BY ERIC R. POOLE
PHOTOS BY SEAN UTLEY

THE NIGHT RAPTR

MOUNTING ATN'S MK 410 TO DPMS' RAPTR PACKAGE MAKES THE BEST OF ANY LOW-LIGHT SITUATION.

For three days, I sat in a Texas ground blind with Harry Fitzpatrick, a Richmond police officer. I spotted kills for Fitz as he repeatedly hammered wild pigs with a Gemtech-suppressed DPMS .308.

Teamed up in another ground blind a few hundred acres away, DPMS' Evin Galbraith was smoking cigars and cooking up ideas about a preaccessorized AR with Crimson Trace's Travis Noteboom. In the course of just a few months, that small talk became reality. Today we simply refer to the result as the Rapid Assault Primary Tactical Rifle, or RAPTR.

THE CONCEPT

All great things evolve from necessity, and there is no greater example of that than today's AR-15. No matter who you are, people have varying taste and needs, which means that it's difficult to find any AR left in factory configuration. The problem is that with so many ARs starting at more than $1,500, there's hardly any room left in the buyer's budget to accessorize right from the start. Even if you have a little room in your pocket for add-ons and you're new to the game, how do you know what accessories are worth the investment? Well, just like you, Evin and Travis are AR enthusiasts, and they've done all the sorting for you.

Once the RAPTR was conceptualized, Evin and Travis roped in Jason Harmon of Falcon Industries, Julie Knuth of U.S. Peacekeepers and Dave Biggers of XS Sights. Together they set out to do three things:

1. Create a patrol rifle suitable for law enforcement and ready for duty right out of the box.

2. Simplify the daunting number of AR products in a package that will benefit the most novice of shooters.

3. Make it affordable.

GUN DETAILS

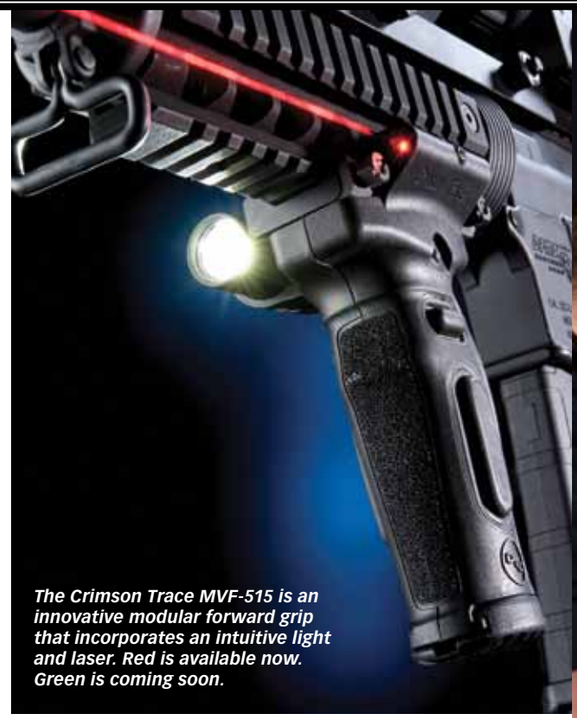
The RAPTR is based on DPMS' proven AP4 Panther carbine with 16-inch barrel. The A3-style upper is forged from 7075-T6 aluminum alloy and features a flattop rail with T-marks that coincide with the fore-end accessory rails.

The lower receiver comes from the same aircraft-quality aluminum and is equipped with a semiautomatic trigger group. Both receiver assemblies carry all the standard M4-style controls and a six-position collapsible stock. This gives the basic platform the identical handling characteristics that helped make the original M4 famous in the first place. And just like other DPMS Panthers, this one is hardcoat anodized and finished in Teflon black.

Just as the familiar telescoping stock has made the Stoner platform comfortable for a broader range of body types, the ambidextrous Ergo Suregrip continues the RAPTR's user-friendly theme and provides a tactile surface that sticks in the hand, even when wet.

The carbine-length fore-end is Ergo's two-piece Z-Rail. This allows the RAPTR to readily accept the Crimson Trace MVF-515 vertical foregrip with built-in light and laser. It's like getting three dependable accessories as a bonus for purchasing the rifle.

The Z-Rail encompasses the 16-inch, 1:9-inch-twist, button-rifled barrel, and at the muzzle end is DPMS' own Panther flash-hider. Underneath the manganese



The Crimson Trace MVF-515 is an innovative modular forward grip that incorporates an intuitive light and laser. Red is available now. Green is coming soon.

Even designating just one officer on a graveyard to patrol with night vision can increase situational awareness and standoff distances during surveillance activities.

Harry Fitzpatrick, a Virginia police officer, was unknowingly testing an early Gemtech-suppressed version of what would evolve into the RAPTR. He's shown with his largest Texas hog brought down with a 5.56.

This Rapid Deployment Pack is supplied with the RAPTR to round out the package. In addition to the medical kit and restraint system provided, the shoulder-slung pack has two pouches to carry four 30-round AR magazines.

phosphate finish, the raw barrel is manufactured from 4140 chrome-moly steel and machined with an AP4-style contour. The chamber has been cut for 5.56 NATO specs and is ready to secure the lugs of the Mil-Spec phosphate steel bolt that's been heat-treated for durability. It rides within an 8620 steel bolt carrier that benefits from the same Mil-Spec standard and heat treat.

The front sight is a familiar tritium-filled XS Sight elevation-adjustable post, and the rear sight is a removable Mangonel flip-up. Throw it all together without ammo and you have a compact service rifle that weighs just 8.2 pounds and measures 33 inches with the stock collapsed to position one.

To complete the RAPTR package, each rifle includes two 30-round mags, a nylon web sling, cleaning kit and loaded medic kit. This medic kit is part of the U.S. Peacekeepers' Rapid Deployment Pack. It includes an ergonomic shoulder sling pack with supply kit, a quick-release front buckle and external pouches that are perfect for storing spare magazines.

The supply kit consists of two pairs of Nitrile gloves, a clear micro shield mouth barrier for CPR, H&H compressed gauze bandages, a pair of trauma shears, an SOF tactical tourniquet and EZ Cuff compact restraints. It all adds up to a comprehensive go bag for the tactical responder. If you're thinking the RAPTR still lacks certain popular accessories, a Harris bipod, chrome or titanium bolt carrier group, and JP adjustable trigger can be optioned for a little more green.

NIGHT OPS

I've been on so many military and LE night operations, I could write a book comparing the ways different units approach problems in the dark. I'm not referring to training. I'm talking about actual missions that resulted in the exchange of fire or capture of criminals. Although the military is effective at owning the night, I've noticed that more patrolmen could benefit from the same technology. Yes, air units do typically have FLIR and other night vision capabilities, but it's usually a uniform working the street that gets to a scene first, and not every department has a SWAT-type tactical unit at its disposal or the funds to equip and train officers with the latest equipment.

SPECIFICATIONS **ATN MK 410 5X**

INTENSIFIER TUBE:	1+
RESOLUTION:	40 lp/mm center
MAGNIFICATION:	5X
LENS SYSTEM:	F1:1.4, F90mm
POWER SUPPLY:	(1) 3v lithium CR123A
RANGE OF FOCUS:	4m to infinity
RETICLE:	Red illuminated Duplex
WINDAGE AND ELEVATION ADJUSTMENT:	1/8 to 100 yards
IR ILLUMINATOR:	450mW, detachable
BATTERY LIFE:	20 hours
OPERATING TEMPERATURE:	-40 C — +50 C
STORAGE TEMPERATURE:	-50 C — +70 C
DIMENSIONS:	10.8x4.3x3.6 in.
WEIGHT:	3.2 lb.
PRICE:	$629

The most common response I get from unit commanders is that issuing patrolmen with some type of quality night vision device (NVD) is outside the department's budget. And even if they had night vision scopes, could the image be dependable enough that an accurate, justifiable shot could be taken out to 100 yards? These are the concerns I've determined to settle.

THE ANSWER

Having used the latest NVDs with good effect in the military, I usually write off 1st Generation NVDs as archaic technology set in unwieldy heavyweight tubes that change the way a rifle handles. Besides that, they usually chew through my battery supply (often the type you can't easily find). I've never considered putting my life or the lives of my teammates on the line for a 1st Generation optic, but ATN has changed that opinion.

For the last several months, I've been working with ATN's Aries MK 410. It is hands down the best 1st Generation night vision scope I've ever seen. It has the image quality comparable to a 3rd Generation unit and reveals total darkness beyond the 100-yard distance I would recommend limiting an LE shot with night vision to. It has 5X magnification, a low F-stop and allows for more light to enter the objective, which improves resolution and provides a sharper image.

The red Duplex target reticle is crisp and can be adjusted for brightness intensity on target. For shots made at ranges beyond 25 yards, I also encourage the use of ATN's 450 mW IR illuminator that's included with the unit and works in tandem. ATN's logistical blessing is that it uses common CR123 lithium batteries, the same battery likely found in your Surefire. If the battery in the optic's illuminator were to die, the light on the Crimson Trace MVF-515 vertical foregrip (which is also available as a covert IR illuminator) is an effective backup. The MVF-515's laser is easily picked up and can be used in conjunction with the ATN MK 410 for closer shots. I haven't had to concern myself with the scope crapping out on me due to batteries. One CR123 gives the scope 20 hours of life.

RANGE TIME

Testing began in daylight hours to evaluate the DPMS RAPTR. I used a Leupold Mark 4 3.5-10x40mm LR/T riflescope to extract the best possible performance from the rifle. And with it, I pulled off the best group I've ever shot with any non-match M4-style rifle. I couldn't have done it without the consistency of Federal's Gold Medal 69-grain loaded with Sierra's MatchKing boattail hollowpoint. The stars were aligned when I put five shots into two holes measuring .45 inch center to center from the prone position on a Harris bipod. The average was a respectable .97 inch from 100 yards.

When darkness fell, I returned to the range and attached the ATN MK 410. How much accuracy can you really expect to get out of a night vision-equipped rifle at 100 yards? Good question.

I made the bad choice of ignoring ATN's advice of sighting-in the unit during daylight hours and tuning it at night, which meant that I had to walk 100 yards and kick up my heart rate to inspect the target after every three shots to determine an adjustment. After five trips downrange, I finally used what was left of my $25-a-box supply of Federal match ammunition to shoot four five-shot groups with the red Duplex reticle illuminated on the third setting. Shot after shot went through the rifle without incident, but I was frustrated with the anticipation of knowing where the shots were printing.

Although I could clearly see each target diamond using the NVD's focus knob, I couldn't distinctly make out the intense neon-colored rings surrounding each bullet hole on the Shoot-N-C target. When the shooting was over, I had averaged 1.82 inches for all four

SPECIFICATIONS DPMS RAPTR

CALIBER:	5.56 NATO
ACTION:	Direct impingement, gas-operated semiautomatic
BARREL LENGTH:	16 in.
OVERALL LENGTH:	32.5 in. (collapsed), 36.38 in. (extended)
WEIGHT:	8.2 lb. (empty)
GRIP:	Ergo Suregrip
STOCK:	AP4, six-position, collapsible
MAGAZINE:	Mil-Spec, 30-round
PRICE:	$1,649
MANUFACTURER:	DPMS, 800-578-3767, dpmsinc.com

**Hatchet not included*

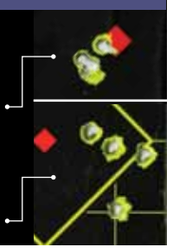
ACCURACY—DPMS RAPTR

DPMS RAPTR w/ Leupold Mark 4 LR/T 3.5-10x40mm

LOAD	BULLET WEIGHT (gr.)	VELOCITY (fps)	AVG (in.)	BEST (in.)
Federal Gold Medal	69	2,646	0.97	0.45

DPMS RAPTR w/ ATN MK 410 5X

LOAD	BULLET WEIGHT (gr.)	VELOCITY (fps)	AVG (in.)	BEST (in.)
Federal Gold Medal	69	2,646	1.82	1.15



groups, with my best measuring 1.15 inches. These results at night are fair for any M4 shot in daylight hours. Due to the fact that the scope's reticle is a Duplex and an LE officer's liability for a miss is high, I don't recommend taking shots much beyond 100 yards. In fact, a 75-yard zero might prove more practical in LE applications. If you're closer than 30 yards, I'd turn to using the Crimson Trace MVF-515.

I spent some time working with the laser on the CTC vertical foregrip as it appears through the night vision scope. For work within 50 yards, you have to turn back the focus knob on the MK 410, but the target is larger and can be effectively engaged with the laser on the MVF-515. However, when you pull the RAPTR tight into your shoulder with the vertical foregrip, there is some flex that renders the laser useless at longer distances at night. On this particularly configured rifle, it should be considered a close-quarters tool only. I recommend sighting-in the scope at either 75 or 100 yards and dialing in the laser on the Crimson Trace MVF-515 at 25 yards.

THE BOTTOM LINE

So there it is, a department's patrol-rifle solution to improving capabilities at night and equipping a patrol officer with a fully capable package that won't bust most department budgets. The DPMS RAPTR is $1,649 before applying any LE discounts or trade-ins. That includes adjustable irons with an XS Sight up front, a vertical foregrip with laser and light, quad rail, Ergo grip, adjustable stock, single-point sling and hardcase. The retail on the ATN Aries MK 410 is just $629. Put it all together and you'll waste more money trying to figure out how to accomplish the same thing through trial and error with different products. This setup is everything you need in an AR and nothing you don't. AR-15

SOURCES

ATN
atncorp.com

CRIMSON TRACE CORP.
800-442-2406
crimsontrace.com

DPMS
800-578-3767
dpmsinc.com

ERGO GRIPS
877-281-3783
ergogrips.net

FEDERAL PREMIUM
federalpremium.com

LEUPOLD
800-LEUPOLD
leupold.com

U.S. PEACEKEEPERS
877-732-2303
uspeacekeeper.com

XS SIGHTS
888-744-4880
xssights.com