

Great Outdoor LEGENDS



RAY
EYE

"You can't soar with eagles if you're working with a bunch of turkeys."

Ray Eye doesn't agree with that line. Eye works with turkeys all the time and he has parlayed his love for turkey calling into a career that has seen him go from being a poor Missouri teenager to becoming an American champion caller.

It wasn't easy. At 14, Eye decided to be the best turkey caller in the country. This meant driving from one contest to another. To exist, Eye produced homemade calls which he sold, if he could, or traded for gasoline and food. It was eight years before he won his first calling contest. But in the next 10 years, Eye won or placed in 125 calling competitions, including wins in two national championships, his personal goal, and the Levi Garrett All-American.

To Eye succeeding against all obstacles at what he set out to do was essential, but his commitment to the well being of the outdoors has made him a doubly respected sportsman. As a pro-staff advisor to the H.S. Strut turkey-call company, Eye now travels the country presenting hunting and hunting safety seminars—many for children since the future of the outdoors, Eye asserts, rests with them.

Because of your drive for excellence and your devotion to the future well being of America's outdoors, we salute you, Ray Eye, an outdoor legend.

Presented by the U.S. Army.



and weight are equal, velocity is increased by burning more gunpowder. This is obvious when we compare, say, a .308 Winchester cartridge to a .300 Winchester Magnum. When loaded with identical 150-grain bullets (both are .30 caliber), the .300 Magnum achieves nearly 500 feet per second more muzzle velocity. This is possible because the magnum round burns upwards of half again as much propellant. Of course, this is why the magnum's case is so much larger.

Burning that much powder generates extra heat; and heat is a major cause of barrel wear. This is why barrels wear out, starting at the breech end. The cutting-torch effect of big charges of powder burns away and erodes the barrel steel. In fact, guys in the know refer to barrel wear as *erosion*.

If you could peer into the barrel of a high-velocity rifle with a magnifying glass, you would see darkening and roughening of the steel beginning to form after firing a few hundred rounds. This erosion begins in the throat just ahead of the chamber, where the gasses are hottest, and progresses down the bore. As the erosion progresses, the rifling disappears and, eventually, you can easily see the affected area by looking through the breech.

As the rifling erodes, the bullet has to jump farther into the bore before it is engaged by the rifling. When the bullet has to jump too far, some loss of accuracy begins to creep into the picture. Handloaders often counter this by seating the bullets farther forward in the cases so they don't have to jump so far.

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As you would expect, loss of accuracy is proportional to the degree of erosion in the barrel. During the early stages of erosion, however, it is common for a rifle's accuracy to actually improve. Thereafter, a gradual decline in accuracy sets in. However, the velocity and actual hunting effectiveness of a rifle remain virtually unchanged, even when bore erosion is quite advanced.

All this leads us to the question of how much accurate life there is in the barrel of a high-velocity magnum rifle. I've worn out fewer than a half-dozen magnum-class rifles, so I can't offer much firsthand experience. All these rifles were ultra-accurate, 1,000-yard target rifles, so it was easy to document the decline of accuracy by measuring group size. Of course, target rifles wear out much faster than hunting rifles because the 20-shot strings make their barrels sizzling hot; and the hotter the metal gets, the faster it erodes. I usually pronounce this kind of target barrel worn out after it has handled somewhere between 700 and 1,500 rounds. My last 7mm Remington Magnum barrel had to be retired after exactly 1,200 recorded shots. *But* it was still accurate enough to group five shots inside an inch at 100 yards! It just wasn't good enough for serious competition.

In hunting-rifle terms, even the hottest magnums are going to deliver excellent accuracy for more than 2,000 rounds (probably closer to 5,000 rounds) before any serious loss of accuracy is noticed. This means that if you fire your magnum rifle 100 times a year, you can expect somewhere between 25 and 50 years of dependable hunting accuracy.

And if you do wear out your barrel, consider yourself a lucky fellow. Not many of us get to shoot that much. Anyway, a new barrel is usually the least-expensive of the three major components of a rifle if you need a replacement.

A Synthetic Stock?

Another puzzlement with which today's rifle buyer must deal is deciding between a wooden stock and the new high-tech synthetics.

It's hard, mighty hard, to abandon beautiful walnut stocks, but we hear some mighty impressive stories about the new synthetics.

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