

Fall River GUN CLUB NEWS



Volume II, Issue No. 1

Winter 2017

Hot Springs, South Dakota

Long Range Shooting: Some History

By Bill Schulaw, FRGC board member

The last few years have seen the development of a great deal of interest in long range shooting. But what do we mean by "long range"? For some of us, 100 yards is a long distance, but others think in terms of shooting several hundred yards - or even more than a thousand. Today's equipment is superb and incredible shooting is possible. But how did we get to where we are now?

Many people believe that the man who had the most influence on long range shooting was Joseph Whitworth of Manchester England. Although the British government had officially adopted an Enfield-made rifle firing the



Bill Schulaw photo

From left to right - a hexagonal bullet for the Whitworth; same bullet showing its six-sided base; a 515 grain paper patched round bullet for the Whitworth; same bullet recovered from dirt bank showing that the base has upset into the six sided bore.

French-developed .58 caliber Minie bullet by 1851, and it was arguably the best rifle used in the Crimean War (1853-1856), lack of uniformity and quality in manufacturing capability was of concern. In 1852 the ordnance department began consulting with various experts to improve arms manufacture and among them was Whitworth. Whitworth was a noted engineer and inventor of lathes and precision machine tools (the Whitworth system of screw threads exists to this day). He was of the opinion that there were additional problems concerning the de-

Ctd./ Long Range - Page 2

FR Gun Club banquet coming

HOT SPRINGS - The last Saturday in February is traditionally Fall River Gun Club banquet time.

The banquet will be returning this year, Saturday Feb. 25, but with a change in location from last year.

After pricing out several options for this year's banquet, the board and membership elected to hold the event at Wooly's. The cost will be \$25 per plate, and remember this is a fundraiser for the club, with your admission and dinner price going towards range improvements and programs like the Appleseed Shoot and other events.

The evening will begin with a social hour in the downstairs lounge, from 5:30 - 6:30 p.m.; followed by a brief club meeting, from 6:30 - 7 p.m.; followed by the 7 p.m. meal, auction and other activities.

Raffle guns are:

- Henry .22 rifle, with octagon barrel, engraved with club logo valued at about \$480.
- Cricket youth .22 with scope.

Ctd./ Banquet - Page 3

On Target...

- **Jan. 31** - FRGC meeting, 7 p.m. Am. Legion, Hot Springs.
- **Feb 25** - FRGC banquet, Wooly's, 5:30 p.m.
- **March 28** - FRGC meeting, 7 p.m. Am. Legion, Hot Springs.

Fall River Gun Club News

— John D. Taylor, Editor —

Tel. 717-598-2916 • e-mail jdt@bonasapress.com
[www http://www.fallrivergunclub.org/index.html](http://www.fallrivergunclub.org/index.html)



LONG RANGE — A look at early long-range shooting efforts

From Page 1

sign of the rifle and rifling. He was given a contract for experimentation, and an enclosed range 500 yards long was constructed in 1854 in which to conduct experiments.

Mechanically fitting projectiles were not particularly new in 1854 with deeply grooved rifling systems using belted balls and winged bullets having been used for at least 20 years. These guns were typically of large bore diameter and used for heavy or dangerous game. But most of those systems suffered from excessive fouling or difficulty in loading. Whitworth initially experimented with some small cannons with polygonal bores and eventually settled on a hexagonally bored rifle barrel for testing. He realized that making a bullet that was very long for its diameter was fundamental to achieving long range accuracy. He also believed that spinning it faster would increase stability. At the time, the rifling in round ball guns was typically a slow twist of from one turn in forty-eight inches to one turn in seventy-two inches. The Minie bullet is relatively short and fat and rifles using it typically had twists of from one turn in forty-eight to seventy-two inches. He experimented with various rates of twist as fast as one complete turn in one inch.

His experiments showed that fast rates of twist had the potential to allow the use of very long bullets, but since most rifle bullets would be made of lead, he settled on a mechanically fitted (six-sided) bullet and a hexagonally bored barrel to alleviate concerns of conventional bullets not engaging in the hexagonal bore. This was not rifling in the traditional sense, but a six-sided bore with a rate of twist of one turn in twenty inches. The hexagonal bullet he settled on for typical use weighed about 530 grains, only a little heavier than the standard Minie bullet, and was .451 inches across the flats. (see pictures) In use, these were usually wrapped with thin linen paper, a paper “jack-



Muzzle of a Whitworth rifle showing the hexagonal bore.

Bill Schulaw photo

et” or patch, to prevent lead deposits in the bore. They were made individually by swaging and machining and supplied in paper tubes with the powder charge of 70 to 85 grains of black powder. Although it is not clear if they were ever used for military purposes, paper patched steel bullets were also produced for increased penetration or for use against armor. Although many people find “polygonal rifling” strange, fans of the products of Heckler & Koch, Glock, and Kahr Arms know that this type of bore is still used.

In tests for the military at Hythe in 1857, the superiority of the Whitworth rifle was clearly evident. Available facsimiles of targets show 20 bullets from the .58 Enfield rather uniformly dispersed over a six foot square target at 500 yards.¹ The Whitworth rifle target shows 20 bullets in a one foot circle. In addition, Greener reports that “the hexagonal bullet passed through fifteen thicknesses of elm to the Enfield’s six, under the same conditions and using the same powder charges.”¹ Hans Busk reported that “at eleven hundred yards its accuracy was equal to the Enfield at five hundred yards. With seventy grains of powder [black of course]

at five hundred yards it sent a bullet through thirty-three half-inch planks and the projectile then only stopped by a solid block of oak behind them.”² He further reported that steel bullets were “repeatedly driven through three quarter inch wrought iron plates without causing the smallest damage to the barrel.”²

Although the committee convened at Hythe reported that the rifle was superior to all other small arms yet produced, concerns about the cost of manufacturing the barrels and a suitable supply of ammunition (and perhaps other considerations) prevented the rifle’s adoption for government service. However, Whitworth was able to obtain an order for forty rifles that were to be used in competition for the Queens Prize to be shot for in the first meeting of the National Rifle Association of Great Britain. That inaugural meeting was held on Wimbledon Common in 1860, where it remained for nearly 30 years. (and you thought Wimbledon was for tennis!) Queen Victoria fired the first shot of the matches by pulling a silken cord attached to the trigger of a Whitworth rifle held in a machine rest

Ctd./ Long Range - Page 3

and aimed at a target 400 yards away; the bullet reportedly struck about four inches from center.

This match ushered in about 30 years of intense international competition in long range shooting with typical matches including competition at 800, 900, and 1,000 yards. Until the famous competition between the Irish team and the first American long-range team at the Creedmoor range in New York in 1874, these competitions all were with muzzleloaders. They were typically fired from the prone position with no sling or other type of support and with peep sights. Whitworth-made muzzle-loading target rifles were very popular in the 1860s, however, his work established that a fast twist, small bore, and elongated bullet were the keys to long range accuracy, and other famous gun makers quickly capitalized on his work. By the mid- to late-1860s, such names as Henry, Rigby, Metford, and Gibbs were associated with highly accurate and finely made muzzleloading long range target rifles with more conventional round bores. It was also demonstrated that relatively soft lead, paper patched bullets fired in the Whitworth would expand or “slug up” to fit the hexagonal bore and shoot very well. Other mak-

ers used paper patched round bullets in their target rifles.

During our War Between the States, Whitworth rifles made in the military style were smuggled into the South and were given to Confederate sharpshooters. On May 9, 1864, during the Battle of Spotsylvania Courthouse, Union General John Sedgwick was killed by a Confederate sharpshooter firing a Whitworth rifle at an estimated range of between 800 and 1,000 yards (multiple accounts). It is not known how many rifles were imported by the South but it was probably small numbers and early in the war before effective Union blockade. A very few of these rifles may have been equipped with short telescopic sights mounted on the left side of the rifle. These were not easy to use and “scope eye” was known to have occurred with them as a result of fairly stiff recoil and the odd position in which one had to put his head in order to sight with them.

In the 1970s, as I remember, Navy Arms marketed a replica of the Whitworth military rifle along with appropriate bullet swages and equipment. Later Parker Hale of England made these and they were imported to the USA for several years before the Eu-

roarms company bought their tooling and began building them. They have never been plentiful here in the USA and for the last few years they have been unavailable. In 2016 Davide Pedersoli & Co. of Italy have been advertising that they are offering a replica of the Whitworth. I have not seen a Pedersoli Whitworth yet but have seen a You Tube review of one. I have seen several replicas of the military style Whitworth rifles, and several original Whitworth made target rifles, fired in shooting matches over the past twenty years and they are capable of very fine shooting. So the next time you attempt to shoot “long range”, pause a moment and thank Sir Joseph Whitworth.

References

1. Greener, W.W. The Gun and Its Development. Ninth Edition, 1910. Bonanza Books, New York, NY. pp. 633-637. Target facsimiles attributed by Greener to Sir J. E. Tennant, Story of the Guns.

2. Barber, Edward C. The Crack Shot or Young Rifleman's Complete Guide: Being a Treatise on the Use of the Rifle. First published 1873 and reprinted by Skyhorse Publishing, 2015. New York, NY. pp. 51-54 and 182-187.

3. Long range shooting in Great Britain <https://longrangerifles.wordpress.com/reference/> and <http://www.lrml.org/>

4. Hans Busk background info [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hans_Busk_\(1815%E2%80%931882\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hans_Busk_(1815%E2%80%931882))

BANQUET — FRGC fundraiser coming From Page 1

valued at about \$320.

- Smith and Wesson 9mm handgun, valued at \$510.

- Weatherby 12 gauge pump shotgun, valued at \$400

Tickets for the raffle are \$10 each,

with all club members having received tickets with their dues notice.

Sell your tickets and help FRGC do all the things it has done..



GFP to lengthen light goose hunting season

PIERRE. – Game, Fish and Parks (GFP) has proposed to lengthen the 2017 light goose season at their January meeting. The Commission proposed to extend the season, having it run statewide from Sept. 30, 2017 to Jan. 12, 2018.

The Commission also proposed the following goose hunting seasons:

- Canada Geese (and Brant) - Unit 1: Oct. 1 – Dec. 17, 2017; Unit 2: Nov. 6, 2017 – Feb. 18, 2018; Unit 3: Jan. 13-21, 2018.

- White-fronted geese - Statewide: Sept. 30 – Dec. 24, 2017.

Regular meeting minutes

October 25, 2016

by Mark Sperlich

The meeting was called to order by president Dan Harley with the pledge of allegiance to the American flag. Five board members present, and six club members.

•The treasurer's report was then given. We have \$9,330.55 in the combined accounts. Jose Miranda made a motion to accept the treasurer's report. Motion was seconded and passed.

•The minutes of the last meeting were read. Suzanne Embree made a motion to approve the minutes, was seconded and passed.

Unfinished business

•Windows not fixed on the office yet. We will be putting hail screen over the new panes once in.

•Yardage on the pistol range is marked, thanks Jack.

•Thanks went out to Dan Harley, Tom Embree and Mark Sperlich for the

dirt work and culvert installation.

•50 Yard berm gravel paths were discussed and the desire to complete before winter.

New business

•Jack Douthit is working on the annual meeting and has one bid for the meal at this time.

•Mark Sperlich made a motion that the meeting be adjourned. Motion was seconded and passed.

Board meeting minutes

November 22, 2016

by Mark Sperlich

The meeting was called to order by president Dan Harley at Bill Shulaw's residence. Mark Sperlich, Dan Harley, Bill Shulaw, Suzanne Embree and Owen Meadows were present.

•Harley opened the meeting with the bids that were received for the banquet. After adding all of the costs to us they were.

•Legion \$26.20

•Red Rock \$21.50

•Wooly's \$18.00

By unanimous decision Wooly's

was chosen and setting the price at \$25 a plate.

Harley also said they were going to let us use the downstairs for the social hour before the meal. 5:30 to 6:30 social hour, 6:30 to 7:00 meeting 7:00 meal.

Meadows then presented the proposed guns.

•Henry 22 Engraved with club logo & octagon barrel.

•Cricket youth 22 with scope.

•Smith and Wesson 9mm hand gun.

•Weatherby 12 ga pump shotgun.

After discussion, all were in agree-

ment Sperlich made a motion to purchase above guns. Motion was seconded and passed.

Meadows will order the raffle tickets so they can be included in the dues notice letter and a picture page to help sell the tickets.

Tickets will be \$10 each.

Meal tickets will be ordered by Harley.

Meadows will also contact a possible speaker for the banquet.

Sperlich made a motion that the meeting be adjourned.

Motion was seconded and passed.

RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP

Invite a new member to join...

Take a kid shooting....

GFP proposes decrease in pintail limit

PIERRE – The South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks (GFP) Commission proposed a decrease in the daily bag limit of pintails from two to one for the 2017 South Dakota duck hunting season.

Season dates would be as follows:

•High Plains Zone: Oct. 14, 2017 – Jan. 18, 2018

•Low Plains North & Low Plains Middle Zone: Sept. 30 – Dec. 12, 2017

•Low Plains South Zone: Oct. 14 – Dec. 26, 2017

The proposed duck limit may be comprised of no more than five mallards, three wood ducks, three scaup, two redheads, two canvasbacks, and one pintail. A bonus blue-winged teal season, allowing for two more blue-winged teal, would be held the first 16 days of the duck hunting season.



North Dakota woman wins mounted shooting championship

By Jenny Schlecht, Bismark Tribune,
Nov. 23, 2016

BISMARCK, ND - “Jingles,” wasn’t feeling well. The paint mare had a banged up shoulder from a hard stop in the trailer in South Dakota, and the ride from North Dakota to Amarillo, Texas, had left her sore and tired.

Betty McCommon was a little out of sorts, too. Because of her performance at North Dakota Mounted Shooting events, she had moved up from the Senior Ladies 3 class to the Senior Ladies 4 class. She wasn’t sure how she would do against better competition as she headed to the Cowboy Mounted Shooting Association Wrangler World Championship last month.

Her run in Amarillo was clean but slower than she would have liked, thanks to Jingles’ injury. Not long after her ride was finished, people started congratulating her. McCommon had won the Senior Ladies 4 championship — the first cowboy mounted shooting championship for someone from North Dakota.

“It was a surprise. To be fair, I wasn’t the fastest, but other people made mistakes, and I was able to take advantage of those mistakes,” she said. “I went back to my trailer and just cried. I couldn’t believe it. I hugged my horse and cried.”

It was a big win for someone who just five years earlier wouldn’t have considered the possibility that she would not only compete in mounted shooting but also drive across the country to do so.

McCommon had a long history in equine events, including horse shows and rodeos. She quit those about 12 years ago but kept horses for trail riding. About six years ago, McCommon had a bad wreck while riding. After that, she bought Jingles, then a



Mark Quigley photo

Betty McCommon, riding Jingles, won the Cowboy Mounted Shooting Association Wrangler World Championship in Amarillo, Texas last year.

2-year-old.

McCommon’s daughter, Bailey Elkins, had wanted to get involved in mounted shooting, and McCommon, though resistant to the idea, went with her to a practice.

She was hooked.

Mounted shooting helped her recover from her accident, she said. It helped her regain her balance and reflexes and kept her mind active. And it’s strengthened her relationship with her daughter and her horse.

Jingles — named after McCommon’s daughter’s childhood stick horse — also did not initially seem interested in being used for mounted shooting. But McCommon took her to a former world champion. Within three weeks — and 600 rounds fired — Jingles was ready to go.

“Now, she’s probably one of the top senior ladies horses in the country,” McCommon said.

The unpredictability of the sport — where there are 60 different patterns that might be used for a competition — along with the variety of

elements involved have kept McCommon coming back. Success depends on how a horse runs and on hitting the balloon targets. A gun could misfire or a rider could drop the gun.

“It’s just got so much happening,” she said. “It’s just fun.”

McCommon’s goal for the year was to be ranked in the top 10 of Senior Ladies 3. That went awry in August when she got moved up to Senior Ladies 4. She was ranked 18th in that class heading into the world championships. Her goal heading then was to have a clean run in Amarillo.

McCommon wasn’t the only North Dakotan to have a successful world championship. Keith Benz took third in Senior Men’s 3, and Roger Collins took third in Senior Men’s 1.

“The seniors really kicked butt down there,” she said.

Seniors are 50 and older in mounted shooting. McCommon, 59, said that while the younger age groups often ride — and recover — faster, there are people into their 70s

Ctd./ Mounted - Page 6

Taylor's books coming to banquet

HOT SPRINGS - Prior to coming to work for The Hot Springs Star, as editor, Fall River Gun Club board member John D. Taylor ran a book publishing company, Bonasa Press (www.bonasapress.com) that focused on producing high quality books about the outdoors, especially upland bird hunting. He also authored eight books, five of them about the outdoors, four published by Bonasa Press, all with bird dogs and upland bird hunting a particular focus.

Taylor's five outdoor book titles include the following:

- *Prairie Autumn: A Mid-continent Quest for Heart and Soul* - This 2012 two-volume, 1,000-page book looks at tall-, mixed- and shortgrass prairie, the Great Plains, and considers its past, present and future. "The book," Taylor says, "is really my justification for moving from Pennsylvania, where I grew up and spent a lot of time hunting ruffed grouse, to the Dakotas for a better quality of life. Sharptails and pheasants hooked me on South Dakota, big game, especially antelope and turkeys made sure I'd stay here."

- *A Gentleman's Shooting Dog: Evolution of the Legendary Ryman Setter* - This is a book about a particular line of English setters, a blend of field and show lines, that has been continuously bred since 1907, and what it means to be a gentleman outdoors. Taylor has owned and trained dogs from this line for the last 30 years and currently has three English setters who occupy his autums. Unfortunately, it is out of print.

- *Gunning the Eastern Uplands* — This (2004) book explores the past, present and future of hunting upland game east of the Mississippi River,



with a special focus on Dr. Charles E. Norris and George Bird Evans, two of the East's premier upland writers.

- *The Wild Ones: A Quest for North America's Forest & Prairie Grouse* - This book was the result of a six-week quest Taylor made in 2001 to hunt all six species of North America's grouse - sharptails, prairie chickens and sage grouse on the prairie; and ruffed, spruce and blue grouse in the forests. The book shares this adventure and looks at the status of these birds at that time.

- *Hunting North America's Upland Birds* - This 1999 book, published by Lyons Press focused on an overview of hunting all of North America's game birds, from South Dakota pheasants to Oregon blue grouse to Minnesota woodcock.

Taylor will have copies of some of these books, and others published by Bonasa Press at the Fall River Gun Club's Feb. 25 banquet as auction items and as donations.

Taylor is currently the Editor of the The Hot Springs Star,

MOUNTED From Page 1

still competing.

McCommon credits Elkins for pushing her to practice and get better and her husband Don for supporting her. Jingles, with the help of a horse chiropractor and lots of care, is recovering over the off season and should be ready to go for next season. McCommon will be ready, too.

"It's become something that I just do, and it's part of me now," she said.



Harvest, opinion surveys underway

PIERRE. – Game, Fish and Parks (GFP) is currently administering a number of different harvest and opinion surveys regarding the management of wildlife resources across the state.

"Harvest and opinion surveys are an important part of wildlife management in South Dakota," stated Tony Leif, GFP wildlife division director. The survey data collected helps determine license numbers and assists GFP in setting season structures along with the technical and financial components of habitat, access and wildlife depredation programs; which meet current and future management objectives.

GFP encourages individuals to complete the surveys either online or via mail as they receive them.

"We want to hear from the people we serve. The information obtained by completing these surveys is an important link between our agency and the public," concluded Leif.