

Military Match report

Date of report: 27 June '21

Nine shooters (and a half-dozen spectators) gathered for the first-annual Jack Wickander Memorial Match, aka "Old Iron." We were especially pleased to see Ray Berryman who served as one of Jack's pallbearers all those years ago, and who wielded his '03 Springfield to great effect. Other rifles on the line included several Garands, a Swiss K31 straight-pull, an Egyptian Hakim (copy of the Swedish ag/m42), a Springfield M1a (scoped), a 91/30 Mosin Nagant, and others. FN FALs were grossly over-represented.

In order to allow everyone to shoot (even deer rifles) we divided the entries into four classes: bolt-action/iron sights, bolt-action/scoped sights (of which there were none), semi-auto/iron sights (by far the most entrants), and semi-auto/scope sight (of which there was only one. I will not name this "gamer," but his initials are Jim Hubbell. I will grudgingly admit he shot well. But then, he always does. I think I hate him).

Winning Bolt-Action Iron (the purest quill) was Ray (11/24), with Gifford "Don't Hate Me Because My Last Name is French" Allaire taking second (6/24).

Semi-Auto/'Scope, as indicated, was Jim (16/24). As his was the only entry in this class, you could say either he came in first, or last. If classes are combined he came in second overall.

Semi-Auto/Iron sights class was blown away by Gary Langlitz (19/24) shooting cast bullets from a mold he made (moly lubed) out of his Garand. Left-handed (show-off). So Gary's score won not only the class but the match. Second was Andrew McClay (even though we tried to tire him out by making him reset targets), followed by Andy Turner, Jim Rector, and David McClay (who was thrown off his game by a recalcitrant rifle). Marv also had a bit of gun/ammo trouble (as did Gary). This seems surprising, given that these are military weapons whose prime design requisite is reliability. Not pointing fingers at all, as I've suffered numerous malfunctions in every such rifle in my small battery. Which is one of the main reasons to hold matches like this – it encourages us to work with and tune our equipment and ourselves. Mighta been Clint Smith who said, "A fight is a poor place to learn new skills."

Our sincere thanks to all who participated and especially those who made the match both possible and successful. This would include Rick "Bull" Gorte and Jim Rector, who each brought their ATVs and did most of the literal heavy lifting in resetting the plates for what wound up being 14 relays; Darrel Plank who found the plates, gave me access to them, and graciously did not appear to shoot, thereby giving everyone else a chance; club officers Karl and Dutch, who not only gave their blessing but facilitated the sign-in and score sheets and answered administrative questions about the conduct of the shoot; and Andy Turner's lovely lady who took all the excellent professional-quality photos of the match to which you can hopefully navigate.

Note to club officers: upon solicitation no one claimed any injury (other than pride); conex and range building keys have been turned back in; will submit match roster and fees to club president tomorrow, though little of the latter remain after expenses, the largest of which I will cheerfully admit is whiskey, which I'm pretty sure I can get certified as medically necessary. God bless America.