By D. K. Pridgen

With the modern emphasis on “smaller, faster, more power” in our society, it is no wonder the firearm world follows suit. I’m actually glad for this! In the handgun world, smaller means increased likelihood for the average carrier to have it with them. In the long-gun world, smaller may mean faster and more convenient in handling, but frequently has the connotations of less power – perhaps less effective. In many instances this is true, depending on the firearm’s purpose.

Few folks choose to hunt geese with an 18” barrel on their smoothbore, or delve into long-range shooting with a 16” barrel on their rifle. For the most part, longer barrels mean higher velocities (to a point) and more power. However, in the defensive/tactical world our primary interest is in quick, handy, effective weapons working well in urban/CQB situations. For defensive/tactical applications shorter firearms are the ticket. In fact, many opt to pay Uncle Sam’s tax to shorten a barrel below the approved length, just to squeeze out the last bit of handiness.

One solution working well and eliminating that tax is the bull-pup design made most famous by the Steyr AUG. (Others have come and gone but the AUG is always remembered.) While I like the concept intellectually, I could never warm to the AUG, and I could never put my finger on the reason. Lately, I’ve been working with a couple of bull-pup designs that have warmed me to boiling!

**Kel-Tec RFB**

I am talking about Kel-Tec CNC’s offerings – their KSG shotgun and RFB rifle. The Rifle, Forward-ejecting Bull pup (RFB) in particular for this article. Before moving into the specifics, there are three things, other than the compactness of the RFB, that really ring my bell: using metric FAL magazines, .308 chambering, and ambidextrousness.

No, it won’t fire .358 Winchester cartridges – but perhaps I am getting ahead of my story and should wait!

A strong point of the RFB is its ambidextrous nature. Thus, the forward-ejecting system, with a tilting bolt to shove empty cases into the forward ejection chute as a fresh rounds are picked up and inserted into the chamber. This feature eliminates cases spewing into the shooter’s face, or cumbersome changes to swap ejection from one side to another. It also closes the action area everywhere except downward for extra strength to direct gases from a potential case rupture out through the magazine.

More ambi touches include bolt releases on both sides of the magazine well rear, a magazine release behind the magazine well, safety levers on both sides of the receiver above the pistol grip, and a forward-mounted reciprocating bolt handle swappable from left to right side.

Dimensionally, the RFB is 26.1” overall with an 18” 4140 Chrome-moly barrel with chrome-lined bore and chamber and weighs in at 8.1 pounds, sans magazine. Of course using polymer and metal in the construction allows Kel-Tec to control the weight.

Square, grenade checkering covers the polymer pistol grip and forend. The trigger guard is generous, and the enclosed trigger breaks nicely at 6.5 lbs. The polymer stock ends in a rubber butt pad and includes sling-mounting slots. (A sling mount for one side of the forend is included.) Kel-Tec’s A2 style flash suppressor rides the barrel.

Riding the dust cover is a 10”, alloy, 1913 MILL-STD rail for any sights you might want (The RFB arrives with none.), and a small portion of rail is integral to the stock butt. The RFB uses a short-stroke gas piston system, which keeps the chamber and action area cleaner. A lever on the front of the RFB can adjust gas pressure of the system.