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A SHEEP HUNTER IS BORN BY: KELLI S. THORNTON

The <1 Club – a club where national Wild Sheep Foundation members like myself fantasize about the day they will officially be kicked out. The members are comprised of both men and women who have never personally harvested a sheep. These are the dreamers...and many of them are the professional hunters and guides who spend every chance possible on the mountain making their client's dreams become a reality.

Jack O'Connor said it best – "Sheep hunters are romantics who love high places and solitude. To them the wild ram embodies the mystery and magic of the mountains, the rocky canyons, the snowy peaks, the fragrant alpine meadows, the gray slide rock, the icy dancing rills fed by snow bank and glacier, the sweet, clean air of the high places, and the sense of being alone on the top of the world with the eagles, the marmots, and the wild sheep themselves. The sheep hunter is willing to climb until his lungs are bursting, to walk until his legs are dead weary, to grow hungry and thirsty for great rewards. There is no half way."

O'Connor provides profound insight into the heart and soul of those men and women blessed to be inducted into the sheep hunting fraternity. These words evoke a much deeper and more meaningful spiritual message now than ever before. Last month in British Columbia I was blessed with a magnificent harvest, a Stone's sheep surrounded by dear friends and my best friend, and hunting mentor, my husband Gray.

This was not my first trip to British Columbia nor was it my 1st sheep hunt. In August of 2014, just 1 year ago, we booked a Stone's sheep and Mountain Goat hunt with Golden Bear Outfitters. On day one of our hunt Gray harvested an exceptional sheep and on day two I harvested a beautiful billy. I returned home – a "Mountain Hunter" and even though I did not pull the trigger I had hunted sheep! I'd become a "Sheep Hunter"! This past January my husband surprised me with my own Stone's sheep hunt that he booked at the Sheep Show™.

For the last several months Gray and I have been training both physically and mentally in preparation for our trip back to super natural British Columbia. Only this time I will be the one hunting the majestic Stone's sheep not only as my first Stone's but my very first sheep. The training has endured a few obstacles along the way, from my foot surgery to an unruly "work" schedule. In spite of it all we managed to get ourselves in better sheep shape than we were the year prior.

"Late to bed and early to rise" seems to be my motto these days with so much happening right now in our life. Within just 2 days before we departing to British Columbia we signed papers with a real estate agent to sell our mountain paradise in Cody, Wyoming. The idea of moving away from Cody is bittersweet to say the least. Wyoming was a choice and a choice that we both made together eight years ago when this little southern gal led by her leading man made her way northwest to a place where notable legends such as Teddy Roosevelt, Jack O'Connor, Jim Zumbo and Lefty Kreh have written about. Snowcap peaks, alpine meadows, blue ribbon streams and more wildlife than people – a place we have been proud to call home! It has been very good to us!

In 2005 I attended my first sheep show convention in San Antonio. It was known as FNAWS then and my knowledge of wild sheep was non-existent. My hunting career was still in its' infancy and sheep hunting was on a whole other level that quite frankly I did not understand. I had only just completed my 3rd hunting season in Texas but I was blessed to have had the opportunity to hunt Africa. Plans were well underway to travel that next year to New Zealand for Tahr, Chamois and Arapawa Ram.

As I look back on that time I needed to grow as a hunter and as a conservationist before I could even begin to comprehend the fascination of sheep hunting and the extreme limits that men and women will go through for the privilege to stalk and harvest these magnificent creatures.

Years later here I am! I am one of those insane sheep hunters. I have evolved not only as a mountain hunter but also more importantly as an active steward. It was a process I feel that I needed to go through in order for me to appreciate just how special this fraternity is. And so, the long awaited sheep hunt begins and life as I know it will be changed forever.



On August 12th my sheep quest began filled with mixed emotions on so many levels. As we drove away from our home I began to cry. These were not the tears of sadness rather tears of being overwhelmed with excitement and the unknown. I cried all the way to Bozeman. I could not believe this moment had come. I suddenly found myself questioning my mental and physical abilities. Why? I had trained and trained hard, I had all the right gear and mentally I was ready for this exciting adventure. I had pushed myself towards this incredible challenge and yet somehow at that very moment a surreal sense of calmness embraced me.

There were many calls from special friends we received that morning wishing me a successful and safe hunt. I could not believe this moment had come. Driving through the mountains that morning was a spiritual time. It became a time of reflection and appreciation. An opportunity for me to not only thank God for the many blessings he had bestowed but also to reflect back on the road traveled and the amazing journey that had finally led us to this point.

We departed from Bozeman early that next morning and arrived in Juneau around midday. It was overcast and started to rain shortly after our arrival. We booked an overnight accommodation at a quaint hotel that used to be a bed and breakfast back in the day. We freshened up and were off to downtown Juneau to the Red Dog Saloon where we enjoyed the local Alaskan brew and our favorite piano man. We finished off the evening with a lovely dinner and a Pinot Noir at an exceptional restaurant, SALT, before heading back to the hotel.

Early that next morning we shuttled over to Ward Air, a private air charter company that would fly us in to British Columbia. Usual Juneau weather caused for some delay but nonetheless we eventually were given clearance to take off and we landed around noon into Tatsamenie camp to kickoff this long awaited adventure. We were greeted by our British Columbian family, Greg and Fay Williams of Golden Bear Outfitters, their daughter Melissa, son & guide Blake and his wife Kelsea, granddaughters Mercedes and Novah, and camp companion "Tuffy".

We spent the rest of the afternoon organizing our gear and hunt details. The plan was to pack for six days. Blake had just gotten married in February and his new bride, Kelsea, would be joining us on the hunt. Greg's plan was to fly us out in the morning to another lake and we would hike/climb in from there. This was going to be a true backpack hunt. Knowing that everything you will need for the hunt will be on your back it was critical that the pack was not only well-planned but that you ensured it was strategically structured for optimum travel. Some tough decisions had to be made. The majority of gear brought to B.C. included an entire arsenal of photography equipment including collapsible reflectors, multiple batteries, tri-pod and a 400mm lens. I decided to leave behind the 400mm lens and other misc. items. I weigh barely a 100 pounds and my pack in relation to my body weight was getting quite heavy.

That evening we enjoyed an Alaskan King Crab Feast that Gray and I brought with us from Juneau. It was an incredible evening of fellowship and celebration for the exciting and life-changing hunt that was about to begin. The next morning was we awoke to blue skies and crisp alpine air. We had a quick breakfast, gathered up our gear and began to load Greg's Piper PA12. Greg

decided to take Blake and Kelsea first and then he would return to take Gray and me. It was a beautiful morning to fly and we saw an incredible population of mountain goat along the way. As a board member of the Rocky Mountain Goat Alliance, it was wonderful to see such thriving and healthy billys, nannies and kids. A testament to the great work British Columbia has done managing this resource.

By the time we all arrived at the drop off location it was mid-morning. Blake suggested we scale down our packs and leave enough food for two days in a game bag that he would secure in a tree.

It was now time to begin our climb. Over the next six hours we would do a near-straight vertical climb gaining over 2000 feet in elevation over some of the most gnarly and treacherous rocky shale. The one thing I had not truly trained myself for especially with the extra weight from a heavy pack. There were many areas along the way that challenged my balance and surefootedness. This was not a race. The best thing for me to do was to take my time and to be very selective with which rocks to climb. We eventually made it to the top. It was a vast alpine plateau not unlike a boulder-strewn moonscape with intermittent grasses and glacial fed runoff.

As we hiked across this plateau we came upon periodic seeps caused from glacier melt – an excellent water resource for not only sheep but for us as we adventured into their mountain top realm. We decided on a nearby sandy patch to set up our camp. As we begun organizing our tents we noticed off in the distance about 400 yards was a feeding group of ewes and lambs. For the next thirty minutes or so this group continued to get closer to our camp. I grabbed both the binoculars and camera so that we could sit and enjoy glassing and photographing the sheep.

The sheep continued to get closer and eventually came within 10 yards of the tents. There were two young heavy based rams approximately 3-4 years in age that you knew in a few more years would be an outstanding trophies. The herd continued to move on and we stood in awe as they faded in the distance. These sheep had never been hunted so there was no human pressure or fear. We were living amongst them and this was such an incredible opportunity that had presented itself.

With a few more hours of light and well beyond the 6 hour minimum B.C. same-day airborne wait, Blake asked us to gather our packs, binoculars and for me to grab my gun. I was reluctant to follow his instructions. What if we see a legal ram this early into the hunt? My hunt would be over but I wanted to experience Sheep Camp and at least for more than just one day! Yes I was there to hunt sheep but it is so much more than pulling a trigger. This is what I read and dreamed about. Despite my hesitation, I grabbed my Kimber .308 and we officially started the hunt. We hiked west of camp for about 500 yards and climbed over a couple of grassy knolls where we stopped to glass down into a couple of draws. You would think there would be sheep but did not see any signs of sheep. It was getting much cooler and the sun was beginning to go down so we headed back to camp for a quick freeze-dried dinner and off to an early sleep.

We arose to a beautiful sunrise, brilliant blue sky and crisp alpine air. Blake had boiled water for coffee and tea. The mornings are what I loved most. I could feel the adrenalin high building inside me, the warmth in my hands from the fresh brewed cup of tea and the sweet smell of maple brown sugar oatmeal.

After breakfast we gathered our gear and packs (making sure not to forget my <1 Club shirt) and started day 2 of the hunt.

We started out hiking back towards the draws we had glassed the evening before and continued east to basically make a loop around our camp. Blake could see a group of rams that were pretty far away and thought we should probably get a closer look. As we walked across a scree field we literally bumped into the ewes and lambs we had seen the prior day. It became a stand off of note with 100 yards between us. We stood still for what seemed like hours praying that this group would somehow carry on. Finally they gave up on us and wandered off without causing any disturbance to the group of rams we spotted previously.

We hiked in a single file line to minimize as much exposure as possible. Unbeknownst to us there was a shallow valley that had another group of rams that we were not able to see. It wasn't long before Blake spotted them. While glassing this new group the first group left their beds and joined their brothers. There were now a total of 18 rams about 600+ yards away. We wanted to get in closer. We got in another 150+ yards but there were so many rocks there was no way we could be confident that the shot from barrel would have a clear path.

Gray and Kelsea decided to stay back as Blake and I belly crawled until we got to a spot that I was confident would have a clear path and a firm rest. We ranged our location to be 375 yards. There were 2 rams we were watching. One was a 9-year old white ram with very nice extended lamb tips but he had thinner bases. The second 11-year old ram had a dark beautiful coat, and beautiful twisting horns. Blake wanted me to shoot the white ram but both rams were superb.

The two began to spar, their heads collided and the sound of the impact echoed in the valley. Tears ran down my face as I watched this incredible act of nature. Blake leaned over to me and said "take the shot when you are ready". I took a deep breath with more tears running down my face, I said to myself "just squeeze the trigger" and I pulled the trigger. It was a perfect shot, I quickly reloaded and the ram spun around, I pulled the trigger once more and the sheep fell immediately to the ground. As I looked through my scope I began to cry. Blake said those words I remembered hearing a year ago but this time he was speaking to me, "You just got yourself a Stone's sheep"! Yes, I did! But it was not just my Stone's sheep it was our ram. Each one of us played a pivotal role in the hunt. There were many tears, hugs, and excitement. As we walked towards my sheep the 17 rams stood beside him waiting for a new dominant ram to emerge. My team allowed me an opportunity to privately give reverence and thanks to God and as I kneeled down beside the sheep I gently stroked the hair on his back with my tears falling on his coat. I thanked him for the experience and for the nourishment from his body that we would receive from this harvest.



Within a few moments my team joined me for beautiful photos and together we field dressed our ram and carried him back to camp; which amazingly was only about a ½ mile away. We had truly hiked and camped within their mountain realm.

It was late and darkness was approaching soon. We had a superb Mountain House dinner and Kelsea served a wonderful dessert, raspberry crumble. After dinner the sky lit up with the Northern Lights, something I had always heard about but had never seen. Kelsea said to me "Kelli, God is congratulating and blessing you with the Northern Lights".

It was a wonderful way to end such a special and spiritual day. By the next morning the weather had rolled in and we quickly broke down camp following breakfast and loaded up our gear. I was determined to carry our sheep off the mountain. My pack was brutally heavy and the weight was certainly slowing me down. I carried all my gear and equipment I initially brought in plus the horns and cape. Gray, Kelsea and Blake divided up the meat among their packs and we headed down the mountain. The descent was terrifying and the added weight became a real challenge. There were moments of blood, sweat and tears on the way down and they were times when I needed my husband to just talk me through it. I soldiered on and by the grace of God I carried our ram off the mountain and it took three (gratefully) weather delayed days to recover to where I could finally move my body without pain and depart again for Gray's goat hunt.

It is a life-changing experience only a sheep hunter knows and understands. The commitment you made to yourself is fulfilled. You have a greater respect and appreciation for the species and their habitat. With my husband, Gray, by my side, my guide, Blake Williams and his beautiful bride Kelsea, I pushed myself to limits I never thought imaginable. Our ram taught me more about myself than I realized. I became a better person up on that mountain that day!

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Bullet Drop Compensators

“Are not created equal” written by Jack Peterson

Bullet Drop Compensators or (BDC) turrets simply put, are target style elevation turrets utilized on a rifle scope, which can be calibrated in yards or in the standard MOA click values. This is accomplished by simply rotating the BDC turret to adjust the reticle and display the proper yardage or MOA to a known distance. The accuracy and repeatability of a BDC turret system is comprised of many factors. One of which includes utilizing a very high quality scope that is both consistent when dialing the turret and can hold up to recoil and the rigors of field use.

Unfortunately for the consumer, the reality is not all scopes and or BDC turrets are created equally. In addition, there are both advantages and disadvantages when comparing yardage turrets to MOA turrets. In this article I would like to demonstrate some of the major differences between these two methods and some of their strengths and weaknesses. Also, it may be helpful to make some comparisons and give my opinions on why I do not consider either mil-dot or hold over reticles to be a viable option for long range compensation in real world “hunting” situations. I want to clarify that this article is about making BDC turrets that are capable of effectively and ethically placing bullets in a kill zone sized area on both animate and inanimate targets.

The main objective in successfully taking longer than normal range shots is by eliminating as much of the guess work as possible. Bullet drop compensation is an area that this can be done quite effectively, if done right. The other main factor is wind compensation and I think all would agree that wind is the more difficult of the two. This is because the atmospheric conditions in real world environments are not a constant and at times can be difficult and sometimes even impossible to determine the value. However, because wind deflection is not as drastic as gravitational pull is on a bullet, wind deflection is much more forgiving than bullet drop compensation.

Following in diagram (1) is an example that demonstrates wind deflection for a 10mph crosswind vs bullet drop in inches.

Diagram (1)	Velocity	Energy	Wind (IN)	Drop (IN)
200	2702.1	2723.3	2.2	-0.0
300	2535.2	2397.2	5.1	-6.0
400	2374.3	2102.6	9.3	-17.4
500	2219.3	1837.0	15.1	-35.0
600	2070.0	1598.1	22.4	-59.6
700	1926.8	1384.6	31.6	-92.4
800	1790.1	1195.2	42.7	-134.6
900	1660.7	1028.6	56.1	-187.6
1000	1539.4	883.8	71.9	-253.3

This was using data from a 300 win mag, 168gr Barnes trp shck, BC 0.476, 3050fps, 3000' alt, 70 degree temp, 10mph wind, Barometric pressure 26.81, relative humidity 50.

Notice that there is over 3 times as many inches of bullet drop as there is wind (10 mph) deflection at 1000 yards. Once again reiterating wind deflection is much more forgiving when determining wind effect and in the event the estimated wind speed is off somewhat from reality.

Drop on the other hand is very critical to get it right the first time. Therefore, collecting good data for a yardage BDC turret is vital. This can only be done by actually shooting a specific rifle and load in a known atmospheric environment to develop drop data when making a BDC turret. I will go into more detail about how we accomplish this later.

First, let's consider hold over reticles that are made by using “estimated” velocities, ballistic coefficients and

atmospheric conditions to include altitude, humidity, barometric pressure and temperature. Consumers must consider the point of impact changes when any of the above components are different from the original generic data that was used in creating a hold over reticle. Sure, there are some sophisticated hold over reticles that provide the ability to make corrections, but these take a considerable amount of experience and learning curve. Mil-dot hold reticles with mil-grids could be the best choice for shooters with proper training and experience and can be quite effective for both ranging and engaging a target fairly rapidly. As far as being (one shot accurate) at extreme ranges, this would depend greatly on the experience of the shooter and his ability to determine a solution for correcting any atmospheric or angle changes. This is why many of the elite snipers are using MOA systems where they can acquire a real time firing solution to include angle and then dial the reticle utilizing a BDC turret. In short, consumer level hold over reticles are difficult at best. Mil-dot reticle systems are better, but again requires lots of experience and a real time solution at longer ranges.

Let me try and clarify my point by an additional example using the same rifle caliber and ballistics as the data above. The only change below is a 9000' alt and 45 degree temperature vs 3000 at 70.

	Velocity	Energy	Wind (IN)	Drop (IN)
200	2758.5	2838.0	1.8	-0.0
300	2617.6	2555.5	4.2	-5.8
400	2481.1	2295.9	7.6	-16.6
500	2348.7	2057.5	12.2	-33.1
600	2220.4	1838.8	18.1	-55.9
700	2096.0	1638.6	25.2	-85.7
800	1975.7	1455.8	33.9	-123.5
900	1859.6	1289.8	44.2	-170.2
1000	1748.1	1139.8	56.2	-226.9

Diagram (2)

When comparing to Diagram (1) on page 1, notice that at 800 yards there is an 11 inch point of impact difference. At 1000 yards there is a 26 inch point of impact change. Mostly due to air density from elevation. In fact, only 5 inches can be attributed to the temperature change. Also, notice the wind deflection differences. (Windage in diagrams is in inches) Some folks might point out that they could shoot the data for their "custom" made reticle and it will be just as accurate as a BDC/MOA turret. The problem is they are back to a guessing game when making elevation, temperature and angle compensations. With a yardage BDC/MOA turret you can dial the exact corrections for angle and temperature.

So how does the average hunter and shooter ethically utilize a hold over reticle in hunting situations?maybe limited to 400-500 yards.

This leaves us with a few better choices and that is either MOA turrets or yardage turrets.

For an experienced shooter that thinks in MOA or minutes of angle, a MOA turret can work very well. It does however require a real time solution usually a hand held device that can compute the atmospheric conditions, angle, velocity and then correct the distance to target. Or a chart taped to the side of the rifle that has information for making these changes. This can be very effective if the target holds position long enough to work out the data. In the event of a follow up shot on a wounded animal that continues to change distances and sometimes rapidly, this may not be the best system.

For those of you that think in yards and have a range finder set for yards, then a yardage BDC turret might be your best solution. Although this could depend entirely on the process and how the BDC turret is made. This may still require a chart to know how to make changes to atmospheric conditions. The problem with most yardage BDC turrets is that like hold over reticles, generic data is used in making a turret. Sometimes they work well and if you are really lucky they might even work pretty darn good. This is providing you have a field solution for changing altitudes more than 2000ft plus or minus from the data that was used to develop the BDC turret.

So, how does one make a really good yardage BDC turret that works every time, at every altitude and temperature and is dead on accurate at longer ranges? Well, the truth is currently, it is not possible to make a single yardage turret that fits different atmospheric conditions. This is where Huskemaw Optics has been and still is the industry leader in making yardage BDC turrets that matches the trajectory of an individual rifle, caliber and specific load. Notice, I said turret(s), a turret can only work effectively and consistently by obtaining data from actually shooting the rifle and collecting “proven data” opposed to using estimated generic data. In addition, it is necessary to build more than one turret to span the altitude and temperature ranges many hunters and shooters will experience in their shooting endeavors.

Building fully customized “windage enabled” BDC turrets (US Patent 8,365,455 B2) can be accomplished by utilizing our ballistics calculator to provide online customers with a drop data chart they can take to their shooting range. www.huskemawoptics.com. This chart provides users the same ballistic data that many turret makers use to make their generic turrets from. This same chart provides the information to know “approximately” how many clicks should be dialed to a known distance, after the rifle has been zeroed at a desired distance. (Notice in the above ballistic charts that I am using a 200 yard zero.) Customers then shoot a 4-5 shot group and measure how high or low the group size is from the aim point and record it on the data chart. This needs to be done both at a far distance and again at a midrange distance. Once again, the group average is recorded as to how high or low it is, along with how many clicks were dialed. It is a very good thing to shoot through a chronograph and to record the velocity and temperature when shooting. What we are doing is providing back to our ballistics program “proven data” in a known environment. This will allow the BC program to correct the original generic data and trajectory to match the actual trajectory or “proven data”. It is basically correcting the G1 or G7 drag model used in ballistic programs to an actual proven trajectory from an individual rifle. The proven and corrected ballistics are then laser engraved onto an aluminum turret in yardage increments.

These turrets also include the corrected wind hold values (US Patent 8,365,455 B2) in a second row of numbers above the



Diagram (3) All of your “True Ballistics” to include wind is right on the turret.

appropriate yardage numbers. In diagram 3, notice the small 4 above the 7 this is the wind value number. The windage numbers are in minutes of angle and based on a 10mph full value wind speed. The 7 represents 700yds and the hash marks in between the 6-7 are in 25 yard increment marks. Obviously there are click values between the 25 yard hash marks that allows the scope to be dialed to distances in between the 25yd increments for extreme accuracy. Wind holds and values are just as simple to understand and calculate, but I will save that for a future article.

To summarize, all of the “true ballistics” derived from your actual bullet trajectory and wind values is built right into the yardage turret, no charts, no complicated reticles and no hand held computers. Building turrets for additional changes to elevation and atmospheric conditions is simple because the ballistics program does all the work. For example, with a high BC bullet, a 2000ft turret spans from sea level to 4000ft, a 6000ft turret reaches from 4000-8000ft and a 10,000ft turret works from 8000-12,000ft. It takes about 30 seconds on average to change elevation turrets and just three of them will allow you to hunt anywhere in the world from 0 to 12,000ft elevations. It is my intention that this article helps to not only answer a few questions, but also inspires many more questions. There is obviously more than one way to accomplishing similar results and it is up to each hunter and shooter to find what works best for themselves. It is also our personal responsibility to make sure we are ethical in the shots we take on live animals. Never take a shot that you haven’t proven on inanimate targets time and time again in the same field conditions you are faced with in each hunting scenario. But with the right equipment and practice your effective and ethical shooting ranges can be extended beyond what was once thought to be impossible.

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One Shot One Kill

by Walter S. Muirhead III

There I was in South Africa with my wife Christina, my best friend & co-host of The Best of the West Dan Adler, his wife Terri and son Joshua. I had never been to this location to visit or to go hunting before. The arrangements for the journey had been made so far in advance that it had always seemed to be a distant plan that would get lost in the shuffle and monotony of daily life. It was truly amazing to actually be there. My best friend Dan is a professional hunter, guide and outfitter. He paired me up with a Huskemaw Blue Diamond 10x42 HD binocular, a Best of the West Signature Series 300 Win Magnum rifle fitted with a Huskemaw Tactical Series 5-30x56 scope, and custom Best of the West ammunition. He said I was in good hands for this safari. Although I've had a lot of experience firing different types of weapon systems and ammunition as an active duty service member for over 16 years in the U.S. Army, I am new to the sport of hunting wild animals. "How new" you may ask? New as in this is my first time big game hunting and it is going to be on an African safari! Talk about getting thrown in the deep end and told to swim. Fortunately, I have had a lot of experience with training and ranges to include three overseas combat tours behind me.



Before we headed out on our first day of hunting, I wanted to become more familiar with the rifle system that I was going to be hunting with. I would accomplish with Dan's coaching and training. We began by firing at a paper target at a distance of 100 yards to confirm the weapons accuracy and my own. I had time to look at and inspect the 300 Win Mag rifle system while setting up the range and preparing it for firing. At first glance, the rifle system is very impressive from the composite stock, mounted fluted barrel and muzzle break, to the tactical series 5-30x56 scope.



I thought I would have to fire more shots than what I did due to my unfamiliarity with the rifle system. I was wrong about that! I only fired two practice shots at the paper target. Both shots of which hit in the same half inch square together, barely an eighth of an inch left of center. At this point, I was extremely impressed with the rifle, scope and ammo combination adding much needed confidence to take in to my first hunt of the day. I couldn't believe how crisp and easy the trigger pull was and how the recoil was nearly non-existent.

Now that I had gotten past that first hurdle of demonstrating to the professional hunters and guides that I can be accurate with the rifle, I was thinking to myself that I can sit back and watch how it's supposed to be done, being the new guy here amongst the professional hunters and guides.

So we secured our equipment, mounted up and headed out to hunt animals that were on our lists. Before I could grab a bottle of water, I was told to get off the truck and begin getting into a supported firing position to take a 200 yard shot at a mature wildebeest. I found myself trying to become relaxed and controlling my breathing after a short amount of dialogue between the PH, Dan and myself. The priority was to confirm shot placement on the identified wildebeest bull. I was recalling Dan's coaching and envisioning the shot in my mind while he was asking if I was comfortable and to take the shot when I was ready.

I found myself thinking about how fast everything was happening, the wildebeest standing completely still and that this could be my very first game trophy, so long as I shot with accuracy. I thought briefly back to the shooting range earlier and how accurate the scope and rifle was with my first time use. Then I remember barely applying slow gradual fingertip pressure to the trigger assembly and a metallic click followed by a very small amount of recoil. I released the trigger, chambered another round and continued to look through the Huskemaw tactical scope. I watched the wildebeest make a 180 degree turn right and drop to the ground. All I could hear now were shouts of praise from my group saying, "great shot!" and "he's down!" I relaxed and then was overcome with



happiness and a feeling of success. I did it! I had taken my first animal. However, I didn't do it alone. I also felt very confident that I was outfitted with very high quality hunting equipment. That equipment played a vital role in my success, accuracy and lethality throughout the remainder of the hunt. I was able to take further shots that otherwise would have not been possible to take without having to move in closer and possibly lose the shot due to startling the game or loss of line of sight. The Best of the West signature series 300 Win Magnum rifle with its extreme accuracy allowed me the confidence for a much further range and engagement area.

During my combat deployments overseas, I felt a similar confidence and bond with my M4 rifle and 9mm pistol because they were with me night and day for years at a time during difficult situations where I relied on them to perform. I felt the same bond and high sense of pride and confidence with the Best of the West Signature Series 300 Win Mag rifle and Huskemaw optics in a relatively short amount of time in comparison. I knew very quickly that I could count on that equipment to get the job done.



During the ten day hunt, I would go on to successfully hunt the additional following five game animals: An impala at almost 300 yards, an eland at 506 yards, a gemsbok at 190 yards, a Kudu at nearly 425 yards and a zebra at 386 yards. From a tactical perspective, you could say I took 6 animals at a combined distance of nearly

2/3rds of a mile! It was the vacation and hunting trip of a lifetime. Best of the West rifles and Huskemaw optics certainly secured our success with a one shot, one kill approach! I couldn't be more pleased with how the Best of the West equipment and ammunition performed. Even as the hunt when on and equipment got dirty and beat up it never once let me down. Thank you Best of the West for this exceptional top-of-the-spear equipment package for this safari! Thank you Wild Wildebeest Safari's

for bringing this safari to life! Thank you Ron Roboud and Wounded Warrior Outdoors for your sponsorship! Thank you Dan Adler for inviting me and sharing with Christina and I the HUSKEMAW ADVANTAGE!

As a military service member and US Army master gunner, I use some of the most elite military grade weapon systems in the world. In doing so, I put them through a lot of punishment in austere conditions. The Best of the West shooting system is extremely high quality, tough, durable and is definitely up to the task of taking a once in a lifetime precision shot. I look forward to shooting one again soon!



-Walter S. Muirhead III



Shooting Courses

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- Shooting Fundamentals
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- Many more topics specifically related to hunting.

Todd Heap - 2 time football pro-bowler



JJ Hardy - 2 time Gold Glove Winner

Lunch after Classroom

Next it is off to the range to begin engaging targets at various ranges out to and beyond 1000 yards. All will experience several different Rifles/Shooting Systems set up ready to go. You will start from the bench rest stations, so that everyone gets comfortable with the Shooting Systems. We have multiple Instructors so students will be in 2 man teams to promote Shooter Spotter Relationship.

DAY 2

After a short classroom session to discuss application from the day before we return to the field to resume practice from Real World Shooting positions. Not from the Bench! When you have completed the morning Field Shooting Course you will return to the classroom for lunch and continuing education.

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IN PURSUIT

OF CANIS LUPUS AND COUSINS

BY JIM SESSIONS

For those of you that don't know what Canis Lupus is, I am referring to the northern Grey Wolf. This animal has a broad range extending from Alaska in the north down to Idaho and Wyoming to the south and east to Michigan, Minnesota and Wisconsin. To say that the wolf has been the subject of much controversy would be a huge understatement. In Wyoming, we have seen the carnage and decimation realized by our ungulate populations. The elk herd in Sunlight Basin and Crandall of northwest, Wyoming at one time produced exceptional trophy bulls on late migratory hunts and was a general hunt during October. All this has changed dramatically. The late hunts are a thing of the past and the general hunt is now limited quota. This is just one example of a prey population that has been ravaged by unregulated wolf predation. Unfortunately, Wyoming hasn't been able to keep a controlled hunt in play. Idaho and Montana continue to offer hunting and trapping opportunities. The reality of wolf populations in the 21st century is that they are here to stay and they must be controlled for the benefit of all wildlife populations.

This article refers to a wolf hunt/trapline adventure that I was able to participate in with Inzana Outfitters. Inzana's guide area is located in North-Central British Columbia, near Prince George. Paul Trepus owns and operates Inzana Outfitters from a comfortable lodge within his guide territory. Paul is very familiar with his territory as he not only guides Fall and Spring hunts, he also runs a trapline in the area and is a recognized expert on wolf trapping/hunting and predator control. Paul truly understands the relationship between predator and prey populations and the need for management of both. Given these facts, I have been very fortunate to hunt and film three hunts with Paul.



I arrived in Prince George with The Best of the West videographer Terence Knudsen in the evening where we were met at the airport by both Paul and -20F temperatures. We loaded our gear in his truck and he said, "Let's check some snares!". Shortly after leaving Prince George, we stopped along a rural dirt road and followed Paul through the bush. A typical snare setup is to place bait in an area and correspondingly set 6 – 10 snares on trails leading into the bait. The first check yielded 3 coyotes. Darkness had settled across the northern landscape and we still had a few miles to drive to Paul's house. The next morning we continued checking snares at various baits and the fur pile began to build with coyotes and foxes. The fox population in this area offers red, cross and silver color phases. The pelts were in prime condition and are a great addition to a trophy room.

Later that afternoon we loaded our gear and headed into the more remote country, where the Inzana Outfitters

hunting lodge is located. Paul had been setting out bait piles of frozen beef scraps and bones on a couple of isolated lakes in the area. He had confirmed that two separate packs of wolves were hitting the bait. We headed out on snow machines to check snares and any recent activity at the wolf baits. The bait pile nearest to the lodge had seen recent activity and we were soon set up in a comfortable shack that provided an unobstructed view of the bait pile approximately 300 yards across the frozen lake. The sun soon set, creating the Alpen glow effect seen in Northern Latitudes. Our vigil continued into the evening with darkness shrouding the frozen landscape.

We loaded our gear and followed the packed trail back to our snow machines. A brisk 20 minute ride back to the lodge ended our first day. The next morning we set out checking various snare sets scattered throughout the country. We were focusing our efforts on the fringe country. By this, I mean the country on the edge of agricultural lands and miles of Northern forest. This is also where conflict arises between wolves and cattle ranchers. There we met John Kochel, a local rancher trying to raise cattle in this remote area. He was very articulate relating his experiences particularly with wolves and the problems he has personally experienced from outright predation to the stress mother cows experience from wolves being in close proximity. Unfortunately, we had two wolves snared on his ranch that had broken the snares and escaped. As a consolation, we did manage to snare 6 coyotes in and around his ranch.

After our interview and filming at the Kochel ranch, we headed back to the Inzana lodge in preparation for our evening wolf hunt. We parked the snow machines well back from the frozen lake and packed all our gear to the blind. We noticed that additional activity and feeding had taken place at the bait pile and anxiously glassed the timbered edge of the lake shore. It happened very quickly as I caught movement from the right of our location. Two wolves were on the move

coming into the bait from a Northerly direction. They knew something wasn't quite right, maybe an errant breeze had carried our scent in their direction. Whatever the cause, both wolves veered off heading in a westerly direction across the frozen lake.

Terence was set up and had the camera running, Paul was giving all kinds of marching orders and I was on the Best of the West Signature Series 7 Mag topped with a 5-20X50 Huskemaw Blue Diamond scope. My sight picture was perfect and I placed the cross hair on the larger wolf's nose and broke the shot. This apex predator dropped immediately to the frozen surface of the lake. Not only had I fulfilled a dream of killing a wolf, he was a large male with an absolutely beautiful coat. We were able to take some great pictures in the waning light. We finished all the video work while Paul retrieved a snow machine and sled to pack ourselves, gear and our trophy back to the lodge. The evening was filled with much excitement as our goal of harvesting a wolf from Paul's main hunting area had been accomplished.

The next day we travelled by snow machine deeper into the Northern woods and checked a Canadian Lynx trapline that Paul had set prior to our arrival. Unfortunately we were unsuccessful in trapping a Lynx and/or Wolverine. We continued adding to our growing fur pile with many fox and coyote caught in snares throughout the area. We took the time to reset active snare sets throughout the area. By the time we left, Paul had a pile of canine carcasses thawing in his skinning shop. He is an expert in the skinning, fleshing and stretching of furs and sells these prime northern furs at auction, which is a portion of their family annual income.

I enjoyed every aspect of this hunt and trapline adventure with Inzana Outfitters. Having trapped in my younger years in Northern Wyoming, I fulfilled a dream to participate in a true longline trapping adventure. I hope to return to the region to obtain a Lynx and Wolverine, bringing my son to share in the experience.

I believe that as concerned sportsmen, we have an obligation to hunt and harvest predators as part of proper management of all species. The uniqueness of predators both from a hunting perspective and as a trophy to enjoy for many years cannot be overstated. By hunting predators, we as hunters are the true conservationists that ensure the survival and viability of both predator and prey species.



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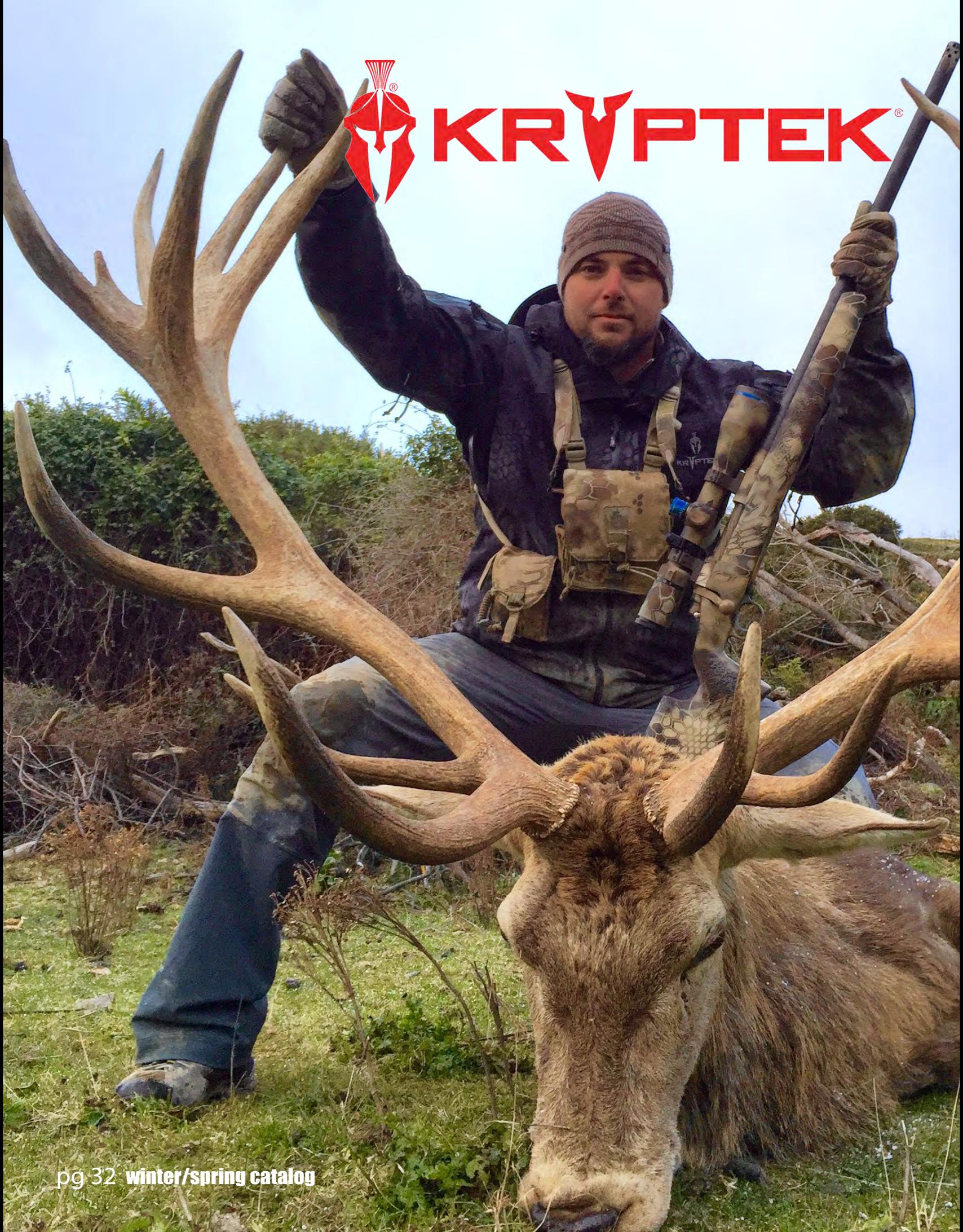
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CUSTOMER TESTIMONIAL

John Shafter



**MARCO POLO RAM
KYRGYZSTAN, 2014**

One day, I was talking with a good friend Brian Martin (Asian Mtn Outfitters) about our upcoming 2014 Marco Polo / Ibex hunt and about my frustration etc. with long range shooting in preparation for our hunt.... From our earlier conversations, I was aware that on many occasions with this hunt, the hunter is typically taking that 600 plus yard shot at these incredible trophies.. We would be experiencing very rugged terrain at high elevation with extreme cold and animals that are extremely weary making it difficult to get that 200-400 yard shot..... Being a realist and understanding that this hunt would be a once in a life time hunt for me, I was very concerned about being 100% prepared and did not want to leave anything to chance.. I felt confident in my physical abilities to handle 10-14 days of tent hunting at 10,000 - 14,000 feet with -20 to 30 degrees temperature but simply could rest due to my concerns surrounding my abilities to make the long shot if needed..

Brian explained that the Huskama Rifle scope set up on my custom built 300 Win was a great system for the issues I was concerned about... I researched the Huskama scope system from the Best of the West and this system addressed all of my current issues / concerns and then some I still had not uncovered..

With this system I was able to get an extremely accurate load that the Best of the West built for my rifle... With this load they are able to make elevation turret caps that I wanted/needed to address the different hunting elevations.... I ended up getting 4 turrets with my rifle set up that covered the complete range of elevation I could potential ever hunt..

This scope set up also addressed my wind concerns.. The Elevation Turret shows you what windage adjustment is needed for the yardage you are attempting to shoot. This package also included the Flatline Angle Cosine Indicator that address the adjustments needed when taking that up hill or down hill shot..

The Kyrgystan Marco Polo/ Ibex hunt would be my first opportunity to use this system in a hunting situation... I can honestly say that this scope / rifle set up made this hunt a success for me, and a hunt I will always look back upon with much thanks for Brian recommending that Huskemaw set up...

My first animal harvested was this incredible Marco Polo that was featured on The Best of the West TV Episode The Horse with No

In all of my years of hunting I have experienced the same problem over and over.... Not Feeling comfortable and confident taking that 500 yard plus shot at a trophy animal... The last thing I would ever want to do is wound the animal and not be able to recover these great trophies.. I tried to address this issue in many different ways with the first being a faster / flatter shooting rifle like my Weatherby 30-378 that I equipped with Swarovski scope. My thought process being, flatter shooting means less hold over and more accuracy.... I practiced and practiced and found that yes, I was improving my accuracy but it wasn't enough to start reaching out past 500 yards in a true hunting situation... Later I went to a different caliber rifle (300 win) with a Night Force Tactical scope, thinking that this was the fix and realized after years of bench and field practice this option still was not as accurate as I would like.. I spent a lot of time and money working up loads and trying to figure out the MOA adjustment for the different yardage only to find the more I learned the more I didn't know.. What is the correction when hunting at 10,000 feet vs. practicing at 5,000 feet?? How do I correct for colder temperature vs. the warmer temperature I have been practicing in all summer? How much will the shooting angle change the shoot too distance? And finally, how in the world can one figure out the windage adjustment needed when facing a cross wind? It was depressing to realize after all of this time and the several different rifle/scope set up's, I still had a long way to go to be proficient at long range hunting / shooting..

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Name. This was an incredible hunt where we ended up chasing two MarcoPolos for 7 hours with a vertical climb from 10,200 feet, finally harvesting the animal at 13,500. The closest we were able to get was 725 with a slight down hill shot with 0 wind.. With the scope set up we were able to make the correction to 705 using the angle adjustment. When laying down in preparation for the shot I used the Anti Cantor level to confirm that I was square to the target and in the correct shooting position.. Because I had complete confidence in the rifle set up and due to my many hours of practice that I had logged that summer, I was able to make a perfect shot dropping the animals in his tracks...

The last morning of my hunt I was still working to get my Ibex when we spotted three of them high up in the rocks.. We ranged them and they were 750 yards out and we had an 18-22 mile left to right cross wind.. Obviously not the most desired of shooting situations... The two Kyrgystan guides that I had with me did not speak any English so we used hand signals and drew pictures in the snow to communicate. We worked at cutting the distance down but were only able to get a 695 yards line of sight with a shoot too of 645.. The three Ibex spotted us and stood up in preparation to get out of the area... The first two rounded the rock face leaving the larger of the three there looking back at us.. We realized that we had only seconds to get the shot off before he was no longer visible. Because of our difficulties communicating, it was up to me to gather all of the information and make the proper adjustments.



Because of the simplicity of the Huskema system, I quickly was able to make the adjustment from the 695 line of sight to the corrected 645 shoot too.. I double checked the wind and made my correction for a 20 mile an hour left to right wind and squeezed off another perfect shot dropping the animal once again square in his tracks... I can honestly say that without this Huskemaw rifle scope set up, I would not have been able to harvest either of the animals with any confidence.. Yes, I could have done it the old conventional way of guessing on my hold over with a fixed scope and then once again guessing how much wind hold was required and the letting it rip with a 15% or so chance of success... But why guess when you can have the best and easiest equipment that will help guarantee a perfect outcome.

Two shots and two kills with some pretty technical corrections that were needed to be made... This system is extremely simple and with some practice I was able to feel extremely confident in my abilities to shoot up to 800 yards accurately. I am a firm believer in the simplicity and accuracy of the system and have recommended it to any and all... The only regret that I have is all of the wasted money and time over the last fifteen years on the four different attempts at the perfect rifle scope set up...

Upon my return from my Kyrgystan hunt I called the Best of the West and ordered a long range shooting system (rifle / scope) and am selling my Weatherby, Remington and Kimber rifles along with my Swarovski and two Nightforce rifle scopes.. Without the help from the guys at the Best of the West and the Huskemaw rifle scope, I know that this hunt of a lifetime to Kyrgystan would not have turned out as successful as it did in the end for me. I can't thank them enough.

GARY BAUGHMAN

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Stability

One thing I cannot over-emphasize is stability. A stable shooting platform should always be one of the top priorities on your pre-firing checklist. Something we spend a lot of time coaching in our shooting courses is animal behavior and tactically speaking, most of the time when setting up for a long range shot we have lots of time to get set up. Your spotter should be keeping you posted on what the animal is doing and how it is behaving. At long yardage if the animal doesn't know you are there, you must take the time to get a secure stable shooting platform.

A stable shooting platform is not a backpack, is not another hunters shoulder and it's not a couple of rocks piled up on one another (although I will confess to using all of those over the years). My favorite shooting position (when I can get it) is the prone position. The prone position is the one I will coach my hunting clients and BOTW Shooting Course students to use each and every time it's available. My top choice set up accessories for prone shots from 200-1500 yards is the Huskemaw prone shooting sticks with the leather head in front and the Huskemaw/Flatline Ops Booster, Dirt and Body Bags in the rear supporting the stock. When used properly it nearly feels like all I have to do is squeeze the trigger and my Huskemaw Advantage takes over from there.

If a standing shot is required, which is common in many hunting areas with lush vegetation, I dread the single monopods and bipods used by many guides and PH's around the world. Instead I trust the outcome of my hunt to my ultra light and ultra stable Huskemaw shooting sticks. They are super compact, set up almost instantaneously and easily fit in my carry-on backpack. Recently, I have taken them to both Ireland and South Africa and on countless hunts in the western United States.

That being said, I still will do anything I can in my power to get prone. Simply stated it is the most stable shooting position known to hunting and tactical shooting. An unstable shot at 100 yards still may kill an animal. An unstable shot at 400 yards and beyond is a recipe for disaster.

This fall, take that extra moment or two to get stable and whenever possible, get prone. You'll be glad you did.
See you on the mountain!
Yours in the outdoors,



DAN ADLER

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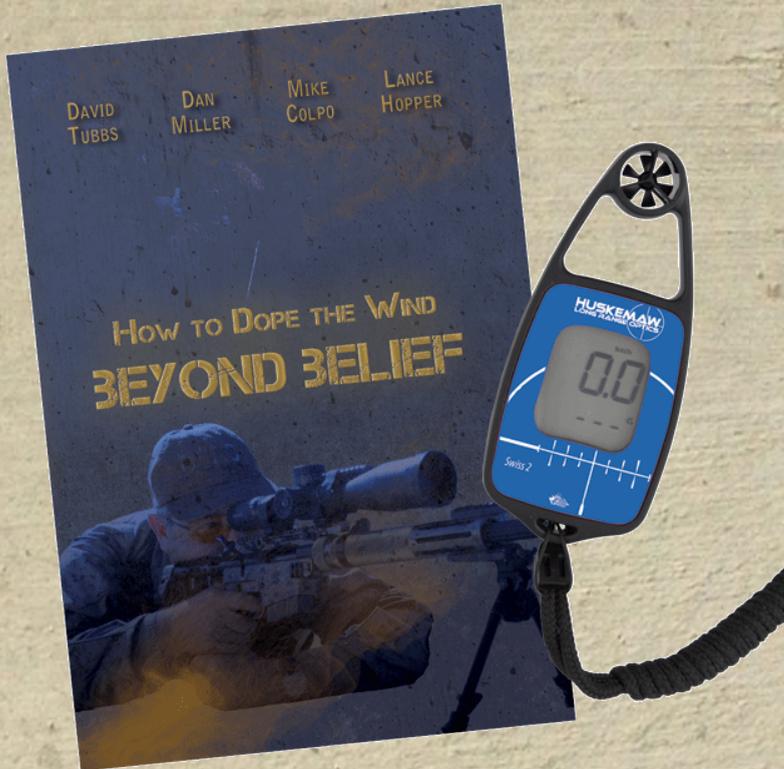
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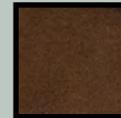
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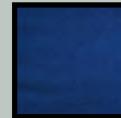
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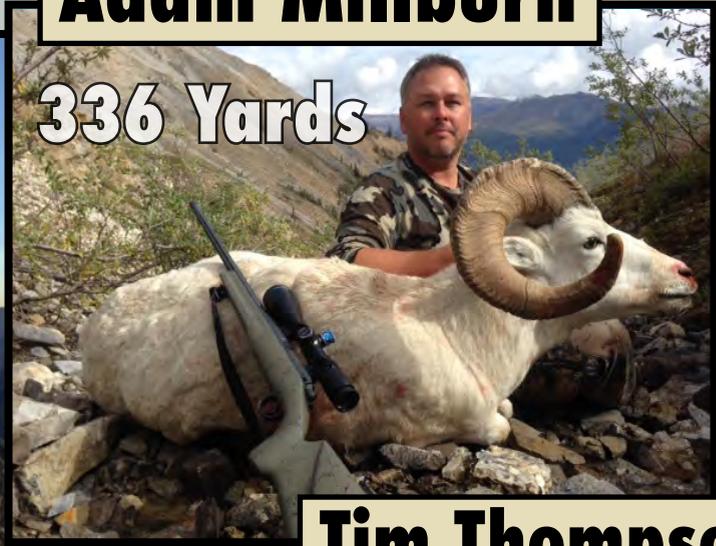
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