Rifle Supply AR Build & Vortex Sparc Review

Today's AR platforms have nearly unlimited options for any build you could possibly imagine. Unfortunately most of these mods, exotic materials, Gucci parts, lasers, optics & 45 degree backup whatever result in a 15 pound "light weight" rifle. If I wanted to carry even a 12 pound rifle, I'd be carrying a M1A variant and taking advantage of the 7.62 cartridge. Having said all this, I can tell you that I appreciate rifles that are simplistic, highly functional, and ready for battle. Optics and accessories follow the same mindset and in my opinion, a rifle doesn't need much to be very effective.

As you know, Direct Action Group has been partnered with Rifle Supply for several years now. Rifle Supply is a fantastic place, with knowledgeable employees who will meet all of your expectations. When it came time to replace a very aged and worn out AR upper, Rifle Supply was my first choice. Don't worry, they'll build plenty of Gucci uppers that actually do work; but I wanted a very simple flat top upper with a standard front sight post.

Tony went right to work, assembling a nearly Mil-Spec rifle upper exactly how I wanted it, complete with a MagPul Backup Iron Sight (BUIS) and mid length MagPul fer-end(which is actually pretty Gucci). I was impressed with Tony's easy going craftsmanship, and the type of attention to detail I've become accustomed to with any professional. I grew up watching my dad gunsmith and accurize rifles, and I know an experienced gunsmith when I see one. Tony test fit, applied lubricant and loctite as appropriate. He placed my sights at mechanical zero, then performed a simple bore sighting to confirm we were close enough to zero.

I returned home with my rifle and mounted a Vortex Sparc Red Dot Optic (RDO). I believe in the performance of iron sights, and I also believe that a RDO is essential for low light battle and while wearing a gas mask; and RDO's are unarguably faster in close quarters environments. I have always favored Aimpoint and ACOG optics as they were standard issue in my Army unit. Direct Action Group has recently partnered with Vortex Optics and I wanted to give their products a try.

The Vortex sight is impressive right out of the box, the sight is well built and robust, the mounts are well machined, and I mounted the sight in less than 10 minutes. I'll admit I've never been a fan of electronic buttons on sights, but the Vortex sight operation is easy, straight forward, and very fast. The red dot

does not lose shape or clarity under different light settings, which is important for firing on targets at extended distances. The red dot was very close to a co-witness zero on the rifle but I did not adjust it until the iron sights received a zero.

With my rifle put together, it was ready to to take to the range. I set up a target and assumed a prone position supported by my Maxpedition range pack. I fired 3 rounds from the rifle using Mil-Spec M855 ball. The first 3 rounds were 2 inches low and 1 inch left. A few simple adjustments and 3 more rounds found the rifle zeroed. I co-witnessed the Vortex onto the front sight post and fired 2 pairs of headshots at 15 yards for confirmation. I think the results speak for themselves.

I spent the rest of the afternoon training with the rifle including long distance and close quarters fire, combat reloads, and both slow and rapid fire. Neither the rifle nor optic missed a beat, performing flawlessly during the first 200 rounds of fire. I did stop at about 100 rounds to disassemble, wipe down the bolt carrier group and scrub the barrel with Slip2000 products. I've used Slip2000 for over a decade in very harsh conditions, their products are fantastic.

I'd like to thank Tony and Rifle Supply for his extensive knowledge and building a very effective and robust AR platform; and I'd like to thank Vortex Optics for their fantastic customer service in helping me select the correct sight. I highly recommend these businesses and their products, you can't go wrong with Rifle Supply or Vortex!

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