

## USA SHOOTING TRIP 2009

by Miss Ruby Redsmoke aka Tracey Ball

Well I am back from another adventure in the USA. Chances are pretty good this was my last EoT but never say never..... If I could talk Trinity into coming back with me I'd be back in a flash but he just won't give in!!!

I flew out from Nelson on Monday 8 June and met my Aussie travel buddy Ms Clancy at Auckland airport. I had already had my share of airport 'fun' with excess luggage; a security 'pat down' and a firearm residue test – man did I hold my breath for that one!!!

Our good buddy Trooper (also from Australia) had put us on a standby upgrade to Premium Economy with his air points and we were lucky enough to get it. We got to sit upstairs in the 'bubble' part of the plane for the 12 hour flight with bigger seats, more legroom, better food and more attendants. Even in the rest room we had flash cleansers and body lotions etc, very nice, wouldn't be hard to get used to that!

We went through customs at LAX (when my bags finally made an appearance), without too much drama, oh except for the small fact that a rifle with the exact same serial number as my shotgun had been reported stolen over there, great! I soon got that sorted once I explained to them that my Baikal 12g shotgun could not in fact be a .370 rifle..... We had a couple more drama's there too but I don't want to put everyone off travelling with firearms completely :o)

From Los Angeles to Denver I sat next to a couple from Gisborne who had actually heard of cowboy shooting and were very interested in where we were going and what we were doing.

We stayed the night in Denver before starting our travels the next day. In the morning we were meeting Aspen Filly and Aspen Wrangler for breakfast, a couple we had met before at shoots in USA and had kept in touch with. We were over an hour late as we got hopelessly lost.

They took pity on us and gave us their gps unit for the rest of the trip, what a lifesaver it was. It did have a female voice but as it was a Tomtom unit we named him Tom-Tom our Indian Guide and changed it to a male voice. We thanked Tom-Tom many, many times for the duration of our trip and he successfully guided us over 3,500 miles!!!

After breakfast we set Tom-Tom for Powell via Casper. It was an interesting drive. The skies were black, the rain was torrential, thunder was crashing and lightning flashing all around us – for four hours!!!

We were very pleased to get to Powell which is a lovely wee town about half an hour drive from Cody. At Powell we were lucky enough to stay with other cowboy friends, Lizzie Marie and Campfire Cookie in their lovely new home. Also staying there were Virgil and Alvira Sullivan Earp from Australia and the six of us shared many a night of laughing and fun, we had a great time with them.

Our first match was Cody's Wild West Shootout hosted by the High Lonesome Drifters. Cody wasn't a great match for any of us really. Virgil and Allie had brand new pistols and a rifle they had just bought to keep in the USA and were having quite a few issues with them. Clancy was having issues with the rifle ammo from Ammo Direct, it was slightly too long for her rifle and they weren't feeding very well at all. I can't blame guns or ammo, I just shot like crap and had many more misses than I am used to having!!! Lucky for me it was just one of those matches where lots of people must have been shooting as badly as me cos I fared pretty well at the end!



Ruby shooting at Cody



Posse Photo at Cody

Photos by Major Photography  
<http://www.majorphoto.com/>

We went into Cody a couple of days straight after shooting. It was great walking around there in our cowboy clothes, the best part was all the shopkeepers knew we were there for the shoot and even better they knew all about cowboy shooting and we didn't have to keep explaining ourselves. The tourists didn't know any better though and some thought we were the tourist attraction and asked for photos with us!

Cody is an awesome cowboy town. It is so neat being in a place that looks cowboy and sells cowboy and all the locals walk around in cowboy hats and boots just as normal dress. I would love to spend more time there one day.

On Friday night a group of us dressed in saloon gear and went to the historical Irma Hotel for their famous gun fight. Most of the visitors there thought we were part of the show, and in fact the actors asked us to go in the show with them but Clancy and I were both too chicken for that so we watched quite happily.

The banquet dinner was a little unusual by our standards.... Drinks at 5pm, dinner at 6pm, prize giving at 7pm, all over bar closed and doors shut 8pm. I was just warming up!!! Clancy and I both fared better in the results than we thought we would. Clancy was 2<sup>nd</sup> Lady Wrangler and 16<sup>th</sup> overall. I was 1<sup>st</sup> Lady B-Western, 6<sup>th</sup> overall and 1<sup>st</sup> Lady overall. There were 141 shooters.

In the side events (men and women combined) Clancy was 2<sup>nd</sup> in the Speed Shotgun. I was 3<sup>rd</sup> in the Speed Shotgun and 2<sup>nd</sup> in the Speed Pistol.

<http://www.highlonesomedrifters.com/matchfinaltt10.pdf>

On the Sunday we headed in to Cody to be tourists for the day. We took a trolley tour around Cody which was great, spent most of the rest of the day at the famous Buffalo Bill Historical Centre then went to the night rodeo, spending the night at the Western Six Gun Motel. The next day we started to make our way to Cortez, Colorado for the next shoot.

We travelled via Yellowstone National Park and got there just in time to see Old Faithful do her thing. It was amazing travelling through there with snow right down to the road in the freezing cold when it had been so hot everywhere else. That night we stayed in Jackson Hole, which is an even cuter cowboy town than Cody was. The next night we stayed at Grand Junction then we headed on to Cortez via Moab, Utah. Another place that looked great and I would like to get back to one day.

It was awesome to be back at Cortez for the Revenge of Montezuma with the Windygap Regulators, man do they know how to make you feel welcome! I just love it there and think it is possibly my most favourite shoot in the whole world! Awesome people, awesome range, awesome courses of fire, what more could you ask for? They have a wall there that they get the shooters to sign every year, it's very cool. They always make an effort with displaying our flags too which I really appreciate.



The signature wall at Cortez

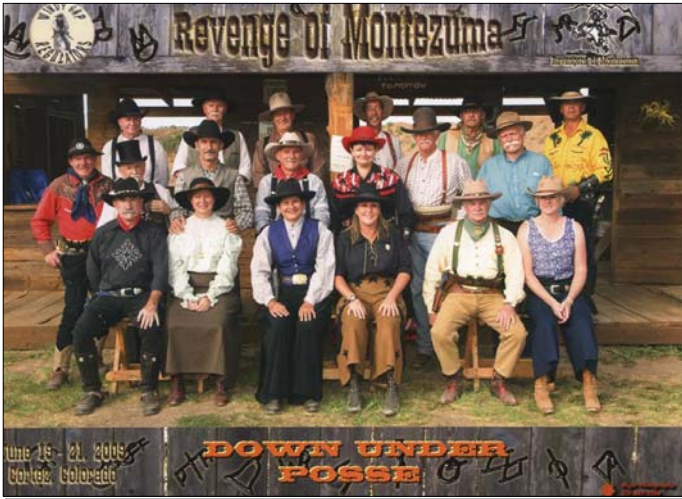
*Photos by Miss Ruby Redsmoke*

Flags flying at Cortez

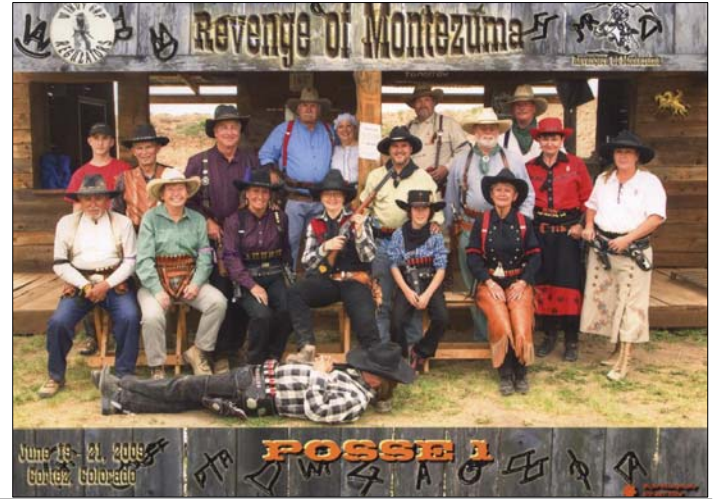
Again the men and women were combined for the side events here. I won Speed Rifle and another very interesting side event they called "Hells Revenge". It was very curly; tiny swinging targets and a Texas star for pistol; Texas star and static targets for rifle and knock down shotgun targets. Great fun!

Clancy was 1<sup>st</sup> Lady Wrangler, 3<sup>rd</sup> Lady and 18<sup>th</sup> overall. I was 1<sup>st</sup> Lady B-Western, 1<sup>st</sup> Lady and 7<sup>th</sup> overall. There were 88 shooters including 18 Aussie's and me. We had such a great time.

<http://www.windygapregulators.com/2009RevengeMatchFinal.pdf>



All the cowpokes from Down Under at Cortez



Posse 1 at Cortez

Photos by Major Photography  
<http://www.majorphoto.com/>

Trooper and Rooster joined us at Cortez so the next day the four of us made our way to Albuquerque, New Mexico with a stop off at Durango for a few hours. We got there just in time to see the train head off for Silverton (the four of us took that trip when we were there in 2006). Again in Durango I couldn't get over the cowboy stuff everywhere!!!

We got to Albuquerque and headed out to Founders Ranch for our shooters packs and to check out how it was all looking. Just as well we did cos the programme had changed a little since we left home and we would have missed our warm up match the next morning! There were already a lot of motor homes, people and vendors there but lots more arrived in the next couple of days.

Clancy and I shot the warm up match really well the next day. However side events the following day were another story – crash and burn sound familiar??? I shot Speed Rifle a couple of times and couldn't get my speed up to normal and missed one and couldn't figure out why. Finally checked my rifle out to discover my brass bead had broken right out of the side of my sight. Went to Cowboys & Indians and got it replaced by Jim Bowie quick smart then I was away again. They had a stage set up with 10 pistol, 10 rifle and 6 shotgun, every target a knock down, that was great fun and I used that to 'sight' in my rifle.

The opening ceremony was awesome. Clancy got to carry in the Australian flag to their National Anthem and I carried in the New Zealand flag to our National Anthem. I was very proud and must have got some dust or something in my eyes..... I had made a new Kiwiana costume and was very glad I got to wear it for the opening ceremony. It was made with a Maori fabric in red, black and white (of course!). It was very time consuming to make as I had over 1200 tiny rubies on the shirt alone!!! I also had special laser cut red Tiki buttons and jewellery made for me thanks to Wendy J on Trade Me.



Ms Clancy and Miss Ruby Redsmoke  
 after the Opening Ceremony at the  
 SASS 28<sup>th</sup> Annual Cowboy Action Shooting World  
 Championships

Photo by Trooper

I was on one of the best posses I've ever shot with at EoT. I think what made the difference for all of us was Pecos Jane. Pecos Jane is a deaf mute and in a wheelchair. She is bloody amazing!!!

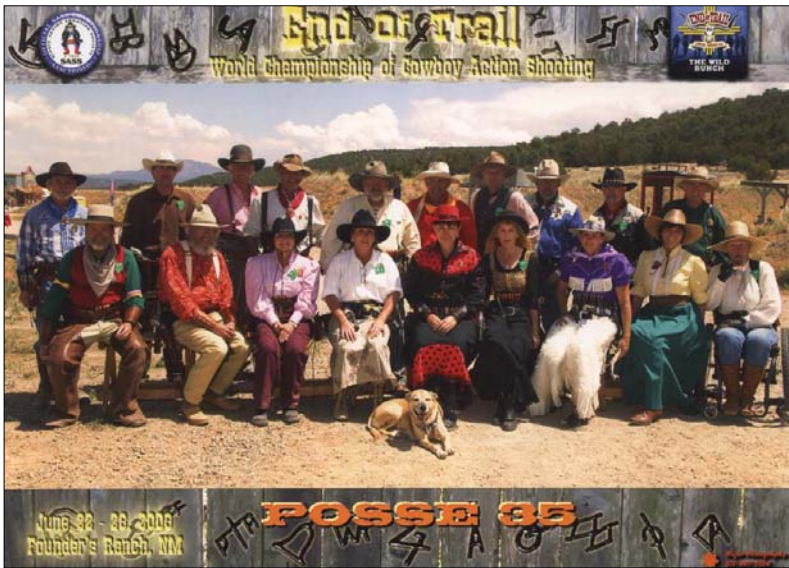
Pecos Jane shooting a stage at the  
SASS 28<sup>th</sup> Annual Cowboy Action Shooting World  
Championships

Range Officer Cowtown Scout

*Photo by Miss Ruby Redsmoke*



Jane shot every single stage the same as all of us. We kept trying to make it easier for her but she wouldn't have a bar of it. One stage we had to climb a flight of stairs and shoot the whole stage on the balcony. We told Jane she could shoot it from the ground.... In answer she rolled her wheelchair to the stairs, hauled herself on to them and climbed them on her bottom, pulling her legs up by hand on every stair. We took her wheelchair up there and she shot on the balcony the same as all of us.



End of Trail – Posse 35

*Photo by Major Photography*  
<http://www.majorphoto.com/>

There was another stage where we start sitting on a horse on an 'exploding' bridge which fell away a very small distance underneath us when we started. They told Jane we could move the horse out and she could shoot the stage in her wheelchair. No way was she having that! She dragged herself on to the horse and shot it the same again.

It was a real eye opener for all of us and I think that's what pulled our whole posse together and made us truly appreciate what we had. Never has working a posse been easier, we were all practically begging each other for our turn to spot and pull targets etc. Just awesome and something I'll never forget.

Anyway Clancy was 2<sup>nd</sup> Lady Wrangler and 71<sup>st</sup> overall. I was 1<sup>st</sup> Lady B-Western and 40<sup>th</sup> overall. There were 419 shooters. Trooper shot a clean match and earned himself a white buffalo. He finished 18<sup>th</sup> overall which is his best ever finish at an EoT (he is Constable Nelson in the USA). Clancy was also 1<sup>st</sup> Best Dressed Lady for the formal costume competition. This is quite an achievement at EoT where the ladies take their costuming so seriously.

<http://www.sassnet.com/EoT/2009Scores/MatchFinalMainCorrect.pdf>

As always Clancy and I both have plenty of 'what ifs' and 'if onlys'!!!

Clancy was only two places off being 1<sup>st</sup> Lady Wrangler and I would have loved a higher overall placing (see what happens when you only start practising a week before you leave)..... and as we all know hindsight is a wonderful thing!

All in all though we were both pretty happy with ourselves and had a fantastic trip and spent time with fantastic people.



Miss Ruby Redsmoke  
SASS Ladies B-Western World Champion 2009

*Photo by Trinity*

We had to hang on to those happy memories as we tried to get our guns out of Denver.... It was a nightmare to tell you the truth and I don't think I will ever fly with United again if travelling with firearms! We were lucky enough to have a very helpful check in lady otherwise it could have been so much worse. Even though we flew in to Denver with United and our four firearms in one locked case they wouldn't let us fly out!

Legally with United you are only allowed two firearms per locked case. Luckily I had my pistols in their Ruger cases so I could put them in my other soft case but Clancy had to buy a pistol case at the airport for hers.

It took nearly three hours to get everything sorted, lucky we went in so early.

Still it hasn't put me off travelling with firearms permanently; I have time to forget about it until we head off for Chisholm Trail in Australia at the end of September!

Once we got all that sorted out we were very pleased to get on the plane for Los Angeles. There some other cowgirl friends, Lady Fleur and Alpine Lil, picked Clancy and I up from the airport and took us to the fabric district to shop for fabrics and trims for future costumes. My shopping here was seriously curtailed by the gargantuan amount I had just paid for excess luggage but it was great to see what was available and get a couple of small bits and pieces.

Then back to the airport for the biggest leg of our trip to Auckland. There Clancy and I had to say a sad goodbye, not as bad when we know we'll see each other soon at Chisholm.

That's it for now, keep ya powder dry!

***Ruby***