



# A shot of history

Jill Clarke tells the story

One of the durable sports in the Braidwood area is rifle shooting. This type of pastime is still partaken in the Braidwood district and has a long and interesting history.

The interest by local men in rifle shooting on an official capacity started in 1888 when the district established the Braidwood Reserve Rifle Company. This was backed by Government officials with strict rules and regulations.

The inaugural meeting was officiated by RM Higgins and a fine rifle range was donated by R C L Maddrell on his land in close proximity to the town. The Braidwood Rifle Company was a founding member of the Southern Rifle Association (formed 1891 and headquarters at Moss Vale) and local members were often competing against Moss Vale, Goulburn, Yass, Gerrington

## PEOPLE OF CALIBRE



and the Sydney Reserves. The local papers regularly reported the results of competition between Braidwood and Moss Vale. In 1897 a small team of Braidwood local accepted an invitation for a competition at Moss Vale; they included members, J S Dobson, F Le Maitre, W J Chapman, W Higgins, R J C Maddrell, J M Moroney and D S Young.

By the beginning of the new century the Braidwood Rifle club was formed and during the first decade of the twentieth century the rivals for this club were Araluen, Bungendore and teams from outside the district.

Some of the above local competitors went on to volunteer in the Great War. The Club continued during this time and often sent packages for local members at the front. In the 1920s the men of the town looked towards social interactions and they encouraged young fellows to become members of the club. Another generation of enthusiasts embarked on this pastime. Members such as Paul Nomchong, Jack Stoyles, F Wright (Capt.), Harold Young, the Stein brothers and F Fletcher were often competing in competitions with Bungendore in the Charlton Shell competition. The trophy was a battle shell and the winners names were inscribed

onto it. This competition was contested from at least 1913 until 1929 with great enthusiasm. J Charlton, after a hard fought match between Braidwood and Bungendore in January 1913, offered a challenge trophy of machine gun shell which he had picked up on one of the South African battlefields after a hard fight with the Boers. The local fellows competed in sweepstakes during the early 1930s with able shots like Eugene Bourke, R Innes, J Stutchbury and J McGrath.

During the years 1939 to 1945, the club was disbanded but reformed in 1946 under the proud captaincy of G Brown and G Judd. Members at the time were Dick Bensley, Les Grant, Erle Thorne, Roy Thorne, R Lamont, Les Stores, Stan Gill, Jack Dempsey, John Royds, Dick Royds, Roy Thorne, Paul Nomchong, Tom Wilder, Jack O'Brien and Don Maher.

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[ABOVE LEFT] BERT SOUTH, HAROLD YOUNG SITTING WITH FLAT CAP ON BEHIND PERCY NOMCHONG, 1918. [ABOVE] REIDSDALE RIFLE SHOOTERS, [BELOW] ALBERT CATLIN AND FRIEND. PHOTOS: BRAIDWOOD MUSEUM COLLECTION



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