Attention to Detail
(Think about what’s going on with your reloading)

So many times in my Army career, I was chastised with the phrase, “Attention to detail”.

In recent years since I have been roaming the cast sites on the internet, I have realized how much I was guilty of taking many things for granted on my reloading and not really paying attention to detail.

When reloading, you really need to **always** think about what you’re doing. Many of us who have been in the hobby for 40 plus years tend to take things for granted and assume “that’s the way things are”. It’s a bad habit to get into and I decided a few thoughts were in order to remind my fellow loaders that maybe we don’t know everything about loading.

I’ll cover some of the ones that come to mind. The list won’t be all inclusive but should nudge the old gray matter into a little thought.

**Sizing.**

How many of us have arrived at the range all ready to shoot and discovered that the ammunition we’d carefully loaded wouldn’t chamber because the case was not full length resized as we’d grabbed the wrong box of cases when loading. I have…

**Priming.**

How many of us have arrived at the range with ammunition with primers protruding that wouldn’t function in a revolver because we didn’t check to see if they were flush or below the case rim or failed to clean the pockets even occasionally. I have…

**Bullet Seating.**

Boy, this is a “Pandora’s Box” of problems. Long seated rounds, bulged crimps, bell not ironed out of the case mouth so that the cartridge will chamber. Who has carried carefully loaded cartridges to and from the range because they were seated too long. I have…

**Case Length.**

How many folks run into rifle cases with rough mouths after firing, crimps that bulge the neck and won’t chamber or have experienced a buckled shoulder on a .30/30 because you failed to check the case length frequently. I have…

**Leading.**

How many of us have experienced leading or poor accuracy when we though we were firing .431” sized bullets in a .44 Magnum. Did we check the bullet diameter after it was cast to see it was big enough to be sized to our desired diameter and did we check the diameter of the bullet after sizing to see if the sizer was the right diameter that was stamped on it. I have…

**Powder Charges.**

How many of us weight each charge and trickle up. I do… How many of us load one cartridge at a time or use a flashlight to inspect for powder present and of the right height in the case. I do… How many of us have only one bottle of powder on the bench at a time when reloading. I do… How many of us have experienced misfires due to no powder. I haven’t… But, I have helped remove many bullets at the range which were stuck in the barrel because
of this. I kind of got broke of that habit when using a Star progressive loader back in the olden days. I just don’t need to produce that much ammo. So, if you’re guilty of any of these violations, say….I do…

Primers.

How many of us are guilty of at one time or another substituting magnum primers in a know load for regular primers and got caught at it with high pressure…..I did…

Seating depth.

How many of us are guilty of not paying attention to seating depth and seating the bullet to “that looks about right” depth and driving on. I’m guilty… And I’ve gotten caught several times with pretty high pressures in the 9mm, .32 Magnum and .30 Carbine. In the 9mm to the point of loosing a couple of boxes of brass.

Primer pockets.

How many of us are guilty of trying to get one more firing out of a case with a loose primer pocket when it should be discarded. I am…

Bullet length.

How many of us are guilty of thinking that all bullet bodies are the same length and it makes no difference in the seating depth as long as it chambers and feeds. I am… This little stunt was brought home to me recently when I substituted some bullets of the same weight and got lower velocities. Then, I measured the bullet length from the base to the crimp groove. .3” makes a big difference in pressure and velocity. Luckily, I didn’t swap bullets the other way or I’d have gotten some high pressures. This doesn’t pertain to rifle shooter as much as it does to pistol shooters.

Consider.

These are only a few of the possible situations that can happen to you. I’m sure there are many more that I haven’t encountered or am aware of but I’m afraid I’m guilty of about all of these.

Reloading manuals are pretty well written even if a bit outdated in many cases. I almost guarantee that each of us has encountered advice on each of these subjects in almost any manual in your loading room.

Load safely, pay attention to the published data and warnings and enjoy a fine sport with other good cast loaders.

Reloading is like riding a motorcycle. From my experiences in the past with bikes, when you get to thinking you’re good on one, it jumps up and stomps you.

So in all reloading operations as well as bike riding, “Pay attention to detail”.

John Goins/aka beagle