

LONG-RANGE ACCURACY
THE WORLD OF PRECISIONBY
FIREPOWER

SNIPER JOURNAL



INSIDE THE KILL ZONE
GROUND ZERO WITH A RANGER SNIPER
MODERN URBAN SNIPER
NOT ALL TRAINING IS EQUAL
FN'S BALLISTA
BLAZED CALIBER WITH RAPID
SUB-MGA ACCURACY

WAR HAMMER

DRD'S PRECISE KIVAARI .338 LAPUA



SUPREMELY ACCURATE
RISE ARMAMENT'S 1121XR PRECISION RIFLE



EXTREME RANGE
BUSHNELL'S XRS II H59 OPTIC



WORLD OF FIREPOWER PRESENTS
FIREPOWER'S 2014 U.S. BEST SHOT PRODUCT AWARD

COVER STORY

32 THE MODERN URBAN SNIPER

This first-hand account provides the details of what it takes to be successful in a real-world operation.

By Charles Moser

FEATURES

14 BORN WINNER

FN's Ballista has everything you'd want in a long-range precision rifle. And more.

By Todd Hargreen

22 BOLT ACTION VERSUS SEMI-AUTO

A Special Operations sniper discusses the pros and cons of bolt-action rifles versus semi-autos in today's world of multi-assault attacks.

By Jim Smith

42 GOING DEEP

It's all new, it's semi-automatic and it's multi-caliber. It's DRD Tactical's Kivaari.

By a Staff Writer

48 A SNIPER IS BORN

This riveting true account takes you inside a perilous mission with U.S. Army Rangers in Afghanistan.

By Paul Martinez

56 EXTREME QUALITY

Our reviewer, a veteran LEO, raved about Bushnell's XRS II H59 rifle scope ... for numerous reasons.

By Drew Pruthi

60 HEAVY HITTER

RISE Armament's brand-spanking new precision rifle—the 1121XR, available in .308 and 6.5 Creedmoor—turned heads at the recent SHOT Show.

By a Staff Writer

68 PASSION FOR PERFECTION

He calls himself "just a regular guy," but his five keys to enhancing long-range perfection are out of this world.

By Jared Clawson

84 WANTS VS. NEEDS

Ever wonder what the right optic for the mission is? You're about to find out.

By Brook Hammond

94 AERIAL OVERWATCH

He is a former Special Operations sniper, and he's going to take you behind the scenes of how airborne snipers enhance public safety. Hang on for the ride of your life.

By James Smith

102 OWN THE NIGHT

Years in Special Operations made the author an elite pro in many areas, including night vision. Enter the darkness.

By Mike Glover

110 TINY TACK DRIVER

Desert Tech's new bolt-action long-range precision rifle, the SRS A-1 Covert, is a rocketeer.

By a Staff Writer

116 DARK HORSE

There are a lot of black rifle manufacturers, but Lantana Tactical is virtually coming out of nowhere to make a huge splash. What makes them unique?

By Paul Martinez

122 NO COMPROMISES

The passion this U.S. Marine (ret.) has for DIY projects is most apparent. You'll understand why after you read about how he built an AR-10 6.5 Creedmoor system. His way.

By Kevin Reese

BUYER'S GUIDE

74 RANGEFINDERS

COLUMNS

06 THE SNIPER'S HIDE

08 GEAR CHECK

130 FINAL FIRING POSITION

ON THE COVER

Model: Charles Moser

Gun: DRD's Kivaari

Photographer: Scott Wolff

Designer: Eric Knagg

NO COMPROMISES



STORY AND PHOTOS BY KEVIN REESE

Building Your Own Long-Range AR-10 Can Reap Huge Benefits

B. R.A.S.S. The acronym for Breathe, Relax, Aim, Stop and Squeeze was beat into our brain-housing groups mercilessly as young Marines—marksmanship being important and all. This advice continues to help me today.

Hailing from a long line of shooting enthusiasts, I started plinking early. My father gave me my first rifle at age 10; I still have it. My mother also has always been handy on the trigger so I grew up with some solid civilian coaching that bode well when I decided to dial up my trigger time in the Marine Corps.

Over nearly eight years of service, I had grown pretty fond of standard issue gas-impingement semi-auto rifles and the battle-proven 1911 platform; before then my experiences had been limited to bolt guns and revolvers, save one WWII-era Walther P38 my father still owns today.

My affinity for AR-platform rifles continues today. While I own and love running precision bolt guns, too, the opinion that long-range precision shooting is best accomplished using, or should be left to such systems, is one I don't buy. I've seen some pretty amazing shots with gas guns, even with many that won't break your bank; of course, the sucker's gotta run.

Whether you're into gas guns or bolt actions, the right combination of equipment and shooter is a given if you're looking to go long. That said, I spent countless hours combing through semi-auto systems I thought would or could consistently ring steel out to 1,000 and beyond. My search turned up some impressive rigs, but pricing was an issue, especially considering what I was after: a solid mix of lightweight hunting and long-range precision—a jack of all trades with only one exception—no compromises. Let's face it, if you're paying top dollar, you want it your way ... at least until you find a system better than one you can dream up on your own. So, dream up I did.

DREAM FULFILLED

I set out to build an AR-10 6.5 Creedmoor system my way—the way I wanted it. My search was pretty aggressive, but after a few days, my jack-of-all-trades dream turned into an action plan. It took weeks for everything to come in, but as my pop used to say, “The juice is worth the squeeze.”

Along with some carefully selected parts, I brought in some new AR building tools from Real Avid to make a few (normally frustrating) aspects of the build a bit less of a pain. Smart move, to be sure; builds are about to get a whole lot easier, and I’m excited to see what they’ve got planned for the workbench in future innovations.

STARTING THE BUILD

The long hunt for the right foundation ended when I caught a glimpse of Grey Ghost Precision’s Grim Billet AR-10 receiver set and handguard. GGP’s reputation for premium quality components was not lost on me, and the Grim’s robust, lightweight, yet balanced 7075-T651 billet construction assured me it was the right piece of real estate for the build.

Ever the artsy guy, I had the set finished in

After the work is done, the play begins.

battle-worn bronze Cerakote. Don’t let GGP fool you; their Cerakote work is pristine. The body for this project turned out better than I could have ever hoped.

To keep weight down, I headed straight for carbon-fiber-wrapped barrels and ran into a newcomer ... BSF Barrels. It’s hard not to notice these aggressively designed barrels moving into the carbon-fiber landscape, but, in true one-of-these-is-not-like-the-others fashion, it’s not wrapped at all. Roughly only 5 percent of the carbon-jacketing actually makes contact with the 416R stainless steel barrel, and the combination is loaded under tension to not only improve stiffness but to increase stiffness as the barrel warms.

Barrel production mastered in the company’s short life, less than a year in business, has resulted in head-turning, match-grade performance. While BSF guarantees sub ½-MOA accuracy, neither hot or cold, I believe these barrels are consistently capable of much better.

While carbon-fiber-wrapped-barrels had a checkered past when it comes to warping and delamination, BSF’s carbon jacketing eliminates this problem with an array of elongated slots. The slots and the jacket’s air-fool effect result in

“I’ve nearly run the gamut on stocks, or so it seems, but I’ve become a big fan of the Command Arms Accessories (CAA) Sniper Stock.”

ridiculously fast heat dissipation. Even after full magazine dumps, the barrel can still be grabbed barehanded. The perfect match-grade barrel storm for ARs? Maybe, either way, it appeared to do what I wanted. It was exceptionally badass and the owner, Aaron Painter, not only knows his stuff, the guy’s passionate about zero tolerance for defects. Good in my book.

I capped my BSF barrel with a ZRODelta Gen 2 Cowf Induction muzzle brake. I used a couple of Gen 1 brakes over the past year, most recently on a Bergara B-14 BMP 6.5 Creedmoor that won my heart, and I love it to no end. The level of mitigated recoil and muzzle rise the Gen 1 delivers has been exceptionally impressive. Seriously, a five-year-old would have no problem jumping on that Bergara for some trigger time. The Gen 2 earns its title as quite a successor.

During my first shooting experience, recoil and muzzle rise seemed comparable to the Bergara, even though this rig is quite a bit lighter. I made a call to Clint Walker about it afterward and confirmed my suspicion. The Gen 2 is averaging a 12-percent reduction in recoil, and the ports angle up to better suppress rise—a win-win.

I’ve nearly run the gamut on stocks, or so it seems, but I’ve become a big fan of the Command Arms Accessories (CAA) Sniper Stock. I used this stock on a 6.5 Grendel build and love it. As the name implies, CAA had precision shooting in mind for this model.



The rifle features a ZRODelta Gen 2 Cowf Induction muzzle brake.

The stock’s micro-adjustable comb height and length of pull make it a perfect fit for just about everybody and the rock-solid folding, telescoping monopod has been my squeeze bag’s worst nightmare. While it’s not lightweight, it’s not heavy or bulky either—I’ll go with mid-weight. Everything I look for on a stock finally came together, and I’m looking forward to using it on future builds.

TRIGGER TIME

When it comes to triggers, I’ve worked with many and keep coming back to Timney. I’ve used them for years and currently run Timney 510s in my McRees G10 and two BR10s, as well as an AR Calvin Elite and several AR-10/AR-15 Competition models. If it ain’t broke Timney triggers offer.

While the 510s in my McRees Precision



GOOD SITES TO VISIT

REAL AVID
www.RealAvid.com

GREY GHOST PRECISION
www.GreyGhostPrecision.com

BSF BARRELS
www.BSFBarrels.com

ZRODELTA
www.ZRODelta.com

COMMAND ARMS ACCESSORIES
www.CAAGearUp.com

TIMNEY TRIGGERS
www.TimneyTriggers.com

WMD GUNS
www.WMDGuns.com

WHITE OAK ARMAMENT
www.WhiteOakArmament.com

BROWNELLS
www.Brownells.com

SIGHTMARK
www.SightMark.com

HEXMAG
www.HexMag.com

Here's a look at the WMD Guns NIB-X coated bolt carrier group.

bolt-guns run about 2.2 pounds and the AR Calvin Elite is fixed at just 1.5 pounds, my AR-10 and AR-15 competition models break pretty consistently at an ultra-comfortable 3.3 pounds.

The trigger on this build actually breaks lighter than previous models at 2 pounds 10 ounces, according to an average of 15 pulls on my gauge.

BOLT CARRIER

Like a number of other past build projects, I stuck with a WMD Guns NIB-X coated bolt carrier group. Call me a loyalist? Maybe, but I've burned countless rounds and have never seen any measure of concerning wear with WMD's BCGs. Their parts have been bulletproof and reliable in my systems so, like Timney, I happily stay the course. There's a lot to be said for consistent performance ... and my inability to break something.

If you haven't built an AR-10, especially a 6.5 Creedmoor with a 22-inch barrel, you haven't experienced the brutal task of finding a gas system. BSF Barrels, and a number of others, require a +2 gas system for this type of setup. Good luck finding one! Good thing you have a guy who's been there, done that.

"Barrel production mastered in the company's short life ... has resulted in head-turning, match-grade performance."

Let me make it easy for you—White Oak Armament. In fact, White Oak Armament was the only place I found offering a "rifle +2" gas tube after several hours of searching; in fact, I even made a few calls. Fortunately, not only is White Oak Armory one of the few actually carrying this special sized tube, their parts are top notch ... and a perfect fit for this build. Remember, no compromises!

BROWNELLS STEPS UP

Once again, Brownells turned into my home away from home for all things ancillary: One of the benefits I realized later while investigating buffer systems was that in researching various buffer weights and spring tensions/coil counts I could take a look at nearly all my options in one place.

When I mistakenly ordered a buffer assembly

with 3.5-inch buffer, they quickly replaced it for the 2.5-inch part I needed for my carbine-length tube. Building a competition AR-10 can be a bit tricky, especially when it comes to the buffer assembly and gas system. Do your homework. While at Brownells, I also went with a Radian Raptor ambi charging handle.

B.R.A.S.S.

Maybe it's just me, but settling in behind a new build always has me a little on edge, even AR platform rifles built modularly. Like you, I have an affinity for long-range shooting and mounted a Sightmark Pinnacle 5-30x50 TMD First Focal Plane Rifle Scope on a ZRODelta M4 DLOC scope base. The combination has routinely delivered rock solid stability and a razor-sharp edge-to-edge clarity, even at 30x.

The buttstock is fully adjustable in terms of length of pull, cheek piece, cant along with being foldable. Sling swivels are also present.





“The benefit of a micro-adjustable monopod over a squeeze bag is undeniable...”

It's the same system I run on my precision bolt guns.

After quickly boresighting at close range to ensure I was on paper, I settled behind the rifle, established a solid cheek-weld and natural point of aim, breathed, relaxed, paused and squeezed. The 10s report shattered an otherwise eerily quiet morning.

The shot was roughly 6 inches high and a couple more right. With the first shot under my belt I was much more relaxed. Within a few rounds I was center punching and easily established a sub- $\frac{1}{2}$ MOA five-shot group using Hornady's 123-gr Black ELD Match ammo.

At 200, the rifle turned in sub- $\frac{1}{2}$ MOA accuracy again and the trend continued out

The author is running a Sightron Pinnacle 5-30x50 TMO First Focal Plane Rifle Scope.

to 1,000 yards on a chilly and overcast yet still afternoon. I would have taken it farther, but the weather conditions were such that I could not see well enough beyond 1,000 yards to establish what I felt would have been a fair measure of the capabilities of either the rifle or the dude lined up behind it, although the Triple C Shooting Range does boast four 2,000-yard lanes—it's a perfect proving ground.

My trigger time on this rifle was almost euphoric. I generally get excited anytime I can get on a trigger, but shooting a rifle I built specifically on the premise of “no compromises” took my gas gun experience to new heights. The Timney Competition Trigger broke cleanly with consistent weight. The BSF Barrel performed as

promised, actually better—ringing 1,000-yard steel consistently with 1-MOA accuracy—is quite respectable and this setup performed a far sight better.

Beyond accuracy, some of the most recognizable attributes of my first experience on this AR-10 were the unshakable stability of the Sniper Stock and Firefield Stronghold bipod to keep me relaxed and on target. The benefit of a micro-adjustable monopod over a squeeze bag is undeniable and worthy of consideration for any project or upgrade.

I was also impressed with the ZRODeba Gen 2 CI brake's mitigation of both recoil and muzzle rise. A Girl Scout or Cub Scout would have no problem sending rounds down range and let's

face it, tracking a bullet blazing a trail never gets old. Unfortunately, a series of compromises, even on high-priced rifles and first-focal-plane optics, often leaves you guessing or relying heavily on a spotter.

THE FINAL SHOT

The takeaway through this build is this: If you're planning on dropping your giant stack of greenbacks on a production rifle, consider building your own. Sure, there are some amazing systems to be had, but why not take the leap and challenge yourself?

Get your rifle your way ... and you might even shave off a few bucks. **SJ**