

PRIVATE MILITARY CONTRACTOR

INTERNATIONAL

KAPAP COMBATIVES

Training with Avi Nadia

CARINTHA

Good Gear for
the Good Guys!

URBAN SKILLS

Surveillance Skills with CROPS

SEMI AUTO SLUGGER

.308 Perfection with Devil Dog Arms!

**ESA: A NEW
COURSE!**

The Combined
Firearms Course

**INDUSTRY
UPDATE**

Hot topics in
the Contractor
World!



DEC 2015

PLUS MORE BOOK REVIEWS, INDUSTRY VACANCIES, AND MORE GEAR THAN EVER!

BOLT vs SEMI



DEVIL DOG ARMS

BY TRAMPAS SWANSON

As a lifelong hunter, recreational shooter and former Law Enforcement SWAT sniper, it is safe to say, I am a huge fan of long range, precision shooting. Having reached several milestones in my life through the use of the industry standard, Remington 700 based bolt action rifle, I have still always kept an eye on the continuing advancements with semi-auto rifle technology. With their higher magazine capacity and faster ability to load and reload, it was always an ashamed they would never be as accurate as my beloved bolt action. With all those moving parts, there is no way a semi-auto high caliber rifle such as a .308 could perform like a bolt gun, right? In this article, we will take a look at key components for building an AR style precision .308 calibre rifle like the one recently built here in house that could help you answer that question for yourself.

DAWNING OF A NEW ERA OF SEMI AUTO RIFLES

Until the Knight's Armament SR-25 started its deployment with US Navy SEALs and US Army snipers under the military designation of M110 roughly 20 years ago, it was been a general understanding bolt action rifles were simply more

accurate. What was sacrificed in volume of fire as well as second shot follow up times by the traditional bolt action rifles was outweighed with its more precise shot placement and range. Due to machining and technological advancements in semi-auto rifles, the gap between bolt and semi-auto accuracy started closing at a lightning pace with the SR-25 on the battlefield setting the pace. Over the past couple of decades, real world data has been accumulated both on static competition ranges and down range in the hands of special operations warriors that have made the firearms industry rethink its traditional views.

As data rolled in over the war torn past 14 year period for the military in particular, it was discovered the semi-auto rifles were holding their own in the field against the bolt action sniper rifles and becoming quite the overall advantage. The SR-25 gained worldwide notoriety which sadly led to sky-rocketing price increases on the civilian market for those shooters who wished to own one. Currently, the Knights Armament SR-25 retails for over \$6000.00 US.

MEET DEVIL DOG ARMS

With the recent trend of shooting enthusiasts building their own AR platform rifles, there has been a good portion of shooters and companies alike trying to replicate what Knights Armament provided to the military at a better cost via the AR10 and slightly modified LR308 models. While there have been some very good rifles built off of these designs, they all have fallen a bit short in their goals. In 2010, one company was founded in Zurich, IL with the sole intent on specializing in precision AR style rifle manufacturing, thus giving serious rifle shooters a more affordable solution to the SR-25.

I present to you Devil Dog Arms, the company that will change the way you look at precision shooting with the AR platform forever. I had the great pleasure of meeting Joe Lucania, CEO of Devil Dog Arms earlier this year at the industry

FIREARMS Devil Dog Arms Precision Rifle Build

SHOT SHOW in Las Vegas during the shows range day. Joe was kind enough to walk me through the wide range of their AR platform rifles before letting me get behind one of their signature .308 rifles to engage gong style targets set out into the desert at 800 and 900 yards. After missing low on my first two shots to see where the scope was doped in at, the following 8 shots from the MagPul magazine struck steel at each distance.

Once I was done shooting, I spoke again with Joe and the rest of his crew more in depth in regards to the .308 series. I was impressed with how crisp the trigger felt breaking the shot and the extreme lack of upper / lower movement between the two parts which is usually a thorn in the side of most AR10 platform rifle's as far as accuracy. According to Joe, the key is the design being based more on the SR-25 specs rather than AR10 / LR308 versions. The big difference between the SR-25 and the Devil Dog Arms (DDA) is Joe's company has built theirs in a rock solid billet configuration. As I discovered, DDA not only sells complete rifle packages but all the components to build your own rifle as well.

BUILDING A SOLID FOUNDATION

In the passing weeks after SHOT SHOW, I could not get over how impressive the DDA rifle was and how with a few minor personal preference tweaks based on my shooting style, their rifle would be the perfect .308 semi-auto rifle. I finally decided to reach out to Joe and explain what I had in mind for a custom build project. Joe and the Devil Dog Arms staff went out of their way to make sure this project was off to a great start by providing a rock solid foundation by means of a matched billet set of DDA upper and lower parts.

A week after the arrival of my receiver parts at my local gun shop, Second Amendment Gun and Range, a beautiful hexagonal shaped 15 inch free float rail Joe and I discussed at great length back in Las Vegas arrived at my home. This rail not only locked onto the upper so secure you would swear it was one solid piece but it also allows for a bipod to be mounted far enough forward to give the rifle a great balance when shooting prone or supported. Exclusively produced by UniqueARs for Devil Dog Arms, this meaty handguard has a smooth finish with pre-drilled holes on all sides down its entire length to add supplied accessory rails wherever you wish. This design is perhaps my favorite of any I have seen by far on the AR platform.

Realizing the bolt carrier group needs to be smooth and mated well with the upper, I decided to also choose DDA for this set up as well. I had originally looked at several other manufacturers in order to offer more diversity in the build but none of the other products I found matched the precision and craftsmanship of the DDA carrier and bolt. Combined with a BCM Gunfighter charging handle, the action was smooth and easy to manipulate.

BARREL CHOICE

Having a great start to the project rifle in hand, it was time to seek out the heart to this shooting beast. With this decision, I chose to take a cue from Knight's Armament and contacted Krieger barrels. This company is the driving force behind not only the SR-25 platform's success but several other rifle designs that have taken top honours in the amateur and professional competitions. I spoke with the marketing director at Krieger and explained what I had in mind.



After our discussion, I was instructed to decide on what muzzle break I wanted to go with and send it and the stripped rifle bolt to Krieger. As my goal is to shoot the project rifle suppressed and unsuppressed equally, I had my friends at Surefire send over a suppressor ready flash hider. Once it arrived, the bolt and muzzle device were in the mail to Krieger less than 24 hours later. Upon receiving my package, the engineers at Krieger took their standard M110 20 inch stainless steel barrel blank, chambered it in .308 and cut it to match the supplied bolt facing. Each barrel Krieger builds is single point cut, hand lapped and thoroughly inspected before sending to its new home. When the barrel arrived back to my shop, the muzzle device I had originally included was installed and tuned to the proper position. Without even shooting the finished rifle, I was already immediately impressed!

FINDING THE RIGHT TRIGGER

As I had learned during my time at SHOT SHOW, Devil Dog Arms and I both share a fondness for a series of triggers made by a company called Hiperfire. This company offers a new dynamic to the AR based platform through a totally redesigned trigger group with their HiperTouch line. Instead of the amount of force the hammer has striking the firing pin being directly inverse to the weight of the trigger pull, the two parts are independent of each other's actions now other than to fire. With the assistance of two overhead mounted power springs, the hammer actually has 30% MORE power while giving the trigger LESS felt pull and over travel. I chose a HiperTouch model Z4E for our build project which ended up giving each shot a true "glass rod breaking" feeling. Set at just over 2lbs, I could not feel any slop what so ever and extremely little creep in this scalpel-like trigger.

STOCK, GRIP AND MAGAZINES

Once the main components of the build were secured, I needed to decide on several other key factors of the basic structure, such as which stock, grip and magazines I would run on this project. I turned to the most popular choice on the current market, MagPul of course. With their line of PRS stocks, it seems no precision AR platform rifle these days can bear to go without its counter-balancing heft and wide range of adjustability. Having run these stocks in the past with other ARs I own, this combined with my personal favorite MagPul MIAD pistol grip with customizable front and rear straps, would aid in getting a jump start on the rifle's initial comfort.

The 10 and 20- round magazines were also supplied by MagPul to offer the best feeding option on the market for the .308 platform. These magazines are tough, easy to clean and light weight enough to help offset the extra heft once fully loaded. For general purpose shooting, these magazines would be a perfect choice in rounding out the rifle's ground work.



OPTICS AND MOUNT

Next, what precision rifle would be complete without good quality glass? For the Devil Dog Arms project, a scope would need to comfortably handle being able to get the shooter on target out to 1000 yards. I decided to go with the Viper PST 6-24x50 Front Focal Plane model from Vortex Optics. With so many great options on the market for scope pick from, I chose Vortex due to their perfect balance of quality, price point and great service in my personal opinion. Taking all three of these factors into account, I have never been disappointed or regretted a purchase from them.

The Viper PST 6-24x50 offers the shooter CRS zero stop tactical style turrets for fast adjustment while shooting. This model comes with an illuminated reticle in 3 options of configuration. My personal choice for reticle's is the EBR-2C (MOA) which offers a very fast shot hold over adjustment and easy to use hash marks for distance and speed estimations.

The 30mm tube offers all the light needed to squeeze off shots in very low light situations. Of all the scopes I have owned in the past, the Vortex Optics Viper PST is one of my favorite all-purpose utility scopes I have ever used.

Mounted to the rifle using a cantilever style American Defense Recon series mount, the scope held secure without need of adjustment after over 100 initial rounds. This mount is built rock solid and perfect for the AR platform regardless of chambering due to its forward design allowing for optimum scope eye relief. The mounts are strong and easy to set your scope into with the benefit of American Defense's awesome customer service and tech support.

AMMUNITION OF CHOICE

Federal Match Grade 168 grain, boat tail hollow point ammunition in .308; I could end this section on that statement alone. Why? Because it flat out performs. The FBI snipers use it, most every SWAT sniper unit that I have ever encountered during my time as a Law Enforcement sniper uses it and I have a little over 15 years of personal experience of using it, including taking top honors in competition with it. We all use it because we trust Federal Match Grade ammunition to do the job quality precision ammo is meant to do, fly straight, group well and efficiently destroy what it strikes. Are there other loads and brands on the market that can do a great job? Yes, of course, but in a personal ten load test by eight different manufacturers, the Federal "Holy Grail of ammo" not only outperformed the others out of the Devil Dog project's Krieger barrel during its break in time, it has time and time again outperformed the others in my bolt action sniper rifle left over from my LEO days. Good job Federal!

Holding just at ½ inch MOA in a 3 shot group and 0.7inch 5 shot group during the first 100 rounds fired from the Krieger barrel on the Devil Dog project, I was quite impressed. The weight of the barrel and solid billet construction of the upper / lower seems absorb much more of the recoil which allows your scope to stay on target more than its bolt action counterpart.

FINAL TOUCHES

With the addition of a stable and fully adjustable bipod for prone shooting, I decided to give the entire rifle project a complete DuraCoat finish. This helps protect all the metal surfaces from rust, dirt and damage as well as break up its outline by blending into the Florida environment. By adding a very comfortable Viking Tactics padded sling in MultiCam pattern, the entire project seemed to tie together well.

To transport the rifle project to and from the range and during long trips, I chose the NANUK hard case. This case is sturdy enough to support a full size man standing on top jumping up and down! (Yes, I personally tried it and no you will never see my gorilla routine unless you visit us in Florida.)

Offered in Tan, Black and Green, I went with the Tan color in hopes of it drawing less heat when left in our endless Florida sun. Measuring just over 55 inches long, 17 inches wide and 6.6 inches tall, this case easily fit our rifle with scope mounted. With an empty weight of around 26.6lbs, this case isn't the heaviest hard case I own, but it does make you appreciate the smooth rolling wheels on the bottom. There are four stainless steel reinforced eyelets located around the case to make it fully lockable and airline approved allowing me to easily transport our Devil Dog project anywhere I wish for a shooting event.

IT'S A WRAP!

With now having roughly three months under my belt shooting the fully completed Devil Dog Arms .308 project I have had to rethink everything I thought I knew about precision rifles. With the help of all the great companies who went out of their way to help this project come together, it is clear to me the market is finally able to allow shooters to build their own precision .308 rifles just as well as they have been with the 5.56 platform. Based on my recent personal experiences of building and shooting this project, I no longer believe the sacrifices outweigh the benefits of a bolt action over semi-auto precision rifle.

This rifle was able to be built for roughly half the price of the industry semi-auto precision standard, Knights Armament SR-25. In our staff's experience, our build has actually been able to produce better end results as well! It is needless to say how impressed I have been with all components that went into our build in order to produce the results we have seen thus far. As with any rifle, every firearm has its own preferences, even those of the same make and model. The goal of this article was to show the end user what is available on the market to be able to build the precision semi-auto rifle that fits them. Feel free to contact us and share your builds with us as well and please take the time to check out all the great companies who made this article possible.

'Til next time, Train Hard and Watch your Six out there!
For more information on all the options offered please pay a visit to www.devildogarms.com



FIREARMS: Devil Dog Arms Precision Rifle Build