

Dillon's Dandy (Handgun) Dies ⁶⁹

By D. K. Priddgen

Perhaps all of the cleaning out and reorganizing I have been doing lately (Read this as tossing stuff that has inexplicably accumulated, and for which I cannot remember any use!) has left me feeling a bit nostalgic. During a reorganization of my reloading room I came across one of my first sets of reloading dies for the .45 ACP. It was produced by a company other than Dillon Precision Products, Inc. and worked quite well in my single-stage press days.

However, when the predecessor to the Dillon RL 550 exploded on the scene and I made the leap to it, I found these dies caused a few problems.

Remember, these were my days of children in school, house payments, and everyone shooting on the poor. Reloading handgun rounds was our lifeblood!

Heck, we were even building our own race-guns and such! The problems with these dies were primarily from their design being for a single-stage press. In fact, with no progressive press in the manufacturer's stable, I'm sure they had no idea how many problems traditional dies could cause.

I knew, though, as did a number of my fellow shooters who had followed me into the Dillon progressive press world. The mouth of the carbide sizing die I had scrimped so long to buy had insufficient flare to accommodate cases not handheld all the way to insertion, as one did with a single stage. The result was cases jamming as they tried to enter the die slightly off center.

Let the grinding begin! Out came the Moto-Tool, and metal particles flew from the mouth. Of course this came to a screeching halt when I reached the carbide insert. But after polishing my work things were better – not perfect by any means, but better. Still remaining were the occasional snapped decapping pins from not feeling excessive resistance through a progressive press' linkage.

I also experienced some problems with the bullet seating die, finding the mouth a little narrow, like its brother the sizing die. The adjustment stem was a tad short to seat at one station and taper crimp at the next. A bolt fixed the latter nicely, if I do say so myself, and Moto-Tool and I belled and polished the die mouth. Again, none of these fixes were perfect. Then along came Dillon to the rescue!

Today no one has to agonize through these problems. Dillon's handgun dies are just what the doctor ordered. As a matter of fact, they are just what we all ordered years ago. Die mouths are amply belled (Radiused they call it.) to accept less than perfect case mouth alignment, and have a mirror-like polish.

Cases from the sizing die shine like a new penny, and are returned to pre-firing dimensions. Dillon sizing dies have a longer ring of carbide than most other sources, and it tapers inward. (You didn't think the entire die interior was carbide, did you? I once did!) Dillon even gave con-

sideration to the humble decapping pin. It has what they call a "floating decap assembly." With this assembly, coupled with a snap spring to throw spent primers off the pin, primer "draw back" that may occur when decapping military brass is eliminated.

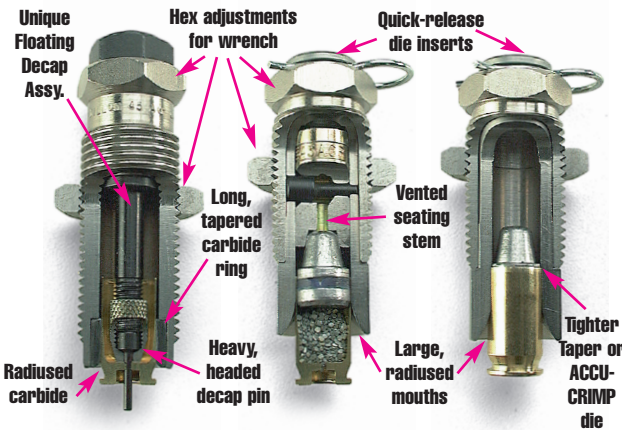
The seating die arrives designed for seating only, so no gawky long

stems like I made. If die de-gunking (Lube and such from cast bullets, don't you know?) becomes necessary, you no longer have to start all over at square one adjusting the seating depth. With the quick-disassembly feature, pop the seating stem out, clean it and the die interior, and reinsert the stem, without losing the setting you worked so hard to set! A reversible seating stem makes it easy to change bullet styles, with no lost stems to fret over.

There are two Dillon crimp die styles – taper crimp for pistols and accu-crimp for revolvers. Taper provides the precision, extended-length crimp pistols need to avoid bullet set-back while feeding into the barrel. Accu-crimp insures a perfect roll crimp for revolvers, preventing recoil from pulling out and locking up the cylinder.

Crimp dies are also blessed by a quick-disassembly design. Die inserts are easily removed for cleaning, while the body remains in the toolhead, still perfectly adjusted.

What more can I say about Dillon's handgun dies other than they fit right in the toolhead, which, in turn slips into a Dillon press, where it all works together to produce round after round of shooting fun! (Actually, the last good thing about Dillon dies is that the Dillon wrench fits them!) **D**



See Pages 48 & 49 for More Dillon Die Info.