

SOP for SOT

By Steve Coulston - December 2, 2013  1071  5



Going hot! Fire Testing the Special Ops Tactical AR with Steve Coulston and Chris Tran.

While the AR has been around for half a century American ingenuity continues to refine the legacy rifle. With the numerous firearms manufactures coming onto the scene these days it takes a lot to stand out from the other black rifle companies. One of the up and coming companies is Special Ops Tactical (SOT). SOT is located out of Apopka, Florida and was started by 35-year old Garrett Potter. When I asked Garrett about his start he said, “I was the sales manager at Spikes Tactical for several years, I left to continue my professional flying career in the airlines but once I left I realized the airline industry was still not fully recovered from the September 11th attack. So I started Special Ops Tactical and began developing rail systems, uppers, and lowers for the firearms industry.”

His enthusiasm and attention to detail are getting his company noticed in a very competitive AR market. When I asked, “What makes SOT different?” Garrett quickly replied, “My passion for high quality firearms and creation, our level of experience, our attention to detail and the quality parts we use.” He goes on to explain, “We here at (SOT) have a very tight and stringent QC process. It is up to us [to] make sure our customers get the best and we take that very seriously. Even CNC machines can become un-calibrated or programmed incorrectly so it is up to us to inspect every part that comes in and goes out of our facility to ensure that our customers get the best.” And I can confirm customers are getting just that as I was fortunate to get my hands on one of their new offerings, the SOT SO15 Billet 14.5”.





This rifle is a looker. It has very clean lines and has a nice aggressive look to it. The foundation for the gun is its billet upper and lower. These are made of 7075 T6 type 3 hardcoat anodized aluminum. Their fit is really nice with only the slightest hint of play between the upper and lower. The starboard side of the lower has a deepmilled recess for the magazine release and markings for safe, semi and auto operation. The trigger guard is integral to the lower and has an elegant curve to it. The Enhanced Wire EDM enlarged magazine well has a generous flare to assist in mag changes. On the port side of the lower the company logo and serial number are prominently located. Their logo depicts a F-117 Stealth Fighter which is very appropriate for the aesthetic of this gun. The safety lever is not ambidextrous, but can easily be upgraded to

one if desired. The pistol grip is the outstanding Magpul MOE+ and the stock is a Magpul milspec CTR on a 6 position extension tube. The castle nut is staked in two places reducing the chance of it coming loose over time. The lower parts kit and buffer are standard milspec parts.

Moving on to the upper receiver. The upper springs from the lower at faceted, stealth like angles. This makes it almost impossible to feel the seam between the upper and lower which is a testament to the machining quality. The brass deflector and forward assist are chunky and almost chisel like adding to the stealthy appearance of the gun. The charging handle and dust cover appear to be fairly standard. It sports the typical flat top rail and it has the indexing numbers engraved along the top. The rail is really unique. This is SOT's own GPR-12 Rail system. This is a 12.5" rail system that has picatinny rails at the 12, 3, 6 and 9 o'clock positions. The rail is fastened to the barrel nut by 8 machine screws and provides an uninterrupted top rail between the forend and the upper. The GPR-12 has four QD attachment points on both the left and right sides for a total of eight points. This allows the user to have flexibility with how they attach their sling. The rail has also been generously cut throughout to reduce weight and aid in cooling.



Range day was chilly and with the about an hour of daylight left, we began to break in the gun. We have a very precise procedure we follow. It consists of taking it out of the box, inserting the loaded magazine and shooting the hell out of it. The gun was not cleaned, lubed or broken down prior to firing. I was testing this gun with Chris Tran, a local LEO and weapons expert. As daylight was slipping away and we were using a 6MOA optic, we didn't spend time zeroing on a bench rest. Instead, we were shooting at a distance of 10 yards and in. We both laid into the gun pretty hard to the point we had the barrel smoking hot. As Thanks to the Nickel Boron BGC, she ran like a top and didn't seize up even though it had not been lubricated. We used 30 and 40 round PMAGS to feed the beast without a hick-up. The gun handled extremely well and the 14.5 inch pinned barrel made transitioning from the ready position to targets and back again very comfortable and efficient. The trigger, while milspec, was surprisingly crisp and had a very pronounced reset. Rapid shots were very easy and the SOT muzzle brake really did a nice job of reducing the felt recoil pulse and as the sun began to set, the muzzle brake gave us a little light show. Keeping the gun on target was child's play. Both Chis and I really enjoyed shooting it and it was a nice way to end the day. My only regret... I'll have to give it back..

In closing I think the future looks bright for Garrett and SOT. His guns and parts are very well made and they continue to innovate. They have a handsome new minimalist rail called the GPX in the works which is slated to be released 12/23/13. Garrett also has some unmentioned LEO units using his guns and has high hopes for military contracts. If SOT continues to perform and innovate, he will go far in this industry. Oh and the SOT lifetime warranty ain't bad either.

The retail price point for the Billet Rifle 16" with 12" GPR rail is (Optics Ready) is \$1,470.00. If you are interested in purchasing their rifles or their parts, they can be ordered directly from SOT at <http://www.specialopstactical.com/>..