

Rob Kerridge, FTR winner, shoots a Barnard action rifle with a Nightforce scope.



THE 156TH NATIONAL RIFLE ASSOCIATION CHAMPS –

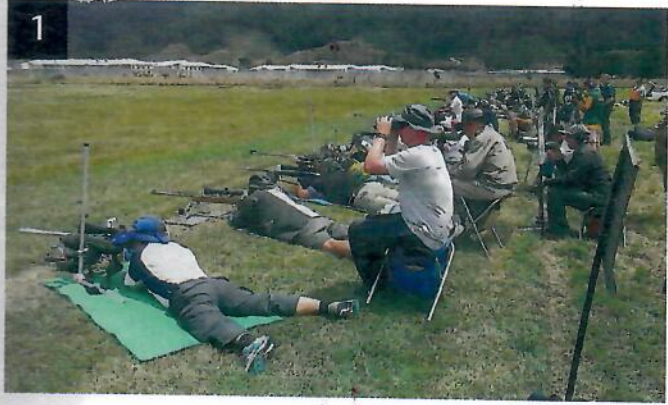
BRUCE MILLARD REPORTS...

This January the 156th New Zealand National Championships were held at Seddon Rifle Range in Trentham. Over 140 shooters traveled from everywhere between Invercargill and Whangarei to attend, and there was also a large contingent from Australia, plus a couple of South Africans and one from England. Shooting took place from 300 yards to 1000 yards. The week starting fairly kindly weather-wise but built up to big winds and showers later in the week. Trentham lived up to its reputation again!

Three Class National titles were decided over the week, F Open, FTR and TR (Target Rifle). Bob Pedersen from Australia won the F Open with a **big lead** going into the final. In FTR, Rob Kerridge from Te Puke Rifle Club jumped into the **lead after the** final 15-shot match at 900 yards

with some brilliant shooting to overtake and win the FTR Championship.

In Target Rifle class, Jim Bailey from Australia held a small lead but top scored in the final with 75/75, making it impossible for him to be beaten, and thereby winning the Ballinger Belt.



1 Over 140 shooters took part in the event, some from as far away as South Africa and the UK.

2 Aussie Jim Bailey, the Ballinger Belt winner. Jim's Rifle is a Barnard action in .308 with a Benchmark 1-11 twist barrel in a System Gemini stock from the U.K.

3 Bob Peterson (Left), F Open Class winner, and right, Rob Kerridge who took out the FTR Championship.



4 Electronic scoring is the latest innovation – this is a 900 yard target indicating bullet impact and velocities.

“COMPETITION INVOLVES FIVE SHOTS AT 300, 500 AND 600 YARDS. IT'S A GREAT CHANCE TO SEE HOW GOOD YOUR RIFLE AND AMMO ARE, AND TO TRY YOUR HAND AT LONG RANGE SHOOTING.”

Brian Carter, the top scoring New Zealander, in 3rd place overall, will be the holder of the belt however, as it does not leave New Zealand. John Ball from Te Puke won the B grade and Robbie Gilchrist from the Oamaru Rifle Club won C grade. Both John and Robbie won their grades at the final range of the Championship, 1000 yards, in trying conditions.

Earlier in the week the Australian Open and Veterans teams competed against the New Zealand teams. The NZ Veterans won the day for the 2nd year in a row, but the NZ Open Team was beaten by very slick and professional Aussies warming up for their trip to South Africa in April.

Clubs are now operating around the country, and a

new Hunter Class has been introduced to get more people using standard hunting rifles on NRA ranges. Competition involves five shots at 300, 500 and 600 yards. It's a great chance to see how good your rifle and ammo are, and to try your hand at long range shooting.

Electronic Targets have also been introduced to clubs, allowing members to shoot more without having to stop

to change target markers. The targets provide instant feedback and speeds with their built-in chronographs. Group sizes and other information can then be printed out. The E-targets are having a huge effect on the culture of the sport, with older members having to accept the new technology – the shot you fired went where the computer indicates!

Coming up in September is the F Class Long Range World Championship hosted by Canada. New Zealand is not sending a team but some individuals will be attending. Trials are currently under way for the NZ Palma Team for 2019, with 26 members required. A team Captain and Manager have been selected: Richard Rowland (Christchurch) and Chris Kershaw (Christchurch).

Fast approaching are the Commonwealth Games in Brisbane next year with trials already occurring in New Zealand and Australia. Two members will be selected to make up the NZ Fullbore Team.

New Zealand hosts the 2019 Long Range World Championships, Palma Match, Age Group matches and Veterans Match at the Seddon Range in Trentham. It's been 24 years since we last hosted this event and preparations are well underway.

The 2019 Long Range World Championships offers opportunities for shooters to take part in a world event without the cost of international travel. Opportunities are there for members to represent their country, so shoot well over the next two years and you could be taking part.

If you are interested in Fullbore Target Shooting contact the NRRANZ (04) 528-4843, visit our website www.nranz.org.nz, search NRRANZ on Facebook, or email: secretary@nranz.org.nz for details of your nearest rifle club.

Bruce