

Hit and miss .303 action at North Arm

There were a few stray shots and misfires, but also some remarkable straight shooting at an ANZAC memorial .303 rifle shoot held on the Sunshine Coast on Sunday 27 April 2009.

Blaming the equipment was a fair excuse for once, with some of the rifles in use over 100 years old and ammunition dating back to the 1950s.

The event hosted by the North Arm Rifle Club at Yandina and supported by the combined Sunshine Coast RSLs, drew vintage rifle enthusiasts from around south east Queensland.

Event organizer Bob Bull was pleased to post a respectable score with his BSA Mark One rifle.

"It's date stamped 1902, but some of the parts would have been made in the 1890s during the reign of Queen Victoria," Bob said.

"We modified the scoring system because some of the .303s are not that accurate and there is some pretty old factory ammo being used.

"But some of the scores posted were remarkable. You couldn't do better with the most modern target rifles," Bob said.

Brian Long of Pittsworth Rifle Club posted three possible 50s with 15 inner bulls to win the aggregate competition shot over 300, 400 and 500 yards.

His performed superbly with a 1930s vintage rifle that had been rebuilt with a teak stock and rear peep site for his father Ted.

"Dad used this rifle in competition events for many years and it is still in great condition. It's a challenge to shoot with but it's hard to beat a score like that."

Brian did make the concession of loading his own ammunition, using his regular routine of carefully hand weighing each powder load.

"It's time consuming, but I find it is worthwhile to get consistent results," Brian said.

Queensland Military Rifle Club captain Rod Wood led a strong contingent of members, dropping just a single shot to post a score of 149 with 13 inner bulls.

He was using a Canadian-made 1943 rifle and 1956 vintage ammunition.

We shoot with a whole suite of military rifles, but an event like this is a great tribute to the .303 which is right up there with the best service rifle ever made.

“The concept for the .303 dated back to the 1880s and there were millions of them produced until 1959.

“It was the principle service rifle in many countries for over 70 years,” Mr Wood said.

Eumundi shooter Neil McBride was not going to let a recent spell in hospital keep him away from the North Arm range.

“I’m 76 and I’ve been shooting .303s since I was a lad of 16 in Melbourne,” said Mr McBride who served in the military for 10 years.

His rifle of choice on Sunday was a vintage of 109 years with sights modified 90 years ago.

Results of the .303 North Arm Anzac Shoot:

Service Rifle: 1 Rod Wood, Qld Military Rifle Club (QMRC), 149.13; 2 Glen Skipworth, QMRC, 149.03; 3 Leo O’Reilly, Toowoomba, 142.05; 4 Des Voght, North Arm, 140.03; 5, Thomas Hayes, Ipswich, 136.04.

Modified rifle: 1 Brian Long, Pittsworth, 150.15; 2 Bryan O’Neill, Nambour, 148.11; 3 Bob Bull, North Arm, 148.08; 4 David Hatherell, Gympie, 146.04; 5 Les Pedersen, Darling Downs, 144.11.

Light Horse: 1 Bill Saunders, Woombye Troop 130.06; 2 Ian Malcolm, Woombye, 100.