



THELMORE PISTOL CLUB INC

HISTORY OF THELMORE PISTOL CLUB Inc. AND THE COMPANY - THELMORE RANGE PROPRIETY LIMITED

Thelmore Pistol Club was established in 1999 by individuals previously associated with the Moruya Batemans Bay Pistol Club, who had a preference for ISSF .22 Pistol, Centrefire, Air Pistol, and Black Powder target shooting disciplines rather than Metal Silhouette and Holster Competitions. They established an independent club and continued participating in the **ISSF Southern Zone Pistol Competitions** held monthly at various New South Wales clubs, including Ulladulla, Shoalhaven, Nowra, Illawarra, Bowral, Goulburn, Yass, Cooma, Bega, and occasionally Canberra.

Whilst searching for a site that would be suitable for a Shooting Range – A Thelmore Club Member suggested that members look at an old and unused **WWII RAAF Command Bunker** located near the Moruya Airport on Donnelley Drive, North Moruya which could be suitable for an Underground Shooting Range.

There are Four Bunkers Built at the RAAF Airport Site and all these Buildings have Historic Significance with the biggest one being the main **Command Bunker for the RAAF Operational Base, For Number 73 Squadron**, this Military Airport was used for Aircraft Training as well as Seaward Surveillance and to attack Surface or Submerged Enemy Vessels that may venture close to the South Coast of New South Wales during WWII.

Built in 1941–42, the Base and Aerodrome served the RAAF until late 1944.

In early 2001 the Thelmore Club members located the unused **Historic Command Bunker** and assessed its value as a Shooting Range. The Club President and Secretary approached and then wrote to the Eurobodalla Shire Council to ask if the old unused Bunker could be leased as an Underground/Indoor Pistol Target Shooting Range and after some negotiations the Council and the Club came to an agreement and the Land and Building was to become the first building of its kind to be leased as an Underground Firearms 25 Metre Shooting Range in New South Wales and would be leased for a period of 10 years.

The Club had 10 Members plus about 15 Associate Members, it was suggested that the club should be protected from any future takeover by way of setting up a **Non-Profit Company** which was to be called **Thelmore Range Pty Ltd** and that the company would hold the Building Lease and pay Company Fees, Council Rent, Rates and Electricity accounts by way of an estimated yearly invoice sent to Thelmore Pistol Club Inc and the company would also have the overseeing rights and objectives to ensure that the Thelmore Range Building, Land and Thelmore Pistol Club remains an **ISSF Pistol Shooting Identity**. (The Lease was signed 1st January 2002)

In June 2001, the original **Ten Thelmore Pistol Club Members** were registered with ASIC as Directors of the **Non-Profit Company** named **Thelmore Range Pty Ltd** and voted in a Board of Directors consisting of a ***Company Chairman, Secretary/Treasurer, Plus Eight Directors.***

Finance for the Range Building Project came from the Original Thelmore Pistol Club Account and its Ten Members with the remainder of the finance being provided by the Directors of Thelmore Range Pty Ltd by supplying cash deposits and privately purchasing the products in order to construct the inside of the Range.

The first thing the club had to do was to survey the site in order to set out the appropriate land size to adhere to all **Firearms Safety and Council Regulations** and as one of the club members was a Surveyor, there was no problem with setting out the correct land size. The land and building were overgrown with vegetation, which was subsequently cleared. The interior contained a significant amount of mud, was unclean, had an unpleasant Odor, and graffiti was present throughout the building. As the building had no power the members set up a power generator so the members would have light with which to work, then the inside of the building was cleaned. The main driveway was altered for more direct access to the property. New concrete replaced damaged and uneven floors prior to installing shooting partitions. This work altered the building internally and was an immense undertaking, the Company Directors worked Day and Night to achieve their result.

With all Company Directors given projects to perform and complete inside the building three directors manufactured and fitted the Main Metal Doors and Louvered Windows so the building could be secured and locked up. Then the company purchased an Electrical Transformer with Poles and Wires and when power was connected it was time to have an electrician run wires and switches in order to provide permeant power and lights inside the building, then the Bullet Deflecting Trap the Target Turning Mechanism and the Shooting Benches were manufactured. Members also supplied and fitted the Air Compressor and the Air Extraction Fan. Our resident Carpenter with laboured help built the Shooting Bays the overhead ceiling and fitted the inside doors and Painted the entire outside of the building and then last but not the least the Sound Attenuation was secured to the Walls and Ceiling. Building the Range took many months from the 2001 to 2002 with significant effort and enthusiasm from the Thelmore Range Directors, who just wanted a safe place to shoot and conduct competitions. The Range's construction and setup cost about \$45,000 based on receipts, but with some unreported expenses, the total is estimated at \$55,000–\$60,000.

Then came the Range Testing and NSW Police Firearms Accreditation which was easily passed. The first Member Shoot was shot on the 6th February 2002. Our ISSF Matches were organised on the evenings of Tuesday - Pistol, Wednesday - Air Pistol and Thursday – Pistol along with Pistol Saturday Afternoons and Air Pistol Sunday Mornings. The Club also represented itself at the Southern Zone Pistol

Competitions and took on organising and running the Zone Competitions for a number of successful years.

Although most of the original Ten Club Members and Directors are no longer associated with the Club or the Company the rules regarding the original verbal agreement between the Club and the Company remain.

Thelmore Pistol Club began as a private club but, due to rising costs, decided to invite select new members and introduce an annual membership fee. One of the first members designed and built two Target Turning Timers and the club thanks him for his contribution. The values of our Club have not changed and with the addition of Rifle Training through the **NSW Firearm Safety and Training Council Ltd** and using the Club Firearms Training Officer, the Club had the opportunity to increase membership by adding a Rifle Competition using any .22 Rifle and with Rifles being used on the Range most of the Rifle Shooters graduated to train in the use of Target Pistols in order to obtain a Handgun Licence thus increasing the use of the Range and its Income.

Toilet facilities are available using an Outside Toilet which the club purchased outright.

A Refrigerator and a BBQ Cooker are also available for use by all members.

Club membership requires recommendation, committee selection, and approval.

All Shooters must hold the correct Firearms Licence, Full Membership and a restricted Associate Membership is available, Visitors are always welcome to attend the club.

Being a **Secure Underground Shooting Range** the club is limited to Six Shooters at any one time and the Thelmore Pistol Club is also limited by its Firearms Licence to the use of the following Pistols and Rifles - 5.6mm (.22), Centrefire Pistols up to 9.65mm (.38) Calibre (No Full Loads are to be shot on the Range) Air Pistols & Rifles 4.5mm (177) Black Powder Target Pistols up to (.45) Calibre. Rifles are to only use 5.6mm (.22) Ammunition.

Firearms Safety on the Range will always be paramount and all Safety Procedures must be followed. (The Range Officer Rules the Range and His/Her directions must be adhered to) Ear Protection must be used whilst in the Shooting Range, Eye Protection is also recommended. The Range is available to all Full Club Members and they can purchase an access key which is used to gain entry into the club any Day or Night - 24/7.

Our working parties are a diligent lot, cleaning the Range and keeping the grass and vegetation under control. There is always something to be done at the Range.

Unfortunately, the rain during 2021 and 2022 was so intense that the Water intrusion into the Range Building was so great and we were unable to stop the ground water from entering the building and all shooting stopped.

In early 2022, the local RSL Branch requested permission from the club to construct a War Memorial on the Eurobodalla Shire Council land leased by the Pistol Club, intended to commemorate Airmen lost in local service during World War II.

In 2023 the Thelmore Pistol Club Inc. approached the NSW Government for a Sporting Grant was approved, and on 29 March 2023, members, friends, and contractors began cleaning, clearing, and rebuilding the range.

The Thelmore Pistol Club logo was designed by member Elizabeth Ann McAlpine.

Amateur Pistol Association Inc. (NSWAPA)

Pistol Australia (PA)

International Sports Shooting Federation (ISSF) – Worldwide Shooting Organization

Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC)

Thelmore Range Pty Ltd & Thelmore Pistol Club Inc.

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