their countries - and on my grandad in particular - were brought home in ways that would be impossible to understand any other way.

Sitting at a beachside café sipping Belgian cherry beer with Scott while our young daughter enjoyed crepes, there could have been no starker contrast between our experience of this place and the deadly days suffered by grandad over 80 years before.

The Dunkirk War Museum, located in the former headquarters of the French Army, does an excellent job in bringing to life the story of the Dunkirk evacuation with dioramas, artefacts, and interactive displays that explain the context for the operation and the human cost to those who fought. Being there finally helped me understand what had made grandad tick. It was just a pity that mum and grandma never had the opportunity to do the

Scott paying his respects to the first MIA soldier he helped to identify.



Not only did I learn about Australia's military history in PNG, but I also finally put faces to the names of the local Buna clan who Scott's worked with for years and who he regards as his second family. Notably, I found myself immersed in a society which maintains a subsistence lifestyle that's changed little since pre-colonial times. I was among a people who happily fish and hunt for their daily protein, keep kitchen gardens for sustenance, barter among themselves, and buy only the barest essential dry and tinned goods from the nearest main town some 40km away. Without televisions, the kids grow strong playing outside, swimming and helping with

day-to-day chores. It was an eye-opening experience that would be valuable for any Australian parent with kids who spend their time glued to devices.

The reality is that the echoes of history have real resonance within our present lives, generations later. And so touring sites of significance to our battlefield history can be a meaningful way to connect with our families' past. Scott's forebears' military service was the catalyst for his early ambitions to join the Australian Army, and to become Pioneer qualified, helping to forge the identity of the man I chose to marry.

These days when he leads tour groups to Owers' Corner and looks towards Imita

same. Their home life would likely have been a lot better for it.

Firearms of the era

Everyone assigned to the Australian and British militaries during WWI and WWII would have known the bolt-action Short Magazine Lee-Enfield (SMLE) No. 1 Mk III*. With its genesis in lessons learned during the Boer War, the SMLE entered British military service in 1904. In Australia, it was first produced at the Lithgow Small Arms Factory (see *Great Australian Outdoors 5*) and issued in December 1913. The Mk III* remained in military service for more than 70 years.

While he would undoubtedly have used the SMLE No. 1 Mk III*, my grandad also served in the Regular Army before WWII, in India and elsewhere. As a member of the East Yorkshire Regiment's Machine Gun Company between the Wars, his stock in trade was the British-made Vickers machine gun.

Meanwhile, he served as a rifleman in the Green Howards (Alexandra, Princess of Wales' Own Yorkshire Regiment) during WWII, at Dunkirk and D-Day. It's the Vickers that he may have been using in the closing days of Operation Dynamo.

As for Scott, his maternal grandad was a machine gunner too, in the Australian Light Horse between the Wars. For WWII, he transferred to the 2/1st Pioneer Battalion and, prior to his action in PNG, saw service as one of the Rats of Tobruk.

Scott's paternal grandad was also in the Australian Light Horse between the Wars. For WWII, he rejoined the military and served in the RAAF 19th Repair and Salvage Unit, seeing service in Darwin, PNG and Morotai. While his primary role was as a cook, he was qualified in the Thompson submachine gun which he'd have used in perimeter defence around the airfields, and for self-defence when salvaging plane parts.

Sporting shooters and wartime

Sporting shooters have had a close association with the Australian military since well before Federation. In his book *The Riflemen* (2013), Andrew Kilsby traces the first colonial rifle associations to the 1860s and the creation of the National Rifle Association of Australia (NRAA) to 1888, Australia's first national sporting organisation. Formed to support

Australian military volunteers and later militia forces, rifle clubs were intrinsic to most small towns and urban centres where rifle shooting was regarded as an 'every man's' pastime.

Accelerated by patriotic feelings during the Boer War, a powerful and militarised rifle movement had developed in Australia by the early 1900s. As the spectre of WWI loomed large, however, defence authorities increasingly came to see rifle clubs as a cheap defence asset, demanding more control in return for ammunition grants, free rail travel and use of rifle ranges. This situation caused tensions with club leadership. As the military pressed rifle clubs to shoot 'under service conditions' (including the conduct of route marches in full battle dress), it faced resistance from clubs that preferred to continue programs of target shooting for sport and monetary prizes. Unwilling to adapt quickly enough and losing their ablest members to the Australian Imperial Force (AIF), rifle clubs became ideologically disconnected from the military which, in response, developed its own structures to meet wartime challenges.

Despite being placed back within the military structure in the 1930s, rifle clubs were again sidelined when Australia prepared for WWII. Club rifles were sequestered, and all club activities ceased until 1948 as troops returned home with souvenirs off the battlefield or acquired rifles that were 'Sold out of Service'.

Regulations

In 1947, the NSW Police Offences (Firearms) Amendment Act made it an offence for any person to have in their possession any military rifle or military ammunition, except if they were a member of the defence forces of the Commonwealth (including cadets) or police force, or a member of a rifle club formed under the Defence Act.

This restriction applied to any firearm made after 1890 'of a type' used by militaries of 'any country' and which had a calibre larger than 22/100th of an inch (.22). For club members, such possession had to be for club use - carried for the purpose of engaging in, or proceeding to or from, target practice at an authorised rifle range.

It is interesting to reflect that, on April 15, 1948, when the prospect of this new offence was likely a subject of public discussion among firearms users, about 100 shooters



Walking the ground on a battlefield tour can, and should, be a family affair.



Bomana War Cemetery holds 3824 Commonwealth war burials.



Corporal Heiman in PNG with his Thompson submachine gun.

met in Sydney to form the Sporting Shooters' Association of Australia. The purpose then, as it is now, was to promote shooting sports and to protect the legal privileges and interests of firearm owners. ●



Off to a
roaring start

The 2024 deer rut provides
Adrienne Warren with the ultimate reward

Following my first buck hunt (AWS 21) last year, I was back at it for another first, the 2024 fallow rut. This year was made a family occasion, with my partner Harry and I bringing the kids along with us for some of the experiences. Also joining us were some good mates. We returned to the same farmer's property in the mountains south of the Australian Capital Territory.

This year we timed the rut just right, arriving for the first week of April. The bucks were croaking all around us as we set up camp, resulting in a hurried attempt at making camp before some of us grabbed our firearms and scurried off excitedly into the bush.

We had allowed ourselves five days for this trip, to take the pressure off getting a nice buck and some nutritious meat for home. The extra time allowed us to dedicate the first few hunts to filling the freezer, doing recon and passing up any bucks not up to standard.

On the morning of day two, Harry and I decided to recreate the successful hunt that we had trekked the previous year when I took my first buck. We headed up two spurs of the same mountain on the SE and SW aspects, with a plan to meet at the peak and continue the hunt along the ridge.

About 20 minutes into the trek, I spied a spotty doe grazing across the trail 250m ahead of me. Eager to bag a meat dear, I wasted no time as she would no doubt soon hop the fence and wander out of view. So, I cautiously moved forward about 10m, crouched down and took a rest on a fallen tree.

My Tikka .270 hasn't let me down yet - a remarkable 100 percent shot to kill ratio - so I was comfortable taking the 200m shot. I carefully took aim and gently squeezed the trigger; the shot rang out and the doe dropped on the spot... the Tikka's success rate intact.

With Harry still committed to his hunt across the valley, I now had the opportunity for my first solo efforts at gutting and field dressing a deer. I approached the doe, put my rifle and gear down and got to work with my knife.

In the meantime, Harry had taken another doe, gutted it and hauled it down the mountain to meet me, and from there we made our way back down the spur together and to the track with our respective bounties.

We spent the next couple of days hunting to varying success and enjoying time out bush with our family and friends. Harry and I planned a hunt together towards the peak of an adjacent mountain where we had spotted



Adrienne's doe harvest with the skin gifted to her mother.



Adrienne's son learning all about marksmanship and firearms safety.



Adrienne's daughter happily collected this fox when spot-lighting for the first time.

a good-looking buck earlier on. We trekked up the eastern face of the mountain through steep inclines and thick bush. There was no easy way to get to where we wanted to go, and it was a long and challenging task. We had to cover a fair bit of ground in the dark before sunrise to get into position before the morning sun would make it more difficult to cover ground.

The summit flattened out at the top to run in a series of peaks and saddles linking the adjoining mountains. Mostly populated by mature trees and little underbrush, it gave a false sense of having a clear view of the area, however the fallen trees on the ground made for deceptively good cover for deer.

As we approached the summit, we saw the smallest flash of the top of an antler from behind a large fallen tree 25m away to our '2 o'clock'. We stopped in our tracks and dropped to the ground, caught with little cover and the morning sun high in the sky.

Pinned, we observed patiently, only moving enough to peer through the dead wood to catch a glance of the buck. He was moving leisurely right to left, quartering slightly away with four does by his side, all making their way into a nearby valley.

Harry and I were about 10m apart, both struggling to find a clear shot as we shuffled and adjusted our scopes, mouthing to each other to take the shot if a clear one presented. The deer began to wander into the valley 30m... 50m... 80m. Harry tried his luck for a better vantage, only moving slightly in the sunlight but it gave us away almost immediately.

The does took off and vanished downhill but the buck let out a bark, ran across the small valley to the spur on the opposite side, turned around and paused to look back from 150m away. I could no longer see the buck clearly from my rest. Harry, still crouched in the same place, knew he had very little time left to take a shot. He sat back down, raised his left knee for a rest, took a breath and squeezed the trigger. The buck reared up, charged a short distance into the scrub then crashed to the ground.

Ordinarily, we would parcel up our meat and cart it all back to camp, but we were a long way in and wanted to have the buck shoulder mounted. So, we radioed Harry's father, Dave, to bring the quad bike to a

nearby trail. After we caped out the buck and harvested the meat, we hiked back to camp as Dave took the bounty the long way back on the quad.

With the hunting trip now being a shared success with time to spare, we dedicated the rest of the trip to target practice and spotlighting foxes with the kids. We spent precious time to teach them about firearms safety, marksmanship and even took them out to experience a couple of stalks.

I may not have been the one to take the shot and bag the buck, but what I got from this hunting trip was worth a whole lot more. Not only did I make it out bush hunting during the rut, but I also got to share it with friends and family. I got to hear the croakers, share in the camp life, swap stories and catch up over great campfire meals. The fact that I was able to do this with my children for the first time, allowed me to share these quality experiences, values and skills. For them to grow up lucky enough to enjoy and appreciate these things is even more dear to me than the splendid trophy now hanging on my wall. ●



Adrienne's partner Harry with the buck he shot on their joint hunt.



The quad bike came in handy throughout the trip.



Ladies Day shines at SSAA Sunraysia Pistol Club

On Saturday, July 6, Girls with Guns held a Ladies Try and Shoot Day at SSAA Sunraysia Pistol Club in Mildura. The event was a sellout and had mostly beginners who had never held a firearm before, along with some with their long arms (rifle) licence who wanted to try pistol shooting.

Any nerves on the day quickly turned into confidence thanks to Chief Range Officer Russell 'Smokie' Dawson, who is President of the Sunraysia Pistol Club, along with knowledgeable instructors Wayne Lording, Allan Ziday and Farrah Buckland.

The two afternoon sessions saw shooting across a range of practice targets with a .22 rifle and .22 pistol, then finish off with a bang firing a 9mm pistol. It was fantastic to see mothers with their daughters and the girls keen to sign up as junior shooters. The pink firearms were popular with the girls and over 1000 rounds of ammo we fired on the day!

Well done to all the incredible women and girls who handled a firearm for the first time and to those gaining further experience in the shooting sports. The kind words of encouragement and support between complete strangers was incredible and plenty of new friendships were made. Having a go at shooting in a comfortable environment helped reiterate that the shooting sports are all-inclusive. ●



The pink firearms were popular with the girls.



The .22 and 9mm pistols shot on the day.



Farrah Buckland and Wayne Lording.



Farmer's friend

Pest removal on the agenda as **Christie Pisani** lends a much needed helping hand

Bidens pilosa. It is a flowering plant in the daisy family. It is also known as 'cobbler's pegs', or ironically, 'farmer's friend'. Ask any farmer and they will say this herbaceous flowering plant is no friend of theirs! It has an annoying needle-like seed that nestles between the fibres of your socks, and you just can't seem to get rid of them.

Sometimes I think that's what I am to Liz and Allan. A thorn in their socks. If you pester a small country town long enough, you eventually become a thorn in somebody's socks. But I must have grown on them, because nowadays, whenever I ring up for a chat Liz eagerly asks when I will be back for a visit. I don't know if it is for my pleasant company or my supernatural command of the weather. "A bit dry out there is it?" I ask, as Liz eagerly tells me about the ever-increasing pig numbers that "might need attending to." See, my drawcard is that just about every time I visit them, I bring rain.

The following week, I am on my trip to their western Queensland property, for a weekend camping in their shearing quarters, hunting and farm-handing. A few kilometres out of my hometown, my old HiLux has a breakdown. After some clumsy roadside bush-mechanics, I get moving again. Unfortunately, automotive mishaps, like many other things, come in threes. Number two is another (coughing and spluttering) halt, this time courtesy of an empty fuel tank. The earlier electrical fault had caused the fuel gauge to reset itself, giving me the false reading of a half full tank. I had driven right past a desolate looking petrol station in the previous 'blink-and-you-miss-it' town, thinking I would easily make it to the next town where the fuel might be cheaper and the sausage rolls less dry.

I am very soon reminded that the kindness of strangers is everywhere in the bush. After spending some time trying to wave down a vehicle, eventually the air brakes of

a Mack truck signal the arrival of my 'angel in flannelette', an interstate road train driver who introduces himself as Kev. Minutes later we are syphoning diesel from his tank into 2L milk bottles, running across the highway, pouring it into the HiLux tank and repeating the whole arduous process for a good hour of the truckie's precious time. But if Kev is put out, he doesn't show it. He refuses to take any money for his fuel or troubles, so I hide some cash amidst the mess in his cabin. He probably hasn't found it to this day.

Upon arriving at the property gates, I follow Al's descriptive directions to the paddock they are working in; each paragraph punctuated by 'if you've reached the (inanimate object/landmark) you've gone too far!' Tracking down a man or woman of the land during a drought is a fairly easy task. You follow the cloud of dust thrown up by the rusty farm ute or locate the sounds and sight of a mob of hungry stock as they swarm to any human presence in the hope for a feed.

Al and Liz are busily hand-feeding stock. As we chat amongst the incessant bleating of ravenous sheep, I am astounded by the

mental toughness of these farming families. It is easy to get overwhelmed by the number of hands being thrust in your face for assistance, but there are none more deserving than the ones who are brought up to not ask for help. They tough it out in the hope that future seasons will compensate for the present hardship: dams evaporating into muddy puddles, malnourished stock grazing in a paddock of stubble, plague proportions of feral animals and kangaroos consuming thousands of dollars of crops each night while wild dogs prey on newborn lambs.

Today the normally wisecracking Al looks beaten. The drought has not only sucked the moisture from his dams, but also the energy from his body, leaving deep furrows of worry in his face. "I somehow don't think you can weave your magic this time, mate. I just can't see that it is going to rain in the next few weeks. Feels like it will never rain again!" he says.

In the excitement of arriving at a hunting property, we can easily forget that the land we are using as a playground is a livelihood, history and home for the property owners. I consider it a privilege to be allowed access to it and find



Sometimes the 'work' is as fun as the 'play'.

any opportunity to lend a hand. Whether my hand is a very productive one is questionable but Al and Liz seem grateful all the same.

The next few days are spent fencing, mustering cattle, starting siphon hoses and feeding stock. It is hard but satisfying work. Al's and Liz's major source of stress is the attack of their stock by wild dogs. Aside from the obvious financial impact, the devastation is compounded by the sheer brutality of these attacks. Despite our best efforts each evening to trap or shoot the predators, each morning reveals a fresh batch of victims as we imagine the suffering of the stock as they died slowly from their wounds. It is truly devastating.

When I could find some surplus energy in an evening, I would do a scout of the property for wild dogs, but with no success. They are too clever for me - always one step ahead. On such a large property, driving around with a spotlight may intimidate them out of one paddock for the night, but it is only a band-aid solution. Meanwhile, another flock of sheep would fall victim at the other end of the farm.

I am reminded that I am yet to complete the trifecta of vacation mishaps when one morning I am greeted by two flat tyres. Al directs me to his workshop, and I help myself

to the contents of his tyre repair kit. The next morning, another puncture. Flat tyres, it seems, also happen in sets of three.

At the end of each day, despite making only a mere dent in the farmers' perpetual to-do list, it feels like we have achieved something, and a hearty home cooked meal is well-deserved. A farmer's invitation to dinner, I've learnt over the years, is more a direction than a request. "Beer?" asks Al, lobbing a can of XXXX my way. Also, not a question.

Liz has already set a plate in front of me and insists that I tuck in first and fill up before Al picks all the good bits out of the salad. Over a feed of farm fresh lamb chops, I break the news that I have effectively exhausted Al's supply of 'tyre worms'. Al laughs as he considers my "misfortunes". My misfortunes? In the grand scheme of things, I am the luckiest person alive if my biggest problem is having three leather strips poking out from the tread of my brand new all-terrains.

I feel privileged to be here, enjoying this hospitality. Not only have Al and Liz let me stay on their farm (insisting I stay in the house, not the shearers quarters as I had intended), they have also fed, entertained and allowed me unrestricted access to their

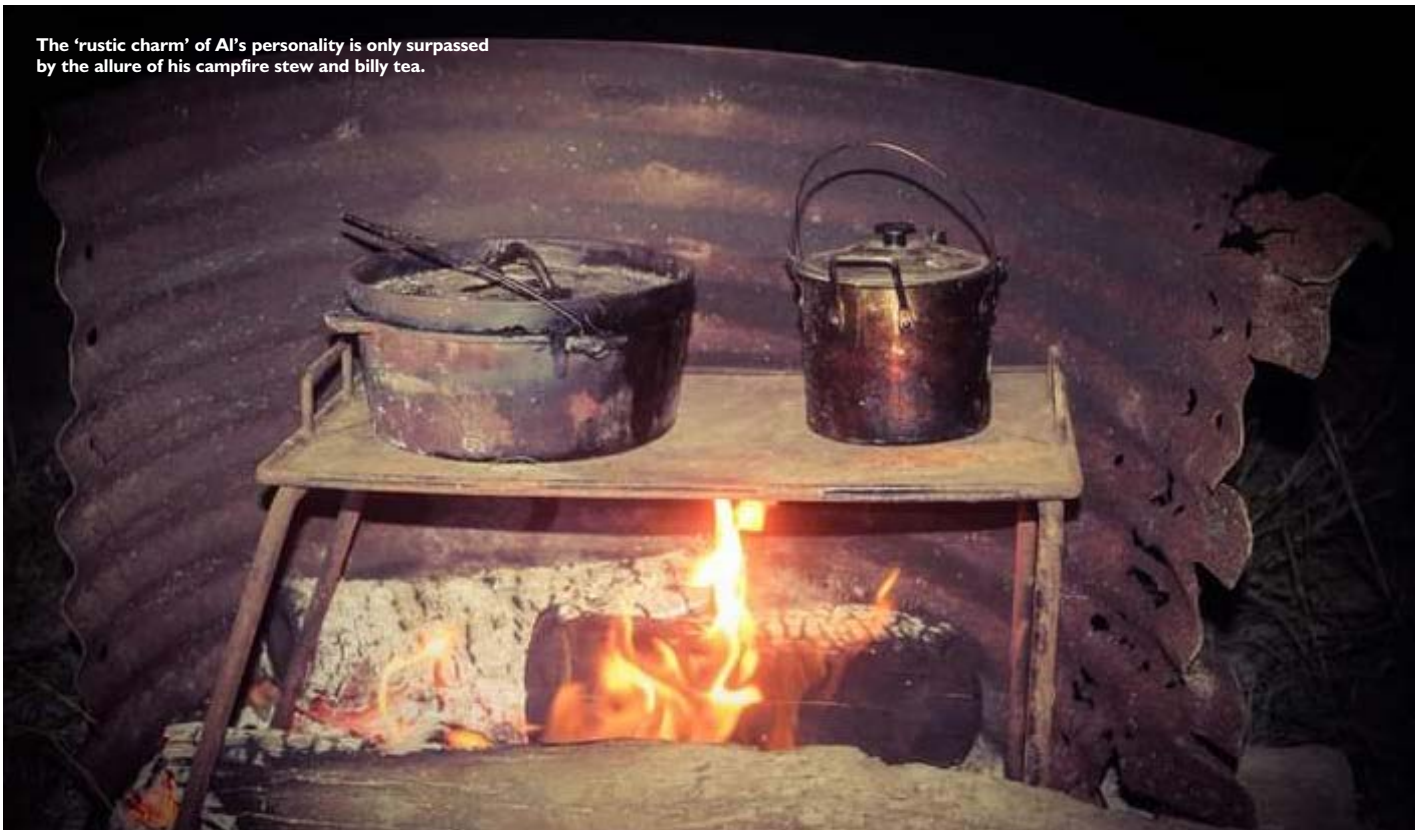
well-stocked workshop. A few days of clumsy labour does not even come close to returning the generosity.

Amongst the clinking of plates as we clear the dishes, Al announces: "It's getting late, I'm gonna hit the sack". I check my watch. It's 7pm. Al yawns as he jokes: "You can outrun your welcome you know." Liz laughs and shakes her head as she corrects him: "Outstay. Outstay your welcome." Behind every tired farmer is his wife rolling her eyes. "Well, you didn't cast your rain spell this time Chris, but thanks for your help anyway," says Al.

Over a cup of tea on my last evening, the sun sets in an amazing display of colours through the endless sky. It is country that some would consider desolate, but I smile to myself, as if I have discovered some buried treasure that nobody knows about. Well, this place does hold a few hidden gems.

I set my alarm for an early departure home the next morning, but at 5am I don't hear the alarm. It is drowned out by a strange sound pounding on the tin roof. Vaguely familiar, but something I have not heard out here in a long time. I lean my head against the flyscreen for a closer listen and take in a big breath of moist air. It's raining! ●

The 'rustic charm' of Al's personality is only surpassed by the allure of his campfire stew and billy tea.



Let's talk shooting

Jennifer Martens opens up, what can be, an awkward conversation

Great Australian Outdoors magazine encompasses everything 'outdoorsy', including the use of firearms.

What makes for interesting conversation when out with your friends? Current events, hobbies, sports? What about the shooting sports?

Talking about sports shooting with non-shooting friends can be tricky. Your chances of engagement improve if you start the conversation with something that piques the interest of the individual you are speaking to.

The subject of shooting comes up rather frequently in my conversations. Some of my friends don't have any problems with the shooting sports and hunting while others are not so sure about it. With those who cringe at even the mention of firearms, I've incorporated ways of making it all more palatable, less intimidating and a more frequent part of our conversations.

One of the easiest ways is to talk about things shooters and non-shooters have in common – such as current events, celebrities, good recipes, hiking, fishing, sports and camping. This is made much easier with an issue of the SSAA's many publications, as they offer a variety of articles that can be used as great conversation starters with non-shooting friends. Often, my conversations will begin by me saying: "I recently read in the *Australian Shooter* magazine..." and off we go on a nice chat that results in discussing the many benefits of the shooting sports and hunting.

After seeing camel rides on offer during an outing with a friend the other day, I casually mentioned the *Great Australian Outdoors* article: 'Humpback wail – Scourge of the feral camel' (Issue 2) that brought to light Australia's overabundance of camels. My

friend didn't even know Australia had a camel problem. When we got down to the nitty gritty of the issue, she agreed that shooting as a method of control is a good idea, especially compared to the alternatives.

I had a similar conversation with some friends as we sat in a restaurant overlooking the beach scrub, which was home to several fluffy bunnies hopping about. The afternoon presented itself as a great opportunity to talk about several articles from *Australian Shooter* and *Australian Hunter* on Australia's rabbit explosion and what hunters are doing to help solve the problem.

To my friends who like cricket, I like to point out the fact that Glenn McGrath was a hunter, SSAA member and grew up shooting firearms. Those who follow boxing now know that, at one time, world champion boxer Kostya Tszyu visited a pistol club on a weekly basis. When Tasmanian mine collapse survivors Todd Russell and Brant Webb were in the media because of their terrible ordeal, I let it slip that Todd was a SSAA member and a keen hunter. And when Australian country singer Lee Kernaghan was named Australian of the Year, you can bet that my friends knew he was a sporting shooter as well.

Often, current events provide great opportunities to talk about the shooting sports. Take, for instance, a terrorist cell uncovered in New South Wales in 2010. When that subject came up, I was able to refer to an article in *Australian Shooter* which explained the role the NSW's firearms industry played in ensuring one of the terrorist's convictions.

If you are stuck for stories relating to current events or celebrities, you can't go past some of the reviews on products like GPSs, quad bikes or outdoor gear. We all know someone who would be interested in one of those subjects. And if not, everyone must eat, right? Grab any issue of *Australian Hunter* and there is bound to be an article about game food. In my experience, most people are happy to talk about a good recipe, even if it is for rabbit, venison or kangaroo.

Other topics that can easily lead to the shooting sports and hunting are fishing and camping - two of Australia's favourite pastimes. *Great Australian Outdoors*, *Australian Shooter* and *Australian Hunter* have a number of articles on these topics.

Camping, it seems, is as Aussie as Vegemite so the columns 'Bushcraft and Survival' (*Australian Shooter*) and 'Around the Campfire' (*Australian Hunter*) make it easy to introduce your camping friends to possibly their first-ever shooting magazine. The two columnists have a wealth of knowledge that outdoor lovers would give their right arm to access. *Great Australian Outdoors* magazine takes this to whole other level.

So, whether it is an article about the day's newsmakers, an innovative new product or tips for surviving or enjoying the bush, don't be afraid to dog-ear a few pages and lend out an issue of any one of the SSAA's great publications, including *Australian Women's Shooter*. If you don't want to part with your copy, why not simply say, "I read in this great magazine..." ●

TROUT FISHING LAKES AND STREAMS

Cast a line with **Paul Barker**, who believes there's no better way to cherish the great Australian outdoors



fishing into a magnificent sunset... a great time to be on the water.

Wandering along the streams and lakes in the high country and alpine areas of Australia the bonuses for those of us that are passionate about pursuing trout. Adding to that, the challenges of presenting accurate flies or lures to likely holding spots for trout further enhances the consuming and sometimes addictive pastime of trout angling. Trout species are not native to Australia. Brown trout (*Salmo trutta Linnaeus*) were first imported from England in 1864 as live ova by a gentleman named James Youl. Previously, a number of attempts to import brown trout to Australia had failed. The ship Norfolk arrived at Melbourne's Railway Pier carrying 3700 brown trout ova; the ova were packed between layers of moss inside 164 boxes, which in turn were stored in the ship's icehouse. The journey from England had taken 84 days. About 15 days after their arrival in Melbourne, the brown trout ova were shipped to Tasmania where a hatchery was being built on a tributary of the Derwent River at Plenty. The first Australian brown trout were hatched on May 6, 1864. The Loch Leven strain of brown trout originated from New Zealand, arriving here in the 1890s. Both strains of the brown trout were liberated into suitable streams on the mainland over the following years. Rainbow trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*) were originally liberated into New South Wales streams in 1894 from New Zealand stock that had arrived there from California in 1877 and 1883. Rainbows in Victoria were supplied from the Ballarat and Geelong Acclimatisation Society's hatcheries around the same time. Brook trout (*Salvelinus fontinalis*) are the third species of trout that anglers may encounter. Like the rainbows, they



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