

## Accurate and Powerful?

"Those old muzzle loading guns are slow to load, stinky, messy, inaccurate and don't have any power". Have you ever said, or heard someone say something like this? If you had, the person saying them might be right with regards to the first three items, but would definitely be wrong about the last two.

Sure, it might take 30 seconds to load your rifle, and you might not appreciate that wonderful sulphur smell that's created by burning black powder, or you might not like cleaning black sludge out of your barrel. You might not even like the grey clouds that tend to obscure your vision on windless days, but then again, some of us think that this is half the fun of shooting muzzleloaders.

I personally like to shoot my "smoke pole" on range # 7 on busy days, and listen to all the military semi auto guys complain about the smoke obscuring their targets. (By the way, I'm also one of those semi auto guys, so it's nothing personal.)

*– For the rest of Tim's Black Powder article, tum to the inside of the back page. Thanks to Tim for such an entertaining read!*

# A BURKE'S EYE VIEW - PCDHFC

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But let's talk about accuracy. How small a group do you think that you could shoot with a black powder muzzle-loading rifle, shooting a patched round ball, standing, offhand, with open sights? If I told you that at 100 yards, some of the guys could shoot a 3-inch group, would you believe me? Well it's true. I see people do this every month at our regular shoot. I personally can shoot my muzzleloader offhand more accurately at 100 yards, than I can with my scoped Ruger #1 in 30-06 calibre. I can't explain why, but a lot of the black powder guys say the same thing. I won't even start to talk about the guys with the old "buffalo" guns who regularly hit targets 500 meters away.

Now let's tackle that power issue. Did you know that the cap and ball revolvers used in the American Civil War, were still some of the most powerful handguns around until the .357 magnum came out in the 20's or 30's? Did you know that a .50 calibre muzzleloader rifle will shoot completely through a deer at 75 yards?

Sure, you say, not bad, but the most awesome example of power I have seen occurred one day at range #7 after one of our monthly shoots. This gentleman came up to the range with a piece of bulletproof glass about 2 inches thick, for use in armoured cars. He wanted to test how good it really performed before installing it in their cars. He set it out

on the range at 50 meters, and proceeded to fire various firearms at it.

The .22 cal rifle made a little dimple in the glass. The 9 mm made a little crater. The 44 magnum round made an impressive crater. Then the acid test: the .308 calibre rifle penetrated about half way. WOW, pretty good glass eh? The armoured car guy was pretty much satisfied he had something here.

Just for laughs, Doc had his Civil War musket with him and asked if he could take a shot at the glass for fun. He loaded the usual load for this rifle; a 500 grain soft lead minie ball over 60 grains of black powder, and then aimed and fired at the glass.

You should have seen the look of horror on the armoured car guy's face when there appeared a perfect .577 calibre hole completely through the glass. There wasn't even the same starring effect around the hole like the other rounds, just a perfectly round, clean hole. He couldn't believe it, and neither could I. It's funny though, Doc didn't seem surprised at all, but then he's been shooting this stuff for 50 years and knows a thing or two about it.

So you see, black powder shooting can have a few surprises, so why not come on up and give it a try. You might be pleasantly surprised.

This article's getting a bit long winded, but I wanted to quickly mention Doc's Annual Turkey Shoot that we held in early December. We had 27 shooters including 4 juniors show up. Everyone had a blast, and we also managed to celebrate Doc's 79th birthday with a little bit of cake. Our next shoot will be Sunday Jan 2, starting at 9:30.

I hope everyone has a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year, and why not fight those hangovers and join us at the range to help make some smoke.

Tim Wall

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