

FIERCE FUN!



Reviewed by Peter Caroline

The first bullpup rifle I ever saw was, as I recall, in an old *American Rifleman* magazine article, which described a 1903 Springfield modification designed by none other than George S. Patton, Jr., just prior to WWII. This gun was meant to accommodate the needs of tank crews or other troops working in tight quarters. It was an ugly mutt, as you can imagine, and particularly unappealing to those who were not right-handed and/or dedicated risk-takers.

The bullpup configuration, with the action or bolt assembly located behind the trigger guard, is not a shape that is likely to win favor with traditionalists. It does, however, have distinct advantages in terms of compactness and maneuverability. Many bullpup rifles have been adopted by the military...the Steyr AUG, FAMAS F1 and Israeli Tavor being just three examples. I was intrigued with the concept, but the only example available in semiauto-only was the AUG, which was (1) expensive, (2) hard to find, and (3) in .223 only, which was not my favorite caliber.

At a SHOT Show several years ago, I found the solution. Kel-Tec introduced their RFB (Rifle, Forward-Ejecting Bullpup). It was 27.5" long with an 18" barrel, weighed slightly less than nine pounds, and was chambered for 7.62 x 51mm NATO or

.308 Winchester (I know, I know, they're not identical). The charging handle could be configured for right- or left-handed shooters, and the spent cartridges drop forward out of the ejection chute through an opening in the gas block. This latter feature makes it a reloader's dream. My old FAL would throw spent cartridges in a wide arc 15-20' from the gun, necessitating a search team to pick up reusable brass. The RFB politely drops empties at your feet. Best of all, it uses widely available FAL metric magazines, perhaps the cheapest of all military surplus rifle magazines.

One little problem. For at least three years, the Kel-Tec RFB was made of pure Unobtainium. But patience won out. Once again, at the 2012 SHOT Show, I requested an RFB for testing, and Kel-Tec delivered.

For my first trip to the range, I put together a mixed bag of ammo: Winchester 7.62mm 147-grain FMJ, Winchester .308 Win. 147-grain FMJ, American Eagle 150-grain FMJBT, TulAmmo .308 Win. 150-grain FMJ and Brown Bear .308 Win. 140-grain SP. Kel-Tec provides one very nice DSA mag with the RFB, and I brought along a half dozen well-used surplus FAL mags.

I had initially mounted a large 3-10X scope on the RFB's 9.75" picatinny rail. Anticipating some stout recoil from this short carbine, I mounted the