BIRTH OF A WILDCAT + 100 YEARS OF THE .270 WINCHESTER

THE REPORT

October 2026
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THE LEGENDARY SLR

ISSN 2982-2122
9 772982 212009 10
Proudly printed in Australia

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October 2026









Editorial

Update from the 2026 SSAA Queensland AGM

Delegates from across Queensland gathered at the Captains Mountain Complex in Millmerran on September 12 and 13 for the SSAA (QLD.) Inc. 2026 Annual General Meeting. Most branches were represented in person, with others represented by proxy.

The executive was pleased to report that SSAA Queensland's financial position remained strong and had continued to grow during the past financial year. The media team also reported on the success of The Report, which received praise from delegates, particularly those from SSAA Herberton.

The 2027 calendar and discipline chair appointments were confirmed. Guest speaker Greg Moon of IPSC spoke about the memorandum of understanding between SSAA Queensland and IPSC, and the opportunities it provides for IPSC shooting at our ranges.

One of the meeting's highlights was the awarding of honorary life membership to Damion Faith in recognition of his extensive contribution to the shooting sports. Damion is a prolific Single Action shooter who has helped and influenced countless others throughout many years. He served as treasurer for about 12 years and has worked tirelessly to protect .45 calibre shooting. Regarded by many as a 'godfather of Single Action shooting' in Australia, he has also travelled internationally for the discipline and has a long history with its international body, SASS. His dedication to Single Action and to the wider shooting community makes this recognition thoroughly deserved. "I'm humbled, and very, very proud," Damion said.

The executive committee was re-elected unopposed, with the exception of Michael Pommer, who sadly passed away just a few weeks before the AGM. A minute's silence was held for Michael at the start of the meeting, and a tribute to him is on page 55. Paul Heiser was elected to fill the committee vacancy. I thank the incoming committee members for putting their hands up again. I also thank our members for placing their faith in us and for their continued support and commitment to SSAA Queensland.

2026–2027 Executive Committee
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Vice President (Disciplines): Greg Riemer
Vice President (Central Development): Shane McEwan
Vice President (Southern Development): Paul Heiser
Secretary: Michelle Herschfield
Treasurer: Adam Price

There is a great deal of work ahead of us, but there are also many opportunities. Together, I believe we can continue to build a strong, independent and sustainable future for SSAA Queensland and recreational shooting in our state.

Thank you, and I look forward to the next 12 months.



Jeff Ross - President, SSAA Queensland

THE REPORT

Australia's largest print circulation hunting, shooting and outdoors magazine!

Volume 2.8

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Proudly printed in Australia by ive Print Web Offset

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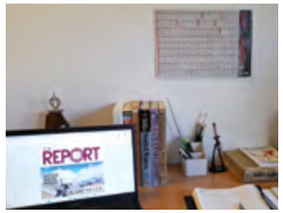
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Bullet posters a hit

Dear team,

As usual, I checked out the new edition [digital July *The Report*] quickly and eagerly awaited the arrival of the print copy to go through it in more detail.

I noticed the Barnes Bullet Guide straight away, as I'm a big fan of Barnes bullets and am often on their website checking stuff out.



The pull-out centre spread is a great idea: it's a very handy and quick way to compare different bullet weights for the same calibres, so I'll certainly be using it and am looking forward to any others you might include in the future.

Steve, via email

Old still wins

I've given much thought to the debate between old and modern firearms after reading the comparison between the Taipan and Smith & Wesson in my August issue of *The Report*. I, like many of my compatriots, believe the fundamental form of firearms, particularly shotguns, reached its epitome decades ago. Everything else has just been refinements since then. The new optics are probably the exception, but the classics are classics for a reason.

I would be interested in someone taking a look at the relative value of classic firearms versus modern firearms - adjusted for inflation of course. That might be a better indicator of the winner between old and new.

Jeff, Brisbane

Shop congratulations

I am excited to see the new ASA Shop initiative from SSAA Queensland. This is the sort of thing we need to have so that the Association and the shooting sports remain prominent now and in the future. Looking forward to seeing more products added during the coming weeks and months.

Fiona, L, Qld

Gunsmith trade

Reading about the Glock armourer in the September edition of *The Report* got me thinking about gunsmithing as a trade. Is it time for Australia to get a nationally recognised trade for this skill? Surely as a country we can't let firearms manufacturing fully go the way of car manufacturing and many of our other industries. Maybe people are aware of a career path that exists through the defence forces because I'm not aware of any clear-cut pathway that exists for civilians.

Jake, K, Qld

One more for the movie list

I enjoyed the recent article on the top five hunting movies you must watch. *The Grey, White Hunter Black Heart* and *The Ghost and the Darkness* are all classics that deserve their places on the list, and I encourage other SSAA members to see them if they haven't.

To that list I would also nominate the Australian film *The Hunter,* starring Willem Dafoe. Set in the Tasmanian wilderness, it follows a mercenary searching for the supposedly extinct Tasmanian tiger. It combines hunting, survival and some spectacular Australian scenery with a genuinely interesting story. Do they find the elusive tiger? You'll have to find out for yourself...

Cheers and happy watching.

Tim T, Qld

How many shots to zero?

The article about zeroing in using 10 shots (September *The Report*) is a bit extreme in my opinion. It should or could be done in the single digits. I think 10 shots should be the maximum really, and with those extra shots you should just be double and triple checking the accuracy.

Investing in a solid and reliable bench to shoot off is definitely a worthwhile investment for saving on ammo in this process. Knowing your firearm well and after you've done this process a few times it can be done surprisingly quickly.

Old Timer

From the editor:

Thanks, for your feedback. That article was intended for new shooters. Hopefully you can use your experience to help newcomers keep the numbers down!

Odd cartridge

I was hoping someone there may help identify a cartridge and maybe the projectile, which I found first and thought a funny size. Anyway, I sent images. But on the bottom of the cartridge is stamped 71 top and 90 bottom. I put a 10c piece beside it to show its size. Would this be a rifle or pistol shot? Curiosity has got the better of me so thought I would ask.

Thanks Alan J, via email

Editor's reply:

Hi, Alan. It looks like a 7.62x 39mm Soviet standard service cartridge from the late 1940s until the 1980s. Very commonly chambered in the SKA and AK 47 rifles. If you measure its length, it should be 39mm. Hope this helps.



Normally hard to scare

Thanks for the hunting movies story. I found *'The Grey'* on Stan and watched it in one sitting, which is rare as I usually fall asleep halfway through. It was a genuinely scary film based on wolves hunting humans after a light plane crash. In the movie, Liam Neeson's character is employed to keep remote mining staff safe from the wolves, so I guess it is a hunting movie in multiple ways. More stories like this please!

PS: I get your magazine from my local gun shop in Bexley in New South Wales.

Bill S, NSW

We value your feedback and questions.

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Father, ~~Son~~ Daughter Bonding

By Amelia Jane

Growing up, I always knew my dad would have made a great father to a son. Instead, he was blessed with two 'girly' daughters. As children, we were very much the opposite of sons. We both love everything pink, makeup and fashion related, which doesn't make for an ideal hunting partner. However, being the firstborn, I naturally became the default companion in all the 'father-son' adventures.

While being interested in anything that was girly and sparkled, I was made to attend annual fishing trips (with pink fishing rods, of course), camping holidays (more like 'glamping' with the promise of pancakes for breakfast if I didn't complain), and my father's most treasured hunting trips (I would typically follow behind with a pair of binoculars spooking any nearby animals with my heavy footsteps). While my sister got ballet lessons and pony rides along the beach with Mum, I was out in the paddock learning how to tie knots or fishing off rocky headlands.

For years, Dad tried to encourage me to enjoy hunting beyond just a walk in the bush. He'd come back from weekends in the scrub, eyes shining with stories of close encounters and occasionally a trophy animal that he was proud to have found. I'd nod along, half-listening, half-wishing he'd talk to me about literally anything else. It just wasn't my 'thing'.

But something changed this year. Maybe it was the feeling of time moving too fast, or the realisation that I'd spent more time working in an office than being outside living my life. When Dad suggested a hunting trip as a birthday present for himself, I jumped at the opportunity for a break from work and a chance to escape the hustle and bustle of day-to-day city life. Maybe it was the way Dad's eyes lit up every time the rut rolls around. Either way, I finally told him I wanted to join him on his next hunt. His reaction? He tried to play it cool, but his excitement was extremely obvious.

So, there we were, early April 2025, deep in the Brisbane Valley on a property I'd camped on since before I can remember. Only this time, I wasn't there to roast pink marshmallows or swim in the creek with my golden lab Bessy. I was there for my first real hunt. I was there to find a trophy stag.

We set up camp near the creek line, where the sound of running water mingled with the distant call of kookaburras. The plan was to rise at 4am and climb the ridge before the sun had a chance to spill over the hills. As we lay down that night under a thousand stars cosy in our swags, I couldn't help but feel like a kid again, except this time, I wasn't just tagging along, I was part of it. I was here to join Dad on his hunt. I stirred all night as the excitement for what was to come raced through my mind.

The next morning came cold and quick. We packed light, boots crunching through dew-laced grass as we ascended the steep hills in silence. The world was still asleep, wrapped in a thick white fog that filled the basins below us like ocean mist - a view that alone made the hunt worth it.

Then the sun broke over the ridgeline.

It didn't just rise, it exploded, casting golden light across the valley. The fog glowed from within, like the land itself was waking up. I stood there on the ridge, heart thumping in my chest, not from exertion, but from awe. I'd seen sunrises before, but never like this. Up there, above the world, disconnected from traffic, Tik Tok, and city norms, I felt something shift. This wasn't just a hunt. This was a reintroduction to something I didn't even know I'd missed.



A dad and his two daughters. Who knew what adventures the future would hold?

Waiting for the fog to lift and reveal the opportunity that awaits.

"The world was still asleep, wrapped in a thick white fog that filled the basins below us like ocean mist - a view that alone made the hunt worth it."

Then it came: the first roar. Low and deep, the sound was loud in the silence of the early morning. A red stag announcing his presence like a king claiming his throne. The sound echoed through the valley and suddenly, our hunt began.

For the next two days, we moved with the rhythm of the land. The hills were slick with soggy spear grass, every step strategic and quiet. We would crest a ridge and pause, listening. Sometimes we'd hear a roar close by and make a beeline for it, only for it to fade into silence as the deer spotted us before we had a chance of sighting it. Other times we'd spot doe's moving through the shadows, alert and nervous. My legs ached, boots soaked through but still, I kept going.



The thick white fog filled the basins below like ocean mist.

"Then, from the other side of the ridge, there came a roar so deep it made my whole-body shudder."

Dad moved like a ghost, each movement practiced and efficient. I realised how much I had to learn; how much I'd missed in all those years of turning him down. But he never said, 'I told you so'. Instead, he just handed me the binoculars, pointed and smiled like he'd been waiting for this moment his whole life.

On the third morning, the slow pace sped up. We were just below the main ridge, a narrow saddle between two wooded gullies. Fog clung to the treetops, and the air smelled of wet earth and eucalyptus. Then, from the other side of the ridge, there came a roar so deep it made my whole-body shudder.

"That's him," Dad whispered, eyes certain and wide. We moved quickly, following the ridge, wind in our face causing my eyes to water. The stag kept roaring, steady and strong. He was holding his ground, alerting does of his whereabouts - a dominant stag, and from the sound of him, a decent sized one too.

For two hours we stalked through thick scrub and grass, on the steep slope mimicking that of a cliff, every crunch of a twig echoing like a gunshot. At one point, we froze for nearly ten minutes as a group of does moved past, unaware of our presence. The beauty of these wild creatures in their natural habitat astounded me. The stag roared again, this time much closer.

We circled around to avoid the wind giving away our standpoint, slipping through a patch of lantana into a clearing framed by tall trees and thick scrub. At last, we got eyes on him - the stag behind the mighty roars we had been tracking for days. Large. Regal. A red stag with a crown of antlers - a 'double four'. He stood where the ridge plateaued and two hills merged, head high, steam rising from his nostrils with every breath. I could feel my pulse in my ears.

Dad looked at me and shook his head. 'Too small', he whispered. I was taken aback. How could he call this monstrous creature small? He was big and beautiful. I questioned my father, "Please, Dad; he is the one". Dad stared back at me blank faced. My heart stopped as disappointment flooded my body. And then, he nodded. "Alright, I will let you take him," Dad hushed.

A smile plastered my face as reality swept in. The stalk began. I crept down the steep slope through spear grass approaching the nearest tree that I had targeted as my arm rest. Each step sounding louder than anything I had ever heard, as I tried to remain silent to avoid spooking my red stag. It felt like hours as the heavy .30-06 rested on my left arm wedged between myself and the charcoaled tree trunk rest. My earmuffs blocked out any distracting sounds. All I could hear was the thump of my heart in my chest. Avoiding blinking, I lined





Carrying out her first stag might look like a burden... but Amelia's excitement, pride and gratitude outweighed everything else.

up the stag with my scope. He responded to my dad's doe calls, trotting towards us, tall and proud. It was hard to line him up while he was moving. But then he stopped. Standing side on and looking back. This was my chance.

I raised the rifle. Everything slowed. The wind, the fog, even the sound of my heartbeat. All I could hear was the voice inside my head telling me it's now or never. One breath in, one breath out… I was ready. I squeezed the trigger slowly and controlled, just like Dad taught me.

The sound cracked through the valley, and the stag bolted. My stomach dropped. Had I missed? I really thought I was a better shot than that. But he only made it a bare ten meters before collapsing and staggering off the flat, down the steep hill; a clean shot behind the shoulder. My breath caught in my throat. I had done it.

I turned to face my dad; buck fever had overtaken him. It was highly evident he was proud of me. His smile stretched ear to ear, and he jumped like a little kid.

We approached in silence. I knelt beside the stag, my hand resting on the coarse fur of his neck. His eyes were still, his magnificent antlers rising like branches toward the sky. I expected a rush of triumph or maybe sorrow, but what I felt was something deeper: respect, gratitude, connection.

Dad placed a hand on my shoulder. "You did well", he said softly. "Really well". In that moment I knew his dream had finally come true. Not to take a trophy stag himself, but to watch his child take up the hobby he has always loved. He finally got to pass down his knowledge of the land and hunting and see me succeed in a way he had only ever imagined.

Later that night, back at camp, we sat around the fire. The stars returned, as brilliant as ever, and the air carried the faint smell of gun powder and red deer. We sat there recalling our hunt and talking about the stories that would travel with us through the years.

I went out there to hunt a deer, but I found more than that. I found stillness, purpose, and a connection to my father I hadn't felt since I was a kid with muddy boots and scraped knees. And maybe most importantly, I found a part of myself I didn't know was missing. This is what it is to be human, to hunt and to survive off the land.

If you are a young girl, I encourage you to join your dad on his next hunt. It is so much more than harvesting meat or chasing a trophy stag. It is an opportunity to connect with the environment and take a break from the routine we are all trapped in. This experience demonstrated that it is possible to truly disconnect from ordinary life. A fire, a swag and an experience of a lifetime that I will forever cherish and seek to experience time and time again.

And fathers, you don't need a son to have a built-in hunting partner.

Till next rut! I'll be back for sure.



Sitting next to her first deer, the author felt respect, gratitude and connection.

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After 100 years of service, it's a

CALIBRE worth considering

By Billy Allen



A selection of factory ammunition the author has owned and used in his .270 Winchester throughout the years.



Cartridge size comparison (right to left): .22 LR, .223 Remington, .243 Winchester, .270 Winchester, 9.3×62 Mauser and .375 H&H Magnum.

What if I told you that there was a calibre out there that can better the ballistic profile of a 6.5 Creedmoor? Furthermore, this calibre:

- can hit an animal and penetrate with the efficiency of a .300 Winchester Magnum
- has recoil that is only slightly heavier than that of a .243 Winchester
- uses ammunition that is easy to find and is cost effective
- is a true deer slayer?

What if I added that this calibre can be found in the lineup of most popular rifle manufacturers and is now 100 years old yet still holds its ground against more contemporary cartridges? Have you guessed it yet? That calibre is the .270 Winchester.

Introduced in 1925 by Winchester, the .270 Winchester was created by necking down the .30-06 Springfield to a .277-inch bullet. It quickly found a loyal following, but it was the legendary American writer Jack O'Connor who truly popularised the cartridge. O'Connor reported that it was the finest medium-game cartridge ever, praising its flat trajectory, accuracy and manageable recoil. He used the .270 Win extensively on sheep, elk, pronghorn antelope and deer across North America, proving its lethality on large and small game animals alike.

In Australia, the .270 Winchester became regarded as a deer rifle calibre and continues to hold the valued opinion among deer hunters as a tried-and-true deer cartridge. Most of my deer hunting mates hunt deer primarily with a .270 Win. Those of us chasing any of the six deer species known to Australia report that the .270 Win is a proven performer. The .270 Win is also capable of taking large game and feral animals from the small sly fox to the larger desert dwelling camel.

My own journey to owning and using the .270 Winchester as my main hunting rifle has been a process of trial and error. I chose it not only because of its ballistic effectiveness and efficacy but also because of the traits that come with the cartridge in its manufacturing. My first hunting rifle was a .243 Winchester, given to me in a Ruger M77 stainless synthetic for my 12th birthday. I still own and use that rifle today, and it contributed to my preference bias for how a rifle should carry and feel in hand. What I learned to like in a hunting rifle was how balanced a standard-length action rifle felt when carried on the shoulder with a sling. The manoeuvrability of a rifle with a 22-inch barrel became imprinted into my tactile and spatial awareness - it simply felt natural. In my experience the traits and manufactured specs and styles of a .243 Win typically carry over to the manufactured specs of the .270 Win.

In 2008, good fortune came my way when I won a blued timber Sako 85 chambered in .300 Winchester Short Magnum at a hunting convention. This was a beautiful rifle and extremely accurate. It was well balanced for off-hand shots and carried comfortably slung on the shoulder. Yet I was never fully satisfied with it as my primary hunting rifle. The 24-inch barrel was noticeable when manoeuvring in the bush, and the timber stock made me nervous about hunting in the rain. The greatest disappointment, however, was the unreliable feeding and extraction issues caused by the short magnum cartridge. So, I traded it for a Winchester All Weather chambered in .300 Winchester Magnum.

I moved away from the beauty of the Sako to a robust synthetic stock that gave me confidence in wet weather. I also switched to the standard .300 Win Mag in its belted case for the reliability in feeding and extraction of the narrowed tapered case shape. This rifle was a powerhouse and served me well, but the 26-inch barrel and long magnum action made it too lengthy for my liking. After a while, I found myself longing for the familiar feel of my first Ruger in .243 Win. The standard-length action and 22-inch barrel simply felt like home in my hands when carrying and manoeuvring through the bush.

The next choice I made was with considerable thought. I knew I wanted a shorter rifle like my old .243 Win, but with more knockdown power. The decision came down to a cartridge choice between the .30-06 Springfield and the .270 Winchester. Maybe I was swayed by the hunters in my group of friends and family who all seemed to have a .270 Winchesters as their main hunting rifle. Maybe it was because, in realistic terms, the .270 Win just edges out the .30-06 Springfield ballistically with factory rounds up to 150-grains in weight. The .270 Win has proven to have impressive ballistic penetration and killing ability in all manner of game animals found in Australia and abroad.

With this being my main hunting rifle, I also knew that most of my hunting would be for medium-sized deer.

I initially purchased a Kimber Hunter in .270 Winchester. Though it was a nice rifle and perfect for travelling into the back country where every ounce counts, it was too light for my liking. I sold it and finally settled on a Sauer 100 in .270 Winchester. With a 22-inch barrel, a standard long action, along with great balance and portability in the field, I finally found my perfect hunting rifle calibre in the right configuration.

Using my Sauer 100 chambered in .270 Winchester, I was able to shoot my best red stag in the 2025 rut - a magnificent six-seven bush stag. On that hunt I was using 130-grain Remington Core-Lokt factory rounds chronographed at 2850fps. I was not disappointed by the performance, taking a steep-angled shot at about 190 yards. This year, in the 2026 rut, I took a nice fallow buck using a hand load with a 120-grain outer edge projectile travelling at 2925fps. It was a mild load but performed well at 120 yards, achieving full penetration on a direct shoulder strike.



Macen Allen, the author's younger brother, with a sambar doe taken using his Winchester Stainless All Weather rifle chambered in .270 Winchester.

A CALIBRE WORTH CONSIDERING

I am now content with the .270 Winchester being my main hunting rifle. My journey in hunting rifles essentially drew to the same conclusion that the late great Jack O'Connor came to about the .270 Winchester, and that is why the .270 Winchester might just very well be the finest medium-game cartridge ever. Its versatility and knock-down power make it suitable for both new and experienced hunters with the benefit of mild recoil, reliability and effectiveness on most of Australia's game and deer species.

The ballistics tell a compelling story. The cartridge offers a high ballistic coefficient and excellent sectional density for deep penetration. In fact, it matches heavier bullets in .30-calibre. For example, a 150-grain .270 Winchester rivals a 180-grain .30-calibre in penetration performance.



The author walking back to camp with the antlers of his best red stag from the 2025 rut and his Sauer 100 chambered in .270 Winchester.

"The ballistics tell a compelling story. The cartridge offers a high ballistic coefficient and excellent sectional density for deep penetration."

The slender, high-velocity bullets create large primary wound channels plus secondary tissue damage by the hydrostatic shock created by its high velocities, producing quick, clean kills. This deep penetration and terminal performance are what make the .270 Win such an ethical and effective choice.

To put the modern credentials of the .270 Winchester into perspective, here is a direct comparison using a 145-grain ELD-X in .270 Win against a 140-grain ELD Match in 6.5 Creedmoor in the cartridges' standard configuration, with all bullet drop figures based off a 100-yard zero: At 100 yards, the .270 Win maintains 2796fps and 2535 foot-pounds of hitting energy, compared to the 6.5 CM at 2516fps and 1999 foot-pounds of energy. At 300 yards, the .270 Win retains 2465fps and 2204 foot-pounds of energy with -11.1 inches of drop, outperforming the 6.5 CM's 1955fps, 1512 foot-pounds of energy and -13.6 inches of drop.



Current handloads used by the author in his .270 Winchester. The projectiles are 120-grain copper Outer Edge bullets, chronographed at 2925fps.

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Its flat trajectory provides a point-blank range of around 400 yards with ±3 inches on a 6-inch target, making it ideal for shots from dense bush at 100 yards to open country at 300 yards and beyond. Recoil is mild at approximately 17 foot-pounds in a 7.5-pound rifle — comfortable for extended hunting days and beginner-friendly.

Ammunition is widely available and affordable, with quality factory loads from Winchester, Remington, Hornady, Barnes, Norma and others. The cartridge is offered by most major rifle manufacturers, including Ruger, Sako, Tikka, Sauer and more. The shorter action and barrel enhance portability and balance, which is particularly welcome when stalking through Australian scrub and hills.

Hunters in my circle have reported consistent performance that makes long shots feel achievable. My brother Macen shot a sambar doe at 250 yards with a single shot from his .270 Win. My mate Frank shot and killed a red stag with his .270 Win at 200 yards. Dad used his .270 Win to take a chital stag at 280 yards with a double lung shot. The cartridge has also proven effective on larger game by a family friend, Geoff, where he took his .270 Win on an African hunt and successfully dropped a large body kudu.

The .270 Winchester delivers fast, humane kills that reduce animal suffering. Its century-old legacy, passed down through generations, continues to inspire trust over some of the newer cartridges like the Creedmoor or PRC family of cartridges. The ‘Dead is Dead’ philosophy rings true - there is no need for magnums when the .270 Win is more than enough for Australian game animals.

Will I buy another rifle cartridge to hunt with? Most likely, but don’t tell my wife. Do I need to get another hunting rifle cartridge already owning a .270 Winchester? Probably not. Whether you are considering your hunting rifle cartridge or thinking about a change, the .270 Winchester deserves serious consideration. After 100 years of service, the .270 Winchester remains a practical, reliable and effective choice for Australian conditions.



Family friend Geoff with a kudu taken on a recent hunting trip to Africa. The kudu, a large-bodied spiral-horned antelope that can weigh upwards of 315kg, was taken with Geoff’s custom .270 Winchester.



A fallow buck taken during the 2026 rut with the author’s Sauer 100 in .270 Winchester.



The rifles used in last year’s (2025) red deer camp. Every rifle in camp was chambered in .270 Winchester. From right to left: Sauer 100, Sako Finnlight and Ruger M77.

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MY FIRST RIFLE MATCH, TOP 10 FINISH

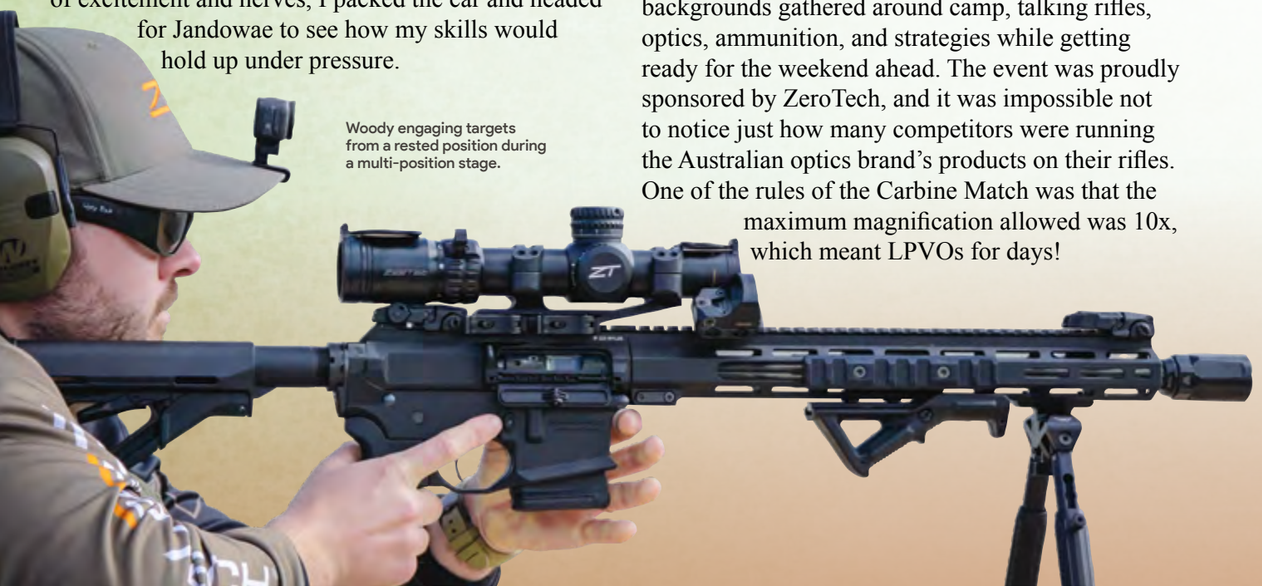
Taking on the ZeroTech Carbine Match

By Chris 'Woody' Woodrow

There's a big difference between shooting on the range or at the farm and stepping onto the firing line in competition. No matter how much practice you've had behind the rifle, the moment a shot-timer beep goes off and people are watching, everything changes.

That was exactly what I discovered when I travelled to the inaugural ZeroTech Carbine Match hosted by Precision Rifle Queensland (PRQ) at SSAA Jandowae (a great range and host). It was my first-ever rifle competition.

Armed with my trusted WedgeTail Industries MPR Mini chambered in .223, topped with my favourite ZeroTech TRACE ED 1-10 LPVO, and a healthy mix of excitement and nerves, I packed the car and headed for Jandowae to see how my skills would hold up under pressure.



Woody engaging targets from a rested position during a multi-position stage.



ZeroTech prizes on display, LPVOs, prisms, red dots and binoculars.

ARRIVING AT THE MATCH

Competitors began arriving on Friday afternoon before the event, setting up camp and taking advantage of a short practice session before dark.

As a first-time competitor, the atmosphere was immediately welcoming. Shooters from all backgrounds gathered around camp, talking rifles, optics, ammunition, and strategies while getting ready for the weekend ahead. The event was proudly sponsored by ZeroTech, and it was impossible not to notice just how many competitors were running the Australian optics brand's products on their rifles. One of the rules of the Carbine Match was that the maximum magnification allowed was 10x, which meant LPVOs for days!

After a quick practice session and meeting plenty of fellow shooters, it was an early night. Competition day would start before sunrise.

COMPETITION DAY BEGINS

Morning temperatures were considerably colder than expected, but that did little to dampen enthusiasm. After breakfast and the safety briefing, competitors gathered for stage walk-throughs and final equipment checks before heading to their first courses of fire.

The biggest challenge for me wasn't shooting. It was remembering. For experienced competitors, stage planning becomes second nature. For a newcomer, however, remembering target sequences, movement positions, round counts, and engagement orders can feel overwhelming. To help stay organised, I relied heavily on handwritten data cards strapped to my arm, containing target sequences and stage notes. It wasn't elegant, but it worked. Mostly.

THE PRESSURE OF COMPETITION

The ZeroTech Carbine Match was designed to test a broad range of practical shooting skills. Targets varied in size and distance. Shooters had to move between firing positions, manage magazine changes, engage multiple targets in sequence, and do it all against the clock. My WedgeTail Industries MPR Mini performed flawlessly throughout the event. Reliability was never a concern.

Unfortunately, that meant every mistake belonged entirely to me. The pressure of competition quickly became apparent. Tasks that seem simple during training suddenly become more complicated when a shot-timer is running and every second counts.

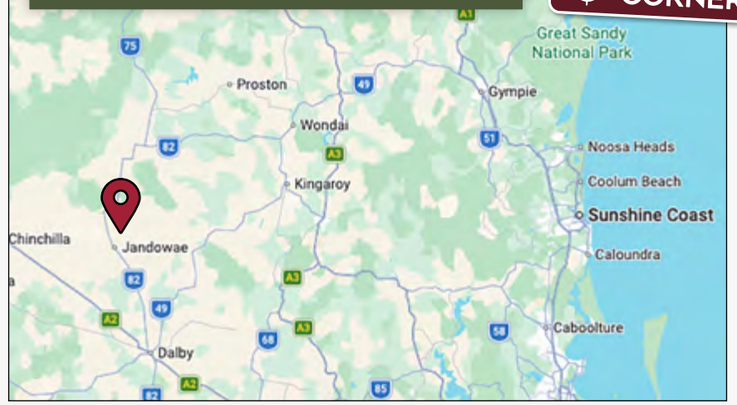
Magazine management, stage memory, movement efficiency, and target transitions all became just as important as marksmanship. There were moments of frustration, there were also stages where everything clicked perfectly and the rifle seemed to flow effortlessly from target to target. Those moments are addictive.

LEARNING FROM AUSTRALIA'S SHOOTING COMMUNITY

One of the highlights of the weekend wasn't the shooting itself. It was the people. Competitive shooting often gets misunderstood by those outside the sport, but events like this showcase one of the strongest aspects of Australia's firearms community. The willingness of experienced competitors to help newcomers is remarkable. Throughout the match, fellow shooters offered advice,

SSAA JANDOWAE

CLUBS' CORNER



North of Dalby, Jandowae is home to the northern end of the Dingo Barrier Fence - 'the longest fence in the world' at 5,614 kms. It is also home to the SSAA Jandowae Branch.

The club has been around since 1913 and caught the eye of the army in 1939, which is when it used the site to put its troops through training. Sometime in the 1950s, the range became a haven for Big Bore shooting. Today, though, it would appeal to just about any shooter – as it's approved for most SSAA disciplines.

Precision Rifle Queensland call the place home, with shoots each month – as mentioned in the feature story.

Membership of SSAA Jandowae is growing at a rapid rate and includes a fair number of juniors – ensuring a healthy future for the club. As it is just two and a half hours away from Brisbane, it is an accessible option for travelers, too.

Seasoned campers will enjoy the generous grounds and the laid-back atmosphere the property offers.

The appeal of the range is only going to get better, as plans for development are in the works.

Stop by when you are in the area and see the Branch's Facebook page for events: @SSAA Jandowae Facebook

encouragement and practical tips. Whether it was discussing stage strategy, gear setup, or simply helping calm nerves before a run, the sense of camaraderie was evident everywhere.

Match organisers and range officers also deserve significant credit. Running a safe and enjoyable event requires enormous effort, and Precision Rifle Queensland delivered a professional competition that catered equally well to seasoned competitors and first-timers.

THE RESULTS

As the final shots were fired and competitors packed away their gear, attention turned to the presentation ceremony. For me, expectations were modest. This was my first competition. The goal had simply been to participate, learn and hopefully avoid embarrassing myself.

The results exceeded anything I had anticipated. Out of a highly competitive field, I finished seventh overall. To place inside the top ten during my first-ever rifle match was a result I couldn't have imagined before arriving.



Woody's optic of choice: The ZeroTech Trace ED 1-10 LPVO. Chrystal clear in all conditions.

"As a first-time competitor, the atmosphere was immediately welcoming."

My teammate James Head secured eighth overall and also took out first place in the .30 Calibre category, while teammate Tyrone Vorst finished a highly respectable 14th in his own first rifle competition.

The team had every reason to celebrate. In the team scores, we took third place and came away with a nicely crafted trophy, featuring a 3D model of a Wedgetail MPR with a ZeroTech LPVO on top. A nice tribute to the supporters of the event.



Team ZeroTech with their trophies, left to right: Woody, Tyrone Vorst, James Head.

LOOKING AHEAD

Like most competitors, I drove home replaying every stage in my head. The mistakes were obvious. The lessons were valuable. And the motivation to improve was stronger than ever. Competitive shooting exposes weaknesses that normal range sessions often hide. It challenges not only marksmanship but also decision-making, preparation, discipline and mental resilience. For anyone considering entering their first rifle competition, my advice is simple: do it.

You don't need to be the fastest shooter or own the most expensive equipment. You simply need to show up, learn and enjoy the experience. The ZeroTech Carbine Match delivered exactly that. A challenging, professionally run competition filled with great people, quality shooting and plenty of lessons learned. And if finishing seventh overall on my first attempt taught me anything, it's that maybe I should have started competing a long time ago. I'll definitely be back for the next one.





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October 2026 approved.

Colour me... PINK, PURPLE OR ORANGE?



From left to right: James McIver, Clinton Davies, Dennis Dinte. Lens selection is a highly individual choice, with competitors choosing different colours, tints and levels of light transmission to suit changing conditions, backgrounds and target visibility.

By Darryl Groundwater, *SSAA Queensland Shotgun Chairman*

For those who have tasted the exceptional array of shooting disciplines, there will be one discipline or more that will occupy any spare time to achieve satisfaction. Managing to master one's preferred shooting choice necessitates timelines that can only be matched to a life sentence.

The technology that supports shooting in the 21st century offers satisfaction and provides solutions well before that moment of thinking about a different hobby.

Metallurgy in production to improve quality and accuracy in firearms combined with the modern-day electronic sight systems often accelerate the transition from a new shooter into a serious competitive grade shooter well before the frustration leads to resignation from the sport.

Ironically, there is one discipline that differs from the norm - that is clay target shooting. For starters, the principal of shotgun shooting at a moving target in flight has not changed for 150 years. The use of a generic smooth bore barrel combined with a choice of lead pellets is unchanged. For the devoted enthusiasts who wish to own a fine 130-year-old English shotgun to enjoy modern target shooting will be a serious competitor and readily match the performance of the modern-day shotgun.

The introduction of the modern clay target shooting sport has drawn interest from around the world, inviting associations to focus on developing various forms of this discipline. One of the key associations that countries can align with is the Federation Internationale de Tir de Chasse or F.I.T.A.S.C. More than 60 countries are affiliated with FITASC. The number of competitors wishing to compete around the world has initiated the association to host numerous international events annually. The association provides venues that can cater for more than 1000 competitors who are willing to test their skills.



Shotgun shooters have very individual preferences when it comes to shooting eyewear. Image X Sight Sport

The colour of the modern-day clay target has varied from traditional black to any fluorescent colour that one chooses to develop. As this discipline is attracting growing interest worldwide, and the venues are specifically sourced to provide challenging backgrounds including hills and valleys, the benefit of using various coloured clay targets is critical to ensure a successful event.

With the introduction of fluorescent painted clay targets, there became a growing interest in experimenting with coloured tinted eye wear. Optometrists have readily provided specialty shooting glasses that offer optical prescription to the competitor. The growing demand for coloured tinted prescription lenses has now made specialty-coloured glasses an essential component to improve success.

After viewing the broad choice of coloured lenses, the next step is to determine a preference. Now this task needs some additional information, such as the light on the day (e.g. sunny or cloudy), coloured background behind the target and of course, the colour of the target itself.

Certain coloured lenses can readily distinguish the target from the background. These lenses alter a visual perception by emphasising the specific-coloured targets while fading the background. Glare reduction is critical for sensitive eyes and the preference of a choice of coloured lenses is part of the shooter's requirements on the day.

Examples of preferred coloured lenses for various clay shooting conditions:



A selection of 3XR lenses from X Sight Sport.

Another influence for a colour preference is the performance of the retina. The retina influences the light and colours that are transmitted through to the brain. The task of the retina for each individual may have a varying stimulation to specific colours. The retina may be the instigation of the variety of coloured lenses worn on any clay target shooting day.

A clear observation when viewing various clay target shooting events is that all competitors will wear shooting glasses and the majority will have a preferred tinted lens – and probably a few close favourites.

Note: X Sight Sport specialises in performance shooting eyewear, with its glasses available through a growing network of retailers across Australia. Its interactive Lens Colour Simulator allows shooters to compare how different lens colours can affect target contrast, backgrounds and visibility across different light conditions.

Explore the simulator at: https://xsightsport.com/lens-colour-simulator



The orange tint enhances contrast and background depth as well as reducing light. Image: X Sight Sport



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May V.3

QUEENSLAND STATE RIMFIRE BENCHREST CHAMPIONSHIPS



By Leea Cherry

The 2026 Queensland State Rimfire Benchrest Championships at Captains Mountain Complex brought together keen shooters of all ages for a fantastic week of competition, camaraderie and some seriously impressive shooting.

The championships featured a full program of Rimfire Benchrest, beginning with IRB before moving into Score Light and Heavy Varmint and finishing with Light and Heavy Rimfire Groups. Across the week, competitors were treated to plenty of challenging conditions, great competition and there were some outstanding performances on the benches.

The action kicked off with IRB, setting the tone for a fantastic week of Rimfire competition. The firing line saw three perfect 250 scores recorded on the opening day alone and plenty of incredibly close competition across the field. After two days of IRB competition, Simon Schultz claimed the overall win with an aggregate of 1485.84, narrowly ahead of Danae Jenkins in second with 1485.83, while Bill Buchanan secured third place with 1483.80. With just 0.01 separating first and second place, it was an exciting and closely fought start to a fantastic week.

There was certainly no shortage of impressive scores throughout the Score events, with multiple 250s recorded and some extremely close results across the field. The Light and Heavy Hunter 2-Gun competition saw Gavin Marshall take the overall win with 992.19, followed by Matthew Bourke with 990.33 and Danae Jenkins with 987.31.

As is often the case at Captains Mountain Complex, the conditions added another challenge to the competition, with shooters contending with changing winds and even rain throughout the Groups events. Despite what the weather threw at them, there were some exceptionally small groups recorded. David Jenkins shot a screamer .339 at Light Rimfire 100 yards. Phil Jones recorded a tiny .180 during Light Rimfire at 50 yards, while Heavy Rimfire saw Simon Schultz fire an incredible .091 group. Simon went on to take the Light and Heavy Group 2-Gun with a combined aggregate of 0.6969, followed by Matthew Bourke on 0.7307 and Phil Jones on 0.7553.



Gavin Marshall, Maci Cherry and Jaxson Cherry - they make a great target crew.

One of the real highlights of the championships was watching our junior shooters step up to the benches and show that the future of Benchrest is in very capable hands. Junior shooter Jackson Barnes put together some outstanding performances across both IRB and Score, holding his own amongst a field of experienced competitors and producing some fantastic results throughout the Championship. We also saw Jaxson Cherry take on Rimfire Groups for the very first time and what a debut it was! Shooting Heavy Rimfire at 50 yards, in the rain no less, Jaxson fired a whopping .248 group. For a young shooter competing in Groups for the first time, it was an incredible achievement and certainly a moment worth celebrating. Seeing juniors on the firing line, learning from experienced shooters is something very special. Results like this show just how important it is to encourage and support the next generation of our sport. We certainly hope this is only the beginning for these young shooters and that we'll see them on the benches for many years to come.



Jaxson Cherry – firing a .248 group...first time at Rimfire Groups.

Events like the QLD State Championships don't happen without an enormous amount of work behind the scenes. A huge thank you must go to everyone who helped prepare the range, run the matches, score targets, organise the event and keep everything moving throughout the Championship.

We also extend our sincere thanks to every competitor who travelled to Captains Mountain Complex to join us. Whether you came from just down the road or crossed the border to compete, your support is what makes these events so special.

Most importantly, congratulations to all our competitors and placegetters. From the 250s and tiny groups to the personal bests and first-time achievements, there was plenty worth celebrating throughout the Championship.

The 2026 QLD State Rimfire Benchrest Championships was a wonderful showcase of our sport, friendly off the line and filled with the kind of mateship that keeps shooters coming back year after year. Most importantly, thank you the Springsure Benchrest Club for hosting yet another memorable event.



Joy Harrison helping hold down the fort.

ZEROTECH'S THRIVE HD RAISES THE BAR

By Dallas Walker @dallaswalker._

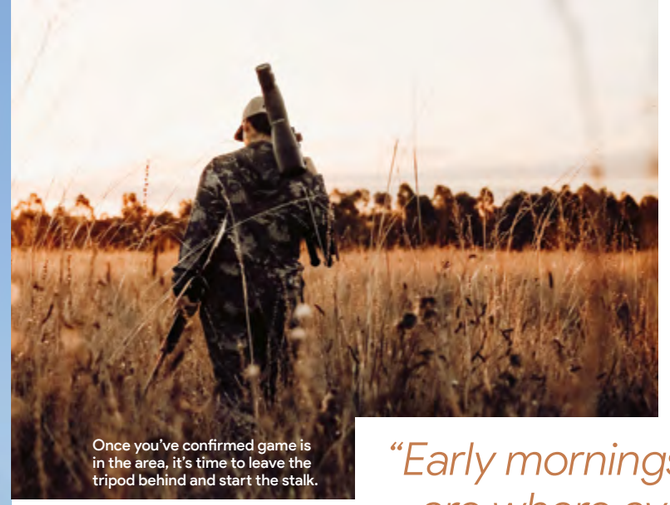
Yahtzee! That's honestly the only way I can describe what ZeroTech has done here because somewhere in their R&D department somebody clearly slapped the table, scared the interns, and decided the original Thrive needed to come back angrier.

And somehow…it worked.

I've had the Thrive HD 20-60x85 ED floating around in the ute and bouncing around in my kit for the past couple of months now - not 'looked through it twice while standing in the backyard pretending I'm a professional' either. Actual use. Long range days, hunting trips and cold mornings where your fingers stop functioning properly. Dust. Wind. That weird phase where every shooter becomes a part-time meteorologist because mirage suddenly matters more than emotions.



Hours behind a spotting scope are part of the job. Comfortable eye relief and sharp optics make those long sessions far easier on the eyes.



Once you've confirmed game is in the area, it's time to leave the tripod behind and start the stalk.

You know, normal activities.

First thing you notice compared to the original Thrive - and this is immediate - is the glass. The HD ED upgrade isn't subtle. It's brighter, cleaner, sharper right through the edges and overall, just calmer to look through? Hard to explain unless you spend stupid amounts of time behind optics (#guilty).

It's like cleaning your sunglasses after convincing yourself they were 'fine' for six months. Turns out they were not fine at all, but you became very good at gaslighting yourself.

At 20x, it's super usable. Stable. Comfortable. You're not fighting every tiny movement or breeze trying to wobble the image into another postcode. Then you crank it toward 60x, and it still holds together surprisingly well. That's the part that caught me off guard a bit because usually somewhere in high magnification territory things start getting weird. Soft edges, mushy detail, existential regret.

Spotting impacts at distance is easy enough, reading mirage is clean, and you can properly assess animals before committing yourself to a climb that seemed like a fantastic idea from 800 metres away. And, look, every hunter knows this feeling.

You glass an animal. You think 'that's not far'. Then halfway up the ridge you begin negotiating with God and your lower back, simultaneously (#characterbuilding).

The 85mm objective lens deserves a proper mention too because low-light performance is genuinely impressive for the money. Early mornings and last light are where average optics quietly fall apart and hope you don't notice. This doesn't. The image hangs on longer than I expected it to, which is unfortunate for the local pig population who were absolutely minding their own business while I conducted very serious optical testing.

"Early mornings and last light are where average optics quietly fall apart and hope you don't notice. This doesn't."

During the past few months, it's done a bit of everything. Spotting hits at long range, watching trace, hunting, and general glassing. Even looking at hillsides for no reason whatsoever because once you own good glass, you suddenly become interested in absolutely everything. Tree lines. Fence posts. Distant cows. Your neighbour assembling something badly. Relax, Gary. It's not surveillance. I'm evaluating edge clarity.

What genuinely surprised me though is the pricing. At $1199 RRP, it sits in a weirdly good spot where it feels premium without entering the 'I'll just hide the receipt and deal with this later' category. Because some optics are incredible and then you see the price and briefly consider taking up fishing instead, but only briefly.



The coffee can wait. First light only happens once, and that's when good glass earns its keep.

This feels balanced, like somebody at ZeroTech actually understands Australian shooters. We want performance, but we'd also quite like to afford fuel and a servo Four'N Twenty meat pie on the drive home. Crazy concept, right?

And honestly, while it's obviously aimed at hunters and shooters, this thing would suit anyone who appreciates decent optics. Bird watchers. Wildlife observers. People who enjoy staring at distant objects and pretending it's a skill. Good glass is good glass.

Then there's the warranty side of things. ZeroTech backing it with a lifetime warranty actually means something these days because some companies treat warranties like hostage negotiations written by lawyers. This feels more like: Yep. Use it hard. We built it for that.

After a couple months with it, this doesn't feel like a gimmicky refresh or some marketing department rebuild where they changed one screw and added 'HD' to the box. The original Thrive was already solid, proven and reliable.

This version just sharpens everything that mattered in the first place. No dramatic reinvention. No nonsense. Just better glass.

And honestly? That's probably exactly what most shooters wanted. *Dallas Walker is an ambassador for ZeroTech Precision Optics.*



A sturdy tripod and quality spotting scope are a combination every hunter should have in their kit.

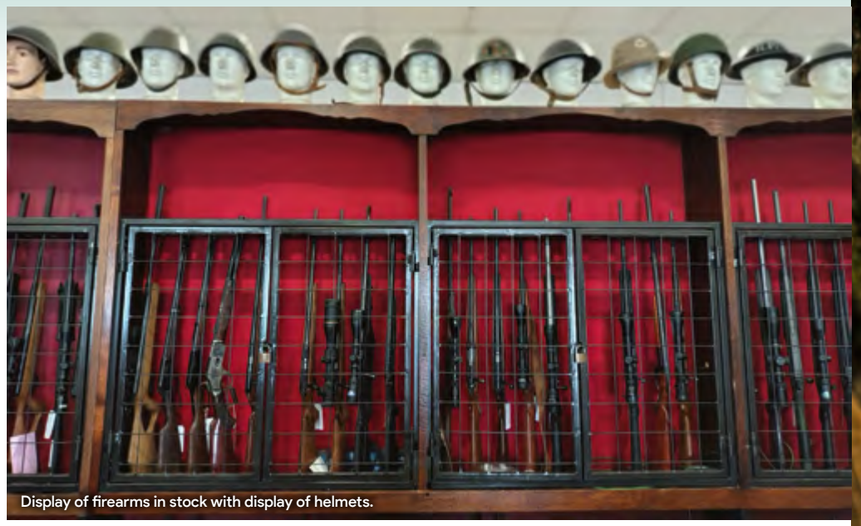
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JOHN VICHIE FIREARMS

When doing what you love, it's never work

By Paul Heiser


Display of firearms in stock with display of helmets.

Nestled approximately 220 kilometres from Brisbane is the picturesque town of Stanthorpe. Located in what is known as the Granite Belt, close to the Queensland/New South Wales border, the locality is well regarded for fruit and interesting varieties of wine not often encountered in other areas. The town makes for a fine day trip and I can thoroughly recommend it.

Located at 24 Matthew Street, Stanthorpe, is John Vichie Firearms, which is owned by SSAA Queensland member John Vichie and his wife Lisa. The business is typical of those of smaller towns and is diversified, retailing not only firearms and accessories but also motor vehicle lubricants and batteries. John came into the firearm industry after working for a short time as a bank clerk, then partnering with his brother to purchase a car parts business when John was 18.

Being a keen firearms collector, John started selling ammunition, which proved to be a successful business decision. Regular customers inquired about the possible expansion of his business to include the sale of firearms.


John has a large display of vintage collectable domestic and imported ammunition.

A local sports store sold firearms and John did not want to start up as a competitor. The owner, after some discussion, was happy to cease selling firearms and for John to sell them. John proceeded with his plan and on February 1, 1992, a Dealer's Licence was issued to John. Fortunately, the business was able to survive the repressive Howard gun laws of 1996 and continues to thrive today. John is focussed on suppling the needs of the farming community and rural property owners. If you require something a little specialised, it can be ordered in.

John is a keen collector of firearms and militaria, starting off as a 14yo boy. He now specialises in British and Commonwealth firearms and bayonets and, when time allows, he enjoys restoring World War Two military vehicles. One striking feature when you enter the shop is a collection of helmets on the top shelves.

John has, for many years, supported SSAA Queensland, directing many budding collectors the SSAA Historical Arms Collectors Branch so that they could obtain a Collectors Licence.

With more than 30 years of experience in the firearm industry, I asked John what he thought were the emerging trends in the industry. Without hesitation, he said thermal scopes and monoculars were rapidly being sought after by his customers.

The quality of these thermal scopes continues to improve, and they are becoming a game changer for seeing animals at night.

If you find yourself in the Granite Belt, pop in and say hi to John and Lisa. They always have interesting stock on hand, and it is good to support a business that supports us.

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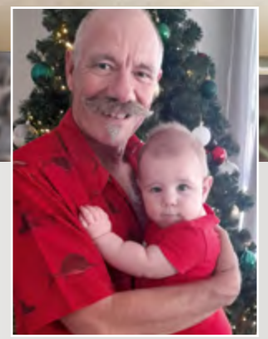


I expect young Lincoln will be surprised and pleased to find he has a cartridge bearing his name.

THE BIRTH OF A WILDCAT

From concept to completion

By Neil Schultz



Neil with Lincoln: The Lincoln legacy.

> *"Following the arrival of my first grandson, I thought it would be cool to have a cartridge named after him."*

Wildcat cartridges can basically be described as any that are not produced commercially. The process of developing a wildcat most commonly commences with a readily available factory cartridge. Those 'parent' cartridges are then 'necked up', 'necked down', shortened or otherwise modified to produce the desired result. 'Wildcatting' has been going on since the first smokeless powders were developed. The popularity of the pastime had its peak from the 1930s through to the late 1950s but is still practised by a small band of enthusiasts.

The reasons for individuals modifying a cartridge vary but are usually performance driven. This was certainly the case during the heyday with 'improved' versions of many factory offerings emerging from wildcatters' sheds. Many cartridges that originated as wildcats from home workshops were adopted by major manufacturers to become industry standards. For example, the .270 Remington began as a .30-06 necked down to .277cal. Similarly, the renowned, flat-shooting .25-06 emerged via the same path of evolution from the parent .30-06. Necking the .30-06 up to .35cal produced the .35 Whelen. The .257 Roberts was a necked down 7mm Mauser cartridge. The Roberts later gave birth to the .220 Swift when necked down to fire .224 calibre bullets. Along similar lines, the .308 was simply necked down to produce offspring including the ever-popular .243 Win, the .260 Rem and the 7mm-08. Going in the opposite direction and necking the .308 up in diameter gave us the .338 Federal and the .358 Winchester, both commercially adopted cartridges.



The parent 7.62×39 cartridge on the left, compared to the finished article, the .277 Lincoln loaded with a 130gr SST.

My incentive for developing a wildcat was purely for sentimental reasons. Following the arrival of my first grandson, I thought it would be cool to have a cartridge named after him. I had a few criteria to meet: recoil had to be moderate enough for a youngster to handle comfortably; reloading costs needed to be manageable so that I didn't hand a rifle on to the family that was too expensive to feed; and, most importantly, it had to be an original concept. Lastly, it needed to be practical, as it's intended use would be pest animal management up to and including fallow deer and feral pigs. So began the research phase.

Planning a wildcat begins with selecting the calibre to be used. I looked at .224 but found that it is so popular that almost every imaginable variant has already been tried. Thirty calibre was the top end of my possibilities, as I wanted something that the young fellow would find comfortable when he reaches the age at which he can shoot. Nothing I could devise in .30 calibre seemed practical. Likewise, with 6mm and 6.5mm due to their long-lived popularity with both wildcatters and industry ballisticians. After many hours of searching books and websites, I selected .277cal as the most likely candidate due to it not really finding favour with cartridge developers.

> *"Every .308-based variant has already been tried and documented, and I needed something unique so that I had the naming rights."*

The next step was picking the parent case that would form the basis for the new cartridge. Any variation using the long action .30-06 would generate more than the desired recoil, so that was rejected. Every .308-based variant has already been tried and documented, and I needed something unique so that I had the naming rights. Even shortening the .308 case and necking it down to .270cal was rejected due to similarity in dimensions to the .277 Fury commercial cartridge.

A full-length .223-based wildcat already exists going by the cool name of the .277 Wolverine. Shortening the .223 case before necking it up a-la .300 Blackout would not give the velocities I was looking for to make the cartridge viable for medium game beyond short range. Following the same train of thought as choosing a calibre, I decided to go for something far removed from common use for a parent case. In a very fortunate coincidence, I just happened to have a rifle with a 7.62x39 Russian bolt face sitting little used in the safe. From all the reading and web surfing I did, nothing was found to suggest this cartridge had been used as a base for a .277cal wildcat. Game on!



The finished rifle looks well-proportioned with its 20" barrel and compact 3-9 variable scope.



The second rifle chambered in .277 Lincoln is a (very) heavy barrel version, built on a sturdy Lithgow LA102 action sitting in a thumb-hole stock. This rig will be just as much at home on the brigalow plains as it will be at the range match shooting at 300m.

In order to keep the process as simple as possible, I decided to keep the overall case length unchanged. Shoulder to base measurement would be pushed back by .020” to give a slightly longer neck for loading modern, long ogive bullets. The shoulder angle was sharpened from the 17 degrees on the original Russian to a much sharper 30 degrees and most of the taper was removed from the body, bringing the diameter at the shoulder to 0.432”. These changes increased the powder capacity and followed modern case design parameters that increase efficiency in powder burn. The sharper shoulder angle also helps reduce case stretch, which decreases the frequency of case trimming and increases brass life.

Once my design was drawn, I contacted Jim at Buffalo Gunsmithing for his input into reaming the chamber. He came up with the answers for which I was hoping. The task could be done in a couple of steps with an existing reamer for a different cartridge for the chamber, then boring the throat and free-bore in a separate operation. I found a stainless .277cal barrel on the shelf at a nearby gun shop and had it delivered to the gunsmith along with my donor rifle.

As this was a totally new cartridge, there were obviously no reloading dies yet in existence. Making the brass required a little imagination and several steps. I started with once-fired 7.62x39 brass, kindly donated by a mate. Step one was pressing out the primers with a universal depriming die that I use for almost all of my reloading. Then the cases were run through my Ugly Annealer to make the necks more malleable. If this step is skipped, one risks splitting a lot of case necks when they are fire formed. Reducing the diameter of the necks required some backyard engineering on my part. I bought a sizing die for a .270 WSM to give enough clearance in case diameter and shoulder angle for the new cartridge’s specs. Due to the length of the die, I lopped 22mm from its body with a cut-off wheel. Forget the hacksaw; those die bodies are very hard! This left me with what is basically a universal, short .270 neck-sizing die. Lubing the case necks inside and out allowed them to be pushed from .341” to .305” outside diameter in one pass. I used this modified die with the expander ball and depriming pin removed so the only working of the brass in this step is squeezing the neck’s outside diameter and bumping the shoulder back by 0.02”. Precisely sizing the inside neck diameter to .276” was then achieved using a mandrel in a universal expander die.

All those preparation steps give a close approximation of the finished cartridge, except for the body taper and shoulder angle.

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This final change to the case's shape is achieved by fire-forming, a common practice in wildcatting where the pressure generated by firing the round blows the case out to the chamber's dimensions. The more brass is reshaped, the harder and more brittle it becomes. To reverse the hardening, I annealed the cases after each step and will continue to do that after each firing. Of course, fire forming can't be undertaken without the finished rifle.

Buffalo Gunsmithing had the barrel chambered and fitted in quick time and I was impressed with the rifle's shiny new stainless barrel. Very proudly engraved on the barrel is its official designation, the '.277 Lincoln' - Lincoln being the Christian name of my new grandson!

A lightweight 3-9 scope was unearthed from the archives in my gun room and fitted, just to get some shots through the new rifle. The first trip to the range was undertaken to fire-form some cases and complete the initial barrel run-in process. Having some brass fully formed in my chamber allowed some load development to be undertaken. Initial loads were assembled using a fairly fast burning powder: ADI Benchmark 2, pushing 90-grain flat-based hollow-point projectiles. These very safe starting loads registered on the chronograph at an average muzzle velocity of 2,550fps. Grouping was quite acceptable for a new barrel, putting five shots into a 0.8" group at 100 metres from the bench. I've now settled on a load yielding 2,690fps after some load development. Later, three-shot groups were tighter after some fire lapping of the barrel.



Is the .277 Lincoln accurate? The proof is in the target. That is a three-shot group at 100m. For scale, the $1.00 coin is 25mm in diameter.

As an experiment for shooting longer ranges, I also loaded test rounds with ADI 2206H and 130gr ballistic tipped bullets. These were disappointingly *much* slower at the muzzle, so I tested with the same powder used for the lighter projectiles. Another range session saw much better results, with the 130gr bullets leaving the barrel at 2,440fps delivering sub-half MOA groups.


Field testing proved the effectiveness of the little round under practical hunting conditions, harvesting this ideal eating fallow doe. This is what the cartridge was designed to do.

Having successfully developed loads for the new outfit, it naturally needed to be field tested. A quick dash down to the granite highlands of the southern Darling Downs was arranged at very short notice. Fortunate timing saw my visit scheduled just after a rainy week that dropped 50mm onto the hills to make hunting a little easier. During my previous visit, the leaf litter was so dry and crunchy that the animals could hear our footsteps from 500m away. Saturday morning was fully scheduled with a 5km cross-country race in the morning and a session with the chronograph, testing handloads for my old 1941 vintage .303 Lithgow during the day; so, a late afternoon hunt was the only option.

Just a couple of hours of daylight remained when I hefted my backpack, grabbed the rifle and headed into the hills. A steep climb to the top of the first ridge where I often find deer yielded no animals other than a few red-necked wallabies grazing. Stalking is a slow process, with each step being deliberately placed. 'Walk a little, look a lot', is my credo when blind stalking.


Early morning in the hills and lining up on a fallow doe. Deer number two for the lightweight .277 Lincoln sporter.

The sun had dropped below the summit of the peak to my west in the time it took to move along the ridge and start down towards the next valley. There in the gully, where a little green pick had sprouted after the rain, was a grazing doe. She was mostly obscured by vegetation between us, so I felt confident of being able to close the gap a little. Adrenaline made my heart rate climb as I stepped from tree to tree until I ranged her at 96 metres; perfect!

Resting the Lincoln in the fork of a convenient stringy-bark tree, I waited for her to present a shot. By the time she stepped into a position where I could see the vital zone, the light was all but gone. I was shooting at a silhouette through



a gap between trunks, aiming at the heart/lung area. Threading the needle through the trees, I touched the trigger and lost sight of the target area with the recoil. Two deer bounded away at the sound of the shot, a mature doe and a yearling. Doubts came flooding to mind. Had I missed?

I watched those two animals until they crested a ridge with no sign of injury. Neither of them had been hit. I descended the very steep gradient to the valley floor and looked around, hoping so to see my deer lying on the green grass where she'd been grazing. Nothing! "How did I miss that shot?", I asked myself out loud. I walked out of the timber to the middle of the gully and scanned around to see if there were any other deer further along. I spied two hooves poking up from a washout behind a large tree stump. There was my doe. She'd been feeding right on the edge of a vertical sided hole and dropped into it when I fired, dead in her tracks.

Now in almost total darkness, I snapped a few photos before breaking down the deer and bagging all the meat for the hike out. The trip out was by torchlight and picking my way around and over rocks on the steep climbs certainly got the quads burning. Two kilometres later, the weight of that pack full of venison was taking its toll on my shoulders but it was a very happy hunter who arrived back at the ute, still smiling with the result.

I was so happy with the .277 Lincoln that, within weeks, I had another rifle at Buffalo Gunsmithing being chambered. This one, on a Lithgow LA102 action, was fitted with a longer, varmint profile barrel for my personal use after the lightweight first edition was handed on to Lincoln's father. This rifle required a little more lathe work, as the .223 bolt face need to be opened up to fit the larger diameter .277 Lincoln cartridge head. Fortunately, there is plenty of metal around the stout Lithgow bolts to allow this modification without compromising its strength. I'm yet to take the newer, varmint-barrelled Lincoln on a hunting outing but have been quite pleased with its performance during load development at the range. Groups measuring 0.4" with 130gr projectiles are achievable from the bench. 'Watch this space', as they say.



Yeti finds a home with *The Report*

The Report Magazine is now branded on the goldilocks of the famous Yeti drink bottles and is now available for purchase. Proud SSAA Queensland members and readers of The Report can get their hands on the 26 oz (769ml) vacuum insulated cooler.

Holding about three quarters of a litre, the Rambler cooler is considered just the right amount to carry either your ice-cold water or piping hot coffee to the range, hunting grounds or waterways.

Yeti was started 20 years ago by two brothers who had trouble keeping their drinks cold in the relentless Texas heat. Brought up by their father to be passionate fishers and hunters, they were told "if you can't find it, make it." And so, they did.

They started the cooler business in Driftwood, TX, USA and expanded into other food container and outdoor kitchen supplies. They are now a coveted and household name.

Brothers Roy and Ryan say they overengineered the Rambler for maximum insulation, which matches the demands of Queensland's temperatures. It's no-sweat design also prevents condensation on the outside, so hands are kept dry and the container doesn't get slippery. Thankfully, unlike some vacuum flasks and thermoses, the Rambler is dishwasher safe or can just be cleaned with soapy water and rinsed out after each use.

The hunting, fishing and clay target shooting boys from Texas probably never thought of how their inventions would match the needs of Queenslanders 13,000 kilometres away, but Yeti has found a home right here. Visit the ASA Shop at asashop.com.au





FIOCCHI AMMUNITION

A leader and legend in ingenuity



A selection of ammunition from Fiocchi: Super Black, Golden and TT Two. According to Todd: "There is no better range of cartridge out there."

Todd Bridge has been a fan of Fiocchi ammunition for more than a decade.

By Darryl Groundwater

The Nioa Group has recently added Fiocchi ammunition to the list of its industry products. Certainly, a familiar name to the seasoned competitor, Fiocchi is one of the most advertised shells in the international shotgun circles, and Queensland shooters will now have the pleasure of choosing another well-known brand of ammunition to compete with.

Fiocchi is no recent player in firearms and ammunition manufacturing. Historically, this firm entered the weapons arena in 1876 and is acknowledged as one of the earliest manufacturers of ammunition. Originating in Italy, Fiocchi has expanded worldwide and its commercial ingenuity has survived for more than 150 years.

A selected choice of 12-gauge ammunition was provided to *The Report* for evaluation, ranging from the general-purpose competition TT2 to the high-end Super Black, which is used for those elusive long trap targets as well as the further distanced sporting clay targets.

With some reservation, I endeavoured to initiate an evaluation of this ammunition using the normal process of patterning, velocities and felt recoil. I conceded my process for a review of Fiocchi ammunition would provide questionable results. Patterning is heavily influenced by chokes and guns, velocities are impacted by the temperature on the day and, although recoil is also affected by temperatures, this assessment can be benchmarked by the felt recoil of other familiar cartridges on the day.

By chance, I recently participated in a sporting clay competition at the Caboolture Clay Target Club. While mentioning the name Fiocchi to friends, Todd Bridge overheard and rushed over to enquire about sourcing some of this ammo. After some discussion, I realised there could be a far better path to evaluate this fine ammunition by interviewing Todd, a regular user and fan of Fiocchi ammunition.

TODD BRIDGE

Before moving to Australia, Todd represented the county of Essex in both FITASC and Sporting teams on several occasions. Here are some of his achievements using Fiocchi ammunition:

- He won the Super Sporting championship out right with a 95/100.
- Was joint Hi Gun champion in the Essex FITASC Championship.
- He finished 2nd in AA at the British Open Sport Trap.
- Best Score in English Sporting with 98/100.
- Reached AAA in English Sporting averaging 88.78% over 1000 targets at three separate grounds



Darryl bumped into Todd by chance at a sporting clay competition at the Caboolture Clay Target Club, giving him an opportunity to find out why Fiocchi is Todd's favourite ammunition.

A recent import from the UK, Todd has made his name in the sporting arena and his skills with a shotgun are well respected. The following is an interview with Todd Bridge talking about his experience with Fiocchi.

Q: Todd, how long have you been in Australia?
A: I came over here in 2024 with my partner and son to find a better life and to explore the world and further shooting interests.

Q: You seem to be chasing a lot of targets over here; do you like the shooting in Australia?
A: Initially, I hated the Australian events, and I hated FITASC (Fédération Internationale de Tir aux Armes Sportives de Chasse) in the UK, as it was my bogie and I preferred English Sporting. But now, I've grown to love Sporting and it is definitely the best shooting discipline. FITASC, Compak Sporting and Australian Sporting are the events that I now prefer.

Q: You're a very fine shot. Who educated you to possess the current level of shooting skills you now have?
A: My grandfather started me off in shooting when I was around 14. He would give me a box of cartridges after I did the logging in the morning, then he would put me in a blind in the afternoon to shoot pigeons. I followed him around the traps learning, and after some time I left trap shooting and followed Sporting. My grandfather shot for England for many years and he is now retired.

Q: With only one packet of cartridges to shoot with, your skills were honed more so on accuracy rather than coaching?
A: Yes, with only 25 shells, one had to be very accurate and wait for the birds to come in close for the kill. Sometimes I was lucky to have 25 pigeons for 25 shells, while other times I had only three pigeons for my trouble.

Q: Hailing from the UK and considering the vast choice of ammunition available, you mentioned you chose Fiocchi. Can you give me a reason why, and how long you have been shooting Fiocchi shells?
A: A little bit like George Digweed, I've tried everything. I don't know why but every time I tried something else, I always went back to Fiocchi. Fiocchi cartridges pattern unbelievably well in my Blazer. With three quarter in both barrels, I don't change chokes for anything. For me, you won't find anything better through the whole range of this brand, going from the TT1 right to the top end. There is no better range of cartridge out there.

Q: How long have you enjoyed this relationship with the Fiocchi cartridge?

A: I've had my Blazer for 10 years, so I've shot Fiocchi for about 12 years. I use Fiocchi for everything. For game shooting, I use Fiocchi fibre wads as well as plastic. With the vast choice that Fiocchi ammunition provides, I have no need to change.

Q: Do you feel Fiocchi Italy amalgamating with Baschieri & Pellagri (B&P) is a good thing?

A: Now that B&P is involved, I feel the amalgamation will take Fiocchi to the next level. B&P has a Gordon System that may improve recoil for the Fiocchi cartridge, but I find no need for change. I have patterned Fiocchi shells and find them brilliant as they are, and now that I have managed to find a supplier in Queensland, I will source my favorite TT2 shells.

Q: At the shoot on Sunday, there was a 70-75 yard target that was intended, by the course setter, to test shooter and gun. This target was offered three times to the gun; how did you go with it?

A: You provided me with three types of cartridges this morning: the TT2, Golden Competition and the Super Black. On the first call, I hit the target first shot with the TT2; the second call I used the Golden Competition and struck the target with the first barrel and on the third call I used Super Black with the same success. This type of target can be shot with Fiocchi confidence, as one may have some trouble finding a better cartridge to shoot these testing target with any consistency.





Fiocchi ammunition helped Todd score 98/100 in English Sporting. After that, why experiment with anything else?





Darryl bumped into Todd by chance at a sporting clay competition at the Caboolture Clay Target Club, giving him an opportunity to find out why Fiocchi is Todd's favourite ammunition.

Q: The expectation of Queensland shooters having a reliable supplier of Fiocchi ammunition would give a dedicated shooter, such as yourself, absolute comfort in knowing the ammo will be readily available.

A: That's best news ever. It's like a kid in a sweet shop. For me, having a product that I'm familiar with gives me confidence to successfully achieve my goals in moving forward in the Australian Sporting Clays disciplines. I now have a good opportunity this year to get into the Queensland Team for the forthcoming SCA Nationals in Cooma.

Special thanks to Todd for his time with me on this interview.





ZERO IN: EXTERNAL BALLISTICS BASICS



FALLING WITH STYLE

By Ben J. Anderson

"Hey, Buzz, you're flying!"

"This isn't flying, this is falling with style!"

'Falling with style', coined by Buzz Lightyear in Pixar's classic *Toy Story*, is quite apt a description of external ballistics. Unlike a rocket or bird, projectiles in sport shooting lack any propulsion. External ballistics, sandwiched between internal and terminal ballistics, concerns itself with this unpowered flight of a projectile.

From exiting the muzzle to entering the target, a myriad of factors and forces combine and intertwine to determine where the bullet ends. The math and physics underpinning these factors are beyond detail of this article series, and touching on all of them is beyond our scope. Instead, we will tackle this 'what goes up, must come down' scenario conceptually with broad brushstrokes.

For practicality, we will lay out our external ballistics overview in three main sections: factors inherited from upstream in the ballistics progression, intrinsic characteristics specific to the projectile itself and environmental forces acting at the time of the shot.

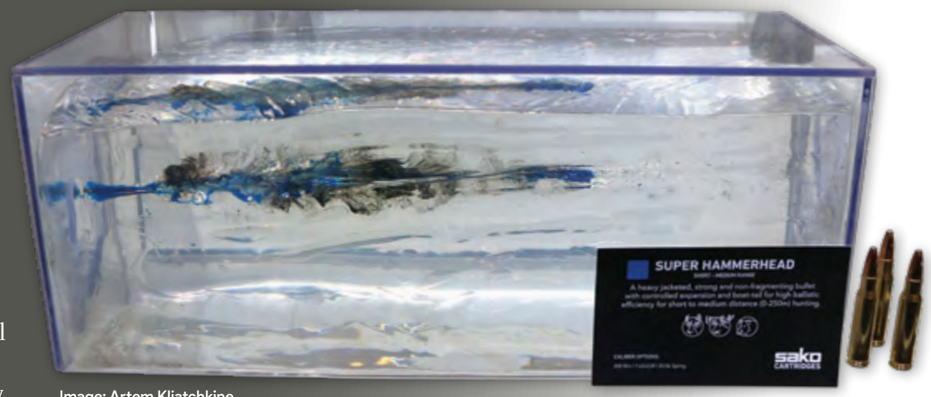


Image: Artem Kliatchkine

INHERITED

Velocity: There are few variables more critical than velocity in external ballistics. As soon as a projectile leaves the muzzle, it is on borrowed time. How far it can travel, how fast it spins, how much drag it experiences and how much the wind impacts it all have velocity factored in. Being unpowered flight, all the velocity a bullet will ever have comes from what was imparted to it by the internal ballistics' component. Bullet design and environmental conditions do greatly impact the rate at which that speed is lost, but nothing you can do in the external ballistics realm can accelerate or add speed. The velocity the bullet has at the muzzle is the most it will ever have. It's only downhill from there.

Rotation: The spin or rotation of the bullet is also inherited. The twist rate of the barrel, and how fast the bullet is travelling, combine to dictate the rate and direction a bullet spins. For rifle rounds, this is typically between 150,000 and 300,000 rpm! The idea of rifling a barrel to spin a bullet is to stabilise it in flight. This gyroscopic stabilisation is desirable, as it improves accuracy and allows for aerodynamic shapes to be used instead of round balls. How much spin is required to achieve gyroscopic stabilisation comes down to the shape and length of the bullet, but when not achieved leads to tumbling and erratic and unpredictable flight with increased drag. But too much of a good thing can cause centrifugal force to tear bullets apart.

And a side effect of spin stabilising is a phenomenon called spin drift. This spin combining with complex aerodynamic forces as it travels down range results in projectiles fired from righthand twist barrels to drift to the right.

Firing orientation: The last inherited factor we will mention is firing direction. Of course, where the gun is pointed affects where it lands. But beyond the bleedingly obvious, both the inclination and compass direction the barrel is pointing have secondary impacts on a bullet's trajectory.

The direction as it relates to the compass will be discussed at length when we cover earth-based effects. But differences in elevation between the shooter and target – be it an incline or decline – has a separate effect. Shooting flat means line of sight and horizontal distance to target are the same. But when a shot is angled up or down, the effective horizontal distance to the target is reduced. Because earth's gravity only acts vertically, the reduced horizonal component of the shot means the zone in which gravity pulls the bullet down is reduced, causing shots to land higher than they would for the same line of sight without the angle. As both shooting up and down reduce this horizontal distance, the effect on trajectory is the same.

INTRINSIC

Beyond variables inherited from the internal ballistics phase, characteristics of the bullet itself also play a major role in external ballistics. Beyond simple (but important) factors like the weight and diameter of a projectile, the complexities of its 'shape' dictate how effective the projectile is at avoiding slowing down.

Drag: As discussed with velocity, the moment a bullet leaves the barrel it begins to decelerate. The reason for this is drag. Drag is the force acting on a bullet opposite to the direction of its travel and exists because of air resistance. As a bullet travels through the air its colliding with air molecules, pushing them out of the way. This interaction robs the bullet of momentum, slowing it down. In the vacuum of space, a bullet could go on forever and ever, or at least until it hits a UFO. In this environment, aerodynamics aren't a consideration, like every space movie has taught us when an astronaut fumbles a spanner and it slowly flies off into the solar system never to be seen again. Without air, aerodynamics don't matter. But back on earth, the more aerodynamic a bullet is, the better it is avoiding slowing down, and the faster and farther it can travel before gravity inevitably pulls it to the ground.

To complicate things further, the faster a bullet is travelling also affects how much drag it experiences. For a given travel distance, a bullet will have to shove the same amount of air molecules out of its way. But the faster it covers that distance, the more collisions it is having in relation to time. The total number of collisions is the same, but are occurring in a shorter period, meaning more drag.



The shape of a projectile is made up of a combination of factors that play into its unique form, and help determine how good at resisting drag it will be.

Shape: The shape or form factor of a projectile is made up of a combination of factors like cross-sectional area, general base style – boat-tail or flat – and their specific dimensions, overall length, length of the calibre diameter shank, length of the nose, specific nature of the curved taper of the front of the bullet (ogive) and the tip (meplat) itself. These, and more, play into its unique form, and therefore how aerodynamic or good at resisting drag a bullet is. While this shape for the bullet is fixed, other key variables in the drag equation like velocity, air density, and temperature are not, meaning the drag a bullet experiences is anything but constant.

The 'Mach-Drag curve' – a graph for modelling drag – highlights this. The dog-leg shaped correlation reveals as Mach number (velocity as it relates to speed of sound) changes, so too does drag in a non-linear way. We just aren't talking muzzle speed variation here, but during bullet flight the velocity drops off rapidly, meaning the drag experienced is also changing drastically. This is to say nothing of other factors in drag calculation like humidity, pressure and temperature as they relate to air density. And even the speed of sound itself changes with temperature. All this to say drag is extremely complex and variable, but crucially important to external ballistics and vital to where a fired bullet will land.

Ballistic coefficients: Worth mentioning here is ballistic coefficient – or BC. Even if readers haven't dabbled in external ballistics and trajectory calculations, you've most likely seen BC numbers printed on ammunition boxes. BCs are related to drag in that they are an approximation of how a given bullet matches a standardised Mach-Drag curve or model. The two most common to sport shooting are the G1 and G7. G1 is a projectile formfactor that resembles a stylised flat-based, round-nosed projectile, like a cartoon rendering of a bullet. Alternatively, the G7 standard looks like a sleek long-range projectile with boat-tail and extended nose taper.

These G1 and G7 shape standards have a Mach-Drag curve reference standard for which the relationship between drag coefficient and Mach number (or velocity as it relates to the speed of sound) is fully mapped out. Because mapping out the true drag model for a bullet is complicated, time consuming and expensive, manufacturers calculate the BC of a bullet instead. This BC is an offset or correction factor to that reference standard and is just a snapshot along that Mach-Drag reference curve. Manufacturers must decide at what velocity and conditions that BC snapshot is calculated to correspond to the standard.

As such, a bullet's BC isn't an external ballistics variable. It's not a reason the projectile flies the way it does or lands where it lands. It's instead a metric used to try and correlate a bullet's trajectory to a reference standard – a subtle but critical difference. We will revisit BCs and how to use them later in the series when we cover the uses and benefits of ballistic calculators.

Conclusion

The 'falling with style' a bullet is undergoing between exiting the muzzle and hitting the target is dependent on a vast array of factors and forces. We have touched on some of those we classified as inherited from internal ballistics and intrinsic to the projectile itself. Next time, we look to tackle the environmental forces that play an equally important and complex role that, when added up together, result in the bullet falling where it does.

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SHOOTING STRAIGHT

SG PULSE REVIEW

By Simon Frederiksen



Everything you need to get going is neatly contained within the box.

It was a few months ago, while I was getting my arse handed to me during an NRL22 match at the SSAA Imbil range, that I first noticed a curious little device. Hanging off the side of a CZ was a tiny black box flashing different coloured lights. Naturally, it grabbed my attention. I'd seen anti-cant devices before, the trusty bubble level has been around forever, and more recently the SEND iT brought electronics into the mix. But this one looked different…

A bit of research quickly showed this wasn't just another anti-cant indicator. Designed and manufactured by Shooters Global, its marketing department calls it a 'Precision Shooting Assistant'. The deeper I dug, the clearer it became that this little box could be a genuinely useful tool for the workshop bench, training, competition and hunting. Thankfully, the team at Shooters Global sent me an SG Pulse to find out for myself and for *The Report.*

COMPANY BACKGROUND

If you haven't heard of Shooters Global, you're not alone. The company is originally from Ukraine and was founded in 2016. As you can imagine, the past few years have made operating a business in Ukraine extremely challenging, so the company relocated to Poland. Shooters Global first entered the market with a shot timer that quickly became popular with world champion shooters, match officials and instructors. Along with strong hardware manufacturing, it also showed real capability on the software side, with an app that connects to its growing range of devices.

The company now offers two shot timers (the SG Timer 2 and SG Timer Pro), the Advanced Precision Shooting Assistant (SG Pulse Pro), and the Precision Shooting Assistant (SG Pulse), which is the focus of this review.

WHAT'S IN THE BOX?

Opening the box to the SG Pulse, you will find the small device already mounted to a Picatinny clamp via two Allen key bolts. Included in the box is a USB to device-specific charger, an M-Lock style mount, Allen key, and the instruction manual. Following the advice from the manual, I downloaded the 'Drills: Shooting Training' app and synchronised the device to the app with no dramas.

The app allows you to play with the different sensitivity settings of the device. It's pretty easy to navigate through the settings to define at what degrees of cant you want the device to show the red, green and blue lights.

The device has two basic modes. Out of the box, the default mode gives you light indications - green for level, red for canting left, and blue for canting right.



It's a small device packed with easy-to-use tech.

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Red light means a left cant over the preset threshold.

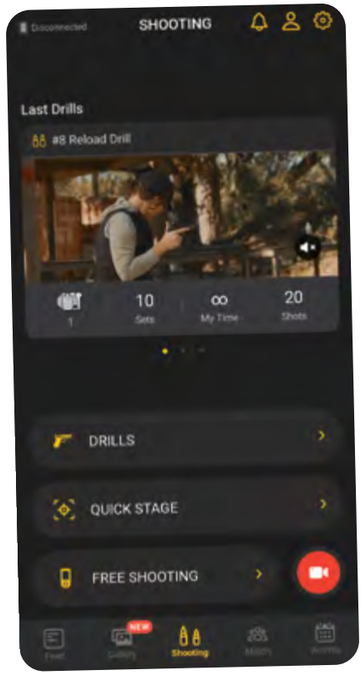


Blue light means a right cant over the preset threshold.



Green light means you are on the money.

The second mode is the Level Mode, which can be activated through the app. For the Level Mode, the reference surface on the device is the butt (opposite side to the button/lights). It can be used as a sensitive digital level, where the lights will guide you to level out whatever surface you place the device on. You can also view in real time the level data across the X and Y axis on a nice digital display within the app. During the review, I did not need to charge the device once. Checking the forums, it turns out the battery is good for up to 50 hours, which is great.



The app is easy to navigate and has some very interesting features.

PRACTICAL USE

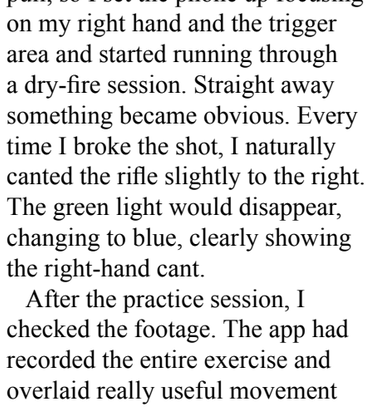
My wife enjoys pointing out which pictures and paintings aren't sitting level around the house. Thanks to this little black box of tricks, I can now jump into Level Mode in the app, place the device on top of the frame, and get them perfectly straight in seconds. It's pretty much replaced my spirit level for most jobs.

Playing with the device also prompted me to re-check all my rifle scopes, because the SG Pulse gives you precise levelling measurements. With rifles that have a Picatinny rail and a bit of clearance under the scope, it's simple. Mount the SG Pulse to the rail and level the rifle. Then remove the device, switch to Level Mode, and place it on the scope turret to confirm everything lines up. If you don't have a Picatinny rail, or there isn't enough clearance between the rail and scope, just remove the scope and place the device on the action's machined flat surface to level the rifle that way.

DRY FIRE AND SHOOTING

With the price of diesel sitting at ludicrous levels, it's getting harder to justify popping out to the range or property as often as we used to. Dry fire practice at home is a great way to stay sharp, and the SG Pulse might just be one of the best training tools to help lift your game.

Having the device mounted to my



With the SG Pulse in Level Mode, this live data display gives you precise information to help you level whatever you place the device on.

Lithgow LA101 .22LR, I started working through some typical shooting positions at home. After tweaking the sensitivity in the app so it could pick up the light dry fire strikes of the rimfire, I selected Shooting Mode and tapped the red camera icon. This switches on your phone's camera and overlays some seriously interesting live data.

I wanted to analyse my trigger pull, so I set the phone up focusing on my right hand and the trigger area and started running through a dry-fire session. Straight away something became obvious. Every time I broke the shot, I naturally canted the rifle slightly to the right. The green light would disappear, changing to blue, clearly showing the right-hand cant.

After the practice session, I checked the footage. The app had recorded the entire exercise and overlaid really useful movement

Vale MICHAEL POMMER



SSAA Queensland was deeply saddened by the passing of Michael Pommer, Vice-President of the Southern Region, on Friday, 28 August.

Michael was a dedicated servant of SSAA Queensland and the shooting sports community throughout Australia. Throughout many years, he held several senior positions within the Association, including State President, Senior Vice-President, Junior Vice-President and Privacy Officer. These roles reflected the respect placed in him and his willingness to accept responsibility on behalf of members.

Michael's contribution, however, cannot be measured by titles alone. He devoted countless hours to supporting the Association and the sport, regularly attending committee meetings and continuing his work right up until his passing.

Meticulous in his organisation, Michael offered both shooting and practical advice, as well as and strategic direction throughout his tenure. He contributed to numerous areas of the Association's work, including developing ranges, strengthening clubs, various media and helping to secure grants.

Volunteer organisations rely on people willing to give generously of their time, knowledge and experience. Michael was one of those people. His years of service helped strengthen the Association and support the work of its branches, committees and volunteers. His contribution forms part of the foundation upon which SSAA Queensland continues to grow and bolsters the shooting sports.

Michael's funeral was held on Thursday, September 10 at St Patrick's Catholic Church in Laidley, where family, friends and colleagues gathered to remember his life and pay their respects.

We invite those who knew Michael to pause and remember him, and others to reflect on the many shooting friends and family members who have enriched their own lives.

Michael will be greatly missed by those who served alongside him and by the wider SSAA community.

SSAA Queensland extends its sincere condolences to Michael's family, friends and all who knew him.

Vale Michael Pommer and thank you for your many years of dedicated service.

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data across both the horizontal and vertical planes. The way it presents the information is surprisingly easy to digest. A centre trace follows your movements and, when the rifle is steady and within your predefined level limit, the line drops neatly into the middle of a crosshair-style display. As soon as you start moving, the trace drifts away from centre and a red circle expands, clearly showing the impact of your movement on the shot. The SG Pulse also picks up the dry-fire shot and records how many shots you have taken. The good news from the footage and data overlay is that I managed to break the shot before any change in the rifle's position. I could play back the footage at 0.25x speed and see exactly how I was manipulating the rifle. Very cool.

Using the device on a rifle with a bit more punch allows you to track how you handle the recoil. You can quickly experiment with how your hand positioning, the amount of grip force you apply, and the placement of the buttstock against your shoulder affect your recoil management. Looking at the video and overlaid live data, you can start to piece together how each of your inputs affects the behaviour of the rifle. Again, this little black box partnered with the app is a very interesting shooting aid.

'CANT' BE

Using the device attached to the rifle via the Picatinny rail, the coloured lights on the device are easily seen while behind the scope. You will be shocked how often you think you are level when in reality you are a few degrees off centre. On a recent bush trip, I was shooting from a sloped ridgeline in a prone position using a deployed bipod. Referencing the slope of the terrain and the angle of the trees, I made my adjustment to what I thought was vertically upright. The device showed a red light. Checking the phone app, it showed that the rifle was sitting at six degrees of cant. I have to say I was a little shocked.



Live data of your movements can be recorded over video for analysis.

Calibre	.22LR
Grain/Velocity	40 grain @ 1070FPS
Distance	Cant error 6°
50m	12mm
100m	54mm
150m	120mm
200m	216mm

Calibre	.223
Grain/Velocity	55 grain @ 3240 FPS
Distance	Cant error 6°
200m	25mm
300m	54mm
400m	96mm
500mm	150mm
600mm	216mm

So how much does can't affect the final destination of the projectile? These tables assume a scope height of 65mm from bore to centre of scope.

Calibre	.308
Grain/Velocity	168 grain @ 2650 FPS
Distance	Cant error 1°
200m	12mm
300m	48mm
400m	102mm
500m	198mm
600m	312mm

WORTH THE MONEY?

The RRP for this device is $299 and it can be purchased through a number of gun shops here in Australia. My experience with the SG Pulse was very positive. I had no issues using the device. The app worked fine and was simple to navigate. If you like gadgets and analysing data, then this device would get you excited. If you compete in fast-moving, position-changing competitions such as Practical Shooting, then this is worth looking at. If you are a hunter who takes long-distance shots, then you should consider this device over a bubble level. Having the different lights visible in your peripheral vision while focusing on the target is a far better option than moving your focus from the target to a bubble level and back again.

PADDOCK TO PLATE

VENTURE HUNTING & OUTDOORS

Venture Hunt Fest 2026 packed two big days into the Venture Hunting and Outdoors store, from field to knife to the pan, with the crowd never thinning out.

BY VENTURE HUNTING AND OUTDOORS | AUGUST 9 AND 10, 2026 | QUEENSLAND



The floor stayed busy both days as hunters, shooters and outdoor enthusiasts came through for the second Venture Hunt Fest.

TWO DAYS, ONE THEME

Venture Hunt Fest returned for 2026 with a simple thread running through the whole weekend: paddock to plate. Over August 9 and 10, the Venture Hunting and Outdoors store turned into a working showcase of what happens between taking an animal in the field and putting it on the table, caping, butchery and cooking, all done live, all open for anyone walking through the door to watch and ask questions.

It wasn't a quiet one either. Across both days the crowd didn't thin out, a steady stream of hunters, shooters and outdoor punters moving between the demo stations, the trophy wall and the gear on show.

At its core, Huntfest exists to celebrate our hunting heritage, promote our right to hunt and strengthen the hunting community, all while backing our stewardship of sustainability and ethics in the environment we hunt in. It is a platform for the hunter's role in conservation and rural communities, from pest management to full utilization harvesting. Above all, Huntfest is built by hunters, for hunters.

THE HUNTS BEHIND IT

The story started before the doors opened, with Venture founder Tim and his son Liam heading out together. Tim harvested a red deer spiker to help stock the festival kitchen, and on the same trip the pair helped Liam bag his first rusa stag. "Made us work for it," Tim said afterwards, and that animal ended up on the butcher's bench for the crowd to see exactly what a hard won rusa looks like once it's down.



LIVE AT THE BENCH

Marcus McCullawitz from Down Under Taxidermy ran the caping demo, walking hunters through how to properly preserve a hide in the field so it's still ready for taxidermy by the time it gets to the workshop, skills most hunters only pick up the hard way, after ruining a cape or two.

From there, Lawson from Nature's Perks took over on the butchery, breaking down the rusa Liam and Tim brought in and talking the crowd through each cut and how to get full use out of the animal, ethical hunting followed all the way through to ethical butchering.



Then it hit the pan. James Viles, chef and CEO of Offgrid Provisions and chef and owner of Two Hatted Biota Fine Dining and Rooms, worked out of a kitchen dome set up on site, turning the wild venison into dumplings with chilli crunch, crostini and a venison pastrami for the crowd to try. His line summed up the whole weekend:

> *"Local is best, wild is better."*
>
> JAMES VILES, OFFGRID PROVISIONS AND TWO HATTED BIOTA FINE DINING AND ROOMS

ROUND THE STORE

Between demos there was plenty to keep people around, the Down Under Taxidermy trophy wall, Tikka rifle racks and ammo on display, optics to get hands on with, and an indoor archery lane getting a workout all weekend. Carnivore Collective ran a mincing station out the back, right alongside the Offgrid kitchen dome, so the paddock to plate story was on show from every angle of the store, not just the main bench. Thank you to everyone who came out to share stories and support the cause.



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DIDN'T CATCH IT LIVE?

WATCH THE FULL PADDOCK TO PLATE VIDEO.

We filmed the whole journey, the hunts, the caping, the butchery and the cook up, start to finish.



SCAN TO WATCH

POLITICS IN FOCUS

PITY THE PUBLIC SERVANTS TASKED WITH THE IMPOSSIBLE...

While the taxpayer pays for the distraction

By David Henty

There is no denying the rebuild of Australia's firearm registers is an epic task comparable to climbing Mount Everest for state and federal public servants. The four-year program to rebuild the eight firearm databases to allow them to be connected to a national registry was already incredibly difficult and has now been further complicated by the consequences of governments' kneejerk reactions to the Bondi Jewish massacre last year.

While there is little consistency in state responses to the federal government's call for firearm buybacks and ownership caps, it is the responsibility of the public servants to attempt to make sense of poor government policy. They are tasked with interpreting policy, establishing a plan for implementation, then actioning with the many other stakeholders while working to a budget.

Thankfully, firearm laws are under the control of the state government, and the Queensland Crisafulli Government has said no to the federal government's calls to buy back legal firearms and limit the number of firearms licensed and fit and proper-approved citizens can own. Potentially, a few other states and territories may also follow Queensland's lead and rebuff the calls to further hamper their legitimate firearms owning communities.

The difference between the calls to restrict firearm ownership after Port Arthur and Bondi are stark and even those without an interest in firearms, and some in the media, could smell a rat after Bondi. Prime Minister Albanese dismissed accusations his government ignored rising anti-Jewish behaviour in Australia, like the marches to celebrate the murders of 378 young Israelis at a music festival by Hamas barbarians.

The NSW Premier Chris Minns jumped on the same deflection boat, eager to talk about firearms rather than the anti-Jewish hatred simmering in the Western electorates of Sydney and the soft responses by his fellow politicians.

The NSW Liberal Opposition were telling in their failure to call out the deceitfulness of supporting firearm restrictions instead of clamping down on racist poison spreading, opting for 'me too'. These demands for further government interventions and firearm ownership restrictions on its citizens were a deeply cynical response and must be called out for the dishonest narratives that they are.

Calls by terrorist supporters on the steps of the Sydney Opera House yelling, 'From the river to the sea' and calling for the destruction of Israel have nothing to do with firearm ownership and everything to do with antisemitism and hatred.

The governments at both the federal and NSW level were trying to cover up their decisions to allow antisemitic and racist behaviour to fester rather than taking action to punish it and protect those targeted.

About $160 million has already been earmarked for the National Firearms Registry, which is meant to be finalised by 2028. And now the costs of post-Bondi potential firearm buybacks and increased bureaucracy in firearms licensing and registration need to be taken into account. How many millions of dollars of taxpayers' money are being used to further political dishonesty and deflection?

Both the Liberals and the Labor parties need to realise the electorate will not stand for being treated like mugs and this is reflected in the current public cynicism of the two-party system that is failing to produce tangible actions on everything from the state of our defence forces, energy stability, housing and public safety. Will we live long enough to see one of the new submarines or have reasonably priced power again? Will our children and grandchildren be able to afford their own homes and will the police and policies focus on the unlawful not the lawful public?

Be it as the electorate, legitimate firearm owners or taxpayers - we deserve better.

Carriage of the National Register 'on track' according to drivers

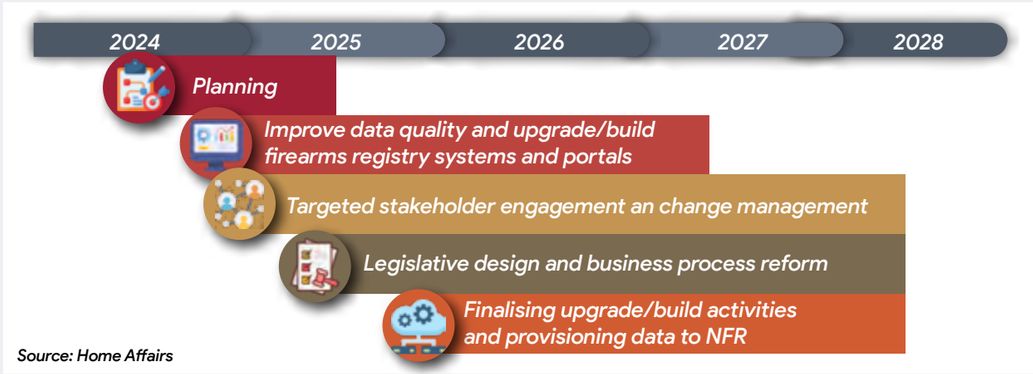
Firearms lobbyist and *The Report* Co-Managing Editor Tim Bannister met with senior staff from Home Affairs in Canberra to discuss the ongoing roll out of the National Firearms Register. According to internal key performance markers, the Register progression is on track. The roll out is reliant on the state and territory governments rebuilding or 'cleansing' their firearm databases so that they are accurate and can be connected to a future national register. Insiders from firearm registries have previously said that many of the databases are about one-third inaccurate.

Responsibility of firearms policy has recently shifted from the Attorney General's office to Home Affairs under Minister Tony Burke. Most of the staff were simply transferred, while a lot of the management will now be handled by the massively funding-increased Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission (ACIC) who had this to say about the current state of play:

National Cabinet has set a target to complete the National Firearms Register (NFR) by 1 July 2028 to help improve community safety. In January 2026, Police Ministers and Attorneys-General agreed to accelerate the NFR. The Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission (ACIC) expects new capabilities will be ready for states and territories to adopt by the end of 2026.

Each state and territory will join at different times, depending on how ready their systems are. Some benefits are already being seen as systems are updated and data improves. The NFR will help law enforcement know where registered firearms are, who has them, and what risks to the community may exist.

Tim said he appreciated the time the staff made for him now and in the past representing the Australian Shooters Alliance (ASA) as a key stakeholder in the process. "If there is something beneficial to come out of the National Firearms Register, it will be in the state databases being a lot more accurate than they have been in the past. Errors in databases have often been blamed on firearm owners who are then punished through no fault of their own," Tim said.



Source: Home Affairs



Rapid deployment, effortless adjustment and the ability to observe game for a long period of time means the Primos Trigger Sticks in the tall tripod configuration have become an integral part of the author's night hunting kit.

LONG-TERM REVIEW

UNSHAKABLE AIM

Get a fast and easy shooting rest with Primos Trigger Sticks Gen3

Brendan Jones

In this long-term review are the Primos Trigger Sticks Gen3 Tripod (Tall). They are a shooting rest designed for hunting, with the key point of difference being the speed of deployment and single-handed adjustability.

Primos is an American company, which began with hunting calls in the 1970s, and now has expanded to all manner of hunting accessories. Primos' shooting rest offerings include simple folding sticks to heavy-duty carbon fibre tripods and its line of Trigger Sticks. These are aptly named for the large trigger, or sprung lever, which is used to actuate the adjustment of the legs. Of these, there are monopod, short and tall bipod, and short and tall tripod variants available.

The Primos Trigger Sticks Gen3 Tripod (Tall) weighs in at 1.35kg and, when compacted, measures 104cm long - from its toothed-rubber feet to the top of its Y-yoke. Fully extending the dual sectioned 20mm diameter anodised alloy legs results in a length of 168cm. At its tallest deployed shooting position, a height of 156cm is achieved and the lower is 98cm with the legs in the standard width. A minimum height of 60cm is possible by turning a sprung collar underneath the tripod head that allows the angle of the legs to be widened, making for a total vertical adjustment range of 108cm. The legs also have a rubber strap to cinch them together for transport.

The tripod head is made of hard polymer, hydro dipped in a non-descript camouflage. It has a pistol grip shape and allows attachments to be quickly swapped by a push button, with a secondary safety switch that locks the button if desired. The trigger sticks come with a Y-yoke for supporting a gun fore-end that is 65mm wide at the top, 35mm deep, rubberised and stepped on the inside. It is also supplied with an optics plate with a standard ¼-20 thread. There are other styles of yokes available for purchase and even a two-point gun rest/cradle (the product is said to hold up to 9kg.)

This leaves the trigger actuation lever. It is 50mm long, slightly curved, with jimping on the bottom part for grip and is 12mm wide. One or two fingers can fit on the trigger, which has around 25mm maximum travel.



The large trigger lever is what is used to actuate the adjustment mechanism of the Primos Trigger Sticks. Also pictured here are the two attachments it comes with, the Y-yoke for supporting a rifle fore end and the optics plate for cameras and spotting scopes.

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TESTING

As the name suggests, the heart and soul of this device is the trigger, or more accurately, what the trigger operates. A slight squeeze and hold of the lever actuate a mechanism that unlocks all three legs simultaneously. The legs could then be pulled out if desired, but they are able to extend rapidly under gravity. When the lever is released again, the legs lock at any position. This makes deployment of the Trigger Sticks extremely fast. In the case of a traditional tripod, you would need to loosen a collar or locking lever per leg section, pull the section out and then lock again. Potentially a total of 9 to 12 separate adjustments.

Once deployed, adjusting is a breeze. To go from maximum height with a rifle rested, to minimum (kneeling) with legs at the standard width took an average of 2.5 seconds and 1.5 seconds to reverse from kneeling to standing. Your mileage may vary depending on your height, your knees and lower back health. Making small adjustments to height and angle takes mere fractions of a second and is instinctive, requiring zero thought processing.

Even more impressive is deploying or adjusting on uneven ground, slopes or having one leg on an obstacle. This takes no longer than adjusting the device on flat ground. You just hold the trigger and push/pull/lean/tilt and then release to lock in. To adjust the device to its lowest end of the range requires the legs to be splayed out, which is achieved via the ring that releases them to a wider angle. This is slower relative to using the sticks in their higher range, but still fast.

When in a kneeling or standing height, the sticks are easily steady enough for practical hunting ranges out to a few hundred meters, depending on size of target and shooter's skill, of course. At the maximum height there is a bit of play where the leg sections join. Reducing the height by only 10mm removes that play and is then consistent throughout the range. This would only be noticed by users over six feet tall. The most unsteady position is when the legs are released to their wider angle and extended to almost maximum length. There is some flex and bounce in the legs at this position, but not unmanageable. If the user's intention was mostly for sitting/kneeling shots, and standing wasn't of interest, the short version would be lighter, smaller, cheaper and more stable at that height range.

The rotating head pans smoothy and is good for tracking left and right for observation purposes or shooting moving targets, and the only slippage of the feet I experienced was inside on a tiled floor.





The Primos Trigger Sticks Tall Tripod offers not only a wide degree of shooting heights, but the ability to deploy and adjust extremely quickly.



When combined with a tree for added support, the Primos Trigger Sticks significantly increase the practical ranges for taking shots in a hunting scenario.

Knife skills on display as *The Report* shines in NSW



Hunters use knives and knife makers talk to hunters or are hunters themselves. There is a certain synergy between the two that was evident at Sydney's NSW Cutlers Expo held recently.

With *The Report* magazine on display for attendees and all exhibitors receiving a complimentary copy through our own knife writer Rod Hoare, there was plenty of discussion on the two passions of shooting and knife making. One exhibitor even talked about how he did a spot of feral animal control on foxes and rabbits on his drive down from Emerald to Sydney and planned to do the same on the way home!

Previously known as the Sydney Knife Show, it was the largest annual event celebrating edged tools and all things sharp south of the equator. The event is brought to states across Australia by the Knife Art Association and supported by the Australian Knifemakers Guild and its members.

They showcase the work of top Australian artisan makers, highlight knifemaking courses, industry suppliers, factory blades from across the world, along with live demonstrations from blacksmiths, Jacobite re-enactors, hand engraving, scrimshaw, whittling/carving, leatherwork, sharpening and taxidermy.

Exhibitors came from every state and territory in Australia, as well as New Zealand and Japan, displaying all kinds of folding and fixed blades for every conceived use there is.

Think about how many times you pick up an edged tool during the day (kitchen or utility knife, axe, hatchet, scissors, multitool or razor.), whether at home in the kitchen, garden, shed or farming. Most jobs require a knife, multitool or similar at some point during a normal day and then there's the weekend hobbies and interests that see them used all the time, like BBQs, hunting, camping, touring, or carried as a lifesaving item when trekking or bushwalking. Edged tools are everywhere in your life and are required for day-to-day living. Make sure you have the right tool for the job. And that it's made to perform as required; our artisan exhibitors perform all heat treating, grinding, forging, handling and sharpening of their tools to make sure they are the best possible tool for the required job.





Jason Heinemann was just one of many talented knife makers putting their expertly crafted products on show.

Edged tools are one of the world's oldest tools along with the hammer, brought from the stone age into modern times using modern materials, by the men and women who devote their life to the art of making the best possible heirloom quality functional edged tools they can.

Exhibits included factory knives from the world's best brands including Benchmade, Civivi, Ruike, Tops, ZT, Cold Steel, Ka-Bar, SOG, Buck, Kizer, Knafs, Jack Wolf, Vosteed, Japanese kitchen knife brands, Boker, Randall, Buck, Puma, ESEE and OKC.

Every Day Carry (EDC) gear included multitools, flashlights/torches, pens, pads, prybars, coins and wallets, from brands like NEXTORCH, NEXTOOL, Notorious EDC, Tactile Turn, Big Idea Design, Field Notes, Vero and Vosteed.

For Queenslanders look out for the next show in March next year at Doomben Racecourse. Stay in touch at knifeartassociation.com



Rapid deployment, effortless adjustment and the ability to observe game for a long period of time means the Primos Trigger Sticks in the tall tripod configuration have become an integral part of the author's night hunting kit.

In both cases, holding a rifle topped with a thermal scope for that long isn't feasible due to the fatigue factor. Secondly, the speed to deploy has proved crucial when the pigs are aware of your presence from the get-go. In such a scenario, there aren't minutes spent observing, but seconds rapidly setting up to take a shot. In contrast, large traditional tripods with a gun clamp are slow to deploy and cumbersome to keep moving and adjusting.

The Trigger Sticks have proved equally useful for more 'traditional' hunting in the daylight. Additional to pigs, they've been used to take wild dogs, deer, cats and rabbits. Switching out the Y-yoke for the optics plate, the sticks have also pulled double-duty as a tripod for photography or for glassing. While I wouldn't advocate buying this product as a dedicated photography tripod, it is certainly more than serviceable when one isn't at hand.

IN THE FIELD

This review began late one night about three years ago. While watching Jim Shockey's 'Unchartered' on YouTube I yelled, "That's it!" at the TV, as Jim deployed these weird sticks he had been carrying to take an awkward shot up a steep incline. Some quick Googling revealed they looked to be the perfect solution for our nighttime thermal hunting escapades, for which we had been unable to find or make something satisfactory.

85% of our use during the past three years has been night thermal hunting for pigs. In the tropics, the vegetation has dictated most of that is in the standing position. When thermal hunting, generally you have longer to observe a mob of pigs waiting for the right shot, which is where these sticks have proved invaluable. It is nothing to observe and trail a feeding mob for many minutes before the right pig is in the right position clear of obstacles, before a shot is taken. This is exacerbated when coordinating shots from two shooters. Another scenario is when calling pigs, where there can be a lengthy observation window prior to a shot.



While not a replacement for a dedicated photography tripod, the Primos Trigger Sticks are a more-than-capable alternative when one isn't available.



Dave pictured with a young boar that was observed via thermal for five minutes while it was called in through thick vegetation until a shot could be taken. Using the Primos Trigger Sticks to support the rifle while standing in such scenarios means a hunter can effectively wait indefinitely without getting fatigued.

PRICE, AVAILABILITY AND ALTERNATIVES

All variants of the Primos Trigger Sticks Gen3 can be found at gun shops and in Australian online shooting retailers (Amazon will not ship to Australian delivery addresses). At the time of writing, online prices from Australian retailers for the tall tripod version featured in this article ranged from $399 to $499.

During recent times, similar products and clones have been coming to the market, many of which having parts and components suspiciously similar to the Primos range. Most of these clones don't allow the legs to hinge wider, therefore have a decreased range of height adjustment. Also, many don't have the capacity to switch attachments. But if those two features aren't critical to your use case, and if the mechanism works, the off-brand copies could serve your needs at a reduced price.

CONCLUSION

As the old road safety messaging used to say, 'speed kills,' and that is certainly the case with the Primos Trigger Sticks Gen3 tall tripod. The sheer speed to deploy and adjust makes getting into a stable supported shooting position at a full standing height on uneven ground remarkably fast. When the shot opportunity is being measured in seconds, and vegetation requires a standing shot, there is nothing I have come across that is better.

At current pricing, I am not sure I would have bitten the bullet and bought them sight unseen. Now that they have become such an integral part of our hunting system, particularly thermal night hunting, I would buy a replacement in a heartbeat, albeit while whining about the price and lamenting not buying a spare earlier.

All products in this review were purchased by the author.



Though the bulk of the author's use of the Primos Trigger Sticks has been thermal hunting, they work just as well in the daytime. Here, Paul is pictured with a young chital stag shot off the review item.

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THE LEGENDARY SLR



A new SLR straight out of the box in Britain.

By Tom Lewis

The SLR for most readers of this magazine would almost be 'Everyman's' rifle. If you were ever in the forces in the 1960s to the 21st century, you would likely have qualified on this firearm. You may have fired one of the old but trusty .303 Lee Enfields in your early days, but you were then told this was the new rifle, the way ahead: the SLR.

You would have thought that 'self loading rifle' was an odd way to refer to a ubiquitous service weapon but there it was. You later learned it was a Belgian FN FAL battle rifle design, made in Australia under licence.

You probably engaged in the endless debates about how much of a kick it had; whether it was a better firearm than a .303; and a few decades into its service life would have engaged in the argument between the SLR and the Steyr hovering in the distance.

In particular, you would have engaged in the debate about how it was preferable to have something with a bit of knockdown power, which came from the 7.62mm cartridge compared to the 5.56 that however had a lot less recoil.

But then again, a semi-automatic was a step up from the old bolt-action. And so on and so on, especially after a range shoot, when the shadows lengthened and the sun set down, and the tinnies cracked open cold.

WELCOME TO SLR WORLD

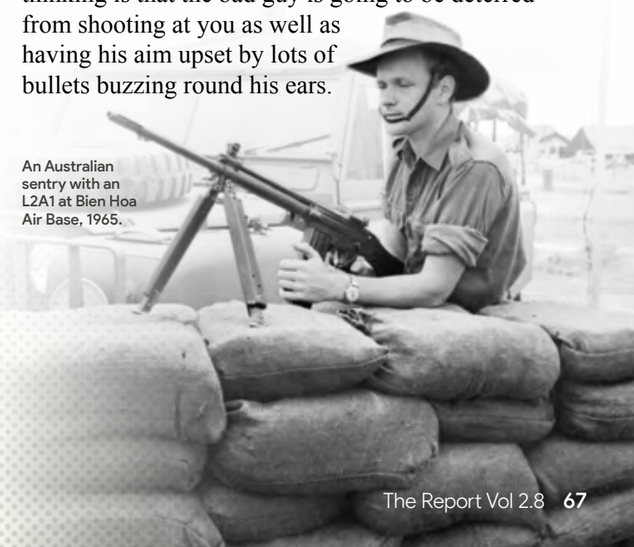
In Australian and New Zealander eyes though, this rifle has one great over-arching war associated with it. It was a war deeply embedded to this day in our national psyche. It showed us as capable of standing alone in a conflict apart from the old mother country of Britain. It was a war where the Aussies and the Kiwis were as sharply differentiated by their SLR rifles as they were – working hand in glove with the Americans – by their slouch hats, their laconic sense of humour, their can-do attitudes, and their rifles, so different from the M-16 carried by the Yanks.

IT WAS VIETNAM

But first, why semi-automatic?

One of the interesting aspects of changing over to a semi-automatic rifle in military service is why? After you sort through pages of military arguments from several countries, the answer comes down to one thing: more rounds down range.

For many military people – your correspondent included – that is reflected in training as to what to do when attacked. The recommended response is to take cover while putting as many shots toward your opponent as possible. Don't be concerned about accuracy so much as generating a response. The thinking is that the bad guy is going to be deterred from shooting at you as well as having his aim upset by lots of bullets buzzing round his ears.



An Australian sentry with an L2A1 at Bien Hoa Air Base, 1965.

So, does this mean you have a better defensive weapon? Yes, you do. But does that aid the soldier in attack?

After all, a force can hardly have one rifle for defence and another for attack.

An interesting situation. Broadly speaking, one might look at World War I, fought mainly on the Western Front in France, as being a defensive war. Both sides dug in, and their bolt action weapons, capable of 20 shots a minute, were aided in trench warfare by machineguns and barbed wire, making taking the enemy's position very difficult. The rifles were superior in defence. Going forward was best with a combination of artillery fire and close-quarter weapons such as revolvers and grenades, not long rifles. The short semi-automatic weapon, as we have covered previously in *The Report,* was only experimented with towards the end of WWI.

World War II was much more mobile, seeing infantry using their firepower to take the opposition's position. The more firepower you could muster going forward the better. Does that mean the war was being won by having semi-automatic weapons? The Americans, with their Garand M1, were to the fore here. Firing the .30-06 Springfield cartridge with a muzzle velocity of 2,800ft/s (853m/s), this remarkable rifle could generate a rate of fire of around 40–50 rounds per minute from its eight-round magazine. It was devastating against the bolt-action weapons of the Axis powers that the US forces faced. The famous General Patton called it "the greatest battle implement ever devised". So, semi-automatics were indeed seen as being superior.



John Garand (left) points out features of the semi-automatic M1 to army generals.

SLR (SELF LOADING RIFLE)

WEIGHT:
4.3kg /9.6lb

LENGTH:
1,143mm / 3'9"

CARTRIDGE:
7.62×51mm NATO

ACTION:
Gas-operated, tilting breechblock

RATE OF FIRE:
675-750 rounds/min (L2A1/C2)

MUZZLE VELOCITY:
823mps/2,700f/s

EFFECTIVE FIRING RANGE:
800m/870yds

FEED SYSTEM:
20-or 30-round (L2A1) detachable box magazines

SIGHTS:
Aperture rear sight, post front sight

Warfare, however, was increasingly being won by explosive power, generated by artillery, delivered from land or sea units or dropped from aircraft.

Broadly speaking, the face of battle had changed massively throughout 150 years. In Napoleon's time, the massed fire of infantry weapons could be decisive, with artillery only causing about 10-20% of fatalities. By WWII, explosive power was the main combat killer, causing around 70%.

So, the assault rifle in attack was much better if it was semi-automatic. This was something taken away from WWII by the planners of the future. While the rifle issued to every man should be semi-automatic for better defence, it was also better in attack too.

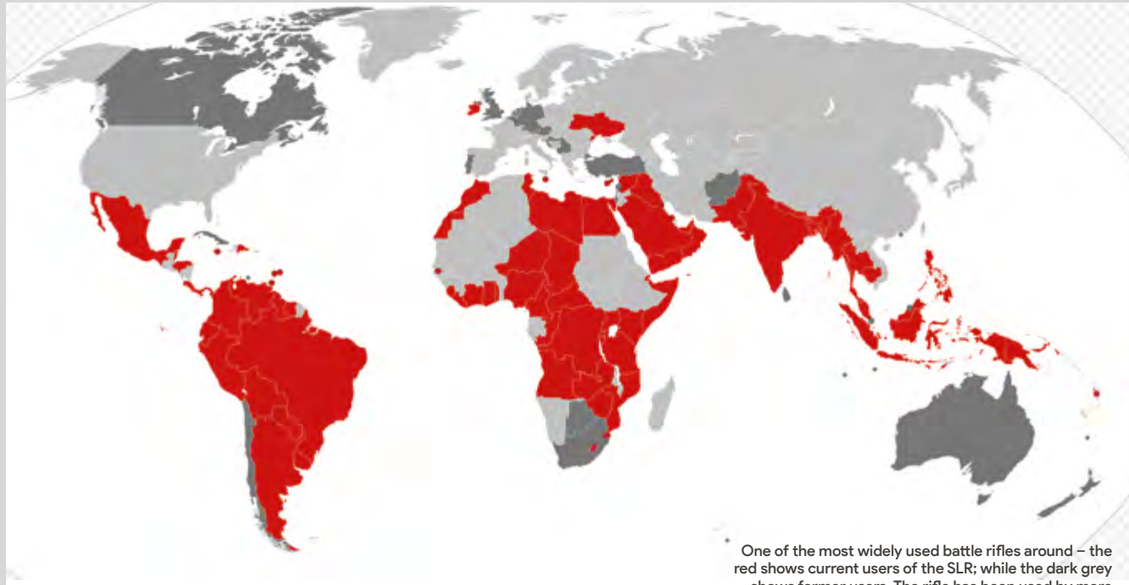
The rate of fire generated by weapons such as the M1 meant an enemy facing your troops going forward would receive at least twice the firepower, so he would instinctively take cover more. That meant he was not firing at you.

A second reason – although argued about – is that generally a semi-automatic will be more accurate than a bolt action.

The sight picture is not altered as much. Instead of working a bolt, which in the .303's case meant some slight rotation of the weapon to the left and then the right as the fired cartridge case was ejected and a new one reloaded, the semi-auto loads a new round through its gas cycling mechanism, which is worked backwards and forwards. And so somewhat by a tortuous route we come to Australia's new rifle.

The organisation that caused a rifle's revision – the North Atlantic Treaty Organization

Formed: 4 April 1949 **Headquarters:** Brussels, Belgium



One of the most widely used battle rifles around – the red shows current users of the SLR; while the dark grey shows former users. The rifle has been used by more than 90 countries, with about seven million produced.

Members: 32 countries (present):

Albania	Denmark	Hungary	Montenegro	Portugal	Turkey
Belgium	Estonia	Iceland	Netherlands	Romania	United
Bulgaria	Finland	Italy	North	Slovakia	Kingdom
Canada	France	Latvia	Macedonia	Slovenia	United States
Croatia	Germany	Lithuania	Norway	Spain	
Czech Republic	Greece	Luxembourg	Poland	Sweden	

NOTES: 12 founding members when the alliance was established. All members are based in Europe except for Canada and the USA. Major reason for formation: to counter the threat of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

Most important attribute: 'Treaty Article 5; an armed attack against the territory of one member shall be considered an attack against them all.'

AUSTRALIAN FORCES AND THE SLR

"Following the experiences of WWII, the Australian forces began to look for a more capable weapon than the Lee Enfield .303."

Following the experiences of WWII, the Australian forces began to look for a more capable weapon than the Lee Enfield .303.

It had been a reliable and faithful friend, capable of delivering 20 aimed shots a minute, but given the analysis above, it was time to acquire something more devastating. Britain and Canada were going down the same road in the early 1950s. Australia joined the Allied Rifle Committee along with two companion countries of the Commonwealth: the United Kingdom and Canada. (The Commonwealth was the new name for the rapidly reorganising British Empire.) With the UK and Canada's membership of the new Northern Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), there was a need for commonality of ammunition, and the 7.62mm cartridge was decided on. Other countries, including New Zealand, followed along. Although it was designated as the L1A1 FAL rifle, in Australian service the new weapon became known as the SLR.

It was mandated for semi-automatic use, although in some battlefields it was modified for automatic fire. It was dubbed 'the Right Arm of the Free World'.

Indeed, a heavy barrel version of the rifle was brought in too as an automatic weapon. Designated the L2A1, it featured a bipod. Oddly though, the light Bren machinegun (see July 2026 *The Report*) was a superior weapon, as it had a barrel that could be changed out in a fierce fight, as well as being an excellent all-rounder in reliability and performance. Maybe we should have just stuck with the Bren...

SLR production in Australia saw the Lithgow Small Arms Factory in NSW designated for manufacture in 1954. The factory began a program of modernisation and updating machinery in preparation for production of the new rifle.

The first factory-made L1A1 self-loading rifle was proof fired in October 1958. Mass production began in 1959, and the rifle remained the standard service weapon for the Australian Army until 1992.

AUSTRALIA'S ARMED FORCES ASSAULT RIFLES

	CALIBRE	YEARS OF USAGE
Lee Enfield	.303	1895
SLR	7.62	1954-1990s
Steyr	5.56	1990s to today

Notes:

- Generic names only given.
- The term 'assault rifle' is a modern derivation likely derived from the WWII German term 'Sturmgewehr', meaning storm rifle, developed for propaganda purposes.
- The .303 in its most familiar form was the Short, Magazine, Lee Enfield, which came into use in 1912.
- A conversion of .303 calibre to metric gives 7.7mm.



Four members of 1 Squadron SASR in 1967, showing the variety of weaponry members could carry as preferred. (L/R) Ian Conaghan with an M16 and also carrying possibly a captured VC Ak47 or SKS; John Duncan with an M79 grenade launcher, Simon Liefting with an SLR, and George Garvin with a silenced Stirling 9mm sub-machine gun.



Leading patrol, Kapooka training base, with their SLR rifles. (Dennis Mitchell)

INTO SERVICE

Colin O'Neill, later to be deployed to the Vietnam War as a National Serviceman, remembers firing the SLR for the first time:

> *I can recall that when I first fired it, I couldn't believe how hard that weapon hit you in the shoulder. I think one of the training instructors said, "Recruit, have you never fired a weapon before?" I said, "Well, I actually have." He said, "It doesn't look like it." I thought 'Okay.' That was something that was said to me, and I was bit embarrassed because I had fired quite a lot of weapons before, shotguns and .22s. When I fired this SLR, I couldn't believe it. We all had earplugs, I mean the noise was just deafening, and the kick behind the weapon. And I can recall, as I said, that we had bruises on our shoulders, very sore in the shoulders from firing the weapon, in the early days. But once you got used to firing the weapon, and spending a lot of time on the range, it became quite easy in the end. They showed us what an SLR could do, and they fired it into a forty-four-gallon drum of water. The drum just exploded, so to speak. The bullet was a pretty heavy sort of bullet. Then they showed us what the F1 sub-machine couldn't do. They put an army great coat over a forty-four-gallon drum, and then from thirty or forty metres or yards away, they fired the F1 into it, and it didn't even penetrate the great coat. That shows you how strong that weapon was.*

THE M16 VS THE SRL

Dennis Mitchell of 3 Squadron Special Air Service recalled of his army time in Vietnam:

The issued weapon in the Australian Army was the SLR, which is a large calibre 7.62 or 30-cal high velocity semi-automatic weapon. It's a heavy weapon. The ammunition is heavy; the magazines are heavy, particularly the load of ammo we used to carry but its advantage was it had real knock-over power.

Hit somebody with a 7.62 from an SLR, the fight went out of them, might not die straight away but the fight certainly went out of them. Subsequently, when we got to Vietnam we quite highly modified those weapons, changed them to 30-round magazines, they'd fire on full automatic, cut holes in them everywhere, painted them green. They didn't look anything like a standard issue SLR.

The M16 value, I suppose, was it was a much lighter weapon, easier to handle in thick bush and jungle because it was shorter. It fired a 5.56...high velocity and its ammunition was therefore much lighter, the mags [ammunition magazines] were much lighter.

The reason I didn't like that weapon was it didn't have knock-over power. You could shoot somebody with a .556 and unless you hit them in the right spot perhaps not all the fight would go out of them, perhaps they'd still want to have a go and that happened a couple of times.

The other thing wrong with it was it was more prone to stoppage than the SLR.

So, I never trusted the [M16] weapon, but we did use them extensively in Vietnam particularly with an M79 grenade launcher slung underneath.



Dennis Mitchell's photo of '25 Patrol in back of jeep', an SAS unit. (Dennis Mitchell)

While the rifle was the standard weapon for all troops deployed to Vietnam, some specialised units carried other long weapons. But the SLR was often still preferred. Trooper Arpad Bacskai of the Special Air Service recalled:

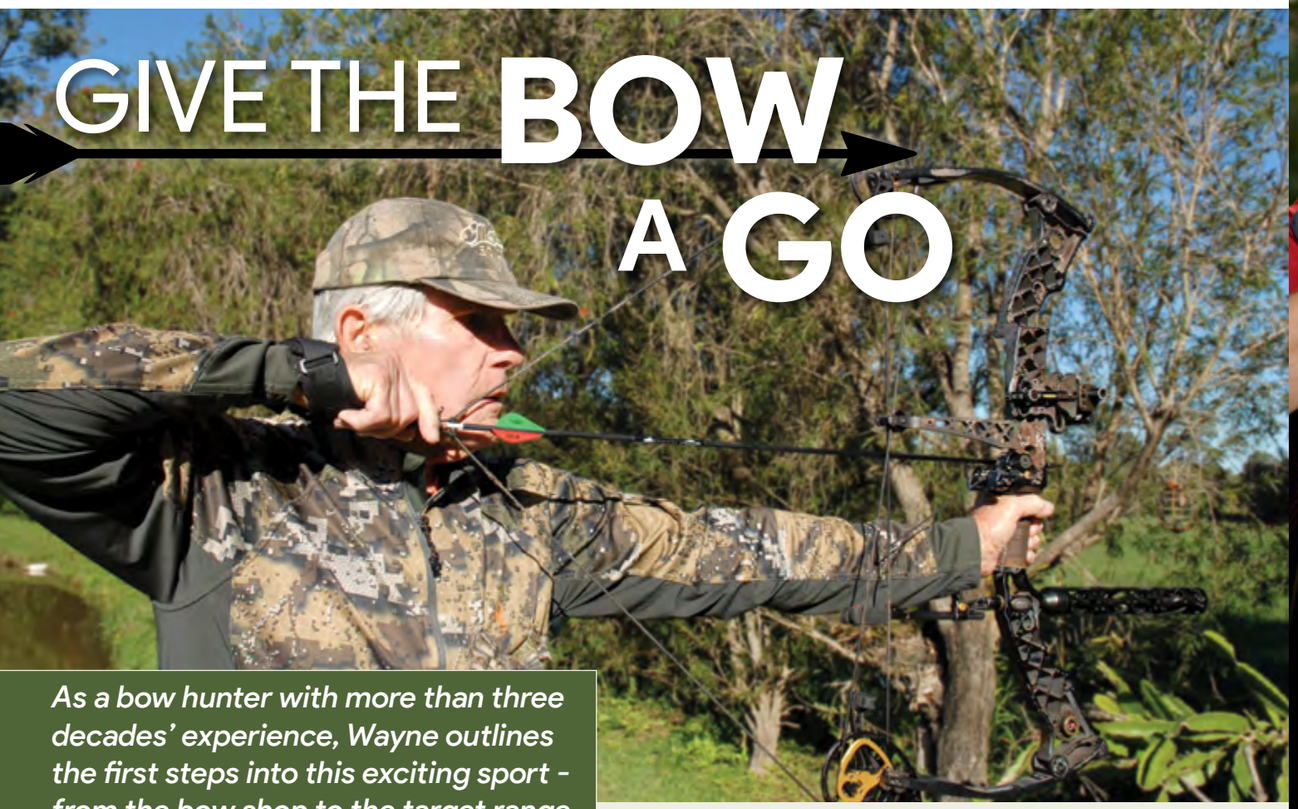
> *I always carried an SLR [Self-Loading Rifle] weapon of my choice. This is a thing you have in the SAS, unless a patrol commander or special job demands you carry something else, you carried the weapon of your choice. I always selected what I used to call the old elephant gun, because it used to put people down well and truly…the 7.62 round.*

The SLR was of course adopted by all three parts of the Australian armed forces. They were used by RAAF field guards; carried in Royal Australian Navy ship armouries and were the primary weapon for annual qualification by all members. With the introduction of the F88 Steyr, they began to be phased out in the 1990s. But one of the proudest sections of the ADF still utilises the SLR: the Federation Guard carries the rifle, complete with chromed magazines and white slings.

With the introduction of the F88 Steyr came a great weeping and wailing from those who had served with the SLR. They often bewailed the supposed complexity of the new firearm and mourned its supposed lack of stopping power. Was any of that true? In a future article I'll ponder that.

Dr Tom Lewis OAM is a military historian. One of his latest books is *Cyclone Warriors*, an analysis of the Australian armed forces in Cyclone Tracy.

GIVE THE BOW A GO



As a bow hunter with more than three decades' experience, Wayne outlines the first steps into this exciting sport - from the bow shop to the target range.

Full draw scenario. Note the strap of the release aid on the author's wrist, plus the trigger of the unit with a finger behind it while lining up the shot. The string is almost touching the author's nose as he sights through the peep in front of the cap's peak.

By Wayne Kampe

So, what's with this bow hunting business? It's long been a part of modern hunting life - although never approaching the scale of rifle activity - yet to step into a retail archery outlet these days is to see folk behind the counter very busy indeed. Equipment's well displayed with customers enquiring about various aspects of the sport, bows being assessed and perhaps tried. There's a prevailing hum of things happening; bow shops are busy these days.

A resurgence then? And why not? Prolific YouTube bow hunts grip the imagination - perhaps making it look a bit too easy. And there are also definite advantages to bow hunting that make the concept very attractive these days: it's silent and safe, so ideal for more confined hunting areas. And it's farmer friendly.

Hunters rejoice at a greatly upgraded hunting craft putting them within range of a highly regarded game animal. Drawing a bow on an unsuspecting deer at 30 metres is a primal experience, nothing less.

The compound bow

Let's expand the picture and start at the beginning. Basically, there are two styles of bows mainly favoured today: compound and long (traditional style), with compound bows being more popular in the field over their long-bow cousins. The latter are lighter, but fine accuracy falls away because sighting systems are not fitted. It's learned judgement (after mega practice) when a long bow is in the paddock; by contrast compound bows feature precise sighting systems, making them far more suitable for the humane despatch of game animals, a definite priority of ours, of course.

Why not consider crossbows as well? They are classified as M class – licensed weapons with restricted ownership.

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- Keith 4 Wheels
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- Kodiak
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- Mansfield Hunting & Fishing
- NateChrony
- NexTorch Australia
- Nitecore Australia
- On Track Meals
- Oricom
- Outdoor E-Store Australia
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Let's talk about 'let off'

A compound bow's system of cables and cams reduce final draw weight (i.e., strength) by providing considerable mechanical leverage at *full draw*. This capability is referred to as 'let off' and can be as much as 75 or even 85 per cent of a compound bow's nominated draw weight; thus, making it far easier to hold the sight onto a target. Yes, there will be strain, as any compound bow is drawn, but a bow that's drawing 60 pounds (note: archery terms are old school) might be held drawn at 15 pounds or less.

A peep at the sight system

Aiming a compound bow is achieved via a peep sight within the string, which aligns with the dominant eye. The front sight consists of graduated pins at graduated intervals (usually 10 metres) within a housing on the bow's riser or the central hand gip area to cater for differing ranges. Realistically, the furthest pin should be at one's maximum confident range, whether that be 30 metres or 60 metres. Single pin front sights will see the pin moving up or down for a shot, according to distance.

To ensure accurate range estimation, a range finder is virtually standard equipment for bow hunters, as even arrows from powerful bows drop in trajectory rapidly after, say, 30 to 40 metres.

Bow selection

Here, professional assistance is vital. A hunting bow for a beginner will not be found on any 'marketplace' listing; moreover, you cannot just survey the racks of bows at an archery outlet and walk out with a one that looks like it means business - not without ample assistance from the staff, that is. You see, a bow's draw *length* needs to match the *length* of a user's arm, so the staff will usually measure draw length and then show the customer a bow of correct draw length and of a draw weight to suit that person. Note: draw weight can be flexible with many compound models.

And, one last consideration, that the new bow does not overstrain the hip pocket. Somewhat sadly, there is no 70 per cent let off in that area!

Ancillaries

Arrows, made of carbon fibre, should match the bow regarding spine (or stiffness) to correctly suit a specific draw weight. Additionally, the bow should have sights and an arrow rest installed, with a quiver (case for carrying arrows) selected to safely accommodate razor-sharp broadheads in the field. And a release aid is vital, as it has a trigger that trips the string and is designed to facilitate smooth arrow release... because one cannot hold and release a drawn compound with just the fingers, there's far too much string pressure. Ouch! Don't forget an arm guard: a released string whacking the arm is another big 'pain'!



The author's first bow-shot pig; a huge step forward in skill levels and the start of a new hunting lifestyle.

Never underestimate the deadliness of an arrow. Look at the penetration of the arrow on a hardwood log.



Front sight pins set at ten metre intervals. The object immediately below the bottom pin is a spirit level, which assists in keeping the bow level while aiming.

Archery precedes hunting

So, you have that bow! It's off hunting then? Well, no. Mastery of archery comes first and hunting later - likely a fair amount of practice hours later. It's only when you are quite confident in your ability is it time to go for a hunt. Correct archery form is far from an innate sense, but getting professional guidance is easy, as most archery outlets have a range where initial shots can be taken under instruction. From then on, whether a long bow or a compound is your chosen hunting outfit, accuracy involves acquisition of consistency, both in aiming and let-off technique - one shot after the other with practice and more practice.

Shooting the bow

Basically, the technique (with range ascertained) is to draw the bow until the string is almost 'kissing' the cheek or tip of the nose. This is known as 'holding the anchor point', and it is maintaining the same anchor point every time that achieves consistency with aiming. The eye looks through the peep, then centres the appropriate front pin for distance onto the target.

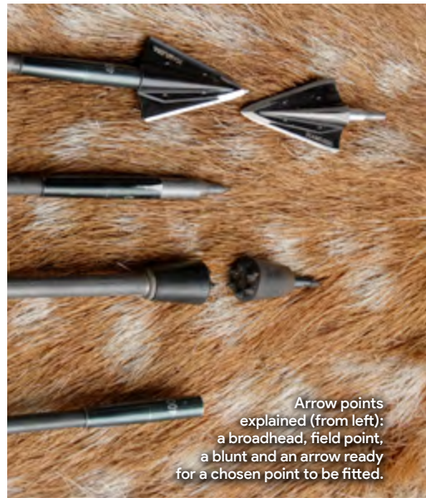
Understand though, the bow must *not* be gripped tightly, or it will be torqued to one side or other with arrows following suit. Ideally, the drawn bow should rest back in the upright hand and, just after release the bow tilts forward, the hand closing to retain it. This is not an involved process and is easily mastered with practice.

With the bow at full draw and the sights lined up on the target, the trigger of the release aid is gently tripped to send the arrow on its way. Overall, it's the continual pursuit for identical technique each time that will develop accuracy. Nothing else. Note that field archery clubs, some of them hosted on SSAA ranges, are invaluable for learning archery skills, as information and technique are backed up with animal-sized targets. Practice those heart/lung kill shots!

Get to the point

Arrows have varying points, threaded for interchangeability. Target work involves field points shaped similar to a sharpened pencil; hunting of larger game requires broadheads as sharp as possible. They should shave. Note that archery shop advice is required for both field point and broadhead selection relative to spine of arrow and draw weight of the bow, with ready reference tables reliable guides.

Rabbits require blunts – the best being somewhat broader items designed to smash said rabbit, which it certainly does. If a miss does occur, the blunt tips the arrow on ground contact and it can then usually be found. Not the case with broadheads and field points; they burrow. Gone - too bad! Blunts are great for shots at cow pats, grass clumps and the like for some paddock practice. It's all fun.



Arrow points explained (from left): a broadhead, field point, a blunt and an arrow ready for a chosen point to be fitted.

Broadhead checking

With field point work going well at a target, it's time to swap for a broadhead and check point of impact. Broadheads wreck things so a designated broadhead target is necessary. Again, back to the good old bow shop to buy a portable target for practice at the camp as well.

Interestingly, it's not unusual to find that broadheads shoot to a different point of aim to a field point simply because of the difference in profiles. And while an expert might be able to 'tune' a bow to obviate this, Plan B is to simply alter the front sight, keeping in mind that an adjustment to move impact to the right requires the sight to move left and vice versa. Elevation requires moving the sight down. It's called 'chasing the error'; all archers are familiar with the term. Naturally, one makes a note of any sight pin changes.



This image shows the manner in which the drawn bow sits back against the palm, with the hand quite open. Torquing the bow will upset accuracy.

Practise and legalities

A bonus of archery life can be the ease of practice. With suitable heavy-duty back stops, target practice at home is feasible provided your neighbours are not concerned about it *and there is no possibility of an arrow exiting the property.* That's vital. Remember, bows are weapons and complaints to authorities will cause big problems, same as with any other weapon. Discretion with practice areas is everything.

Legally, bow hunting for ferals – and only ferals – is at a landowner's discretion in the eastern states, with bow hunting bans in place in South Australia and Tasmania. Bow hunting in Western Australia and Victoria requires a permit.

Let's go hunting

With confidence and ability up there, it's time to put on the camo and take the bow and associated hunting kit into the paddock. Watch out for a future article, which will set out how to stalk close enough to use that bow to take your first hard-won trophy. Thrills and frustrations? You bet!

BOW HUNTING TERMS:

Anchor point: The area near the cheek or nose where an archer's hand comes to rest each time a bow is drawn. Consistency in anchoring is vital for accuracy.

Cam: The pulley-like item at a compound limb's extremity. Upon release after full draw, it turns over to convert rapid rotary motion to linear motion. This mechanical advantage greatly facilitates both ease of holding and accuracy.

Compound bow: One that relies upon mechanical advantage via cams and pulleys to propel arrows. Compounds are somewhat heavier than their long-bow relatives but have massive advantages thanks to ease of aiming and accuracy potential from sights.

Length of pull: Measured distance the string must be pulled back to reach an archer's anchor point near the face.

Long bow: The traditional, sightless and quite long, one-piece bow consisting of shaped timber or other material with a handle in the middle. There are two styles: recurve and standard long bow. These must be drawn and released virtually in one motion, as the full pressure of the drawn string is on an archer's fingers and difficult to sustain.

Quiver: A special pouch-style unit designed to safely hold sharp arrows. Many styles exist and some are actually affixed to the bow.

Spine: A term referring to the inherent stiffness and ability to resist flexing that will categorise an arrow.

Weight of pull: The actual poundage (archery life features avoirdupois classifications) measured in draw back pressure before cam reduction takes place in a compound or at full draw in a long bow. Special scales measure poundage.



With a mobile broadhead target, practice at the hunting camp is as easy as it's discreet.

GREAT AUSTRALIAN
OUTDOORS

REVIEW

Chill with EVAKOOL



Rocky terrain is no problem for the EvaKool fridge. After a full day of 4WDing on some serious tracks, everything was just where it was meant to be at the end of the day.



The temperature display is easy to see – day or night.

By Ty Martens

Keeping your food, drinks, bait and camping necessities icy cool has never been easier or more efficient than with an EvaKool drawer fridge/freezer. EvaKool's products are proudly Australian made in sunny Queensland – meaning the company knows a bit about beating the heat. Born out of need in 1994, EvaKool's original fibreglass icebox was just its starting point. Today, the company is leading the way in reliable and quality-built cooling products. In fact, EvaKool was the first company in Australia to offer a dual-zone fridge/freezer that was powerful enough to handle the tropics while still being energy efficient.

On review here is EvaKool's 40-litre drawer fridge/freezer. This compact unit will fit perfectly in almost any 4WD vehicle space, whether you are running a tray and canopy setup or a standard ute tub. It will even work in the boot of an SUV. With its dimensions at only 836mm x 595mm x 326mm (LxWxH), worrying about taking up too much space in your vehicle is no issue, which was one of the main reasons I chose this unit.

With the price listed at $1,399, it comes in as a mid- to high-range priced fridge/freezer, but for the quality and functionality, tested in the harsh conditions of the Australian summer, it's worth it. Plus, it is Australian made. What more do you want?

SETUP AND OPERATION

The process of unboxing to installation was simple, unlike with some other brands that have too many loose pieces and bits to put together, which more often than not leave you overwhelmed and confused. This unit arrived with a simple assortment of items, including an instruction manual, mounting bracket, and the necessary screws, bolts and washers. Keep in mind, though, you do have to purchase your own power supply cable, which may vary in size depending on the length of the run and type of connection to your battery. Thankfully, EvaKool was thoughtful enough to include a handy guide for choosing the right cable.

On the lower back left side of the fridge is a 50A Anderson plug for connection to the power supply, so getting it up and running is simple – just plug it in and go. Once connected, the fridge automatically turns on. Then the choice is yours as to the operating temperature, which ranges from a deep freeze of –18° Celsius up to 10° Celsius, all with the press of the up/down arrows on the front of the fridge next to the digital temperature display screen, which has a built-in LED light to make the display clear and easy to read even on the darkest of nights or in bright sunlight.

Once installed, I chose to set my fridge to 3° Celsius. It only took about 45 minutes to get to the setting, thanks to the Secop PBC 2.5 compressor, which is designed for portable fridges. Secop compressors are highly regarded for their energy efficiency, durability, light weight and quiet operation. They are meant to be used for mobile and off-grid use. By the time I had everything ready to load into my ute, the compressor did its job, and the fridge was ready to go.

For those who want to use the unit as a freezer for maybe bait or meat, getting the temperature low enough (-18° Celsius) to not risk spoilage only took two and a half hours from room temperature.



Powered from 12v setup – not included.


Unpacking the fridge is a breeze. Set up took less than 20 minutes.

EVAKOOL 40L DRAWER FRIDGE/FREEZER SPECS

DIMENSIONS:
(L) 836mm x (W) 595mm x (H) 326mm

POWER SUPPLY:
12-volt or 24-volt

TEMPERATURE RANGE:
-18° Celsius to 10° Celsius

PRICE: $1399
EvaKool.com.au

FIRST USE

Packing for a week away, I was pleasantly surprised with the food and number of drinks I was able to store. Plus, the ease of packing the drawers and the ability to clearly see what is inside is much better than an upright fridge, which can have limitations on the height of containers or the ability to see what is stuffed in the back. And, compared to an esky, EvaKool's drawer/fridge, was a no brainer. No lifting. No replenishing ice. And no water-soaked food when fresh ice in not available. Don't get me wrong though, an esky, especially an EvaKool fibreglass icebox, has its place. But for regular and off-road travellers going fair distances, a fridge/freezer offers next-level conveniences.

For my first outing, I opted to use half of the fridge for food and half for drinks. I was able to fit in 24 cans with ease, leaving the other half for a few days' worth of refrigerated foods such as steaks, yogurt and vegetables. It was the perfect drinks-to-food ratio. If you plan to only use it as a drinks fridge, it has the capacity to hold 48+ cans; that's right – 48 just like a large esky minus the hassle and cost of replacing the ice every few days, which is a huge win for those situations where the closest servo might be hours away.

The only downside of the fridge I noticed, which I'll admit might sound slightly picky but was a little inconvenient at times, it that there is no feature to keep the drawer in its open position if your vehicle is at the wrong angle. This means if your vehicle is set up with a slight tilt towards the back of the fridge,



EvaKool wouldn't use anything less than a SECOP compressor to operate in Australia's varied temperatures.

the drawer's instinct is to fall back into the closed position if you aren't supporting it. But when I adjusted the ute to a flatter surface, this wasn't an issue, so pick your terrain wisely for optimal use. Having said that, if you were angled the other way, the drawer does lock shut, so you don't need to worry about it sliding open unintentionally.

Another benefit of a drawer fridge/freezer reveals itself after the trip...when it comes time to clean up. Just open the drawer and wipe out the compartments. Compared to an upright fridge, it wins hands down. No need to wrestle with unruly and tricky-to-clean shelving or tight spaces.

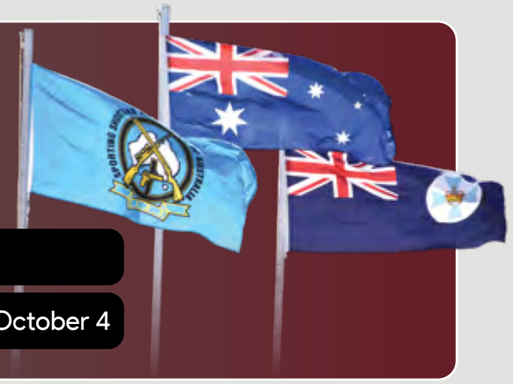
You will never regret graduating from an esky to a fridge/freezer drawer. Of course, there are other products out there, but why would you look any further than EvaKool – a company that prides itself on being pioneers in 'keeping the important stuff cool'? It's been beating the heat successfully for more than three decades.

Visit EvaKool.com.au for fridges, freezers, eskys, drinkware, cool accessories and spare parts. EvaKool's fridge/freezers range from 40l up to 110l.



A full fridge makes a full day of 4WDing even better.

As the competition calendar for 2026 is coming to a close, here are the last of the year's events. But, as we ramp up for 2027, this space will include a full list of known events for our competitors. So, stay tuned.



2026 COMPETITION CALENDAR

Rifle Silhouette	Brisbane	October 3-5
Single Action	Captains Mountain	September 28 - October 4



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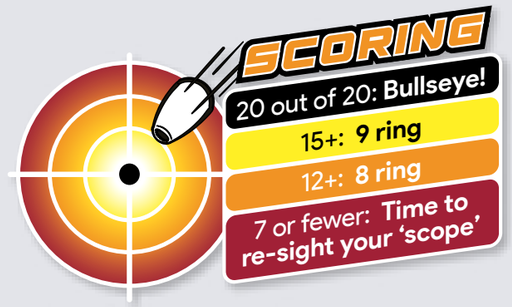
SHOOT OFF! Quiz

Welcome to another instalment of The Shoot Off! It's a chance to test your knowledge on firearms, hunting and the great outdoors. Whether you're a competitive shooter, or closer to a bushwalker, there's something here for everyone.

We think getting anything over 15 out of 20 makes an AA-grade quizzer. Answers can be found in the Sunset Gallery section on page 83.

QUESTIONS:

1. **Which is older:** the Luger P08 or the Colt 1911?
2. **What came first:** the Lee-Metford or the Lee-Enfield?
3. **Which cartridge is longer:** .308 Winchester or .30-06 Springfield?
4. **What firearm entered service first:** the Bren Gun or the Owen Gun?
5. **Which came first:** the .45 ACP or the 9mm Luger?
6. **Which is older:** the AK-47 or the FN FAL?
7. **What deer is typically heavier:** hog deer or fallow deer?
8. **How many deer species are native to Australia?**
9. **Which came first in Australia:** rabbits or foxes?
10. **Which has the larger antlers:** red deer or fallow deer?
11. **After Tasmania, what is Australia's largest island?**
12. **Which is larger:** Cape York Peninsula or Tasmania?
13. **What state has the most World Heritage Areas?**
14. **Which has the greater muzzle energy:** .22 LR or .17 HMR?
15. **Which has the larger bore:** 10-gauge or 12-gauge?
16. **Which Olympic shooting discipline came first:** Trap or Skeet?
17. **Which is further south:** Adelaide or Melbourne?
18. **Which is longer:** saltwater crocodile or freshwater crocodile?
19. **What is Australia's largest bird of prey?**
20. **What direction do tropical cyclones rotate in the Southern Hemisphere?**



Plus, if you want more quizzing fun, there's a second half to the Shoot Off! A full extra 20 questions on our website - **ssaaqld.org.au Good luck!**

Send feedback and your question ideas to news@ssaaqld.org.au.

SUNSET GALLERY

Eat WILD:

Wild venison kofta kebabs

Prep: 30 mins | Cook: 15 mins | Serves: 2-3

Recipe from Australian Meats

What you'll need

Kofta
- 500g wild venison mince
- 6 garlic cloves, finely grated (micro planed)
- ¼ bunch coriander, finely chopped
- 1 tbsp smoked paprika
- Chilli flakes, to taste
- Zest of 1 lemon
- Drizzle of olive oil

Pickled Red Onion
- 1 red onion, thinly sliced (or use a mandoline)
- 1 cup vinegar (white or apple cider)
- ½ cup water
- 1 tbsp salt
- 1 tsp sugar
- Cracked black pepper
- 1 tsp coriander seeds

Whipped Feta Sauce
- 100g Danish feta
- 100g Greek yoghurt
- Juice of 1 lemon
- 1 tbsp dill, chopped

Cumin & Fennel Salt
- 1 tbsp cumin seeds
- 1 tbsp fennel seeds
- 1 tbsp salt
- ½ tbsp cracked black pepper
- Chilli flakes, to taste

To Serve
- Flatbreads
- Sliced tomato
- Sliced cucumber
- Mixed lettuce
- Extra Danish feta
- Fresh dill

How to cook it

Prepare the kofta mixture
- In a large bowl, combine venison, garlic, coriander, smoked paprika, chilli flakes, lemon zest and olive oil.
- Mix well until evenly combined. Cover and refrigerate to marinate while preparing the accompaniments.

Make the pickled red onions
- Place the sliced onion in a clean jar.
- In a small saucepan, bring vinegar, water, salt, sugar, black pepper and coriander seeds to a boil.
- Once boiling, pour the liquid over the onions. Set aside to cool and pickle.

Make the whipped feta sauce
- Combine Danish feta, yoghurt and lemon juice in a bowl.
- Mash or blend until smooth and creamy.
- Finish with a lemon zest and fresh dill.

Prepare the cumin & fennel salt
- Toast cumin and fennel seeds in a dry pan over medium heat for about 5 minutes, shaking the pan often.
- Transfer to a mortar and pestle (or food processor) and grind until slightly coarse.
- Mix with salt, pepper, and chilli flakes

Cook the koftas
- Preheat a BBQ or grill to medium-high heat.
- Shape the venison mixture onto skewers, pressing firmly to hold.
- Grill the koftas, turning occasionally, until charred on all sides and cooked through.
- Toast flatbreads on the grill for 30 seconds to 1 minute per side.

Assemble the kebabs
- Spread a generous layer of whipped feta sauce over a toasted flatbread.
- Add lettuce, tomato, and cucumber.
- Place the kofta on top, then add pickled red onion.
- Crumble over extra feta, sprinkle generously with cumin & fennel salt, and finish with fresh dill.

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SHOOT OFF! Quiz

ANSWERS

1. Luger P08
2. Lee-Metford
3. .30-06 Springfield
4. Bren Gun
5. 9mm Luger
6. AK-47
7. Fallow
8. None
9. Rabbits
10. Red deer
11. Melville Island
12. Cape York Peninsula
13. Queensland
14. 17 HMR
15. 10-gauge
16. Trap
17. Melbourne
18. Saltwater crocodile
19. Wedge-tailed eagle
20. Clockwise

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