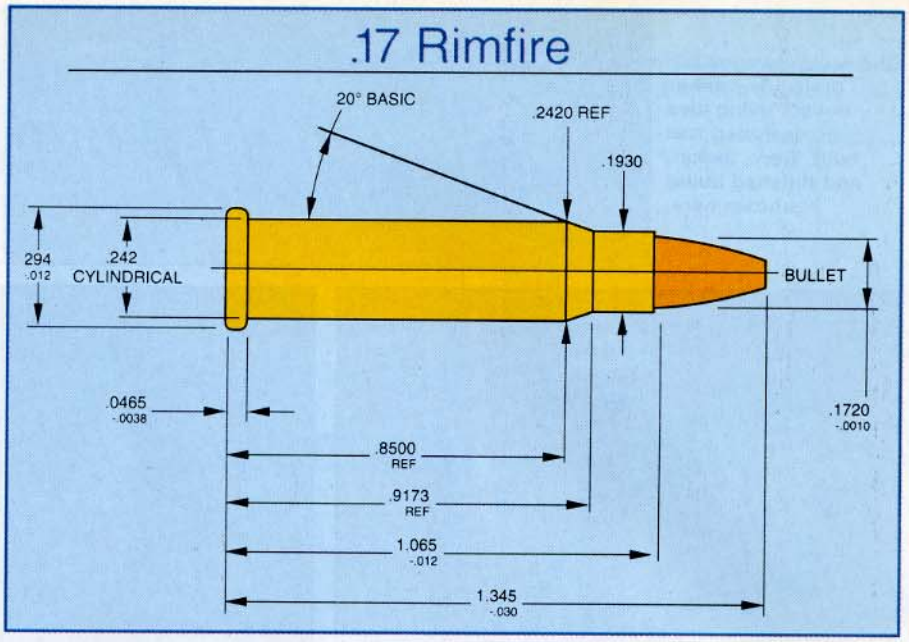
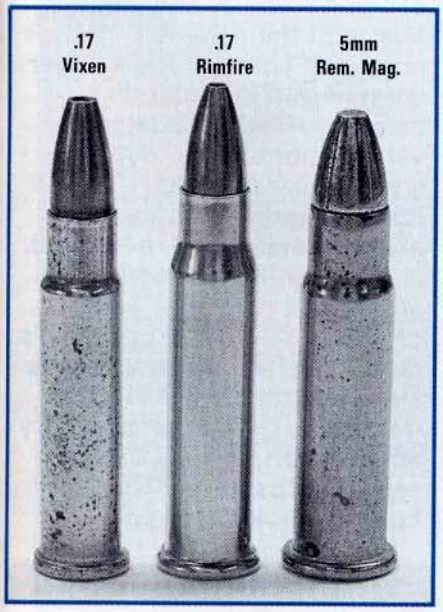
The .17 rimfire's diminutive size belies its effective downrange performance.



Chernicky has made accurate, perfectly-functioning .17 Rimfire rifles from the H&K M300, Ruger M77/22 Magnum, and Marlin M25—magazines shown here.

and called the resulting wildcat the .14 Jones. In the early 1960s, Jones necked the .22 Magnum rimfire and other small cases down to .17 caliber.

The first *commercial* .17 Rimfire cartridge that I'm aware of was an Australian round made about 1976 by a company called Myra in New South Wales. It was called the .17 Vixen. Exterior dimensions and case capacity were slightly smaller than the standard .22 Magnum.



The .17 Vixen was an Australian try at a commercial .17 Rimfire. Failed 5mm Remington helped inspire .17 Rimfire.

In 1983. W.A. Eichelberger of King of Prussia, Pennsylvania, designed a .14-caliber rimfire magnum chambering reamer, which was ground for him by JGS of Coos Bay, Oregon. This was basically the .22 Magnum necked down to .14 caliber. It produced about 2200 fps, with a solid, leaded-copper bullet.

Terry Kopp, who owns a full-service gunsmithing shop in Lexington, Missouri, liked the 5mm Remington Magnum. When Remington discontinued ammunition for the rifle, Kopp came up with something to replace it. He began loading his version of the .17 Rimfire magnum, called the .17 KRM, in 1984.

Chernicky Goes To Work

In 1988, Steve Chernicky of San Diego, California, also began working on a .17 Magnum rimfire cartridge. He was unaware of previous developments, so his version is similar to Kopp's and others. It was through Chernicky that I first learned about the work people are currently doing on the .17 Rimfire.

Chernicky and Gene Harwood of St. Helens, Oregon, were hunting ground squirrels in Nevada with .22 LR rifles (which have a maximum useable range of about 100 yards). Jokingly, they decided they needed a 200-yard cartridge. Subsequently, Chernicky decided to try a necked-down .22 Magnum cartridge. Fred Wood, of Florence, Oregon, Bob Simonson of Schoolcraft, Michigan, and Chernicky did the initial die work. Wood also experimented with a .17-Rimfire cartridge with a 30-degree shoulder. Chernicky's round has a 20-degree shoulder.

Chernicky has considerable background in the shooting sports. He's been shooting benchrest competitively for about 10 years and was on the Shooting Sports Research Council for the U.S. Shooting Team. He was director of the U.S. Shooting Team's Ultra Match ammunition project (high-accuracy .22 rimfire match ammunition) until it was turned over to Federal Cartridge Co. for development and production.

It's not easy experimenting with wildcat rimfire ammunition. The reason is a lack of cases. The average individual cannot re-prime fired rimfire cases as handloaders do with centerfires. Therefore, in most instances experimenters must pull bullets, empty powder, and replace powder and bullets after case forming operations. This was Kopp's approach to load development with the .17 KRM. Kopp used existing Remington and Hornady bullets designed for the .17 Remington in his ammunition.

Neither I nor *Shooting Times,* Chernicky, or Kopp recommends the practice of reloading rimfire ammunition in any manner. Tools must be custom made for