

# Reduced Loads Without Reloading

By Jim Berndt, ©2006

I love shooting my surplus rifles. The abundance of inexpensive ammunition for many former military rifles is one of the really great advantages of collecting and shooting the old warhorses. Although I reload for many of my sporting rifles, I do not bother for some of my surplus rifles – ammunition is inexpensive and if I need a few hunting rounds I can buy a single box of commercial ammunition.

However, there are some occasions where it would be nice to have some reduced loads of cartridges that I don't normally hand load. I like to do some close range plinking just to practice sight acquisition and trigger pull; I also am trying to transition my son from his first .22 to shooting some centerfire rifles. Both of these tasks are well-suited to reduced rifle loads. With reduced rifle loads I even will dispatch the occasional pest or take a squirrel or two. But, if you are not a reloader or if you choose not to reload for a particular cartridge, where do you find reduced loads?



My M48 Yugoslavian Mauser chambered in 8x57



The Game Getter with accessories in its case

A solution I have found for this problem is the Hammond Game Getter. This device is manufactured by Brian Hammond of Alberta, Canada and is available from him (B. Hammond, Box 41061, Petrolia PO, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada T6J 6M7; [www.gamegetter.ca](http://www.gamegetter.ca)). I was intrigued when I first saw the Game Getter, so I contacted Brian and ordered one in 8x57 for my Yugo M48 Mauser.

My Game Getter arrived in a handy little plastic box about the size of a cigarette pack. The box contained a modified

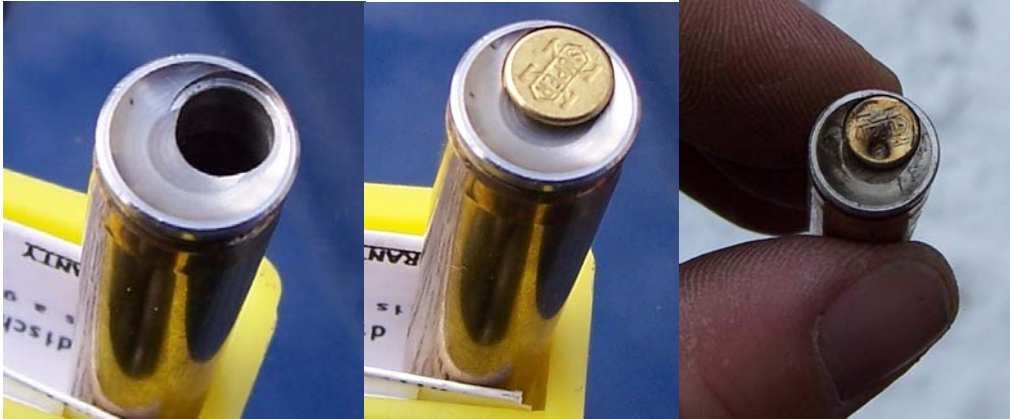
8x57 case, a small sizing die for sizing round balls or buck shot to the appropriate diameter, a few lead balls of the appropriate size and an empty compartment for power loads (more on these later). The whole package is very compact and easily slips in your pocket.

The actual Game Getter device is a modified cartridge case. The brass head of the case has been



Remington power loads for power-actuated tools

replaced by (what appears to be) a stainless steel insert. The power for the Game Getter “cartridge” comes from a blank .22 cartridge – the type commonly marketed by Remington for power actuated tools (called a “power load”) not the type of blanks used in starter pistols. The power loads come in a variety of strengths, indicated by their color with the mildest charges colored grey, the next strongest brown, then green, and finally yellow, the most powerful.



The base of the Game Getter modified cartridge showing how the power load is inserted, and struck by the rifle firing pin.

To load the Game Getter, a power load is placed in the stainless steel base, which holds the power load off-center so that the centerfire rifle firing pin will strike the rim of the power load and set off the charge. The projectile is a suitably size round ball (a little larger than the bore diameter) which has been pushed through the tapered swage provided with the Game Getter. This sized round ball is pressed into the mouth of the modified cartridge case by finger pressure; and the Game Getter is ready to fire.

Since I am using my Game Getter in an 8x57 rifle (0.323” bore diameter), 00 Buck Shot (0.33” diameter) is an appropriate projectile to size for my rifle. Although the manufacturer did not suggest it, I lightly lubricated the buck shot with a dab of Lee Resizing Lubricant before pushing the buck shot pellets through the die. After sizing, the diameter of ten randomly selected pellets averaged 0.3227” with a standard deviation of only 0.0002”. Although not really necessary for the bullet velocity of my planned tests, I also lightly lubricated the sized pellets with Lee Liquid Alox to minimize the chance of leading the barrel.



Sized buck shot pressed into the mouth of the Game Getter modified cartridge.

The modified cartridge case I received was a bit large for the chamber of my M48. I was able to close the bolt with some difficulty and after getting the bolt closed I was concerned about getting the cartridge out. However, after several firings the cartridge chambered noticeably easier and I had no further chambering problems. The manufacturer suggests that the lower power loads are the most accurate. After

looking at the velocity data for the Game Getter in several chamberings on the manufacturer's website, I figured that either the brown or the green power loads would give me the 700 to 900 feet per second (fps) velocity that I wanted.

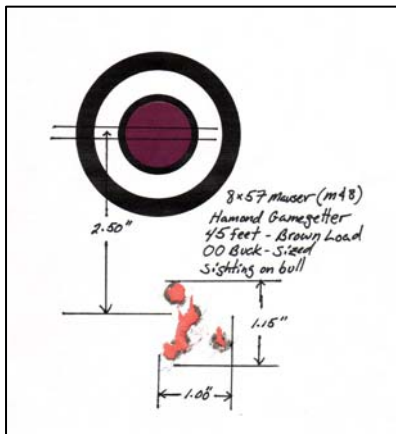
Accuracy testing of the Game Getter in my M48 took place on a warm (for Northern Wisconsin) November afternoon. The Game Getter is intended, according to the manufacturer, for ranges of 25 yards or less. I chose two distances for accuracy testing, one at 85 feet, a bit longer than the maximum range, and one at 45 feet, a typical squirrel shooting distance. In my testing, I was trying to evaluate the practical accuracy of the Game Getter rather than the full potential accuracy. As a result, I only used a forearm rest when shooting, rather than a bench rest and sandbags. I wanted to know if I would be able to shoot the Game Getter accurately enough in the field to reliably pot small game.



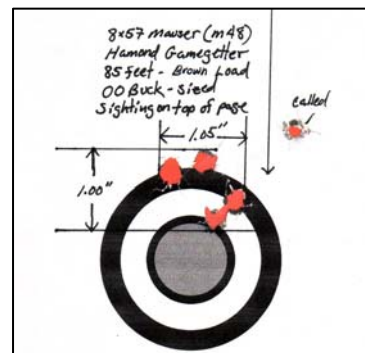
"Field rest" used in testing.

One of the possible uses of the Game Getter (where allowed by law) is the ability to swap the Game Getter for a full-power hunting load if small game presents itself while big game hunting. With this idea in mind, the sights of my M48, which are set for my hunting ammunition, were not adjusted for my tests of the Game Getter. I wanted to see how far below the point of aim the shots from the Game Getter would hit at my test distances.

Both the green power loads and the brown power loads were tested at 85 feet. Both power levels of power loads produced reasonably good groups on the "long-range" targets. The lower velocity brown power loads produced noticeably tighter groups, averaging a little over an inch for five shots. I noticed an occasional flyer at 85 feet, usually associated with a power load that sounded quieter than most. Groups powered by the green power loads clustered about 4.1 inches below the point of aim while groups from the brown power loads were about 4.4 inches below the point of aim. The difference in velocity between the two different powered power loads, as shown by the amount of relative bullet drop, does not appear to be significant at this distance



Group shot at 45 feet with brown power loads



Group shot at 85 feet with brown power loads

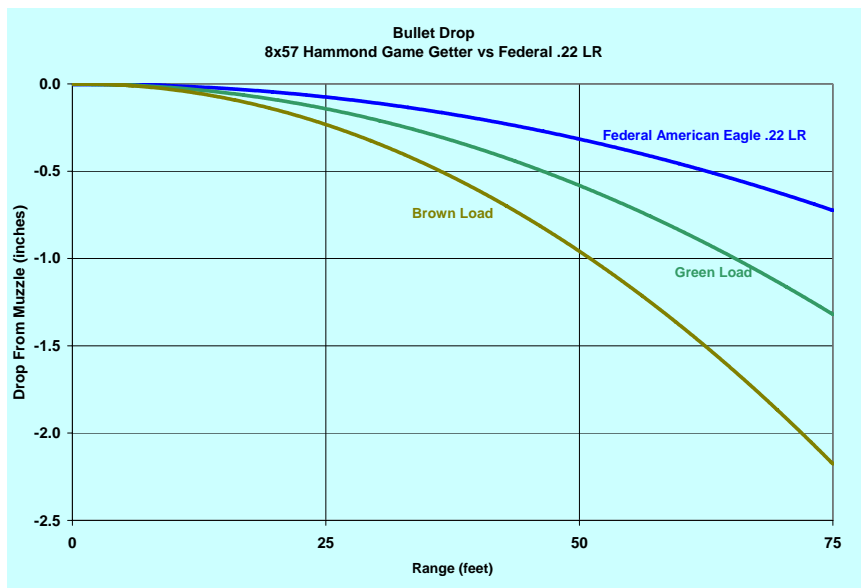
When the range was decreased to 45 feet the brown loads showed that they were indeed the power source of choice for my 8x57. At this closer distance the groups

began to resemble a ragged hole. Typical group size at this range with the brown power loads was about one inch or less and the groups were about 2.5 inches below the point of aim. I am confident that in a rifle with more accuracy potential than my M48 and with a good bench rest, the Game Getter could produce tighter groups than shown by my testing. However, a one-inch group at 45 feet makes me confident that I could reliably head-shoot squirrels within that range. In some informal practice after testing I tried holding over the target bulls eye about 2.5 inches (about one and a half squirrel heads) and was able to consistently place shots in the center ring of the target.

Bullet velocity 3 feet from the muzzle was tested for bullets powered by both the green power loads and the brown power loads. Ten shots with the green power loads produced an average velocity of 974 fps with a standard deviation of 21 fps. Another ten shots with the brown power loads gave an average velocity of 792 fps with a standard deviation of 39 fps. The lead Buck Shot I was using for bullets in these test had an average weight of 52.5 grains.

While the 00 buckshot pellets fired in the M48 have been very slightly elongated during sizing, some simple ballistic calculations can be made using the G2 ballistic coefficient for 00 buckshot of 0.032. At 974 fps at the muzzle the green power loads produce a little more than 103 foot/pounds of energy at the muzzle with the green power loads and 72 foot/pounds with the brown power loads. As a standard of comparison, Federal's American Eagle .22 ammunition leaves the barrel at a stated 1,260 fps with a muzzle energy of 141 ft/lbs

| Load                          | Velocity (fps) |         | Energy (ft/lbs) |         | Bullet Drop (in) |
|-------------------------------|----------------|---------|-----------------|---------|------------------|
|                               | Muzzle         | 25 Yds. | Muzzle          | 25 Yds. | 25 Yds.          |
| Game Getter - Green Load      | 947            | 857     | 103             | 84      | 1.3              |
| Game Getter - Brown Load      | 792            | 729     | 72              | 61      | 2.3              |
| Federal American Eagle .22 LR | 1,260          | 1,193   | 140             | 126     | 0.7              |



My limited tests have convinced me that the Hammond Game Getter is all it is billed to be: an easy to use, accurate, field-assembled cartridge suitable for reduced velocity plinking, the taking of close range small game with a big game rifle. The workmanship of the modified casing is excellent and looks like it will last longer than me. This little device has earned a place in my range box and I intend to keep it handy when hunting with my M48.



While my testing was conducted with the 8x57 Hammond Game Getter, the manufacturer's website lists 91 other standard chamberings with a note that wildcat chamberings can be provided upon request. I think my next trials will include my 7mm-08 and .223...or perhaps my .45-70...

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