

Collecting and Shooting the Military Surplus Rifle



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Tennessee Gun



Review by [R.Ted Jeo](#)

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As you probably have gathered from previous writings of yours truly, I am always on the look out for new products that may be of interest to shooters in general and fellow mil-surp shooters in specific. One such product that I got to review recently is the new for 2006 MTM Front Rifle Rest.

In the past, I did a review of the Caldwell Deadshot shooting rests (see <http://www.surplusrifle.com/reviews2005/deadshot/index.asp>). Unlike the Deadshot bag rest, the MTM Front Rifle Rest does not depend on weight to achieve its stability characteristic, rather it depends on its physical design, that is, the spacing and placing of the legs of the rest.

Now, I have to tell you the truth. When I got the MTM rest, I was bewildered thinking how something that weighs a mere 1lb 8oz could ever be stable enough to shoot high powered

high recoiling rifles from. I seriously had my doubts, so I took the MTM rest out to the range with a big bore rifle as well as a semi auto pistol, as the rest is also designed to be used as a stable pistol rest.

The first thing you will note about the rest is the large front rubber support. The MTM rest will not allow your barrel or stock to slide very easily, if at all. When you first set up, you will need to pick up and move the rifle/barrel into place, it does not slide against this non marring rubber shield very easily if at all. This feature I liked very much. It really locks the rifle into place. The design shape of the rubber rest is such that it will take nearly every shape of stock and barrel out there, from the mil-surps to black powder muskets with their ramrods hanging below (which you won't have to remove) to the flat footprint of a bench rest rifle.



Figure 1. At a mere 11lb 8oz in weight, you would not think the rest would work, but it does a pretty decent job for the average shooter who wants stability without having to lug the weight around or drop a mint on a rest.

The front rest moves up and down via a very large and easy to use, albeit coarse, adjustment wheel. The elevation range is from about 8" to a fully cranked up 11". There is a locking lug on the side of the stage that will hold the elevation in place. There is also a "stop" built into the device so that you cannot inadvertently completely unscrew the rest from the best.

The entire device is made of thick molded red plastic. In addition to the rubber molded

front rest, there is also a rubber pad installed on top of the rear leg of the base. This pad comes in handy as a hand rest if you wish to add additional stability to the base, or, more appropriately, is used for a rest when shooting a handgun from the device.



Figure 2. Firing a handgun from the rest is easily accomplished while resting the barrel on the front rest and your hands on the extended rear leg of the base. Non slip rubber coats the rear leg to create a comfortable rest for you hands. The rubber really locks your pistol into place.

The three legs of the base all have rubber non slip pads on the bottom. An ingenious way that MTM made the base even more stable was on the underside of the extended rear leg are two such non slip rubber pads. This removes any wobbling effect from the base.

Upon shooting my Turkish Mauser with full mil-surp loads, it became apparent that the MTM Front Rifle rest does indeed work quite well. Regardless of the lightweight nature of the rest, it afforded me a very stable sight picture and was very easy to move and adjust with only one free hand. The one minor issue I had was with the heavy recoil generated by my Turkish Mauser, I found the rear leg would "pop up" ever so slightly. Actually, it came straight back down into place for a repeat shot so I was not too concerned with the issue. You could minimize this action by putting your free hand on the back leg, but I usually use my left hand to pull the buttstock tightly into my shoulder. Another option would be to put a small sand bag on the rear leg. I look at the rest as being a stable platform for the average plinker or the traveling varmint hunter who does not want to lug around a heavy rest. (or the Surplusrifle.com postal match shooter.....)



Figure 3. Because of the way that I shoot where I use my left hand to grip the buttstock to pull it back into my shoulder, the mount did lift a bit on the rear leg when firing heavy recoiling ammo. This did not seem to detract from the stability of the mount as it came right back down into the same spot after firing. One way to counter this would be to place a sand bag on the rear leg. The particular test rifle was a very long Turkish Mauser.

I was very pleased and surprised with how the new MTM Front Rifle Rest worked. I really enjoy the weight of the rest. When I go to the range, I have to lug a lot of equipment, including tool boxes, cleaning gear and photographic gear in addition to whatever rifles/pistols I plan on shooting. To be able to grab this rest with a free FINGER and still have a very stable shooting platform to boot, well, is just plain icing on the cake. As usual, "Made in the USA" MTM products do the job without emptying your wallet.

The MTM Front Rifle Rest is available from sources like [Grafs and Sons](#) (\$22.99).

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