

# THE CUMBERLAND RIFLEMEN'S EARLY HISTORY

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## Chapter III

Once the Club received its Charter and started receiving government surplus arms--Springfield 1903 A-3's and 30 caliber carbines, we were on a roll. Both of my carbines were brand new with manufacture dates of 1944. One was a Remington and the other one was a General Motors from Pontiac Division.

Singer Sewing Machine Company and Coca Cola Bottling Company also manufactured carbines during World War II. Most of the ammunition we received was World War II or Korean War issue. It was shipped to Vineland via Railroad Express. We only had to pay the freight charges.

Several carbine matches were organized. We fired from the pistol range area. In order to fire 100-yard matches, the firing line was along the tree line behind the pistol range. We were able to squeeze in a ten-position 100-yard rifle/pistol range. Two by four target holders were built across the front of the pistol range impact area.

At this time interest in a big bore long range rifle range was growing. Several of our members: Joe Martelli, Donald Martelli, Bob Courter and Andy Knoph traveled to Camp Perry, Ohio to participate in big bore matches.

When they returned and discussed the possibility of building a big bore range, the members showed a lot of interest. Fortunately we now had a member who just happened to be a Civil Engineer and Professional Land Surveyor namely John Bertino. He was a graduate of Perdue University and volunteered to design and help build the big range. Bill Otto and John Bertino teamed up to find the space on the Smith property for the range layout. Bill Otto was a land excavator with a bulldozer and dump trucks which we needed to start building.

We were able to obtain big bore range plans from the NRA. It was decided by the range committee to build a south to North design with the impact area on the North end since the sun would be at the shooter's backs during the mornings and afternoons.

There were big bore shooters who were calling for a 1000-yard range with 20 firing positions. John Bertino made excellent use of Club members on weekend work parties to survey, chain and measure a rough layout for 1000 yards. Club members with brush hooks and chain saws cut the line of sights as well as grade and elevation benchmarks to determine the amount of bulldozing that would be necessary.

There is a natural slope of the land from South to North starting where the 600 yard firing positions are now located. From the 600-yard line back to Rt. 49 the ground slopes back down. Because of this hill we could not build a 1000-yard range. The excavation to remove the hill was going to take too much time and money.

Club members decided that we should build a 600-yard range. Work parties under the direction of John Bertino laid out the firing lines at 200, 300 and 600 yards. Bulldozing by Bill Otto soon started. The target pit was dug out and a concrete block retaining wall was put into place. Club members worked every weekend digging the footing for the retaining wall and building the forms for the poured concrete foundation.

A transit mix truck poured the foundation while bulldozing continued on the range. Steel rods were set in the foundation to secure the block work. Fortunately we had several members who were cement masons that could lay the blocks.

A target house was built next in order to store the large target frames. Club member, Leonard Anderson was a steel welder with a portable welder on the back of his pickup truck. He welded all of the steel frames for the target holders and the doorframes.

Frank DeHart, another Club member was an excellent carpenter. He built the wooden roof frames for the target building and a heavy wooden door. A large sign was attached to the door—"No Weapons or Ammunition are stored in This Building". Unfortunately, this did not stop thieves from breaking the locks on the door stealing the frames and lumber to build tree stands for deer hunting.

As the range neared completion, military teams who had fired on our pistol/rifle range made many donations to the range: a complete set of field phones for each firing line, communication wires which were trenched into the lines and the target pit area. They also supplied large targets; cases of target posters and bullet hole spotting plugs.

Military rifle and pistol teams began coming to our matches: New Jersey National Guard, Fort Dix; U.S. Coast Guard, Cape May; U.S. Marine Guard, Philadelphia Navy Base and Fort Meade, Maryland rifle and pistol teams. Also coming to our range facilities was a Green Beret team from Fort Dix as well as the Air Force Rifle and Pistol teams from McGuire Air Force Base.

Military groups who used our ranges usually left "donations" to our Club: ammo cans, some filled with ammo, tons of once-fired brass cartridge cases for our reloaders, G.I. rifle cleaning kits, solvent and bore patches.

After the firing lines had been laid out and graded using a borrowed tractor belonging to Joe Martelli, Roger Linton seeded rye grass. He became the Custodian of the Firing lines, reseeding and mowing the lines before each match.

As the Club Secretary, I received notification at 45 cal. M1911 or M1911 A1 pistols were now available from the NRA for \$17.00 each—this included packing, handling and shipping charges. Most of our members sent for two weapons—husband and wife NRA members. Soon after they were delivered we received an allotment of 45 cal. ball ammo.

Naturally, 45 cal. matches followed. The pistols were in excellent condition considering they were advertised as unserviceable. During 1967, the members began to build target quality 45's with target triggers, Bo-Mar ribs, adjustable rear sights and raised front sights, etc.

The Club received ten 45cal. pistols for Club matches for those members who did not receive any from the original allotment of purchased pistols. The Club pistols and ten M1 Garand rifles on loan had to be returned to DCM following the Newark, NJ race riots.