



Time Travel Suits

Rifle Range Manager

Jeff Johns has found his dream job: Manager of the Coeur d'Alene Rifle Range. As a big game hunter and mountain man born out of his time, he can blast away with his weapon of choice anytime.

"Traveling, and firing large caliber modern and black powder rifles are my long-time passions," he says.

Johns, a well-traveled import to Idaho from Pennsylvania 25 years ago, often chooses big bore rifles, 40 caliber and above. He prefers the 505 Gibbs, 470 Nitro Express, or his all-time favorite, 458 Winchester Magnum.

So what's to love? For starters, the sound. "Some rifles produce that deep, throaty roar," he notes, "not a crack."

On the other hand, he craves the sharper, unobtrusive tone of black powder exploding from his muzzleloader. He enjoys the "poof," and blinking through the enveloping smoke, heavy with the olden-days aroma of sulfur, sodium nitrate and charcoal combined. No thrill quite like dusting soot off the eyebrows.

Many shooters shun big bore rifles of any era because they're concerned with recoil. Johns understands, having experienced the kick from a 495 LTD. "I felt like I'd been hit between the eyes with a 2"X4". I hurt all over," he recalls like it was yesterday. "But a lot of bad experience comes just from not holding the rifle correctly." As case in point, he offers the time his thumb installed a bloody cut on his forehead when the rifle discharged.

Otherwise, Johns is charmed by the extra power. He sees a big bore rifle as insurance, "a charge-turner if I meet a belligerent moose or grizzly that wants to stomp me into a grease spot."

"A big bore rifle can kill game swiftly and humanely, but only if hits the right spot," says Johns. "Sighting in, I want to lock holes at 200 yards." He speaks as the meticulous mechanic he is.

Johns travels light. He says that apart from firearms, he has little use for money, but if he had more of it in years to come, he'd be off to Africa to join a big game safari. While he's waiting to pursue this traveling obsession, he'll keep firing those modern "big thumpers" that take him into the future. Or when he yearns for a retro-experience, he'll don moccasins and powder horns of his own design, detonate his muzzleloader and take a trip backwards in time.

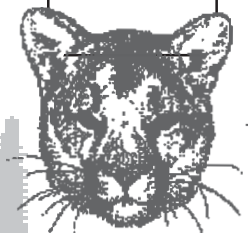
Jeff Johns, Rifle Range Manager, revives a bygone era with his black powder musket. He constructs moccasins, powder horns and other muzzleloader accessories.

Letters...Apology Declined

Dear B.J.,
Thanks for the fun read! I learned a lot, too. Brought back memories! One day I heard dogs barking up beyond the goat pens. We don't encourage dogs around here because they kill as many goats or more than a cougar does. So I took a few pot-shots in the general direction, even though I couldn't see them. Then I saw the pickup. I realized a houndsman was running. I slammed into my pickup and tore up the hill. I wanted to apologize for shooting, but he wasn't letting me get near him. His pickup shot across the brush. I went more slowly, but even so I broke off my aerial and scratched the body. I saw him on the final ridge, but when he saw me, he sped on to Devore. Man, I hated those crazy-lady-with-a-gun rumors I kept hearing, but I sure couldn't dispute them.

--Alice Hall

(In the previous issue, The Cougar Bob Review featured the Halls at their San Bernardino, CA, ranch, fending off cougar attacks from their goat herds.)





The Campbells utilize all possible props to maintain maximum cheer at the rifle range, including garb for freezing temperatures and ear protectors good for 300 decibels.

Marksman Adjust to Every Rifle's Quirks

Whether you're target shooting or waiting for a deer to dart out of the timber on opening day of hunting season, you had better know your rifle. So says Cougar Bob Campbell, who sights his rifle several times a week year round. For him the process usually takes one shot, but just in case someone you know requires more, he offers recommendations.

"First, get a target slave, preferably one like Babe who likes sprinting 100 yards 10 times per day to post and retrieve targets in sweltering or freezing weather," he says, "and who follows your every shot with a spotting scope."

Next, he advises, bore sight your rifle, lining up the scope with the barrel. Then when you shoot, the bullet actually might strike somewhere on the target.

"Then hone in. A one-inch group at 100 yards is respectable," he allows, "so you should fine-tune for perfect line and elevation."

For line (windage or side to side flight), move the lateral gauge, which resembles the groove in a screw head, right or left using a

handy dime or quarter. For elevation (up and down flight), adjust the second gauge up or down, by gnat's eyebrow or frog's hair increments. Shoot after every adjustment and tweak the dials accordingly.


"Of course, other big factors in precision sighting are temperature, wind, barometric pressure, trajectory, bullet weight and powder load," he cautions, "along with whether your barrel is hot and you've had your coffee yet."

Various experts point out that, since the bullet travels in an upwards arc before it falls, a rifle shooting dead center at 25 yards will be 1 1/2" high at 100 yards. Cougar Bob prefers 1/2" low at 25 yards so he can hit dead center at 100 yards.

"Two identical rifles will shoot differently," he warns, "so take nothing for granted. Shoot until you know where your bullet will hit when you squeeze the trigger. Or until you run out of ammo. Whichever comes first."

Big Shot Cat Fired from Rifle Range

Tyson, the biting fur ball, wasn't always an outlaw. But once such a cat grasped the idea that the entire Rifle Range and Manager Jeff Johns' house belonged to him, he was bound to develop an attitude.

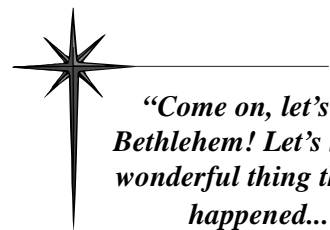
It wasn't just the constant body cleanup that tipped Johns over the brink. After all, he hired Tyson in the first place to hold down the mouse population. But every day brought more mice, birds, and even cock pheasant corpses to remove from the premises. Perhaps it was the cat's strolls in front of the 100-yard targets, forcing wise marksmen to hold their fire. Maybe it was the claw-shredded furniture, or worse, the muddy pawprints on the Range Sign-in Sheet. Whatever behavior was the last straw, Tyson now has a home on somebody else's range. 

From Our House to Yours...



"If only," Piglet thought, as he poked out of the window, "I had been in Pooh's house, or Christopher Robin's house, or Rabbit's house when it began to rain, then I should have had Company all this time..." And he imagined himself with Pooh, saying, "Did you ever see such rain, Pooh?" and Pooh saying, "Isn't it awful, Piglet?" and Piglet saying, "I wonder how it is over Christopher Robin's way" and Pooh saying, "I should think poor old Rabbit is about flooded out by this time." It would have been jolly to talk like this, and really, it wasn't much good having anything exciting like floods, if you couldn't share them with somebody.

—Winnie-the-Pooh



"Come on, let's go to Bethlehem! Let's see this wonderful thing that has happened..."
Luke 2:15 NLT

Write On 