

# The Bradley Arms AR15 Mini Rifle



By Vince Bottomley

In this, the second part of our winter series of articles designed to get you and your club involved in competition shooting, I was intending to put my GSG 5 through its paces but, a slight change of plan.

Following part 1 in last month's Target Shooter, Mark Bradley got in touch and offered us one of his rim-fires for review. If you shoot Practical Rifle or Highpower, Mark will already be known to you and you may even be shooting one of his rifles. As well as being a keen competitor, Mark is also something of an AR specialist and will build you a bespoke centrefire AR15 and he also offers a semi-auto rimfire version of this popular 'straight-pull' rifle.

Now, my GSG might look like Heckler & Koch's MP5 but that's as far as it goes – it's just a semi-auto rimfire made of plastic and Dinky Toy metal with no parts common to the real MP5. The barrel is a weedy tube and the moderator is a 'pretend'. On the other hand, Mark's rimfire not only looks like an AR15 – it is an AR15 and shares many common parts with the real thing - it just happens to be chambered for the 22lr cartridge. In fact, if you already own an AR15, you could easily convert it to a 22lr simply by dropping an 'upper' onto your centrefire 'lower' but of course, you already knew that didn't you?

There are other cheaper ways to convert your centrefire AR and you may have heard of those

**Above and below - The real thing – this is no replica. Note safety just above the grip.**





Very similar rifles handling-wise. Note my new fore-end on the GSG

conversion kits - basically a 22lr 'chamber' which drops into the centrefire chamber. I have to emphasise that our rifle is not so converted and it is a true 22lr fitted with a heavy Border match barrel. This rifle is therefore no cheaper than its centrefire counterpart, so expect to pay around three times what you would pay for my H&K look-alike.

As you can see from the photographs, the AR really looks 'the part' and this example is nicely tricked out with pic-rails and contrasting furniture. The standard AR 223 magazine is nicely reproduced to take the 22lr cartridge and, once in place, you would struggle to tell it from the real thing. Is this important? Should we be attempting to make our 'pretend' rimfires look like 'proper' guns? Well, it certainly won't make it shoot better but on the other hand, an awful lot of research has gone into the ergonomics and handling of guns like the MP5 and AR15 and it makes sense to copy this with a replica - if you are allowed to - I've heard a little whisper that H&K are none too pleased with GSG's replica and they may not be on sale for ever, so now might be the time to grab one!

Mark's rifle has a 1 - 4 Schmidt & Bender scope up top but he also gave me a red-dot sight. In a future issue, I'll compare this with the red-dot I got from York Guns. I'm a novice where these

optics are concerned so maybe we can both learn something. I'm currently ammo-testing with a four power Burris on the GSG so the Schmidt will be ideal for comparable test purposes. I expected the S&B to have a duplex reticle but it's fitted with a fancy but super-fine crosshair, so even better.

I asked Mark for an ammo. recommendation when I collected the rifle but he was non-committal - "It'll shoot anything." So, I'll treat it the same as the GSG and try the CCI Mini Mag that I've now settled on for the GSG.

The Black Dog mags. are the same size as the 'real' one and really tough



Rested, Mark's rifle is one accurate piece of kit but then, the GSG is no slouch. Indoors at 25 yards there is very little to choose between the two and with care, I could lay down some very impressive three-shot 'clover-leaves' with either rifle though under proper 'benchrest' conditions, the AR would definitely have the edge. This impressed me as I know the super-sonic rimfire ammo. doesn't usually give results comparable to the sub-sonic target variety. At eight and a half pounds (less sight) the AR is a good bit heavier than the GSG's six and a half pounds so it's easier to benchrest. Also, the GSG's mag. tends to get in the way when trying to rest the fore-end but off-hand, either rifle will do the job and with practice, it's possible to shoot three-shot groups around half an inch.

If we are comparing the two, I found that the lighter GSG was a bit easier to handle. The GSG's left-side forward-mounted cocking-handle is more user-friendly than the AR's rear-mounted charging handle but, of course, if you already have an AR15 you will be familiar with such features. On the other hand, the trigger was far superior on Mark's AR and this made it nicer to shoot off-hand. With the GSG's heavier trigger and lighter weight, there is a tendency to pull the shot but the internet is bristling with modifications for these guns and shortly, I will have to tackle the trigger.

The Black Dog AR magazines are a superb piece of kit. Externally, you just can't tell it from the real thing and it's so strongly made you could drive a 4x4 over it no problem. However, filling the mag. is painfully slow compared to the GSG, which is very thoughtfully designed with a small catch which allows you to pull down on the follower, releasing the spring tension. The GSG mag. is also a reasonable replica of the H&K but because the sides are open, your visible weedy rimfire rounds are a give-away.



**That Magpul retractable stock is really good (Shown in fully retracted position)**

Of course, this is a bonus in competition as you can immediately see how many rounds remain whereas the AR gives no indication, though it does hold the bolt open following the last round.

Both magazines snap in and out easily though the GSG must be pulled out – they won't just drop to the floor when you release the catch like the AR mags. do. However, this is not a problem – the GSG is designed so that you can easily do it one-handed by gripping the mag. and operating the release-catch with your thumb. The AR releases exactly the same as on all ARs - i.e. the release-catch is operated with the trigger-finger.

From the photographs, you will see that my GSG is now sporting a new fore-end made up of three Pic. rails, with a grip mounted on the lower one. This greatly assists holding the rifle when shooting from the standing position and the AR is similarly equipped. The AR also sports a neat Magpul retractable stock which I really liked. You can buy a retractable or folder for the GSG but I've not seen one as good as the AR's Magpul – but I'll keep looking and maybe try modifying a Magpul.



**Tim Finley's Mini Rifle from South Yorkshire Shooting Supplies**

Finally, I would guess that many shooters who buy one of Mark's ARs – either as a complete rifle or as an 'upper' – use it for indoor practice in the off-season to keep competition-sharp. The GSG on the other hand is the plinker's favourite – you only have to look it up on You-Tube – but I'm hoping it will still make a reasonable beginner's gun for Mini Rifle competition as well.

Next month, Tim Finley will be reviewing his latest toy (above)- a Mini Rifle from South Yorkshire Shooting Supplies – it looks 'the dogs' and Tim has already taken his first win with it!