

#### Ammo & Extras

Next, came the 8x57 ammunition selection and right off I acquired several boxes of Remington Express cartridges, featuring a 170-grain Core-Lokt soft point bullet (R8MSR). These cartridges are precision manufactured and Remington advertises that the Express loads with the Core-Lokt bullets have dropped more game than any other round. I also obtained some Federal Power-Shok and these also have a 170-grain JSP bullet that's slightly more pointed than the Remington projectile. Federal recommends these cartridges in this caliber for medium game, which includes such thin-skinned animals as deer, antelope and black bear. For years Federal rifle cartridges have come packed in plastic slides, which hold ten cartridges each. They have slots and can be worn on the belt, making carrying of extra ammunition a snap.

For the bargain price military surplus loads, I selected cartridges made in Turkey, circa 1940; Ecuador and Czechoslovakia, both circa 1955. Bullets are the pointy, spitzer variety and have cupro-nickel or copper full-patch jackets. I pulled the bullets on these three loads and found that all were loaded with a nitro-cellulose powder in small, black square-shaped flakes. The bullets in the Czech and Turkish cartridges were boattail and weighed 198 grains each, while the bullet in the cartridges from Ecuador was flat-based and weighed 155 grains. Time would tell how close to the same point-of-impact these three loads would shoot.

The final piece of equipment I obtained for this test was a Shooter's Ridge Steady Point Rifle Rest, distributed by Onalaska Operations/Outers. This rest is constructed from tubular steel and holds the rifle steady at the forearm and butt for rock steady target practice, sighting-in or even long-range hunting. The rest has a durable powder-coated finish in an attractive green color, and a small leather sandbag made from tan leather that is attached by a Velcro strip. Non-skid rubber feet keep the rest from sliding on the bench and the butt portion (cradle) of the rest is vinyl coated to protect the rifle's finish. There are three points of adjustment on the Steady Point rest, a foot adjustment that raises and lowers the rear support arm, an elevation adjustment that works like a scissors jack, and a fine windage adjustment knob, just below the sandbag. The rest is hefty without being too heavy and virtually eliminates felt recoil for the shooter. That sure makes this old gun writer happy. The rest easily converts for right or left-handed shooters, and collapses without need of tools for easy transportation and storage.

#### Shooting Impressions

The day I had a chance to go to the range it was 79 degrees and a south wind was blowing at 15-20 MPH. This beautiful late March day brought out lots of shooters at the Department of Natural Resources Range. I managed to score a shooting bench, but the target stand left much to be desired for precision shooting as it was a sheet of cardboard stapled to a 2x4 driven into the ground. It moved a bit in the wind, which gave me a good excuse for my groups!

I set up my Steady Point rifle rest and pulled the rest of the gear out of my shooting bag. I had previously bore-sighted the Remington 700 Classic in my backyard, so it only took six rounds of Remington factory ammo to zero-in. I did some preliminary shooting at 50 yards to see where the other ammunition would shoot compared to the Remington loads. The Federal factory load was a couple of inches low at 5 o'clock, the Czech and Turkish surplus cartridges shot about three inches high at 11 o'clock, but the Ecuador Army ammunition with its 155-grain bullet shot over a foot high and about six inches to the right. I decided to forego using this load for my test, as I didn't want to have to do any radical scope adjustments.

Moving to 100 yards, I put up some targets made with used computer paper and Birchwood Casey Shoot-N-C self-adhesive targets. I put five of them in a pattern on the computer paper like five appears on dice. I used the center target as a final "sighter" and the four targets in the corners for 3-shot groups. I had noted some lateral movement of the buttstock of the rifle in the Steady Point rifle rest cradle, so I used a folded hand towel to eliminate the extra space. I was using a pretty uneven wooden plank bench, so it was a bit difficult to move the rest back in place after each shot as it moved with the recoil. Fortunately the elevation and windage adjustments were quick and easy to get you back on target.

I was somewhat surprised when the best 3-shot group of the day at 1.31 inches was scored by the Remington Classic 8mm with the surplus Czech ammunition. I set up my Oehler Model 35P chronograph to do some velocity measurements, and the American commercial loads and military loads compared favorably with the highest velocity round and lowest velocity round averaging a difference of 329 feet per second (fps).

I had no feeding or firing malfunctions of any kind with the Federal and Remington factory 8mm cartridges. The rather aged military stuff was another matter. I noted the Ecuadorian round, while winning the velocity contest, took some "umph" to lift the bolt and eject the empty. A few times I had to stand up in order to get some added leverage to raise that bolt handle far enough for it to unlock. The Czech ammo, while being the most accurate, was also the least reliable. I had a number of misfires and finally found that if the round didn't go off with the first firing pin strike, I would wait for several seconds in