

Of no small significance
By Fermin C. "2 Dogs" Garza

At the age of 15, I was a small kid. My older brothers, were 25 and 28, and at that time had the responsibility to manage all the family ranch chores. This included everything from bailing hay to cowboying some pretty wild cows and horses, building fence, and keeping the windmill up and running. No small chore for two guys, capable as they were. That my older brothers took me along as a helper was an endorsement of sorts that even a little guy could get it done. This, more than any other characteristic, describes the 6mm BR in my eyes.

The typical 6BR today wears a 28-30" barrel and is twisted 1:8" to manage long heavy target bullets. Hubble like optics and target stocks rule the range. This is easy to see as most 6BR shooters are punching paper all the way out to 1000 yards. It is clearly one of the most accurate rifle cartridges ever developed and most definitely one of the most efficient.

I wanted a rifle that was some different. I have shot the 243 Winchester and well as David Tubb's original 6X pretty extensively. Both are excellent especially with the long heavy target bullets as long as the barrel could put the correct spin rate on the bullet. But I wondered, could the 6BR manage the lightest bullets as well as its big cased brothers?? You see, I wanted a pest rifle. My weight restriction needed to mirror a Remington Varmint Special. My velocity goal was 3900+ fps with a Nosler Ballistic Tip at 55 grains. Excellent accuracy of course is a no brainer, but I expected 1/4 MOA or better. Finally, and the most difficult to achieve, would be to make the rifle feed from a magazine. As you will see, I was indeed successful.

The base of my 6BR would be Remington's excellent 700 short action. I selected what is now my new favorite rifle trigger, the Timney Calvin Elite. An oversize bolt knob was installed. I chose a Hart 1;14" twist barrel at 26" in length. My stock is the B&C A-3 with a butthook in tan. Bottom metal was by CDI who also did the inlet. My magazine choice is a AI 223 polymer magazine which of course I modified for the 6BR cartridge. On the muzzle end, I also installed a Tubb tuneable muzzle brake. My scope would be a Night Force 5.5-22X.

My thinking was, I would push the little cartridge until I got the velocity I wanted and then "tune" the Tubb muzzle brake until I got the accuracy I wanted. This is the 2nd time I have tried this, and I am sorry to report that I cannot say how much the Tubb brake can "tune" in accuracy. The first time I tried it, I also used a Hart barrel but on a 223 AI. In both cases, I installed but then never touched the brake as both rifles are pretty much "one holers".

In order to make the 700 feed the stubby little 6BR from a magazine there are several tricks that need to be employed. I will share those with you here. No stranger to this project, I also have two 22BR rifles on the Remington 700 set up to feed from an AI box magazine. The 223 magazine has to be modified by opening the feed lips to accept the 6BR case. The magazine/bottom metal release latch has to be carefully fitted so that the magazine fits all the way up against the bottom of the action. Finally, the ejector has to be set up so that the case stays supported by the inside of the receiver during the bolt cycle.

I got really lucky on the barrel. While I was waiting for my 6BR reamer to show up from PTG, I saw one for sale that had been smithed by Dan Dowling. I was on it like it was the last beer in the ice chest on a hot day. My good friend Ray is that he is a master tool and die maker. He has a really neat way of head spacing the barrel from one rifle to another. He simply measures barrel shoulder/receiver gap and "builds" a custom lug to fit. The tolerances he keeps to, as you will see, are second to none.

I am also lucky that my older brother Henry does some extremely fine glass bedding. This rifle is rock solid and weighs just enough that I can see the bullets impact in the scope while afield.

My load testing began and ended with AA 2230 powder. Accuracy and velocity were all I could ask for except for one little hitch. While working up a load, I started to see "donut" or "volcano" shaped craters on my CCI thick cup primers. Danger Will Robinson!!! I called, and sent the bolt to Greg Tammel who installed a bushing in the firing pin hole and sent it back to me in something like 7 days or less. I was able to work up to 35.5 grains of AA2230 on Lapua brass and CCI primers to achieve 3920 fps with a NBT 55 grain bullet. The primers look fine and the rifles shoots, feeds and kills like a dream.

This project was completed this last year just before hunting season was to begin. I decided to take it out while I was scouting and see if I could "brain" a wild hog or two. The first target that showed up for testing was a coyote at 140 yards or so. These S. Texas coyotes don't do the end of the runway pose thing, they disappear as fast as they appear. I lifted the rifle, got hair in the scope, and pretty much just slapped that trigger and made a solid shoulder shot. Stopped his fawn eating ways with authority. I was impressed as I "saw" how hard that dog took that bullet in the scope. The next weekend, I again passed over my heavier caliber rifles and hauled my new 6BR out of the safe. I was suitably impressed by its performance and also the knowledge that my good friend Ray had something like 51 shot and 51 kills on hogs with similarly set up 223 running the 53 grain V-Max bullet.

I took 2 more hogs the second weekend out, both head shots, at 150 and 185 yards with the little 55 grain Nosler Ballistic Tip. I was a little confused, because I was expecting but not seeing monster exit wounds. The next weekend I shot 3 more hogs, 2 after dark and one on the run. I was ready to try this little rig on a deer.

My first deer was a 165 yard long horn spike. A cull in these parts. I was shooting from a stout deer blind with excellent support for the rifle. My aim point was his eye after I corrected the Night Force scope for 1 MOA of elevation. Pow. Whap! His back legs go out from under him. Down deer.

My second and last deer of the season was a decent 8 point taken at 225 yards. This shot was considerably more difficult. I was looking at a deer who was surrounded with does, none of which I wanted to hit even by accident. He was at a difficult angle for the position of the stand I was in. The good light was fading fast. A heart/lung shot was out of the question as I didn't want to have to go looking for him. I wanted a DRT shot or nothing. I decided to take a neck shot IF I could get everything just right. I was struggling to hold my just steady enough position when the 1 pound Timney broke. He kicked at the impact and then went down and never moved. 225 yards. Perfect neck shot.

Small and efficient. Fast and accurate. The little 6BR delivers.

