



Personally

A few words from the editor by Marcus O'Dean

Knowing what you don't know...

I HAD THE pleasure to attend a Precision Long Range Rifle Shooting course conducted by the team from precisionshooting.com.au very recently. The chief instructor, Glen, was eminently qualified to teach us how to use the latest technology and accumulated ballistic knowledge of centuries to enable us to make regular hits on stationary clay targets out to 923 metres.

Contained in this course were several elements including:

- Rifle safety and range template familiarity
 - Ammunition and velocity testing
 - Ballistics theory
 - Environmental Ballistics Computer Software
 - Wind Reading
 - Shooting positions and
 - Spotting hits and calling corrections
- I had some familiarity with many of the concepts explained in theory classes due to a background in the Artillery in a previous career in the Regular Army. Concepts like Coriolis effect, cold barrel effect, projectile stability, atmospheric and wind effects and local ambient temperature were all known to me but never applied practically and electronically to any small arms.

Despite years of doping wind shooting fullbore and service rifle from 100 to 800 metres, the degree of precision aspired to on this course was all new.

With a good spotter, I was able to knock off a clay target on the at 723 metres using a 16X Mildot scope in very light wind and at 923 metres, I managed to hit a three litre milk bottle twice, but a minor change of wind, took the bullet a few target-widths away. Once the target was hit, there was great elevation, because the bond between spotter and shooter is sealed at that point. It was a great learning experience and great fun shooting in magnificent autumn Monaro weather.

Here's the thing, though. With all that knowledge and developed skill in addition to feeding firearm/optics/ammunition and current environmental conditions into the palm pilot to fire that shot, a bucketful of stuff can easily go wrong. You have to have a lot of patient guidance, perfect well set up gear and faultless ammo, and a very switched-on spotter to get near the target with your first shot. So, at the end of the five day course, I knew that I knew how to apply the

knowledge and techniques but I also knew that shooting at animals at that distance was still a lottery. It would take months or years of experience to gain the confidence to take any shot at any animal at anything like the distances we shot in that week. Consequently, I won't be doing it.

The most worthwhile elements of the course for me were the challenge of doing something new, meeting like-minded shooters who were going through the same process and experiencing the measure of success I could never have dreamed of. If anybody out there has a hankering to have some fun and learn a lot about this long range game, check out the precisionshooting.com.au website and it will open another world to you.

A SAFETY NOTE

I had been remiss in not heeding Nick's warning about highlighting carrying de-cocked rifles with a round in the chamber, be advised it is very dangerous. If readers can visualise a de-cocked bolt, they will see the striker protruding from the hole in the bolt-face. This means that a de-cocked rifle has its striker in hard

contact with the primer and could easily result in accidental discharge when subjected to a bash or knock, very like old single action revolvers whose hammers rested on primers in a full cylinder, hence the old practice of carrying these guns with an empty cylinder under the hammer.

With modern sporting rifles we who have been using this practice, me included, have to suck it up and just make a bit of noise approaching game by stripping a round from the top of the magazine into the chamber, applying the safety until ready, then shooting the animal. If the odd one twigs and runs away, it's got to be better than the tragedy of drilling ourselves or our mates.

On a pleasant closing note, prolific hunter, photographer and contributor Alex Juris, has agreed to come on board as a regular staff writer in *Sporting Shooter* from next month. His monthly offering, "From the Field" will cover species guides, photo tips and other pertinent information for our readers. ■

MARCUS O'DEAN
Editor



The view through a Schmidt and Bender scope at 20X at 1,000 yards when shooting at clay targets and milk bottles.

SPORTING

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