



TRIGGER TALK

THE NEWS LETTER OF

THE MILNERTON SHOOTING ASSOCIATION

INCORPORATING NEWS FROM THE WESTERN CAPE
SHOOTING UNION

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WCSU NEWS

We had a bit of wind damage to the silhouette ranges and are planning a more permanent roof structure for these ranges. An Area has been allocated for PIN shooting and we are hopefully going to see the pin shooters on our ranges soon.

The veld range has been temporarily closed until the range is more formalised.

Plans are in place to start practical shooting on the ranges in the near future.

DATES TO REMEMBER

9TH JULY	MSA CENTRE FIRE CLUB SHOOT
13 TH AUGUST	MSA RIMFIRE CLUB SHOOT
29 TH AUGUST	MSA AGM
3 SEPTEMBER	KAAPJAG VELD SHOOT
10TH SEPTEMBER	MSA CENTRE FIRE CLUB SHOOT
1ST OCTOBER	MSA RIM FIRE CLUB SHOOT DATES MOVED
5-8TH OCTOBER	SAMMSA NATIONALS SHOOT
5TH NOVEMBER	MSA CENTRE FIRE CLUB SHOOT
11TH NOVEMBER	WP OPEN VELD SHOOT

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Regards

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SILHOUETTE NEWS

Great news, the SA champs as well as the world shoot will be taking place on the WCSU ranges . The champs will be in October 2011 and the world shoot in March 2012.

Dust off the old sil firearms and get practicing, remember, both are open competitions so you can compete with the best in the world.

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PISTOL SHOOTING SPECIAL SERIES

Chapter three

Trigger Control

A. GENERAL.

Correct trigger control must be employed in conjunction with all other fundamentals of shooting. The physical act of applying pressure on the trigger to deliver an accurate shot may vary from individual to individual. Proper trigger control for each individual gradually assumes uniformity when the techniques of proper application are mastered. Many shooters, for example, maintain a degree of trigger control with a relatively light grip, while another shooter may use a very tight grip. Some shooters prefer to apply consistent trigger pressure at a rapid rate, while maintaining correct sight alignment. For another shooter, a slower, deliberate application may achieve the same results. An ever increasing number of shooters use the positive approach to trigger control, that is, once it is initiated, it becomes an uninterrupted, constantly increasing pressure until the weapon fires.

Trigger control is of very great importance in producing an accurate shot. When the shooter exerts pressure on the trigger, he must do so in a manner that does not alter the sight alignment, or position of the pistol. Consequently, the shooter must be able to exert smooth, even pressure to the trigger.

Furthermore, the trigger must be pressed in conjunction with maximum concentration, peak visual perception of sight alignment and minimum arc of movement.

In order to produce an accurate shot, the shooter must carry out many diverse, but related, actions. Fulfilling this action is compounded by the fact that the pistol is in some degree of motion throughout the period of sighting and aiming. The movement varies according to the stability of the shooter's stance. Consequently, the sight alignment deviates from the aiming area. Often it will move through the aiming area, pausing only for a short period of time in perfect alignment with the target. It is impossible to determine when, and for how long the properly aligned sights will stay in the center of the aiming area. This difficulty is aggravated further by the fact that the shooter is trying to execute coordinated actions when reflex action seeks to contradict them. Such a situation requires the development of conditioned reflexes, and improvement of coordination.

The coordinated action of correct aiming, timely pressure on the trigger, and the correct delivery of the shot is difficult and can be accomplished only by overcoming former uncoordinated reflexes or by

acquiring new ones. Only through constant training and attention to accepted techniques can these new reflexes be acquired. The peculiar nature and characteristics of the human nervous system are covered in detail in Annex III entitled, "Processes of the Human Nervous System Relevant to Equilibrium, Trigger Control and Hearing".

B. FACTORS PROVIDING FOR THE CORRECT CONTROL OF THE TRIGGER.

The pressure put on the trigger must come from independent movement of the trigger finger only. The gripping fingers and the thumb do not move or tighten. Keep the grip pressure constant. Align the sight, settle into your normal aiming area and exert positive, uninterrupted, increasing pressure, straight to the rear, until the hammer falls. You must not look for a perfect sight picture combination of rear sight-front sight-bull's eye. Instead, focus your eye on the front sight, keeping it perfectly aligned in the rear sight notch. The blur of the out-of-focus target may move about slightly, but this movement is relatively unimportant. Any time the weapon is fired with good sight alignment within the normal arc of movement and it is a surprise shot, the shot will be a good one, and will hit the target within your ability to hold. Trigger control has a series of actions that take place if a smooth release of the firing mechanism is accomplished.

1. Slack and Initial Pressure: Any free movement of the trigger, known as slack, has to be taken up prior to a light initial pressure. This action assures that the tolerances in the firing mechanism linkage are taken up and are in firm contact before positive trigger pressure is applied.

Initial pressure is an automatic, lightly applied pressure, approximately one-fourth or less of the total required to fire the weapon. This careful action is an aid in the positive pressure that will release the hammer quickly and smoothly.

In order to fire a controlled shot the shooter must learn to increase the pressure on the trigger positively, smoothly, gradually, and evenly. This does not mean, however, that the trigger must be pressed slowly. It must be pressed smoothly, without interruption, but the release of the trigger must take no more than 2 to 5 seconds. Numerous accurate rapid fire strings of five shots in ten seconds are fired in a cycle that allows only one second or less to employ the principals of correct trigger control.

Smooth trigger action makes special demands on the trigger finger when pressing upon the trigger; its correct functioning determines to a great extent the quality of the shot. The most carefully attained sight alignment will be spoiled by the slightest error in the movement of the trigger finger.

2. Function of Proper Grip: In order for the index finger to be able to perform its function without spoiling the aim, it is first necessary to have the hand grasp the pistol correctly and create the proper support; permitting the trigger finger to overcome the trigger tension. The pistol grips must be grasped tightly but without any tremor. It is also necessary that the index finger clears the side of the stock. The movement of the index finger must be independent as it presses on the trigger, and also not cause any lateral change to the sight alignment.

3. Proper Placement of the Trigger Finger: It is necessary to apply pressure on the trigger with either the first bone section of the index finger, or with the first joint. The trigger must be pressed straight to the rear. If the finger presses the trigger to the side, undesirable things will happen. The weight of trigger pull will increase; because of additional friction on certain parts of the trigger mechanism an otherwise flawless trigger action will take on the characteristics of a poor trigger when side pressure is exerted on the trigger. Another consideration is the effect that side pressure has on sight alignment. Only slight pressure to the side is required to bring about an error in sight alignment. The prime cause of exerting pressure to the side is improper placement of the trigger finger.

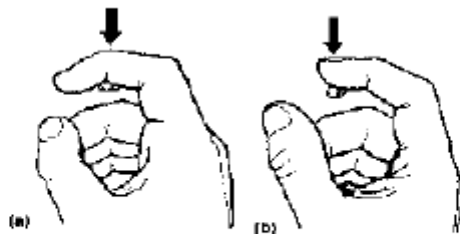


Figure 3-1. Correct Placement of the Index Finger on the Trigger. (a) With Joint of Index Finger. (b) With First Bone Section of Index Finger .

Ideal trigger finger placement may be modified to a degree by the requirement that the grip provide a

natural alignment of the front and rear sights. The shooter frequently must make a compromise to

overcome the undesirable effects of not being able to utilize each factor to full advantage.

4. Coordination: It must be emphasized that match shooting is successful only when all the control

factors are consistently in coordination.

Ability to control the trigger smoothly is not sufficient in itself to produce an accurate shot. The trigger

must be activated in conjunction with correct sight alignment, minimum arc of movement, and maximum

undisturbed concentration. This might be called cadence, rhythm or timing. Under any name, it comes

only to those who practice frequently. Occasional ability is not the answer to championship shooting. A

three-gun aggregate requires 270 successful results. Consistent, exacting performance is enhanced by

an ability to compensate automatically for errors. It is necessary during firing to press the trigger under

varying conditions of pistol movement in conjunction with correct sight alignment. In order to apply

coordinated pressure on the trigger, the shooter must wait for definite times when all factors and

conditions are favorable. Frequently, it will be impossible to exercise maximum control. However, the

shooter must never attempt to fire until he has completely settled into a minimum arc of movement.

C. APPLICATION OF TRIGGER PRESSURE.

1. Positive Uninterrupted Trigger Pressure - Surprise shot method - is primarily the act of completing the

firing of the shot once starting the application of trigger pressure. The shooter is committed to an

unchanging rate of pressure, no speed up, no slowdown or stopping. The trigger pressure is of an

uninterrupted nature because it is not applied initially unless conditions are settled and near perfect. If

the perfect conditions deteriorate, the shooter should not fire, but bench the weapon, relax, re-plan,

and start again.

In instances when the pistol is stable and steady, and the periods of minimum arc of movement are of

longer duration, it is immaterial whether the release of the trigger is completed a second sooner or a

second later. Anytime that the shot is fired with minimum arc of movement and the sights are in

alignment, it will be a good shot. Therefore, when the shooter has established stable minimum arc of

movement and sight alignment, he must immediately begin to press on the trigger, smoothly but

positively, and straight to the rear without stopping, until a shot is produced. This method of

controlling the trigger action will give the shooter a surprise break of the shot before any muscular

reflex can disturb sight alignment.



Figure 3-2. Surprise Shot with Positive Uninterrupted Trigger Pressure.

2. Interrupted Application of Trigger Pressure or the "Point" shooting Method:
This is a method of trigger

control not recommended, although used by some shooters. Some shooters think they can pick the

trigger release time even after years of experience.

a. The shooter will align the sights and exert initial pressure on the trigger. He will then make every

effort to hold the weapon motionless. During extremely brief moments of motionlessness,

pressure is applied on the trigger. If the sight alignment changes and is not perfect, or the arc of

movement of the weapon increases, the pressure on the trigger is halted and trigger tension

maintained. When sight alignment is again perfect and movement diminishes, pressure on the

trigger is resumed until the shot breaks, or after the slack in the trigger is taken up, initial pressure

is applied and the shot released by a single swift movement of the trigger finger when there is a

decrease in the minimum arc of movement. In this case the presence of perfect sight alignment is

not considered essential in initiating trigger action. Abrupt action in applying trigger pressure will

disturb the existing sight alignment and other fundamental control factors are subordinated to a

minimum arc of movement. The application of all other fundamentals is required regardless of

whether or not they are optimum.

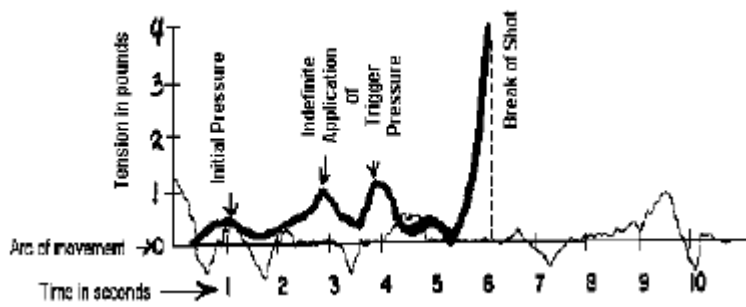


Figure 3-3. Application of Trigger Pressure When Based on Perfect Sight Picture.

b. While applying positive trigger pressure straight to the rear, if any thought enters the shooters

mind to speed up or slow down this trigger pressure, it will result in the concentration on sight

alignment being broken down.

c. The decision to increase the trigger pressure may result in a reflex action commonly known as

anticipation and usually results in heeling the shot (The bullet strikes the target at approximately

one o'clock). The recoil becomes more imminent and the brain will send a signal for the arm and

hand muscles to react prematurely a split second before the shot is fired; resulting in frequent bad

shots and low scores.

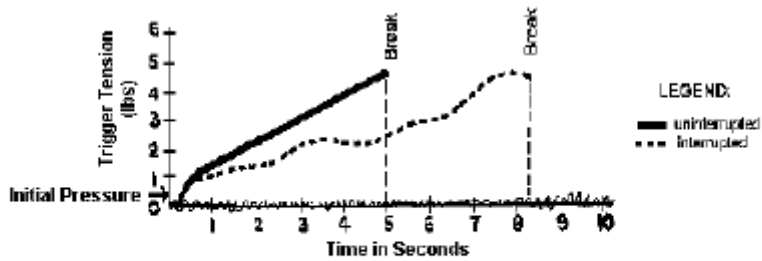


Figure 3-4. Shot fired With interrupted Trigger Pressure Compared to Shot Fired With Uninterrupted Positive Trigger Control.

Figure 3-4. Shot fired With interrupted Trigger Pressure Compared to Shot Fired With

Uninterrupted Positive Trigger Control.

D. ERRORS MADE IN TRIGGER CONTROL AND MEANS OF COMBATING THEM.

1. The most serious and disrupting error made by the shooter is jerking - that is, the abrupt application

of pressure on the trigger accompanied with muscular action of the hand and arm muscles.

If Jerking was limited to abrupt pressure on the trigger, and the rapid displacement of the axis of the

bore, it would cause only part of the results.

a. Jerking is usually accompanied by:

by:

(1) The sharp straining of all the muscles in the arm and shoulder.

(2) The abrupt tightening of the hand on the grip.

(3) Failure to press the trigger directly to the rear.

All of these factors taken together, lead to a great shifting of the pistol to the side and down and

only a very poor shot can result.

b. Most frequently, jerking is observed in new shooters. Usually because of a large arc of

movement, favorable moments for producing a good shot are of very short duration.

c. The cause of trigger jerking is the practice of "snatching a ten-pointer", as the expression goes.

The shooter tries to fire at the moment when the centered front sight, as it moves back and forth,

passes under the lower edge of the bull's eye, or comes to a stop, for a brief time, near the center

of the aiming area. Since these moments are fleeting the inexperienced shooter strives to exert

all the necessary pressure on the trigger at that time. This rapid and abrupt trigger pressure is

accompanied not only by the work of the muscles in the index finger, but also by the sympathetic

action of a number of other muscles. The involuntary action of these muscles produces the "jerk",

and the inaccurate shot that results. The young shooter, in anticipation of the recoil of the pistol

and the loud noise, strains his muscles by flinching, to counteract the anticipated recoil. This is

also known as heeling the shot.

d. Practice has shown that a young shooter must be warned sufficiently early in his training about

the dangers of jerking the trigger and effective steps taken to instruct him in the correct technique

of accurate shooting.

e. Difficulty In detecting errors In trigger control is frequently because the pistol shifted during recoil

and errors are not recognized. The shooter has a more difficult time in evaluating than a coach,

and often does not realize that he is jerking the trigger, blinking his eyes, or straining his arm and

shoulder muscles.

f. The easiest way to correct jerking in the young shooter is by the coaching of an experienced

coach. A coach can more readily detect errors and correct habits that will produce poor trigger

control. Frequently a shooter does not consider it necessary to prove conclusively whether or not

they are jerking on the trigger. It is necessary, though, to know that if he does not get rid of the

detrimental habit of jerking on the trigger, he will never succeed in achieving good results.

g. Signs of jerking are an increased in the size of the area of the shot group or shots off to the side

which are not called there; chiefly to the left and down (for righthanders). To correct the condition,

the shooter must make a change in his training exercise, but in no instance must he stop them.

(1) Dry-fire practice will enable the nervous system to rest from the recoil of the shot. By this

practice some of the reflexes which are detrimental to firing (tensing of the arm in order to

counteract the recoil, the straining of the muscles in anticipation of the shot, blinking from the

noise of the shot), are not being developed. They will, in fact, begin to decrease and may

completely disappear.

(2) Secondly, the shooter may continue regular training, but occasionally he may practice "dry".

This way, he will not lose the stability of this position, as well as the useful reflexes which the

shooter has developed during the process of previous firings.

(3) By aiming carefully and noting attentively everything that happens to the pistol when he

presses on the trigger, the shooter will discover his errors and eliminate them. Training by

means of ball and dummy and dry firing is of great benefit. It makes it possible to develop

correctly and carefully the technique of pressing the trigger, and contributes to acquiring

proper habits in controlling the trigger.

(4) When beginning to use dry firing the shooter must first overcome the desire to "grab" for a

shot when the centered front sight is under the bull's eye. Despite the arc of movement the

shooter must teach himself only to press smoothly on the trigger and to use the uninterrupted

positive control method of trigger action. When the smooth control of the trigger again

becomes habitual and he no longer has to devote special attention to it, he can again shoot

live cartridges. After starting again to shoot live cartridges, the first training exercises should

involve firing at a square of blank white paper, rather than at a target with a black aiming

area. Simultaneously, the shooter must devote special attention to analyzing his

performance, counteract the desire to jerk on the trigger, and be conscious of reacting

incorrectly to the firing of a shot.

2. Another error committed by a shooter when controlling the trigger is "holding too long", that is, the

drawn out action of pressing the trigger.

a. A consequence of holding too long is that the shooter does not have enough air to hold his breath, his eye becomes fatigued, and his visual acuity decreases. In addition, his stance loses part of its stability. Consequently, when he holds too long, the shooter presses on the trigger under unfavorable conditions.

b. Holding too long is a consequence of excessively slow and cautious pressure on the trigger. This is caused by the shooter's fear of producing a bad shot. Such indecisiveness and over caution may be regarded as the opposite of jerking. Moreover, holding too long stems from the lack of coordination of movement which frequently occurs during those stages of training when the process of inhibition outweighs the process of stimulation. Simply stated, the shooter cannot force himself to exert positive pressure on the trigger at the proper time. One favorable moment after another goes past, and soon the chances for an accurate shot are gone. Naturally, the trigger control phase has been extended far beyond its effective duration. This situation frequently occurs after a period of dry-fire training exercises. The shooter loses the sense of the trigger's true weight when he fires for extended periods of time with a round in the chamber. When the trigger is released in a dry shot, the trigger seems to be rather light, but when the shooter switches to live rounds, the trigger weight seems to be considerably greater. He feels he must

exert greater effort to overcome this seemingly greater weight. Frequently, the shooter will blame

his troubles on faulty adjustment of the trigger mechanism. Nothing is gained from such

assumptions. More times than not, the shooter returns to normal trigger control since the root of

the evil is lack of coordinated control and not trigger adjustment.

c. The restoration of coordination of movement, and the return to the correct balance between

stimulation and inhibition is brought about primarily through systematic practice, match training

and dry-fire exercises. It is precisely this method of training which develops the necessary

coordination of the shooter's actions. When the shooter's movements become automatic, the

trigger finger will operate in an unstrained manner, and the shot will break at the proper moment.

It is important that each training session begin with a few dry-fire exercises. It has been

demonstrated that such exercises are necessary for the development of accurate shooting. Such

exercises may also be repeated after record shooting to restore equilibrium in the nervous

processes.

d. Frequently, a shooter, when firing for record, is unable to fire a shot. After several unsuccessful

tries, a loss of confidence will arise. Rather than risk a wild shot the shooter should unload the

pistol, time permitting, and dry-fire a few shots. After restoring coordination of movement, and

regaining his confidence, the shooter is far better prepared, both physically and mentally, for the

delivery of an accurate shot. Firing the shot during the first few seconds after settling into a good

hold, will guarantee confidence.

3. We have considered the fundamental errors that arise in trigger control. Let us now consider a

problem that is also closely related to trigger control - trigger adjustment.

a. The firing of an accurate shot depends to a great extent on the quality of the trigger adjustment.

An incorrectly adjusted trigger aggravates the errors committed by the shooter as he exerts

pressure on the trigger. Incorrect adjustments include:

(1) Excessive trigger weight.

(2) Excessive long creep (movement of trigger).

(3) Too light trigger weight.

(4) Variable trigger weight.

b. The shooter should not try to overcome these difficulties with modification in his trigger control but

take the problem and pistol to the armorer (gunsmith) for solution.

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SWISS NEWS



We have not had much luck with some of our shooting dates. Both times we were scheduled to compete with the Navy, the days were rained out. Nonetheless, we enjoyed the comradeship with the Navy Shooting club by sharing a few drinks and having a luscious braai and salads. We agreed that next time we'll shoot and not braai!

Another shoot was cancelled because the markers in the butts would have been sand-blasted by an incredibly strong south-easter. Again, we were reduced to enjoying our traditional Swiss sausages and a couple of beers before returning home. At least we did not have to clean rifles after the cancelled shoots.

We almost cancelled another shooting day because of strong wind, but it had rained earlier on so there was no dust. In spite of the adverse shooting conditions, our secretary and one of our few active shooting ladies achieved the good score of 96/100. Admittedly, she is no novice seeing she served in the Swiss Air Force when doing her voluntary military service in Switzerland.

Another shooting date was held at the military range near Atlantis and although some of us got wet, we had a relatively good shoot.

The shooting programme for the next few months is as follows:(start @ 12:00 sharp unless otherwise indicated).

The dates in brackets are alternative dates, should the shoot be cancelled due to inclement weather.

<u>Date</u>	<u>(alternative date)</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Programme</u>
July 16	(23)	11:00	Open Day: Kleinkaliber (Small-bore .22 Rifle & Pistol). This is for those of you who want to use their .22 rifles and pistols (as well as your large calibre handguns).
You can also bring your airguns. There will be random prizes for some of you, so please bring husbands, wives, daughters, sons, brothers, sisters, cousins, nephews and nieces, friends, (girlfriends not excluded!)			

Aug 06	(20)	12:00	Day programme: Berner Oberland, Final date Obligatory & EWS.
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Sep 03 (17)

11:00 President's Cup. Day programme knock-out match

Oct 01

12:00 Jahresprogramm (Finalise annual programme)

To enquire whether the shoot takes place because of rain, phone Fridolin Lenz at 021 761 0647 or Dierk Lüthi @ 021 715 6104 or 083 441 4626.

Dierk Lüthi

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MSA FUN PAGE

Marvin (the male Maxine)



Marriage is the only war where
you get to sleep with the enemy!

Why men shouldn't write advice columns

Dear John,

I hope you can help me. The other day, I set off for work, leaving my husband in the house watching TV. My car stalled, and then it broke down about a mile down the road, and I had to walk back to get my husband's help. When I got home, I couldn't believe my eyes. He was in our bedroom with the neighbor's daughter!

I am 32, my husband is 34 and the neighbor's daughter is 19. We have been married for 10 years. When I confronted him, he broke down and admitted they had been having an affair for the past six months. He won't go to counseling, and I'm afraid I am a wreck and need advice urgently. Can you please help?

Sincerely, Sheila

Dear Sheila,

A car stalling after being driven a short distance can be caused by a variety of faults with the engine. Start by checking that there is no debris in the fuel line. If it is clear, check the vacuum pipes and hoses on the intake manifold and also check all grounding wires. If none of these approaches solves the problem, it could be that the fuel pump itself is faulty, causing low delivery pressure to the injectors.

I hope this helps,
John

— Forwarded by Steve Sanderson,
Gilbert, S.C.



Dear Manager,

I'm resigning effective immediately! The reason for my resignation is what I found in my garage this morning before coming to work.

JACKAROO

A young jackaroo from the outback in Queensland goes off to university, but before he gets halfway through the semester, he has foolishly squandered all his money.

He calls home: "Dad, you won't believe what modern education is developing. They actually have a program here in Brisbane that will teach our dog, Ol' Blue, how to talk."

"That's amazing," his dad says, "how do I get Ol' Blue into that programme?"

"Just send him down here with \$2 000 and I'll get him in the course," the young jackaroo says.

His father sends the dog and \$2000.

About two-thirds through the semester, the money runs out again. The boy calls home.

"So how's Ol' Blue doing, son?" his father asks.

"Awesome, Dad, he's talking up a storm. But you just won't believe this. They've had such good results with talking, they've begun to teach the animals how to read," says the boy.

"Read? No kidding. How do we get Ol' Blue into that programme?" asks his dad.

"Just send \$4 500. I'll get him in the class," the boy says.

The money promptly arrives.

But our hero has a problem. At the end of the year, his father will find out the dog can neither talk nor read. So he shoots the dog.

When he arrives home at the end of the year, his father is all excited.

"Where's Ol' Blue? I just can't wait to talk with him, and see him read something," says the father.

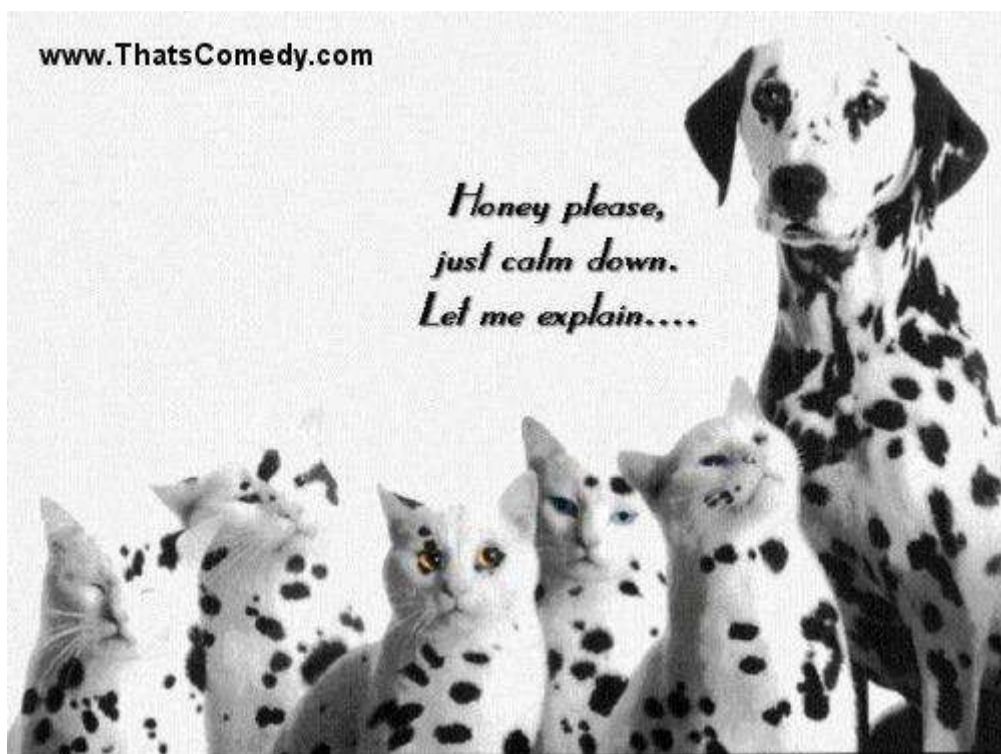
"Dad," the boy says, "I have some grim news. Yesterday morning Ol'Blue was in the living room, kicked back in the recliner, reading The Wall Street Journal. Then he suddenly turned to me and asked: 'So, is your daddy still shagging that little redhead barmaid at the pub?'"

The father groans and whispers: "I hope you shot the bastard before he talks to your mother."

"I sure did, Dad."

"That's my boy."

The son goes on to become a successful lawyer.



A NAMIBIAN CORPORATION

- You have two cows.
- You make biltong...

AN AMERICAN CORPORATION

- You have two cows.
- You sell one, and force the other to produce the milk of four cows.
- You are surprised when the cow drops dead.

A SOUTH AFRICAN CORPORATION

- You have two cows.
- You go on strike because you want three cows.
- They get stolen, so you blame the previous regime' and steal someone else's cows and shoot their owner.

A ZIMBABWEAN CORPORATION

- A farmer has two cows.
- You take over his farm, eat both cows and wait for the international community to supply more.

A JAPANESE CORPORATION

- You have two cows.
- You re-design them so they are one-tenth the size of an ordinary cow and produce twenty times the milk.
- You then create clever cow cartoon images called Cowkimon and market them World-Wide.

A GERMAN CORPORATION

- You have two cows.
- You re-engineer them so they live for 100 years, eat once a month, and milk themselves.

A BRITISH CORPORATION

- You have two cows.
- Both are mad.

AN INDIAN CORPORATION

- You have two cows.

· You pray to them for food.

AN ITALIAN CORPORATION

- You have two cows, but you don't know where they are.
- You break for lunch.

A RUSSIAN CORPORATION

- You have two cows.
- You count them and learn you have five cows.
- You count them again and learn you have 42 cows.
- You count them again and learn you have 12 cows.
- You stop counting cows and open another bottle of vodka.

A SWISS CORPORATION

- You have 5000 cows, none of which belong to you.
- You charge others for storing them.

A CHINESE CORPORATION

- You have two cows.
- You have 300 people milking them.
- You claim full employment, high bovine productivity, and arrest the newsman who reported the numbers.

AN AUSTRALIAN CORPORATION

- You have two cows.
- The one on the left is kinda cute...

"You never surprise me" a woman moaned to her long suffering husband.

"Buy me a surprise for my birthday. Something that accelerates from 0 to 150 in under 4 seconds, ... and I'd prefer a blue one!, she hinted.

Happy and excited she was counting down the days for her birthday.

And finally she got the beautiful present her husband had thoughtfully chosen for her ...

Apparently he's dead now ... but he died a legend.



SHOTGUN

The Sporting Clay Shooters Alphabet

At the end of a clay shooting lesson; I am regularly asked for some sort of 'Aide Memoir'. Pupils are very keen to take away some magical formulae that will enable them to win their class in next Sundays 100 Sporting competition. Sadly I regularly disappoint them; sure fire short cut routes to winning do not exist.

Only practice and preparation will improve an individual's performance; however maybe there is a simple check list which could help clay shooters tidy up their approach to their next shooting event. For simplicities sake let us call it the Clay Shooters Alphabet:

A. Is for 'ATTITUDE' you know the thing we tell our teenagers that they mustn't have!

Well the Sporting clay shooter needs it, (This would apply equally to the UK Game shot and to the Wing shooter in the USA) and he needs it in abundance! But of course he needs the correct good attitude. So what is it? Well it is a mixture of emotions and mental processes. First into the mixing pot is; aggression. Not too much and it must be controlled aggression. Now toss in some cold steely determination; and you can put huge amounts of that in. Next into the pot is clarity of thinking, a mental washing of the mind to the point all thought processes are going to be focused on the job in hand; the next target.

Start stirring gently; but there is still plenty of room in the pot for; self belief. That total confidence that you are going to smash both targets of the next double. Just two more ingredients before we let the mix simmer to making the perfect attitude. They are both physical :Remember last month when I was talking about making a fist and holding the Grip tightly whilst you locked the gun firmly into the cheek and shoulder.

That and your stance are part of your production of the correct attitude. Your stance should have you with most of your weight going through the ball of the front foot. You are leaning forward slightly. You are 'going for' the next target! Finally your voice; how you call "pull" It must be a 'Demand' short, crisp and quite loud; but never a shout. This careful mix of ingredients, will give you the best Attitude.

I often hear some of our champion shots being described as unfriendly and stand offish. That most of the time is very unfair to

them: They are totally focused on their shooting. They are putting themselves 'in the zone' they are maintaining the correct Attitude! I doubt you would stroll up to Tiger Woods as he is about to tee off on the 18th at the US Open and chat about the weather!

B. Is for 'BASICS'

The more experienced and competent the Sporting shooter becomes; the more likely that Basics get forgotten: "I just straightened the last two stands, let us get stuck into this next stand and score another straight" "Pull" Bang. Bang. "Lost kill" "Pull" Bang. Bang. "Kill lost" "Pull" Bang. Bang. "Pair lost "

What might have happened here then? When that shooter arrived at the stand, did he distance himself from others and give himself time to 'Read' the targets? Did he put it into his head that one of the clays is crossing in front of a bush, and that bush might well act as a brake on his gun barrels? Did he notice that the 'on report' target is a Midi crossing in front of trees, and switching to his red tinted shooting glasses would have given him better vision? Did it register to him that the targets on this stand are quite close, and that the tight chokes that he put in for the more distant quartering away Midi clays on the last stand; were not stacking the odds in his favour.

Most important: Did he not read last month's article about planning? Did he in preparation, decide the 'Kill Point' and therefore the 'Feet Positioning' for both targets? Did he think about the 'Pick Up Points' for both targets? This is absolutely crucial for that Midi clay flying along the tree line. Did he visualize and mentally rehearse the 'Kill Picture' for both targets? And finally; did he place himself to the best advantage in the shooting stand?

This is one of the most common failures that I see in Sporting clay shooters. Yes sometimes the safety cages seem quite restrictive; but moving a foot to one side could greatly improve the view of a target. We all miss for the same relatively small group of reasons: But believe me, we would all miss far less often if we would continually focus on the Basics!

C. Is for.....

Well I actually am convinced that C is the most important letter in the Shooters Alphabet (That is the Sporting clay shooter, UK Game shot and US Wing shooter, hunting Quail, Dove and Duck. I believe that it stands for; COMFORT, CONCENTRATION, CONFIDENCE. We will never

achieve the Confidence unless we have total comfort and apply 100% concentration.

We must be comfortable with everything that we wear or use. We must be comfortable with where we are and who we are with. How many of you say "I am always happier when I am with..... and I always seem to shoot much better at..... COMFORT...I touched on suffering discomfort in last month's article, and I said I was astonished at how many shooters put up with it. You should be able to fire your gun without feeling recoil to the point of it causing you pain, and you should be free from discomfort on completion of your 100 Sporting or similar. The first obvious question is; does your gun fit you? Now gun fit is a chapter on its own; but definitely worthy of a few points related to Comfort. Is the stock length correct? I regularly see people shooting with stocks that are too short, and that is a disaster!

How do you know that your stock is correct for you? Let me first dispel a myth. As you read this there are people in Gun shops putting the stock along their fore arm with their fore finger touching the trigger with the Butt in the crook of their arm. They genuinely believe that is a gun fit measurement. It definitely is not; it is simply telling them how long their fore arm is.

Let me give you a Laymen good rule of thumb for getting the stock length right. Mount the empty shotgun into your cheek and shoulder. Lock it in tight, also make sure that your leading hand has the tip of your fore finger touching the tip of the fore end and your trigger finger is curled around the trigger.

Now get a friend to place two or three fingers flat on to the Comb between your nose and the back of your thumb. If the friend cannot get at least two fingers there; the stock is too short. If there is room for more than three fingers the stock is too long. Fit a good quality recoil pad to the Butt. Have a recoil reducer fitted into the stock. Buy one of the modern shooting vests that have pockets for recoil reduction pads. Experiment with light load cartridges. There are now some very good 21gram 12 g cartridges available. Get a Shooting Coach to check your gun fit and gun mount. When you have experienced totally comfortable shooting; you will never again put up with discomfort. I am totally happy now to shoot in 'Wimp' Mode.

CONCENTRATION...Remember the 'washing of the mind' that I said you needed to give yourself the correct attitude: That is the starting point of your concentration, which must be 100% on every sporting clay target that you are determined to kill. Getting the concentration right is probably the most difficult aspect of Sporting clay and Wing

shooting; but without it, none of us will ever achieve respectable levels of success.

The process should be starting as you approach the shooting stand; if you have shot other stands and have missed some targets, you must blank those from your mind. Distance yourself physically and mentally for a few seconds as you give yourself time to 'read' the targets. This is the time that you should be working your hardest; you must step into that stand with a clear and definite plan of how you are going to tackle those targets.

Now you are in the stand: Slow everything down; you were happy to wait your turn, so is everyone else. Rehearse your plan, get yourself in the most advantageous position in the stand, and make sure your feet are correctly placed for the first target. Close your eyes and visualize the kill picture for both targets. Now you can call "Pull" Bang. Bang. "Pair killed" ..

Reload slowly; you may have noticed some very good Sporting Clay shooters that have developed little mannerisms to slow themselves down. They actually have a little routine that they follow religiously: you could do the same! Shoot every pair of targets as two new and separate jobs. If you are concentrating hard enough, you should not know if you are shooting your second pair or last pair! Try not to count up your scores; yes I know that is very difficult, but it will be a distraction. If you are shooting well, you could get a little complacent. If you are not doing as well as you would want, you could become negative, which would definitely affect your mind state. You must remain positive to be able to maintain full concentration.

CONFIDENCE... Only by constantly adhering to A, B and C coupled with regular practice, will give you that all important Confidence. Nothing else will achieve it and it requires no further Explanation:

D is for 'DISCIPLINE'

During lessons on lovely Sunny days, when the pupils and I are having a great time; I warn them that I am going to introduce 'dirty D they look a little concerned, then I explain that I am talking about discipline'. This is so easy to get wrong: Think about it; you are enjoying your selves at your favourite Sporting shooting ground among your best friends. You are relaxed, shooting well and the World is a great place. It is a delicate balance, you are supposed to be enjoying your selves; and this is when A, BC and D get left behind. When the Discipline goes, so do the good scores!

E. Is for 'EFFORT'

I could have said Efficiency, because of course that is important; but you are all a jump ahead of me, and have already figured out that sticking with A, B, C, and D is going to ensure your efficiency. So for Effort do make the effort to practice; especially mounting your gun in front of a mirror. Not the most exciting shooting activity, but a very valuable one.

If you put enough effort into this; you should be able to mount the gun with your eyes shut, then open them to see that you have mounted the gun perfectly.(This gun mounting practice is just as critical for the Wing shooter as it is for the Sporting clay shooter) Do make the effort to look after your equipment; especially your gun, clean it properly and get it looked over by your local gunsmith every couple of years. Always make the effort to spend time reading the targets and mentally rehearsing your shots. You will be very pleased that you did.

F. Is for.....

Well, I have previously stressed the importance of feet positioning; and gun fitting has been mentioned: So what should F stand for in the Sporting Shooters Alphabet?

What if we ask you to decide! Send in your suggestions of what F. Should stand for; along with your reasons why, and the Clay Shooting magazines panel of experts will decide which word /s should be chosen as the most suitable. The person who in the opinion of the panel, has sent in the most appropriate words will win a signed copy of my "Clay Shooting for Beginners and Enthusiasts" and the following month we will ask for suggestions for G then H and so on.

Good Luck



IF YOU NEED ANY PART OR ARE LOOKING FOR A FIREARM, YOU CAN SEND AN EMAIL TO MARTIN AT CITY GUNS AND HE WILL KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR THE ITEM YOU NEED, HE SAYS HE HAS SO MANY GUNS HANDED IN HE IS SURE HE HAS ONE OF JUST ABOUT EVERYTHING. CONTACT HIM ON: martin@cityguns.co.za

HUNTERS CORNER



How to get that elusive Nyala!!!!!!!!!!!!

HUNTERS STORY

No stories received yet, come on hunters get writing.

Our thanks to Bryan for this info on the Eastern Cape

Just an update on Eastern Cape hunting licences following the information sent out a few weeks ago by Kaapjag warning us that law enforcement are being quite sticky about hunting licences.

I returned yesterday from hunting near Willowmore. We always buy our licences at the Superette in the town, but they did not have any licences and informed us that there are no licences available in the Eastern Cape. We spoke to the SAPS, who seemed aware of the situation and recommended we get a letter from the farm and get it stamped by the SAPS. This is exactly what we did.

I'm not sure if this really is a general problem or if it is limited to Willowmore, but maybe it would be worth alerting hunters to the situation as well as the solution we used.

Regards

BB



What the flash shows up that you did not even know was in the area, an instant laxative.....

HUNTERS TABLE

As outdoor people , we are all interested in country life and as shooters we are mostly very independent people. I have for some time spent a bit of time reading self reliance web pages and have found a really great site, they cover everything from firearms to building your own country home. This months recipe comes courtesy of Them. Feel free to visit their site and sign up for your monthly newsletter.

<http://www.backwoodshome.com/index.html> is their web address enjoy.

Braised venison pepper steak

Courtesy of
William Shepherd

Ingredients

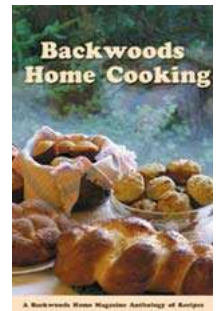
1 1/2 lbs. venison steak shoulder or round steak
2 Tbsp. cooking oil
1 4 oz. can mushrooms
1 cup water
1 beef bouillon cube
2 Tbsp. soy sauce
1 Tbsp. sugar
1/4 tsp. garlic salt
1/4 tsp. pepper
1 green pepper, cut in strips
1 1/2 Tbsp. flour
1/4 cup water

Method

Venison is naturally lean, so tenderizing is necessary. One of the best methods is marinating with milk, wine, and citrus juices. Overnight marinades tenderize and leave a very distinctive taste that will flatter the venison's flavor.

Marinate meat overnight, remove from refrigerator. Cut into 1/4 inch thick strips and brown meat in cooking oil. Add mushrooms, 1 cup water, bouillon cube, soy sauce, sugar, garlic salt, and pepper. Cover and cook 5 minutes. Add green pepper strips, cover and cook an additional 3 minutes. Mix flour and 1/4 cup water, add to skillet and stir until thickened. Serve over noodles or rice.

Serves 4.



*You'll find this
recipe and over
400 more in
Backwoods
Home Cooking.
[Click Here](#)*

HUNTER'S KNEE PADS

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MADE TOUGH ENOUGH
FOR OUR MINES, PERFECT
FOR ALL STALKING

R100 PER SET

CONTACT : john@mouldafoam.co.za

FROM THE CLUB

I think that it is worth mentioning that we now have two stores at the Founder's Range. The 'Club Shoot' is to keep the targets, backers and frames etc which will only be in use at formal Club shoots. The other 'General store' is for storage of the targets and frames etc for use on 'practice days' which is accessible by the duty RO. At the monthly club shoot days this store will be accessible by ROs and replenished with consumables such as targets and backers etc. This is working quite well! The RO's must please note that they have to control issue and collection of frames. It was decided that the RO must take a firearm licence as a deposit for a frame and keep it until the frame is returned, if the frame is broken, a R100 fee is payable. Please RO'S make sure you do this as the last batch of frames all disappeared within 6 months.

Other than that I feel that the shoots run quite well now, particularly considering during the hunting season there are upwards of 20 shooters shooting concurrently with Club shoot events.

That's about all.

Tony

SECRETARY REPORT

I cannot believe that we are more than half way through our RF clubs shoots for 2011. The year has just flown by so quickly.

It has been good to see the range busy on a Saturday with shooters getting there trusted rifles out and seeing that there last year zeros is still on. For some of us we have already completed our first trip for this hunting season and I hope that for those it was a successful and enjoyable hunt.

On our membership side we are seeing quite a few new members as well as old members that have found us again. We have decided to allow members to pay and collect there membership cards directly from the club house on a Saturday. This has been greeted with positive feedback. We are requesting that on collection of your card that you update your contact details so that we can ensure our data base moving forward reflects the correct details. We have also decided that members who have not been paid up for a year or two will not be penalised and that all you will be required to pay is the current fees. I have sent out a few emails explaining the process of obtaining your new membership card as well as for those members who paid directly into our account. I am busy weekly drafting letters for members applying for new firearm licenses and will gladly do so for all current paid up members. Should you require a letter please email me at accesspark@tiscali.co.za

I look forward to seeing you at our next CF shoot on the 9th of July.

Best regards,

Wesley White

AGM

Notice of the MSA AGM.

Hereby notice is given of the Annual general meeting of the Milnerton shooting association.

The AGM will take place on the 29 August at 19h00 at the club house on the Cape of Good hope shooting range (Atlantis)

Please all make an attempt to be there.

RO NEWS

Dear RO's

Firstly I would like to thank every each one of you on behalf of the committee and myself for the services rendered over the past 6 month period. Without you no shooting would be happening and by your duties you are ensuring a safe and comfortable environment, not only for our members, but visitors as well. We are getting great response and compliments from visitors and this is thanks only to you by your professional and friendly attitudes. Those members whom have done more than the duties and always available to help out when we are in a fix, an especially big thank you to you!

Ok, now attached you will find the new RO duty roster for the period Jun - Dec 2011. You will notice that the roster is much more "lean" than the previous ones with less RO's per day. I have sifted through the records and have taken off the RO's that never show up for duty and by doing that hopefully we will have more reliable service on the shooting days. Most of the time we anyway manage with one RO on the day and if by chance it gets so busy that you are not able to cope, you can always give me a call or the committee member on duty.

There is a few points I would like to mention regarding the duties:

1) It has been decided than instead of trying to sort out the administration concerning the R100 per duty that each member gets back, RO's will in future be able to claim their R100 from Geraldine at the bar. So all you have to do is after your duty to report to Geraldine and she will pay you your R100. Then afterwards you are welcome to spend the R100 on a braai pack and a few beers! ;-)

2) Geraldine have requested that RO's, after a days duty, kindly bring her the keys back personally. By doing that she knows the range is closed and therefore will not allow members to sign in after closure.

3) You will notice on the RO duty roster I have included a column for committee members to be on standby duty. In future if you have any problems whatsoever, please contact the members on duty for assistance. If you can not get hold of the person on duty for the day, feel free to call me. I will forward the number for Graeme van Rooijen as soon as I get it.

4) Again RO's are kindly reminded to put up the red flags on the berm. We are getting a bit of hassle if the flag is not up. I know it is a pain in the butt to get up there, but we are busy working on a system to either have something permanent or at least easier to put up.

5) You will notice that I have placed RO's now on club shoot days. This is to allow for visitors and members to have their normal shooting days without interference from or interfering with the club shooters. It will also place less stress on the committee members who runs the club shoot days. If there are any members on as RO for the Club shoot day and wish to shoot with a discipline, either let me know and I will move you to a different day, or on the day just ask someone to stand in for you.

6) We started utilizing the handgun range more and more nowadays. This is causing a bit of a problem with RO's, especially the days where there is only one person on duty. In a case like that, please allow regular club members to use the handgun range but they need to take responsibility for the safety on the range. (You will find in general that they do.) If there is well a visitor on the range and no club members shooting on the handgun range, the visitor should use the normal range, but please give them the rifle target frames. (The low thin frames) We are getting complaints that handgun shooting on the founders range are causing ricochets over the military handgun range. Until this is sorted out with the committee, allow the handgun visitors on the range with the low rifle frames.

Finally, I have chatted to Greg and we are discussing the possibility of having more events for RO's and doing some special things for the RO's. We are considering things like RO shoots, get together, etc etc. Stuart Ralph gave me some good ideas which I would like to look into. That is over and above some other events and stuff we are planning for members. If any of you have some ideas of what you would like to do/see, please forward it to me. I have also started discussing with one or two members the possibility of them helping us out as so-called "event co-coordinators" (thanks for the term, Greg!). The function will basically be to help us out with the organizing of events. Stuff like a snake course, first aid course, get together etc etc. Phil Fourie already selflessly offered his help. Thanks Phil! On the next club shoot I will throw my scores to allow you to beat me! ;-) If there is anyone else whom would like to get involved, please let me know. If no one volunteers I will start approaching some of you in the near future! ;-)

So please go through the list and let me know if there is any problems with the dates for anyone and I will move you around. Also, if a problem or situation develops and you can not do your RO duty, please let me know a bit before the time to get a substitute. If you know of any other members interested in RO duties, please forward me their detail and I will contact them.

Kind regards

Tyron Williams

Chief Range Officer, Milnerton Shooting Association



Version: 08 June 2010

DATE	DUTY OFFICER/S	COMMENTS:	COMMITTEE MEMBER ON STANDBY:	CONTACT DETAIL:
02-Jul	Tyron Williams & Zeljko Curcic		Tyron Williams	082 7140370
09-Jul	Chris Bockle, Gary Fourie	CLUB C/F SHOOT		
16-Jul	Peter Keuck & Stuart Ralph		John Moore	082 3311427
23-Jul	Neville du Toit & Stuart Pretorius		Greg Sykes	083 3780920
30-Jul	Phil Fourie & Willem Steenkamp		Tyron Williams	082 7140370
06-Aug	Jeff Panos & Mark Dawson		Tony Robinson	083 4489608
13-Aug	Mike Truter & Darryll Pettit	CLUB R/F SHOOT		
20-Aug	Patrick Howell & Brett Hawkins		Wesley White	082 7728509
27-Aug	Cobus Janse Van Rensburg, Jacobus Visser		Rodney Camacho	082 8042872
03-Sep	Wayne Pratt, Jaron Pratt & Gary Stirrup		Ludy Starke	
10-Sep	Desmond Holtman	CLUB C/F SHOOT		
17-Sep	Helmut Schertz & Peter Butler		Graeme Van Rooyen	
24-Sep	Neil & Peter Westerman & William Langford		John Moore	082 3311427
01-Oct	Trevor Beeming		Tyron Williams	082 7140370
08-Oct	Gerrit Boonstra	CLUB R/F SHOOT		
15-Oct	Kobus Kruger & Matt Botha		Tyron Williams	082 7140370

22-Oct	David Lee, David Culey & Neil Marsh		Tony Robinson	083 4489608
29-Oct	Danny Levin		Greg Sykes	083 3780920
05-Nov	Justin Barret & Jacques Brand		Wesley White	082 7728509
12-Nov	Eras Reyneke, Arnie du Preez, JP du Preez, Rene du Preez	CLUB C/F SHOOT		
19-Nov	Faan Fourie & Guppy Jari & Abraham van Pletzen		Rodney Camacho	082 8042872
26-Nov	Theo Muller & TJ Muller		Graeme van Rooyen	
03-Dec	Vic Botes, Christine Botes,		Ludi Starke	083 4629653
10-Dec	Committee members	XMAS SHOOT		

Members on duty during and for Club shoot days:

Tyron Williams
 John Moore
 Michelle Crawford
 Tony Robinson
 Greg Sykes
 Ron van den Vyfer
 Johan van Niekerk
 Wesley White
 Dirk Luthi
 Arthur Jonak
 Rodney Camacho
 Ludy Starke
 Graeme van Rooyen

Note:

- 1) Any problems on a shooting day, please contact the Committee member on duty as displayed to the right of the duty roster. If Committee member is not available, please call Tyron Williams.
- 2) After the days' duty, please collect your R100 for the duty from Geraldine at the Clubhouse.

BENCHREST

We are still looking for somebody to run the bench rest discipline for us, come on guys step up.....

PLEASE TAKE NOTE OF THE FOLLOWING WARNING:

The regs have changed. Looks like it is not just ammunition that needs to be stored away, but components to make ammo too. I just received this from False Bay Gun Club:

WARNINGS - SAPS firearm division and Ammunition, primers, powder, "surplus Military ammo"

A word or warning -- I am sure most of you have come to know that just about every Gun shop and Gunsmith in the Cape area has been "Raided" over the past few months by the SAPS Firearms control section.

Almost every one of the raids resulted in charges being brought against the owner / operator due to "Non Compliance"

These charges range from ammunition not stored correctly, (1 or 2 rounds found in a desk draw) to "unnumbered gun parts", and so on.

Now this has been happening at gun shops and will most likely move to "private individuals' being "raided" over the coming months -- the word is COMPLIANCE -- so you need to comply with the law and the type of issues are:

1. Correct storage of firearms SABS safe bolted to wall, etc.

2. Correct storage of ammunition, primers and powder.

- a - Needs to all be stored in a safe

- b - That round of ammunition in the laundry that fell out of your pocket while doing the washing after being at the range -- YUP that will most likely land you in trouble as it is not stored correctly in terms of the firearms control act.

SO -- Ammo, Primers and Powder ALL need to be stored in a safe.

3. Military "surplus ammo" if anyone has any of this type of ammo, please be CAREFUL -- ensure it is NOT in the original "brown boxes" and especially the nice "sealed brown bags" -- Take it out the bags / boxes if you have any of these. Yes, we know that at one stage you could buy these boxes from the gun shops (80's and 90's) -- but seriously -- get rid of the boxes and keep (in a safe) the loose ammo. This way there will be no "please explain" as to why you have the ammo, unless you have the original invoice!!

Then a final note --

It seems as though there are "informants and Cop wanna-be's" out there at various clubs potentially posing a visitor --

Please just be careful what you say and what you do. Most of the raids to date on private individuals and companies has been due to "informants and disgruntled staff" -- this could even be your Secretary, Cleaning lady or garden guy -- so "Mum's the word". It is getting "hot out there with the Cops" and again -- who are being targeted??? -- Those they know are "soft targets", but the Cops keep referring to "Compliance" as the reason for these actions -- well the "Non compliance".

Regards,

Martin

OUR FRIENDS ON THE RANGE

This time we look at the **PUFF ADDER**



Puff Adder (*Bitis arietans*)

Kingdom: Animalia

Phylum: Chordata

Class: Reptilia

Order: Squamata

Suborder: Serpentes

Family: Viperidae

Subfamily: Viperinae

Genus: Bitis

Species: Puff Adder (*Bitis arietans*)

Adults are thick and heavy bodied snakes which rarely exceed 1 m in maximum head-body length in this region. In East Africa specimens as large as 1,7 m have been recorded. The head is large, flattened, triangular in shape, has large nostrils pointing vertically upwards and is covered with small, keeled, overlapping scales. The basic dorsal colour is variable from blackish to brown, light brown, orangey, yellowish to straw yellow, with a certain regional consistency. The back has a row of backward pointing, dark brown to black, pale-edged chevrons and transverse bars on the tail. Specimens from the moister eastern areas tend to be darker, while specimens from the more arid western areas tend to be paler. Puff adders tend to become active at dusk, although they may bask and also move about during the day. When hungry it will take up an ambush position to waylay its small mammal prey, consisting mainly of ground-living mice and rats, although birds,

lizards and toads may also be taken. This snake is ovoviviparous, which means that it reproduces by retaining the eggs with the developing fetus until full term.

Venom: The venom is cytotoxic (tissue destroying). This species is responsible for more fatalities than any other African snake, including the Black Mamba . This statistic is slightly misleading and bears no relevance to the potency of the venom itself. Although the puff adder is classified as the most dangerous snake in Africa, it is neither the deadliest, nor the most venomous snake in Africa.

Although bites are common, only a small proportion results in human fatality.

This may seem confusing at first, but the answer lies in the statistics. In South Africa alone the puff adder is responsible for 60% of all recorded snakebites, the remaining 40% can be divided between the other venomous snakes found in the region which includes the cobras, mambas and other members of the genus Bitis.

The average venom yield per bite is between 100-300mg with the maximum yield of around 700mg. 100mg is fatal in humans. A bite from this snake may result in death after 26 hours if treatment is not received.

Deep necrosis may result in severe cases which may lead to the amputation of the affected limb, and extensive reconstructive surgery is often needed. Death usually results from kidney failure and other complications as a result of extensive swelling.

Distribution: This species is the most common and widespread venomous snake in Africa. It's geographic range includes: South Africa, Namibia, Swaziland, Lesotho, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Malawi, Angola, Zambia, Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda, Burundi, Rwanda, Congo, Democratic republic of Congo (Zaire), Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Nigeria, Niger, Central African Republic, Benin, Togo, Ghana, Ivory Coast, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Gambia, Senegal, Mauritania, Mali, Chad, Algeria, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Oman, and Yemen.

Habitat: The Puff adder is found in all habitats except for true deserts and rain forests and mountain tops. The preferred habitat for the species includes open

grassland, savanna, open woodlands and rocky outcrops.

Habits: Puff adders are described as being both diurnal and nocturnal although they are mostly active at night.

This species "willingness to bite" is greatly exaggerated. As with all snakes, it is reluctant to bite unless provoked. Although I do not recommend this, it is quite possible to stand next to a puff adder without enticing a bite.

The species is quite sluggish preferring to rely on its cryptic colouration and patterns for camouflage, and will only bite if trodden on, or surprised.

Despite its "sluggish" behaviour, this is arguably the fastest striking snake in the world. It can strike within .25 of a second both forward and to the side. Stories of them being able to strike backwards are unfounded and untrue.

These snakes are predominantly terrestrial although they have been observed climbing shrubs and small bushes.

As a result of this most bites from this species occur below the knee.

This snake is fond of swimming, and can often be found on roads at night.

When disturbed these snakes will coil themselves into a defensive posture and hiss loudly, hence its common name "Puff adder". It is a warning best heeded!

Reproduction: Puff adders are ovoviviparous.

Ovoviviparity means that the young develop within an egg, and are nourished by the egg yolk, but instead of being incubated externally, the eggs are retained within the organisms body until they are ready to hatch. The average litter size is between 20-50 young. Litters of 80 young have been recorded on several occasions. The record size of a litter was recorded by a large female which had a litter of 156 young.

The young measure between 13-20cm (5.1-7.87in). The gestation period in this species is between 7-9 months although some records show a gestation period over 12 months.

Mating usually occurs in spring.

Diet: Prey items usually consist of rodents and sometimes birds.

This species does not actively hunt, but rather lies in ambush and waits for prey to come within striking distance. Prey items are seldom gripped, instead, once envenomated, the prey is released and later "tracked" by smell.

Subspecies: Two races are recognised:

Bitis arietans arietans, the common widespread puff

adder.
Bitis arietans somalica found in Somalia and northern Kenya.
A third subspecies was proposed, namely *Bitis arietans peghullae*, but has been rejected.

Conservation Status

ICUN Red List: Not evaluated

CITES: Not Listed

Thanks to jim who sent in this information, source unknown