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## Questions and Answers

The following is a selection of pertinent questions about arms, ammunition, and their use, with informative answers by Technical Staffmen and Contributing Editors. Being able to receive answers to questions of this type is one privilege of NRA membership. Every Dope Bag question-letter submitted must contain the member's 'code line' from RIFLEMAN mailing label or membership card. If you are not a member and want an answer, submit your question with your membership application and dues. (Membership application blank appears on page 87.)

Initials carried in "Answers" below indicate handling by: Walter J. Howe, E. H. Harrison, E. W. Heter, Jr., Joe D. Huddleston, Ludwig Olson, Allen F. Ruffin, Jr., M. D. Waite, Frank de Haas, William Dresser, B. R. Lewis, Herschel C. Logan, H. E. MacFarland, Bert Popowski.

### Rifle Primers For Shotshells

*I have been loading moderate field loads in solid-brass shotshells for my hammerless double-barrel shotgun. The shells are primed with large pistol primers. Firing pin impressions are unusually deep and I often get pierced primers. Is this condition dangerous? How can it be corrected?*

**Answer:** Pierced primers, while an undesirable condition under any circumstances, are not ordinarily dangerous in hammerless double-barrel guns. However, continued firing of loads giving pierced primers will erode firing pin tips and cause pitting around firing pin apertures in breech.

First, check the condition of the firing pin tips. They should be smoothly rounded and have no sharp edges or burrs; otherwise have them smoothed by a gunsmith. Then a change to another brand of pistol primers may prevent further piercing.

If pierced primers still occur, large rifle primers should be tried. The metal cup is heavier than those used in pistol primers and more resistant to piercing.

Some dense shotgun powders are more difficult to ignite than others, and pistol primers may not always give satisfactory ignition. In such cases, a change to large rifle primers will be an advantage where the firing pin blows are strong enough to ignite them, as the large rifle primers have a greater amount of priming composition and therefore stronger action.—E.W.H.

### Smoothbore Load

*I have a cal. .69 smoothbore Harpers Ferry musket. What bullet and powder charges would be best suited to this musket? What accuracy can I expect from it?*

**Answer:** Round balls usually give the best accuracy, as conical bullets tumble when fired from a smoothbore. A .68" round ball used with a greased cloth patch and 40 to 75 grs. of Fg blackpowder works

best. Mild charges are often most accurate.

With the above load the smoothbore should shoot into about 18" at 100 yds. Original accuracy was not this good as the Service bullet was a loose-fitting .65" round ball. Effective range was about that of a modern shotgun with round ball.

All old arms should be checked by a competent gunsmith before firing. In this instance, the threads on the breech plug and in the breech of the barrel should be inspected.—B.R.L.

### Hinged Buttplate On M14

*Descriptions of the M14 rifle in THE AMERICAN RIFLEMAN contain mention of a hinged buttplate, apparently not the same as a butt trap. Please explain.*

**Answer:** The M14 rifle does have a butt trap (opening in the buttplate covered by a spring lid) for cleaning materials. The hinged buttplate, however, refers to a folding extension on the buttplate to keep the butt from sliding down on the firer's shoulder during very rapid firing.

Such devices are used on a number of automatic rifles. In this case it was provided on the M15 rifle, the heavy-barrel model of the M14 designed for the automatic rifle function and standardized in 1957 at the same time as the M14. When the Services soon thereafter decided to drop the M15 and use only the M14, the hinged buttplate was placed on the M14. The M15's attachable bipod is also provided for the M14 when the latter is used as an automatic rifle.

While the folding buttplate is primarily intended as a help in full-automatic fire, it is liked by many for added control in sustained accurate semi-automatic fire.

Under conditions when the hinged buttplate is not desired, it is left turned down flat against its base plate. It is then inconspicuous and the rifle is used as though it were not there.—E.H.H.



M14 rifle with folding buttplate raised.