

Your Resistance is V-Bull

The Old Framlinghamians Rifle Club crosses the water

By Steve "Two Knobs" McDowell



Bisley, Surrey. May 19th 2022.

Jim Over "Gruppenfuehrer" bury unrolls a map. The scene is a musty clubhouse in Bisley. Ten hot, thirsty and tired shooters sit attentively around a boardroom table.

"Gentlemens," he says, as his cigarette smoke uncurls across his frameless spectacles. "Ze targets are in ze channel island of, how do say' Gunzee."

The assembled OF Rifle Club members cough quietly and lean forward attentively. Kim "Skipper" Pope swallows the strong desire to say – actually I am a girl. And actually, properly, the captain too. So there.

But the Honsec of the OFRC is on a roll – and clearly not in a mood to be interrupted.

"Und Fraulein, ahem. Zi siss ze plan."

A long finger stabs three points on his well annotated map.

"Since ve have bin challenged by zees upstarts to a rifle match vis der OFRC in ze shpring of 2022, I have made a plan."

There is much clearing of throats and surreptitious call for more beer (and gin for the skipper, obvs). This could be a long meeting; for Jim formerly known as “Spreadsheet” is well known as a planner in extremis.

“Given Covid und the ferry companies cutting down services, I have concluded ve vill make a combined air und zee assault on Gunzee.”

We are concentrating.

John “Kebabs” Halahan and Luke “Blaster” Malcolm are tasked with hiring and loading a van with all our kit and driving it to Guernsey via Portsmouth to RV with our ‘agent’.

The rest of us are flying – with rifles and no hand luggage (except Kim, who requires numerous goodies from the duty-free)

“Ve will RV at the North Lunnon Rifle Klub at 0630 hrs on ze Thursday und depart at 06h45. Timing is essential. As the rifle carrier must meet our ‘agent’ (aka the magnificent Guernsey RFD that is Peter Jory who will securely store the firearms).

And so we were there. At 06h30.

Ten of us.

The sea-borne element

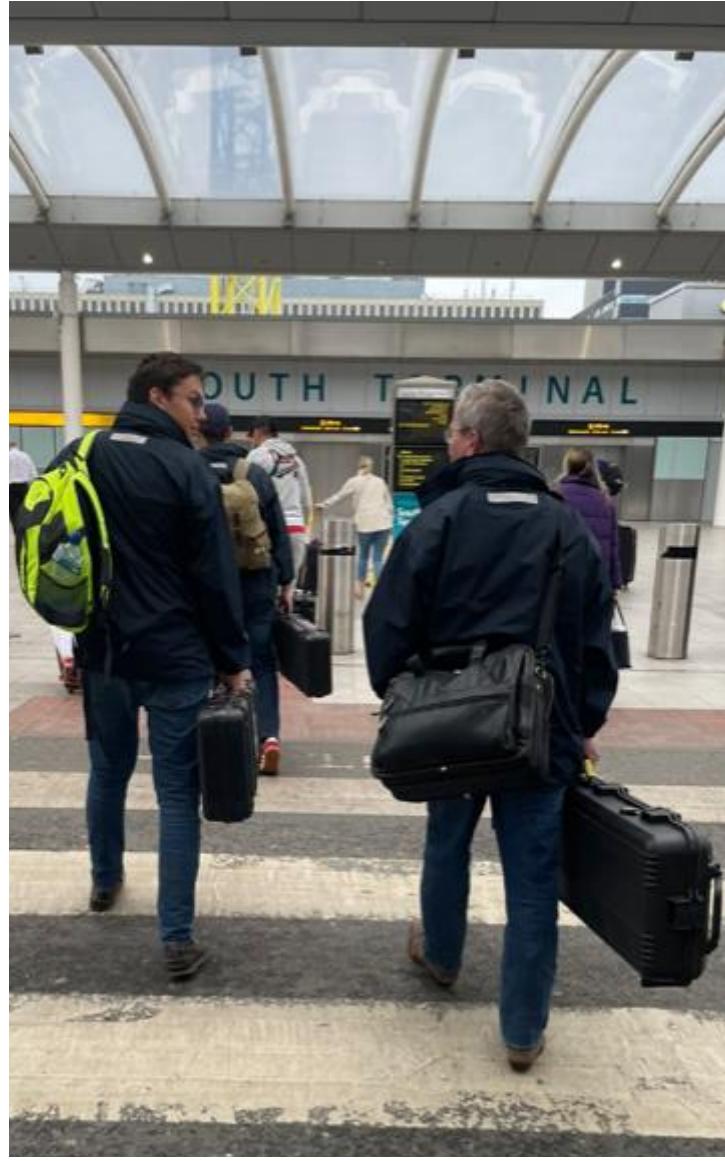


Halahan and Blaster in the van. James “Next level”

Mehta, Steve “Tantrums” McDowell, Ros “World’s Worst Ringer” Wiltshire, Jon “Bafta” Throp, Alexandr “Tsarsha” Radovskii, Nigel “The Chairmanator” Burnip.

And the Gruppenfuehrer. Naturally.

On time, for once. With all our kit. Hard cases with locks, containing rifles. All our pappez (sorry, paperwork – of which there is a great deal as any team who has taken a firearm on a commercial flight will know).



The airborne arm of the OFRC arrives at Gatwick

Except the skipper.

Despite her doom-laden reminders to her team the previous day, she has forgotten the key to the padlocks on her rifle case. And her passport.

It's the first time Guernsey has been assaulted by air and sea since 1941. Or is that; insulted...



...and they're off

Guernsey Airport eight hours later.

Eight riflepersons, with their rifles and tour kit in abundance, having dealt with the necessary paperwork and customs etc gather to pick up our hired cars to meet our 'agent' at the 'RV' aka our four-star HQ, The St Pierre Park hotel.

Guernsey is not very big – very pretty - but not very big; so the speed limit is 35mph – if you are lucky.

The local lass behind the Europcar counter is not very old and has clearly not seen the likes of us before. No hand luggage – just guns.

We check in. Name, ID, licence etc.

"Can I ask: Occupation?" she says.

"Not this time, we're on holiday," says The Chairman, deadpan. The poor thing was a tad nonplussed by the ridiculous wave of giggles which went through the OFRC like a tsunami.

Cars claimed, we arrived at the hotel. *Kosher* and *Blaster* only ten minutes later.

Mission "Gunzee" accomplished – even getting a Russian onto an airplane with a gun.

The first of many, many beers, and the odd G&T, was consumed.

The actual shooting

One of the many good reasons for visiting the island is the magnificent Fort Le Marchant range. Backed up to the sea, the butts are sandwiched between military infrastructure – from the last time Guernsey was successfully invaded, and from the time before that when it was not.

The island is dotted with Napoleonic era forts, constructed by French prisoners of war to keep the French at bay – something the natives still enjoy as a pastime today.



The skipper takes aim (at the correct target)

Being modern sorts of dudes, the Guernsey geezers have upgraded their targets to electronic, where microphones on the target faces send the fall of shot to your phone, or Ipad.

So no need for buttmarkers, or pulling the targets down to mark the shot. Which has another complication. Given you can be anywhere up to 600 yards away from the targets and can see more than one of them through your foresight it is very easy to shoot at the wrong one and score a miss.



Who says shooting isn't a spectator sport?

Doing so is a disaster and becomes expensive in rounds of beers.

This is called a 'Crossfire', or in OFRC parlance it is called a 'Mehta'. Three times over the weekend Captain Crossfire was sent to the bar. He was not alone.

There were others whose names were taken.

Twat McTwatface, for example, whose post lock-down midships expansion caused the zip on his shooting jacket to burst before a shot had been fired.

A roll of Gorilla tape came to the rescue, though while suited up, much movement or sitting down proved impossible. And unravelling the hapless fool at the end of each shoot proved highly amusing.

Much more buffoonery was to come but the serious business of shooting against Guernsey, where this is the national sport, was at hand.

Friday, 20 May, 2022.

Guernsey is obviously exposed to the elements and so Friday showed us it can do all four seasons in one day.

Two courses of fire have been arranged. Two sighting shots and seven rounds to count at 300, 500 & 600 yards – giving a possible total of 105 with 21 V-bulls. Then two and ten, giving 150.30 in the afternoon.

The morning produced a chilly wind but mercifully few drops of rain despite a constant threat. This came as a relief to those of us in shorts and with lenses.



Blaster Malcolm and Tsarsha wrap up the idiot

The shooting was a challenge but home advantage counted in the end with GRC's Peter Jory quietly putting together a near perfect 105.10, followed by one of the island's many impressive youngsters Rory McKenna with 104.15.

We began well with *Tsarsha*, the *Crossfire King*, the *Chairmanator* all hiding some maximum 35s in the mix and good shows from *The Gruppenfuehrer* and *Throp* kept our end up.

Then came Friday afternoon and Autumn showed up with a flicking wind ranging from 3 to 11 minutes of wind. Unheard of at that range.

The OFRC responded magnificently with raging incompetence from the CrossFire King, World's Worst Ringer and a McDowell and Halahan combo which put more giggles down the range than accurate rounds.

The bungling duo managed only one V-Bull between them at 600 yards. Naturally Guernsey took it in their considerable stride and didn't understand what the fuss was about.

Saturday morning saw blazing sunshine and no wind and a 'Guernsey' Queens 3rd stage with two sighters and 15 to count at 500 and 600 yards.

Our laurels, and a Guernsey medal, went to Jon Thorp and Sasha Radovskii with 386.35 and 381.36 ex 405.51.

The Guernsey Rifle Club created this special tournament for the OFRC and in doing so honoured the island's five Victoria Cross winners and presented medals accordingly.

We, being proud of our VC-winning alumni, naturally reciprocated with medals struck in the names of Flowerdew, Agar and Hewitt. Reckless abandon and absence of common sense saw us award the medals to Nick Kerins, Peter Jory and young Freddie Stewart.



McDowell wastes another round

M Creber	A	33.02	34.04	34.03	101.09	46.03	50.06	47.04	143.13
73.05	72.03	145.08	389.30						
N Kerins	A	32.03	35.05	33.04	100.12	44.04	48.06	48.05	140.15
74.10	73.09	147.19	387.46						
J Thorp (OF)	B	32.02	32.02	33.02	97.06	49.07	46.00	49.05	144.12
75.12	70.05	145.17	386.35	Winner of the McCrea & Highest B in the Halliday					
F Stewart	A	34.03	35.07	35.05	104.15	46.04	46.03	44.03	136.10
73.09	71.05	144.14	384.39	Second in the Home					
S Radkovskii (OF)	B	31.04	33.04	33.01	97.09	46.03	48.03	45.01	
139.07	71.09	74.11	145.20	381.36	Highest B in the McCrea				
R McKenna	B	33.02	33.02	33.03	99.07	45.02	48.06	44.03	137.11
72.06	73.08	145.14	381.32	Highest B in the Home					
J Mehta (OF)	A	32.03	34.03	34.04	100.10	41.03	43.03	48.06	132.12
72.07	74.08	146.15	378.37						
J Nippers	A	33.04	34.02	28.01	95.07	47.07	46.02	45.04	138.13
71.05	73.06	144.11	377.31						
K Pope (OF)	A	34.02	34.02	34.03	102.07	44.04	47.03	44.03	135.10
68.04	72.04	140.08	377.25						
J Halahan (OF)	A	34.04	33.02	34.03	101.09	43.01	48.07	39.01	130.09
73.08	72.07	145.15	376.33						
S McDowell (OF)	A	33.04	33.04	32.03	98.11	47.04	45.04	43.01	
135.09	70.04	70.03	140.07	373.27					
P Goubert	A	31.01	33.02	32.02	96.05	45.02	48.05	47.03	140.10
70.09	67.02	137.11	373.26						
N Burnip (OF)	A	25.02	33.02	35.05	93.09	42.02	47.04	43.02	132.08
69.06	73.08	142.14	367.31						
R Wiltshire (OF)	A	33.02	31.01	31.02	95.05	38.00	47.03	45.03	
130.06	69.04	73.05	142.09	367.20					
J Overbury (OF)	B	22.00	29.01	33.03	84.04	34.01	44.03	43.02	121.06
71.06	64.02	135.08	340.18						
L Malcolm (OF)	B	26.02	26.00	29.00	81.02	30.00	46.03	41.02	117.05
64.04	68.06	132.10	330.17						
ASO Stewart	A	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	50.07	47.04	46.01	143.12
75.13	74.06	149.19	292.31	Second in the Nurse					
H Nippers	B	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
74.11	74.09	148.20	148.20	Highest B in the Nurse					
R Tiffin	A	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	73.10
73.07	146.17	146.17							

The Team Match

Fort Le Marchant, Saturday 21 May 2022.



"We shall fight them on the beaches..." Captain Kim rouses her troops

Benign conditions in 23 degree sunshine saw us all line up for the big day. Even though Guernsey went relatively easy on us by bleeding some of their youngsters – the OFRC, our oldest member at 75 and our youngest at 22 who is partially disabled - are proud of our diversity. The rest of us are just bunglers.

Our skipper, Kim “*Plastic Paddy*” Pope used all her feminine guile to deliver a rousing speech of which Churchill himself would have nodded a sage approval. Well between naps on the range she did anyway.

We bravely ventured forward promising to give them a run for their money. And some of us did. Solid shooting from James Mehta (with no crossfires) and a powerful top score from *Tsarsha* with a 148. Sadly, *The Chairmanator* endured a mare at 300 yards (who hasn’t) but in the end it made no difference and we lost by a creditable 23 points from a maximum of 1200.



Taking it seriously. Seriously

The scores for the Team Match below:

Captain - K Pope Adjutant - J Overbury				Captain - N Kerins Adjutant - S Frost					
Coaches - J Halahan, J Mehta, S McDowell, S Radkovskii				Coaches - P Jory, M Creber					
Name	300	500	600	Total	Name	300	500	600	Total
J Halahan	46.004	49.007	49.004	144.015	J Branch	47.003	49.006	50.009	146.018
J Mehta	48.003	50.006	49.005	147.014	A Stewart	46.006	47.005	50.003	143.014
J Thorp	48.003	46.004	48.006	142.013	A Norman	50.007	49.005	50.004	149.016
K Pope	47.006	46.004	47.004	140.014	R Waters	46.004	48.006	50.007	144.017
N Burnip	39.002	45.002	47.006	131.010	ASO Stewart	50.006	49.007	49.006	148.019
R Wiltshire	49.003	48.003	47.005	144.011	F Stewart	49.005	48.002	49.004	146.011
S McDowell	46.001	47.004	47.004	140.009	M Stewart	47.003	48.005	45.005	140.013
S Radkovskii	50.007	49.004	49.006	148.017	N Kerins	47.004	47.004	49.004	143.012
Total	373.029	380.034	383.040	1136.103	Total	382.038	385.040	392.042	1159.120

It was a tremendous event celebrated by all.



Except Kim, who thinks her rifle team is a bunch of bums.

Full scores are below.

The Washdown

To show our appreciation for Guernsey's splendid hospitality, the inevitable dinner took place at HQ. And, no it didn't go over the top. Much.



Cheers, ears. All guns blazing...

Followed by a lunch at St Peter Port's magnificent Balthazar Restaurant – where the ten of us ate every oyster and lobster in the house. Then the gout pills.

Operation Gunzee went swimmingly in reverse order and, exhausted but elated we arrived safely back at Bisley on Sunday 23rd May.

All ready for the next visit – which will be Captain Crossfire's next year as, with bizarre logic, he has been appointed captain of next year's NRA Team to tour the Islands.

Except Kim, his vice-captain, who will leave probably her purse, passport and car keys on the boat...



Guernsey, we salute you