The Butts Bugle

GSRD Newsletter

June 2015

Dear Shooters

Welcome to the June edition of the GSRD monthly newsletter. Weather conditions were windy and overcast but with no rain so the end result was an enjoyable afternoon on the range.

The course of fire was a 3 P match, with a Deliberate out of 12 rounds -2 sighting shots followed by 10 rounds, shot in the prone unsupported position distance 300 yards, core target used.

Rapid Fire 10 rounds shot in the seated position 60 seconds time limit distance 200 yards, core target used.

Snap out of 10 rounds ready position ten exposures each of 3 seconds with an interval of 7 seconds between exposures, 1 round on the black is worth 1 point, distance 100 yards, target used is normally a figure 11, but we used the core target because the others needed repairing.

Sunday saw the biggest attendance of shooters to date, keen to try their hand at the P 3 practice. Our visitors enjoyed their introduction to service rifle and found it an exciting and challenging experience. I had some feedback from the visitors who told me they where impressed with the GSRD and were made to feel welcome by the our members. Thanks to everyone who looked after the visitors on the firing line.

It has been suggested that visitors and new shooters shoot the deliberate 10 rounds prone unsupported at the 200 yard firing line rather than at 300 yard because it's better to be on paper at 200 and then progress to 300 than just getting one or no hits

on the target.

The practice ran well thanks to all those who helped in the butts. Everybody's efforts at putting up targets, scoring and patching plus good communication with the firing line was appreciated and helped the afternoon run smoothly, despite the fact we only have 2 butt targets operational at the moment. Because of this it was decided during the practice that we would forgo putting the orange markers up on the target to let the shooters know how they scored -we needed to move things along.

Last Thursday afternoon (11.6.15) was a working bee and we commenced repair work on tragets 7,8,9 as well as the snap targets. Hopefully next month we will have 3 targets functioning for Service Rifle.

SERVICE RIFLE OF THE MONTH

One of our members treated us to some show and tell with his interesting British Snider–Enfield breech-loading rifle in 577 calibre. There's a short clip of the Snider being fired at the range last Service Rifle practice on the website blog.

I've put together some information on this historical service rifle.

Specifications

Weight 8 lb 9 oz (3.8 kg) (unloaded)
Length 49.25 in (1,250 mm)

Cartridge .577 Snider
Calibre 0.577 in (14.7 mm)
Action Side-hinged breechblock
Rate of fire 10 rounds/minute
Muzzle velocity 1250 ft/s (original black powder load)
Effective firing range 600 yd (550 m)[1][2]
Maximum firing range 2,000 yd (1,800 m)
Feed system Single shot
Sights Sliding ramp rear sights, Fixed-post front sights

The British .577 Snider–Enfield was a breech-loading rifle. The American Jacob Snider invented the firearm action, and the Snider–Enfield was one of the most widely used of the Snider varieties. The British Army adopted it in 1866 as a conversion system for its ubiquitous Pattern 1853 Enfield muzzle-loading rifles, and used it until 1871 when the Martini–Henry rifle superseded it. The British Indian Army used the Snider–Enfield until the end of the nineteenth century.

In trials, the Snider Pattern 1853 conversions proved both more accurate than original Pattern 1853s and much faster firing; a trained soldier could fire ten aimed rounds per minute with the breech-loader, compared with only three rounds per minute with the muzzle-loading weapon. From 1866 onwards, the Enfield rifles were converted in large numbers at the Royal Small Arms Factory (RSAF) Enfield beginning with the initial pattern, the Mark I. The converted rifles received a new breechblock/receiver assembly, but retained the original iron barrel, furniture, lock, and hammer.

The Mark III rifles were newly made. They featured steel barrels which were so marked, flat nosed hammers, and a latch-locking breech block instead of the simple integral block lifting tang.

The Snider–Enfield used a new type of metal-cased cartridge called a Boxer cartridge after its designer. The breech block housed a diagonally downward sloping firing pin struck with a front-action lock mounted hammer. To operate the weapon, the rifleman cocked the hammer, flipped the block out of the receiver to the right by grasping the left mounted breech block lever, and then pulled the block back to extract the spent case. There was no ejector, so the firer lifted the case out or, more usually, turned the rifle upside-down to allow the case to drop out. (Perhaps even more usually, the firer then shook the weapon vigorously to dislodge hot cartridges or those fouled by dust or grime.)

The Snider first saw action with the British/Indian Army at the battle of Magdala (Aroghee) in Ethiopia on 10 April 1868, against the forces of Tewodros II of Ethiopia; during the battle the 4th (King's Own) Regiment of Foot alone fired 10,200 rounds. The Snider–Enfield served throughout the British Empire, including Cape Colony, India, Australia, New Zealand, and Canada, until its gradual phaseout by the Martini–Henry, beginning in 1874. Volunteer and militia forces continued to use it until the late 1880s. It stayed in service with the Indian Army until the mid-1890s, because between the Indian Rebellion of 1857 and 1905 the British kept the Indian Army one weapon generation behind British units. The Indian units received the Martini–Henry when the British adopted the Lee–Metford. The Ijeshas used large numbers of Snider–Enfields against Ibadan during the 16-year-long Yoruba Civil War (1877 to 1893).

Use today

Enthusiasts still use these rifles today, with the number in circulation boosted by the acquisition by Atlanta Cutlery and International Military Antiques of a vast quantity of antique weapons held in the Royal Nepalese Armory in the Lagan Silekhana Palace for over a century. Ammunition is reloaded into either modern production .577 Snider cases, or reformed 24 gauge brass shotgun shells. Black powder or modern black powder substitutes are used.

All information is courtesy of wikipedia!

Thanks to everyone who attended -your help and support is appreciated.

Kind regards

Matt V

GSRD Coordinator 8/6/2015