

.250-3000: An oldie but a good one

By HAROLD HARTON
Special Contributor

The late Charles Newton developed several cartridge designs in the early 1900s using the powders and primers of that day which were lacking in desirability, but he made do with what he had. He was way ahead of his time.

In 1915, he came forth with the .250-3000, which was a .30-06 case shortened to 1.912 inches and necked down to accept the .257-inch diameter bullet. At that time, he was able to achieve the amazing speed of 3,000 feet per second, which gave Savage a real advertising plus.

Newton was trying to achieve this speed using a 100-grain bullet, but to keep the pressure down to an acceptable level for the Model 99 Savage action and reach the magic 3,000 feet per second, he had to reduce the bullet weight to 87 grains.

Of course, with today's components and in a modern bolt action, 3,000 feet per second can be reached using a 100-grain bullet, when fired in a 24-inch barrel. That pressure level would not be safe in any action other than something like the Remington Model 700, or similar actions, since this would require pressures in the 50,000 psi level.

With the new bullet designs of solid copper, such as those of Barnes Bullets, the 87-grain weight will perform much like a heavier bullet, so the need for the higher pressure levels is not as important.

Using varmint bullet weights such as 60

grain and 75 grain, velocities from 3,200 to 3,600 feet per second can safely be achieved with safe pressure levels in the Savage lever action. These give very flat-shooting loads with great results.

The design of this case is very accurate, as proved by some bench rest shooters in the late 1940s, when a 100-yard bench rest record was set using a bench rest rifle chambered for the .250-3000.

The .250-3000 is a very fine, accurate, light-recoiling caliber that will perform on game when proper bullet selection is made for the game hunted.

A number of years ago, my old friend the late "Cotton" Palmer showed me a trophy bull elk he had taken in Colorado with his Model 99 Savage in .250-3000. He said it took only one shot at about 80 yards right behind the shoulder. The bull ran about 50 yards and folded.

I would have selected a larger caliber if I had been going after game of that size, but with good bullet selection and shot placement the .250-3000 did the job.



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The .250-3000, center, is shown alongside the .22-250, left, and the .243.



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