



## THE FAST-GROWING SPORT OF LONG RANGE MATCH SHOOTING: A REPORT FROM THE GRANITE CREEK SNIPER CHALLENGE

Schnee's was honored to be a co-sponsor of a terrific event in Southwest Montana over Memorial Day weekend, the Granite Creek Sniper Challenge, helping to raise some money for the Honored American Veterans Afield (HAVA) organization.

The event was hosted by Bill Wood and SkyBridge tactical. Bill Wood is an impressive man and has impressive shooting credentials. Bill was on the US National Shooting Team for 8 years. He was the Junior National Champion in 2000 and finished 5th in the 2004 Olympic Selection finals, was a Gold and Silver Medalist in the 2002 World Championships. He started training select military groups in the art of Long Range Precision in 2009 and has also guided elk hunters in Montana for the past seven years.

"Three years ago we just wanted to put on a decent competition because there really wasn't anything close around" Wood said. "We had twelve competitors the first year. The second year we wanted to get Honored American Veterans involved and do some donations to them."

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1. Ned Miller takes aim on a target during the Granite Creek Sniper Challenge in Southwest Montana. 2. Ned Miller and Brandon St. Clair look for targets during the 5 minute glassing before shooting. 3. Ned Miller wins the Ruck Race and is rewarded with a new Mystery Ranch backpack. 4. Bill Wood walks between the stages on day one of the two day event. Photos by Shawn Raecke

## GRANITE CREEK SNIPER CHALLENGE

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This year 36 two-man teams competed in the event, which required shooters to engage steel targets at 10 separate stations over two days at ranges out to 1300+ yards. Many of the teams were veterans and former members of our military, but also included some excellent hunters and avid rifle shooting experts. The teamwork and marksmanship were something to behold, in weather conditions and shooting stations that were challenging to say the least.

Competitor Brandon St. Clair from Bozeman, Montana, could attest to the challenges. St. Clair who served in the military as a Scout Sniper with the First Battalion 7th Marines said shooting at events like this one is a way to extend his shooting, compete, have a good time, meet new people and other veterans. "I come to compete against myself and to get

better," St. Clair said, while sitting on the tailgate of his truck finishing up a plate of barbecued pork and salad. "It takes a lot of dedication and commitment to get better. On this course here today it's not just shooting out of the prone position, you're shooting off a rock, off your backpack all contorted and twisted with one leg this way and one leg that way on a 27 degree downslope so you have to calculate that math. It's weaponizing math is what it is."

The other half of the Schnee's team was Ned Miller, also from Bozeman, said it was his first long ranger shooting competition although he said he has shot in competitive trap and bow events. Miller also has another skill he put to use at the end of the first day of shooting. "They call it the Ruck Race," Miller said. "Runners have to carry all of their gear plus their rifle during a three mile run across the sagebrush." On this day Miller ran

past a dozen other competitors leaving them all in the dust, and by a large margin on his way to winning a brand new backpack donated by Mystery Ranch. At the end of the race after catching his breath Miller said with a smile, "Yeah I ran a little track in high school and ran the Mile for the Cats (Montana State University) back in my college days."

Big thanks to Bill Wood, SkyBridge Tactical, Upper Canyon Outfitters, Mystery Ranch backpacks, all of the other sponsors, volunteers, and competitors for putting on such an outstanding event, and for helping to support our military veterans and wounded soldiers.

Brandon St. Clair and Ned Miller compete at the Granite Creek Sniper Challenge in Southwest Montana.

