

AR-15

AR VS M1 CARBINE

UINTAH PRECISION BOLT-ACTION
.224 VALKYRIE

AIMPOINT DUTY RDS ▶

▶ ATAC DEFENSE
ENHANCED PISTOL IN
.300 BLK



6mm ARC
THE KING OF VERSATILITY

WWSO 2020
WHAT WOULD STONER DO?

IRON SIGHTS
WORTH A CLOSER LOOK





ON THE ATAAC

ATAAC DEFENSE'S ENHANCED
PISTOL IN .300 BLACKOUT
IS COMPACT, RELIABLE,
AND READY FOR ANYTHING.

BY
JAMES TARR

PHOTOS BY
MARK FINGAR

ATAAC DEFENSE IN LUCEDALE, MISSISSIPPI, HAS BEEN IN manufacturing for 20 years, starting out making automotive components. For the last nine years, they've been making OEM firearm parts — more than 300 — for various companies. They decided to start making complete rifles and pistols under their own name and launched ATAC Defense in February 2020.



Though short for a 5.56, this 7.5-inch barrel suits the .300 BLK just fine.



That's really as short as you want to go with an AR chambered in .223/5.56 NATO, as your velocity suffers hugely. But the .300 BLK is a completely different animal. It was optimized for use in 9-inch barrels and really doesn't see any serious velocity dropoff until you go to barrels shorter than 7.5 inches.

The 7.5-inch barrel is 4150 chromoly vanadium steel, button rifled, with a 1:8-inch twist. It is tipped with an A2-style flash hider. ATAC's product pages are very detailed. They state that their barrels start out as steel barrel blanks per Mil-B-1159SE. This is the military specification for barrels of small arms weapons and covers alloys, steel bars, and blanks under 2 inches in diameter. This means ATAC makes barrels for a company that has a contract with the U.S. military to supply M4s.

My contact at ATAC told me, "JMS Manufacturing (ATAC Defense's parent company) has a Commercial and Government Entity (CAGE) code issued by the Defense Logistics Information Service (DLIS) as a contractor identifier for companies bidding or doing business with the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD)."

Those 300 OEM gun parts they make for various

Available straight or curved, the Enhanced models ship with quality, drop-in cassette triggers made by ATAC themselves.

ATAC makes rifles in 5.56 NATO and .300 BLK and pistols in 5.56 NATO, .300 BLK, and 9mm. They offer several different packages, with their Basic being the more affordable end of the spectrum and the Enhanced as their top-of-the-line model. I secured a sample of their new 7.5-inch barreled Enhanced Pistol chambered in .300 BLK.

As you can see, the pistol in the photos is not black. The listed price of the pistol includes a Cerakote color treatment of your choice on the receivers and handguard: Black, Tungsten (silver), FDE, OD Green, or Burnt Bronze, like my sample. It's like FDE but classier.

First, a word about length, as it's always important. ATAC's 5.56 pistols have 10.25-inch barrels.

companies? A lot of them end up in weapons supplied to the military.

As the cartridge was built for short barrels, the .300 BLK crushes the competition when barrel length reaches single digits. A 7.5-inch barreled .300 will provide 85 percent of the velocity of a 16-inch barrel with supersonic ammo at less than half the length. Plus, if you're interested in being very, very quiet, a suppressed AR firing subsonic .300 BLK ammunition is as quiet as a semiauto gets while offering the familiarity of AR controls.

ATAC matched this short barrel with the top-of-the-line, four-position adjustable Maxim Defense PDW Brace, which has a shorter than standard buffer tube (more on that later). As a result, with the brace fully collapsed, this pistol is just 22 inches long — and it can be fired with the brace collapsed.

The 7-inch handguard is ATAC designed and built. It is constructed of 6061 aluminum and features M-LOK attachment slots at 3, 6, and 9 o'clock. There are QD sockets on either side of the handguard, front and rear, for mounting a sling, as well as one at the bottom all the way forward.

The upper and lower receiver are both 7075 T6 aluminum forgings and machined in-house. ATAC states that they leave the upper receiver lugs slightly oversized, and they hand fit each upper and lower to reduce slack and/or rattle. ATAC broaches the magazine well in-house.

There is a standard forward assist, brass deflector, and ejection port cover. There are pictogram markings on both sides of the lower receiver for the selector.

As for the bolt carrier group (BCG), ATAC is once again happy to point out that all of their parts meet or surpass mil-spec. The bolt is machined from Carpenter 158 steel, which is both the mil-spec for AR bolts and the industry standard.

After machining, their bolts are HP/MPI (high pressure, magnetic particle inspection) tested.



The 4150 chromoly vanadium steel, button rifled barrel is fittingly paired with a standard A2-style flash hider.

AIMPOINT DUTY RDS



SOURCE
Aimpoint
aimpoint.com

Built with the needs of law enforcement in mind, Aimpoint's all-new Duty RDS packs the same quality features the company is known for into a more affordable package. The optic is housed in EN AW-6082 aluminum, which can hold up to any action this optic might endure. A matte finish complements flush-mounted windage and elevation turrets, and the brightness adjustment is achieved with digital buttons rather than a dial found on other Aimpoint models. Weighing in at 3.9 ounces and measuring only 2.7 inches long, the Duty RDS adds little size or weight to the rifle while still functioning as well as bulkier optics. Because it is "operationally parallax-free," this 2-MOA red dot only needs target alignment to provide accurate shots. Just point and shoot. A lithium-ion CR2032 battery powers the Duty RDS for a rated 30,000 hours or over three years of constant on at setting 7 of 10. An MSRP of \$499 makes this optic a solid option for any shooter but especially those on stricter budgets.

ON THE ATAC



The NiB coating on the BCG ensures that the rifle will run smooth and clean easy when the fun is over.

The M16-profile carrier is constructed of AISI 8620, which is a chromoly nickel low alloy steel. The gas key is also made to spec, installed with the proper bolts, which are then staked in place.

In the Enhanced rifles and pistols, the bolt and carrier have a nickel-boron (NiB) coating, which is a nice brushed silver in color, but it's not done for looks. The NiB carrier is deliciously smooth in the hand. If you've never run an NiB bolt carrier group, the coating means they are both very corrosion resistant and inherently slick even without lube. Not only does that coating mean the gun runs smoother, but it means the BCG is much easier to clean.

The bilateral safety selector is a modular unit. There is one long lever and one short one, and if you're a southpaw, you can switch them. The main problem with bilateral units is a long, right-side lever that pokes your trigger finger when you flip it to Fire. You won't have that problem with this model.

Perhaps the biggest difference between the pricier Enhanced and ATAC's Basic guns is the trigger group. The other rifles come standard with GI-style trigger groups. Those provide reliable trigger pulls, but not light, crisp, or pleasant ones. With the Enhanced models, you get a drop-in cassette trigger made by ATAC Defense and an anti-walk trigger and hammer pins. It provides a crisp, single-stage pull advertised at 3.5 pounds. You can get it with a curved or straight bow, and

PERFORMANCE

Barnes TTSX 110 gr.	Black Hills OTM 125 gr.	SIG Sauer Tipped 205 gr.	Wilson Combat HPBT 220 gr.
Velocity (fps)			
1,936	1,905	945	964
Standard Deviation			
17	11	18	10
Extreme Spread			
35	33	38	27
Average Group (in.)			
1.23	.72	1.12	.79
Best Group (in.)			
1.08	.56	.89	.67

Accuracy results are the averages of four five-shot groups at 50 yards from a sandbag rest. Velocities are averages of 10 shots measured with an Oehler Model 35P 12 feet from the muzzle.

my test gun had the latter. I like the looks of their flat trigger and the crisp break it provided.

The bolt catch pin is threaded, and the bolt release is oversized. On the right side of the receiver, the magazine release is both enlarged and slightly extended. The oversize paddle is grooved for texture. On the opposite side of the lower receiver, you'll see that there's a magazine release there too, just underneath the bolt catch. Push the serrated rear of it, and it pivots to let the magazine drop.

The pistol grip is the ENGAGE V2 from Mission First Tactical, which has a slightly more vertical grip angle that has been determined to be more ergonomic. As I like to store spare batteries and/or bolt in the pistol grip of my rifles, I wish the pistol grip had a trapdoor instead of an open bottom.

The Maxim Defense PDW brace is the best in the world, and it had better be for the price (they start at \$359 bought separately). They use buffers of traditional weights (this pistol had the S-marked Standard 3.3-ounce buffer), but the buffers are shorter than GI spec to fit inside the shortened buffer tube. Those proprietary buffers are paired with shorter, stronger buffer springs. I've found these braces to be excellent performers. However, most people don't realize you don't need to push the button to extend the brace — just grab it and yank. You only need to push the button to collapse



the brace. It adds a bit of weight, but still the pistol is only an ounce over 5.5 pounds.

Supersonic ammunition provides about 30 percent more recoil than .223, which means it's still not much. Subsonic ammunition is much softer, and if you don't feel like swapping out buffers when switching between the two ammunition types, the trick is to find a buffer/spring that is light enough to cycle subsonic ammunition but not so light that supersonic ammo beats the gun up. As the Maxim Defense PDW brace was built exactly for guns like this, it performed very well. At the range, the pistol was completely reliable with supersonic ammo. After a 50-round break-in period, the pistol would cycle all subsonic ammo, but the bolt wouldn't lock back on the notoriously light SIG 205-grain load.

While .223/5.56 is by far the most common chambering for ARs, if you want an uber-short AR pistol for home or vehicle, you are far better served by the .300 BLK cartridge. And the ATAC Defense Enhanced Pistol gives you everything you might need or want (minus sights, of course) in a very compact package. 🍌

ENHANCED PISTOL

Type	Direct-impingement semiautomatic
Cartridge	.300 Blackout
Capacity	20, 30 rds.
Barrel	7.5 in., pistol-length gas system, 1:8-in. twist
Overall Length	22 in. (brace collapsed), 26.75 in. (brace extended)
Weight	5 lbs., 9 oz.
Brace	Maxim Defense PDW
Finish	Burnt Bronze Cerakote (other colors available)
Bolt Finish	Nickel-boron coating
Trigger	Single stage, 3.5 lbs. (4 lbs. as tested)
Sights	None
MSRP	\$1,819
Manufacturer	ATAC Defense atacdefense.com