



Team Journal – Part 14

Wednesday 25th August

This morning began as yesterday morning - breakfast at 8 - although a little less chilly and more sunny. Six of the (mainly newly) enthusiastic riders set off at 9.30. There was a little unhappiness from David who had, yesterday, formed a close bond with Grady. Unfortunately today Grady had been assigned to Mary and David did not find his new mount, Joe (ridden to exhaustion as a result of carrying David Richards yesterday), so amenable. Ever the lady, Mary agreed to swap when we reached the halfway point at the top of the trail and Lucky and Grady were, happily, together again.



Lucky and Grady ... man and horse together again ... happy.

The Captain left with Ross, Alwyn and Jon Cload immediately after breakfast. We have known for some time that there was a potential problem with the ammunition which was being shipped to Raton for us. The issue now needs resolved as it appears, contrary to what we had understood, that the ammo may still be at Heathrow. We have a number of contingency plans - including borrowing some equipment to load our own (Alwyn and Jon being point men on loading) - and our advance party is to go to the Whittington Center to see what can be arranged.

The rest of us stayed until after lunch (a second chance to enjoy the guacamole). Those who chose not to ride either shot clays or fished. A keen contest on the clay range saw Toby and Andy tie for 1st place just as the shells ran out.

After lunch the Adjutant's bus left first so that James could prepare the ground at the Holiday Inn at Raton. The other buses drifted away one by one - some to try to get some shopping done in the less-than-metropolis of Trinidad - some to take the scenic route over the mountains to Raton. The Raincock/Millar bus (for that is from where your report is now coming) left at about 3 p.m. after a little fishing and humming bird watching. We decided to take the scenic route (signposted Scenic Byway - Highway of Legends) despite the lukewarm recommendation of the owner of Echo Lodge ("it's just trees and mountains and stuff"). So we found ourselves winding our way up and down the Rockies to the strains of Frank Sinatra (My Kinda Town (Chicago), Strangers in the Night (doo-bee-doo-bee-doo), My Way etc.) through some dramatic scenery.



... humming bird watching



... trees and mountains and stuff ...

We arrived at the hotel to find it well-appointed in all but one respect - it is distinctly lacking in the bar department - in fact it suffers from a complete lack of bars.



... the hotel - lacking in the bar department.

We then decided to visit the range and found a most impressive complex. The first thing we saw was a herd of deer - one stag and a dozen hinds. The 'high-power' range at the Whittington Center is a 1000x range with 100 targets. The firing points are cinder and look more comfortable than the 800m and 900m firing points at Bloemfontein. While we were there we saw no clouds and there was a light breeze coming over the shooter's right shoulder.



We then went into downtown Raton to get some essential supplies and then it was back to the hotel for a team meeting at 7 p.m.

The loading party had been met by extraordinary generosity from the US shooters. Sierra donated 3,500 rounds and Varget donated powder, both free of charge. A magnificent loading room has been put at our disposal. Chad Stamm and Jack Polen were extremely helpful in giving us cases and primers and providing loading gear. We will, in return, be making a donation to the Whittington Center. By the time of the meeting Alwyn and Jon Clod had already loaded 300 rounds and it seems that, thanks to the very great generosity of the US shooters our ammo problem is well under control.



The entrance to the Whittington Center



The 'high power' 1000x range at the Whittington Center

There was then time to unpack our kit and rifles, clean and assemble the rifles, order a Chinese and get ready for an early start tomorrow when we have a day of practice and zero-finding.