

BOSVELD OPEN CHAMPIONSHIPS

PHALABORWA

During April 2008 Japie Maritz received an invitation to field a team of Muzzle Loading Mid- and Long Range shooters at the BOSVELD OPEN Championships on the weekend of 16 and 17 May 2008. This would have been the very first time that Muzzle Loading shooters would participate in the specific event.

Four shooters, Japie Maritz, Gavin James, Eugene Kuisis and Merwe van Rensburg decided to travel to Phalaborwa and participate in the event.

The championships took place at 5 Special Forces Base in Phalaborwa and 5 distances were shot on each day. (300, 500, 600, 700 and 800 meters). All the different classes in the S A Bisley Union disciplines, ie. .303, .308 Palma, F-Class and Black Powder Muzzle Loading participated shoulder to shoulder at each distance competing in each specific class.

Because of the time constraints, the SABU members assisted the Muzzle Loader shooters by pulling and marking their targets. We greatly appreciate this kind show of sportsmanship from our fellow shooters who generally complete their details much quicker than us. If it were not for their unselfish contributions, we as black powder shooters would most certainly not have been able to participate in SABU shoots without delaying the events.

Being the very first time we participated at the specific range, we encountered interesting wind and mirage conditions very different from other ranges that we previously shot on. On the Friday it did not take us long to discover that the flags might portray a different wind speed from what were actually happening on the range and that the mirage (as a wind directional indicator) would at some stages be more reliable to adjust sight settings on, than the flags itself. The Saturday however was a totally different ball game. Starting off on the 300 meter we thought that different from the previous day, the flags were more reliable. This perception changed drastically as we moved further and further back with a wind from the opposite direction than on the Friday. At the 800 meter shooting point we experienced flags that indicated a wind speed of 5 MOA (minutes of angle) whilst we ended up with as many as 13 MOA on windage and 2 MOA on elevation higher than normal.

Conditions like this was exactly what we needed to test our ability and to prepare us more and more for the unknown range at Camp Butner, America where the 2009 Muzzle Loading World Championships will take place, and where we as South Africans will have to defend our two World Titles. We will make sure that the selected Protea Team for Camp Butner will use the 2009 Bosveld Open as one of their preparation events.

Apart from shooting we also made a lot of new friends, who as usual for the first time could not believe that we can shoot as far back as 800 meters with our "smoke pipes". It is clear that those friends intend in having us back there in future as they designed a beautiful floating trophy especially for the Black Powder shooters, which was won for the first time by Merwe van Rensburg with a grand aggregate of 427.10.

The black powder shooters would like to thank the organizers of the Bosveld Open event for the invitation to participate for the first time and for the invitation to participate in the future Bosveld Open Championship events.

In conclusion; a stunning shooting experience on a challenging range amongst wonderful shooting friends.