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Some people are just ahead of their time. Vladimir Fedorov certainly was with his pre-World War I Avtomat (assault rifle). When it comes to designing reticles for tactical scopes, Ed Verdugo was thinking decades ahead of his peers. A Green Beret who served with the 5th SFG and 1st SFG in 1972/73, Verdugo wanted to increase the hit probability of the "everyday warfighter."

Even back in the 1970's, he realized a properly designed optic offered a huge advantage over traditional iron sights. The problem he ran into, of course, was a suitable optic didn't yet exist. The tactical scopes of the day were geared primarily for sniping.

So after he left the military, he began looking for an optic that worked from point-blank distances out to the effective range of a standard combat rifle. This led him to test every tactical and commercial scope he could get his hands on. When nothing met his criteria, he set out to design his own.

What sets Verdugo apart from his peers is he not only understood the needs of what he calls the everyday warfighter, but he was also willing to throw out conventional thinking. For far too long “sniper” reticles have influenced fighting rifle reticles.

Verdugo realized they are completely different animals for very different purposes. Influenced by the simple circle and dot reticle utilized by Steyr on the AUG, he developed what he calls the General Purpose Combat Reticle. This is also, and perhaps better known, as the “horseshoe BDC” reticle. It is designed to allow rapid engagement of targets out to medium ranges.

He wanted it to be lighting fast up close, because as he states, “In CQB you are either fast or dead.” Yet it also needed to be quick to use at distance when you don’t have time to spin knobs. In order to engage targets at medium distances, you need to be able to correctly range targets, so he incorporated a simple yet effective system. The reticle he designed accomplished everything he wanted. Actually, his concept is so good that quite a few companies have ignored his patents.

His reticle consists of two distinct parts that work together using his “Rule of 10.” It is based around the diameter of a human head (8.5 to 10 inches) and the width of a man’s shoulders (18-21 inches). Plus he is also takes into account the human eye will center an object into a circle faster than any other shape.

The heart of his reticle is a thick-walled circle with the bottom portion missing giving it a horseshoe appearance. This is used for snap-shooting man –sized targets out to 200 yards or so. The internal diameter of the circle subtends 10 inches (a human head0 at 100 yards.

The outside diameter of the circle subtends 18 inches (width of a man’s shoulders) at 100 yards. At 200 yards a man’s head will measure half the distance, and his shoulders the entire width, of the inner circle. For added precision when there is time, a small center dot is provided.

Below this is a circle with a dot inside it. The inner diameter of this circle subtends 10 inches at 300 yards. Below the large horseshoe is a Christmas tree type reticle for use out to 800 yards. This consists of circles, hash marks and spaces. All of these subtend10 inches at their numbered range. The reticle itself acts as a bullet drop compensator for 62-grain M855 ball when fired from an M4 carbine. The reticle is designed to provide precise aiming points out to 600 yards. From 600 yards out, circles are provided to facilitate area fire.

As early as the 1970s, Verdugo believed the optimum optic would be a 1-6x variable power scope. However, technology at this time was not advanced enough to build such a piece. Today he is working on a 1-6X design and currently offers his reticle in his Combat Rifle Scope (CRS) 1-4x24mm scope.

Built on a 30mm tube, this unit is 9.4 inches long and weighs 16.5 ounces. Objective lens diameter is 24mm and magnification runs from 1X to 4X. Exit pupil runs from 24mm to 6mm. Field of view is wide and varies from 112 feet at 1X to 28 feet at 4X at 1oo yards. Eye relief varies from 4.25 inches at 1X to 3.5 inches at 4X. This model sports a speed focus diopter eyepiece and an illuminated reticle located in the front focal plane. Finish is in satin black.

As the reticle is intended to provide all ballistic compensation, the elevation and windage turrets are capped. This precludes the possibility of their being accidentally rotated. They provide .5 moa adjustments when zeroing. Once zeroed, put the caps back on and forget about the turrets.

Each cap is also designed to provide storage for one CR2032 battery. The rheostat provides both red and green illumination at the user's discretion. Battery life with the rheostat set on high is approximately 60 hours.

In use, the CRS performed very well. The front focal plane reticlemeans the horseshoe shrinks visibly on 1X. On 4X, the BDC portion of the reticle is clearly visible. It's a very fast and easy to use system. Often in combat the only portion of an enemy combatant you can see is his head, so Verdugo's range finding system makes a lot of since.

I suppose what I like best about the CRS is its versatility. It's as at home at 10 yards as it is at 500 yards. Is the scope perfect? No, this is not a high end piece like the Vortex. Rather, it is a $350 scope made in Korea. Yet while not blessed with Hensoldt glass it is priced within reach of most AR owners.

While the optic is good but not great, the reticle is outstanding. His design provides everything an everyday warfighter needs without unnecessary clutter, mils or math problems. Within the reach of the common man, it certainly deserves a look.