Sniper rifle bolt action vs semi auto

There is an ongoing debate as to whether someone should buy a semi-automatic rifle or a bolt-action rifle for long-range precision shooting. There are some key differences in both that make them very different, and probably contribute to the great difference of opinion. As a general rule, the bolt-action precision rifle is considered more accurate than a semi-automatic rifle. However, this depends on many factors with respect to both firearms and ammunition, and modern semi-automatic rifles can be exceptionally accurate when designed with long-range shooting in mind. Some of the factors that snipers take into account when the accuracy is discussed between the two platforms are: Recoil Gas release Mobile Components Recoil The bolt-action rifle, when fired, has only one step backwards, which is backwards in the back-pocket in the shooter's shoulder pocket. The semi-automatic precision rifle, when fired, has three steps backwards: one being at the back as the bullet comes out of the muzzle, the other at the back as the bolt slams into the pad, and the final step as the bolt slams forward, picking up an extra cartridge. Because the bolt-action rifle has only one step backwards in the rear, some shooters find that they can drive the rifle in a way superior to semi-automatic rifles. Gas Release When a cartridge is fired inside the chamber of a bolted-action rifle, the force of the fire charge and the expansion of the gases propels the bullet into the barrel. However, some of the energy is transferred to the shooter by its normal recoil. In a semi-automatic rifle, some of the energy used to propel the ball into the barrel is used to cycle the action. Mobile components The mobile components of both rifle platforms must also be considered. As a general rule, snipers prefer the bolt gun simply because of its lack of mobile components, and by extension, simplicity and reliability. Looking at the bolt gun, the only part in motion is the bolt, which is manually operated by the shooter. Once the bolt is locked, the entire rifle is only a solid component, which facilitates recoil control and avoids bullet impact deviations due to shooter-induced movements. The semi-automatic precision rifle will always have a moving part in a section of the rifle, which is usually found in the upper and lower receiver. If you have ever looked through the range while in the lying position, you may have noticed that the slightest movement with your shooting or support hand causes the upper receiver to move slightly left or right, or in some cases, towards up or down. This slight shift/movement in the scope can be caused by a number of factors: shooter bronche, undue sympathetic compression as the rifle fires, etc. As the shooter begins to fire or begins to perceive the recoil, the shooter may cause the upper and lower receiver to move where the two components meet, causing a change in the desired point of impact when the rifle is fired. At the or novice shooter, this may seem like a sloppy pistol, or a rifle that is unable to reach 1MOA. Semi AutomaticRead Next: Sniper's Choice Malfunctions Bolt-action vs. Semi-automatic Precision Rifles As with any semi-automatic rifle or handgun, we can find an array of malfunctions induced by the weapon or shooter induced. Some of the malfunctions I've commonly seen within the semi-automatic family of precision rifles include: Stovepipe: A stove hose occurs when the case that has been ejected is caught in the ejection port by the slide. This could be due to unburned powder, obstructions of all kinds that are placed near the ejection port not allowing the complete ejection of the worn envelope, and poor quality ammunition. Extraction defect: This occurs when the cartridge case remains in the gun chamber. While the bolt and bolt holder could only move backwards a short distance, more generally the bolt and bolt holder back up completely at the back, leaving the cartridge case in the chamber. A live turn is then forced into the base of the cartridge case as the bolt returns in the next power cycle. This malfunction is also one of the most difficult to erase. Failure to extract can be caused by short recoil cycles caused by a foul or corroded rifle chamber. A damaged extractor or a weak or broken extractor spring can also cause this malfunction. Ejection defect: Here, a malfunction occurs when the cartridge is not ejected by the ejection port and partially remains in the chamber or gets stuck in the upper receiver as the bolt closes. This may be the result of carbon or fouling on the ejector spring or extractor, or a short recoil. Short recoil is usually due to an accumulation of fouling in the carrier mechanism or gas tube. The resistance caused by a carbon-covered or corroded chamber can interfere with the extraction and subsequent ejection of a cartridge. Double feeding: This malfunction occurs when a round is in the room and a second round tries to feed in the room. The result is a real jam. On most semi-automatic weapons, the slide has a limited movement and the magazine does not eject by pressing the magazine's press release. Failure to feed, chamber or lock: A malfunction may occur during the loading of the rifle or during the operation cycle. Once the loader has been loaded into the rifle, the forward movement of the bolt-carrying group may lack sufficient force (generated by the expansion of the action spring) to power, or lock the bolt. Some of the causes could be the result of the following: Excessive accumulation of dirt or fouling in and around the bolt and bolt holder. Defective magazine (bumpy, bulging, or a weak magazine spring). Poorly loaded charger. Defective round (forced projectile back into the cartridge case, which could result in a studded round or the base of the previous cartridge could be separated, leaving the rest in the room). Damaged or broken action spring. Outdoor accumulation of dirt in in extension of the lower receiver. A dirty gas tube causing a short recoil. A magazine resting on the floor or pushed forward could cause an incorrect lock. Failure to fire: This malfunction occurs when a cartridge does not fire despite the fact that it is turned upside down, the trigger is pulled and the sear releases the hammer. This occurs when the firing pin does not hit the primer with sufficient force, or when the ammunition is defective. Probable causes of this malfunction include excessive carbon build-up on the cooking pin, thus limiting the complete forward movement of the pin, or a defective or worn cooking pin. Proper inspection of the ammunition may reveal shallow indentation or no marks on the primer, indicating a malfunction of the firing pin. Cartridges that have a print on the primer but have not fired may indicate deflated ammunition. Bolt Action A major advantage of having a bolt-action rifle is the absence of malfunctions they produce. Here are some of the most common bolt-action malfunctions I've seen over time, both the induced shooter and the induced weapon. Falling shot pin: A falling shot pin occurs when the shooter closes the bolt too fast or too hard. The firing pin will not remain in the rear position, but will fall forward and move into the firing position. When this happens, the shooter is not able to fire the rifle. The most common causes are a lack of maintenance on the bolt, dirt or build-up on the face of the bolt, etc. Failure to fire: The failure to fire in a bolt gun occurs in the same way as in the semi-automatic. Failure to feed: Failure to feed occurs in the same way as semi-automatic. The problem usually occurs when the firing bolt overrides the cartridge in the internal or external charger. Field Performance Although one rifle platform can outperform the other in some applications or instances, we also need to understand that a given platform is only a tool for a certain task, and may not be applicable in all situations. Let's take a look at the pros and cons of each platform by discussing different situations/environments. Multiple Commitments Precision shooters may find themselves in a multi-target engagement situation not only in combat (defensive or offensive), but also in a competitive event over time. As we all know, hold-overs and holdunders will greatly increase our speed to get tricks on the target, but when time counts most, the semi-automatic rifle will far exceed the bolt gun. The The time it takes to run the bolt, acquire the target, and get proper trigger pressure on the target is greater than that of the semi, as the shooter only has to transition through the targets and apply an appropriate trigger pressure while using the trigger reset. Use in Urban and Woodland EnvironmentsRead Next: TriStar Tec 12 Shotgun Pump or car? What about both? In terms of the use of a precision rifle in an urban environment, speed, accuracy and the possible presentation of multiple targets play a role The upper platform. Although the bolt gun may have the greatest advantage in terms of accuracy, which is usually necessary when engaging partially masked targets at different ranges, it may not have the speed to engage multiple targets. The semi-automatic rifle, while superior in speed and engaging multiple targets, may not have the precision necessary to engage small, partially masked targets. This is usually due to the shooter not driving the rifle properly while in various alternative shooting positions, but this is a consideration, notwithstanding. Aerial platforms As difficult in nature as aerial fire can be, the amount of tricks used to engage a target while the shooter is in flight are usually more than three, due to the lack of a stable platform, the amount of time that the shooter is actually on or able to engage the target, and the appropriate lead needed to engage the target. However, the semi-automatic rifle outperforms the bolt's action. Featured image courtesy of DVIDS DVIDS

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