

A change must come after empty-handed Olympics

AUSTRALIAN

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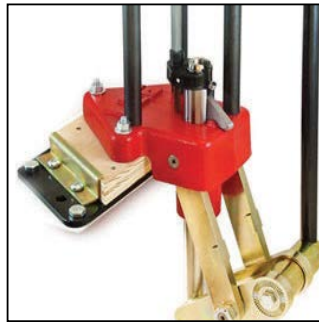
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Our September cover
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Our 'Most Challenging Hunt' series continues with seasoned hunter Chris Redlich on the trail of chamois in the mountains of New Zealand, a trek which pushed his physical and mental capacities to the limit.

Tikka T3x would arguably rate as one of the most popular and best-selling centrefire rifles on the Australian market and next month we run the numbers on their Varmint Hunter, available in eight calibres and two metal finishes.

The ATACR is a Nightforce acronym meaning Advanced Tactical Riflescope and as far as long-range scopes go, this one's a beauty. While not an inexpensive option, if you want to push the boat out you'll certainly not be disappointed.

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National News

Olympians will look to go again after valuable experience

The Australian competitive shooting landscape continues to be impacted by ongoing COVID-19 restrictions both at a grassroots level and for the elite. Our Olympic shooters came home without a medal but having put in a gallant effort and gained a wealth of experience.

The 12-month delay of the 2020 Tokyo Games and lack of elite international competition experience due to travel bans appeared to affect our competitiveness in a strong field of shooters. SSAA members Katarina Kowpols and Laura Coles performed admirably on their Olympic debut, the pair who competed in the Rifle and Skeet disciplines speaking to *Australian Shooter* earlier this year about their unique preparation and their challenges.

Our own *Australian Women's Shooter* columnist Laetisha Scanlan also recorded some strong performances in the Trap events, finishing an Aussie-best fourth in the women's individual competition which made for some great viewing from home and as we went to press, the entertainment was set to continue late last month as our Paralympic team prepared to compete from August 24. Meanwhile Olympic gold medalist and *Australian Shooter* columnist Russell Mark has cast doubt over the merits of the current selection process and outlines his thoughts on Page 16 as competitors and officials reset and look to Paris 2024.

In the political space, an unreasonable decision by freight giant FedEx-TNT to rule out transporting firearms and related products has been met with anger from Australia's multi-billion-dollar firearms industry. The SSAA is also bitterly disappointed this misguided judgment was made without consultation as we instead look forward to working with transportation companies which have chosen not to discriminate against our chosen sport and pastime.

On the home front the SSAA National Board has made the tough decision to cancel National Championship events for the remainder of 2021. National Coaching and Disciplines Supervisor Denis Moroney said the decision was made with an abundance of caution to ensure the ongoing safety of competitors. "The changing status of restrictions this year has made it difficult for national competitions to continue, with a number of disciplines already affected by cancellations," he said. "To maintain the integrity of our competition calendar, the remainder of national and international competitions scheduled this year will be cancelled. Members should check the SSAA website for further information."

In other news, our efforts to showcase the sustainable harvest and cooking of game meat has made waves internationally. *Field to Fork - Second Helpings* has been named winner of the 2021 Gourmand Cookbook Awards Best Meat Cookbook - Australia and is now in the running for the Best in World title next year. This is the second time the Field to Fork cooking movement has been recognised by this prestigious initiative, with *Field to Fork - The Australian Game Cookbook* having been named Best First Cookbook - Australia in 2013.



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A case for keeping it local

FROM YOUR MARCH edition I note with interest the article on the Sako S20, particularly the packing case photo on Page 24. On this, I'd like to provide some positive feedback on local businesses with which fellow members may choose to engage.

The logistics of safely transporting equipment to remote locations can present a range of risks. Apart from ensuring a rifle is out of sight and in a lockable part of a vehicle, it may also be prudent to guard against impact or friction damage due to vibration or shifting loads. While several case options exist, a foam-filled hard polymer case provides a robust solution.

A lockable hard case from Supercheap Auto may afford suitable protection for most delicate optical, camera, drone or shooting equipment. Typically, these are supplied with multiple layers of foam including a high density 'pick and pluck' layer which allows customisation to position specific equipment by removing small pre-cut squares. I contacted Dyman Foams for their expertise in supplying and cutting foam to order for reasonable outlay. I sent them a paper template, outlining the various shapes close to exact size and a week later was told it was ready and I'm thoroughly

impressed with the results.

Please be clear I have no affiliation with either Supercheap Auto or Dyman Foams, apart from being a satisfied customer keen to promote the local economy in a pandemic.

Anthony Wilkinson, via email

These cards were marked

I REFER TO Peter Bindon's great little piece on gathering the components for a survival kit when travelling (*Shooter*, December 2020). When the Swiss Card first became available I bought a few to pass on to friends and relations but the two I passed on were both seized by judicious security personnel prior to them boarding the aircraft - one here in Australia and the other on an overseas flight. More than a bit annoying to say the least.

Geoff Rath, via email

It's *Exactly* what you need

I JUST WANT to put on record my delight at seeing and reading Geoff Smith's excellent book review of *Exactly* by Simon Winchester (*Shooter*, November 2020). It's a terrific book for all sorts of reasons and of particular appeal to shooting enthusiasts

like me who have a scientific, technical or engineering background. I read *Exactly* soon after it came out and can thoroughly recommend it to shooters and non-shooters alike. Meanwhile thanks for a great magazine, keep up the good work and congratulations on reaching 200,000 members.

Nick Stokes, ACT

Let us be part of the solution

IS IT POSSIBLE our authorities don't understand that a great number of our native animals are meat eaters and the fox is arguably the most cunning creature on earth? To the fox the faintest scent or hint of humans near bait is a warning.

Cats, on the other hand, do even more damage to our native animals than dogs or foxes so if the members of our registered shooting clubs were given a worthwhile bonus (bullets aren't cheap) on every dog, fox or cat hide handed in, the problem would go some way to being contained.

Wouldn't this be a far better alternative to indiscriminate poisoning which also claims the lives of native animals?

Peter Bury, Vic



Insurance Q&A with Trevor Jenkin

Send questions to: insurance@ssaains.com.au

Q Due to COVID-19 our family won't be going any overseas holidays for a while, so we've invested in a caravan to focus on holidaying locally. What do I need to consider with the insurance of the van?

Timothy Berry, via email

A The cost of your caravan insurance will depend on a range of factors including the type of cover you choose, whether you choose to cover a touring or permanent on-site caravan and what additional benefits you might wish to add on.

Some insurance companies may offer different levels of cover such as comprehensive, third-party fire and theft or

third-party property caravan insurance.

Comprehensive insurance will usually cover accidental damage, theft, fire, storm and flood and vandalism. Often it will also include emergency repairs, accommodation and transport costs and could also cover the costs of food spoilage, storage, towing and contents up to a certain amount.

Generally you can choose to insure your caravan for either agreed value or market value, agreed value being a fixed sum you and your insurer choose for the caravan, whereas market value is based on the amount your caravan is worth at the time of the claim (agreed value policies tend to carry a higher premium). You'll also have an

excess, which is the amount you agree to pay out-of-pocket when making a claim - if you choose a higher excess this will tend to lower your premium.

By the way, if you're planning an extended trip you must contact your insurer and check your home is covered while you're away, as some insurers may not cover your property if it's left unoccupied for a long time, typically more than two months. Timothy I hope this helps, enjoy your touring holidays and if you've any further queries please visit ssaib.com.au or call us on (08) 8332 0281.



Tahr trek . . . Kiwis boldly going where they haven't gone before

Sometimes it's good to look outwith our borders to gauge how hunters and/or game species are being managed in other countries. Back in May of this year I read with interest an article by New Zealand's *Farmers' Weekly* discussing plans to control expanding populations of Himalayan tahr and while I haven't hunted them myself, I know a few people who've crossed the ditch to do so.



The NZ Department of Conservation is looking at new ways to control tahr numbers.

From what I can gather, tahr populations have enjoyed substantial growth in a number of areas in New Zealand to the point where the Department of Conservation (DOC) has implemented control programs. Part of this year's plan is to allow recreational hunting within the tahr's range and encourage targeted culling through the use of ballots and guided hunting, in what's been seen as a more conciliatory approach to managing their growing numbers.

The DOC's control program will focus on high population areas in the Aoraki/Mount Cook and Westland Tai Poutini national parks, in what would be a scaled-back operation compared with those of the past two years. In what seems to be a good decision, they'll not go after identifiable male tahr over 425,000ha of public conservation land where hunters from both New Zealand and overseas regularly target trophy animals.

A spokesperson for the DOC said their control activities will continue to focus on targeting high tahr densities in areas where hunter access is challenging and hunters and stakeholders have reported the animals in large numbers. They'll also trial using professional ground hunters to control tahr in forested areas where they're extremely difficult to spot from the air - they'll be sharing maps with hunters and other stakeholders showing identifiable male tahr observations as well as areas with high densities identified in recent surveys. This sharing of information

is expected to lead to more hunting pressure and higher tahr harvests in those areas.

These changes in control target numbers have been seen by hunting groups as less aggressive and ambitious to what the DOC tried to implement in 2019. The control target of 18,000 tahr (from an estimated population of 34,500) was condemned by hunting groups. Instead of a massive aerial cull operation, the new plan will allow and encourage recreational and more targeted hunting through the use of balloted and guided outings, which also includes aerial-assisted trophy hunting and wild animal recovery. In some areas accessible by vehicle which have a range of huts available and are favoured by hunters for day or longer hunts, aerial culls will not be conducted during the next year.

It's refreshing to see government agencies including hunters' and other relevant stakeholder views when planning control of game species. The focus to target females to limit growth is not a new concept but one seldom acted upon in the usual cull-and-waste strategies of aerial shooting programs. It may seem obvious that controlling females who are the drivers of game species population growth is a no-brainer, but unless hunters push the point it seems to be forgotten in discussions.

Send questions to:
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The trick to loading accurate centrefire cartridges

When we ask how to reload rifle cartridges for accuracy, it's not a straightforward question as many factors must be taken into account and perhaps the main one is the cartridge itself, so let's have a look at what a loaded cartridge consists of. Starting with the projectile, most factory-made options currently available are excellent and I recently conducted a weighing test using my newly-acquired Lyman electronic scales to find out just how much their weight varied against their stated weight.

Results were quite interesting. I started with Hornady 45gr .22 calibre projectiles and after weighing 30, I found none had varied by more than plus or minus one-tenth of a grain which I thought was excellent. I then moved to 80gr .243 Sierra projectiles and again stopped measuring at 30 as, yet again, they all recorded less than one-tenth of a grain variation.

My final measurement was on 165gr .308 calibre Nosler projectiles and I thought they might vary more due to their greater weight, but was surprised when most passed the plus or minus one-tenth of a grain test with only a few going out to one-fifth of a grain more or less. To me this meant that as I was looking for hunting and not benchrest accuracy then unless the projectiles were off-centre, most of the over-the-counter ones available would be accurate enough in hunting scenarios.

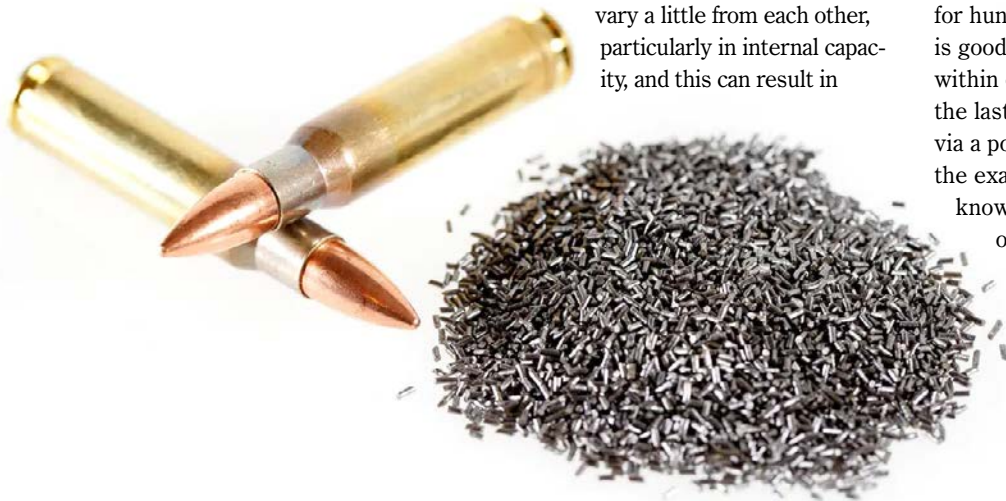
Another item which could cause inaccuracy is the primer but not having the facilities to measure their performance, I surmised from articles I've read that provided the same brand and type was used consistently (and they were properly inserted), accuracy wouldn't be a problem.

The cartridge case itself is another factor which must be taken into account and again the golden rule is to use the same brand and not mix, as different brands vary a little from each other, particularly in internal capacity, and this can result in

inaccuracy on the target. Internal cartridge case volume is measured by filling the cases with water then weighing the water. In this way it has been found the various brands of cases - although dimensionally the same on the outside - varied in their internal volume, usually because of the web or case thickness and, if a mixed lot of cases are used, inaccurate results could occur.

The last item which can produce inaccuracy is the powder and it's a must for accuracy and safety that when reloading, only one brand and type of powder being used is on the loading bench. It's well documented that 'blow-ups' have occurred when the wrong powder has been accidentally loaded into cartridges because more than one can of powder has been sitting on the bench.

When weighing out powder - say 45 grains to use in a cartridge - I dispense via a powder thrower which, if of good quality, will throw the weight you require to within about two or three-tenths of a grain. Even for hunting accuracy I don't believe this is good enough and I prefer to load to within one-tenth of a grain, so I meter the last bit of powder into the loading pan via a powder trickler. In this way I have the exact weight of powder I require and know I've given myself every chance of achieving consistent velocities which will place my bullet exactly where I've aimed on the target.



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Clay Target Q&A

WITH RUSSELL MARK

Q I've been a shotgun shooter all my life but for the most part an avid duck and quail hunter. Recently I was introduced to clay shooting and became immediately addicted. I notice when shooting Sporting Clays I have no problem looking down the centre of the barrel but when I shoot Trap or Skeet, find I'm hopelessly looking a long way down the right side of the barrel. I use the same Miroku shotgun for hunting and clays and out in the field I don't have any problems either. Any suggestions you have to correct this fundamental error would be much appreciated.

Mark Morrison, Vic

A Without actually seeing you shoot Trap or Skeet my answer is fraught with danger but I've encountered this issue on many occasions so am happy to offer you something to try. The problem could be caused by the fact that when you shoot Trap or Skeet, the shotgun is pre-mounted to your shoulder before the target is released and you could be keeping the gun locked into your face by pushing your right elbow up (this is based on the assumption you're right-handed and your right eye is your dominant eye).

Pushing your right elbow up too far can cause you to cant the shotgun inwards, meaning the rib on the barrel is dipped lower on the left side than the right. You can highlight this fundamental problem by simply taking a 30cm wooden school ruler and strapping it across the end of your barrel (you'll have 15cm either side of the barrel and a couple of rubber bands will suffice to hold the ruler in place).

The ruler will look like a small wing across the end of the barrel, but if you're canting the shotgun inwards the ruler will be much lower on the left than it will be on the right. If this is the case there are two very simple solutions - drop your right elbow down to 60 or even 45 degrees and this may cause the 'twisting' of the shotgun that's the cause of the inwards cant to straighten.

Another solution is to add what's called 'cast at the toe' which involves unscrewing the bottom screw of your recoil pad and re-screwing it a few millimetres to the right. Don't go too far as you run the risk of cracking your stock with a screw out the side of it. Adding cast will let you mount the butt of your stock in a more comfortable part of your shoulder and will negate the habit of you twisting the gun inwards when

mounting it to make it feel comfortable.

When hunting in the field you quickly bring the shotgun to your shoulder and simply don't have time to cant the gun by pushing your right elbow up too far to cause you to look down the right side of the barrel. A small amount of cant, either inwards or outwards, is not the end of the world particularly when using a shotgun with a fairly flat point of impact.

Where canting can become a problem is on your second shot, especially when a quick instinctual shot is required as is often the case in Trap shooting. If the shotgun is canted the recoil of the first shot will naturally try to straighten the gun into its correct position and this will cause your eye to be misaligned down the barrel, meaning obvious inaccuracy. With very high-shooting Trap guns canting can become a serious problem which should be addressed.

If the problem still exists once you've straightened the shotgun after it is mounted to your shoulder by dropping your right elbow, or you've added cast at the toe to help it find a more comfortable position in your shoulder socket, then you might just have too much cast on the comb of your stock.

Miroku guns aren't known for excessive amounts of cast so I'd be a little surprised if the stock had that much bend in it (called 'cast off' for right-handers) that it's causing your dominant eye to look down the right side of the barrel. As I always suggest, try rectifying the problem with the aid of a pattern board.

Questions to:

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Got a question - ask our TOP SHOTS ?

• John Dunn • Paul Miller • Greg Riemer • Geoff Smith • Barry Wilmot • Rod Pascoe

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Q In the Top Shots column of your April 2021 edition you mentioned the .22 Winchester Rimfire cartridge being chambered in the Model 1890 pump action rifle. What is this cartridge?

John Mortimer, NSW

A The .22 Winchester Rimfire was introduced at the same time as the Model 1890 in attempt to improve killing capacity of the .22 LR. It was also known as the .22-7-45 and Remington had their own variation, the .22 Remington Special. The cartridges were interchangeable with the main difference being the shape of the bullet, the Winchester load using an inside lubricated bullet (either 45gr FN solid or 40gr FN) and the Remington using a round-nosed bullet. Neither would fit into a .22 LR chamber.

Considered a good hunting cartridge out to 70m or so, it was loaded in a variety of repeating and single-shot rifles of the era - notably the Stevens line of single-shots - as well as revolvers by Colt. The cartridge was predecessor to the .22 Winchester Magnum Rimfire, both having similar specifications though the Magnum has a longer case (the WRF will fit into a WMRF chamber but not vice-versa). For a long time the cartridge was considered obsolete but during the past 20 years or so both Winchester and CCI have produced limited runs of it.

John Dunn

Q One of your writers in an article a while back gave a system for measuring the height of the centre of your scope above the rifle bore to use when fine-tuning Leupold CDS scope

Q I have in my possession a Grange double-barrel 12-gauge hammer gun which has some history. During the First World War the government of the day was collecting firearms to help with the war effort in England. The then-owner didn't want to hand the gun over so he wrapped it in oil cloth, resulting in rust damage. I'd like to find out how old the gun is, where it was made and any other information you can offer.

Robert Bliss, via email

A From what I can see in your photos the gun was made in Birmingham between 1887 and 1904 and as it's not proofed for modern propellants (ie, black powder only), I wouldn't be tempted to fire it. It's likely this is one of many 'trade guns' which were mass produced

for the general population as the name Grange isn't mentioned as a famous make in Tate's *Birmingham Gun Makers* or David Williams' *The Birmingham Gun Trade*.

There is a Grange Gun Company Ltd (company number 00616138) listed in the UK 'open corporates' company register as having been dissolved in the UK prior to 2011. A Google search gives several advertisements for a similarly marked but single barrel bolt-action .410 gun which was of dubious quality.

It seems the company was based at or close to a similarly named gun club near Redditch in Worcestershire and their guns were also sold from London at some stage. I requested help from a number of museums and libraries in the area but none were able to directly help.

Geoff Smith

dials. Am I right in thinking this information can also be entered into ballistic programs to more accurately see the trajectory of your loads if they've been properly measured for velocity with a chronograph? Any help and advice appreciated.

Phil, Vic.

A Hands up, that writer was me! You're right when you say this measurement is important and most ballistic resources like the excellent Hornady program you can access online from their website uses 1.5" as the default measurement. If your scope is a little bit more or less from the centre of the bore than this, it won't affect your trajectory calculations all that much unless you're shooting at long-to-very long ranges.

The way to find the measurement from your scope's centre height to the bore's centre line involves four steps. I originally sourced this information online courtesy of Sinclair International (US).

1: Measure the bolt diameter and divide it in half (example 0.700" divided by two equals 0.350"). 2: Measure the scope tube diameter and divide it in half - 1.000" by two = 0.500" (for 30mm tubes use 1.81" and divide by two). 3: Measure the distance from the top of the bolt in the rifle to the bottom of the scope on the rifle (example 0.750"). 4: Add the numbers in those three steps (0.350" + 0.500" + 0.750" = 1.600").

Now put this measurement into the technical specs part of the ballistic program along with bullet weight, speed, ballistic coefficient and distance your load is zeroed. The program will then provide a solution almost instantly - amazing! If, like me, you're not good at remembering rise and fall measurements over various ranges out to the maximum range you intend shooting, you can print this out as a 'cheat-sheet' if you want, small enough to trim and tape to your rifle stock for future reference when hunting or target shooting.

Paul Miller



Q I recently revisited Rod Pascoe's excellent article on Mike Papps (*Shooter*, July 2020) and his follow-up in *Australian & New Zealand Handgun 19* about the 1956 Olympic Games in Melbourne. My father went to watch the shooting events back then and I remember him telling me about how the pistols used by the Russian competitors stirred up the rest of the shooters. Can you explain what was going on?

David, NSW

A You're absolutely right David, there certainly was controversy surrounding the pistols the USSR shooters were using at that time. They were made by Margolin specifically for the Rapid Fire match and apparently it was a Russian state secret until they were released to the world at the '56 Melbourne Games.

The MTsZ-1 was nicknamed the hacksaw pistol and when you look at the accompanying photo you can see why. It was an unusual-looking .22 Short match pistol in that the receiver with action, slide and barrel are well below the level of the top of the orthopaedic grip, giving the shooter a distinct advantage in absorbing recoil straight back along the extended arm.

The flat rib on top, where the barrel would normally be, supported the sights and the five-round magazine was loaded from the top. The pistol had an external hammer and ejection of spent cases was downwards, as you'd expect from the 'upside-down' design. One of the Russian shooters, Yevgeny Cher-

kasov, went on to win the silver medal in Melbourne with this pistol.

It's my understanding that, because of its unusual shape and size, the Olympic rules were subsequently changed so that all pistols had to fit into a box 30cm long x 15cm high x 10cm deep, effectively eliminating this firearm from further competition.

Rod Pascoe

• *Australian & New Zealand Handgun 20* will be on sale from early December.

Q I'm considering subsonic reloads for the .303 British. Can you give me any information on loading data for heavier projectiles in this calibre?

Kirk, via email

A I've been unable to locate any subsonic loads for the .303 cartridge using ADI powder, however the *Lyman Cast Bullet Handbook* provides loads for the .303 cartridge with the following powders, which may be of some help to you.

Using a 210gr cast projectile 10.0 grains of Red Dot powder produces 1245 feet per second; 9.5 grains of Green Dot powder produces 1190fps and 10.0 grains of Unique powder produces 1210fps. As the speed of sound is about 1125fps, these loads could be a starting point if you want to experiment in finding subsonic loads.

Barry Wilmot

A photograph of two Australian trap shooters, James Willett and Laetisha Scanlan, in their competition gear. Willett, on the left, is wearing a dark cap with the Australian flag and a blue vest, holding a Perazzi shotgun. Scanlan, on the right, is wearing a white cap with 'AUSTRALIA' and a blue vest, also holding a shotgun. They are both wearing large headphones and protective eyewear. The background is slightly blurred, showing other people and the outdoor setting of the event.

Dejected: James Willett and Laetisha Scanlan exit the Trap Team event in seventh place.
AP Photo - Alex Brandon.

The only way is up

gong-less Games a real cause for concern

Olympic comment
Russell Mark

Defying all odds the 2020 Tokyo Olympics have come and gone, albeit a year late. Coronavirus and its many strains weren't enough to deny the world's best shooters a chance to fight it out over 10 days at the Asaka Shooting range on an army base an hour north-west of the capital. There were memorable moments, none better than America's Vincent Hancock winning his third gold medal in the men's Skeet to cement his name at the top of shooting's royalty list at just 32. In the same event Abdullah Al-Rashidi, a 57-year-old from Kuwait won a second consecutive bronze to prove our sport really has no age barrier.

During the Games I worked as a commentator for Channel 7 as an 'on-air' specialist to pass judgment when an Australian shooter reached a final. An agreement was made between the network and the International Broadcast Committee to televise all other shooting finals via their 7plus app so in effect I didn't have a thing to do unless one of our athletes went into

medal contention. Sadly it was easy money as only our female Trap shooters made me earn my pay cheque.

With only two athletes reaching the finals, this was our worst team effort since Barcelona '92

See the opposite table for a summary of each event as it unfolded. Probably the most worrying column on there for Australian shooting is the number of competitors to placing percentage ratio, 1% representing first place and 100% indicating the unfortunate competitor who placed last. The vast majority of Australian results were below the 50 per cent line which means a placing in the bottom half of the field. We had 23 starts in the events on offer with just seven placings in the top half of the field, two finalists and no medals. With only

two athletes reaching the finals this was our worst team effort since Barcelona 1992 (if it wasn't for the shotgun Trap discipline this would've been an absolute disaster).

COVID-19 and associated travelling complications meant our athletes had no international competition in 2020-21 which didn't help anyone. World-ranked competitors including Laetisha Scanlan, Penny Smith and James Willett - all of whom won medals on multiple occasions at world level since the Rio games - were massively disadvantaged. You'd be hard pressed to say they shot badly, particularly the girls whose qualifying results were excellent, but no World Cup exposure for two years probably showed through in their disappointing final.

The obvious rebuttal against this accusation is that our most successful team in Tokyo, the swimmers, faced the same dilemma but alternatively a lack of international travel appeared to have no impact on their performances. Truth is that as a nation Australia did far better in Tokyo

Tokyo 2021 Australian Olympic shooting results summary

Event	Name	Age	Number of Competitors	Place / Ratio%	Qualifying Score	Score to make last position in Final	Best Qualification Score
10m Air Rifle W	Elise Collier	23	50	42nd / 84%	618.2	628.5	632.9
10m Air Rifle W	Katarina Kowplos	19	50	46th / 92%	617.2	628.5	632.9
10m Air Pistol M	Daniel Repacholi	39	36	30th / 83%	568	578	586
10m Air Pistol W	Elena Galiabovitch	31	53	27th / 51%	569	577	587
10m Air Pistol W	Dina Aspandiyarova	45	53	46th / 87%	558	577	587
Skeet W	Laura Coles	34	28	25th / 89%	112	120	124
Skeet M	Paul Adams	29	30	21st / 70%	119	122	124
10m Air Rifle M	Dane Sampson	34	54	30th / 56%	623.5	629.2	632.7
10m Air Rifle M	Alex Hoberg	19	54	21st / 39%	625.6	629.2	632.7
10m Air Pistol Team	Dina Aspandiyarova	45	20	8th / 40%	380	384	387
	Daniel Repacholi	39	20	8th / 40%	380	384	387
10m Air Rifle Team	Dane Sampson	34	29	22nd / 76%	623.1	627.9	633.2
	Katrina Kowplos	19	29	22nd / 76%	623.1	627.9	633.2
10m Air Rifle Team	Alex Hoberg	19	29	19th / 66%	623.6	627.9	633.2
	Elise Collier	23	29	19th / 66%	623.6	627.9	633.2
Trap W	Penny Smith	26	26	6th / 23%	120	120	125
Trap W	Laetisha Scanlan	31	26	4th / 15%	121	120	125
Trap M	James Willett	25	28	21st / 75%	120	122	124
Trap M	Thomas Grice	28	28	25th / 86%	119	122	124
25m Pistol	Elena Galiabovitch	31	44	11th / 25%	583	584	590
Trap Team	James Willett	25	16	7th / 35%	145	146	148
	Laetisha Scanlan	31	16	7th / 35%	145	146	148
Trap Team	Thomas Grice	28	16	6th / 30%	145	146	148
	Penny Smith	26	16	6th / 30%	145	146	148
50m Rifle 3P W	Katrina Kowplos	19	37	36th / 97%	1137	1171	1178
25m Rapid Fire Pistol	Sergei Evglevski	23	27	17th / 63%	572	582	587
50m Rifle 3P M	Dane Sampson	34	39	27th / 69%	1162	1176	1183
	Jack Rossiter	24	39	29th / 74%	1160	1176	1183

than anyone was willing to predict (there could even be an argument COVID may have helped us on the overall medal tally).

But here's the sad reality for shooting. Since Sydney 2000 the disciplines of pistol and rifle between them have produced just one notable result, Prone Rifle shooter Warren Potent's bronze medal in Beijing. In fairness to rifle, Tim Lowndes was showing enormous potential but left the sport after the 2004 Olympics to pursue a career in the Army. Former pistol shooter Lalita Yauhleuskaya won quite a few medals for Australia at world level, but she learnt her trade in Belarus whom she represented when she won her Olympic medal in 2000.

Pistol and rifle have spent a fortune on finding another Warren or Lalita but in all honesty they haven't. In the past five Olympics, the same time period Shooting Australia started to receive substantial government funding, only one Australian rifle or pistol shooter has made an appearance in an Olympic final, Potent in 2008. In saying that I thought the performance of young Alex Hoberg in Air Rifle was encouraging on Olympic debut and Elena

Galiabovitch's 11th in the women's 25m Pistol is well worth recognising - I certainly wouldn't give up on those two.

In the past five Olympics, rifle and pistol have had 77 individual starters with 64 posting a result which placed them in the bottom 50 per cent

So let's cut to the chase and I'll be the elephant in the room. What are pistol and rifle doing wrong? It would be easy to blame the athletes but don't - these men and women are the best in the country currently in our system, every one of them earned their place and no-one was left home who should have been in Tokyo. Some were still juniors and many made their Olympic debut and you're only ever going to be as good as those you constantly compete against. A pyramid's height is

determined by the width of its base but the brutal truth is the depth in quite a few of the events in these disciplines is ridiculously narrow and that's the reason why many of the team are so young and making their first Olympic appearance.

But here's the deeper problem. At the 2004 Athens Olympics, rifle and pistol had 18 starters with just four finishing in the top half of the field and one of those in the top 10. In 2008 at Beijing these two disciplines again had 18 starts with only three finishing better than halfway and one of those a top 10. At London 2012 not one competitor in rifle or pistol finished in the top 10 and again only three of their 15 starters finished in the top half of the field. Four years later in Rio there were no top 10 placings and 13 of the 15 starters finished in the bottom half. In Tokyo, once again no top 10 finishers and this time nine of their 11 starts placed in the bottom half.

In the past five Olympics rifle and pistol have had 77 individual starters with 64 posting a result which placed them in the bottom 50 per cent and only two have managed a top 10 finish. Incredibly just one competitor has made it to the finals

The only way is up - gong-less Games a real cause for concern

in the past 21 years. We're clearly going rapidly backwards in these disciplines and anyone trying to convince me otherwise should report immediately for a drug test. Our sport often hides behind performances at the Commonwealth Games which doesn't paint an accurate picture of where we sit in the world rankings and sadly even that 'smokescreen' has been removed with the exclusion of shooting at Birmingham next year.

For the record, shotgun has produced 12 individual finalists in the five Olympics since Sydney, 11 in Trap and one in Skeet. In shotgun's defence they've had a long-standing tradition in Olympic Trap disciplines, starting at Los Angeles in 1984 with world-class performers such as Jim Ellis and Terry Rumbel and once again our only realistic medal chances leading up to Tokyo came in this event.

So who's at fault? The blame has to be directed at either the national bodies of Pistol Australia and Target Rifle Australia or at Shooting Australia (each discipline, rightly or wrongly, is governed by its own national and often state association as well). Internal growth and development should really be their portfolio, however it's Shooting Australia which reaps the vast majority of government funding and dictates domestic selection competitions and international policy which can directly affect participation at grass roots level.

At what point do we say enough is enough? When will Shooting Australia finally admit they have the formula wrong? More importantly if this is actually the case, at what point do the national bodies governing pistol and rifle intervene on behalf of their membership and ask what

on earth is going on - surely after 20 years of lacklustre results they're at that point? I apologise if any of these proud Olympians take offence at my comments, many are personal friends, but this analysis is necessary to form part of a review trying to provide some constructive criticism and, more importantly, answers. My concern is 'with the game, not the man'.

About two years ago Shooting Australia engaged new CEO Luke van Kempen who wasn't a shooter and I doubt he even held a firearms licence back then and I've no issues with that. Luke came from a cricketing background and I believe he's done a reasonable job but, in my opinion, he inherited a bureaucratic mess.

He made some much-needed staff changes and certainly tried to increase the marketability of the sport, but it's time to look at what some of these prominent Shooting Australia employees who surround the CEO are actually doing Monday-Friday, 9 to 5. Some cost us six figures in annual salaries and associated expenses and Luke is now firmly at the crossroads of his administrative career and there are a multitude of people, including me, keen to see what path he takes the sport down.

It's time to demand an independent review as to how this organisation spends the millions of dollars in taxpayer-generated funding it receives from the Federal Government. From the outside it appears they've become masters of delegation, many people including an alarming number of athletes feeling there are key staff members who seem to take no accountability for the role they were employed and direct communication between themselves and their athletes is poor at best.

Shooting Australia now has more people on its payroll than we had athletes in the Tokyo Olympic shooting team

There's now a layer of full and part-time employees working beneath them and if we were a hugely successful sport such as swimming I'd understand that. But we're not. Shooting Australia now has more people on its payroll than we had athletes in the Tokyo shooting team - digest that for a moment.

On behalf of all shooting organisations and on the back of yet another Olympic disaster for rifle and pistol, the board of Shooting Australia must ask some serious questions in regard to the daily operations of their own administration. If they can't (or won't) they must step sideways and let someone independently assess and unbiasedly scrutinise what everyone's employment descriptions outline and how they're ultimately going to help grow the sport at elite level to contribute to future medal tallies.

An example of why we need an enquiry into Shooting Australia's activities lays in the detail of their last Olympic selection policy. It was shown to athletes frustratingly late and when finally released was fundamentally flawed. It contained a huge loophole allowing competitors the chance to better their position in the team by not competing in a national Olympic trial or by withdrawing mid-event - two shotgunners actually exploited this and did just that! Surely a problem. The ambiguity was flagged before the policy was released by at least one national coach but unbelievably nothing was done.

This begs the question: Do the people involved in drafting and implementation of such a document actually understand how and why Australia produced so many world-class shotgun competitors in the 1990s and early 2000s? Our potential Olympians more than ever needed as many high-pressure battles as they could muster among themselves but, in an Olympic year when a policy is formulated that can actually discourage competition, you have to feel those involved knew little about the history behind shotgun's success.

I know what shotgun *didn't* do during this hugely successful period leading into the Sydney Games - they didn't 'over-administrate' their sport. With the



success of the team during this time came a substantial influx of government funding. Unfortunately accompanying the increased finances were the many 'experts' with sports degrees we inherited with the break-up of the Institute of Sport. In essence the Australian Sports Commission threw us these 'talented' people with no background in shooting to control an already successful sport, just to give them a job. Many had never loaded a firearm let alone were qualified to give advice on how to shoot a gun accurately under pressure. Thankfully, in my opinion, many moved on to other sports but their legacy for shooting surfaced again in Tokyo last month.

It's time we went back to basics and learn from the simplicity the US has used time and again to select athletes who produce countless Olympic medals. We don't need a selection system with any subjectivity to pick a squad or one requiring a mathematical degree to calculate who's in the team. Remarkably the US are using a very similar policy to the one the Australian shotgun team built its foundations on in the 1980s and '90s.

They use two fundamentals we should follow if we want to grow the sport. They have a simple, fair and inexpensive 'first past the post' selection policy over two major competitions, the events conducted several months apart where whoever hits the most targets goes on to represent their country. There are no excuses and no favourites in this dog-eat-dog system - it teaches US athletes to be tough competitors.

Their policy does have its critics. Six-time Olympic shotgun medallist Kim Rhode finished third in the US trials for Tokyo and missed out on the team and there was uproar until the girl who displaced her won gold in Japan - deathly

silence ever since. The US system has built so much depth they could've sent their third team in Women's Skeet to realistically medal at these Olympics (the US won six shooting medals in Tokyo).

A 'first past the post' policy won't always give the team you may want on paper but will give everyone hope. Hope builds dreams which turn into medals and, most importantly, with everything on the line it teaches competitors how to win. The fact is this simple system will select basically the same team any 'expert' panel would pick anyway and won't send families bankrupt in the process trying to get their kids into an Australian shooting team jacket.

Shooting Australia has made selection policies so complex, many potential competitors just walk away

Shooting Australia's new selection policy is not only complex but outrageously expensive for an athlete to completely participate in. There are qualifying events all over the country and if you want the best mathematical chance to qualify for the team, you need to consider attending them all. Any system where you can delete poor performances and substitute them with others will always favour those with most money in their bank account.

If you doubt what I'm saying visit Shooting Australia's website and explore what pathway your son or daughter must take to make the next Olympics - I bet you can't. In a sport so pure where the result



Thomas Grice



Alex Hoberg

is essentially either a hit or miss, Shooting Australia has made selection policies so confusing and complex, many potential competitors just shake their head and walk away. The massive cost in time, money, frustration and the dissention these cause has become a huge barrier to even entering the sport.

We know the most successful team in Tokyo once again were our swimmers. Why can't we learn from them and copy the Australian Olympic Swimming Policy? Their selection consists of one event, that's it, one event on one night, a cut-throat system which never seems to hinder their success. If swimming can do this why not shooting? I'm sick of being told this type of policy won't work for pistol and rifle. Well here's the news - the policy they're using right now isn't working so I'm not sure how it can be worse?

In essence paid administrators hate such easy self-selecting systems as it costs them jobs. A 'first past the post' policy largely makes the role of high-performance manager and their array of subsidiary staff defunct. All you need is a piece of paper and a pencil to add some numbers together then call the travel agent to say "here's our team, book the flights". Don't laugh too loudly, that's exactly how the Australian shotgun team did it right up to the '96 Olympics where we won three medals.

We must remember that for most of the golden years of Australian shooting up until 2001, Shooting Australia had a paid full-time staff of fewer than four people.



James Willett

The only way is up - gong-less Games a real cause for concern

The Australian Shooting Association as it was then was run by a part-time farmer on a property in rural Victoria, then for years the duties of CEO and high-performance manager were done very successfully by one person. Today the number of people earning some type of income from Shooting Australia (not including athletes) numbers well over 20 and instead of a farmhouse they have offices to accommodate everyone.

The US also have a great initiative called the National Junior Olympic Program, a breeding ground for future champions. It's a squad mainly selected from youngsters showing promise in any of the domestic firearm disciplines and they're brought together to train, compete and help them transition to international events. In fairness Shooting Australia, through additional government funding sourced through the Victorian Institute of Sport, has started a Pathway Squad program but it needs far more time and money spent on it and I'm confident they could find some of that funding within the administrative side of their current budget.

If we continue down the path we're on in regards to Olympic performances here's the issue we face: Shooting, more than any other sport, needs positive publicity. Again I give credit where it's due and Shooting Australia has made inroads, at some expense I imagine, to generate online streaming of their major domestic competitions but they're largely preaching to the converted.

The Olympic Games is the only event on earth where we have a chance to broadly showcase our sport to the non-shooting public, highlighting our use of firearms as a sporting tool and not a weapon. If we can't put athletes into Olympic finals we simply don't generate exposure on free-to-air networks, and it's unrealistic to rely on a handful of clay target shooters to be our only finalists for this much-needed exposure.

Shooting is battling for TV time with an array of sports visually far more marketable than ours

Without high-profile media coverage our national team, athletes and sport in general has no hope of attracting a major income-injecting sponsor. I'm over the countless social media comments by passionate firearm owners criticising Channel 7 for not televising Olympic shooting. There's no hidden anti-gun agenda as many conspiracy



theorists like to propose, truth is the big networks won't televise events with no Australians in the finals as they rate very poorly with our viewing public. Shooting is battling for TV time with an array of sports visually far more presentable and marketable than ours. You may not like skateboarding, BMX or surfing but they're sports of the new generation, Australians are good at them and they all draw large viewer numbers.

What we need is to stop the apocalypse now. I'm sure Shooting Australia will conduct reviews, investigations, enquiries, examinations and workshops where countless hours will be spent on analysing what went wrong in Tokyo. For me the answer is clear. Outsource many Shooting Australia duties to the private sector and give more control and finances back to the national bodies for them to develop their sport. Most importantly, make the current administration as accountable for their performance as we do our athletes.

The dilemma facing Shooting Australia is easy to explain. Without competitors we don't have depth and without depth we don't have quality. Without quality we don't win medals and without medals the sport loses funding and people lose jobs. At least that's how it works in the real world.

There are rumours the system the International Shooting Sports Federation is planning to introduce for entry to the Paris 2024 Games will involve qualification through a world ranking system potentially requiring much more funding for an individual to be successful. Pistol and rifle will both need a very convincing case before they receive any extra cash to help turn their form around on the big stage. I know the talent is out there, it just needs better nurturing.

Overall the Australian team in Tokyo was an outstanding success, only the efforts from the two home Olympics in Melbourne (1956) and Sydney (2000) returning better results.

No-one had the perfect build-up for these Games but clearly some sports handled the COVID crisis far better than others. Regrettably, the pandemic will provide a ready-made excuse for many poor administrative performances to hide behind.

Apart from our Trap shooters and a couple of acceptable results in rifle and pistol, our Tokyo team failed miserably. That doesn't mean we shouldn't be proud of them - it's the biggest stage of all and they're now Olympians and have made huge sacrifices but many need financial help if they seriously want to take the next step to being contenders at this level. It wasn't COVID that hampered them in Japan, it was a virus the sport was infected with more than 20 years ago.

Unless Shooting Australia can turn things around there appears to be a substantial argument to hand the millions of dollars of annual government funding to the existing national shooting bodies to administer and let them control their own destinies. I'm sure the Australian Clay Target Association would be the first to agree and put their hand out for some much-needed funding and I'm willing to wager Pistol Australia and Target Rifle, based on their Olympic performances over the past two decades, wouldn't be far behind.

The Brisbane Olympics are just over a decade away and with them will come an even greater injection of money into sport. We need to spend it better, we need to stop wasting it on administrators and start spending more on athletes to turn them into serious medal contenders. More than anything, shooting needs a vaccine to cure its over-governance problem. And we need it fast. ●

Russell Mark is an Olympic gold medallist and Australian Shooter columnist.





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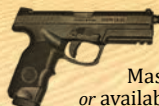

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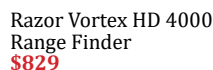

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MVP Precision RHS profile in close-up with monogram 'M' on the receiver.

MVP Precision follows in grand tradition

Daniel O'Dea

During the past year I've had a selection of Mossberg rifles from local distributor Grycol International which I've been working my way through for review. To recap, the Mossberg MVP Series incorporates six different rifle lines and even more subvariants as well as various calibre options, the array including the MVP-LC, MVP-LR, MVP Scout, MVP Patrol, MVP Predator and finally MVP Precision. The last in this list happens to be my closing subject for appraisal.

In style and design the Mossberg MVP Precision is a modern, chassis-type rifle with several unique adaptations. To begin with the chassis system completely envelops the barrelled action, extending at the front to a rounded hexagonal shape, M-Lok slotted barrel shroud and at the rear to an MSR-type receiver extension (buffer tube) which supports a Luth-AR MBA-3 multi-adjustable four-position stock. This must be fixed in NSW.

Quite cleverly the receiver extension leaves the buttstock and barrel bore axis completely aligned on the same plane, an ideal scenario for recoil control as any rearward recoil energy is directed in a straight line back into the shoulder. As the stock has no drop at heel there's no point at which the direction of recoil energy might pivot causing potential muzzle rise, as with a conventional stock set-up.



The Luth-AR buttstock was infinitely adjustable and well featured.

The chassis body is extended rearward, leaving a void for the bolt to be drawn into on cycling and the stock has a quick release system so it can be taken out completely for bolt removal and cleaning. You might consider the need to remove the buttstock for cleaning as at best a practical solution to the design. However, if you're a long-range precision shooter who wants to watch your bullet's impact through a riflescope, any feature which helps control recoil and muzzle rise would generally be looked at as beneficial.

The chassis body is alloy in construction in a matte hard anodised black finish and the action is bridged with a 20 MOA Picatinny rail for optics fitment. The triggerguard is generous and a recessed scallop out of the right side forward of that provides access to the magazine release while protecting the release button itself from accidentally being bumped and dropping the mag out at an impromptu moment. Directly above the line of the trigger, a shelf gives access to the two-position

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MVP Precision follows in grand tradition

safety lever while on the left of the receiver another small recess provides access to the bolt release. Lastly there's a stylish embossed Mossberg 'M' monogram on the RHS receiver.

Out front the barrel floats free for a length of 24" (610mm) as tested in the 6.5 Creedmoor chambering and 20" in .308 Winchester option. It travels through a slim profiled handguard-come-barrel-shroud which, as mentioned, is compatible with the M-Lok modular mounting system. No M-Lok accessories are included but if you want to mount additional rails, bipod or sling mounts the slots make it easy. The muzzle is also threaded for fitment of a muzzle brake or suppressor where allowed under permit.

The Mossberg Precision chassis has a takedown system to arrange the stock for bolt removal, cleaning and potentially more compact travel and storage arrangements, accomplished via a small black screw knob on the right-hand rear receiver behind the bolt handle. Unscrewing this extends a locking block which then protrudes out of the left side of the rear receiver.

The receiver stub of the buttstock has two lugs with matching keyways to accept the locking block when tightened and, when the locking block is released, these lugs are likewise freed and the stock can be lifted from the rear of the receiver. The locking block and lug recesses are precision machined and once the locking screw is tightened there's no discernable movement between the two components.

At the rear is the Luth-AR MBA-3 buttstock. Apart from the collapsible feature providing 100mm of length of pull adjustment there's an additional 25mm at the kick pad and 25mm height adjustment for the cheekrest, both achieved via thumb turn screw knobs. Other features on the buttstock are QD sling cups either side, a short section of rail for fitment of a rear monopod or similar accessories, an ergonomic weak hand support position and flat-bottomed indexing screw to take out any movement on the buffer tube once adjusted to your preferred position.

For testing I was offered a new Nightforce ATACR 5-25x56 F1 riflescope which I torqued down correctly on the Mossberg in a Nightforce 34mm Ultralite Unimount providing another 20 MOA of fixed mount alignment. I was also provided with a Nightforce bubble level top-half scope ring.

On the bench I used my Caldwell Lead Sled to start the sighting-in process and one advantage of being able to remove the buttstock completely was it made



boresighting an absolute breeze. With no stock it was easy to look straight through the bore and on my 100-yard target I was on paper with the first shot then, with the rifle locked down in the sled, I simply adjusted the cross-hairs to that first point of impact and was centered.

I had a selection of 6.5 Creedmoor Hornady factory ammo including 129gr American Whitetail, 143gr ELD-X Precision Hunter, 140gr ELD Hornady Match and the ever-reliable 140gr BTHP American Gunner along with some tailor-made loads conjured up using 143-grainers and ADI 2209. Most groups measured around 1 MOA or better with half-inch groups not uncommon and I was suitably impressed as the 140gr American Gunner shot a tight 0.425 MOA group. This budget line bulk packed ammo has never failed to shine.

Rounds are fed through a supplied Gen M3 10-round Magpul PMAG and as I've said previously, a primary feature of the MVP series is its ability to accept commonly available STANAG (Standardisation by NATO Agreement) magazines (AR mags). Yet with the MVP in 7.62 NATO/.308 Win, Mossberg use 10-round AR10-type magazines so the



Scalloped bolt knob is supposed to aid with glove use but Daniel just thought it looked cool.



FIND WHAT MATTERS WITH BOTH EYES OPEN



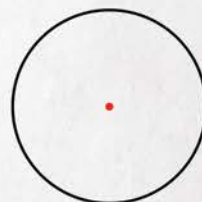
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MVP Precision follows in grand tradition

platform is more versatile in that it can also accept M14-type mags, quite a feat as the two have completely different lock-up systems. M14 mags are traditionally a 'rock and lock' system which would normally locate off a small recess cut out on the front magazine edge and retain via a large lug on the spine. In contrast, AR10-types retain via a slot or recess on the left of the magazine.

With the MVP using M14-types, the lug on the spine becomes redundant with the magazine retained via the locating recess on the front edge. The magazine release operates two separate protrusions within the well which act as magazine catches, one at the front for M14s and one on the side for AR10s. The 6.5 Creedmoor has similar dimensions to the 7.62mm/308 Win Case, so 6.5 CM rifles generally use 308 Win/7.62 magazines. This rings true with your Mossberg Precision chambered in 6.5 Creedmoor where the supplied PMAG is actually stamped 7.62x51 (I had 10-round M14-type mags which fitted and worked just fine in the test rifle as well).

Shooting the MVP Precision, the rifle fed surely and smoothly with solid ejection. The extended bolt handle is well scalloped which the marketing states is to give additional clearance for gloved hands though I'd also say it looks cool. The rifle uses Mossberg's LBA adjustable trigger (3-7lb) which I've experienced in several rifles and would say it's about as good or better than most factory adjustable triggers out of the box. Time was when the first thing you'd do with a new rifle was send it to your gunsmith for a trigger job, now most factory triggers are effective. A sound trigger goes a long way to providing accuracy and I've managed ½ MOA groups with the past three Mossberg MVPs I've tested.

If I had to be super critical of the MVP Precision, removing the stock to clean might be a slight pain but the truth is with better barrel manufacturing processes and dirt-free propellants, there's no need to go overboard with cleaning anyway. A dry patch before you start (if you left oil in the barrel) and an extensive clean at the end of a solid day on the range or a week's hunting should suffice. Personally, my days of over-cleaning guns are finished.



Like other MVP .308 case length variants, the Precision can use both AR10 and M14-style 10-round magazines.

The only other thing I'd note is the Precision's slimline barrel shroud is better suited to a bipod than a fixed rest or bag. On a rest the near-rounded profile allows the rifle to roll around a bit, especially when made top heavy with an ample-sized long-range scope mounted. But these are minor observations in an otherwise fine rifle which should provide good service for anyone inclined to give one a try.

More at www.grycol.com.au ●



A scalloped finger guide allows easy access to the mag button while acting to prevent accidental release.

Specifications:

Rifle: Mossberg MVP Precision

Action: Bolt-action (with spiral fluted bolt)

Trigger: Mossberg two-stage LBA system

Calibre: Tested 6.5 Creedmoor (also available. 7.62 NATO/.308 Winchester)

Capacity: 10-round detectable box magazine

Barrel: Medium-heavy profile 24" (610mm) threaded 5/28x24

Twist rate: One in 8" (6.5 CM as tested)

Sights: 20 MOA rail

Barrel finish: Matte blued

Chassis: Matte hard anodised with M-Lok fore-end and Luth-AR buttstock

Stock LOP: Adjustable 12.5"-16.5" (318mm-419mm)

Weight: 10lb (4.54kg) 6.5 CM tested

Length OA: 43.25" (1105mm)

Price guide: About \$2100, check with your dealer



The Mossberg MVP Precision with 10-round mag, fitted with Nightforce ATACR scope would be a formidable outfit in open country for medium game.



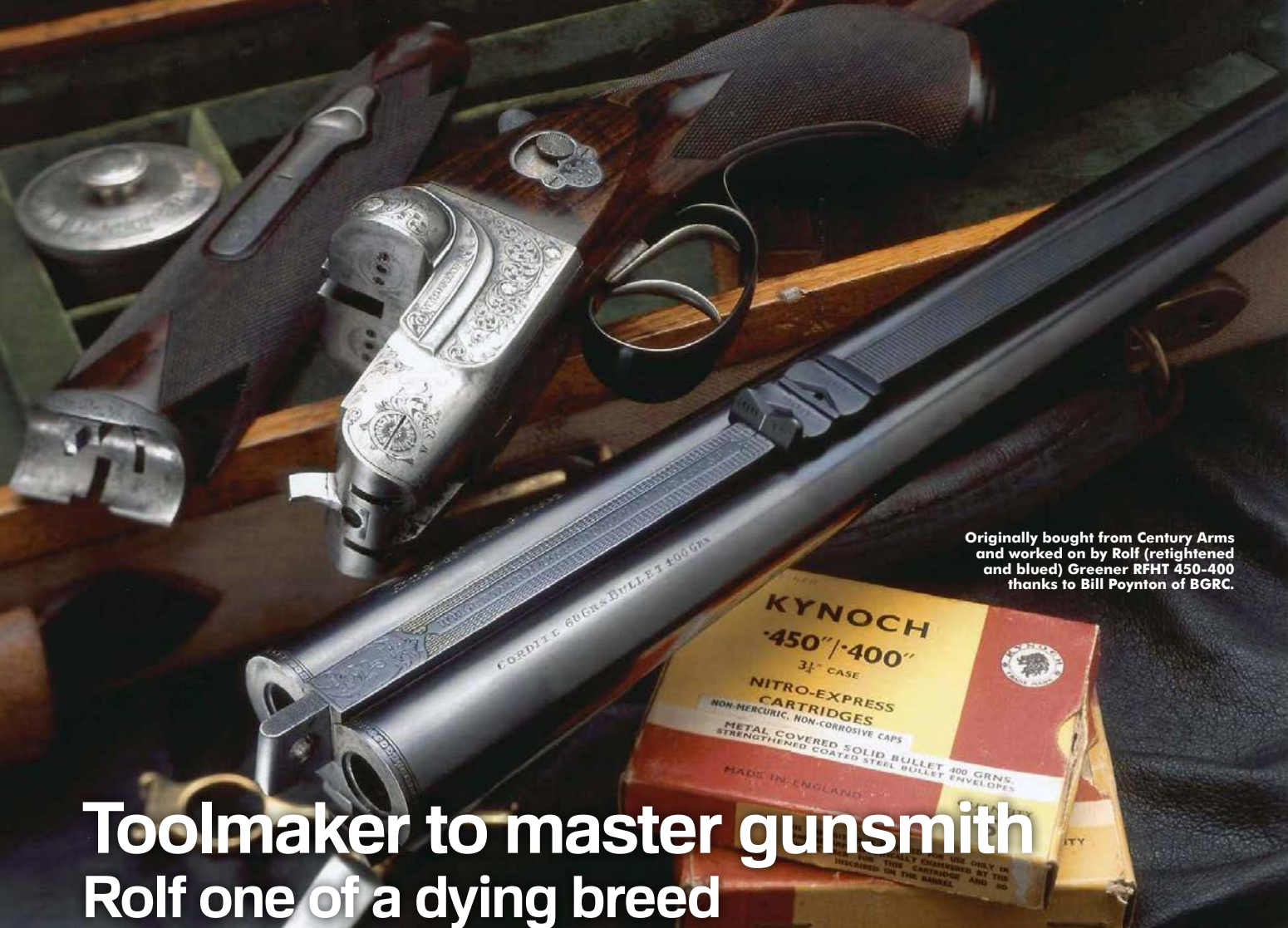
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HUNTER



Originally bought from Century Arms and worked on by Rolf (retightened and blued) Greener RFHT 450-400 thanks to Bill Poynton of BGRC.

Toolmaker to master gunsmith Rolf one of a dying breed

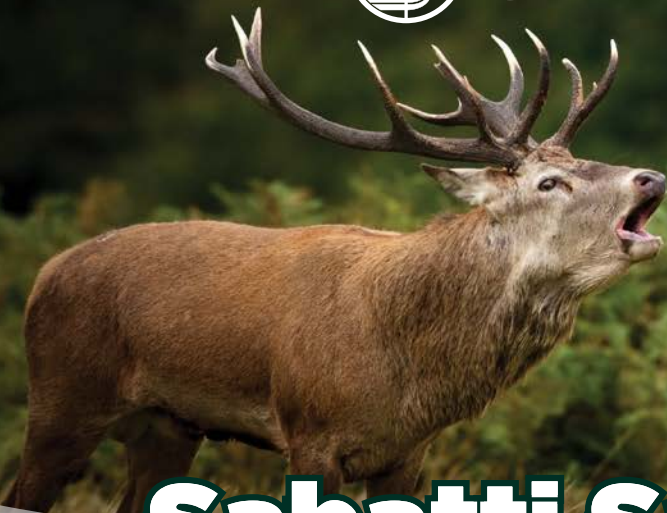
Sam Garro

In 1983 Rolf Bachnick, aged 36, migrated from Germany to Australia like so many others looking for work and a better life. Back in those pre-internet days businesses were listed in the Yellow Pages phone book, as good a place as any to start searching for employment. With a toolmaker's background and some experience in firearm repairs, Rolf began calling gunshops in the Melbourne metropolitan area. He regarded a firearm as another piece of machinery with moving parts and nothing he couldn't service or repair with time and experience.

Perseverance paid off when he landed a position with John Saunders at Century Arms in Balwyn, Victoria. To survive and hold down his job he worked long hours to quickly adapt and develop his skills in the trade. Apart from his toolmaker background and referring to firearm manuals and books, Rolf was essentially self-taught like some of our other masters, his positive approach and determination to succeed making him the perfectionist he became and remains to this day.



Rolf holds a vintage double rifle underlever requiring restoration.



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24" BARREL

.30-06 Springfield (11" MRR twist)
.308 Winchester (11" MRR twist)
.300 Winchester Magnum (11" MRR twist)

INTRODUCTORY PRICE **\$2495**

- High Strength 7075 aluminum alloy action with built-in Picatinny rail
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- Removable 3 shot steel magazine
- Two positions safety, with bolt stop
- Oil finished walnut stock Monte Carlo



Sabatti Sapphire ER



24" BARREL

.308 Winchester (11" MRR twist)
.300 Winchester Magnum (11" MRR twist)

INTRODUCTORY PRICE **\$2395**

- High Strength 7075 aluminum alloy action with built-in Picatinny rail
- 3 lugs bolt
- Match trigger
- Cold hammer forged barrel
- MRR Multi Radial Rifling
- Removable 3 shot steel magazine
- Two positions safety, with bolt stop
- Thumbhole polymer stock, adjustable cheek and Bipod rail

Toolmaker to master gunsmith - Rolf one of a dying breed

Gunsmith work

Over the years he worked on all manner of firearms, resurrecting many from dilapidated states. Conversions, restoration of vintage pieces, sorting out intricate mechanism and actions and complete builds like a custom Mauser 98 .500 Jeffery (one of several), as well as attending to the usual fixes such as replacing ejector springs, barrel polishing, bluing and more were all part of his daily requirements.

Where a part was difficult to source or broken, like a striking pin, Rolf made it in-house to complete the job. He remained at Century Arms for a solid 16 years until 1999 when the business was closed under the government buyback scheme at the time. After that he worked from home under Safari Arms-Rolf Bachnick on a semi-retired basis and today at a young 73 it's more of a hobby as he accepts only selective work.

Firearms worked on

In the 1980s many used firearms were imported in bulk by John Saunders from overseas, more specifically India where he travelled in search of fine pieces to restore and resell. He sourced an abundance of high-end English maker surplus stock from certain dealers, both black powder and nitro doubles and bolt-action rifles, many formerly held by wealthy Maharajahs, Rajahs, Nizams and Nawabs who hunted tigers (now heavily protected) and a variety of other game species.

These princes, exalted highnesses and nobles often upgraded and replenished their significant firearms collections, not only to satisfy their own hunting needs but to provide quality-built firearms for visiting monarchs on a hunting sojourn such as members of the British Royal Family and foreign dignitaries.

As with so many imported firearms their condition varied from good to fair and poor. Some worked on by backyard 'wannabe' repairers with make-do parts not appropriate or guaranteed to last long, were woeful. Rolf attended to each with an exacting and methodical approach, devoting many hours to removing age-long blemishes from neglect and going over the actions and barrels to gradually return the pieces to their near finery and, importantly, safe-operating condition.

Early days

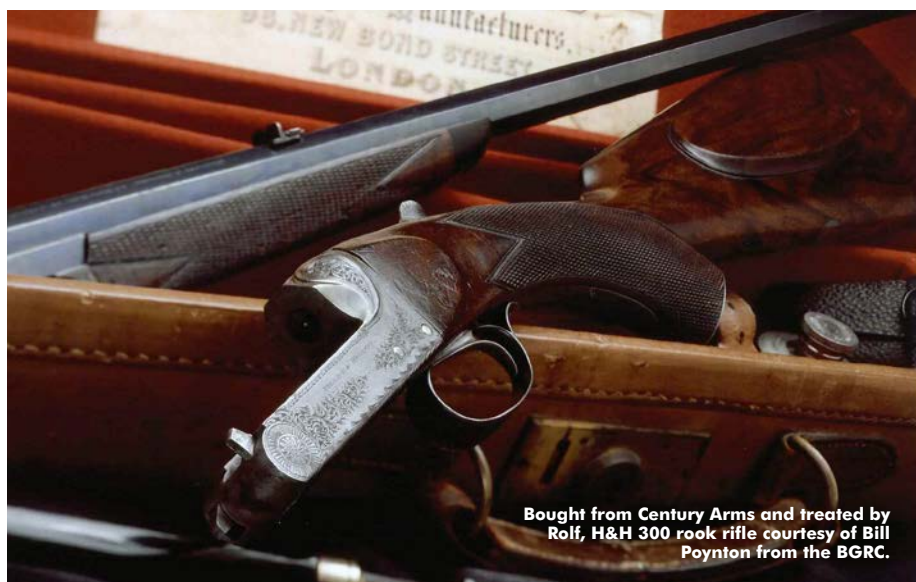
The 1980s was also a time when the Big Game Rifle Club (BGR) at Little River in Werribee, Victoria was formed with members requiring different calibre rifles from big game bore doubles using black

powder or nitro, and bolt-action rifles down to the small Martini or break-open rook rifle in order to participate in the different classes. Furthermore, buffalo hunting in our Top End and big game hunting in Africa was experiencing an uptake, adding to the firearm demand from hunters, safari guides and outfitters. Century Arms was the 'go-to' gunshop for dangerous game calibres, particularly if you were after a high-end quality English double.

To better appreciate what Century Arms had to offer and the type of firearms Rolf worked on and what the doubles and bolt action rifles went for in late 1990, a few examples are as follows: Alexander Henry .577/.500 No.2 (cordite proofed) fine boxlock double in excellent condition (Ex) \$7500; Manton & Co .250/3000 double (Ex) \$9000; Holland & Holland .500 BPE

Royal hammerless (Ex) \$15,000; Westley Richards .450 1 Express BP (Ex) \$5500; Thomas Bland .375 FL Magnum double (VG) \$7500; Mauser Oberndorf 9x57 rimless magazine sporting rifle (Ex) \$2250 and a Jeffery .404 Mauser magnum square magazine rifle (Ex) \$9500. Not so cheap considering the average house price was around \$90,000! Other makers included William Evans, WW Greener, Webley & Scott, John Rigby & Co and Farquharsons.

Despite the high asking prices these firearms were snapped up by collectors and shooters both here and overseas. Today such fine pieces still attract hefty price tags though are not so readily available or found, as passionate owners hang on to them for as long as they can for use in pursuit of game or in club events such as Big Game Rifle.



Bought from Century Arms and treated by Rolf, H&H 300 rook rifle courtesy of Bill Poynton from the BGR.



Bought from Century Arms and under Rolf's care, Jeffery 450 NE double via Bill Poynton (BGR).

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& PR1-MOA..... \$4150
Horus H59 or TREMOR3 Reticle..... \$3715
Illuminated TREMOR3 Reticle..... \$4520



Leupold Mark 5HD 7-35x56 FFP 35mm
TMR, PR2-MIL or PR2-MOA..... \$3230
CCH or Impact 60 MOA Reticle..... \$3870
Illuminated TMR..... \$4520
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Leupold VX-Freedom 3-9x40
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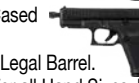


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Toolmaker to master gunsmith - Rolf one of a dying breed

Work with other masters

Certain projects and custom requests were performed in collaboration with master engraver Phil Vinnicombe - a prolific artistic metal engraver who was also recognised overseas and received work from prestigious makers including Holland & Holland and Purdey - as well as Geoff Slee and Ross Waghorn, both fine stockmakers. Once the firearms needing attention were disassembled, the stocks were worked on by Geoff or Ross to restore and maintain their originality or a new stock crafted, some customised to fit the buyer. Metalwork was carefully filed and polished by Rolf to a fine surface then sent to Phil to rework the faded original engraving and give it new life. Additional scroll work, imagery or lettering was applied as requested.

Special project

The *Shooters Journal* of October 1996 featured a Century Arms' Four Bore Rewa rifle on the front cover and associated article by Les O'Rourke. Development of the single barrel, break-open rifle saw Rolf instrumental in its fit and assembly after Phil attended to the engraving while Ross perfected the stock and receiver colour case-hardening in London.

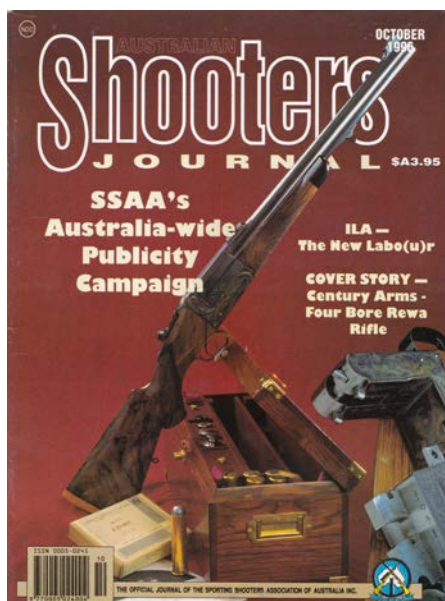
A monstrous jaw-jarring and shoulder bruising calibre was first sported in the 19th century by legendary African big game hunters Frederick Courteney Selous and Sir Samuel White Baker, a time when black powder muzzleloaders fired massive 4oz lead balls in pursuit of pachyderm. The challenge and effort to reproduce the four bore proved rewarding as it was eventually successfully test fired and later taken to a Safari International show in the US where it was viewed by many an admirer.

Rolf's outlets

Like many of us who have a hobby to relax and derive enjoyment from, Rolf has a particular appreciation of vintage Gerber (Rex Applegate and William E. Fairbairn) folding knives made in Portland, Oregon, for their fine design and quality workmanship, several rare prototype and sample folders forming part of his collection. While the pursuit of gunsmithing and other life priorities occupy his time, he still manages the occasional hunt on small game close to home.

Much appreciated

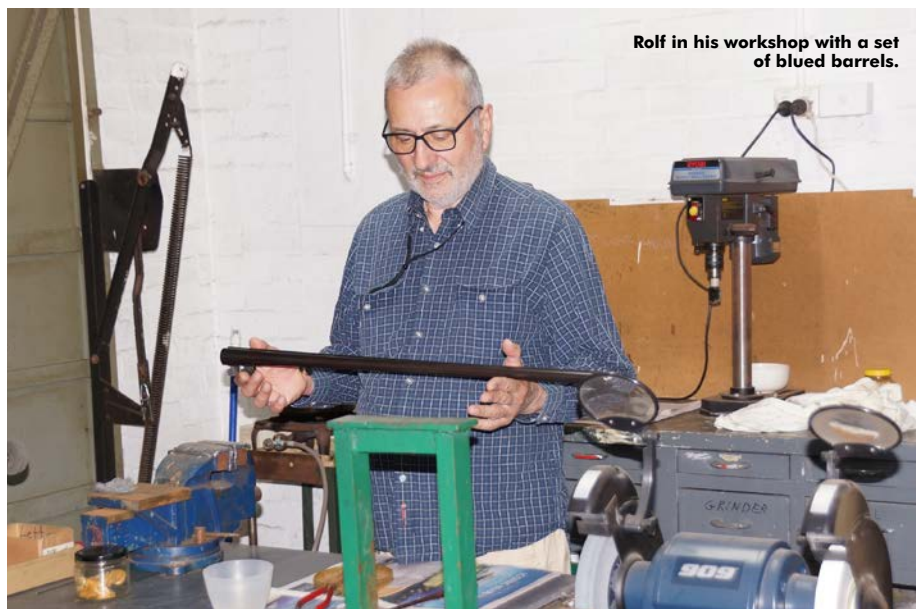
Over the years, many shooting club members including myself and associates locally and interstate who've had work done on their firearms by Rolf, couldn't speak more highly of him and his attention



Front cover of the *Shooters Journal*, October 1996 featuring Century Arms' Four Bore Rewa rifle. Rolf was involved in its assembly.



Rolf's relaxation hobby - an impressive collection of Gerber folding knives.



Rolf in his workshop with a set of blued barrels.

to detail. Now in his 70s he remains one of our last truly gifted gunsmiths.

Uncertain future

In Australia there are still no specific gunsmith, stockmaker or engraving studies or apprenticeships, the closest being fitter and turner or Engineering in Mechanical studies. Yet schools for these trades exist in Europe, such as Suhl (Germany), Liege (Belgium), St Etienne (France), Ferlach (Austria) as well as the Sonoran Desert Institute (Scottsdale, Arizona), American Gunsmithing Institute (Napa, California) and Modern Gun School (Wilmington, Delaware) to name a few. Take-up in the

financially viable trade is encouraged, supported and in part sponsored.

All of which begs the question: Why we don't promote similar study courses or facilities? After all, we have a significant and growing sporting shooter and hunter base with firearms holders at some stage requiring items professionally attended to, fixed, refurbished or customised to exacting fit or needs. It is indeed a sobering thought that sooner than we think, the remaining few masters who've served the public so well will no longer operate or exist as they retire or are unable to continue. What then will become of those fine vintage pieces and firearms which demand their expert attention? ●

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Torturous terrain yields Alaskan double

This month sees the start of a new mini-series with some of our regular contributors recalling their most demanding hunt. Senior correspondent **John Dunn** gets us under way with a gripping tale in pursuit of moose in the mighty Alaska Range.

Mike Colpo scans for moose across the breadth of the Yanert Valley.

In late August 2010, I flew into Vancouver from Sydney then caught a connecting flight to Anchorage in Alaska. From there I travelled by bus to Denali and on to Healy where the following day I was picked up for a short flight into the Yanert Valley for seven days of hunting in the Alaska Range. It sounds so matter-of-fact when you write it down sequentially but organising and preparing for the trip took considerable time and effort.

Knowing the country would be tough, I spent as much time as I could over the preceding six months walking and climbing the steepest terrain I could find around home and also had at least one day a week horse riding around the hills, getting used to being in the saddle and preparing for whatever Alaska would throw at me. It was time well spent.

Arrival

Rain was hammering down as we flew out of Healy, the little Cessna 850 pitching and rocking in the wind. Towering cloud banks swirled along the tops, some already covered by early season snow and as we crossed to the Yanert side, the pilot pointed out a band of Dall sheep rams, the first I'd ever seen. Lower down he showed me moose in the spruce forest and on the river flats proper, a small herd of wandering caribou.

The bed of the Yanert River itself was more than a kilometre wide, veined with braided streams of grey water laden with glacial silt. The mountains were spectacular as range after range of serrated peaks extended in all directions, some of them rising to more than 2130m (7000 feet) with glaciers hanging in the folds of their flanks.

From the alder thickets and spruce forest along the bottom of the valley the vegetation graded away to bare rocky peaks, knife-edged and weathered by the passage of time.

About 20 minutes after take-off the Cessna dropped on to the valley bottom and bounced to a halt on a tyre-worn strip of river gravel. I'd be lying if I said I wasn't glad to be out. As much as I'd enjoyed the birds' eye view of the country, boots on the ground have always been my favourite mode of travel. With Montana-based outfitter Mike Colpo there to greet me, we had coffee and a feed, met some of the other hunters in camp then spent a leisurely afternoon settling in, forbidden by statute to hunt for 24 hours after I'd arrived.



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On top of the range looking
into Dean Creek basin.

Preparing

The following morning Mike and I rode across the river. Pushing up through the spruce we rode into a small group of cows and immature bulls who weren't the least bit disturbed by our intrusion. Above the tree line we settled down on a rocky knob where we spent the day yarning, alternatively looking through the spotting scope at Dall sheep in the valley behind us and trying to locate a moose which was big enough to hunt. We found him late in the afternoon, 17km upstream according to the map, his antlers flashing in the sun.

The hunt

With a cold breeze in our faces Kiwi guide Brian Elwarth and I left camp the next morning, following a meandering trail up the valley, splashing through clearwater side-streams and winding our way around the remnant mounds of ancient moraine walls. We plodded through cathedral-like stands of whispering spruce and back on to the gravel of river bars pocked with the marks of moose, caribou, wolves and grizzly bears. Though I was finally living the dream I first subscribed to as a kid in another country half a world away, none of it seemed real.

Around mid-afternoon we pulled up and pitched our tent on a red willow bench high above the river. We tethered the horses, had a feed and a rest then climbed up to a rocky prominence out of the wind to sit and wait and watch for the moose of yesterday. It had been a long day and I was beginning to feel the strain when Brian calmly announced he could see the paddle of a moose antler sticking up above the willows below us. He set up the spotting scope, we looked hard then set off on a hurried stalk designed to put us ahead of him. For more than half an hour I followed Brian through the willows as best I could, tired and tripping over in the rush, breathing hard and no longer sure I still wanted to shoot a moose now the moment had arrived.

He was upwind when we saw him again, almost side-on and slightly below us a couple of hundred metres away. I unlimbered the .338, found a not-so-steady rest on the monopod Brian handed me and touched off my shot when all my wobbles felt co-ordinated. The bullet sailed over the moose's back and out across the wide expanse of the valley and while he twitched his ears at the wind-muffled sound of the shot, he didn't budge.

Willing myself to calm down I reloaded and fired again, the bullet chugging into his rib cage behind the right shoulder. The bull rocked and tottered, took a couple of shaky steps forward then realised it was all too much and toppled out of sight. He lay head down among the willows, an impressive large-bodied beast with a wonderful spread of dished antler. For several minutes I found it difficult to speak, the lump in my throat threatening to choke me as I soaked up the realisation I'd finally achieved a long-term goal in my hunting life.

In the fading light of the midnight sun we took the photos I had to have then began the task of caping my prize and breaking him down for every scrap of edible meat he could yield, a sensible but onerous requirement under Alaskan game laws. It was 1am when we struggled back to camp for a long-overdue sleep and it took us almost two days with the packhorses to carry my trophy and all the meat down to the valley floor, where it could be collected by the Super Cub and flown back to base camp.

I was out of bed at daylight, helping Brian pack the horses. With three hunting days left he thought there might be enough time to ride to the head of the Dean Creek catchment down the river and maybe find a Dall



The moose where he fell in the red willows.

Torturous terrain yields Alaskan double

ram. It took more than seven hours and the afternoon was fading by the time we set up camp and fed the horses. While I rested and marvelled at the country around me, Brian headed up the other side of the terminal basin in search of rams, returning a happy man as there were four on the mountain side above camp. One of them looked like a shooter and was our best prospect for a morning hunt.

We left camp early just in time to see the rams disappear over the range into the next catchment. With no other animals in sight we went after them, slowly and carefully picking our way across the faces and on towards the skyline. I still regard that climb as the hardest day's hunting I've ever endured - dangerously steep in places with loose shingle underfoot and nothing but rotten rock for handholds. At one point I thought I'd had enough but managed to keep going.

On the knife-edged spine of the ridge we stopped and rested, eating dried fruit and chocolate to replenish energy levels. A shower of rain swept over us followed by a snow squall before the sky cleared and we could see a group of rams further along the ridge. Moving as fast as we safely could we went after them. Within a kilometre or so we found yet another band of 11 rams, two of which were legal and as we watched they stood up and began to feed away from us. We scrambled along in their wake and in crossing a little saddle we spotted two more rams feeding below us. They were closer and easier to reach so we slid down into a cross gully, stopped to look at them again then crept down to a little bench above them.

The larger ram had a broomed horn on his right side which meant his left horn had to be full curl to make him legal and it took an hour of watching and waiting to

confirm that. At a ranged 290m I settled down behind my daypack rest and fired one of the longest shots I've ever taken. The ram buckled and rolled down the mountain towards the creek line. As I'd been with the moose a few days earlier I was overawed with my trophy, worn out by the effort involved in securing him but pleased I'd persisted to the end. That night Brian complimented me for being so determined - he knew he'd been pushing me hard but hadn't reckoned on how pig-headed I could be.

A week or so after returning home I had a spell in hospital recovering from some essential surgery I'd decided to postpone until after my moose hunt. It changed my life and slowed me down for the best part of a year, an inconvenience at the time but nowhere near as challenging as my Alaskan hunt. Both were experiences you only need once in a lifetime. ●



The Dall ram where he came to rest in the creek bottom.



The Cessna transit plane on the Yanert camp 'airstrip'.



On the floor of Yanert Valley with the trophy moose.



Trophy tree at base camp with its load of sheep horns, moose antlers and cast caribou antlers.



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T2 dust covers removed to reveal the dual rangefinder lenses, battery compartment (centre) and optical zoom lens.

G1T2 thermal gives hunters the edge

Chris Redlich

In recent times we've seen increased interest in thermal imaging equipment to give shooters an edge over their quarry in lowlight conditions, many manufacturers responding until we now have a plethora of devices at our disposal. Thermal imaging is not new technology and shouldn't be confused with night vision equipment which uses and enhances available ambient light to view images and surroundings in the dark but is not reliable at extended ranges. Thermal imaging, on the other hand, detects the differing levels of infrared (IR) energy or heat signature from living creatures to identify and return a high-lighted image outline, both day and night.

Sector Optics are new kids on the block, launched in the US as recently as early 2020, though their parent company, Torrey Pines Logic, has substantially more optical experience. Established in 2002 they have an 18-year involvement in US Defence, providing specialised technology products for their military, law enforcement, intelligence agencies and other global partners. Their expertise includes visible, non-visible and IR laser systems, optical communications and image processing, UAV non-terrestrial link systems and, of course, thermal optics.

Sector Optics was launched to supply cost-effective, functional devices to civilian

markets and *Australian Shooter* was given the chance to test their new G1T2, marketed by Australian distributor Dolos Tactical. The G1T2 came impressively supplied, foam padded in a protective hard plastic pelican-style case accompanied by a swag of ancillaries including spare disposable batteries, rechargeable batteries and charger, USB cables, Allen keys and user manual.

Product described

G1T2 is the designation for the combination of G1 riflescope and T2 thermal imaging attachment, sold as a complete thermal imaging and scope package that comes fitted with a Picatinny ring mount with base. The G1 is basically a standard

variable scope of 1 to 8x magnification and 24mm objective lens housed in a 30mm main tube. The turrets, as per most other scopes, have elevation adjustment on top and windage on the right. A USB-C type plug receptacle is on the lower forward section of the left illumination turret and is where the T2 thermal imager is plugged into the G1, linking the electronics of the two components.

Main electronics of the G1 are stored in the ocular bell and evident by the cylindrical raised section marked 'internal display'. The G1 scope has a factory-set parallax of 100yd/90m and is supplied with a glass-etched No.4-style reticle including centre dot in the second focal plane. Additionally,






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- Browning Citori CXS White 12ga in 32", 30" and 28"
- Browning Citori CXS White 20ga in 30"



Browning Citori CXS White

RRP \$3825

G1T2 thermal gives hunters the edge

the G1 reticle centre dot is illuminated and brightness adjustments are easily made with the left-hand turret dial marked by increments of 0-11.

To round off the package the T2 thermal imager is mildly obstructive but tastefully attached to the forward section of the G1 scope, with the 'head up display' of the thermal image easily viewed over the scope and replicated in a smaller (ID) internal 'head up display' above the G1 scope reticle. Sector Optics' engineers have done a good job marrying the T2 thermal imager to G1 scope as they combine for a well-balanced piece of equipment weighing around 1kg with batteries.

A thermal imaging device won't work without power and a good piece of night hunting equipment can't be solar powered for obvious reasons. The T2 is powered by two CR123 batteries and installed in a watertight compartment on the front of the unit flanked by the laser rangefinding lenses (right) and thermal optical zoom lens (left).

The battery power level indicator is top right of the display panel when turned on, the optical zoom lens adjusted by a dial and rotated for levels of 3x to 8 power magnification. On top of the T2 is an easily manipulated function control pad consisting of toggle switches for all major controls including 'power on/off' and 'image snapshot' (centre), 'brightness up' and 'reticle on/off' (top), 'colour schemes' and 'displays on/off' (right), 'brightness down' and 'menu' (bottom) and 'laser rangefinding' (left).

Note that arrow buttons are also used to navigate through the menu display. Additional to the G1T2 inventory is a remote cable with finger pad to externally control the laser rangefinding function, plugged into the USB port to the left of the T2 'head up display' or main screen body. The finger pad can be attached to the stock fore-end and easily activated by the

non-master hand with range readings in yards displayed in the G1 image. The T2 display has a selection of four screen colour choices and six styles of reticle available at the push of a button, though I don't like playing around with settings once I find a preferred colour and reticle.

At the range, in the field

After sourcing a Picatinny rail I mounted it to my 7mm-08 Rem for what I felt would be an effective rifle to test the thermal attributes in a hunting scenario. The user manual states the G1 Picatinny mount is to be tightened to a torque of 65 in/lb and I positioned it for correct eye relief the same as any other scope.

I sighted the G1T2 for 100m zero and found the process a breeze. The G1 elevation and windage adjustments are calibrated for ½ MOA at 100yds and after a few clicks up and across I was in business, the target sight picture of the G1 scope crisp and clear. With the rifle sighted and rehearsal of the T2 functions completed, it became apparent the T2 and G1 are not in sync after manual sighting. Put simply, the thermal image reticle isn't automatically aligned with the scope reticle as I'd expected.

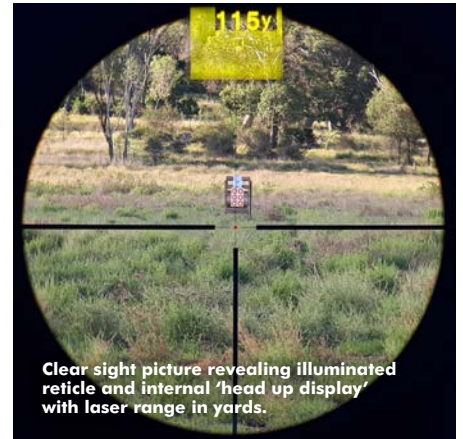
Although the manual instructs how to electronically align the T2 to the G1 reticle, the T2 reticle alone can't be relied upon for accurate long-range shot placement and I won't recommend otherwise. However, reticle alignment would benefit the accuracy of laser rangefinding your image. By my own definition the G1T2 is a standard scope with attached thermal imaging aid and identifying these anomalies helped me take a different approach to testing. Its benefits are evident when we understand a thermal imaging aid can be used effectively in normal daylight conditions, picking up a thermal signature of unsuspecting ferals in the grass and enabling the shooter to

prepare for shot placement once the target shows itself.

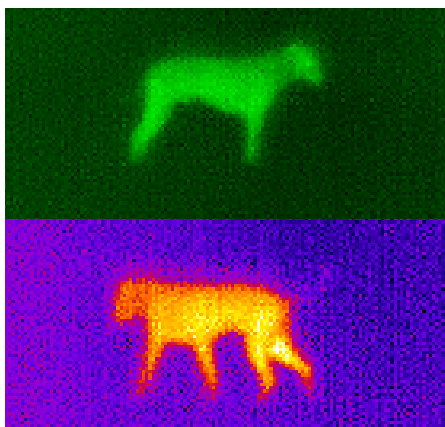
Before putting the G1T2 to use it's important to keep the protective cap on the T2 lenses until required. The external optics of the laser rangefinder and thermal imager are sensitive to dust and dirty lenses can greatly affect the image and detection abilities, so familiarising yourself with the thermal imaging capabilities and range limitation is also important prior to field use. As with other standard



A rangefinding remote cable can be attached to the fore-end for ease of activation.



Clear sight picture revealing illuminated reticle and internal 'head up display' with laser range in yards.



Separate thermal images of a male wild dog (green and red).



G1T2 held securely to Picatinny rail with a well-designed mount.



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G1T2 thermal gives hunters the edge

riflescopes, understanding that while higher magnification draws closer the detection and viewing of an animate object, the field of view (FoV) is greatly reduced and as magnification is lessened FoV increases. Refer to Figure 1 supplied by Sector Optics using the 3x magnification and 8x example, showing G1T2 detection ranges.

While field testing the unit I managed to capture screenshot images of an unsuspecting wild dog at close range. Undetected lurking back and forth, he must have sensed something was amiss and hastily retreated before I could confidently take a shot, though he hung around long enough for me to capture a

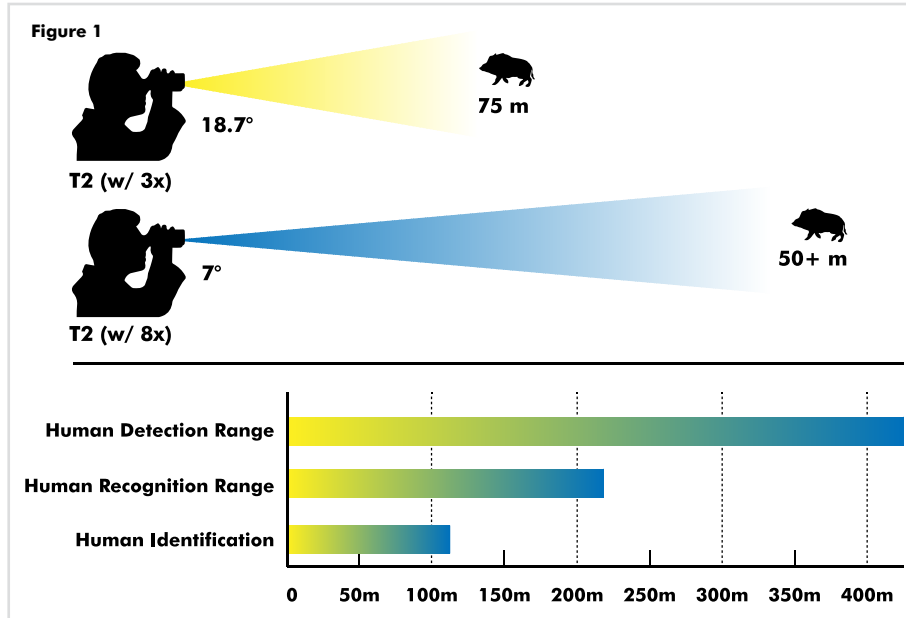
few images on various colour settings. At home those images were downloaded to my PC and I noticed details not evident in the field - the dog was identified as male on my computer screen, highlighting the quality of the T2 thermal image device.

Conclusion

With so many new hi-tech optic sights on the market it's important for consumers to understand a product's capability and while initially I believed the G1T2 to be an integrated thermal imaging scope, my findings during testing proved valuable and I was able to re-evaluate. Put simply, this is a good scope with well-fitted thermal imaging aid and built-in laser rangefinder. The thermal qualities of the T2 component enable the shooter to identify targets not easily seen in challenging light conditions, making it beneficial to the feral pest controller chasing a mob of pigs or sneaky wild dog.

As with all their products, Sector Optics (US) offer a five-year warranty on the G1T2 with after-sales services handled by Australian distributor Dolos Tactical - sales@dolostactical.com. Retailing for \$5293 at time of writing (excluding packages or deals), the G1T2 is a product worth investigating.

More at www.dolostactical.com ●



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Form Rifle Stocks laminate option so stylish

Ben Unten

The latest offering from Form Rifle Stocks is a laminate stock for Tikka T3 and T3x. Laminate stocks are renowned for their stability due to the multi-directional timber grain and the quality of this one from the UK firm is apparent straight out the box. This dark laminate stock offers an angled pistol grip with thumb recess as well as single press-button adjustments to correct length of pull and height of cheekpiece. The stock features near perfect inletting as well as front aluminium block bedding.

The marriage of my heavy-barrelled Tikka T3 in .243 and the Form Stock is almost as if it was 'meant to be'. The timber-to-steel match was outstanding with extremely low tolerances throughout, even down to the triggerguard/take-down screw component on the underside of the stock. The heavy barrel on the T3 sat in perfect alignment with the barrel channel.

The bare stock weighs 1650 grams on my digital kitchen scales, overall (minimum) length is 830mm and the wide fore-end measures roughly 50mm at its narrowest point. The adjustable butt sports a LimbSaver recoil pad and length of pull is adjustable between 370mm and 395mm at the press of a button. Drop at heel is 4mm and drop at comb is adjustable from 9mm to -12mm with the press of another button, all

of which equates to approximately 25mm of adjustment which should suit a wide cross-section of shooters.

The grip features a slight palmswell for right-handers with finger grooves and a neat thumb recess for greater comfort in certain shooting positions, offhand for example. The stock comes with a rear sling mount and twin forward sling mounts, one for bipod and one for the sling. Although the barrel channel comfortably accommodates a heavy barrel (my Tikka is roughly 21mm at the muzzle), I can see no reason why a sporter weight barrel would be any different.

So how did the action/stock combo perform? Exactly as expected with sub-MOA groups the norm along with one freakish group of less than ½ MOA, though I'd note this was achieved using factory ammo without any additional tuning. Still, I've no doubt these groups could be significantly improved with some judicious load development and quality time at the range. Laminate colours available are blue/black, forest green camo, ebony, jacaranda, red/black and walnut laminate and the unit retails for \$995.

More at raytrade.com.au ●



Finger grooves on the grip.



It's a Barbar

... but father or son?

The Barbar with a Victorian-era infantry officer's sword which is probably 140 years younger.

Mark van den Boogaart

As always I was on the lookout for a 'new' old English flintlock and, by way of old, I wanted a pistol from the Georgian era (1714 to 1830) most particularly something from the 1700s. Now finding a true early to mid-18th century gun isn't easy. Why? Because it's potentially more than 300 years old and outside of a museum they're not just lying around waiting on me showing up.

But I'd received word of a particular piece at least a 1750s build and, with a few interested parties, I had to act smartly. After contacting the seller and spending some time talking things over, I bought myself what was obviously a very old pistol - an English flintlock by Barbar of a design generally referred to as an officer's pistol.

Now being an officer in the British Army was an expensive business - you had to purchase your commission, firearms, uniforms and horses. If you wanted to begin your service as a more senior officer, generally you were expected to provide and outfit a company of troops as well. Of course the quality of your equipment and those carried by your men were a direct reflection on your station in life, so scrimping wouldn't do. You even had to pay for the services of the mess and, the more you paid, the better the food and service.

The officer's pistol design as a military firearm would act as prototype for the later, more established formal pattern designs of the 1700s including the 1759 Pattern

Elliot Light Dragoon pistol and, eventually, the New Land Pattern (as opposed to Sea Pattern) first approved for service in 1796 and mass-produced in 1802.

As you might imagine, researching a gun possibly every bit of 300 years old isn't easy. Luckily the Barbars (Lewis and son James) were highly regarded gunmakers. Louis (later Lewis) was a French Protestant born in Essendun, Poitou who migrated to London in 1688 to avoid religious persecution. While some guns have

been traced back to 1685, the first significant record of Lewis Barbar relates to an incident in 1698 when he was prosecuted by the London Company of Gunmakers for selling unproved guns. The good news was he managed to pay his fines and in 1704 was naturalised, adopting the Anglicised name of Lewis.

As a free Englishman he presented his proof piece under the name Lewis Barber to the London Company of Gunmakers and was allowed to join for a fee of 13 shillings



Ornate scroll work which had all but disappeared from English military arms by the 1800s.

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It's a Barbar . . . but father or son?

and 4 pence. In 1714 we see a reference to his son Jacobus (James) Barber who was apprenticed to his father for seven years. In 1722 James was admitted to the London Company of Gunmakers and in 1726 opened his own gunmaking business in Portugal St, Piccadilly after which he began to use the name Barbar.

In 1739 James bought a house near the corner of Bond St and Dover St and his father, who it's believed had been sharing the premises at Portugal St up until that time, moved to Rupert St in Whitechapel. During their combined careers Lewis was appointed Gentleman Armourer to King George I in 1717 and re-appointed in 1727 on the accession of George II. After Lewis' death in 1741, James himself was sworn in as Gentleman Armourer to the King and continued to hold the post until 1762. Five years later he retired from the gunmaking business before passing away in April 1773.

So to the gun. As the design suggests it's a private purchase military pistol, its overall condition being good and presents well with all brass fittings, including a decorative sideplate. The lock, as is usually the case, is secured by two large screws with screwheads incorporated into the overall

sideplate design. The timber stock extends to the end of the barrel and is dark, smooth, devoid of chequering and displays some damage as it looks like the barrel pins have been pushed in and out too many times, cracking the timber.

The pistol grip is a gentle curve and made for smaller hands than mine, the timber ramrod plain as it doesn't have a brass endcap so is either incomplete or a later replacement. The butt of the pistol grip is protected by a large, stacked brass cap which flares back up the grip and to complement the brass flares, the triggerguard assembly goes down to the cap, ensuring the timber grip is well protected. The grip's decorative brass certainly adds to the overall value of the piece and is also helpful in dating the pistol, as the style of brass finish is generally associated with pistols up to the late 1730s after which time it became less common.

Turning to the mechanism, amazingly it functions as designed. The Queen Anne-style trigger is small, mostly straight with slight back curve curls rather than the defined crescent curve of a modern trigger and, while by no means crisp, it does release with a small amount of pressure. Judging by



Ornate lines and decorative pistol grip reflect the times, status of the pistol and its original owner.



The Barbar in profile.



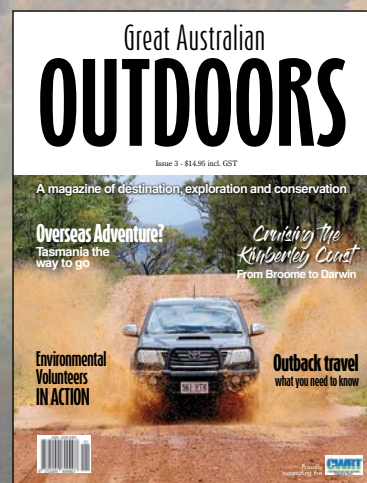
Close-up of the flintlock mechanism.

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It's a Barbar . . . but father or son?

wear marks on the pan, striking frizzen and barrel port it has been fired a lot while the timber close to the lock has been discoloured by the heat of ignited gunpowder.

The barrel is stepped and looks to have been welded at each step. It's obviously aged though not pitted or rusted, while the bore is worn and the walls a little thin. The barrel has no front bead or even a sighting groove so this was a real point-and-shoot affair. The micrometer gives an inner diameter reading of 16.67mm (.65 calibre) so while it may have rattled out a slow and not particularly well-guided ball, it would've packed a punch when it landed.

The barrel also carries London proof and view marks as well as a third, private smith's mark and this is where things become interesting. On initial inspection the mark looked like an L*B for Lewis Barbar (Barber) you might assume but, reading a little further, it's more likely to be an I*B which was the mark of James Barbar - and no, I haven't been able to find out why he used I*B.

In trying to confirm if it is in fact an I or an L, a couple of different approaches were used starting with a USB microscope. Unfortunately, the close-up image proved inconclusive so I decided to try the macro lens on my camera which did provide better quality images though frustratingly they were still inconclusive. As much as I want it to be an L, as I can't confirm that I'm opting for I*B, the mark of James Barbar.

Now as a collector an I*B isn't all doom and gloom. For instance there's a pair of James Barbar pistols on display in Windsor Castle and to quote Norman Dixon, a far more knowledgeable gun historian than me: "... almost without exception, unrestored

and original antique firearms made by James Barbar of London are of the highest quality (Georgian Pistols: The Art and Craft of the Flintlock Pistol).

As the pistol is a James Barbar, rather than Barber, we can confidently set a date range from 1726 when James began using the traditional spelling of his surname admitted to the London Gunmakers Guild, until his retirement in 1767. And if we consider the ornate brass work on the pistol grip we can narrow that further to somewhere between 1726 and 1740 - in other words it's between 280 and 295 years old, making it the grandfather of my collection. Not bad, not bad at all. ●





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Quality clay-breaker won't break the bank

Paul Miller

Miroku shotguns have a well-deserved reputation for quality, reliability and performance and have been one of the standout brands of sensibly-priced shotguns in Australia for many years. They're offered in various models and grades which can become a bit confusing until you dig a little deeper to find they're essentially all the same boxlock action with varying degrees of engraving and quality of wood.

The models also vary in terms of their use, field and competition guns set up differently with conventional or raised ribs of varying widths to suit diverse purposes. Their stock dimensions also vary dependent on use and clearly a great deal of thought has gone into the models we see here. Much Australian input has helped develop these models over time and no matter what grade of gun from their entry level Grade 1 models to the Grade V versions, they all work perfectly for what they're designed to do.

The MK60 Sport on review here is only available as a Grade V field version with beautiful timber and engraving - and that's about it. I say this because we're so used to all sorts of technological inclusions which aren't featured on this gun, yet this is easily

the best-handling Miroku I've ever reviewed or owned. That hard-to-explain 'feel' of a gun which is so important to shotgunners is different for all of us and is brought about by a combination of stock dimensions and weight distribution. This gun, as we'll see, has some interesting attributes which make it handle very well.

Barrels

These are 32" with three-inch chambers, a narrow untapered 7.6mm ventilated top rib and solid rib between the barrels, sighting via a single fine white bead at the muzzle and, being a field gun, there's no mid bead. Rod Laidlaw from importers Outdoor Sporting Agencies told me these barrels are more conventionally bored 18.6 to allow for the use of felt and bio-degradable wads, which require a standard constriction to ensure correct gas seal on ignition and as the wads travel up the barrel. I wondered if this might increase felt recoil a little with plastic wadded loads when compared to most over-bored barrels but couldn't feel any difference.



Extensive and deep Grade V engraving and fear drop on the stock underlines the quality of this gun.

Stock dimensions encouraged a nice head-up position which improved target visibility and acquisition.





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Quality clay-breaker won't break the bank

This gun is fixed choke with $\frac{1}{4}$ in the bottom barrel and $\frac{3}{4}$ in the top, a good compromise in a field model but I believe the next shipment will be $\frac{1}{2}$ and $\frac{3}{4}$ to make the gun even more suited to Sporting Clays where these choke constrictions are popular among the top shots. I've never smoked Skeet targets so comprehensively as I did on testing this gun and while you'd never normally use such tight chokes for Skeet competitions, it was great fun to put it mildly and also proved how perfectly the gun fitted me and shot precisely where I was looking.

Action

This is the same as all Miroku shotguns and as previously noted, a full width hinge-pin provides a large surface area for smooth opening and closing, lock-up achieved with a full width flat bolt which fits perfectly into a bite beneath the bottom chamber. This means the gun has a deeper profile than some other manufacturers' over-and-under shotguns but it's immensely strong and still looks elegant and in proportion to the rest of the gun.

The opening lever worked smoothly as did the trigger selector and safety, the trigger not adjustable but well located and comfortable to use with trigger pulls very crisp at around 4lb. The wood-to-metal fit was superb as seems standard on all grades of Miroku and the gun closed like a bank vault door with a reassuring quality 'clunk'.

Stock

The stock on this gun is like going back in time to the glory days of the Belgian-made Browning B25 series 206, 207 and 208 model Sporters. These superbly made guns had an incredible 'feel' and were first choice for most top shots almost a generation ago. The rare 208 featured 32" barrels and was possibly the first long-barreled sporter and this Miroku feels very much the same but with the narrower rib of the 30" barrelled 207 Sporter.

Anyone who's owned or handled one of these guns will know what I mean. They had no bells and whistles, no screw-in chokes or adjustable ribs or stocks, just



Outstanding Grade V walnut.



Typical field model hard plastic buttplate facilitates gun mount in most conditions.

beautifully made and simple perfection in what they were designed for - and so is this Miroku. If you've a lazy \$20,000 or so you can still commission one of those in the entry level decorated A Grade from Browning in Belgium, but for about a sixth of that you can have this Miroku which feels very similar and has far superior timber and engraving than a basic B25. Clearly not the same gun but a very worthwhile compromise in terms of price and performance.

What makes this gun handle so well to my mind are the stock dimensions and weight, combined with the light 32" barrels. Drop at comb is 39mm and 63mm at heel, the classic American field gun dimensions of 1.5" and 2.5" which won't suit everyone but with virtually no cast, it means it's suitable for left and right-handers. It encourages a comfortable upright head position and shoots exactly where you're looking, with patterns about 60/40 per cent above and below the aim point.

The gun weighs exactly 8lb (3.63kg) and is balanced perfectly on the hinge pin. This weight will vary slightly with every gun due to the slight differences in weight of the dense and gloriously figured walnut used in these Grade V guns. The checkering is excellent and the teardrops behind the action denote a high grade gun and are perfectly executed. The pistol grip is only moderately full and quite slim, is good in the hand and contributes greatly to the overall feel.



Superb engraving and model number under the action.

There's no recoil pad, just a nicely-shaped black plastic pad which is typical of English designed field guns to facilitate a good mount in virtually any conditions. The disadvantage of this pad is its total lack of recoil absorption but if the gun fits perfectly as this one did for me, this issue becomes less relevant. I had no recoil fatigue from testing it in a 100+ target session firing almost 120 shells.

Shooting impressions

This gun was designed for driven game shooting and was only available in the UK. It's perfectly balanced over the hinge pin and feels light (even at 8lb) and very quick but stable to shoot. The combination of classic field gun stock dimensions in terms of the unusually low (by today's standards) drop at comb and heel and perfect weight distribution, helped considerably by the light 32" barrels, makes the 'feel' of this Miroku something special.

I had to smile when I took delivery of the gun and saw it had no screw-in chokes, no recoil pad, no adjustable trigger, no adjustable stock or new-fashioned high rib. It's simply a high-grade field gun of the classic form designed and built to be perfection for

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Stock and fore-end: Grade V walnut with satin finish, medium-to-full pistol grip and Schnabel fore-end. Stock dimensions 39mm at comb, 63mm at heel. 1 1/2" and 2 1/2" with minimal cast for right-handers

Weight: 8lb (3.63kg)

Accessories: Instruction manual, plastic Negrini cases of different qualities extra on purchase (ask dealer for prices from about \$150)

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what it's intended. It'll also work exceptionally well for Sporting Clays and be sublime in the field if you're happy to risk taking such a quality gun into the paddocks, hills or duck swamps - I would as the considerable pleasure of using it would outweigh the risk of damage.

I can't recommend this gun too highly for field use or Sporting Clays and competent shots will also enjoy it for casual Skeet where the chokes destroy targets in a way that's hard to describe. You'll probably miss the odd one as I did due to the tighter chokes where reading the target's line becomes as crucial as the lead, but who cares when the bulk of them are turned into black smoke balls?

It's almost 60 years since the late Malcolm Fuller brought Miroku shotguns to Australia in 1963 and his sons John and David continue the tradition to this day.

There are subtle technical inputs and modifications to the various imported models to make them even more suitable to our conditions and give serious shooters every

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The pig jinx

Could a sinister force be at work?

Thomas Tabor

I admit I try to avoid the number 13 whenever possible, seldom walk under a ladder, am a bit wary of black cats and never open an umbrella until I'm outdoors. But even though I confess to not being all that comfortable challenging those long-held prophecies of potential doom, I don't consider myself superstitious. Nevertheless I believe most people would accept the fact that sometimes unusual and unexplained occurrences take place which have little basis in reality - and I believe that's precisely the situation I've faced for decades in one aspect of hunting.

For more than a half a century my adventures have taken me round the world in search of whatever challenges and species those destinations had to offer. Most of those trips turned out to be successful even though they frequently posed their own set of hurdles. But for baffling reasons if the critter I'm chasing has a tendency to oink, squeal or root the ground, I can usually rely on strange occurrences and unforeseen problems hampering my ambition.

Close encounter in NT

Take for example a Northern Territory hunt a few years back with my mate Ian McConnell. We were on our way back to camp with only moments of daylight remaining when we spotted a gnarly old boar at about 200m - I knew I only had a minute or two to pull off the shot before he'd be shrouded in darkness but I felt confident. Steadying my rifle against the trunk of a small tree I squeezed the trigger, fully expecting the pig to drop in its tracks.

Surprisingly it didn't fall but ran to a neighbouring patch of tall grass and disappeared - what began as a routine shot had turned into a potentially dangerous situation. While Ian had brought his pair of Catahoula Leopard dogs with him he'd chosen to leave them in camp for a well-earned break. We discussed the possibility of going back for them but being fairly confident my shot was good I suggested we take a cursory search around the edges of the grass.

This nasty boar would have attacked if it wasn't for Ian McConnell's quick thinking.



Sadly by that time all natural light had gone and the only substitute we had was a small torch Ian carried. With the light held tightly against his rifle, we cautiously moved forward into the grass and within moments I picked up a faint image of what I thought was the pig standing some distance ahead. Yet what I was actually seeing was just a shadow cast by Ian's light, the boar was a mere 4-5m directly in my path, lying in wait with a carefully planned ambush. Luckily Ian had a better view of the situation and with a single shot he finished the job.

It was only when we returned to camp we figured out that Ian's light must have generated a shadow off the pig, projecting that image much further into the distance and that's what I mistook for the real thing. If I'd taken just a couple more steps forward the big boar would surely have attacked and the thought even now sends chills down my spine.

Hawaiian disappearing boar

Another curious encounter occurred on Hawaii's famous Parker Ranch. On that occasion we'd hunted long and hard in search of a shot at one of their feral pigs with no success and hadn't even seen one until late afternoon when we spotted a large boar 50m away on adjacent open hillside. He seemed oblivious to our presence as I took the safety off and brought the rifle to my shoulder, but as quickly as my cross-hairs settled on the boar's shoulder the entire view disappeared as if part of a bizarre magic act.

In an instant and out of nowhere a freak and unexpected fog bank rolled in, totally engulfing our hunting party as well as the pig. It only took moments for the fog to be swept back out but when it did there was no pig and our subsequent search produced nothing. I've no idea where it went or how it could have vanished so quickly but it had. If the rest of our party hadn't witnessed

the situation unfold I'd have likely thought I imagined the whole thing. We ended that hunt like so many others by boarding the plane a few days later to fly home pig-less.

Curse of the Dark Continent

The problems I found myself suffering even accompanied me to Africa. Sometimes they involved encounters with deadly snakes and other peculiar circumstances but all shared the similar theme of pig hunting. Even the somewhat common and typically easy-to-harvest warthog managed to elude me on a couple of safaris until we finally spotted a boar with a fairly nice set of teeth standing broadside at 50-60m.

Without hesitation and obviously without thinking I rested the forearm of my rifle on the truck railing and squeezed off a shot. I expected the pig to collapse on the spot but

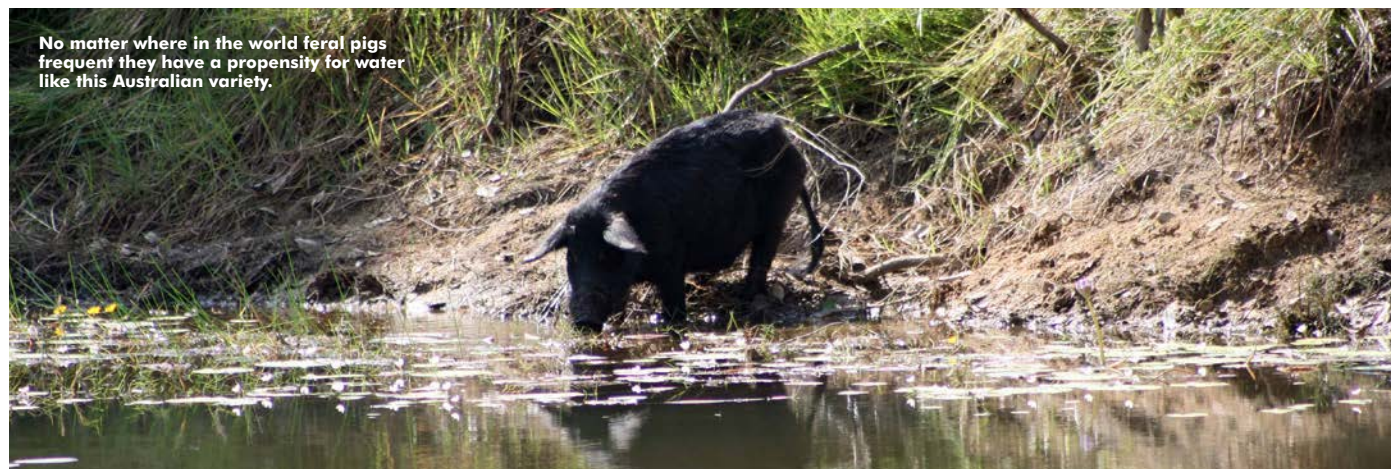
as the report of my rifle died away the only thing remaining where the pig once stood was a wisp of dust, kicked up as a result of the animal's sharp exit. Even though I knew better, by resting my rifle on a hard surface like the truck railing it had clearly resulted in disrupting the natural harmonics of the barrel which drove the bullet off course.

While our accompanying Zulu tracker and skinners didn't speak a word of English I soon discovered laughter sounds exactly the same in any language. Like so many other pig hunting trips I was once again swine-less, this time far from home on the Dark Continent and headed to the airport with nothing to show for my efforts than a belief that something more than coincidence may be at play.

And the Dark Continent had other pig problems in store for me. I'd always



Even African warthogs became part of Thomas' pig traumas.



No matter where in the world feral pigs frequent they have a propensity for water like this Australian variety.

The pig jinx - Could a sinister force be at work?

wanted to lay claim to a bushpig and on a later safari chose to dedicate several days specifically to that. By nature the bushpig is nocturnal and subsequently mostly hunted at night so, in preparation for our own night adventure, we'd gone to a great deal of effort building a camouflage blind on a dike overlooking a corn patch. Pigs were posing dreadful problems for the farmer and he welcomed any assistance we could offer to help stem the damage they were inflicting on his crops.

Not long after dark three of the marauders wandered by and, confident one was the size I was looking for, I squeezed off a perfectly placed shot sending the bullet directly through its lungs. Yet to my shock when we reached the pig it wasn't the huge

boar I envisioned but just a young piglet. Having no other excuse I settled on the notion that due to poor light and nothing to compare pig sizes to, my depth perception must have been messed up. But was that the case or yet another example of more sinister factors at play?

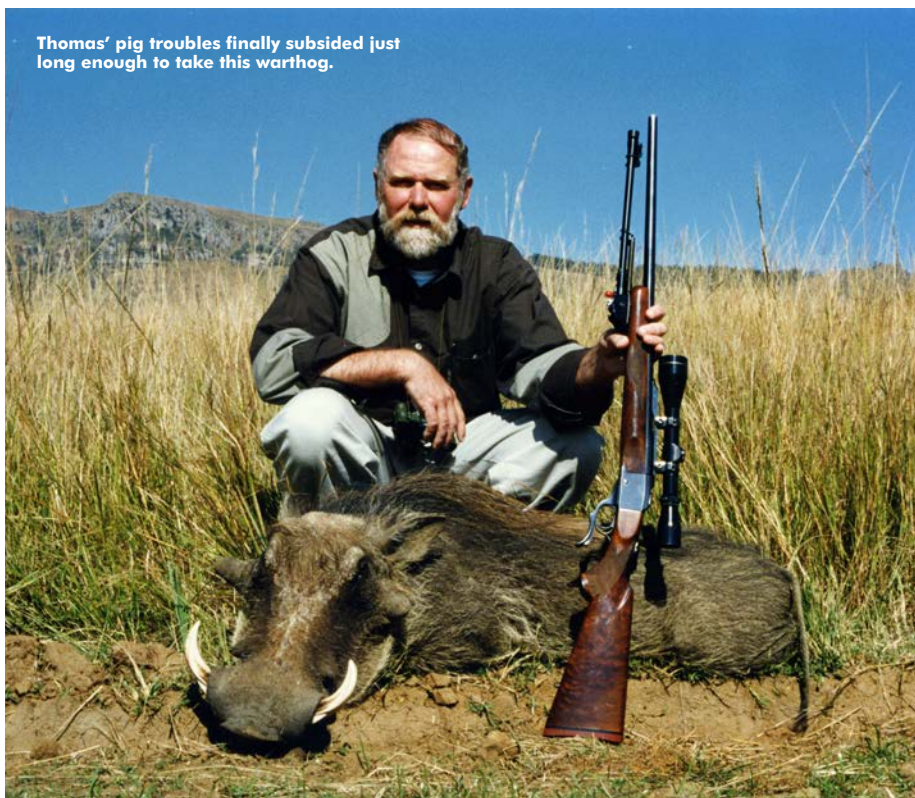
Why pig problems?

Over the years I've taken a few swine varieties, even a warthog eventually. While certainly not a huge tusker it was still a pig and any snorter has become a cherished trophy to me. Pigs have given me more problems than any other animal I've hunted and having chased them in three countries, on a Pacific island and in three US states with only a marginal degree

of success, I've come to the realisation there's maybe more to my difficulties than simply a bout of bad fortune.

As I say, by nature I'm not necessarily superstitious but it's interesting that my pig problems began years ago on my first African safari. In many areas of the Dark Continent the black arts are still practised much as they have been for maybe thousands of years. Most times I'm not a believer of such things but occasionally, after one more than my usual couple of glasses of Scotch, I start wondering if in some remote thatch-roofed hut far from civilisation there might be a doll resembling me with a pin in it. Any logical person would laugh at such a notion . . . but dare I rule out the possibility? ●

Thomas' pig troubles finally subsided just long enough to take this warthog.



While not the huge African warthog Thomas was hoping for, his belief that 'any pig is a good pig' prevailed.



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Bore-sighting

- old technique saves time and money

Bill Fawcett

Sighting-in a new rifle and scope combination offers challenges and while the gunshop may do much of the preliminary work, leaving only a few shots on paper to fine-tune accuracy, that's not always the case. Online or second-hand purchases place the responsibility of sighting-in a new scope on the shooter and the process can be frustrating, expensive or both. The evolution from reticle-moving to image-moving optics means the current generation of telescopic sights can accommodate considerable off-centre movement of the optical path but none of this is apparent in the cross-hairs at the eyepiece end.

The shooter may be unaware of the considerable bending of the light path within the scope's optics and sees only the marked difference between the on-target cross-hairs and the off-target point of impact, a recipe for frustration and wasting ammunition. Accessories such as bore-sights and lasers work well for those who have them but tool-free techniques are

available for preliminary sighting-in.

Bore-sighting is, as the name implies, looking down the bore of a bolt-action rifle to see where the bullet would impact the target. A suitable rest like a sandbag is required because the rifle has to sit firmly but still be movable to find the target. It's an uncomfortable exercise but one worth persevering with. I had to revisit the technique to simplify sighting-in when a friend had a problem with surprisingly inconsistent bullet placement. The rifle was a Tikka, fully bedded and floated and arguably capable of great accuracy. After several shots the cross-hairs fully detached (problem identified) and the scope was sent off for warranty repair.

The scope was repaired and remounted on the Tikka - all too easy in principle but disassembly of the scope inevitably meant loss of original settings and it now had to be sighted-in from scratch. We went to a range for the sighting-in process and it was there I realised the techniques I take for granted are unfamiliar to others, namely reducing

uncertainty by purely optical methods.

Stated another way, this is old news to many shooters but I rarely hear younger or novice shooters discussing the procedure.

There are two ways to bring the optical path in line with the barrel, the first being the only option for lever and self-loading rifles hence safety is vitally important - the rifle must be made safe by eliminating any chance of discharge. Consequently, lever-actions should be opened, magazines and bolts removed and a thorough check conducted to ensure the breech is clear.

It's then theoretically possible to hold a mirror in front of the objective lens, slightly above the barrel, effectively looking back through the scope to the eyepiece to see if the cross-hairs reticle is centred. No apologies here - it is difficult but can show how the position of the cross-hairs may be different when viewed from each end of the scope. If the scope is second-hand, in particular, having formerly been on a rifle with poorly-aligned mounts, the bending of the image path through the

scope may be extreme and throw the point of impact way off target on the first shot.

If this sounds confusing the easiest and safest way to show what's happening in an image-moving scope is to use a camera positioned along the axis of the barrel. This requires a firm mount for the rifle and Bunnings came to the party to achieve this cheaply with off-the-shelf hanging brackets (commercial rifle rests are available but are an expensive accessory for occasional use). The rifle in this demonstration, a CZ 452 in .22LR calibre, was deactivated as described and eased with gentle pressure into the brackets, some bending required to ensure a firm grip.

The camera was mounted on a tripod and positioned at the muzzle end to look back into the objective lens of the telescopic sight. We can note the off-centre cross-hairs at the time of mounting the scope followed by progressive movement towards the centre point with adjustment of the windage screw of the scope.

It's unlikely anyone visits a range with either a camera on a tripod or even a mirror, so the above discussion becomes academic for owners of lever and automatic rifles - the only solution is slow and methodical target shots minimising shake, using progressive trigger pull and allowing time for the barrel to cool between shots. Scope manufacturers show the movement of point of impact with each adjustment of the turret screws but that only applies at 100m or 100yds - sighting-in over shorter distances increases the number of increments to move the point of impact.

I didn't have a mirror or camera at the range so went straight to the second method, namely bore-sighting the Tikka,

a bolt-action rifle. As mentioned, bore-sighting involves sighting through the barrel from the breech end of a bolt-action rifle to the target. It's best not to be too ambitious and distance to the target should be kept to around 30-40m. The barrel appears as a halo around the distant target and effectively creates an aperture sight.

These sights are in use on range and military rifles and there's no doubt a high degree of accuracy can be achieved - the eye is capable of judging the centre point of the halo and alternately lifting the head to look through the scope shows where the cross-hairs need to be shifted.

The technique works well for east-west/windage adjustment but the flat line of sight doesn't allow for descending bullet trajectory under the influence of gravity. Without doubt more fine-tuning will be needed but the saving in ammunition can be significant. In addition, bore-sighting can be done anywhere in complete silence, even before going to the range and will become second nature after a few sessions. Simply put, there are ways to short-cut the sighting-in process, save ammunition and, without doubt, avoid frustration. Old techniques can still work in this more technical age. ●



Camera view looking back through the objective lens from the muzzle showing marked displacement of cross-hairs to the right - but the view from the eyepiece would show them to be centred.

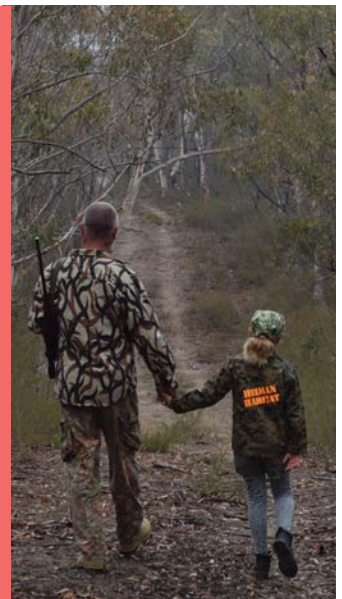


Adjustment of the scope's windage screw shows movement to the left in the images until the cross-hairs are approximately centred. This movement is not apparent from the eyepiece.

AUSTRALIAN WOMEN'S SHOOTER

Issue 12 inside this month's *Australian Shooter* and online now at ssaa.org.au/women

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US unlikely to ever 'do a John Howard'

John Maxwell

Twenty-five years on from the Port Arthur tragedy, some in the US are looking to Australia as an example of how gun laws can be reformed to curtail the soaring number of shootings. This has coincided with US President Joe Biden taking some modest control measures such as cracking down on dealers who supply firearms to criminals.

Across the US violent crime is surging, variously attributed to guns, the COVID-induced economic downturn and polarisation of American society. As the President made his move, numerous media outlets large and small published opinion pieces on the need to do something, anything in the face of gun violence, many citing Australia's experience.

Readers will recall how Prime Minister John Howard responded to the murder of 35 people at Port Arthur with national reforms to firearms laws, specifically the ban on

self-loading rifles. Here's the *Pikes Peak Courier* of June 1: "Great Britain, Canada, Australia and New Zealand acted boldly and it turned the tide on gun deaths. We in the United States do nothing." The *San Antonio Express-News*: "We need to take a lesson from Australia, a nation with a gun ethic very much like ours until 1996."

So is the US ever likely to take a lesson from Australia? Beyond serving as a beacon for the anti-gunners, that would seem unlikely. There are so many guns (estimates put the number at more than 400 million), the positions are intractable and the process too divided for the type of national approach achieved by Howard.

What is significant is the ignorance and misinformation about the Australian situation on both the pro and anti-gun sides in the US. "It's interesting that anti-gunners point to the confiscation of all guns from civilian populations in England and

Australia, but ignore their skyrocketing crime and violence after their governments confiscated guns from their law-abiding citizens," wrote a pro-gun correspondent to the *Pikes Peak Courier*.

Neither the UK or Australia confiscated all guns. Crime and violence certainly didn't increase in Australia post-1996. Relating to the local sheriffs' support for gun rights, an anti-gun correspondent to *The Salt Lake Tribune* commented: "I suspect that statement would be news to gun-free countries such as Ireland, the UK (even London bobbies carry no guns), Australia, Canada, New Zealand etc. Their existence as a free people doesn't seem to be threatened by their strict gun laws."

So which is it, gun-free or strict gun laws? Australia's situation is far more nuanced than either side acknowledges. Gun deaths in Australia were declining before Port Arthur and continued to drop after. More than 700,000 guns were confiscated post-Port Arthur and in the 2003 handgun law reforms but there was no immediate plunge in firearms murders.

More apparent is the absence of mass shootings, defined as five dead excluding the perpetrator. There were 12 in the 15 years before Port Arthur then none until 2018 when a man in WA murdered six family members then shot himself. Yet there have been other mass murders, some involving that most indiscriminate of methods - fire. Fifteen died in the Childers Backpackers fire of 2000, 11 in a Sydney nursing home blaze in 2011 and 10 in an arson attack during Victoria's 2009 Black Saturday bushfires.

The US Gun Violence Archive counted 310 mass shootings this year just to June 29 yet Australians (and most Americans) only hear of the most newsworthy. But every US gun massacre reported here does seem to underline in the minds of many Australians the nation's wisdom in taking the route it did in 1996. After all, Howard said he didn't want Australia heading down the American path.

So what's the current situation? The Australian Institute of Criminology (AIC)



National Homicide Monitoring Program's latest report (for 2018-19) shows 238 murder victims, of whom 35 (18 per cent) died by gunshot while 79 (40 per cent) died by knife or other sharp instruments. In the US around 75 per cent of murder victims die by gunshot.

Anecdotally, a significant portion of current NSW gun crime, and by extension Australia's, appears to be down to two feuding western Sydney crime families. What the US has and Australia doesn't is a constitutional protection of gun ownership. The Second Amendment enshrines the right to possess guns in the following terms: "A well-regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed."

That was ratified in 1791 along with nine other articles of the Bill of Rights. At that time the US had just gained independence from English tyranny with citizen militias playing no small part, yet what seemed a fair thing in 1791 isn't so clear now and the definition and reach of the Second Amendment has been endlessly debated and litigated.

The most recent litigation was the landmark 2008 US Supreme Court case of *District of Columbia v Heller* in which the court decided 5-4 that the Second Amendment protected an individual's right to keep and bear arms. What if a future court decided differently? The Second

Amendment would remain but what would change is its interpretation, which may or may not open the way for comprehensive gun law reform as occurred in Australia.

The key word is comprehensive according to gun control activist Rebecca Peters, spokesperson for the Coalition for Gun Control in the debate about gun law reform following Port Arthur. Howard's approach was comprehensive, achieving (mostly) uniform laws across Australia, covering licensing and registration and banning certain types of firearms for which owners were compensated. Most significantly, he convinced all states and territories to agree - if just one had refused, the National Firearms Agreement wouldn't have been 'national'.

Along with assorted territories and islands the US comprises the District of Columbia (Washington) and 50 states each with its own government, some Democrat and theoretically more amenable to greater controls on guns, some Republican and vehemently opposed to any restrictions, along with some in-between. Right now President Biden would appear to have zip/zero/nil prospects of achieving a national consensus on comprehensive more restrictive gun laws, hence he seems to be doing what he can, initially through a series of executive actions which don't require actual legislation.

He does have ambitions for other restrictions which would require legislation and would be difficult given the divisions in US politics. The biggie would be reinstating the self-loading ban which applied from 1994-2004. That would still be challenging and if successful could grandfather existing firearms, overwhelmingly AR-pattern rifles with high capacity magazines. Least likely could be the complete ban favoured by much of the US anti-gun lobby, essentially going where Australia went in '96 with a scheme for confiscation and compensation.

The very thought of 'gun grabbing' ignites the US lobby like no other issue and implementation would be complex, costly and ineffective in the face of widespread non-compliance. "To get every AR-15 you'd have to be willing to kill some gun owners," observed Stephen Gutowski, a specialist in gun policy and writer at *The Washington Free Beacon*. It surely follows that in any round-up of self-loaders, some police would also die. And even if completely or mostly successful it wouldn't achieve that much - handguns *not* other firearms are responsible for more than 60 per cent of US gun deaths.

"The reality of Australia's gun laws makes implementing them in the US a

fantasy," wrote a correspondent in the *Washington Examiner*, concluding that "any solution to the calamity of gun violence must come not from Down Under but from right here at home."

Some in the US don't see the absence of mass shootings in Australia as an acceptable price for all those guns confiscated. Here's the *AmmoLand* website: "Was this cultural change worth it to Australia? Was making a huge portion of the AU population into criminals worth the cost just for 22 years without a firearm-related mass murder, a run that may have happened without the national buyback, aka confiscation."

It might not be the comprehensive gun control activists would prefer but the US could have better success at saving lives at the edges. Various US studies have highlighted the broad variations in quality of firearms safety training. Many states require those seeking a permit for handgun concealed carry to undertake basic legal and safety instruction, often the only formal training they'll receive. Or not. Moves by more states, most recently Texas, to legalise Constitutional 'permit-less' carry means more Americans will be out and about armed after just a criminal history check and no instruction whatsoever.

Accidents account for around one per cent of US gun deaths but that's still about 500 a year. Americans manage to kill themselves and others through acts of stupidity which can defy belief. Example: the guy who set out to teach his girlfriend gun safety by pointing each of his handguns at his head and asking her: "Will this go off?" Even minimal instruction might have imparted basic safety, starting with: Don't point a gun at anything you're not willing to destroy.

Then there's suicide, which accounts for more than half of all US gun deaths - according to the Gun Violence Archive more than 11,800 so far this year compared with 9800 gun murder victims. Professor David Hemenway of the Harvard School of Public Health outlined promising work in suicide awareness and prevention. "This is one place where there really is common ground and we have gun shops, gun trainers, gun ranges to start doing things to try and reduce suicide," he told the Sydney University Port Arthur 25th anniversary seminar.

"It is really a public health approach. Just as friends don't let friends drive home drunk, if somebody is going through a bad patch - getting a divorce, talking crazy, drinking - it should be your friend's responsibility to, quote, in their words, babysit the gun for a while." ●



Former Prime Minister John Howard.

Hit the target ... after you've built it

Robert D. Moore


Those of us who form part of the benchrest shooting fraternity need targets, so is there a reason why we'd bother to make one? Let's consider the options. From the Eagle Park range shop we can buy a large format wire frame then add a standard-type red and tan/yellow target from one of the many designs available. The start-up format is to hold the target and frame together with clothes pegs which works for little cost. So that's an inexpensive and easy way to start a fun day - just hope it's not too windy.

This article is not about replacing any target which might be designated for use in competitive shooting but about providing a simple and effective alternative. The target in question has been developed over time starting with a 'fix-it' suggestion from one of the wise old heads at SSAA Eagle Park range, that remarkable natural amphitheatre on the northern end of the You Yangs.

We're looking for something which copes with wind and is easy to transport and maintain and, as a starting point, wire frames are great but you need a means of mounting the target to the frame. A backing board is one answer and several types were tried. We found cardboard quickly self-destructs and plywood splinters but a white plastic corrugated sheet works well.

Sheets of 600mm x 900mm are available from Officeworks for about \$8 each and can last for many hundreds of shots while maintaining structural integrity. Cut the sheet in half so the backing board is about 600mm x 450mm as this fits inside the wire frame with a gap. Secure it in the frame by using cable ties and make sure it's offset to one side as this gap works as a carry handle. Use 6mm staples to hold your paper target in place as they're cheap and fast to apply - spread them at 10cm intervals, paying special attention to the corners. Some have tried shade cloth tacks which are useful but can dig holes in the backing board and work themselves loose.

As for the target, normal A4 paper was found to be effective and four sheets held together with sticky tape provides paper of sufficient size. Using a pencil and ruler you



A target 500m higher with guy ropes in use (set up in the garden for photographic purposes only).



At 300m with frame extension.

separation for each group. It follows you may be able to shoot two calibres at a single target, selecting left or right side as needed. For distances below 200m, 12mm black stick-on dots were a success (75mm gaps work well) and I found a sighting point in the middle is ideal for checking your zero. You'll also need a supply of white stick-on dots for repairing the target (and hiding your mistakes). Targets for ranges above 200m are slightly different and usually a single large dot about 50mm diameter in the centre is preferable.

Not wishing to start a war with traditionalists, there's a problem. It's usually without debate that once you need glasses for any reason, the red and yellow/tan colour target is not always easy to live with. The problem is partially how our eyes work as in hunting or indeed any situation, we see because our eyes react to movement and contrast.

A folklore matter relates to camouflage and most game with fur or feathers has colourings which blend into the background. Anecdotal evidence based partially on my sometimes unreliable memory relates to use by the military of a training poster on camouflage. It was found recruits with normal eyesight looking at the poster only saw about half the embedded images while those with colour blindness scored much higher, often seeing all hidden images. Interestingly, some recruits were selected for further special tuition.

The colour of standard targets being orange/tan with red ink can be a problem as there's insufficient difference between the two to see the target clearly at distance. The solution? In tests where contrast has been exploited it was found that by using a white background and black aiming points,

we can use disparity to our advantage. Using cheap and plentiful white paper as a target with black dots works well but let's be honest, if you hit the black aiming point you may not see the hole. It's often best to have your group set perhaps a few millimetres high - your zero will be just a little bit off at whatever range.

Shooting for MOA at 100m is fun but groups past this range add to the challenge, one factor having a large influence on the end result being wind direction and speed. A modest flag was made from a wire coat hanger - a hook on one end with coloured material held via an eyelet on the other works well with the cable ties used to hold the backing board to the frame being one way to mount the flag to the target. Making the top and bottom cable ties on your preferred side of the target just a little less tight makes it easy to mount and hold the flag in place.

We can't expect shooting ranges to have a bowling green texture as the surface takes a beating with vehicle tracks, drainage channels, weeds, plants, animal traffic and gouges left by projectiles all contributing factors. Your range may have minor undulations as an additional challenge and this is the normal condition at Eagle Park along with many hunting locations.

We might wonder if there's an obvious answer to the problem of seeing a target clearly at say 300m. When trying to shoot MOA groups at any distance, firstly you have to see the target clearly and an easy option is to build a taller target but this needs to be easy to erect and dismantle for transport and low cost might be important.

Many of us will have hit and broken the top rung of our target frame but all is not

can draw a 1" grid on the paper so you can choose to position the aiming points you want in places suited to your needs. I found 12mm stick-on black dots are excellent aiming points while a game outline image or traditional bullseye is also effective.

When developing handloads you often need to keep groups separated so you might choose to run dots in vertical lines of aiming points to provide adequate



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Hit the target . . . after you've built it

lost as swift rejigging turns a problem into a solution. Firstly, using a hacksaw cut out the broken rung so your wire frame should now look like a letter H. On standard wire frame the legs are about 250mm long and wire diameter roughly 10mm. Basic arithmetic tells us if we join the legs together we've just raised the height of the target by about 500mm. To do this we need to invert the broken frame, matching it to the normal target but if we reverse the 'H' frame we can use the 530mm leg added to the 250mm leg for a height of 780mm.

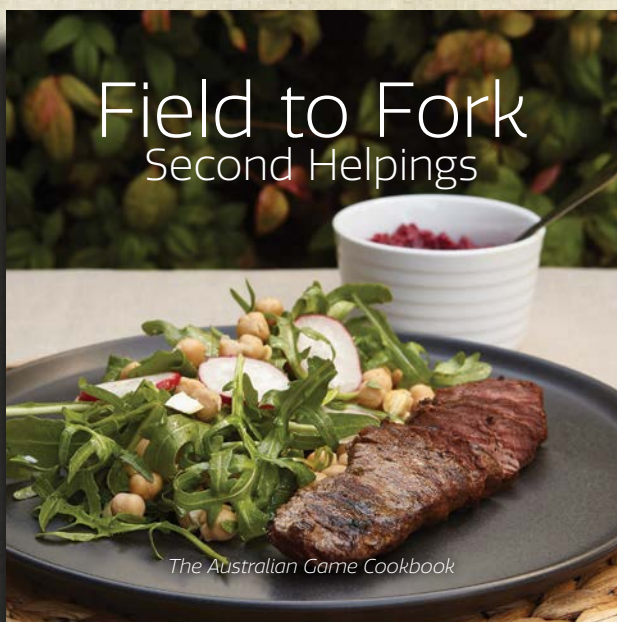
So how do we join the legs? That's a complex poser with a simple answer. Many hardware stores sell a lightweight 16mm steel tube 1m in length, the inside diameter about 14mm. The tops of the wire frame become burred over time after repeated kisses from the hammer until a 10mm frame can easily spread to 12mm or more. To make the target 500mm taller, a single 1m tube cut to 500mm lengths is used. To make a 780mm taller target you need two tubes cut to 780mm then slide the tubes over each of the legs to suit the selected height of your frame, the extended target frame being simple to assemble and disassemble.

At the range with the bottom frame imbedded about 100mm in the soil and the target mounted on top, it's clearly visible

at 400m. On testing, the frame appears to be strong enough to withstand winds of about 50km/h and a couple of guy ropes will provide support for higher wind speeds. Overall this is an obvious and elegant resolution to your target needs but I won't be trying to shoot an MOA at 300-400m in gusting 50km/h winds. No longer a hunter, I don't need that skill as my time is better spent reloading another batch of ammo for another attempt at the perfect score. ●



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The rangefinder is on the right of the unit adjacent to the illuminator and objective lenses.

See the light with night vision pioneers

Con Kapralos

Once the domain of military and law enforcement professionals, night vision technology is no longer limited to the select few with variants such as infrared and thermal imaging advancing in leaps and bounds during the past 10 years. Cutting-edge thermal imaging optics command price tags in the thousands of dollars, but the infrared options are still very affordable for recreational shooters and hunters who've embraced optics such as riflescopes, monoculars and binoculars.

Shenzhen Pard Technology (PARD) is a professional night vision and thermal imaging manufacturer in Shenzhen, China and while they make some high specification night vision electro-optics, they also cater to the recreational bracket and products are exported worldwide with well-established outlets in New Zealand, Europe, the UK and US. Here, PARD Australia is exclusive distributor and already has a sizeable market share, especially when it comes to infrared night vision optics. One of the most recent additions is the NV008P Digital Night Vision (NV) riflescope with integral

Laser Rangefinder (LRF), touted to be big on performance but low on price.

The South Australian Rifle Association store in Dry Creek is an authorised PARD retailer and sent *Australian Shooter* an NV008P LRF scope for review. The unit arrived in a sturdy black carton, zippered storage pouch which also contained scope mounting hardware and information on how to download user manuals and instructional videos. I'm all for online means of accessing information but a printed 'quick-start' manual would've been advantageous and welcome, especially for use in the field or at the range where internet connectivity is unavailable.

Up close

At first glance the unit resembles more a digital camcorder than riflescope and weighing a measly 450 grams, fits in the palm of your hand. There are three main parts, the first being a tube with lenses both front and rear and on/off button to the left. The main button also lets you put the unit to sleep with a single push as it turns off the display, minimising glare from the screen which could spook your quarry. One push of the button means the display is reinstated.

Alongside the on/off button is a small Picatinny rail which lets you attach an additional infrared illuminator if required and directly above the on/off switch, the



Picatinny rail is a series of four buttons which allow operational and setting up of the riflescope, these buttons of a multi-use nature depending on what's required.

The main body of the unit has a built-in 1080p LED display with full colour for daytime use and 1080p night vision mode. The display allows you to see the reticle, inclinometer, elevation angle reading and compass and also displays battery charge, infrared illumination level, Wi-Fi operation status and how long recording has been operational. On the other side of the body are connection ports for USB and HDMI under a protective screw-on cap and towards the front of the unit a manual focus dial for the image sits behind the front lens while to the rear, a display focus dial sharpens up the LCD display image to suit the user.

The device is powered by a single rechargeable 18650 flat-top battery in the top of the body, between the four operation buttons on the left and Laser Rangefinder to the right (the battery compartment is easily accessible and changing the battery is easy). The infrared illuminator is above the main tube and has an adjustable beam, from spot to flood, smoothly adjusted by hand and has three IR power modes. To the right of the main body is the Laser Rangefinder which, with a stated range of 600m, should serve

most requirements at night where a shot between 200-250m is deemed a long one.

Other features include a 6.5x optical magnification and 13x digital zoom function; five profiles for different ammunition or rifles; multiple reticle choice with aimpoint graduations; record in MP4 to internal micro-SD card (not included); recoil rated up to .308 Win calibre; waterproof; Picatinny/Weaver rail mounting system; two-year warranty.

Out and about

Researching the riflescope took several sessions on the internet, making notes on operation of the unit as well as browsing instructional videos. Once all relevant set-up steps were noted, the unit was mounted on a friend's Howa in .223 Remington (with Picatinny rail fitted) and taken to a private club range for sighting-in at 100m.

As expected, initially it was quite fiddly, having to press the right button at the right time but

sighting-in was completed with minimal fuss. As mentioned, a 'quick-start' user guide would have been useful - something to fit in a coat pocket or range bag and give information on how to set up the reticle for point-of-aim. Even so, you can tailor the unit to your requirements, select a reticle of your choice, set brightness and contrast as well as accessing pre-loaded profiles for different ammunition and rifles.

Happily, I can report that as good as the unit is with the 1080p full colour daytime display, the 1080p night vision mode was equally impressive out to 250m with the built-in infrared illuminator. While foxes evaded us, picking up hares or rabbits in the LCD display with the IR illuminator set to its highest level was easily done and we ended up with several for the table. I must mention we used the rifle and scope outfit shooting from a vehicle with traditional spotlight mounted and, once quarry was spotted, the spotlight was turned off and the night vision riflescope deployed. It worked well and I think sitting in a ground blind at night overlooking a productive rabbit warren or fox den would yield results.

In summary

A retail price of \$1929 at time of writing represents superb value to the hunter looking for an affordable yet feature-packed infrared digital night vision riflescope. Its small footprint and light weight make it an excellent choice whether shooting from a vehicle, ground blind or on foot at night. The only minus (if you could call it that) is the lack of a 'quick-start' printed user manual but for the tech-savvy, instructions and videos are easily accessed online. More at info@pardaustralia.com.au ●

Contents of the kit - night vision scope, mounting bracket and data cable.



The unit operates on a single rechargeable 18650 battery which is easy to replace.

The benefits of field camo



Dick Eussen

It was during the mid-1980s I became aware of the value of camouflage hunting garb when I ran into the late Bob Penfold at Jabiru Shopping Centre. Bob was a hunting outfitter who had a concession on Goodparla Station, later to become Stage 3 of Kakadu National Park. He had a habit of always wearing full camo and was often identified as a member of the Army's Norforce team.

Bob was a firm believer in camo and explained how it enabled him to move in much closer on game without being spotted and at that point I'd not given it much thought as my normal bush gear consisted

of khaki/brown/green clothing for concealment. When I hunted in rainforest and in the 'green season' of the wet I wore cast-off Army surplus jungle greens which, along with khaki and brown, were readily available from local military surplus stores.

Still, Bob was a hunting legend and not someone to ignore when it came to advice and hints so it was no surprise that on my next trip to Darwin I went 'Full Monty' and emerged from the surplus shop with a handful of pre-loved Army camouflage clothing (even a ghillie suit), including a camo shoulder holster for my favourite .44 Magnum Ruger Redhawk revolver (in those

days it was legal to hunt with a handgun in the NT). I also held an Armourer's Licence for the purpose of reviewing firearms for magazine articles.

I hunted a lot of buffaloes for the freezer in those days. Asiatic buffaloes are tasty when butchered and hung properly and it saved a lot of money for a few mates and families on buying expensive meat. So here I was somewhere in Arnhem Land with a buddy who reckoned all that camo stuff was nonsense. Maybe he was right but nevertheless I stalked to within eight paces of a trophy bull and shot it behind the ear with the Ruger, dropping it like a

The Full Monty - camo clothing, quad bike and .243 Tikka rifle proved successful in taking a chital deer for the pot.



stone. My mate was impressed but put it down as a fluke until later that day I found myself right among some pigs which had no clue I was part of the mob until I dropped five with the big Magnum loaded with 240-grain Speer bullets.

Days later I stalked across an open anthill-dotted plain and was only five paces from a buffalo cow which could smell me but was unable to pinpoint where I was. She had a calf nearby and was becoming extremely agitated but we were on a pig hunt and I'd no intention of shooting a buffalo with calf. Furthermore, I was armed with a Winchester Model 70 in .243W calibre - not an ideal round for a cranky cow anyway. I was standing behind a 2m termite mound when suddenly the cow charged directly at me and 'dusted' the mound with a solid impact that shook her up. She recovered, as did I, ran to her calf and rushed off into the timber with it.

Does camo work? From experience I'm fully convinced that breaking up solid colour patterns does indeed give hunters some form of 'invisibility'. Animals see in mono and any solid block of colour is easily picked up and identified - but when you break the block into shadowy patterns like camo you become part of the landscape.

A great love of mine is wildlife photography, especially birds, and I used to breed bantam fowl which acted strangely and confused when I wore camo and wouldn't come near me, unlike when I donned solid colours and could pick any of them up at will. I've sat in a hide photographing birds and watched a dingo stroll past as though I was invisible. You can waste all day sitting in a hot blind or shady spot and never see a thing apart from the occasional red-bellied black snake slithering across your boot - as happened to me.

Of course camouflage only works if the hunter remains still and hidden by the ambient light conditions and dappling shadows. I've studied hunting mates when they're walking and any movement is easily spotted but when stationary you're



all but invisible to the naked eye. Yet khaki, green or dark tan also work, especially when hunting under trees casting shadows. Which brings me to patterns as there are many out there to pick from. In the tropical north we have only two seasons - wet and dry - the transition between them being tremendous. For almost half a year we enjoy green mosaic while the other half is akin to drought.

Camouflage clothing is now so popular there are numerous brands on the market as well as military surplus, though some makers must think the whole planet is green and covered in forest. Nothing could

be further from the truth but we do have a choice of patterns to suit all seasons.

But be mindful of the fact it doesn't matter what you wear when a nervous animal becomes aware of your presence and takes to its heels. It makes sense to wear clothing to complement your environment in colours ranging from khaki, greens and browns. Before planning a hunt ensure your clothing matches the seasons of the landscape otherwise, if you wear something which doesn't match the foliage and ground colouring, the game will have the advantage and you'll stand out like the proverbial dog's 'jewels.' ●



Prepare to meet your Match

The new Match round carries the standard Winchester headstamp.

new Winchester ammo looks a winner

Daniel O'Dea

Following recent consultation with competition shooters and clubs in this country, Winchester Australia came up with a new .308 Match round made by Winchester Ammunition in the US to precise Aussie specifications. Review samples were sent to *Australian Shooter* and here's what we found.

The new round starts with a mil-spec non-polished annealed brass case and match grade primer. Although quoted as a Mil-spec case I believe this refers to the grade of brass and annealing as, on inspection, the case doesn't have the military features which would otherwise be undesirable for Match or Target ammunition, such as a heavy projectile crimp, primer crimp or primer sealant.

The cases are single flash hole (Boxer primed) and the lack of a military primer crimp is beneficial to ease of reloading if desired. Weighing fired cases showed minimal variance in case weight, on average less than 0.5g which would indicate tight tolerances in manufacture and consistent internal volume. For would-be reloaders this is excellent brass. Projectile is the Berger 155.5gr hollow-point boat-tail fullbore target rifle bullet of .30 calibre as a .308 round and has a sectional density of 0.234, overall length of 1.226", a G1 ballistic coefficient of 0.473 and G7 BC of 0.242.

To quote straight from the Berger website: "Berger 155.5 grain fullbore target rifle bullets are often used by competitive shooters who seek the highest accuracy possible. Fullbore target rifle bullets are often used beyond mid-range distances out beyond 600 yards. The 155.5-grain fullbore rifle bullet was designed specifically for use in today's Palma rifle applications for international competitions

at distances out to 1000 yards. Berger fullbore target rifle bullets are match-grade quality and utilise a tangent ogive rifle bullet design which makes these very easy to load, tune and shoot. Highly accurate, the boat-tail target uses J4 Precision rifle bullet jackets for construction. J4 Precision Jackets have a Total Indicated Runout (TIR) of +/- .0001 and extremely tight manufacturing tolerances."

The 155.5gr Berger sits atop a charge of approximately 47.5gr of a special factory recipe ball powder which, based purely on my speculation, is most likely burning somewhere between Winchester 748 and Winchester 760 to develop the quoted velocity of 2910 feet per second at the muzzle. One of the stated aims after initial consultation in Australia was a target velocity of 3000fps. The ballistics data table printed on the packaging quotes muzzle velocity of 2910fps but there's no mention of barrel length.

In testing, which included extensive work over the chronograph with my Remington 700 Police with 26" barrel fitted with a GCPD muzzle brake, average velocity was somewhat short of this at a still-healthy 2795fps. Switching to a borrowed Neilsen MN600XL fullbore target rifle sporting a 30.25" barrel, velocity regularly cracked the magic 3000fps with overall average a tad under at 2995fps, so it's bang on for velocity in such target rifles.

More importantly, Extreme Spread (ES) and Standard Deviation (SD) was a reasonable 54fps and 17.5fps respectively, with 80 per cent of measured rounds falling within a 27fps for ES and 11.6fps for SD. These factors are as relevant in long-range shooting as measured accuracy alone, as at long distance variances in velocities can

potentially have as much or more influence in point of impact as relative accuracy measured in MOA.

And speaking of accuracy, I've always been impressed by the old Winchester Palma Match 155gr loading which never disappointed in my Remington or pretty much any .308 rifle I tried it in during numerous reviews. So I wasn't surprised to see pictures of tight groups from Winchester showing three 10-round clusters shot with a factory test-barrelled receiver using the new 155.5gr Berger fullbore ammo, overall average for the groups just 0.43 MOA. In my Remington I



Evolution of fullbore .30 calibre ammunition. From left: Original surplus 7.62mm F4 ball, Winchester 155gr Palma Match and now Winchester 155.5gr Berger fullbore.



Base components: Mil-spec annealed case, Berger Match grade projectile and Winchester (factory recipe) ball propellant.

came close to that, with ½ MOA five-round groups not uncommon, these shot off a bench using a Caldwell Lead Sled. And at 300m I shot some scaled F-Class practice targets and groups on those were also well under MOA.

One point worth mentioning is that although this new Winchester Match ammunition meets SAAMI (Sporting Arms and Ammunition Manufacturers Institute) standards for the .308 Winchester cartridge with respect to chamber pressure, to maximise accuracy potential it's loaded beyond the overall length recommended by SAAMI. As a result, these longer than normal .308 Winchester rounds may not fit all magazines. For example, they were too long for the Wyatt system as fitted to my Remington 700, nor would they fit in some 10-round M14-type magazines I had to hand. But I also had an AICS pattern magazine and the rounds fitted in that one fine.

I'd note that my AICS pattern mag was of a type with no binder plate which does allow for a little extra Cartridge Overall Length (COAL). Of course the intended market for this ammunition is target rifle disciplines such as fullbore and F-Class which generally call for slow

fire, single-loading and most often in single-shot rifles, so magazine compatibility is really of no concern over improved accuracy for this market. For the record, cartridge overall length is 2.920" where the SAAMI standard for the .308 Winchester is 2.810".

All in all I'd say Winchester should be on a winner with this new round for those who shoot fullbore, F-Class and similar disciplines using a .308 Winchester rifle. My testing proved it to be accurate and consistent and in long-range target sport competition, repeatable accuracy is exactly what you're after. ●

Specifications:

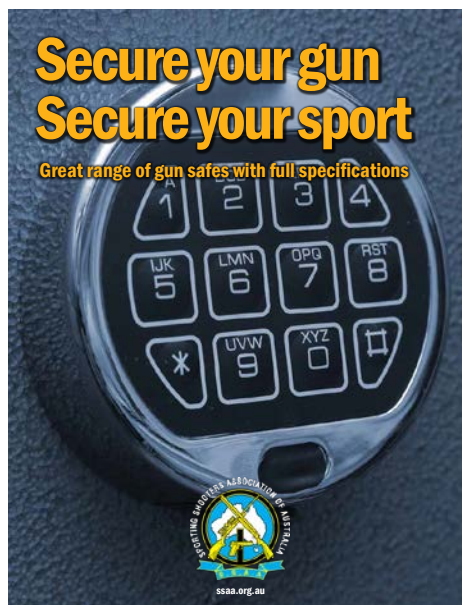
Ammunition: .308 Winchester Match
Projectile: Berger fullbore
Weight: 155.5gr
Bullet diameter: 0.308
Bullet type: Hollow-point boat-tail (HPBT)
Muzzle velocity: 2910fps (quoted)
Ballistic coefficient: 473 (G1)
Ballistic coefficient: .242 (G7)
Sectional density: .234
Bullet length: 1.226"
Ogive style: Tangent
Jacket: J4 target jacket
Case: Match grade Mil-spec brass
Propellant: Winchester ball
COAL: 2.920"
Price: Check with your dealer



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ssaa.org.au/publications/secure-your-gun-secure-your-sport

Desire to hunt nothing more than an inbuilt instinct

David Hughes

We of the hunting fraternity are acutely aware of the antagonistic trend in some parts of modern society towards our chosen recreation. We hear that hunting's an unnecessary anachronism or that we're a mob of moral misfits, we feel unfairly treated and are put on the defensive. So are we really getting the rough end of the pineapple or are we actually weirdos?

My case argues the urge to hunt arises from deep-seated natural instincts and, according to this premise, the desire to hunt, fish and gather our own food represents the 'norm', while the burgeoning proportion of urban dwellers - more than ever removed from the forces of nature - are the ones with the 'unnatural' perspective.

According to the current view of anthropologists, our tribe (modern *Homo sapiens*) originated in Africa and started spreading across the globe something like 100,000 years ago - people then were totally hunter-gatherers. The transition to more a sedentary lifestyle based on agriculture and animal husbandry arrived around 10,000 years ago in the 'fertile crescent' between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers (in what we now call the Middle East). The first cities, built on the productivity of agriculture, emerged and gradually spread, yet some hunter-gatherer societies persisted until the modern era. The salient point here is that humanity has been dependent on hunting for more than 90 per cent of its history since the diaspora from Africa.



The instinct for hunting adventures in wild places has drawn David deep into the NZ Alps in pursuit of tahr and chamois.



Hunting requires people to understand the signs and habits of their quarry. Tracks reveal the presence of fallow deer in the state forest north of Melbourne.

The process of evolution favours attributes which enhance survival. Given our history was one of a successful meat-eating predator, it logically follows our instincts and associated genetics were continuously fine-tuned by evolution to support that role. The more deeply embedded the hunting instinct, the more effective men would've been in securing their core food source. Of course other attributes would've been synergistic and critical, particularly the ability to work cooperatively to hunt prey much larger than humans.

If 100,000 years of evolution of the hunting instinct doesn't sound convincing enough, we can reach much further back in time to reinforce the hypothesis. The hunting forebears of modern man left ample records in rocks dating back millions of years. *Homo erectus* was likely a direct ancestor of modern humans and learned to use fire for cooking prey secured with the help of finely-made stone tools. Thanks to the story told by fossils, we can readily confirm an existence based on hunting has been in our DNA for millennia beyond imagination. If there really is an innate drive to hunt, it should be still fairly evident in the population - despite 10,000 years or so of a non-hunter-gatherer lifestyle.

So where's the evidence for the persistence of such an urge? A quick look on the web yields reports from reputable sources showing there were about 800,000 licensed shooters Australia-wide in 2016, representing roughly 6.2 per cent of households, while in 2017 it was estimated three million people engaged annually in recreational fishing in this country. In rough and ready terms this means at any given time, around four million Aussies may feel inclined to head outdoors to pursue animals for food.

On any reckoning that represents a fair reinforcement of the proposition an innate hunter-gatherer drive is alive and well - a quiet and unassuming bunch perhaps, but a big one. Compare that with a scant 54,000-odd members of the Australian Labor Party and 80,000 for their Liberal counterparts and imagine if the power of hunter-gatherers could be aligned for political purposes - it would be irrepressible.

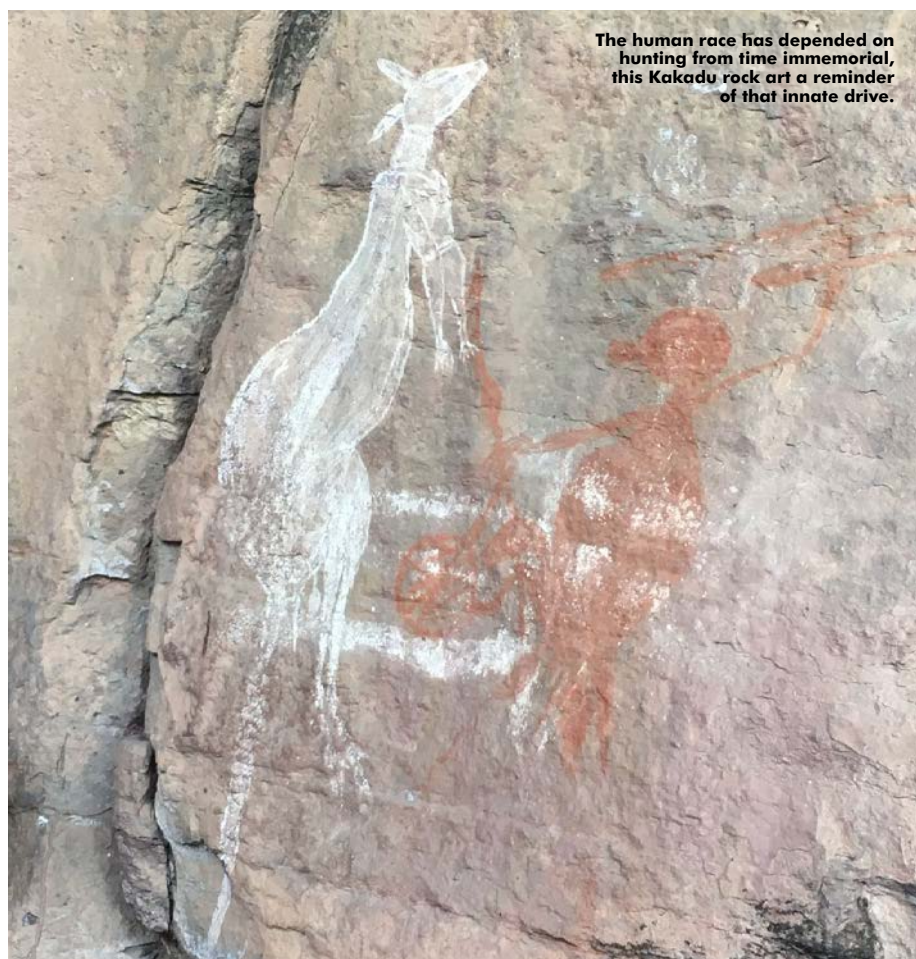
But even if we prevail with the arguments outlined above regarding validity of the hunting instinct, we haven't necessarily won the day. Critics may then run the line that while understandable, this primeval urge to connect with nature is irrelevant and unnecessary in modern society and a mere indulgence which should be quelled

and ultimately discarded. This couldn't be further from the truth as the reality is there for all to see. If we look around us, many problems besetting the world stem from people being 'apart from nature' rather than 'a part of nature'. Instincts which keep modern humankind closer to their roots should be preserved and nurtured for future generations - respect for the environment is a central tenet for those who derive their sustenance from the land.

Evidence that being divorced from nature leads to bad outcomes is staring us in the face. Unsustainable exploitation of natural resources and contamination of the environment with man-made substances are probably the biggest challenges facing us as a species. Commercial overfishing depletes the stocks of the sea, pest species introduced by humans ruin the balance of ecosystems and the very air we breathe is changing because of the excessive man-made generation of carbon dioxide.

Another argument trotted out by critics of hunting (beyond it being irrelevant and unnecessary) is our recreation is cruel and contrary to the 'rights' of animals. This 'reasoning' doesn't stand up to logical analysis, rather such thinking stems from emotional, not rational roots. The term

Desire to hunt nothing more than an inbuilt instinct



The human race has depended on hunting from time immemorial, this Kakadu rock art a reminder of that innate drive.



If emotion is removed, a hunting memento seems as beautiful as any work of art produced by human hand.

‘anthropomorphism’ means attributing human emotions and characteristics to non-human things. We all feel and understand this tendency but having been endowed with the intellectual power to distinguish between feelings and facts, it’s depressing to see how many people fail to do so.

We seem to live in an ever-more-crazy world in which the worthiness of an animal is determined by how cute (appealing to human emotion) it looks. Hence we see great outpourings of angst at the plight of pangolins, pandas and koalas yet nary a blip at the disappearance of some worm, bird, bat or lizard. Emotional thinking is not a platform for practical conservation. Hunting and conservation can work together because if you remove emotional overtones, the lives of pests such as rabbits, deer, camels, donkeys and foxes don’t matter as much as those of the native species whose very existence is threatened by these pests.

Another emotionally-driven criticism of hunters you’ll hear is ‘I don’t understand how a hunter can say something is beautiful then kill it’. The inference in such judgmental statements is hunters are

infected by a warped psychology, yet if you consider that killing animals is part of our DNA and that emotionalism about the act of killing is misplaced, it becomes clear the problem is with the utterer of the claim rather than the hunter.

Ecologists have for years used the principle of ‘sustainable crop’ in setting viable harvest levels for fish, kangaroos, abalone and ducks. The concept recognises that nature produces many more offspring than can be supported by the environment, and removal of the excess by humans causes no harm to long-term survival of the species. The excess is doomed by nature to face a painful death by predation, disease or starvation, yet the anti-hunting brigade, pumped full of unrecognised anthropomorphic zeal, claims any killing is wrong and the cuter an animal is, the more worthy it is of preservation.

People set their own boundaries around when killing is acceptable and when it’s not. Slaughtering domestic stock for food is acceptable to many, spraying mosquitoes or flies is fine by most and killing bacteria with antibiotics to stop sickness is okay for practically everyone. The point is, all these

complex organisms are the sophisticated product of hundreds of millions of years of evolution and all have the same intrinsic ‘right to exist’. Yet many people seem unwilling to examine the basis of their own belief set and being prepared to acknowledge that others seeing the world differently are not ‘wrong’ - just different. And what’s more, responsible hunters are simply minding their own perfectly legal business.

The hunting fraternity should stand tall, confident in the legitimacy of their recreation as it’s abundantly clear the majority of humankind has been dependent on hunting from time immemorial. It’s a logical and understandable proposition that hunter-gatherer instincts are embedded in our history and character. The ever-increasing proportion of society who live in cloistered urban environments, isolated from nature and their own instincts, represent a real challenge to evidence-based conservation and sustainable harvest by hunters. Educating the non-hunting public on the core issues and basic facts is something we can all strive for because increasingly, the viability of our recreation may depend on it. ●

My gradual return to the wonderful world of firearms

Leslie Cachia

Let's start with a little bit about me. I was born in 1958 in Malta and grew up among the memorabilia of World War Two leftovers. Plenty of households used the base of anti-aircraft shells as ashtrays, my playground consisted of the RAF airfield, an old Sherman tank and ancient ruins and occasionally I'd hear of another sea mine which had broken its anchor and surfaced in the Grand Harbour.

I remember going out with my grandfather while he shot rabbits, then spitting out the pellets during dinner that night. I never really liked the taste of rabbits - I wanted to shoot them, not eat them. In my mind I can still see my grandfather silhouetted against the dusk light on top of a hill, firing

his shotgun and seeing his body absorb the recoil then watch the flames leap out of the muzzle. I guess I acted as the dog as I had to go and retrieve the rabbits and while I vaguely remember him shooting birds I can't recall eating them. Several times during our outings he'd raise the shotgun and shoot in the air - I assume he aimed at ducks or was maybe having a throwback to his time in World War One.

The shotgun was a beautiful side-by-side 12-gauge with pull back hammers and engraved throughout the receiver. My father brought it with us when we became £10 immigrants as Australia opened its doors to all Commonwealth countries. I spent years admiring that shotgun but never had a chance to use it as my father panicked and handed it in during the first gun amnesty. There was more sentimental value to it than anything else.

It was during many of these outings we'd walk up to the old Sherman tank. I figured later in life that he purposely took me there, as he told my mum I always had a big grin on my face. That was for the first eight years of my life. Jump ahead five years and I bought my first slug gun, four years later I had a Stirling .22 self-loader and four years after that a Remington 222 Mohawk.

Most of those were sold and bought to buy the next one and fast-forward another 12 years and I owned a 357m revolver, 45 Auto and had spent a bit of time pistol shooting at Victorian Prisons Practical Pistol Club (VPPPC). Then the kids came along and it

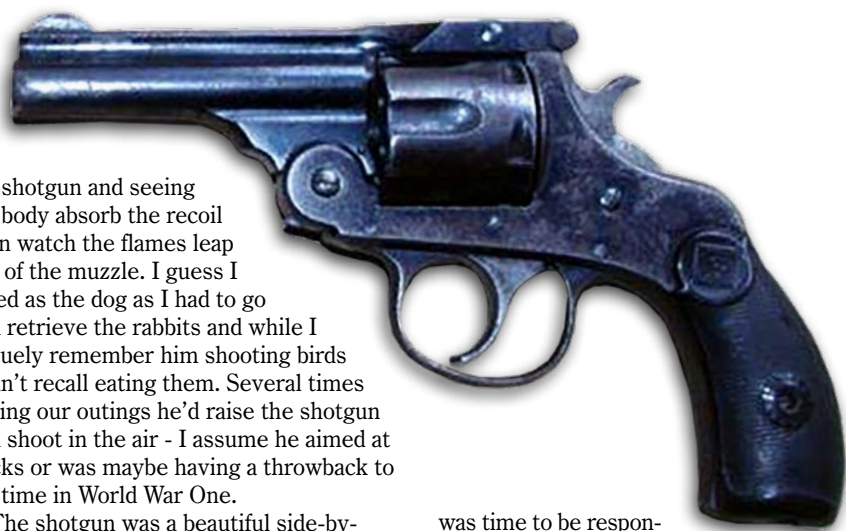
was time to be responsible as a father.

The purchase of the 45 Auto was quite simple compared to today. I remember seeing a 45 Auto in a shop called Cobb & Co on Riversdale Road next to the Warragul Road intersection in Canterbury, Victoria. The owner said all I needed was a collector's licence and I could buy it so I became a member of a collector's club and soon after was the proud owner of my first pistol.

I was really expecting the gun to be not functioning or decommissioned but even so I bought some rounds of ammunition and later joined the VPPPC and started competition shooting, followed by using reloading equipment with a Simplex press and case cleaner. I look back on that now and realise how little I knew and how lucky I was not to have the pistol blow up in my hand. I had a great time shooting at the club until unfortunately the land we were using (Epping Tip) was sold and the club disbanded. The remaining members now shoot at Bendigo.



Leslie's first foray into collecting - an H&R 38 British Bulldog and 32 H&R S&W long.



A Sunday afternoon job of cleaning and sorting brass.

My gradual return to the wonderful world of firearms

Skip to October 2017 and as the furore erupted over the Adler shotgun I decided to visit my local gunshop and ask a few questions just to satisfy my curiosity. I ended up walking out with an Adler lever-action on layby then re-applied for my licence. As it was being processed I started going to other gunshops just to look around, at least that's what I kept telling myself, but the bug took hold and just one month later I had the Norinco 22 and Remington 223.

After asking a few more questions in shops, to friends and online I found out about the military rifle club at Little River Eagle Park Branch of SSAA. Since military rifles were in my blood I started buying other rifles and once I found out the sort of competitions run at the club, it didn't take long to scratch that itch. The club ran the normal practice every weekend, namely 3P with military rifles, but what truly interested me was they also ran competitions of different military rifles from WW1 and WW2 (from both sides).

The Military Rifle Club has themed shoots once a month featuring Japanese, Swedish, Gallipoli, Martini-Henry, Italian, Long Tan, Anzac, Carbine, Bayonet and WW1 rifles, most of them Category B or with a bayonet attached. So I now have a 1944 Mosin Nagant, MK 1 303, P14 303, 6.5x55 Swedish, Type 38 6.5x50 Japanese (battlefield pick-up), Carcano 6.5x52, 308 M98 Mauser, M98 8mm-06 Mauser, 303

Enfield-Martini and 30-06 Belgium Mauser.

One Sunday a month is spent at Little River practising for competitions and entering them, with ammo development thrown in. I haven't won any yet but will eventually. But I wasn't finished. Yes, you guessed it, there was more debt on the credit card and now I was set up with reloading equipment. It'll be fun they said, make your own bullets, you'll have a great time. No one told me I'd have months ahead of ammo development with much trial and error, not to mention entering competitions. Luckily a friend has a large property in the country so I have the chance to try a few things once I set up my hi-tech shooting table, rifle stand, spotting scope and gum boots.

But it didn't stop there and, as I grew up watching John Wayne aka The Duke tame

the Wild West and win WW2, I had to have a Winchester lever-action, 22 Magnum, 30-30 M94 and I think a good find, a 44-40 M1892. Next came my membership to antique firearms, 38 British Bulldog, H&R 32 S&W long revolver and recently I bought an H&R seven-shot .22 calibre revolver and 17 HMR (I already had the rounds so had to snare a rifle).

Of course now that I have more than 15 rifles I need to store them in a secure location, which means an alarmed vault. So after buying a MIG welder, Argon gas and lots of 50x50 SHS, 5mm sheet plate and locks, I decided to design my own locking mechanism. I started to weld up a vault in my shipping container (after I bought one) and while the work has come to a temporary halt, I'm sure my newly-reignited passion for firearms will power on regardless. ●

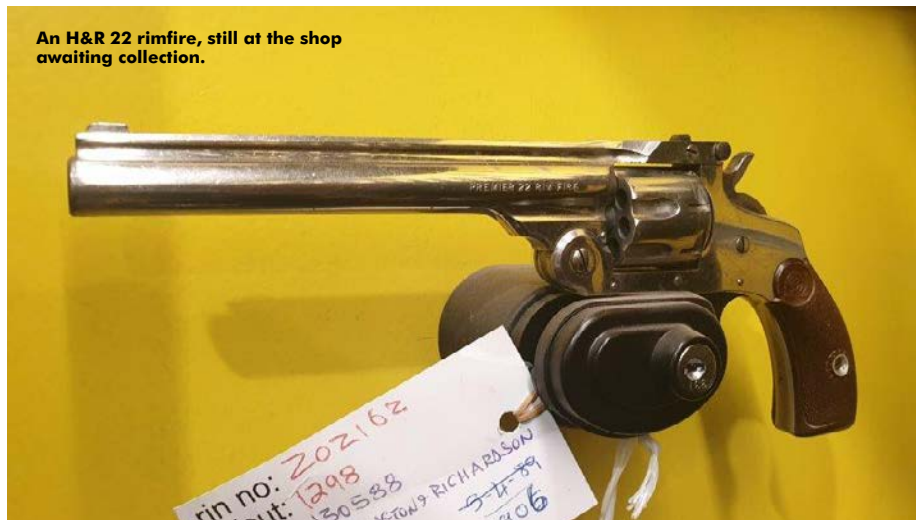
Leslie's ever-expanding gun rack.



Set-up of Leslie's gear at SSAA Eagle Park Range, which almost needs a trailer to bring half the vault.



An H&R 22 rimfire, still at the shop awaiting collection.





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National

Big Game Rifle National Postal Shoot

Jan 1-Nov 30, 2021
Participating Big Game Rifle clubs
See National website for event details.
Contact shoot captain at your local club.

National Junior Rimfire Field Rifle Postal Championships

June 1-October 31, 2021
All clubs and branches.
See National website for event details.
Contact: juniorsports@disciplines.ssaa.org.au

Combined Services National Postal Shoot

June 1-Sept 19, 2021
All host clubs
See National website for event details.
Contact: Steve Knight 0428 876 991.

Rifle Metallic Silhouette National Rimfire Postal Competition

June 1-November 30, 2021
See National website for event details.
Contact: Kathy Tobler toblerkathy@gmail.com

Muzzle Loading National Postal Match

July 1-Nov 30, 2021
All participating clubs.
See National website for event details.

Benchrest Score National Championships

CANCELLED
September 3-7, 2021
Dairyville Range, Coffs Harbour, WA
See National website for event details.
Contact: Ray Munro 0408 649 126 or email: r.munro@internode.on.net

Sporting Clays National Championships

CANCELLED
September 11-12, 2021
Shepparton, Victoria
See National website for event details.
Contact: Brett Chambellant 0407 153 300.

5-Stand National Championships

CANCELLED
September 18-19, 2021
Shepparton, Victoria
See National website for event details.
Contact: Brett Chambellant, 0407 153 300.

Benchrest IRB and Rimfire Group National Championship

CANCELLED
September 30-October 4, 2021
Springsure Sporting Shooters, Qld
See National website for event details.
Contact: Gavin Marshal 0438 759 162.

SSAA Combined Services National Championships

CANCELLED
October 1-3, 2021
Central Qld Shooting Complex, Gladstone, Qld
See National website for event details.
Contact: Shayne Smith: 0418 808 817.

IHMSA National Championships

CANCELLED
October 1-8, 2021
Majura Shooting Complex, ACT
See National website for event details.
Contact: Russell Mowles handgungsilhouette@disciplines.ssaa.org.au or Cheyne Fischer ihmsa.act@gmail.com

SSAA Lever Action National Championships

CANCELLED
October 2-4, 2021
SSAA Alice Springs
See National website for event details.
Contact: Brian Knappstein president@ssaaalicesprings.com.au

SSAA Action Match National Championships

CANCELLED
October 9-10, 2021
SSAA Bundaberg, Qld
Program: See National website for event details. Contact: actionmatch@disciplines.ssaa.org.au

Law Enforcement Activities Police Service Match National Championship

CANCELLED
October 9-10, 2021
Belmont Shooting Range, Qld
See National website for event details.
Contact: lawenforcementactivities@ssaa.org.au

SSAA Lever Action Silhouette National Championships

CANCELLED
October 28-31, 2021
SSAA Majura Range, ACT
See National website for event details.
Contact: David 0423 043 663 or Mark 0401 867 839 or email mn11@live.com.au

SSAA Long Range Precision National Championships

CANCELLED
October 30-31, 2021
Captains Mountain Range, Queensland
Program: See National website for event details. Contact: luna@ssaaqld.org.au

NSW

NSW Combined Services State Championships

September 17-19, 2021
Windamere Regional Shooting Complex
See National website for event details.
Contact: Anthony Gatti info@nswcsd.com.au or 0499 987 899.

Qld

SSAA (Qld) Law Enforcement Activities Police Service Match

October 9-10, 2021
Belmont Range, Queensland
Program: This is an amended Covid-restricted Registered Match. See National website for event details.
Contact: lawenforcementactivities@disciplines.ssaa.org.au

SA

SSAA (SA) Rifle Metallic Silhouette Air and Rimfire State Championships

September 11-12, 2021
SSAA Moonta, SA
Program: See National website for event details. Contact: 0439 837 703.

SSAA (SA) Gallery Rifle State Championships

September 18-19, 2021
Para Range, Greenwith, SA
Program: See National website for event details. Contact: Dave McCarthy atm3855@yahoo.com.au

SSAA (SA) Field Rifle, 3P, Scoped, NRA State Championships

September 25-26, 2021
Para Range, Greenwith, SA
Program: See National website for event details. Contact: Paul Rawlings 0403 436 905.

WA

SSAA (WA) Tower State Championships

September 19, 2021
Wanneroo Shooting Complex, WA
Program: See National website for event details. Contact: Neil Cobb 0404 040 357 or neilcobb@bigpond.com

SSAA (WA) Centrefire Benchrest State Championships

September 19-27, 2021
Jarrahdale Sporting Shooters, WA
Program: See National website for event details. Contact: Trevor 0417 085 528 benchrestwa@inet.net.au or Dave 0400 205 892 benchrest@jarrahdaleshooters.org.au

SSAA (WA) Scoped 3P & Field Rifle State Championships

September 25-27, 2021
Wanneroo Shooting Complex, Pinjar, WA
See National website for event details.
Contact: Matt 0439 092 686.

SSAA (WA) Practical Handgun State Championships

November 6-7, 2021
Boulder Branch, Egan St, Kalgoorlie
Program: See National website for event details. Contact: Steve Genovese 0437 442 884, Paul Fitzgerald 0407 773 286 or Shane Livingstone 0409 596 959.

Tas

SSAA (Tas) HMS Small Bore State Championships

September 25-26, 2021
Oakdale Pistol Club, Tasmania
Program: See National website for event details. Contact: codyabel@spin.net.au

SSAA (Tas) Single Action State Championships

November 27-28, 2021
Westbury Shooting Club, Tas
See National website for event details.
Contact: Steve Collins 0428 631 322.

SSAA (Tas) HMS Big Bore State Championships

November 27-28, 2021
Oakdale Pistol Club, Tasmania
Program: See National website for event details. Contact: codyabel@spin.net.au

SSAA (Tas) Handgun Metallic Silhouette State Championships

November 27-28, 2021
Oakdale Pistol Club, Tasmania
Program: See National website for event details. Contact: codyabel@spin.net.au

SSAA National Event Cancellation/Postponement Policy

SSAA National championship events may be subject to border controls and other COVID-19 impacts. In addition to general border closures, many states and territories may prohibit persons from known COVID hotspots. An event may be postponed or cancelled at any time by SSAA National, SSAA State Office or club directive. It is recommended competitors consider any potential COVID-19 impacts on travel, accommodation plans and insurances etc. SSAA National will not be liable for reimbursement to competitors for any costs associated with a postponed or cancelled SSAA National championship event for any reason, including COVID-19. Competitors planning to attend an event should consider options for free cancellation or refund of travel and accommodation costs where available.

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mail@hartmann.net.au

The 22nd Annual HUNTER VALLEY ARMS FAIR

Modern & Antique Firearms
Militaria Collectables

Federation Centre Basketball Stadium,
10 Bent Street, Maitland, NSW

Was scheduled for
Sat 18th 9-4:30 & Sun 19th 9-3:30
SEPTEMBER 2021

CANCELLED DUE TO COVID-19

For updates, visit
huntervalleyarmsfair.com

SSAA Member Alert

Please be aware that state and territory police firearms registries regularly cross-check firearm licences and your member status. To support your genuine reason and keep your firearms licence and to make sure that SSAA can support you, make sure you renew your SSAA membership.

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300+ tables

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You can't buy this mug, no matter the size of your wallet. So if you want your shot of coffee in the SSAA Best Shots mug, you better get your entry in for your chance to win one! SSAA members only.

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Sign up a JUNIOR

SSAA National's 'Sign up a Junior' campaign was launched to help introduce youngsters to recreational shooting. Juniors are essential to the ongoing strength and vitality of the SSAA and we are seeking your support to protect and ensure the future of the shooting sports in Australia.

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Shop now for exclusive SSAA products, including clothing, camping, accessories, knives, books and more.



Digi Camo Shirts long-sleeve shirts.

Look smart and feel comfortable with the new SSAA Digi Camo polo shirt with brown tones and a stylish digital camouflage design. Featuring a variety of SSAA logos, the shirt is made of 100 per cent Polyester and has a UPF rating of 30+, blocking out 97 per cent of UVA and UVB rays.

\$54.95



SSAA Softshell Vest

Our SSAA Softshell Vest is water resistant and made from 100 percent polyester mechanic stretch fabric and comes with comfy microfleece on the inside to keep you warm.

\$64.95



SSAA Multi Tool

The SSAA Multi Tool, with stainless steel handles, comes with 11 functional tools in one handy unit.

\$39.95



SSAA Magnum Shooting Glasses

Comes with three interchangeable lenses, visit our online shop for all the details.

\$49.95



SSAA Traditional logo belt buckle

The SSAA Traditional Logo Pewter Belt Buckle measures approximately 8cm x 6cm, comes with protective pouch and Care Instructions – just add your favourite belt!

\$39.95



SSAA Buffwear

Look stylish in the great outdoors with one of the new SSAA Buffwear which come in five great options – Iron Bark, Bullet, Coloured Leaf, Distressed Leaf and Oz Flag.

Perfect for men and women alike, the SSAA Buffwear can be worn in a multitude of ways and comes complete with a cheat sheet to show you a dozen different options to get the most out of yours.

\$15.95



Trigga the Koala

Trigga measures 32cm in length, is fully machine washable and is made from 100 per cent polyester fibre.

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SSAA outdoors bag

- * Material made from waterproof 430gs, Ripstop Polyester canvas
- * Hard base sewn between bottom layers of canvas
- * 50mm adjustable shoulder strap
- * Front, rear and side pockets for essential items
- * High visibility reflective strip on front flap
- * Side footwear storage pocket

\$74

See more online!



SSAA beanies

Keep your head and ears warm with SSAA Beanies!

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Glow-in-the-dark fishing knives

When you are on the water instead of in the bush, you can't go wrong with the new SSAA SICUT Fishing Knife Pack, with glow in the dark knife handles!

The SICUT Fishing Knife Pack is designed in Australia for use in Australia's harsh conditions. The SICUT Fishing Knife Pack comes with a heavy-duty, four-pocket canvas wrap and contains:

- Pull sharpener, which is ergonomically designed to keep your knives sharp
- 6" curved boning knife, with glow-in-the-dark knife handle
- 8" semi flex curved fillet knife, with glow-in-the-dark knife handle
- 12" slicing knife, with glow-in-the-dark knife handle

\$124.95

See full details online

Hot new items!



SSAA Sports Umbrella

The automatic opening SSAA Sports Umbrella has eight strong 190T showerproof polyester panels and eight windproof 76cm ribs. It has a fiberglass shaft with a soft EVA hand grip.

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OUTBACK SURVIVAL by Bob Cooper

Outback Survival covers what you need to do, and how, to survive in the great Australian outdoors. The 230-pages take you through every aspect of a survival situation from bush tucker and bushcraft to off-road driving and survival kits. Based on Bob's tried and tested Big 5 survival techniques, supported by diagrams and photos.

\$32.95



SSAA Ka-Bar Warthog Folder

The reinforced tip of the tanto blade is extremely strong, making this knife not only an excellent everyday carry option but also a great tactical tool for puncturing tough objects. It features a non-reversible tip-down pocket clip and gunmetal grey stainless-steel bolsters. For more information, see the website.

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SSAA Hoodie

One can never have enough hoodies! Why not add our SSAA Navy Hoodie to your collection? With the traditional 'kangaroo pouch' and hood, it is sure to keep you warm as you show off the cool SSAA logo.

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Membership No.

NEW ☐ RENEWAL ☐ Have you been a member before? Yes/No



Title (PLEASE CIRCLE) Mr Miss Ms Mrs or Preferred SSAA Branch _____

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Last name _____

Residential address _____

Town/suburb _____ State _____ Postcode _____

Postal address _____

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(IF DIFFERENT FROM ABOVE)

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Date of birth _____ Male ☐ Female ☐ Member referral number if applicable _____

☐ Tick to subscribe to the FREE SSAA National E-newsletter via email

MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES AND SPECIAL OFFERS

Each membership category (apart from Family Member) includes 11 issues of the Australian Shooter magazine per year.

Add four issues of the Hunter magazine per year	
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Adult (over 18 years)

Includes \$35 insurance premium for SSAA Member Firearms Insurance for 12 months, or until next membership renewal.

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Includes \$35 insurance premium for SSAA Member Firearms Insurance for 12 months, or until next membership renewal.

Pensioner Available on production or photocopy of both sides of your Australian Concession Card.

Includes \$35 insurance premium for SSAA Member Firearms Insurance for 12 months, or until next membership renewal.

5-year Adult Contact SSAA for firearms insurance information.

Member for Life Contact SSAA for firearms insurance information.

Overseas Available to members living overseas.

Junior (under 18 years) Parent's or guardian's signature _____



PLEASE READ AND SIGN

This application is made in full recognition of the Association's requirement for responsible and ethical behaviour. I undertake to do all in my power to preserve the good image of the sport and the Association. I understand that members breaking the Code of Conduct may be subject to suspension or expulsion. The Code can be found at ssaa.org.au/code

SIGNATURE:.....

DATE:.....

Refund Policy: Subject to Australian law, membership fees are not refundable, nor can they be transferred.

SSAA Inc collects personal information of members. The information you provide on this form will be disclosed to the state or territory branch of the SSAA to which your membership application relates. A copy of SSAA Inc's privacy policy can be found at ssaa.org.au/privacy. You can obtain access to your personal information by writing to: SSAA, PO Box 2520, Unley SA 5061.

ATTENTION NSW & ACT MEMBERS

Complete this section ONLY if you wish to use your membership of the SSAA to support your Genuine Reason for having a firearms licence. Register your SSAA activities by marking one or more of the following boxes:

- ☐ TARGET SHOOTING (longarms only)
- ☐ HUNTING (club membership)
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I also wish to donate the following amount to the SSAA \$.....

Members-only competitions

For your chance to win one of these competitions, write your name, address, phone number and membership number on a piece of paper and place it inside an envelope, along with the name of the competition on the front of the envelope, as shown in the example. Alternatively, you can enter online.

Competitions close September 30, 2021

(Name of competition)

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Juniors

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Competition winners

Australian Shooter JULY 2021

Engraved Pen Set

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Laurena Reissman, Qld
Robin Smith, Qld
Luke Boniface, Qld
Tom Hawley, NSW

Winchester Prize Pack

Janette Foster, NSW

Junior Prize - SSAA Softshell Vest

Jesse Edwards, WA

Best Shots Mug

Troy Hurworth, Qld

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When it's too late . . . it's forever too late

It only took half an hour to move our gear into the hut and set it up to the Lady of The Camp's satisfaction. Once she was happy, Dixie and I excused ourselves and wandered off for a look around. Not a lot had changed since our last visit - wallabies, wombats and a mob of black and white heifers were still trimming the grass in the old cultivation paddock.

Deer sign was minimal but on a wet patch inside a sheltered stand of timber in the middle of the paddock, an enterprising sambar stag had excavated a new wallow. Though they were a few days old we followed his marks as they angled across the flat, around the end of a redundant electric fence and on to a game trail which turned up the river. The trail was dry and sandy and also showed the marks of a cat and two foxes travelling in opposite directions. Beside a log was a pile of white dog droppings full of coarse wombat hair, interesting to note but too old to be of concern.

Further on was a sandy deer bed under a skinny tea-tree and in the middle, a puddle of urine was slowly draining away. The marks were those of a fallow buck and it was easy to see where he'd stood up when the breeze carried our scents to him, nervously relieved himself then turned and trotted upstream to cross the river.

Happy with what we found we headed back to the hut, knowing we'd somewhere to start hunting first thing in the morning. It rained during the night, the noise on the roof enough to wake me several times as heavier showers swept through. It was still spotting steadily when the alarm went off before daylight so, despite a certain level of anxiety on the dog's part, we waited to see what the morning had to offer.

It was still overcast as we skirted along the edge of the paddock. There were sambar marks everywhere, all of them fresh after the rain as Dixie looked at me forlornly and shook her head, both of us knowing my reluctance to leave camp earlier may well have cost us a meat animal. As I mulled over where to go from there the rain returned, setting the tone for the rest of the day and making the decision easy. I was done with hunting in the wet a decade or more ago so the only comfortable place to be was in the hut.



Fresh sambar marks and droppings after a rainy night. Always interesting to find but if you're not there when the deer are, you've missed the bus.

Though there was barely enough light to see by, the following morning we backed up against some dogwood scrub overlooking the end of the electric fence and waited for the new day. As slim as it might have been, there was a chance the deer would travel the way they had the previous day - if they did we'd be waiting.

In the growing light, Dixie shivered and leaned against me as the first bird calls broke the silence. The river talked water talk, smooth and relaxing in the gloom, but no deer came. When I was sure there was too much light for even the latest of stragglers to be moving around, we stirred ourselves and checked what the ground had to say. According to the marks at least four deer had arrived during the night and returned to the bush - obviously sometime before us.

We followed the marks, needing to know where they led even if the answer was academic. A hind and a smaller animal, probably her yearling calf, had crossed the river while the other two kept going, their marks finally disappearing into the cover of a scrubby spur which led up to bedding areas in the heads of various gullies on the face of the mountain, terrain too hard for me to comfortably hunt any more.

It was clear that no matter how careful your planning there are times in life when you miss the bus and, as disappointing as that may be at the time, it's no disaster. If you view it constructively it can be a learning curve - and the long walk home is always good exercise. ●



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