

“**S**TRICTLY a custom rig, this vicious .17 caliber boasts the kind of ballistics that makes one shot kills on varmints the rule — not the exception.

“Probably the truest way for me to describe my present reaction to this rifle is to state that it has left a believer where once there was a man filled with the gravest doubts.”

MINIATURE FOR MAYHEM

Those are Bob Zwirz' initial comments concerning the Winslow .17/223.

Some years ago, Zwirz was requested to test a .14 caliber rifle for a New England gun collector and sportsman. To say that he was somewhat miffed by his rifle's performance is a bit of an understatement. It seems that finally having given way to an overwhelming desire to own such a pin-hole rifle, and having ordered the rig from a well known gunsmith, he found himself with what he thought to be a jewel of an outfit. But there arose one slight problem — he couldn't manage to deliver very many bullets out to the target, the woodchucks, or for that matter, anything else you care to name as a conceivable target. In a matter of a few frustrating days he contracted a mighty bad case of the blaahs; some \$470 worth.

The problems encountered with that rifle were not really unique. First, interior barrel finishing left much to be desired and the quality of his loaded rounds was anything but consistent. The end result caused accuracy to be exceptionally poor, with a high proportion of his bullets actually exploding while in flight. It's a fact that the slightest burr will pick up copper. Once you go this route you can be certain that all the other related problems will follow quickly.

Not too many readers will be ready to argue against Zwirz' contention that the .14 caliber didn't make the grade, didn't deserve to make it, and, even if it had any real merit, was pure hell to produce. That includes cost of tools, time and the required painstaking skill. Upon hearing of the new interest around Winslow Arms concerning a run of custom .17 caliber rigs, we figured that eventually John Winslow and his staff would turn to other pursuits once they ran into the bugaboos of ultra-small bore production.

Strangely enough the Winslow people have not encountered any problems along the way that would deter them from turning out the quality rifle for which they have become famous.

“I've now had ample opportunity to work with the .17/223 on targets and game, and have finally made the time to check out sources of loading components. And as a result, I think I can come up with a few tips for handloaders that will take some of the mystery out of working with one of the smallest of our small bores,” our Man in the East reports.

Here then is the story on the .17 and a grassroots evaluation of the particular rifle Zwirz has been testing.

“My first inkling of a re-kindling



Penetration test was made on layers of soft pulp board. Entry hole was small. On chucks, few bullets made exit, since most energy was gone.