

# *OHAKEA MINIATURE RIFLE CLUB*

**1925 – 1964**

Large bore shooting had been conducted in the area since the turn of the century by the Ohakea-Sandon Defence Rifle Club on Mr Wilson's property. In the early twenties, miniature rifle shooting had become very popular, and in late 1924, practice shoots were being held by members of the Defence Club in Mr B J Frecklington's wool shed.

At a public meeting in 1925, it was decided to form a miniature rifle club and that a range be established in the Ohakea Hall. Mr B J Frecklington was elected President and Mr Henry Hill, who had previous experience at the Bulls club was appointed as Coach.

While most of the early members had experience in handling rifles, the smaller calibre Vickers rifles caused concern, as it was so difficult to get a good score on the smaller targets. The club struggled for the first 2 years but, under the experienced eye and coaching of Mr Hill, went on to record 18 consecutive defences of the McKelvie Cup. This was the premier trophy of the Manawatu Association, and this feat lasted until 1937 when the neighbouring club, Bulls, finally broke the record.

Through most of the thirties the club was also affiliated with the Wanganui and Districts Association, where interclub postal shooting was conducted, being successful on 3 consecutive occasions.

One of the most notable competitors of this era was Mr J Simpson, who served as Vice-President of the Manawatu Association for 2 terms, and also won the Manawatu Open Championships a record 4 times. Other noted riflemen were H and J Ellery, K Bailey, A and K Vile, W Lumsden, W Klatt and members of the Richardson family.

In the early years of the club, after-match functions were often held at the home of Mr and Mrs Noel Harris, who were keen supporters, and were well noted for their entertainment and hospitality. This was often the highlight of the evening for visiting clubs.

The Second World War saw a cessation of shooting, and in the post-war years, interest in shooting slowly declined. With the reformation of nearby clubs and the advent of modern transport, it was increasingly difficult to attract members, so the club decided to go into recess.

It was a sad end for a club that had such a formidable record and which had held every cup and trophy in the Manawatu Association.

