

THE SVD

by Gary Paul Johnston

When Evgenie Fedorovich Dragunov went to work for the Soviet military's small arms plant at Izhevsk in 1938, no one could have imagined the contributions he would make during his life. While these were many, Dragunov is most well-known for the rifle that bears his name; the Sniperskaya Vintovka Dragunova, or Sniper's Rifle Dragunov (SVD).

Designed in 1959, the SVD was, in simple terms, an enlarged variant of the Automat Kalashnikov (AK), firing one of the most accurate full-size rifle cartridges of its day; the Russian 7.62 x 54mmR (rimmed). Adopted in 1963, the SVD became standard issue with the sharpshooters of the Soviet and Chinese armies and was used throughout the Vietnam War. Variations of the SVD were also used by other ComBlok countries.

Based on the AK, the SVD differs in several ways. Perhaps most importantly is that it uses a Tokarev-style gas system where, unlike the AK, the piston is separate from the bolt carrier. At the rear of the gas block is an adjustable collar. Turned with the head of a cartridge, this collar allows more or less gas to operate the rifle. The SVD uses a machined steel receiver for rigidity and while it operates in the same

Secret Terror Of The ComBlok Now Comes in .308 Winchester!



way as the AK, its rotating bolt has three locking lugs instead of two. Also, the rifle is capable of semiautomatic fire only, using a ten-shot detachable box magazine.

Although the SVD comes with standard-style Soviet iron sights, these are meant to be used only as backup, as the rifle's primary sighting system is the INI-1 Pritsel Snipersky Optichesky (PSO-1), or Optical Sniper Sight. Of 4x magnification, this scope has a range-finding reticle graduated to 1,300 meters (1,422 yards). This scope comes



Left: This close-up of the right side of its receiver reveals the caliber of the new Norinco SVD variant, 7.62x51mm NATO. The receiver is machined from solid steel and the safety/selector lever is seen in its "safe" position at the rear of the ejection port.

Right: Here, the new SVD's safety is seen in its "fire" position. The straight box magazine is similar to the 8x57mm version used in the Yugoslavian variant of the SVD.

GOES NATO

with an amber light filter to improve contrast, and uses batteries to illuminate the reticle in low light.

Using an integral rail on the left side of the SVD's receiver, the INI-1 (PSO-1) scope slides onto the rifle and is locked via a throw-lever that cams the locking piece tightly against the rail. The scope is essentially a return-to-zero unit.

The last major difference between the SVD and the AK lies in the Dragunov's buttstock. A one-piece affair, the stock is made of laminated hardwood and amounts to the forerunner of what we now refer to as "thumb-hole" stocks used on imported semiautomatic rifles such as Springfield's SAR-8 and SAR-4800 series. Equipped with a leather covered cheekpiece, the SVD's stock comes with a side-mounting sling bar.

When it was still a super rare bird here in the U.S., I obtained two of Soviet manufactured SVDs to test. Both had been captured along the way, were used and without scopes. Shooting these SVDs with their relatively crude iron sights at 100 yards, I



Above: The new Norinco 7.62mm NATO SVD Dragunov rifle is shown here with its PSO-1 sniper scope attached. Note the straight box magazine developed for the 7.62mm NATO round.

Below: As viewed from the left side, the detail of the PSO-1 scope can be seen mounted on the integral receiver side rail. Note the scope's locking lever. The battery compartment is also visible beneath the scope near the rear of the mount. Throwing a switch illuminates the reticle in low light.



SPECIFICATIONS: NORINCO M86 DRAGUNOV (SVD)

Caliber	7.62x51mm NATO and 7.62x54R
Velocity	2,650 fps (168 gr. Match)
Operation	Short stroke gas piston
Type Of Fire	Semiautomatic
Barrel Length	22 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches
Overall Length	46 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches
Rifling	Four groove, one in 9 $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch RHT
Weight	(w/scope) 10 $\frac{1}{2}$ pounds
Feed Device	Ten-shot box magazine
Safety	Safety/selector
Front Sight	Protected post adj. for elevation
Rear Sight	"U" notch tangent to 1200 meters
Optics	Soviet Q.D. PSO-1 4x sniper scope
Finish	Blue with black lacquer coating
Stocks	Laminated hardwood

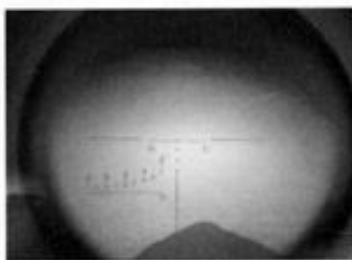
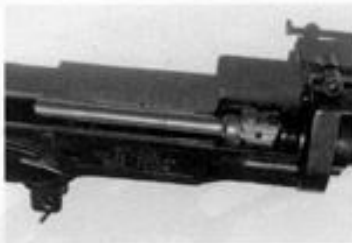


was still able to obtain one minute-of-angle accuracy—leaving no doubt in my mind as to their potential accuracy. Further testing Norinco-made Chinese versions later on, proved that the SVD can equal the accuracy of many National Match M14 rifles, as long as proper ammunition is used.

While Yugoslavia produced a variant of the SVD in 8x57mm (Mauser), all other ComBlok countries that adopted the Dragunov used it chambered for the original 7.62x54R. However, in the wake of the break up of the Soviet Union, not only is the SVD available in the U.S. as a target and collector's rifle in its original form, but can now be obtained in 7.62x51mm NATO (.308 Winchester) caliber.

Manufactured by Norinco of China, the M86 .308 Dragunov is imported by Brolin Arms. Based on the Chinese variant of the SVD (that is essentially an exact copy of the Soviet Model), Norinco's .308 Dragunov differs only in the chamber, size of the bolt face and the redesigned ten-shot box magazine that is straight rather than curved like the one for the 7.62x54R cartridge.

After receiving the sample Norinco .308 Winchester SVD to test for S.W.A.T., I first field-stripped the rifle to examine it closely. While it is in .308 caliber, its gas adjustment remains the size to accept the rim of the 7.62x54R cartridge. Quality, fit and finish of its parts are identical to Norinco SVDs I have tested in the past; with metal parts painted in black lacquer over the blue finish and stock and forend made of laminated hardwood.



The .308 M86 comes in a hard case with all the tools and accessories including an original PSO-1 scope. This scope retains the conventional SVD range-finding reticle, and although we didn't shoot the rifle at long distances, I suspect that the scope is the standard PSO-1 as used with the 7.62x54R round.

SHOTS FIRED

Anxious to shoot the Dragunov in .308 caliber, I took it to the range with a quantity of Black Hills, Remington, Winchester and Federal .308 Match Grade. There were no malfunctions of any kind during the testing, and the rifle performed as have all other SVDs I have fired.

Accuracy using both Federal and Remington Match .308 was a consistent 1.5 MOA at 100 yards from the bench, with Winchester averaging about one inch. However, Black Hills' new .308 Match ammunition produced groups of one inch or less, with the best three-shot group measuring .36-inch.

If you are a Dragunov enthusiast or a collector of Soviet-type military weapons, Norinco's .308 Winchester caliber SVD will be of interest to you. With high-grade ammunition available, you can even use the rifle to compete in three-gun matches that are so popular today. Oh, yes, you can also still get a Norinco SVD in the original 7.62x54R. ●

SOURCE

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Dept. SWAT
P.O. Box 698
La Verne, CA 91750-0698
(909) 392-2352

eachers of the two hundred plus man training staff for a department with over 30,000 officers.

In another case, the county sheriff personally handled the entire sale from my first call to the transfer of all his old M16's and department handguns. You have to be prepared to deal and speak with anyone, from a patrol officer to the commissioner of police, or in some cases the district attorney or mayor of a small town. We will cover what you need to know for your first demonstration, equipment and presentation in the next installment.

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vehicles, etc. as blobs of color in the scope in total darkness, since they emit infrared light rays. In order for this to happen, a light source inside the scope must be removed and exposed to light during the day. This activates it, and allows use at night. During the day it may happen that sunlight falls directly on the objective lens of the scope. A small sunshade is fitted over the forward objective. It may be rotated and locked in either the extended or retracted position. The shade is quite thin and appears fragile, yet will do the job if it is needed.

TO THE RANGE

We took the rifle to our private range in central Alabama for the initial testing. We did not know if the weapon had been sighted in, so set up a target at 50 yards and clipped the scope mount onto the side of the action. The scope does not lie directly over the center of the bore. The mount and scope are made in a single forging. The optical system was designed to be removed for transport, and installed when the sniper was ready to set up. This is in contrast to American systems, which are typically mounted permanently, and are ready for use at all times. The actual mount is a variation of an early German system. It is fast, rugged, and highly repeatable. A light coating of oil in the bore required a few shots to clear. When it was determined that the bullets would stay on the paper we set up another series of targets at 100 yards. The trigger is two-stage, with a long light take up, and a fairly crisp 2-1/4 pound second stage. For a semiautomatic, this rifle has an excellent trigger. A trigger as crisp as might be found on a bolt gun would be unsafe in a semiauto. The trigger guard is exceptionally large, and will accommodate any gloved hand. Once the bore was cleared we determined that the scope had been adjusted and zeroed before it left the factory. George's first three shots at 100 yards went into a cluster less than 5/16 of an inch, center-to-center, with Black Hills, molycoated, 168 grain .308 Match ammunition, right in the middle of the target. This is remarkable considering the nature of the 4 power scope and a 10 to 12 mph gusting wind. George then shot another group on another target face using Federal 168 grain BTHP Gold Medal Premium Match .308 ammunition, with virtually identical results. Later shooting sessions revealed that this .308 Dragunov is unusually accurate in other conditions, and that it does not tend to drift as its barrel heats up. This kind of accuracy can only be achieved with a barrel which is truly straight and concentric inside and out. Comments from others who have purchased these rifles indicate that they are all about as good. It is unusual to come across a semiautomatic rifle that is as accurate as a bolt gun. We were quite surprised with the accuracy we got from this one. Suggested retail is \$2,200, with quantity discounts available.

New Limited Penetration .308 Rounds Available From Black Hills - For Law Enforcement Only

By Mark White

The problem of .308 overpenetration in hostage rescue situations is a serious concern among those litigation specialists who work with law enforcement. A few years ago a group of officers within the LAPD SWAT organization asked a bullet manufacturer to design and build a 168 grain, match-quality bullet which would cause incapacitation without overpenetration. To make a long story short, an LP (limited penetration) bullet was designed, built, and then successfully tested in one of the FBI's labs. That .308 LP bullet is now loaded into rounds by Black Hills Ammunition Co. (Box 3090, Rapid City, SD 57709). FAX: 605-348-9827. Phone: 800-568-6625). Legitimate tactical units can obtain a free 10-round sample pack of LP ammunition for T&E by writing to Black Hills on department letterhead. Two hundred-round cases are available for roughly \$250, which includes shipping. Our testing indicates that these rounds are as accurate as any existing .308 match ammo, and that they deliver approximately 2,500 foot pounds of energy in a very explosive manner. Reports of legitimate shootings from the field indicate that these patented bullets deliver virtually all of their energy to the primary target, and normally do not exit.

We want your input write us at
Small Arms Review
223 Sugar Hill Rd.
Harmony, Me 04942