

# 257 Roberts

To the would-be cast Roberts' shooter, I'll say "Good luck finding a source of .257" bullets."

A good way to start out an informative essay on the subject ain't it? But that's the way it is. My cast data starts out in 1992 for the Roberts cartridge, but I've been casting .25 caliber bullets since 1966, so I've had a head start on you guys in acquiring moulds. I had two old Winchester lever guns a 25-20 and a 25-35 in need of cheap fodder, so I started looking for 25 cal moulds, and old handbooks. Casting lead bullets that range from 72 grain to 117 grain, I've pretty much tried all weights and nose styles that have been offered. For loading, I started out using a couple older Lyman manuals and this can be frustrating. It was for me. The older 1930's to the 1960's manuals list a lot of powders and bullets that aren't even available anymore. So, the powder/bullet combinations listed were quite limiting. The RCBS cast bullet book published in 1986 even lists a 100 grain bullet that's only special order nowadays. However, RCBS listed new and different powders that Lyman didn't. Using these handbooks you can interpolate from similar size cartridges and bullets for a place to start. With forums seemingly all over the place, you'd think all one need do it post a question about cast .257 Roberts. But it seems like more people are looking for answers than are posting replies. Reading anything available and adding new notations to my load book of trial loads, I've slowly built up a fair log to refer back when doing load development. I've never intended on using lead with this cartridge for hunting, so load development always got put on the back burner.



There are two 257 Roberts rifles in my battery. Both were well used when I got them, and both are capable of one MOA with jacketed bullets. The older Remington Model 722 ADL was mfg. 1954 with an older V-7 weaver scope. The Ruger Number 1B is a standard 26" barreled gun that I mounted a T-16 Weaver. When first comparing capabilities of both guns side by side, I had expected the Ruger to outshoot the Remington; as it turned out, they're quite equal considering the optics used. Bullet seating depth is another matter however. With the extra long throat of the Ruger, and the short Remington 722 action, ammunition needs to be marked for the rifle it's loaded for.

As I mentioned at the beginning of this article, appropriate moulds for the .257 Roberts are hard to find in current production moulds. RCBS makes the 25-120-SP as a production mould but this one runs about 128 grains checked, lubed and ready to load. That's a little heavy for my uses. RCBS also makes a smaller .25 caliber mould, the 25-100-FN which weighs around 110 grains ready to load. This is a special order mould but a call to the RCBS Customer Service people will get you one as they normally stock them even though they are listed as custom.

Any of the custom mould makers can supply a good bullet for the Roberts. NEI makes several designs that are really nice bullets and you can get them made to your specifications.

Beyond these sources, you'll have to search the junk boxes at gun shows and haunt E-Bay to accumulate most of the moulds I have listed. One thing going in favor of the .25 moulds, not as many people are looking for .25s as they are .30s, .35s and .375s so the market is more friendly in this case.

Pictured below are the moulds I have accumulated over the years in my quest.



**From left: 257463, 257388 HP, 257388 FN, 257388, 257312, 257464, 25-100 Herters, 257418, 55A Cramer, 257306, 257325.**

My load list may be difficult for you to come up with the same exact mould, but if you're fair at interpolating, you can get an idea of what you need to start. I'll start with the lightest weight bullets and list the powder charges that produced at least 3" five shot groups at 100 yards. There isn't much data for a few moulds because I haven't had them long enough to work up loads, or the 3" minimum criteria haven't been met. Bullet weights are without lube or gas check. Many groups have been less than one inch, but remember that's with my rifles. Numbers in parenthesis are as cast diameters using mostly wheel weights.

**Caution – These are the loads and bullets I've tested over the years in my rifles. I've detected no problems with pressures. Drop off a grain or so and work up until you find the load and velocity that you want.**

Bullet	Weight (grains)	As cast diameter	Powder	Weight (grains)
257463 Lyman	72	.261	BLc2	18.0
257463 Lyman	72	.261	IMR 4198	18.0
257388 HP Lyman	78	.259	BLc2	23.0
257388 HP Lyman	78	.259	H-4895	21.0
257388 HP Lyman	78	.259	Unique	10.0
257388 HP Lyman	78	.259	IMR 4198	16.0
257388 FN Lyman	82	.2595	BLc2	21.0
257388 FN Lyman	82	.2595	IMR 4895	21.0
257388 Lyman	84	.262	Varget	23.0
257388 Lyman	84	.262	BLc2	21.0
257312 Lyman	88	.258	700-X	9.0
257312 Lyman	88	.258	Unique	10.0
257312 Lyman	88	.258	2400	15.0
257312 Lyman	88	.258	BLc2	21.0
257464 Lyman	90	.260	H4895	28.0

257464 Lyman	90	.260	IMR 3031	26.0
25100 Herters	98	.262	BLC2	20.0
257418 Lyman	100	.2585	BLC2	22.0
257418 Lyman	100	.2585	H4895	21.0
257418 Lyman	100	.2585	Varget	22.0
55A Cramer	100	.259	BLC2	20.0
55A Cramer	100	.259	SR4759	16.0
257306 Lyman	116	.258	SR4759	15.0
257306 Lyman	116	.258	2400	15.0
257306 Lyman	116	.258	BLC2	20.0
257306 Lyman	116	.258	Varget	23.0
257306 Lyman	116	.258	H4895	24.0
257325 Lyman	118	.261	SR4759	15.0
257325 Lyman	118	.261	IMR 4198	19.0
257325 Lyman	118	.261	BLC2	22.0
257325 Lyman	118	.261	H4895	24.0
257325 Lyman	118	.261	IMR 3031	24.0

If it looks like I'm stuck on BLC2, you're right. It's always been a consistent performer in most my cast bullet shooting. It's easy to measure, never needs a filler, nice round groups. Varget on the other hand seems to group better with a wad or filler. The last bullet/powder combination I worked with was 257464 and H4895. Working up to 28 grains. Where velocity was 2100 FPS the groups started to open, but There was still no sign of leading in the bore, and best of all I was able to get 2" groups.

I have a both Ideal and Lyman mould numbers 257325, and they both cast two different weights and diameters. I've tried side-by-side comparisons on different occasions, and you'd be hard pressed to pick out the best one. Learning to interpolate load data with most calibers that you intend to shoot cast with is a must. Making up a burn rate chart with old and new powders, has made it easier for me. As long as you're loading in low to midrange velocities, trying loads from similar cartridges and bullet weights usually isn't too much of a problem.

A number of years ago I was working on an old idea of shooting sized but un-lubed cast bullets. The idea was, that the lube was causing fliers, and just to see if it can be done. The first trials I did years ago were with 6.5 Swede bullets shooting at two different targets with both lubed and un-lubed bullets. In my 257 Roberts trial, I loaded up 50 rounds of 257325 sized and lubed and 20 grain BLC2, plus 50 rounds of the same load, but with un-lubed bullets. First I'd alternate shooting at two different targets, one lubed then one un-lubed. Then up to one lubed then two un-lubed. Once the barrel was fouled, I didn't even want to run a brush through it. I continued to increase shooting the un-lubed bullets up to 25 at a time. Going at a fairly fast pace, the barrel was so hot, I couldn't keep my hand on it. The muzzle was dry of course, and the bore was a light gray color. Groups of the un-lubed bullets where 2 1/4", just a shade smaller than the lubed ones 2 1/2". With the residue from powder and primer ash plus whatever lube is left in the bore from the previous shots, the barrel is coated enough so it doesn't lead. I didn't have a chronograph at the time, but I do now. After running that same load over the screens, a 1600 FPS came up

I haven't shot cast with the Remington as much lately. My Nephew started deer hunting 3 years ago with the 722 and I didn't want to go through the hassle of changing the sight settings, until he gets his own deer rifle. After thinking about it, why should he when Uncle George provides free gun and ammo!

**George Carlson**