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**LARGE RIFLE BERDAN**

*"Reloading Berdan Primed Brass: Part 3"*

*RCBS Berdan Decapping Tool*

**ERS**

Article Written by: R. Ted Jeo

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A special thanks to:

**RCBS**

**CAUTION!**

The following article pertains to rifle cartridge reloading. We make no statements, warranties or claims to the safety of the reloaded cartridges, reloading method or load data. Reloading cartridges is to be taken seriously and you should only proceed if you feel totally comfortable and willing to accept any and all risks for your actions.

In this third installment on Berdan reloading, I take a look at the RCBS Berdan Decapping tool. Now, you may say, but why? Well, I also asked that before I used the device for the first time, but I would have to say, this little piece of equipment may become a Berdan reloader's standard tool.



**Simple enough. Two main parts. Nothing else.**

The device comes in the standard RCBS green plastic box and includes a case holder and the decapper proper. Both are made of extremely high grade hard steel.

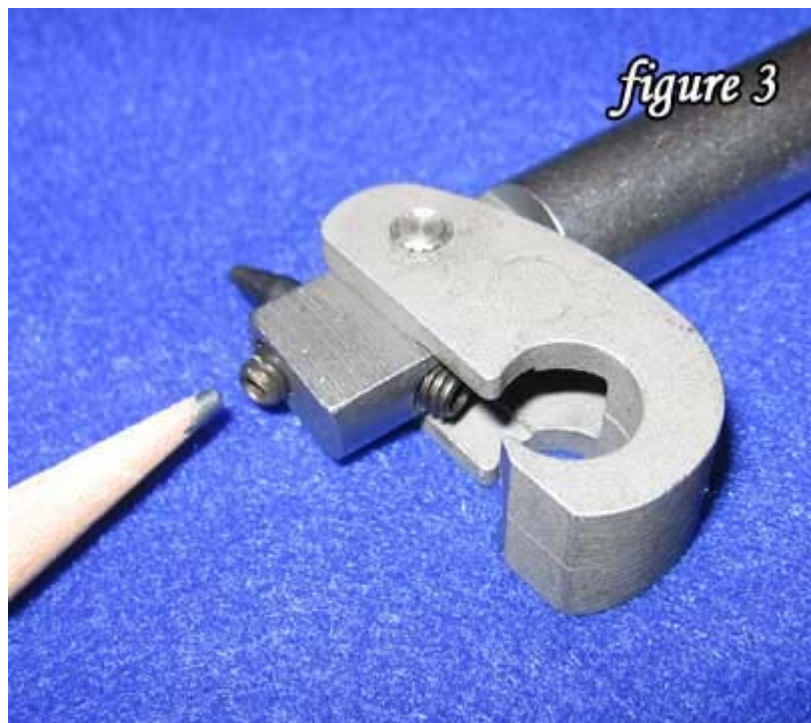
Just WHO is **RCBS**?

Founded by Fred Huntington in essentially a garage. RCBS is the largest supplier of reloading dies in the US and offer a lifetime warranties on their non electronic/non commercial reloading equipment. RCBS is owned by Alliant Techsystems (ATK) along with such companies as CCI, Federal, Speer, Outers, Alliant Powders, Ram-Line, Weaver, Gunslick, Estate Cartridge and Shooters Ridge. Okay, RCBS supposedly stands for Rock Chuck Bullet Swager, originally a swager that Huntington used to use .22 shells as bullet jackets.

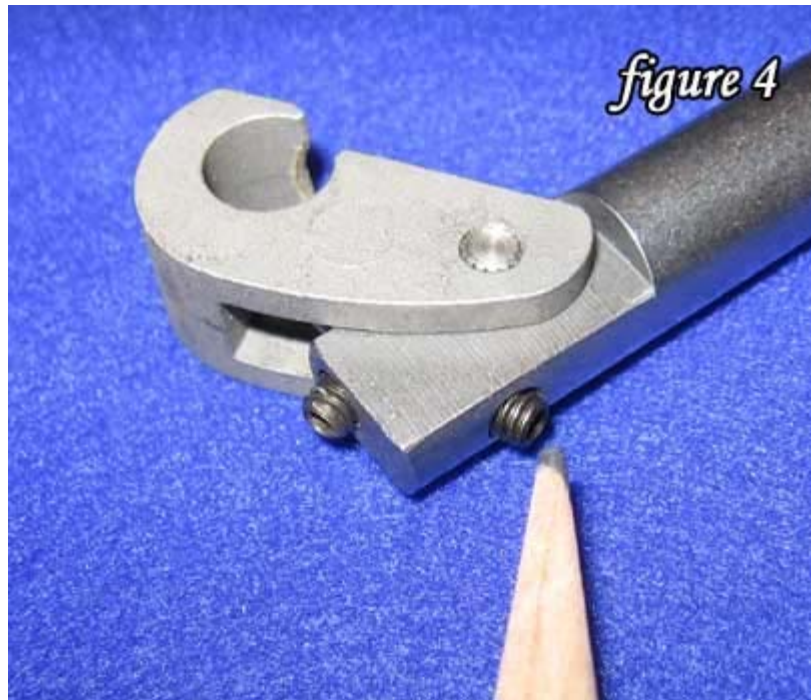


### The guts of the system, the decapping pin

The whole thing works on the principle of leverage really. There is a decapping pin that is forced into the spent primer and then the claw of the device causes a leverage point that lifts the primer out of the pocket. Note, a word of caution, this device is NOT to be used to remove LIVE primers!!!



### Locking screw



#### **Depth adjustment screw**

The decapping pin has one adjustment screw and one lock screw. Both are allen head screws. RCBS includes the required allen wrench. When you first start out, you will need to adjust the depth to which the decapping pin will enter the primer. Too deep and you could damage the Berdan "nipple" in the case. Too shallow, and you will not lift the primer out of the pocket. Start out gradually with the pin adjusted **SHORT** for starters and then gradually lengthen the pin until the primer comes out. It depends on your specific cartridge that you are working with. What you need to do is loosen the lock screw, and then screw the adjustment screw in or out to adjust the pin depth. The adjustment screw is **NOT** attached to the pin, therefore, if you tip the decapper upside down, the pin could drop out of the device completely. On that note, a closer look at the pin reveals that it has an angled point to it. The correct direction of the pin should be such that the "point" is to the front (toward the claw) of the device. RCBS does sell replacement tips if you lose or break on.

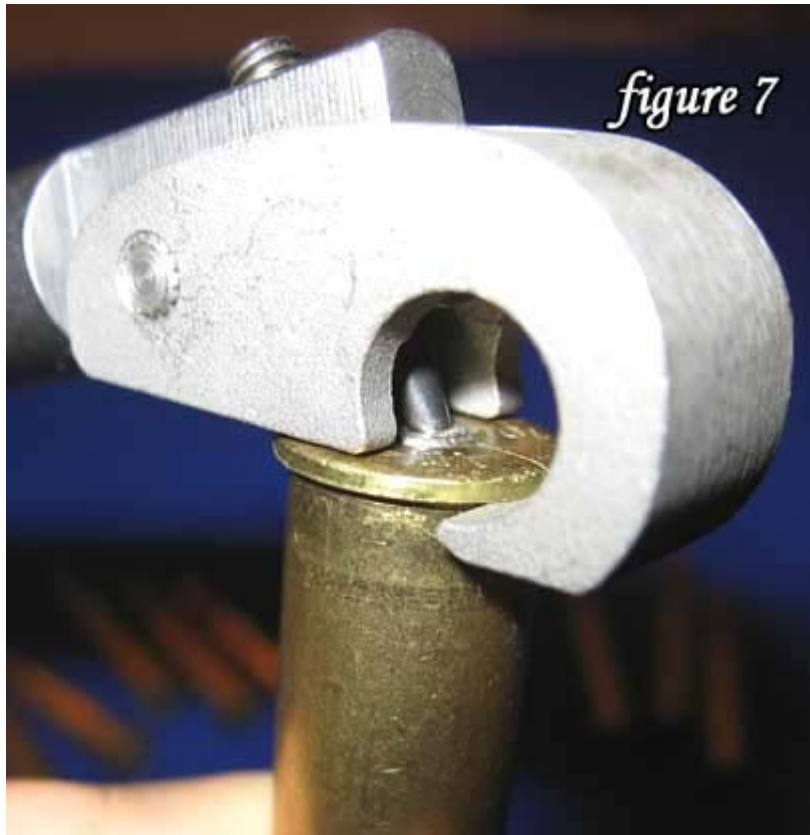


**This is how you hold the case**

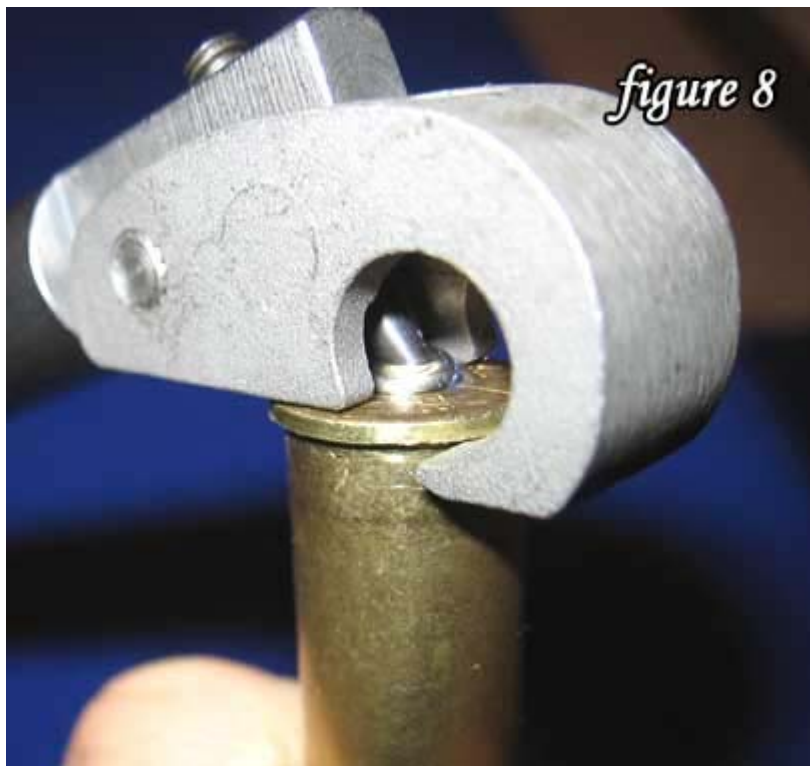
To decap a case, place the case on to the case holder, which is simply a way of easily holding the case as you lever out the primer.



**Latch the hook around the rim of the case, at the same time you will have to align the decapping pin with the firing pin impression in the primer. Here, the pin starts into the firing pin impression**



**Gradually, force the handle downward, which causes the decapping pin to enter into the primer at an angle.**



**As you bring the lever down flush to the base of the case, you will start to lift the primer out of the pocket. I found that a slow gradual movement was more**

productive then quickly snapping the lever down.



Here is the final result. You can see no shiny marks on the “nipple”, so I am pretty confident that it is not damaged. Of course, this pocket needs a good cleaning.



The RCBS Berdan decapper is not really for use in removing the original military (mostly crimped). You will still need to hydro push them out. I found the military primers were harder metal, harder for the pin to enter. The softer reloaded spent primer (on the right), is very easy to lift out.



Here are a couple of 7.5 Swiss decapped shells. The one on the left shows a slight dent into the Berdan "nipple" because the decapping pin was set too long. This could lead to misfire "dud" primers.



The decapper does work for rimless cases as well. Here, a 7.5 Swiss is being decapped, the decapping pin is just entering into the firing pin depression and I am just starting to push the lever downward.

When I started the entire Berdan reloading project I was really gung ho about decapping using the easy and cheap hydraulic method to pop out the primers. It works, but, if you

have tried it, you have quickly found that it can be messy and slow. I figured I would not do a heck of a lot of reloading that way, but at least it was an option. With the RCBS Berdan decapping tool, I will be much more inclined to do more reloading with Berdan primers. You can get the RCBS Berdan decapping tool from a number of sources, including MidwayUSA. Cost is list at about \$55. I have seen them available for about \$38 or so online.

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