

KNOW YOUR NO.4(T)

GETTING THE BEST FROM YOUR No.4(T) RIFLE

NIGEL GREENAWAY concludes his series on this fascinating rifle, silencing any non-believers in the process

HAVING COVERED the development of the No.4(T) sniper rifle and its telescopic sight, it is now time to give some useful tips on shooting and reloading for these fine rifles.

Apart from all the obvious points about sound bedding, good barrel and muzzle, correct head spacing, tight king or bedding screw etc, there are one or two key things you need to check before shooting your No.4. Numerous tests during and after the war proved that the original method of bedding was the best. This resulted in the otherwise free floating barrel touching the last couple of inches of the forend with a downward pressure. It should require 3-5lb of upward pressure to lift the barrel off its contact at the tip of the forend. When released the barrel should go straight back down on the middle of the bearing surface, not contacting the sides of the forend. Some No.4s have subsequently been centre bedded for civilian target shooting which results in the barrel appearing to be free floating at the muzzle-end. This method is not correct for a No.4(T). The other thing to check is that the top hand guard, nearest to the foresight protector, has not moved forward under recoil. I have seen many No.4s where the metal tip



Be careful that the top hand guard has not moved forward under recoil – there should be about a 1.5mm gap between it and the foresight protector

of the hand guard is actually touching the foresight protector, which will result in inconsistent barrel flip and consequent lack of accuracy.

On the subject of accuracy, the required wartime standard for a No.4(T) was a five round group within 3"x3" at 100yd. The training literature stated that 2.5" or better was possible at this range, and because of the Lee-Enfield's "compensating" action, accuracy was often better at longer ranges. I have shot my No.4(T) at 1,000yd in a Practical Rifle competition. The four targets were 18" wide Fig 11s spaced equally apart on the 10ft wide backer – four shots, one on each target in 30 seconds. I had already shot the competition with an Enfield Enforcer, so I had some idea of the wind and the effect of the cold on people's elevation. I asked to shoot my No.4(T) just to see what the old girl was capable of

– much to the amusement of some onlookers with very modern rifles and powerful scopes. I was not given any zeroing shots and cranked off four shots within about 20 seconds. When the targets reappeared there were four chest shots. The doubters said I couldn't do it again, so I did. Amused comments ceased, to be replaced with a certain respect for the old sniper rifle.

Reloading for the No.4

If you really want to experience the full accuracy potential of a No.4 you need to consider reloading. Sierra produces a really nice boat-tailed 174gn Match King bullet which can be made to shoot to just over a minute of angle in a good barrel. I stress this because in a cordite worn barrel, characterised by wear in the lead of the rifling, boat tail bullets will not shoot well even though the barrel may still shoot well with the original flat-based bullets. The flat base helps prevent gas bleeding past the bullet before proper set up in the rifling. Powders that work well are Vihtavuori 140 and Reloder 15. I prefer the latter and anything starting around the 41.5gn level will give near the service velocity of 2440fps. I use Greek HXP brass that I sort by rifle and neck resize thereafter. The type of shooting, magazine fed or single shot, will determine cartridge length – mine are 3.075" OAL. All the usual caveats apply – I have found this to be a safe load in my rifle but readers should start at least 10% below this load, especially if using different brass or bullets. Another tip is to neck size the brass for as long as possible before full length resizing. This will extend the life of your brass and also make it more accurate, but you will need to



Sierra's excellent 174gn MatchKing bullets

segregate your brass if shooting more than one rifle in .303 calibre. I use standard factory-loaded HXP for rapid fire or snap competitions at 200yd because it is perfectly up to the job of hitting the 12" square bull – I then neck resize for the longer-range competitions. Neck resized ammunition can get a bit tight to chamber so is best not used in rapid-fire events.

Zeroing the No.32 telescopic sight

If a shot strikes left of the target, turn the deflection drum anti-clockwise and vice versa. Mk1 scopes have two-minute windage adjustment and 50yd clicks for elevation while the Mk2 and 3 have one-minute adjustment in both windage and elevation. Zeroing the Mk 1 and 2 sights can be purgatory because you need three hands! Zero at 100yd, making adjustments so that you are striking the two-inch square aiming mark. To zero the drums you hold the drum stationary while loosening the clamping ring but not moving the central pin. You then have to keep the central rectangular-shaped pin stationary while rotating the drum so that it either reads zero for windage or the number '1' for 100yd. Next, hold the drum and central pin stationary while retightening the clamping ring. There were two different types of

tool used to help achieve this feat but neither of them proved to be very good! The Mk3 scope or the modified Mk2/1 scope (a Mk2 scope retrofitted with Mk3 drums) were much easier to zero and this is why these are the most sought-after scopes. They had a slipping scale with a recessed projection that was designed to accept the tip of a bullet. All you had to do was hold the drum tight while using the tip of the bullet in the recessed projection to push the slipping scale around to the correct reading – simple!

Well that concludes this series on the No.4(T) sniper rifle – probably the best sniper rifle of WW2 when considering its all-round attributes of accuracy, robustness of scope and mounts and ease of use. German optics were better, but they had no windage adjustment on the scope and some of the mounting systems were not very robust. If you consider that original No.4(T) rifles were subsequently converted to 7.62mm calibre for the L42A1, which served for another 20 years from the 1970s onwards, then that speaks volumes for the basic package of rifle and scope. No.4(T) rifles have proved to be one of the best investments for collectors and shooters: find the right one and it will continue to appreciate in value for years to come, as well as providing a great deal of enjoyment for the owner at the same time.



The author shooting at 1,000yd – note the upward angle of the rifle



Reloads can result in sub one-inch groups at 100yd

New Rifles
NOW IN STOCK - PHONE FOR DETAILS!

KELBLY'S
The Leader in the Benchrest Industry

**if you are going to play,
play to win!**

FEATURED RIFLE SPECIFICATION:

- CALIBRE:** GPPC (all calibres available)
- ACTION:** Kelbly Grizzley
- STOCK:** Kelbly Klub
- TRIGGER:** Jewel Trigger
- BARREL:** Hart
- COST:** £2800

available from your
Number 1 Kelbly stockist

www.Litts.co.uk

D J Litt Firearms Ltd
Unit 3 Maesglas Retail Estate,
Newport, Gwent, NP20 2XF
Tel: 01633 250025/843252 Fax: 01633 244978
Email: andrew@litts.co.uk www.litts.co.uk
Int Tel: 011 44 1633 250025/843252
Int Fax: 011 44 1633 244978

• Written quotation on request • Subject to availability • Part exchange welcome • Prices correct at press date
PLEASE NOTE: All items subject to £6 p&p UK mainland unless otherwise stated. N.Ireland £12

Opening Hours: Mon, Thurs, Fri. 9.30am-8pm.
Tues, Wed, Sat, 9.30am to 5pm.

Litt's

