

# Notes From A Savvy Hunter

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The Technical Case for the Elimination of Assault Rifles and Their Military Cartridges.

There is no good argument for the use of assault-type weaponry from a sport shooter's perspective. Those who use and enjoy firearms for hunting and target shooting, do not choose assault-style, semi-automatic weapons, due to their inherent inaccuracy.

Assault rifles are designed for shooting a high volume of rounds in a very short amount of time. This is true for both automatic military assault rifles, as well as semi-automatic assault rifles available to the public. High volume rapid shooting is inherently inaccurate based on the mechanics of these types of guns, the design of their cartridges and the physical abilities of shooters. Accuracy levels needed for target shooting and hunting are of no importance in military use. The military requires multiple bullets hitting a target in a short period of time. Where the bullets hit is less important than hitting and incapacitating an adversary. Hunters almost all the time fire only one bullet to down their prey.

In combat stress conditions, achievement of accuracy by the shooter is greatly diminished. Quantity compensates for inaccuracy in stopping and killing the target, a human being. Military M16 rifles have a setting allowing only 3 shots to be shot automatically at a time. This was done by the military with the understanding of human capabilities. Rapid fire of 3 rounds and more, in as many seconds, has no purpose for a hunter or target shooter.

Rapid fire physically disallows accurate shooting from both the perspective of the shooter and the gun. Only highly trained sharpshooters can shoot accurately one round every 2 seconds, and with no more than 10 rounds. This is done with non-assault style guns, which are designed for accuracy, shooting in a controlled environment. NRA sanctioned, high power rifle competition matches, using long barrels 22 to 24 inches in length, do not require more than 10 rounds be shot in 60 seconds, and only highly practiced shooters attain scores exceeding 90% in doing this on a repeated basis. Average human reflexes and body dynamics cannot exceed this skill level.

So, high volume, rapid shooting that assault weapons offer, is incongruous with competitive target shooting. Additionally, the vast majority of competitive target shooting is done with single, carefully aimed shots.

As for the guns, the faster a gun can shoot, the less accurate it is. General physics apply here. For rapid firing guns, the mechanism of the gun must automatically discharge a cartridge and immediately reload another, after a round is fired.

Design of the gun's mechanism to accomplish this affects the accuracy of the gun. Guns designed for accuracy insure the placement of the cartridge in the breech of the gun (firing position at the beginning of the barrel) in the same place every time within tight tolerances. Semi-automatic, assault-style guns are incapable of doing this, otherwise reloading and discharging would be greatly impaired.

Assault style rifles also typically have shorter barrel lengths. This was done to make the gun lighter for infantry troops, and for maneuverability in jungle and similar contained conditions. The original military M16 assault rifles were first used in Vietnam. Here again simple physics apply to their accuracy. The longer the barrel the more accurate the gun. Longer barrel length better stabilizes the trajectory of the bullet. Typical hunting and target shooting rifles have barrel lengths of 20 to 24 inches. Again, hunters and target shooters look for accuracy.

The most commonly sold commercial assault rifles have barrel lengths of 16.5 inches. The shortest, federally mandated, rifle barrel length is 16 inches. But, the manufacturers are able to cut a corner. Bushmaster, and others, have semi-automatic assault-style rifles that have actual barrel lengths as short as 10.5 and 14.5 inches. But, at the end of the short barrel, there are permanently installed flash suppressors that add nothing to bullet trajectory, but do bring the overall barrel length up to the legal 16 inches. A 10.5 inch barrel is less accurate than a 14.5, which is less accurate than a 16, etc. The flash suppressors help reduce muzzle flash and vent gases resulting from the ignition of the gun powder. The suppression helps reduce muzzle movement during rapid firing. It is interesting to note the M16 fully automatic military version of these guns has a 20 inch barrel length.

The shorter barrels are only appropriate for shorter range, close proximity shooting. Not for target shooting, not for hunting.

These semi-automatic weapons fire the .223 commercial cartridge, the same as the 5.56x45mm military cartridge. 5.56mm and .223 inch, refer to the bullet diameter. The actual design of the 5.56x45mm brass cartridge case also does not lend itself to decent accuracy. The cartridge was designed for/by the military for fast, automatic loading and ejection, in poor conditions.

There are many commercially available cartridges that are of similar caliber (bullet size) that are more accurate and better lend themselves to precision shooting and hunting.

It should also be noted that the 5.56x45mm cartridge cannot be effectively used for deer hunting, especially in a short-barreled, less-than-accurate weapon. The bullet is not as affective (ability to kill the animal humanely) as larger and heavier bullets and cartridges. The 5.56x45mm is much too powerful when used on small animals, as there is too much destruction. After all, the 5.56x45mm was designed to kill humans. Here's why.

It was designed for the bullet to impact a person at high velocity and on contact yaw (wobble) and fragment simultaneously. That is, do as much tissue destruction as possible combined with hydrostatic incapacitation to the nervous system.

The 5.56x45mm cartridge and the corresponding semi-automatic guns used to shoot it, are designed specifically for killing humans, and are inappropriate and ineffective for precision target shooting and humane hunting purposes.

There is therefore no need for high volume weapons in sport shooting. Anything more than 10 rounds shot from a semi-automatic gun is not needed. If a hunter cannot down his prey in 3 shots, it's too late and the animal has gotten away. Hunters also never shoot multiple animals in very short periods of time. For personal protection purposes, if more than 10 rounds are needed to stop one or more assailants, it's too late for the weapon to be any further affective.

As a further aside, it is interesting that shot guns used for shooting ducks and geese are federally mandated to *hold* no more than 3 shells. There has been no movement to repeal that.

Assault weapons are not used to assault targets or hunting prey. They are used to assault people.

