

Full-bore- Good luck Gerry W.

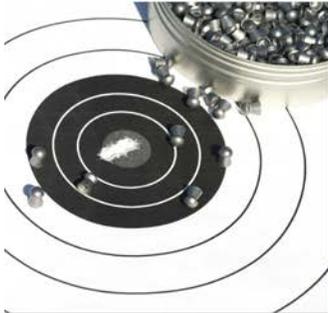
Junior Rifle- Pre Prairie Open

The



Dec 2019

Buffalo Chips



MANITOBA PROVINCIAL RIFLE ASSOCIATION

Air Rifle 22 Long Rifle High Power Rifle

Like always, if you have any questions, scores, tips or advice, comments, or have something that you would like to have published in the For Sale / Wanted section, email me at mprachips@gmail.com



Are you ready

A heads up, the 2020 MPRA Prairie Open will be held the weekend of January 3rd at our SSPC on Leola St. Competitors from across the country will be in attendance. Check out the MPRA Facebook page for updates.

For those rifle shooters who may be occasional pistol shooters, CF Range Control has confirmed that one of the indoor ranges located on the lower level of the Minto Armoury will be available to MPRA members. Leo Poulin usually opens the range between 6:30 and 7 PM, if you intend to shoot, contact him at ileo@shaw.ca to confirm range availability and the exact range opening /closing times on that day. If you have not been to the Minto Range before, he can confirm the vehicle parking arrangements as well as the access route to the building and the assigned range number on the lower level.

The Tuesday Night Air league and Wednesday Morning Seniors Air gun programs are up and running. For more info please contact Gord Oliver at gord.oliver@shaw.ca.

Rob Wiebe is still opening up Gateway Gun Club, Monday evenings for all members to shoot 22LR prone except the nights the Novice program shoots. To get on his email list, contact him at rwiebe1@mts.net.

A special thanks to Leo Poulin for all the work he puts into the Cadet Carty and Whitehead matches for this year and the many years past.

**Have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New year from everyone on the
Board of the M.P.R.A.**



THE CAPT H.A. CARTY AND THE WHITEHEAD TROPHY CADET MATCHES

THE 2295 RCACC WINNIPEG RIFLES WON THE GOLD IN THE H.A. CARTY WITH A SCORE OF 916 ALSO THEY WON THE BRONZE IN THE WHITEHEAD TROPHY WITH A SCORE OF 888



THE 177 RCACS. WON THE SILVER IN THE CAPT H.A. CARTY. SCORE 896. ALSO SILVER IN THE WHITEHEAD TROPHY SCORE 898



49 RCSCC

TEAM # 1. WON THE BRONZE IN THE CAPT H.A. CARTY WITH A SCORE OF 854
TEAM #3 WON THE GOLD IN THE WHITEHEAD TROPHY WITH A SCORE OF 929.





MWO. JUN. HEE LEE. OF THE 526. RCACC. WINNIPEG GRENADIERS. WON THE HIGH SCORE IN THE CAPT H.A. CARTY WITH A SCORE OF 192





RON DAWSON

This is a reprint from the December 2012 Chips, written by the late Ron Dawson. It is a great biography about competitive shooting in the late 40's early 50's and a look back when the city was smaller and times simpler.

Tuesday, 25th September, 2012

I first joined the Cameron Cadets at Minto Armoury in the fall of 1944. My 11th birthday wouldn't be until November, but I was a large sized 10 year old boy so I passed myself off as 12 years of age and was accepted in the Cadet Corps. They had rifle shooting as one of the activities in which I was anxious to take part. We did get some instruction with the Cameron Cadet Corps at Minto and one of the things I can always remember was being shown how to hold a rifle in the prone position, a coin being put on the front sight and I had to squeeze then release the trigger without the coin falling off.

There were three large buildings on the west side of Main St. between York Ave. and St. Mary Ave. which were used for many years by some of the Militia (Reserve) units in Winnipeg (In addition to the QOCH of C (Cameron's), I think the other two buildings were used by the Winnipeg Grenadiers and the Royal Winnipeg Rifles. All three Units actually worked and trained out of Minto Armoury where they had their orderly, band & supply rooms, etc..) Apparently the three buildings were given as bequests by Lord Strathcona (Donald Smith) of the Hudson Bay Company on a 90 year lease. They stood on the same property where our Sport Manitoba meetings were held up until 2011. One of the buildings, 202 Main St., was the quarters of the Queens Own Cameron Highlanders of Canada. Behind the buildings, running along the west back lane of Main St., was a long low building which housed a .22 rifle range. I went there with another cadet (Leonard Montford) in the fall of 1944 on a Saturday morning. We were early, it was still fall and we were playing around in front of 202 Main St. when the instructor Joe Black (a Cameron) arrived to open the range. Even though the range was not yet open, he severely chastised us for playing around, told us if we carried on like that there would be no shooting for us. That was my very first lesson in regards to conduct on or near a rifle range..... i.e. respect for the other shooters and not disturbing them by loud talk or noisy conduct on or near the firing line.

My first shooting on that range was done with a sporting rifle, I believe it may have been a BSA .22 rifle, single shot, no sling, had a lever action which pulled a tray down on which to slide the round into the chamber with your fingers. I shot on that Main St. range for a couple of years and can remember quite often the wood heater being stoked up during the winter to supply some heat when it was minus 40F. One of the older shooters and instructors was Bud Ritchie (a Cameron) who got me to join the Maple Leaf Rifle Club which also shot sporting rifle with no sling. The program was for prone, kneeling or sitting and standing, obtaining pins for 10 targets over a certain score for each position. Somehow I influenced my older sister Enid to get involved and more or less coached her along and she was a pretty good target rifle shooter, but she later got caught up with the boyfriend thing and other interests. With the Maple Leaf Club we did our target shooting at the HMCS Chippawa (a stone frigate) range at 51 Smith St. (Now 51 NavyWay)

I continued to do some target shooting with the Cameron Cadets at Minto and it was in 1948, I first met Captain Paul Gutnick. He was about 7 years older than me

and at the time a Lance Corporal in the QOCH of C. He was the first person who got me to come out to St. Charles range to do some full bore shooting. There was no Perimeter Hwy and Assiniboia Downs was not in existence. We used to drive out Portage Ave. to Isbister St. which was just a dirt road with a sprinkle of gravel, then north to Saskatchewan Ave. and west to the range. Paul had Standing Orders (a Military Drivers License) and he could get the use of a Military vehicle from the Minto Armoury pool, although sometimes we went out in his own vehicle which was a 1928 Model A Ford, or with George Hornbeck in his car. If it rained, the trip to the rifle range was perilous at the best and I can remember having to get out to push the vehicle on some occasions. On one occasion Isbister was so deeply rutted and impassable, we had to turn around and go home without shooting.

During 1949, when I was 15 years of age, we continued to go out to St. Charles to practice, but when the annual MPRA matches were held, as much as I would like to have shot in them, I elected to mark targets to make the money rather than pay entry fees. Sometime, shortly after 1949 the wood constructed latrines close to the 200 yard and 500 yard firing line were done away with. In ensuing years a latrine was constructed at the rear (east) side of the pavilion, but it too has subsequently been done away with.

In Provincial & the DCRA matches at that time the classifications were Cadet, Green Shot, Tyro and Expert. The only rifles that could be used in the matches were a #4 Lee Enfield .303, and some previously issued service rifles. According to the rules the barrel and action had to be bedded the military way with the barrel floating. Most competitors used them with a two point sling attached, post foresight, a Parker Hale or AJ Parker rear peep sight and you had to use the ammo as issued for competitions. Quite a few competitors got to check the rifles in their Military Unit's firearms storeroom and pick out which one he thought would shoot best, then sign it out from the unit. Some rifles would not shoot accurately at all, needed a bedding job and some were only 2 lander barrels. Apparently the 2 lander barrels were an effort to speed up production during WW2.

In hindsight a large part of the inaccuracy for target shooting was because of the bullet used in the issue ammunition. Some of the other inaccuracies were caused by using a post foresight on the aiming mark, which caused elevation problems. Vision definitely has to be focused on a clear front sight when letting

off a shot. Some shooters solved this problem by 'framing', that is using a very wide foresight, blanking out the aiming mark behind the front sight and having a uniform amount of white on the target around the top and edges of the sight blade.

One of the other causes of the elevation problems (in my opinion) was the comb of the stock on the #4 was too low for a prone position shooter to get a consistent head position for line of sight. With the low comb it was rather difficult if not impossible to get the cheek bone down to the comb and still look through the sight and be comfortable. I suspect some shooters were getting better results by clenching their jaw shut (& rigid) in order to obtain a consistent pressure & position with the jaw bone on the comb and therefore getting a consistent head position. Nevertheless, a higher eye position is required at 900 yards after shooting 200 yards and in those days we did not have adjustable stock risers. In spite of this, the #4 Lee Enfield would usually perform quite well, especially at the long ranges, providing it was properly bedded and the barrel was in good shape.

All the practice ammo was issued to the Military Units by the Department of National Defense and Rifle Association members did not have to pay for it. (I believe there were millions of rounds of .303 stock piled after the war.) Each Rifle Association was connected to one of the Military Reserve or Permanent Force Units or RCMP.

The Military Unit then indented for the amount of ammunition based on the number of participants signed up as a member of the Rifle Association. The Military Unit would also indent training ammo for the Unit itself on its enrolment strength.. All full bore brass had to be collected and returned through the supply system before they could get a new supply from the allotment. There were good lots of ammunition and some not so good lots, the only forgiving thing being that everyone had to use the same issued lot during matches.

The newspapers give good coverage of the matches in those days, printing lists of the scores and photographs of match winners. We had a "Tribune" match and a "Free Press" match, so usually the person who won either one got their picture in the respective newspaper. On occasion the Free Press would send out a soccer reporter, Scotty Harper. A member of the MPRA would host him, lubricate him with a few beers and Scotty would produce a pretty good write-up for target shooting.

After WW2 until the early 1950's there were sometimes as many as 130 competitors shooting in the MPRA annual matches. There were lots of homemade shooting jackets used and some people did not have a shooting jacket at all. One of the team matches every year required that a Cadet or Green Shot be on the team, so in 1949 the Cameron team arranged to have me pulled out of the butts for that match and shoot on the team. To my recollection the other team members were Paul Gutnick, Capt. Jim Newell and George Hornbeck. I don't think we won the match. I think I scored about a 44 out of 50, nevertheless the other members seemed to be happy with my contribution. This was the first time I shot full-bore in a competition and the other momentous thing that happened that year was that Shirley & I started to go steady.

During the ensuing winter I shot .22 small bore with the Cameron Rifle team. We were using the #7 (.22) Lee Enfield rifle which is a training rifle for the #4 Lee Enfield .303 rifle. We used slings on the .22 rifles and when my buddy Jim Millar and I first showed up the best we could do was 89-90 out of 100. After that winter of practice we were able to shoot 95-97 fairly consistently. It seems the last few points up to 100 takes the longest and is the most difficult to attain.

The spring of 1950 brought the Red River flood, most schools closed down for about a month and only reopened to write exams. While out of school a lot of students went to help work on the dykes. The Reserves were called out and I joined up in the QOCH of C with two friends from the Cameron Cadet band. To our dismay they wouldn't allow us to do dyke work because we were only 16 years old, so we were assigned to duties back in Minto Armouries. When the flood danger was over we were released and I went back to Daniel McIntyre for about a week to write my grade 11 exams.

I had submitted my name for 1950 summer Cadet Camp and early in July went by train to the Dundurn army camp for eight weeks. Part of the training we had there was recreational target shooting. I will always remember being in a class room when the instructors issued about twelve of us with #7 Rifles (a rifle which I now was quite familiar with). We were instructed to lay them on the table in front of us. Some cadets were quite curious about their rifle and started to handle them, whereupon the instructor admonished us all quite loudly and emphatically told us "do not to touch the weapons". There was a few moments dead silence then the instructor started to describe the #7 rifle to us when all of a sudden there

was a very loud deafening “B O O M”. The instructor at the top of his voice and emphatically shouted “WHO DID THAT? WHO DID THAT? I TOLD YOU NOT TO TOUCH THOSE RIFLES’. Everyone started to look around at everyone else. I for one knew that it wasn’t one of the #7 rifles that fired the shot because it was far too loud and I am sure it was a .303 blank fired just outside the door in the hall. Nevertheless, it was a good lesson and well remembered.

I applied to the Camp Commandant to let me compete in the Sask. Prov. Rifle Assoc. matches, which were being held at Dundurn camp but I could not get the required permission. Meanwhile my buddy Jim Millar was back in Winnipeg and got to shoot the 1950 MPRA matches.

I always used to say that summer at Dundurn Cadet Camp was the best summer I ever had.

I hope to continue with another ‘epistle’ about the 1951 MPRA matches and the trip made by Paul Gutnick, Jim Millar and Ron Dawson to the 1951 DCRA matches in Ottawa.





I was 17 years old during the summer of 1951. At that time, Captain Jim Newell was still an active member of the Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders of Canada Reserve unit. So too, was Paul Gutnick who seemed to be a career Corporal in the Cameron's, although a few years later he was encouraged by the Rifle Association members of the Royal Winnipeg Rifles to join that unit to obtain his Commission.

Jim Millar and I were still active members of the Cameron Cadet Pipe Band. During the previous winter of 1950/51, Jim Newell and Paul influenced Jim and I to attend at Minto Armoury one night of every week to practice .22 with the Cameron Rifle team.

On a second night of the week, the team went to either Minto, Fort Osborne or McGregor Barracks, depending what range the home team was based at, to compete shoulder to

shoulder using the #7 Lee Enfield .22 rifle. Each team consisted of up to 8 shooters, but only the high five scores were counted in. There were several Unit Rifle Association teams (5 or 6?) in the winter .22 league. The one top high individual score for each match won a silver tea spoon with the home team's unit crest on the top of it. They were a much sought after prize which usually kept someone's mother, wife, etc. happy to receive it.

During the spring Jim Newell arranged for us to check over the rifles stored in the Cameron Armoury room. We really didn't know how to choose a rifle, except to get one with a half decent trigger pull and ignore the ones with 2 lander barrels. I cannot recollect where we got the rear sights from in 1951, although I believe the Cameron Rifle Association had some Parker Hale sights which were loaned to us. The issue battle sight on the #4 Lee Enfield .303 rifle was not good enough for accurate target shooting, the rear aperture being too large and not adjustable and you were unable to make half minute elevation or windage adjustments. The rifles in the armoury were all maintained by the RCME workshop and supposedly ready to fire, but they were also used by the units for drill purposes.

That spring, usually Saturday afternoons, we travelled out to St. Charles Rifle range for .303 practice. Most of the .303 ammunition we used was left over from WW2 and for many years the, Armed Forces Active & Reserve, RCMP and Rifle association members put this ammunition to good use, rather than the DND dumping it or disposing of it by some other means. This government authorized issue for training purposes was continued for several years, even after the Canadian Forces retired the .303 Lee Enfield #4 rifle and adopted the 7.62mm FN and the 5.56mm. This issuing of ammunition ended in the middle 1990's.

Jim and I competed in the 1951 M.P.R.A. matches which were usually held the 3rd weekend of July. I won the green shot match that year and shot well enough to make 14th place in the Ottawa Aggregate. Jim Millar also shot quite well and we both made a place as Cadets (green shots) on Manitoba's official team to the D.C.R.A. matches.

During MPRA matches, there was a canteen in the pavilion with soft drinks, tea, coffee, beer, sandwiches, etc. available to the competitors. The interior of the pavilion was a bit smaller than it is today, but there was a screened in verandah on the front running the full length. An armourer was on duty every day in the room at the southeast corner of building. The armourer conducted his business with the competitors through the opened window leading into the verandah.

The butts were open to the elements and not closed in over the top and behind the targets as they are today. On the range were still a couple of latrines/toilets around the 300/500 yard line, to my recollection on the east side.

The DCRA matches were held at the Connaught Range in Ottawa, usually a week earlier than they are now held, that is the 2nd week of August, or thereabouts.

The official team was made up of the top 24 places in the Ottawa Aggregate, the one stipulation being that 8 members must be Tyros or Green shots. Quite often Experts were passed over to get enough Tyros or Green shots. (For me, the downside of having placing in the top 16 was that the following year, when I was no longer a Cadet, I automatically became an Expert, therefore I never did get to compete as a Tyro nor for the Tyro Trophy. This trophy is a large shield which is still in existence, but has been re-assigned by the MPRA to another competition.

The Imperial matches at Bisley, England were usually held coincidentally at the same time as the MPRA matches. Any MPRA member who had competed the previously year in Canada and made the Bisley team, then shot on the team at Bisley the following year, was automatically a member of Manitoba's official team for that following year.

The travel warrants amounted to what the current sleeping car railway fare consisted of on either the CNR or CPR (used in alternate years) to Ottawa and return to Winnipeg. In 1951 the fare amounted to \$76.00 which included a sleeping car berth.

I think it cost me close to \$20.00 to enter the MPRA matches that summer, but there was quite a lengthy money prize list. A match winner won from \$10.00 to \$25.00 depending on the match but the prize list went down quite far because there were many \$2.00 prizes for green shots & tyros. I won over \$40.00 for my \$20.00 entry fee. In contrast the entry fee for the DCRA matches was about \$50.00 but due to the same type of lengthy prize list, I was able to make my money back there also.

Because of employment mainly, most people could not accept a place on the Bisley team, bottom line being because of the time and money expended. When going to Bisley, the team members usually took the railway to Eastern Canada, travelled to England by boat, shot some warm-ups prior to doing the Imperial meet, after which they returned back to Canada by boat. (The boat trip across the Atlantic took close to a week.) Quite a few of the Bisley team shot the P.Q.R.A. matches on their return, then the Ontario R.A. matches just prior to meeting up with their official Provincial team for the D.C.R.A. matches. Needless to say the Bisley team members returning from all these competitions were well practiced up and in fine shooting

form in addition to being quite knowledgeable of the workings of their #4 Lee Enfield .303 rifles. The amount of time required for Bisley team members to travel there, take in some of the provincial and DCRA matches and return home to Manitoba was close to two months.

Jim Millar and I proceeded to Ottawa that year via the CNR along with most of the other members of the Manitoba team. The fares and sleeping car accommodation for the team had been arranged by the same passenger agent so that we were all assigned to the same sleeping car. There were some members of the team who had other modes of travel, such as driving, but they were by far in the minority.

The journey consisted of two nights and one day on the train. Actually the trip was quite enjoyable, with lots of friendly conversation and getting to know everybody a little bit better. George Hornbeck was there and he could keep people occupied, just about spellbound, with his hunting and target rifle stories. Someone pulled out a deck of cards and a low stake game of poker was started. It was not dealers' choice, but five card draw called 'forty four' where four card straights and flushes were inserted in the hierarchy of the cards. Jim and I had some experience in playing poker and were allowed to join in. Whenever the train stopped for any length of time at a town, we often got off for a walk on the platform.

We arrived in Ottawa quite early in the morning after the 2nd night of travel and were met by Jim Newell who was visiting with his sister and brother-in-law living in Ottawa. Jim took the Cameron members out for breakfast to the Connaught Restaurant in downtown Ottawa, then to the Connaught Range.

As far as I can recollect, our baggage and rifle boxes for the whole team were taken by truck to the range where we later reclaimed same. The range was a quite a sight to see, a sea of army bell tents. Just about everybody was assigned two to a tent, except for those with a bit of influence and had obtained quarters in one of the H huts. After registering for the matches we attended to the Quarter Master stores, where we were issued two blankets, a pillow, a ground sheet, our ammo and a tin wash basin. We were also issued our supply of .303 ammunition for all the competitions. We used our wash basins to carry it to our tent where we stored it until expended. In all provincial and D.C.R.A. matches, you had to use the ammo as issued.

The ground sheet was very useful item to have. At Connaught It was usually very cool and damp at night. If you hung any clothes up overnight on the center pole they were extremely damp in the morning, so you needed to store them overnight in a kit bag or suitcase. It was

so cool at night two blankets were really not enough on the beds, so the trick was to put the ground sheet between the top layers of blankets to keep you warm in bed.

It is interesting to note that the DCRA (& MPRA) were quite influential at Connaught Range in those days as many of the active and retired members were high ranking military and RCMP officers.

I could stand to be corrected about the number of shooters in attendance, (the range was like a village) but to my recollection there were over 600 competitors in 1951. For some reason Manitoba had some seniority and for many years always had the first line of tents running back from Shirley Blvd., just west of the present admin. building which at that time housed the old dining mess. Our marquee would be approximately where the DCRA building now stands. The MPRA had camp stoves, iceboxes and cooking utensils stored at the range from previous years. I believe the tables & chairs were on loan from the QM stores. The first tent off of Shirley Blvd. was our marquee which had ample room for over 30 to mess and socialize. We all chipped in for messing and some of the shooters wives and family helped out with organizing and cooking. My share was \$17.00 for the ten days, which seems very cheap, but think of it in relation to people working full time at Eaton's store in those days getting \$21.00 per week. The ice box was kept stocked with milk, fruit juices and beer, there was an honour system cup on top to pay for whatever items you consumed. This messing arrangement was the envy of some of the other provincial rifle associations.

There was another large building on the east side of the admin. building (but it has since been torn down), it had a wet canteen in the basement.... I believe run by the military. They sold beer by the quart. At the back of the mess was a marquee with the sides rolled up, with tables and chairs. Most of the patrons carried their beer outside in the evenings to sit under the shelter of the marquee. It was a favorite place to spend an evening socializing. Most team members showed up there on occasion, including Jim and myself. We also spent a lot of time in the Manitoba marquee, where on occasion the small stake poker game would break out again.

Only a couple of hundred feet west of the Manitoba lines was a small building edging on Shirley Blvd., used by the armourers. The armourers were either RCME or RCASC and were detailed by the military. The armourers would do adjustments and minor work, checking head space, etc. on your rifle. I think some competitors even managed to get them doing a full bedding job. There was a cup on the counter just inside the service window for gratuities.

Everybody cleaned their rifles daily at the competitions, so this meant they were cleaned every 50-60 rounds. The cleaning benches were sort of a common gathering area to trade stories about the days shooting, etc. (Today a lot of competitors do not clean until well over 200 rounds, consequently I now do the same. My rifles seems to group better when there is a certain amount of fouling present.)

I shot quite well for the first few days and was included in the top 8 cadets in camp, but unfortunately in those days there was no cadet Bisley team. During the rest of the matches Jim and I didn't really do anything outstanding. We had some good scores and some poor ones, not very close to first place on the Manitoba team but not last either.

One of the fun matches for us prior to the Grand Aggregate was the Kings Medal, involving the #4 rifles with no sling, 10 rounds slow fire (marked shots) at 600 yards, run down from 600 to 100 yards..... 10 rounds..... 2 rounds at each range, with time limit for each hundred yards, run from 600 to 500 to fire 2 rounds prone, then run & stop at every firing point for 2 rounds at each range, down to the 100 yard firing point..... for the 400 to 200 yds it was kneeling or sitting, until you reached 100 yards for standing with 2 rounds. I can't remember what the time limit was for each 100 yards, but it was probably somewhere close to a minute resulting in fairly heavy breathing when firing. The course of fire also included 10 rounds pop & dodger at 200 yards, 2 rounds per each exposure in a matter of a few seconds, and then 10 rounds rapid fire at 200 yards which I think had a time limit of 25/45? seconds. It was all fun, the results for us being consistent with the amount of practice we hadn't done.

We probably had too many extra-curricular activities on the go. One night Jim Newell took us into Ottawa to see a movie at his brother-in-laws home. He also took us out for a tour of the Ottawa area including the Rideau Canal.

My father had an old buddy who was a Squadron Leader in the Air Force and stationed in Ottawa. As a result, his son Doug and I were old friends of approximately the same age. Doug came out to the range a couple of times with his Crossley 3 wheeled car and drove us into Ottawa.

We also made our way into Ottawa and Hull ourselves on some other occasions. I can remember heading back late at night to the range via the last street car going west on Carling Ave. The end of the line was somewhere just west of Britannia Park, but we managed to thumb a ride further west on Carling Ave. to opposite the range. Then, we walked over a mile overland through the bush (this property has many deer and is now a game preserve)

back to our tent at 3.00AM. Don't know how well or bad we shot the next day (and don't really want to remember).....but you need to remember we were young.

In preparation to leave Ottawa for home, we found out from Paul Gutnick that he was going via Toronto. We learned that you could change your route and have a stopover in Toronto without any further charge to your fare. We joined up with Paul and went to Toronto and stayed in the YMCA for a couple of nights. We took a boat trip with Paul from Toronto to Niagara Falls. It was a fairly large tourist boat, over a hundred feet in length. On the return trip to Toronto it was the wildest stormiest boat ride I have ever been on.....with enormous waves.

The Canadian National Exhibition was about to start when Paul decided to continue on his way home, but we opted to stay in Toronto for a few more days. I phoned my uncle John Dawson, who was a lawyer with BA Oil in Toronto. He told us to come and stay with him for a few days which we did, saw the CNE parade and some of the exhibition, but were running short of cash.

Jim had cashed in his berth ticket for the train to get some money but I still had my berth, with only a small amount of money left myself. We bought a quantity of sliced bread and some cheese and boarded the train for Winnipeg with only one berth and short rations. At one of the stops the next day we scrambled up the hill opposite the train station to pick some blueberries. Luckily there was an Armed Forces chap on the train who recognized our position and gave us a breakfast meal ticket for the dining car.

The next morning we were sitting in the dining car approaching Dugald. A couple of miles before Dugald, highway #15 is on the north side of the tracks, then it makes a Z turn across the tracks to travel on the south side of the tracks. I was familiar with this Z turn, having travelled the road many times to visit my grandparents. We were looking south out the dining car window just as we crossed over Hwy #15. I saw my grandpa Forsyth's car heading west towards Dugald and Winnipeg. I said "wow, the train must have just missed them". Fortunately it did miss them and when I later arrived home my grandparents were there, having travelled in from their home south of Anola. My grandfather told me that because he was almost blind in his right eye, when they were approaching the Z turn, he told my grandmother to look one way for trains and he would look the other, but they both looked the same way (west). He said the train just missed hitting them.

I shall try to wrap this up by saying that I look back on this rather adventurous trip to DCRA matches in Ottawa as an enjoyable experience, good memories and comradeship. Something

I was happy about taking part in. I met many people who have remained lifelong friends. I did attend Ottawa again in 1952 & 1953 but after that, being allowed time to attend the DCRA matches was spasmodic because of my employment, family obligations, etc.

About the shooting, in retrospect everyone in the era of the aforementioned adventure, shot a #4 rifle and to most of them the bedding was a complete mystery. This seemed to have been left to the armourer to accomplish in the military way, ie with a floating barrel, to conform to the competition rules. Just picking a rifle off the rack and going out to shoot with it in a competition was not the way to go. It wasn't until several years later that I realized how important it is to have a reliable, consistent and good grouping rifle for competition. Those who had gained this knowledge usually ended up near the top of the prize list.

In the early 1990's my buddy Jim Millar was living in Nova Scotia and had started competing again, having acquired a left hand Wichita rifle. (In the 1950's Jim shot left handed with a right hand #4 rifle, which probably had some detrimental effect on his scores.)

Due to arthritis in my neck I had not fired a shot since 1981 but Jim persuaded me to take up target shooting again.

I still had no idea about how to bed a #4 rifle or any other type of rifle when I got back into shooting. One of the things I was determined to learn & understand, was how to ensure the rifle I used was performing adequately. With the assistance and encouragement of Don Sewell, I learned how to make three rifle stocks. They were based on his design and made out of laminated Baltic birch plywood, requiring a considerable amount of filing, chipping and sanding, etc. Then, with much studying of articles about bedding and discussions with Don, I bedded two Musgrave .308's and also a Remington .223. Even after that, over several years I still made further bedding adjustments, striving for smaller groups.....(I have yet to mention dry shooting.)

Another thing I learned was that I had to change my head position from what I used years ago on the Lee Enfield. I used to have my jaw bone on the comb of the stock, but the jaw bone moves. The proper method is to have your cheek bone on the stock, because the cheek bone does not move.

Dry shoot

Have fun

Ron Dawson

**Hope everyone had a great fall because we did
Stay safe and enjoy the holidays**

