



# BERGARA ROUNDHOUSE RIFLE CHALLENGE

Tiff Dew brings news from round one of the PRL, where changeable wind baffled the competitors, and updates us on the events we can look forward to this summer

**D**espite Bergara sponsoring the event, the Spanish sunshine eluded us on Saturday and, in keeping with an apparent long-established tradition, this Roundhouse Rifle Challenge (RRC) was not entirely dry. Within a second or two of giving the command to commence zeroing, the heavens opened! Competitors dressed in shorts and t-shirts dived for kitbags, and a pre-8am Monty Python-esque struggle for waterproofs soon unfolded across the 100m zeroing line.

Thankfully, this almost biblical downpour was short-lived, a teasing exposure of what might have laid in wait. Instead crisp, dry and occasionally fishtailing winds developed into bright blue skies as the weekend unfolded. This settled weather came as a relief to everyone – especially the

sentries, who were positioned on the high craggy tors overlooking the whole area.

The electronic ShotMarker system made short work of zeroing, and the 36 shooters were soon positioned across the six morning stages. The competitors remained in their squads of six for the entire day, rotating through the stages and rotating their position within their squad. This cyclical movement within the squad ensures that everyone has the somewhat unenviable honour of verifying the wind call first for a stage. Additionally, those with spotting scopes or binoculars then take the opportunity to try and glean some useful information on the atmospheric, before committing to the stage themselves.

At 600m, the wind whistled down the far side of the valley

***BELOW: The weather eventually settled, but disguised strong winds down-range!***



PICTURES: ROUNDHOUSE FIREARMS TRAINING

*The shooters had a smorgasbord of props to shoot from*



The Orion Mountain Challenge sold out, but the entry limit has been raised to 54! Additionally, a bunkhouse on the range has been made available for £30 per night including breakfast. Please phone their office for further information: 01686 412113

from the left, offering little visual indication to the one mil of windage required. Unfortunately for many, the 600m 'no shoot' target to the right took one too many hits, resulting in a scoring of zero for the entire stage. Throughout the morning, the multitude of bewildered looks from competitors leaving the stage, and those approaching, steadily increased, as they were unaware of the strong breeze downrange. Even those familiar with the Roundhouse felt betrayed by the usual wind direction and vowed to improve by the afternoon.

#### HITS COUNT, MISSES COUNT FOR NOTHING!

Lunch fell around midday and, despite shooting all morning, the PRL's only current female competitor, Rebecca, served a much welcome free barbecue. She was assisted by 'Sentry Mum' who descended from her vantage point to assist, guided slightly by the chargrilled smell drifting on the breeze across the moors... It should probably be noted at this point that having xx chromosomes doesn't mean you'll be stereotyped into a role; rather, my family were supporting the event! It would be great to see more female competitors within the league, as competitive precision rifle shooting is the epitome of an equal opportunities sport. Truthfully, the often less gung-ho, more considered approach that female shooters tend to utilise can be very beneficial for scores.

A key aspect to the PRL is coming to terms with the simple equation that hits count, misses count for nothing. The course of fire may well dictate that a stage round count is 10. However, the match director will often expect all but the most experienced to only fire six or seven precisely aimed rounds within the time limit. Ultimately, the clock is a great leveller and can cause many to rush shots, dropping relatively easy points. A habit you should avoid developing is ignoring the immediate 'easy shot' and focus instead on the one that follows, before the first has even been taken. You must focus on each shot, valuing it and being responsible for its entire path from chambering to successfully impacting the

target. Despite it being just her 10th time behind a centre-fire rifle, Rebecca grasped these concepts and utilised them to great effect. While returning with 20-plus unfired rounds after the challenge (in a CoF that only required 84 total), she still placed midfield in Open Div. and equalled Ryan Chalton's Factory Div. winning score. Essentially, precision rifle is not just dynamic F-Class, and a well-thought-out stage will require two or three different levels of complexity and understanding to maximise scores.

**BELOW: A competitor tries to glean useful info on atmospheric before committing to the stage**

#### IT'S NOT ALL ABOUT THE KIT

Saturday afternoon saw a near 90° change in the direction of fire, and the shooters were greeted with a smorgasboard of





props and positions to shoot from. It is here that the PRL training days really start to pay dividends, as while you may not have shot off an identical barricade before, having a solid understanding of what could work is key. The last stage on the line consisted of five rounds to be fired from five different positions on a tank trap at 535 yards, engaging an 8" or 12" gong; the slight twist to the stage being that shooters had to use a Bergara BMP14 rifle, firing the truly excellent Norma 6.5 Creedmoor 130gr BTHP Match ammunition. The rifle performed well from a wide variety of positions, frequently ringing the steel. Although from a training perspective, it did highlight how much we customise our own equipment. To varying degrees, we lean on a rifle's features to score points, at times losing sight of the fundamentals of marksmanship in the process. While in hindsight a challenge may not have been the best place to address 'skill fade', it did nevertheless provide a relatively valuable training aid for many.

After an enjoyable barbecue in the evening, a similarly early start followed on Sunday. Unlike the main PRL Challenges, the extreme long-range (ELR) days offer the venues the opportunity to express their take on ELR, yet still retain the Factory and Open Divisions. The ELR RRCs have, for a long time, consisted of pairs shooting, alternating between spotting and shooting, predominately from the prone position on each stage. As distance buys time in many shooting situations, a relatively relaxed five minutes is given to each pair to both complete the stage. The round count was equally adjusted, with all but one stage only requiring four shots from each shooter. However, with 12 different stages from 900-1,400 yards to shoot, it is far from easy, and keeping track of turret settings and the wind is key. The Bergara, Tier One bipod and Geco Optic performed admirably at 900 yards, with scores of 4/4 for many on the smaller 10" steel.

By 14.30 all 28 remaining shooters had completed the first round of the Precision Rifle League and everyone dressed down to the indoor range for the prize giving presentations. RUAG (UK) import Bergara rifles and the company's MD, Mark Swift, presented the trophies. They were meant to be awarded to just the top three in both Factory and Open Divisions on Saturday, but it was so close that scores were tied for first, second and third! To avoid this occurring again, there will now be a timed stage to act as a

**ABOVE: The PRL is not all about kit – fundamentals of marksmanship are key**

Very generously, Ridgeline provided discount vouchers to all the RCOs and range staff/volunteers that assisted with the weekend. Without these non-shooting individuals the PRL would simply not be possible! Having quality clothing certainly helps make the experience a lot more enjoyable, especially when stood in one place all day!

**BELOW: On the last stage, every competitor had to shoot using the Bergara BMP14**



## RESULTS

### PRL BERGARA RRC RESULTS

#### Open Division

1st: 83pt, Brad Bourner/John Taylor  
2nd: 80pt, Matt Stockman/Tulga Cordon  
3rd: 79pt, Russell Taylor/Charles Cooper

#### Factory Division

1st: 59pt, Ryan Charlton  
2nd: 19pt, Tony Hollard  
3rd: 11pt, Terry Still

### PRL BERGARA ELR RRC PAIRS RESULTS

#### Open Division 6.5

1st: 92pt, Alex White + Gary Stanaway

#### Open Division .30

1st: 81pt, Michael Ward + John Taylor

#### Factory Division 6.5

1st: 22pt, Ryan Charlton + Anthony Hollard

tiebreaker. Trophies were also presented to the top pairs on Sunday in both divisions, with the addition of 'up to & incl. 6.5mm' and 'up to & incl. .30 cal' brackets, designed to help reduce ballistic disparity across the field. Interestingly, despite the obvious ballistic advantage of the larger .300 Norma's, Alex White achieved the highest individual score on Sunday with a 6.5 Creedmoor propelling his pair to victory. A very good effort, especially after watching him connect repeatedly at distance when the larger calibres were being given such a run around by the wind.

#### COMING UP...

Looking towards the summer months, there is a dedicated PRL training day on Sunday 16 June at the Roundhouse – the perfect opportunity to prepare for the Orion Mountain Challenge the following weekend. Continuing into July, the 13-14 will see round four and the Summer Roundhouse Rifle Challenge. With scores already quite close across the field, it is promising to be quite a competitive first year. **RS**