



M&P 45: THE NEXT COMBAT PISTOL?

COMBAT ARMS

2010

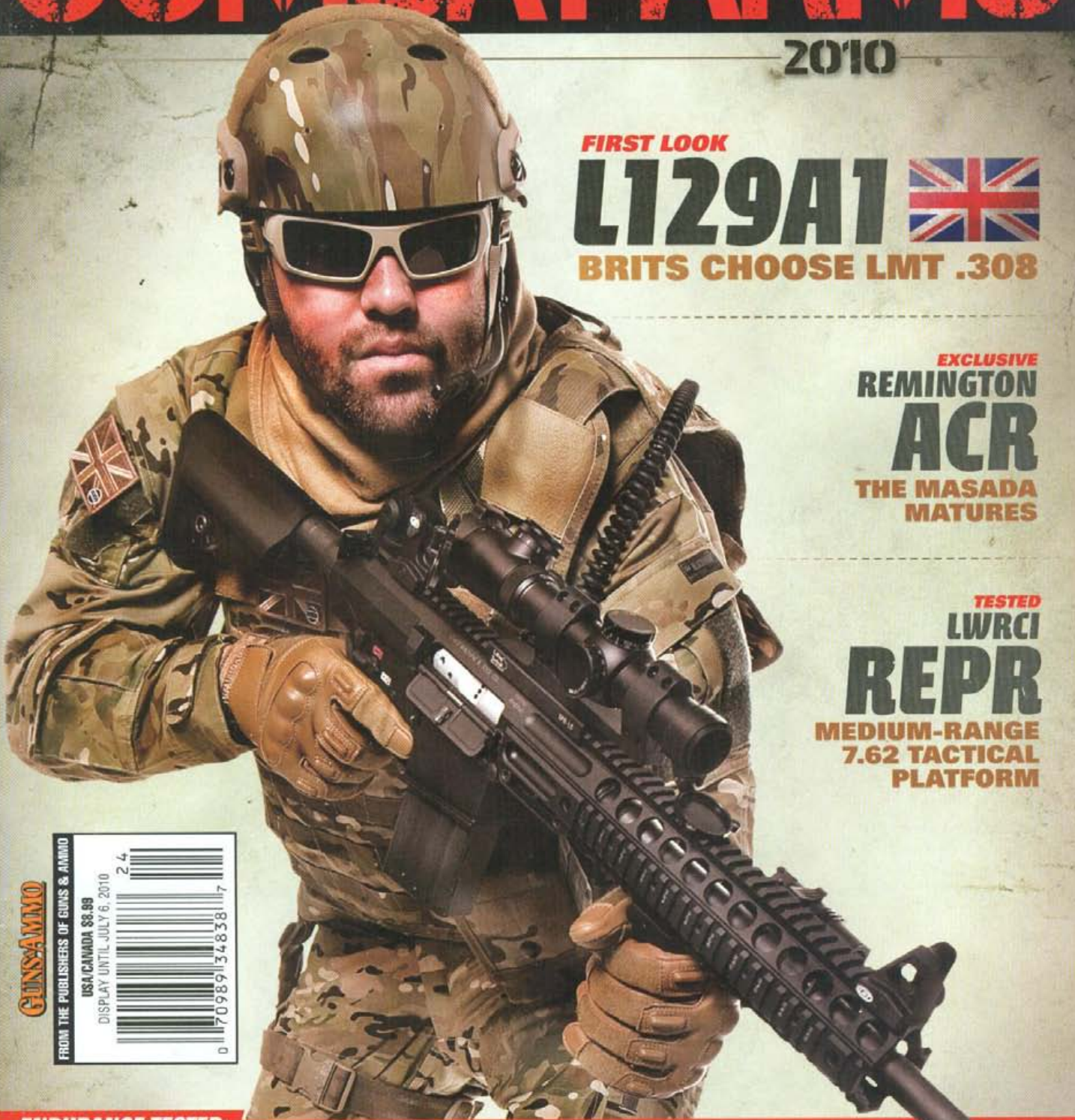
FIRST LOOK

L129A1

BRITS CHOOSE LMT .308

EXCLUSIVE
REMINGTON
ACR
THE MASADA
MATURES

TESTED
LWRCI
REPR
MEDIUM-RANGE
7.62 TACTICAL
PLATFORM



GUNS&AMMO

FROM THE PUBLISHERS OF GUNS & AMMO

USA/CANADA \$8.99

DISPLAY UNTIL JULY 6, 2010



ENDURANCE TESTED:

BEST BOOTS

- > BLACKHAWK LIGHT ASSAULT
- > DANNER STRIKER II
- > BATES DURASHOCK STEEL TOE

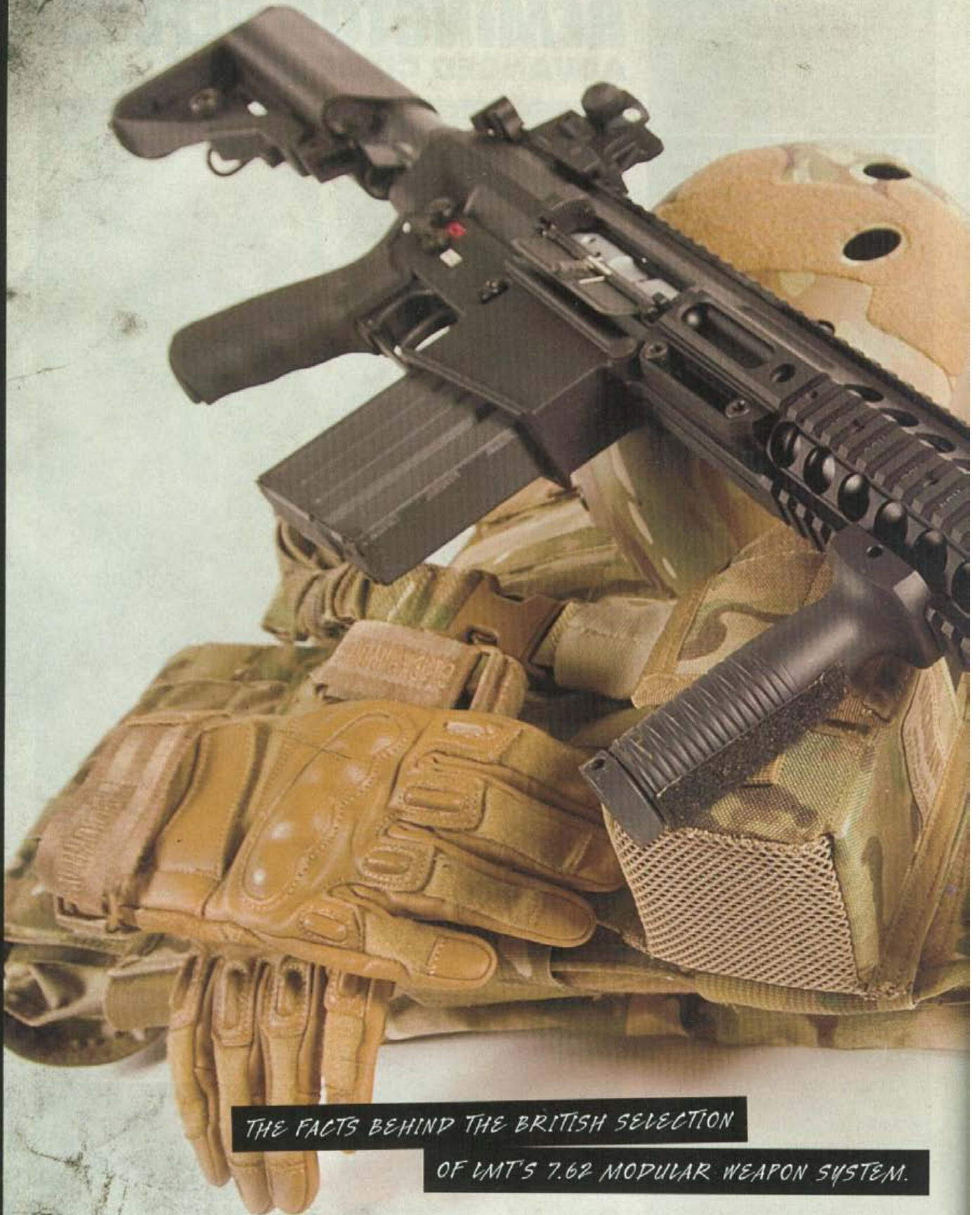
BEST LIGHTS

- > STREAMLIGHT TLR-2
- > SUREFIRE E2D LED DEFENDER
- > INSIGHT X2 COMPACT

BEST OPTICS

- > NIKON TACTICAL SERIES
- > TRIJICON TA11H-G
- > ZEISS-HENSOLDT 4-16x56mm

EXCLUSIVE



THE FACTS BEHIND THE BRITISH SELECTION

OF LMT'S 7.62 MODULAR WEAPON SYSTEM.



CROWNED:

L129A1



BY ERIC R. POOLE
PHOTOGRAPHY BY JEFF ROSE

Everyone is talking, but few know anything about it. The L129A1. It's being loosely covered on the Web, because it's only made an appearance at a couple of trade shows with its maker, Lewis Machine & Tool (LMT). Respect for the British client and abiding by U.S. International Traffic in Arms Regulations (ITAR), LMT has withheld the release of specific details.

But rather than let inaccurate speculations spread throughout the industry, *Combat Arms* was personally invited and briefed by LMT Founder and President Karl Lewis. CA's editorial staff was permitted to watch the development of the L129A1 from computer-aided drawings into a product ready for shipment at LMT's ISO 9001-certified manufacturing facility. And to sweeten the experience, each of us was given the opportunity to extensively test fire what certainly may become the most sought-after production 7.62 Stoner rifle in existence.

CROWNED: L129A1



The UK MoD has designated this LMT MWS the L129A1. It's delivered in a Pelican case with eight magazines (1), a Dewey brass cleaning rod (2), Otis' 7.62 cleaning kit (3) and instruction manual. It features ambidextrous controls (4), a crisp trigger, KAC backup sights (5), a Surefire flash-hider/suppressor adapter (6), a tan ERGO grip (7) and LMT's own tan SOPMOD stock with removable sling attachments (8). British forces are equipping the "Sharpshooter" rifle with a rugged Trijicon 6x48mm ACOG (9) sporting a BDC reticle for 7.62 NATO ball.

SELECTION

"The Brits tried to mimic the U.S. Marine Corps' Designated Marksman Rifle program, but they couldn't get any of the rifles in their inventory to stay accurate long enough," Lewis said. The need for a 7.62 NATO-chambered rifle capable of extending a sharpshooter's effectiveness was specifically called for by British troops serving in Afghanistan last year. "It was amazing how quickly they responded to the troop's needs and came up with this solution," Lewis added.

The British army had a specific need. Armed with the L85A2 bullpup rifle chambered in 5.56 NATO, soldiers in Afghanistan were being outgunned by enemy threats equipped with belt-fed machine guns at distant ranges. How so? PKM machine guns laying a greater volume of fire with greater range than the 5.56 are difficult to neutralize with imprecise fire from dimension-



ally challenged rifles, using a NATO cartridge whose performance significantly drops after 500m.

"The 5.56mm is sufficiently lethal at the right range," said UK's Ministry of Defence (MoD), "but troops need

During a recent tour of LMT's ISO 9001-certified facility, CA staff witnessed the scrutinized production of UK's newest combat rifle.

7.62mm for longer ranges. We should be looking at higher-performance rounds with higher lethality at

longer range. Research is going to filter into user requirements for the soldier system lethality programme."

AMERICAN MADE

FIELD PROVEN

TAPCO INTRAFUSE STOCK SYSTEM
specializing in MILITARY RIFLE ACCESSORIES

TAPCO Intrafuse™ Stock Systems arm you with the most durable and dependable line of weapon accessories available.
Shown in Foliage Green.

TAPCO. Quality Counts
www.TAPCO.com Source: 10CA01

Our US Made rifle stocks and accessories offer the highest quality tactical solutions for your AK, AR, Mini-14, 10/22, Saiga, and SKS.

Every TAPCO product is backed by a lifetime guarantee.

CROWNED: L129A1

The L129A1 is expected to eventually replace the older bolt-action Accuracy International L96 in the Sharpshooter role. This "Sharpshooter" role is filled with specially trained marksmen who aren't trained to fulfill the duties of a sniper, but to provide enhanced accuracy and effectiveness for a small unit leader. Due to these circumstances, the MoD does not consider the L96 bolt gun to be a suitable action type for a patrolling soldier who might have to present quick and effective fire at both close range and distances between 500 and 900m.

The MoD doesn't have a precision weapons development program like the U.S. Marine Corps at Quantico, VA, or the U.S. Army Marksmanship Unit at Ft. Benning, GA. It needed a platform that wasn't going to require service to maintain MOA accuracy every 10,000 rounds (like the high-maintenance M14), and it wanted a rifle unique to its needs. Among those needs clearly indicated by British troops in Afghanistan:

- Compact length
- Comfortably patrolled with
- Can be quickly initiated
- Easily operated and maintained
- Chambered for 7.62 NATO
- Capable of repeatable hits on man-size targets effectively out to 800m using standard Radway 149-grain ball and basic infantry training.


AUGUST 2009

"It all started with a call from Law Enforcement International's [LEI] Greg Felton," said Lewis. "He told us of the solicitation for UK's sharpshooter program and asked us to put together a rifle. We reviewed the contract, built it to the requirements and, like every LMT product, tested it before sending it across the pond."

During secretive evaluations by UK's MoD in England, every experience level of combat troop was involved in selecting the L129A1 to ensure results could be achieved by virtually any soldier. The program scored three areas:

1. Response to the solicitation
2. The company's technical and manufacturing capabilities

ACCURACY		
FEDERAL 149-GR. FMJ BALL		
	Best Group (inches)	Avg Group (inches)
100 Yards	0.83	1.28
200 Yards	0.98	2.09



This one-inch target pasty represents the best five-shot group fired from 100 yards using standard ball ammunition. It measured 0.83 inch and proved that the rifle is even sub-MOA capable with machine-gun ammo.

3. The operators' assessment.

The rifles were fired for accuracy, functionality and handling at 100-meter intervals out to 800m. It was particularly important that the rifle selected could obtain repeated hits within the shoulders of a silhouette target at those ranges without the help of a boutique cartridge. Instead of match ammunition, each candidate was tested with standard Radway 149-grain NATO ball through the entire selection process.

Like many true underdog stories, LMT didn't have high expectations, so it was surprised when it received the call a month later requesting three additional 7.62 Modular Weapon Systems (MWS). When LMT was notified that it had been selected as one of three finalists, the company learned that it was going up against two well-known contract champions. FNH submitted the SCAR-17, and HK sent the 417.

As testing continued in England, a coincidental event occurred that, in some part, might have influenced the manufacturing capabilities portion of the selection process. A MoD representative on "holiday" in the U.S. contacted Karl Lewis on the off chance of stopping by along the way to conduct an unannounced review of the manufacturing facility while traveling through

the States. They weren't going to say no, but ironically his visit coincided with LMT's ISO 9001 recertification that had been scheduled six months earlier. That British MoD representative was permitted to discuss a number of aspects of LMT's capabilities with the added input from the ISO's stringent quality-control inspection. And if someone is curious as to the result, suffice it to say that LMT has successfully earned another recertification.

PRESS RELEASE

"Lewis Machine & Tool Co. (LMT) is to supply the UK Ministry of Defence with its latest 7.62mm semiautomatic 'sharpshooter' rifle. The new rifle will bear the official service designation 'L129A1' and is designed to meet current operational requirements.

"The L129A1 is based on a proven design, with new features, including a one-piece upper receiver and a 'free-floating' barrel, which offers better accuracy at longer ranges.

"A number of companies expressed interest in the requirement, with the contract being awarded to Law Enforcement International (LEI), who is LMT's regional representative. Deliveries start early in the new year."

THE SHARPSHOOTER'S RIFLE

Just because the L129A1 has certain features unique to the MoD's requested need, the rifle is LMT's commercially available LW308MWS. "Unlike many companies, we don't segregate production," said Lewis. "We have one product, and just because a customer like the UK is getting a unique configuration, neither the UK nor U.S. versions is inferior to the other."

The LMT Defender lower is configured with LMT's SOPMOD stock that is quite popular with the U.S. Navy and SOCOM. Noticeably, the L129A1 uses a tan SOPMOD stock, a tan ERGO Suregrip and three tan rail covers from TangoDown. The commercial LW308MWS uses the same pieces but in a black color.

Everything about this rifle is designed to be ambidextrous, including

the magazine release. Colored selector/safety indicators are engraved onto both sides of the aluminum lower and indexed to the ambi selector switch. Inside the rigid lower receiver is a two-stage trigger group that sends the hammer forward after a clean 4½ pounds of rearward pressure.

The upper receiver is based on LMT's highly successful Monolithic Rail Platform (MRP) that surrounds a free-floating barrel and direct gas impingement system (LMT also offers piston-driven systems). The MRP's upper and fore-end quad-rail are cut from the same block of aluminum as a single item. This makes the real estate on the top 1913 rail entirely usable for tandem-use optics without the gap, step or missing rail section resulting from a two-piece upper and fore-end.

The MRP was the first Stoner-type rifle in full production that allows a user to switch barrels, a key feature

noted by the British evaluators. The standard 16-inch barrel includes a 1:11¼-inch twist rate and chrome lining, but an optional stainless steel barrel is available. Like most other LMT parts, the barrels go through a magnetometer, to check for stress or cracks, and are sent to scrap if a defect is found. A lot of companies may purport owning and using a magnetometer but few that have them actually send their inspectors to 5,000 hours of certification training to get the most from this valuable piece of equipment.

The UK's L129A1 utilizes a stainless steel barrel that's finished in matte black to reduce the barrel's visual signature. Only available on the L129A1 is a Sure-fire compensator/suppressor adapter that was specifically requested by the Brits. And underneath the adapter is a trick learned from benchrest competition that improves each barrel's accu-

racy. In addition to the 11-degree crown most match barrels come with, LMT developed a tool to add a 60-degree camphor to the lands that rise above the grooves just inside the crown.

A unique charging handle assembly can be used to manually draw the chromed bolt carrier group into the buffer tube. Its large handle follows the curves of the receiver and blocks residual gas or excessive lubricant from unprotected eyes. An extended lever on the handle makes charging the MWS easier and possible with the just the left hand.

Shipped in a foam-fitted Pelican case, the UK's L129A1 ships with eight 20-round Knight's Armament Company (KAC) magazines, KAC rear flip-up backup and front flip-up post sights, torque wrench/driver (for barrel changes), Dewey brass cleaning rod, Otis cleaning kit, removable sling swivel attachments and a bipod.



BATTLE HARDENED

THERE ARE MORE LONG-RANGE LEUPOLD TACTICAL OPTICS CURRENTLY IN SERVICE WITH THE U.S. MILITARY THAN ANY OTHER. ON THE RANGE, ON THE HUNT, IN THE FIELD, LEUPOLD TACTICAL OPTICS EXCEED YOUR MISSION-CRITICAL REQUIREMENTS.

CALL 1-800-LEUPOLD OR VISIT WWW.LEUPOLD.COM

—PORTLAND, OREGON, U.S.A.—



LEUPOLD
TACTICAL OPTICS

CROWNED: L129A1

RANGE TIME

Before firing the first shot, a beneficial feature that can be easily overlooked is the fit of the upper and lower receivers and the LMT six-position collapsible stock to the buffer tube. Normally, these two areas are sources for disruptive harmonics, rattles and untimely noises in the field. When interrogating the LMT assembly team at the factory, they were completely aware of this fact and sworn to secrecy as to how they achieved such tight tolerances. I've seen designated marksmen wedge cardboard between the upper and lower receivers of the M4 to improve accuracy and reduce noise. Brits won't have to.

Even though our testing occurred in 18-degree weather, it was easy to achieve MOA accuracy from any of the L129A1 and commercial LM308MWS rifles available to *Combat Arms* for range evaluation. Two types of optics were used, a Trijicon 6x48 ACOG (TA648MGO-308) with a ballistic drop-compensating reticle for the 7.62 NATO cartridge and a U.S. Optics 1.8-10X (SN-3) scope.

The Trijicon 6x48 ACOG is the optic being supplied to British sharpshooters equipped with the L129A1. It's quick to pick up the red fiber optic chevron and can be used to make effective shots at distances at which the L129A1 is designed to reach. Though some might criticize the use of such a large optic on this rifle, the MoD already had additional ACOGs intended for 7.62 machine guns and decided to save money that could've been spent on optics to equip more sharpshooters with L129A1 rifles. The best groups fired from these rifles were obtained using the U.S. Optics scope with ¼-minute click adjustments.

The most interesting aspect of this evaluation was the choice of test ammunition. On hand were 1,000 rounds of standard M80 ball loaded by Federal Cartridge. Similar to the British accuracy requirement using standard Radway ball, this could be considered the closest thing to an American equivalent. The fact that the best group at 200 yards printed a freak .98 inch speaks

volumes for the accuracy potential both American and UK versions possess. When the five-round, five-shot groups are averaged, it's no surprise that the L129A1 was capable of engaging targets effectively out to 800 meters and keeping the groups within the 23-inch shoulder-to-shoulder requirement. If match-grade ammunition is available, it's safe to predict that MOA accuracy could consistently improve the performance to fall well below a one-MOA experience.

A lasting impression at the range was created by a glance into a Pelican case

but it was caused by the relationship of the nose on that first round to the chamber's feed ramp. My confidence was restored in that particular magazine after subsequent reloads. After a few hours, our function fire made a significant dent to the case of 1,000.

LAST ROUND

Don't expect the exact configuration of the L129A1 to become available in the U.S. However, the commercially available LM308MWS is a virtual twin with (primarily) a few cosmetic differences.



The L129A1 is based on LMT's commercially available LM-308MWS. The furniture is black instead of tan, but the rifle includes most of the same features, including LMT's Monolithic Rail Platform, which permits a quick change between the company's match barrels.

filled with unmatched components. It was the perfect definition of interchangeability: accuracy and reliability achieved using a number of rifles assembled on-site using a mix-matched case of MWS components.

These rifles loved to chew through ammunition loaded in the KAC magazine. However, I would be delivering an injustice if I didn't report the one incident during function testing. The problem occurred as a failure to feed the first round from a brand-new Magpul PMAG. I'm a fan of virtually everything Magpul produces, so it pains me to report such a malfunction,

The \$2.5 million contract called for an initial order greater than 440 rifles, and (as of this writing) most of those have already been shipped. It's not an extremely large purchase, but it's a prestigious one. Without taking anything away from the other competitors, you've got to give credit to the fact that LMT fairly defeated HK, FNH and Sabre Defence in the trial. Unlike so many U.S. contracts awarded without competition, the UK selection process, which rapidly fielded a specific solution to meet a specific need, should be a model for any government. America, take note.

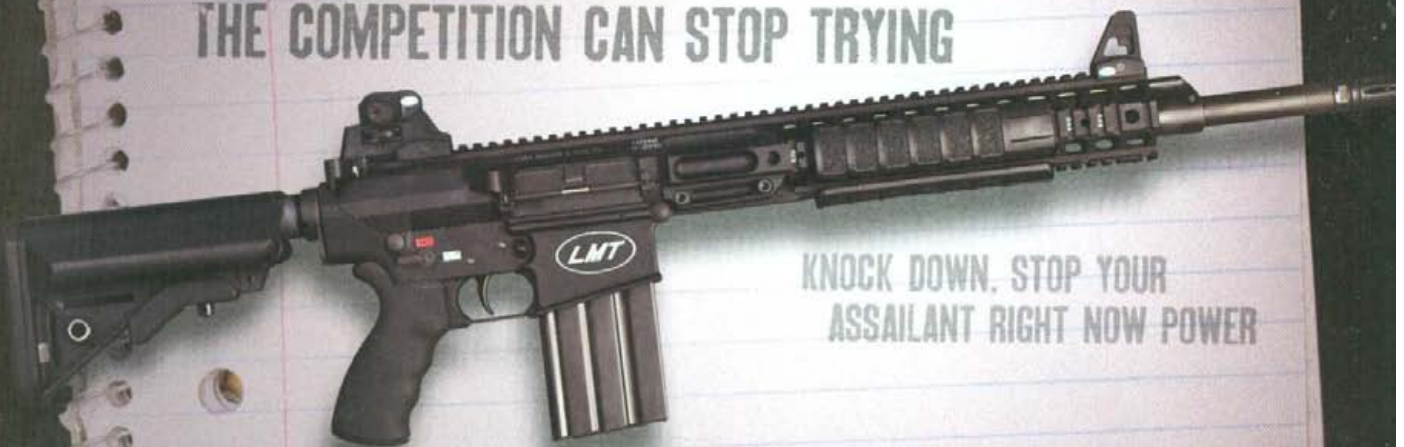
CA

ABSOLUTE STRENGTH

.308 Caliber

MACHINING, FITTING AND FINISH ARE EXCELLENT

THE COMPETITION CAN STOP TRYING



KNOCK DOWN, STOP YOUR
ASSAILANT RIGHT NOW POWER

UNMATCHED STRENGTH AND DURABILITY

LEWIS MACHINE & TOOL CO. IS TO
SUPPLY THE UK MINISTRY OF DEFENCE



BY FAR THE BEST AR PLATFORM I HAVE EVER OWNED OR OPERATED

**ACTIONS SPEAK LOUDER THAN WORDS,
SO SHOOT ONE FOR YOURSELF!**

THE NEW LM308MWS FROM LEWIS MACHINE & TOOL

After nearly a decade in development, the Lewis Machine & Tool LM308MWS has arrived and taken the shooting community by storm. Designed by the LMT team, the LM308MWS is the latest evolution of the LMT Monolithic Rail Platform. The .308 caliber monolithic rail model was developed to give its operators greater accuracy, power and extended range, **Because Failure Is Not An Option.**

LMT

BECAUSE FAILURE IS NOT AN OPTION

www.LMTdefense.com 309.732.9527