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Gun Digest[®] 2021

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ATAC Defense Enhanced Rifle in
5.56mm NATO with Leupold
Freedom RDS 1x34mm red-dot sight

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EDITED BY
Philip P. Massaro

ATAC DEFENSE ENHANCED RIFLE

The *Gun Digest* 2021 cover gun is the ATAC Defense Enhanced Rifle (ADER 5.56; MSRP: \$1,299). Numerous enhancements make this rifle fast to operate and a dream to shoot. **These enhancements include** an ambidextrous safety, ambi mag release with oversized mag button, oversized bolt release, oversized ambi charging handle, muzzle brake, a nickel-boron-coated bolt-carrier group, and a Mission First Tactical (MFT) Battlelink Minimalist Milspec Stock and MFT Engage Grip.

In addition to the Burnt Bronze Cerakote finish of the cover gun, these rifles are available in Black, Tungsten, Flat Dark Earth (FDE) and Olive Drab (OD) Green Cerakote finishes. Three different triggers are available: drop-in curved or straight with a 3.5-pound pull; or a two-stage trigger with a 1.5-pound pull in the first stage and a 2-pound pull in the second stage.

At ATAC Defense, quality, reliability, accuracy and fit and finish are of the greatest concerns. The company believes in holding a quality level that is far above Mil-Spec. All components are hand-picked and tested by the marksmen who design the rifles.

"One thing we chase is quality," said Monty Johnson, ATAC Defense co-owner. "Fit, finish and accuracy. We're not cranking out firearms for the masses. We were just trying to come up with something in a relatively affordable price range, but with quality that exceeds expectations. I won't send out a rifle I wouldn't use to defend my family in a bad situation." ATAC Defense was born in the custom car-parts shop of fellow co-owner Chris Johnson (no relation) in Lucedale, Mississippi. In 1999, Monty joined the team that fabricated everything from twin turbo kits, to custom super-charger kits, to complete intake manifolds. And the team just happened to include more than a few gun enthusiasts.

"We were hard-core gun guys," Monty said. "When we had any downtime, we would be tinkering with stuff, making parts. Being gun guys, it was a natural progression into making gun parts with all the equipment we had."



ADER rifles are also available with a Tungsten Cerakote finish.

(opposite and above) In addition to a Burnt Bronze Cerakote finish, these ATAC Defense rifles are available in Black, Tungsten, Flat Dark Earth (FDE) and Olive Drab (OD) Green Cerakote finishes.

ATAC Defense now supplies parts to more than 300 firearms manufacturers.

“Quality manufacturing is the very first step,” Monty said. “And we have a lot of control over the quality because we do most of the manufacturing of the parts we use in our guns. We’re just gun enthusiasts doing what we love to do, and doing it with quality.”

And the end-results should be obvious considering the attention to detail and quality control that goes into the building of every ATAC Defense firearm.

The upper and lower receivers on the ADER 5.56 are machined in-house at company headquarters in Lucedale, to ensure proper fit, without slack and rattle. Each ATAC Defense Enhanced Rifle is hand assembled with the company’s inspected, tested and approved components. After assembly, each firearm goes through a test-fire session and is re-inspected. Each firearm must pass a final inspection before it can be shipped to the customer.

An ADER lower receiver starts as a 7075 T6 aluminum forging that is machined to exact tolerances. After inspection, it moves through an in-house mag-well broaching process to ensure proper dimensions, and a straight, true mag well. Then it goes through a vibratory tumbler that uses ceramic media to deburr it. Additional, enhanced features include: threaded bolt catch pin, threaded (captured) rear detent pin and an upper-to-lower adjustment feature.

(below) The upper and lower receivers on the ADER 5.56 are machined in-house at company headquarters in Lucedale, Mississippi, to ensure proper fit, without slack and rattle. Each ATAC Defense Enhanced Rifle is hand assembled with the company’s inspected, tested and approved components.



The upper receivers also start as a 7075 T6 aluminum forging. They also must pass inspection at every machining station they go through. They are then tumbled and deburred in a vibratory tumbler. During the machining process, ATAC chooses to leave the upper receiver lugs slightly oversized. Utilizing the oversized lugs, builders hand-fit each upper and lower receiver to ensure a proper, tight upper-lower fit.

The M4 contour 4150 CrMoV barrel starts life as a true gun-barrel steel blank that meets Mil-B-1159SE specifications, which cover alloys steel, bars and blanks under 2 inches in diameter for use in the manufacture of barrels for small firearms. All ADER barrels are precision-bored and button-rifled using a six-groove rifling at a 1:7

ABOUT THE COVER GUN



In addition to an ambidextrous charging handle, the ATAC Defense Enhanced Rifle has an ambidextrous safety and an ambidextrous magazine release.



At ATAC Defense, quality, reliability, accuracy and fit and finish are of the greatest concerns. All components are handpicked and tested by the marksmen who design the rifles. This is the ATAC Defense Enhanced Rifle (ADER) in the Black Cerakote finish.

twist rate. Each chamber is cut to match the 5.56 caliber. After boring, rifling and chambering, the exterior of the barrel is cut to the M4 profile with a .750 gas-block diameter, and a 1/2 x 28 muzzle thread. The gas port is properly sized to achieve the right gas pressure for proper ejection. After final machining, inspection and testing, the barrel is then salt bath nitride coated and quenched to provide a durable lasting finish. At assembly, a muzzle brake is mated to the 1/2 x 28 threaded barrel.

Bolts are precision-machined from Carpenter 158 steel, a chrome-nickel al-

loy steel with an analysis representing the best case-hardening steel known for parts subject to heavy shock and wear. After machining, the bolt is vibratory tumbled and deburred.

Carriers are machined from AISI 8620 alloy steel to full auto profile, then stress relieved, and case-hardened, which results in excellent wear characteristics. After the machining and hardening, they are nickel-boron coated. The gas key is machined from 4130 chromoly alloy, heat treated, and attached to the bolt-carrier group using grade-eight hardware torqued to the recommended



Leupold Freedom RDS 1x34

The optic on this year's cover gun is a Leupold Freedom RDS (Red Dot Scope) 1x34. It is built Leupold tough, performs in extreme conditions, and won't break the bank with an MSRP of \$364.99, without mounts.

The Leupold Freedom RDS has a 34mm main tube that offers unparalleled windage and elevation adjustment travel (80 MOA, each), and the 1/4 MOA precision finger-click adjustments deliver absolute repeatability and dependability over a lifetime of extreme use.

The Freedom RDS has a 34mm main tube that offers unparalleled windage and elevation adjustment travel (80 MOA, each), and the 1/4 MOA precision finger-click adjustments deliver absolute repeatability and dependability over a lifetime of extreme use. The 1 MOA dot is ideal for precise shot placement. The scope is 5.3 inches long and weighs 7.2 ounces without mounts.

The Freedom RDS features Motion Sensor Technology, which extends battery life by automatically deactivating illumination after five minutes of inactivity, yet reactivates instantly as soon as any movement is detected. Leupold reports battery life (one 3V CR2032 lithium battery) of a minimum of 1,000 hours on brightness level four of eight.

This updated version will accept the Alumina Flip Back Objective Lens Cover and the Alumina Flip Back Eyepiece Cover. And it is backed by a Leupold lifetime warranty.

spec. After the bolts are torqued, they are properly staked to mil-specifications. The bolt carrier group is assembled using stainless steel gas rings, a 4340 heat-treated cam pin, and an 8640 heat-treated firing pin. The extractor is heat-treated, precision-ground 4340, and a S7 heat-treated ejector is used.

"I hate sloppy, loose parts," Monty Johnson said. "We're holding to a better standard in everything we do. I just want every one of them to be good. Every time you pull the trigger, we want them to be accurate." GD



ATAC DEFENSE
ENHANCED PISTOL 9MM-ADEP



QUALITY. DEPENDABILITY. ACCURACY.
manufactured in Lucedale, MS
Visit us at www.atacdefense.com

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