

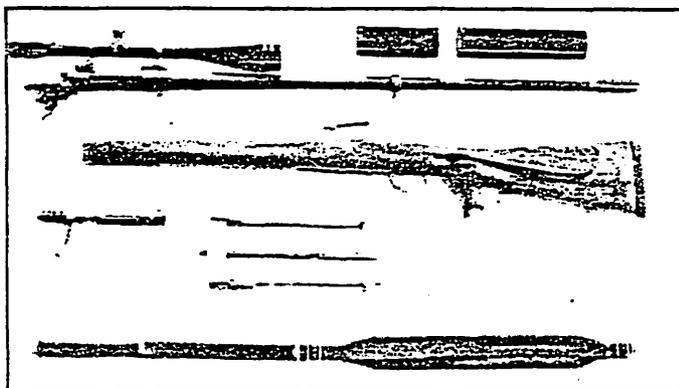
"375 Improved"

.375 Improved:

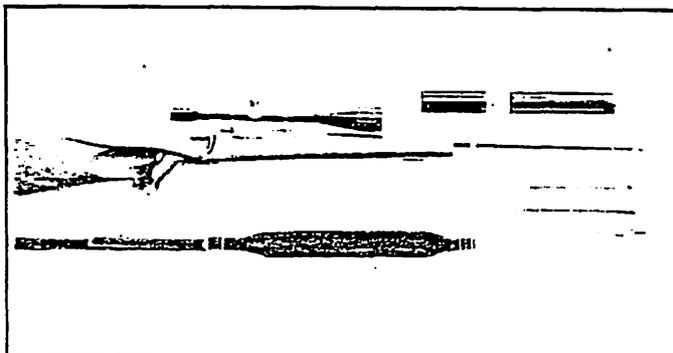
Practical Long Range Sniper

The MTLRPS-15 will make the job of future snipers much easier, even out to 1,000 yards and one mile. . .

By Lenny Hoover



The MTLRPS-15 and its sub assemblies



NOT far outside Winslow, Arizona, Scott Selby of A to Z Gunsmithing is manufacturing a rifle that has a potential one mile range and only weighs a tad over 15 lbs. with bipod and scope!

The rifle is a total departure from sniping equipment used for extreme distances in the past. Scott calls his radically new sniping arm the MTLRPS-15. While long, the name is descriptive. It stands for Mobile, Tactical, Long Range, Precision System. The 15 stands for the rifle's weight of approximately 15 lbs.

The rifle is built around the .375 Improved round and while this round is a wildcat, all one has to do is fire-form a standard .375 Holland & Holland in the weapon and then using standard off shelf components to reload the fireformed cartridge. This means no special presses, as the .50 caliber shooter must purchase. All Scott uses is a standard 270-grain flat based spitzer, commonly available powders and the fireformed brass. Anyone with a set of .375 dies can do it and they are included with the weapon.

The .375 Imp. has about 20 percent

more powder capacity than its parent cartridge. While the .375 in all of its loadings is great for large game, Scott has turned up a new side to this 1940s era favorite, its ability to remain accurate and stable at extremely long ranges, while offering the shooter a lot of bullet mass with a good ballistic coefficient.

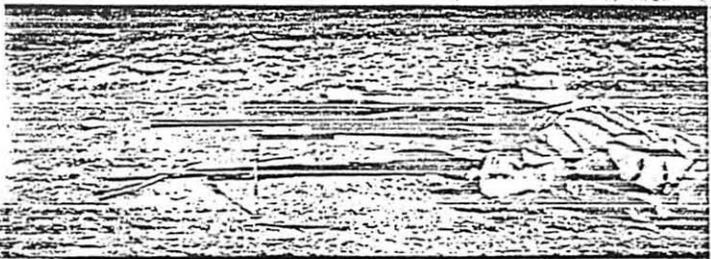
At 500 yards the 270-grain bullet from the MTLRPS-15 has about the same remaining energy as a 180-grain bullet from a factory .30/06 load at the muzzle. At 1,000 yds. that same 270-grainer is roughly equivalent to being hit by a 265-grain bullet launched from a .44 Magnum carbine, with a 20-inch barrel, at the muzzle. That's what anyone has to call a good power to weight ratio.

Scott uses a 98 large ring Mauser, commercial style bolt action to begin one of his sniper rifles. This Mauser action is forge machined and is a proven solid turnbolt. After a great deal of modification Scott mates a 28-inch, heavy tapered contour, International Match grade, chromoly barrel. This action and barrel are the principle reasons why with modification the rifle

will shoot into one hole at 100 yards and 2 $\frac{3}{8}$ -inch groups at 500 yards.

Next Scott machines a compensator/muzzle brake which does reduce the flash signature. This device is a timed gas release system which actually works. There is no muzzle climb in this rifle upon firing at all. The muzzle actually is forced down by escaping gases. In the prone position with the bipod down the bipod's feet are driven into the ground after several rounds. No gases escape towards the earth so the sniper does not have to worry about a dust signature giving away his position. The compensator/muzzle brake reduces felt recoil to that of a .30/06. The firearm, even in the prone position were the shooter does not have the flesh padding that other shooting positions provide, is a dream to shoot. The recoil is negligible.

Even the stock is unique. The densely grained select American Walnut stock has an upswept comb above the bore axis. This greatly assists target acquisition through a powerful scope. The Monte Carlo style stock also has a thumb hole and integral pistol grip to arrest and control some of the recoil



as well.

The bipod is of a sturdy and unique design. It is quick detachable and folding and is mounted to the forearm of the stock on an extension of bar stock. This mounts the bipod to the forearm where all bipods should be and at the same time moves the bipod out towards the muzzle providing a better balance, feel and controllability to the weapon that I have never encountered in any other system. The bipod system alone is worthy of a patent, it would seem to me!

Optics — I have saved the best for last. Any sniping system is only as good as the optics attached. After much searching Scott chose Tasco's TS 86 by 4x fixed powered optical instrument. This is the most powerful scope I have ever seen mounted to a firearm. The device is really nothing more than a spotting scope with reticles.

Resolution is superb bringing targets at 1,500 yards right in for close

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scrutiny by the shooter.

Tasco's powerful scope and its huge amounts of elevation and windage adjustments allow the shooter (depending on the load) to fire on targets at 1,200 to 1,400 yards with *no hold over*.

All adjustments can be dialed right into the scope. This feature alone makes the weapon system unmatched in its long range accuracy ability. During testing Scott and I both upon occasion were able to spot our own hits at 500 yards before the target spotter (who was using a spotting scope 100 yards from the target) could radio where the bullets were striking! The Tasco TS 36 is mounted on a massive two piece base which in over 500 rounds of full house .375 Imp. Magnum rounds fired through the weapon system has shown no tendency to loosen or deviate in the slightest from its zero. The word is rugged.

The Tasco scope comes with metal threaded lens caps and a sweet two piece metal optical hood system which allows the shooter to select a 6-, 8- or when threaded together 14-inch optical hood. These hoods allow the sniper to fire on the most bright and difficult sunlit, backlighted targets.

If you already have not gotten the drift, the MTLRPS-15 is simply the finest long range weapon system on the market today. Nothing else I have

seen from .308 to .50 caliber offers so many surgically precise features. From the precision crown and cut job (which you cannot see due to the compensator) on the free floating barrel to Pachmayr's fine Decelarator recoil pad the weapon is a thoroughbred in every respect.

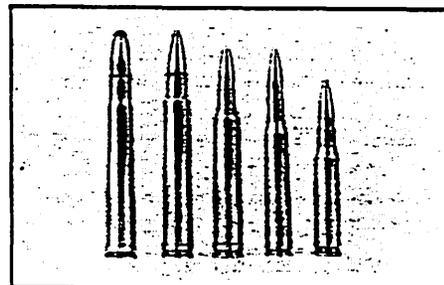
Even the littlest things are well thought out such as the redundant sling swivel mounts on both a barrel band and the bipod. This allows the shooter to carry the rifle slung with the bipod on or off. The bipod comes with a case which can be attached to a belt (even the large web belt). In short you are buying a weapon system not just somebody's idea of a sniper rifle.

Having taken an interest in this unique design early in the rifle's manufacture I was present at almost all of the weapon's test sessions. Scott submitted the rifle to tough test after test and the firearm displayed its true rugged field ability at each one.

The chronograph testing placed the 270-grain spitzer bullet's velocity at 3,040 fps. At 500 yards the bullet is still sizzling along at 2,150 fps.

Scott is currently testing a 300-grain boattail spitzer and it looks very promising at range. Testing for accuracy was tough due to the wind conditions in east central Arizona during the

Common sniper cartridges. From left, the parent cartridge, .375 Holland and Holland, the fireformed .375 Improved Magnum, the .338 Magnum (these are all belted magnums — note belt at bottom of the cases), the .30/06 and the 7.62 NATO or .308 round.



spring. Eager to shoot the rifle after so much labor Scott did not get good groups at 500 and 1,000 yards in 25- to 30-mile-an-hour gusting winds. What amazed me was the shooter's ability to consistently adjust windage internally (very large adjustments) and repeatedly strike the target at all.

Finally a relatively calm day arrived with the gusts only hitting 5 to 10 miles per hour. 500-yard testing revealed that the weapon was accurate indeed. While most three-round groups ranged from 3 to 4 inches. One group, the first, measured an amazing 2³/₈-inches.

A large target was manufactured for 1,000 yard testing. The target consisting of two pieces of clamped plywood and painted white, allowed better target acquisition. While hampered once again by wind a day arrived when the wind cooperated a bit more than usual. In 5- to 10-mile-an-hour winds Scott fired several rounds at the plywood and after some adjustments and cleaning he fired two amazing groups. The first one a tight 7¹/₄-inch group and the second after another windage adjustment measured 11³/₈-inches. Estimated velocity at this distance is around 1,400 fps. That's about like getting hit by an AK-47 near by you.

In closing, a few miscellaneous points should be mentioned. Much of the Winchester casings Scott has used have been reloaded up to seven times and as of yet no case ruptures or cracks have been observed. This attests to the precise barreling and chambering process of this system. The weapon disassembles with just a screwdriver to 39.5 inches, making airborne or sea-borne insertion very possible as well as portage in the trunk or back seat of a car. The rifle's balance and light weight make it easily man portable

MTLRPS-15 SPECIFICATIONS

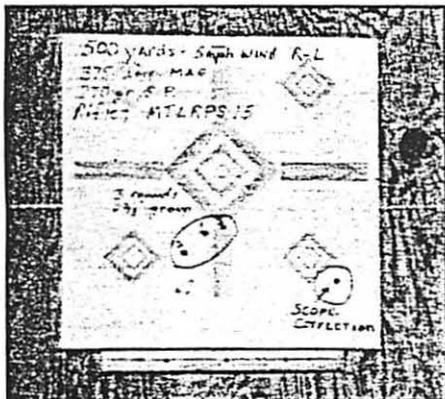
Caliber	.375 Improved Magnum
Operation	manually operated turn-bolt, two position safety
Feed Mechanism	single shot, 3-round blind magazine
Weight Empty	125 lbs. without bipod. With bipod and scope 15 lbs., 3 ¹ / ₂ ounces
Length overall	.51 inches. Length will vary depending on customer's length of pull
Barrel	premium International Match grade, heavy tapered contour
Barrel length	28 inches
Action	heavily modified, 98 large ring commercial style
Stock	high density, select walnut
Trigger	fully adjustable
Sights	optical only; receiver drilled and tapped, 2-piece base system and Tasco TS 36 by 44 scope included
Price	\$3,500, complete with hard case, scope mounts, scope, 2-piece optical hood system, threaded metal lens caps, sling, swivels and mounts, loading dies, bipod & bipod belt case, weapons manual & handloading data brochure, 500-yard test target
Finish	stock filled, hand rubbed oil, metal surfaces excluding scope, zinc-phosphate parkerization
Manufacturer	A. to Z Gunsmithing, Dept. M-15a Rt. 2 Box 22763, Show Low, AZ 85901
Options	sporting configurations, checkered finishes, optional metal finishes

by a single individual with all of the support equipment such as ammo, food, etc.

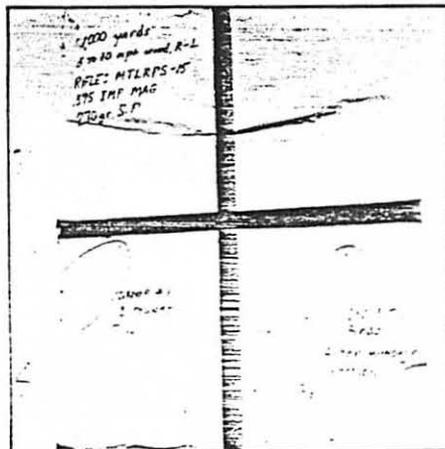
This makes long range recon and tactical missions possible with just one's self or an observer/spotter along. This cannot be said of the much touted .50 caliber in its sniper variations. The lightest of them weighs 30 lbs. with most of them ranging from 35 to 50 lbs. This high weight makes the .50, no matter how you look at it, a crew served weapon.

Scott's MTLRPS-15 would work well at long range against soft targets as well as light aircraft and exposed communication antennas and dishes. The average house could be well ventilated as well.

Scott is considering adding a monopod for the butt of the weapon to assist in extremely long range shots. Just resting the firearm gives the observer a feeling of elegant menace. In short, the MTLRPS-15 will make the job of future snipers much easier even out to 1,000 yards and one mile. The sniper's credo of "One shot, one kill!" isn't a dream with this weapon system, it's a reality! ●



Groups obtained with the MTLRPS-15 from 500 and 1,000 yards.

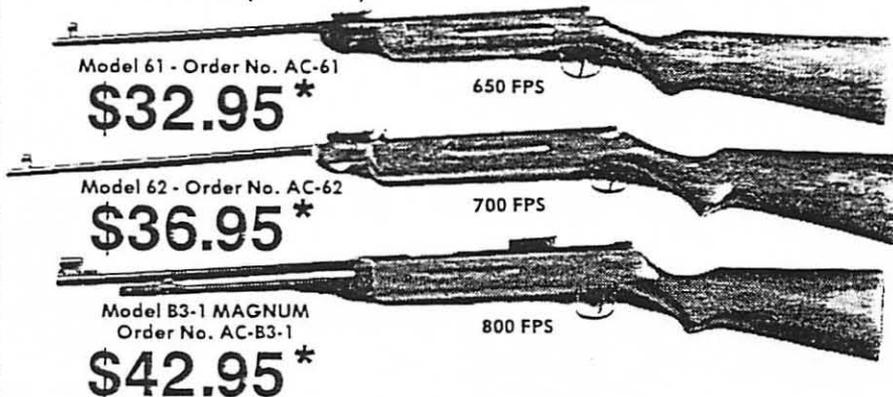


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