



Nikko Stirling's long-range value

Daniel O'Dea focuses in on the new Hornet ED 10-50x60 riflescope

Nikko Stirling has been around for more than 60 years and has a unique Australian connection in that it was Malcolm Fuller, of Fuller Firearms, who founded the Stirling Scope Company in Tokyo in the mid-1950s.

One of their claims to fame is that Nikko Stirling's origins rest purely in hunting and shooting, unlike other riflescope brands that are essentially divisions of related optics factories whose primary business is in items such as microscopes and binoculars. From the start Nikko Stirling was about manufacturing affordable riflescopes for export to the hunters and sports shooters of Europe, Africa and Australasia.

In Australia, Nikko Stirling has been

considered among the budget conscious end of the market. Although many might aspire to own a prestigious German or Austrian piece of glass to ride atop their favourite rifle, the reality is for most the cost simply doesn't allow for such extravagance. When I set out to buy my first riflescope my only income was an after-school paper run backed by a little pocket money from chores around the house and, as such, my first scope was a Nikko Stirling.

In the 1970s and '80s the *Shooters Journal* was full of advertisements promoting the latest rifle, scope and mounts 'package deal' from Fuller, be it a for a Stirling .22, a sporterised Swedish Mauser or a new Tikka. It was likely to be mounted with a Nikko

Stirling scope which was probably the first optic of many an Australian shooter.

Recently I was given the chance to take a look at one of Nikko Stirling's latest offerings in the Hornet ED 10-50x60. This is a fully featured high magnification variable scope geared towards long-range centrefire and target disciplines. The packaging was befitting a premium model as the scope was neatly secured by inlaid foam rubber that included spaces for all accessories and the manual.

Included in the package was the scope, sunshade, 100mm side wheel for parallax adjustment, fitted metal lens covers for both ocular and objective lens housings, removal keys for same, a lens cloth and



Fitted on a Lithgow LA102 in .308 Winchester mounted on an APC Aussie Precision Chassis stock.

both a manual and reticle instructions. Unpacking the Hornet revealed a scope of massive proportions. Weighing in at just under a kilo (980g), its 30mm diameter tube measures 458mm in length, increasing to 558mm or just over half-a-metre with the shade cover installed.

The Hornet ED has a huge 60mm objective lens which holds this diameter for the front 70mm of the scope before tapering neatly over the next 100mm or so to the 30mm tube diameter. A squared-off housing about two-thirds down the length mounts adjustment turrets at 12 and 3 o'clock while the parallax adjustment knob sits at 9 o'clock offset to the front.

A large power change ring at the front of the ocular housing is clearly marked at various increments to show the variable magnification setting. The increments line up with a small arrow positioned to the right of the illumination turret. This holds the battery and provides both on, off

and dimming controls for the illumination system and is offset about 15 degrees to the left so vision of the vertical adjustment turret remains unimpeded.

Lastly, at the end of the ocular housing is a focus ring for diopter adjustment and corresponding plus, minus and arrow markings. Despite its size the scope looks sleek and stylish and appears well sorted out ergonomically.

Adjustment-wise it offers a full 45 MOA (45" at 100 yards) of both vertical and horizontal adjustment. The turrets include markings at 1/20 MRAD representing 5mm at 100m per click, with 3 MRAD or 300mm at 100m per full rotation. The turrets also include full rotation markings out to four rotations. For sighting-in, the turrets are spring-loaded for a lift and turn to re-zero once sighted in and when adjusting the clicks are both positive and audible to easily confirm what you are dialing in.

The side adjustable parallax knob is rather stiff by virtue of the mechanics and as such an optional 100mm wheel is supplied. This is easily fitted via two small hex screws which are provided with the corresponding hex key. Fitting the wheel provides a simple mechanical advantage making turning the adjustment knob far easier to rotate. Parallax adjustment is from 9.1m (10 yards) out to infinity with markings at 10m, 25m, 50m, 100m, 200m, 500m and infinity.

Eye relief is listed at 95mm for both high

An advert from 1971.



and low power setting and field of view is tight as expected of a target scope with numbers of 0.8m at 100m at the high power setting (50x) and 3.8m at 100m at the low end (10x). Lenses are multi-coated and feature 'ED glass - Extra-low Dispersion'. The scope is also credited as being shock-proof, waterproof and nitrogen filled.

For testing the Nikko Stirling Hornet ED was fitted to a Lithgow LA102 chambered in .308 Winchester mounted in an APC Aussie Precision Chassis stock. The rifle



The scope comes well packaged with plenty of features.

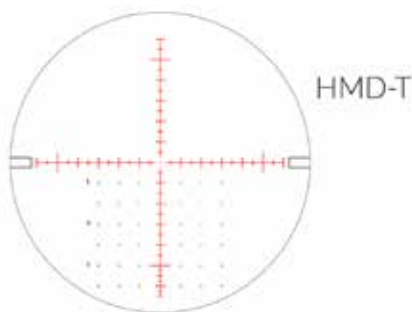
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had been supplied for testing along with the scope by Australian distributor Outdoor Sporting Agencies so a quick zero was performed at 100m before I jumped straight into testing for tracking. Basically I fired a round and then, maintaining the same target hold, walked the point of impact around a 30 x 30 click square ending back where I started.

So referring to the image shown, I fired at the bullseye of the top right-hand target circle. Shot 1 was one of the two shots in the nine-ring at 3 o'clock. I then adjusted the vertical turret 30 clicks to bring the point of impact down and while maintaining aim at that top right-hand target, I fired shot 2. Impact was on the bottom right-hand target.

Repeating this process I walked the point of impact 30 clicks to the left (shot 3), impacting the bottom centre target, then 30 clicks up (shot 4), impacting top centre target and finally 30 clicks right to end up back at the start (shot 5), which just about impacted in the same hole as shot 1. As previously indicated the adjustments are measured 1/20 MRAD which equals exactly 5mm at 100m so 30 clicks in adjustment equalled 15cm.

The SSAA target as shown has six circular targets exactly 15cm apart centre to centre both vertically and horizontally. The Hornet ED performed superbly in this basic test. Reviewing the impacts on target if superimposed you would find shots 1, 2, 3 and 5 all in a tight clover at the 3 o'clock position between the 9 and 10 rings. Shot 4 landed approximately 15mm higher. This



The HMD-T reticle features 1/2 and 1 MRAD sub-tensions when set on 25x power.

simple tracking exercise would indicate the adjustments are precise, accurate and repeatable.

The Hornet ED's HMD-T reticle features relatively fine cross-hairs with 1 1/2 MRAD sub-tensions that can be used to adjust for hold over, windage or even estimating range. As a second focal plane scope, the reticle size remains constant regardless of magnification setting and as such the value of the sub-tensions are corrected for 1:1 use only when set at 25x. This means the 1 MRAD sub-tension values are true at 25x, halved at 50x (1 MRAD sub-tension now equals 0.5 MRAD) and doubled at 12.5x (1 MRAD sub-tension now equals 2 MRAD).

With a front focal plane scope the values remain constant but the cross-hairs appear thicker as the power is increased. Some may argue this obstructs the field of view for fine target work hence in this style of target scope second focal plane optics can be preferred.

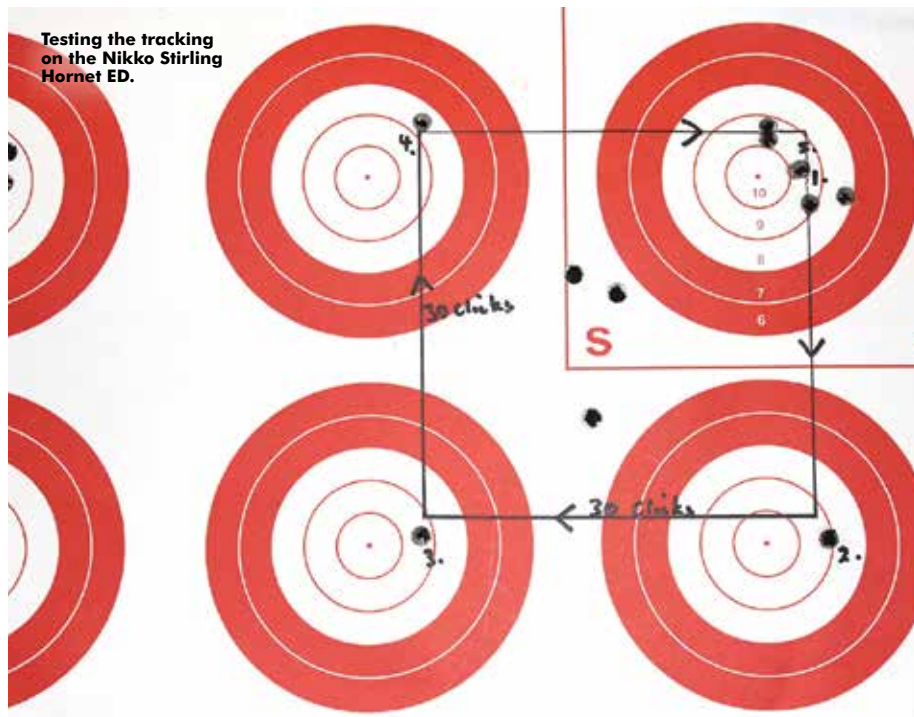


Removable metallic lens covers are hinged to swing 270 degrees to fold flat against the body.

The reticle remained sharp and clear between power settings and the varying light conditions on the day. With the illumination engaged, the constant variable adjustable knob made dialing on just the right amount of intensity of the illumination system a breeze. The scope features fully multi-coated lenses and the sight picture was nice and bright.

At the range the large side wheel made parallax adjustment quick and easy when moving between ranges to engage distant targets. It certainly does nothing to reduce the bulk of the scope but is both simple and practical to use. Again in this respect the Nikko Stirling Hornet ED is a purpose-built target scope which I imagine will mainly find its most practical use on the bench or range mat where bulk is not a factor.

In summary, the Nikko Stirling Hornet ED 10-50x60 scope presented as a great value package for those getting into long-range shooting and target disciplines that require plenty of magnification. It was well featured with bright clear optics so hard to argue against at around \$1000. More at nikkostirling.com or osaaustralia.com.au ●



Specifications

- ED glass - Extra-low Dispersion
- High-end optical system
- Precise Target turrets
- 1/20 MIL click (5mm at 100m)
- 30mm main tube
- Parallax adjustment - 10 yards to infinity
- HMD-T reticle, based on MIL standard
- Sunshade
- Illumination unit on ocular
- Extra side wheel (100mm)
- Fully multi-coated lenses
- Fast focus on ocular
- Metal flip-up lens covers on objective and ocular