

Nokkrar einfaldar reglur frá Kevin Thomas:

- 1) You can't make a bad barrel shoot well. If it's bad, it's bad. Loading the very best bullets in perfectly prepped and loaded cases now merely makes for shooting more expensive, more time consuming bad groups.

- 2) You can't make a bad bullet shoot well, no matter how good a barrel you run it through, or how well you load the ammo. Bad bullets give bad groups, period. Not to say they can't be amusing, if they're bad enough. At my old job, I once ran into a batch of FMJs that shot so poorly, they consistently delivered donut shaped groups; a perfect pattern of bullet holes gathered around a complete bald spot where I was aiming. Totally pointless, but kinda interesting (and comical) to see.

- 3) You CAN make a great barrel with really good bullets shoot poorly, if you just do a sloppy job of assembling the ammo. Quality is not immune to idiocy, and at that point it merely becomes a waste of good materials that could be better spent.

- 4) You can get superb quality ammo, great bullets and a top notch barrel to shoot poorly by shooting them in an HFG. For those who haven't shot in these conditions, that's a "Howlin' F\$#%in' Gale" as one of my old Army coaches used to call them. Make sure your serious testing is done on days, and in conditions, that will allow you to give them a fair shake. Anything else, and again, we're wasting good quality components and barrel life.

You want to judge barrel quality, you'll need to start with good quality projectiles, loaded carefully into good quality ammo, and shot in decent conditions. You can sort out the rest from there.

Barrel life

Keeping a log book is a great place to start. In doing this, I can generally look for a barrel to start heading south even before it does. On others, once you've hit X number of rounds, those flyers shouldn't be much of a surprise and you can make a pretty good educated guess that the barrel is now toast. Saves lots of wasted time on what is simply a "done" barrel.

Part of the problem here is HOW a barrel goes bad. They don't simply stop shooting, though life

would be a lot easier if they did. They continue to shoot great groups, even long after they're scrap. The problem is those flyers. They start off small, giving a good group with one shot just slightly out. Far too many shooters will overlook this, thinking that it must be something they did, an errant wind, etc.. After all the other four (or nine, take your pick) were in the middle. They will become more frequent, and the strays will venture farther away from the group as the downhill slide progresses until the shooter finally admits the barrel is gone. Unfortunately, there can be a lot of frustration between those early flyers and the final realization that there's simply no saving that bore, beyond using it as a tomato stake. Using a log book, once a barrel hits the neighborhood that I know they start to die, I become very impatient with those flyers. Toss one or two out of the group after say, 3,000-3,500 rounds in a 308, and I won't mess with it beyond that. It comes off, and goes into the scrap pile at once. Trust me, a good log book is worth its weight in gold just for the hair pulling it'll avoid.