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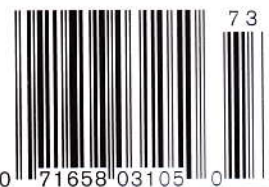
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On the Cover:
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Building your rifle from stock, out-of-the-box into a tack driver with repeatable accuracy is fun...but must be done with informed opinions.



TACTICAL SIX-PACK

Six Must-Have Remington 700 Accessories



BY CAPT. JOHN N. RAGUSO

5,000,000 AND COUNTING

So you have a Remington 700 bolt-action rifle. Congrats! You and 5 million other folks can't be wrong, so welcome to the club! Since its introduction back in 1962, the Rem 700 has been America's most popular bolt-action production rifle. The Rem 700's proven "three rings of steel" action is the building block for a number of military spin-offs like the US Army's M24 sniper weapons and the USMC's beloved M40 platform. It's also a favorite of foreign armies, nine out of 10 U.S.-based police departments, the U.S. Navy and the U.S. Border Patrol... even those Toronto SWAT folks on the TV series "Flashpoint" use it!

You get the picture: the Rem 700 is a robust, reliable, and flexible bolt action rifle that is offered in 37 different calibers from .17 Remington and all the way up to .458 Win Mag. (And it looks good on TV, too!) So you bought one in your favorite caliber and you feel good about it... but now what? How can you get the most out of it, with the perfect tactical accessories?



A padded nylon transportation case is often good enough for most shooters to get their rifle safely to and from the range.

A LA CARTE

The majority of Remington 700s leave the factory one way: totally stripped and bare bones. The two SPS Tactical models that I recently acquired for some R&R were shipped with a lock, an operations manual, and not much else. Even the screwdriver for the adjustable trigger was M.I.A. That being said, every new Rem 700 owner faces a shared dilemma: determining the best way to make these potential tack drivers fully operational!

The good news is that there are literally thousands of various aftermarket parts to upgrade your Rem 700, and they are made by dozens of top-of-the-line manufacturers. So if you need to upgrade something, this is the rifle to do it with due to the vast array of product choices. I've broken this solution down to the short strokes that totally worked for me and will probably work for you too. The following are a six-pack of must-have tactical accessories for your Rem 700 to help you realize 100 percent of its portability and accuracy potential.

TACTICAL STOCK UPGRADES

Let's face it: In order to sell a classic "quality" production rifle at an affordable price (my SPS Tactical in .308 Win and .223

Rem each have an MSRP of \$757 and a street price of around \$625), the manufacturer has to shave costs on something somewhere, right? If they are not going to do it in the steel action, barrel or trigger group, then where? Both of my Rem 700 SPS Tactical models were outfitted with OEM Hogue OverMolded black synthetic stocks. As an aftermarket accessory item,

was caused by the standard factory equipped Hogue Overmolded stocks, which had a slight bit of "flex" in the forend area. Depending on how or what I rested the rifle on to acquire a target, and how much pressure was put on the forend to steady the sight picture, sometimes the Rem 700's heavy profile barrel touched the stock and sometimes it didn't. If you are shooting the

“ If you are shooting the eyelashes off of a squirrel at 200 yards, this is a big no-no... ”

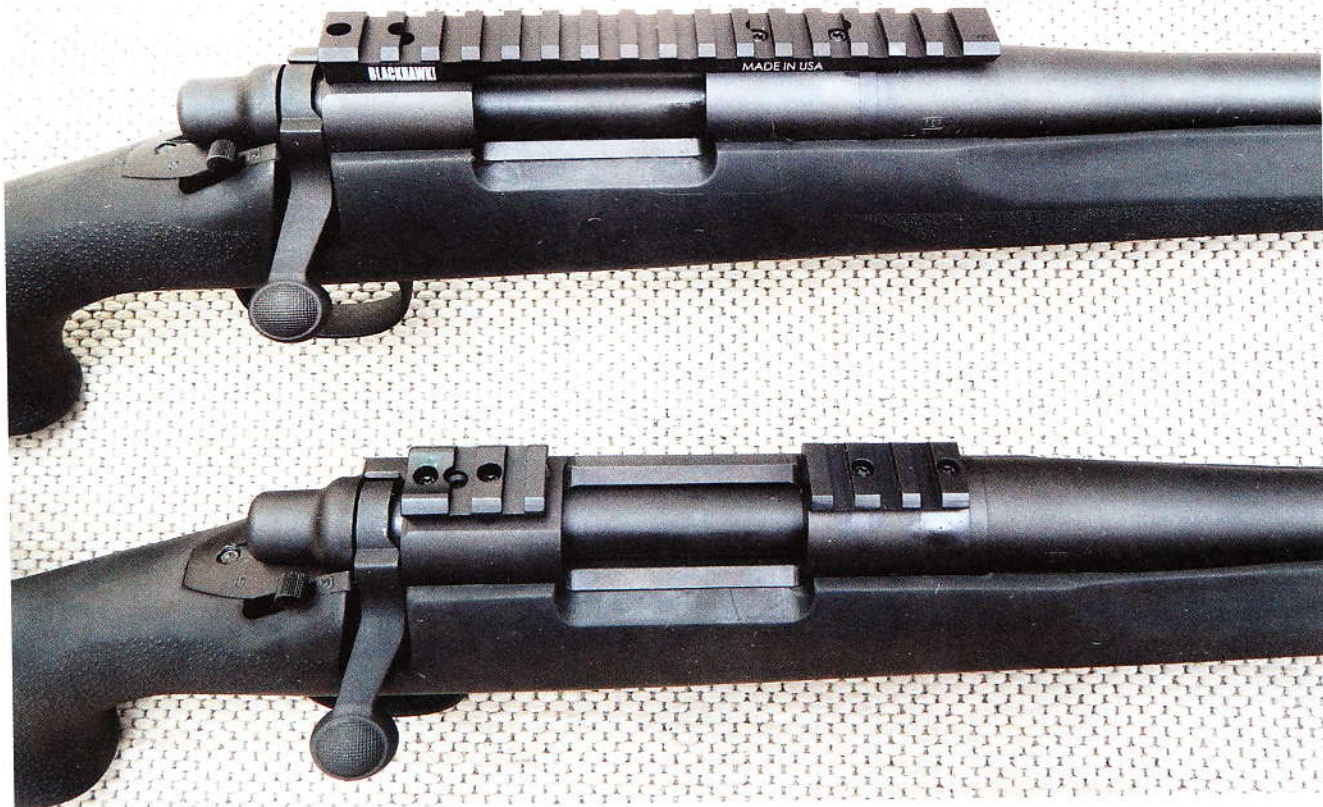
these stocks have an MSRP of \$150 and sell on the web for \$100 to \$110.

This Hogue pillar bedded stock is a "free-float" design (the stock's forend does not touch the barrel) that in theory allows the barrel to have consistent harmonics with every shot to insure maximum accuracy potential.

The only hiccup that I experienced during my extensive Rem 700 field and range tests

eyelashes off of a squirrel at 200 yards, this is a big no-no.

The Rem 700's OEM Hogue OverMolded stock is constructed by molding a super strong, rigid fiberglass reinforced skeleton or "insert" that precisely fits the Rem 700's action. This rigid skeleton is then OverMolded with a durable but soft synthetic elastomer (rubber) that chemically and mechanically bonds to the fiberglass during



Blackhawk's extended length mono-rail offers a 20MOA rise along with greater options for ring placement.



An upgraded tactical stock—to one that won't ever touch the barrel, is a great place to start your customization.

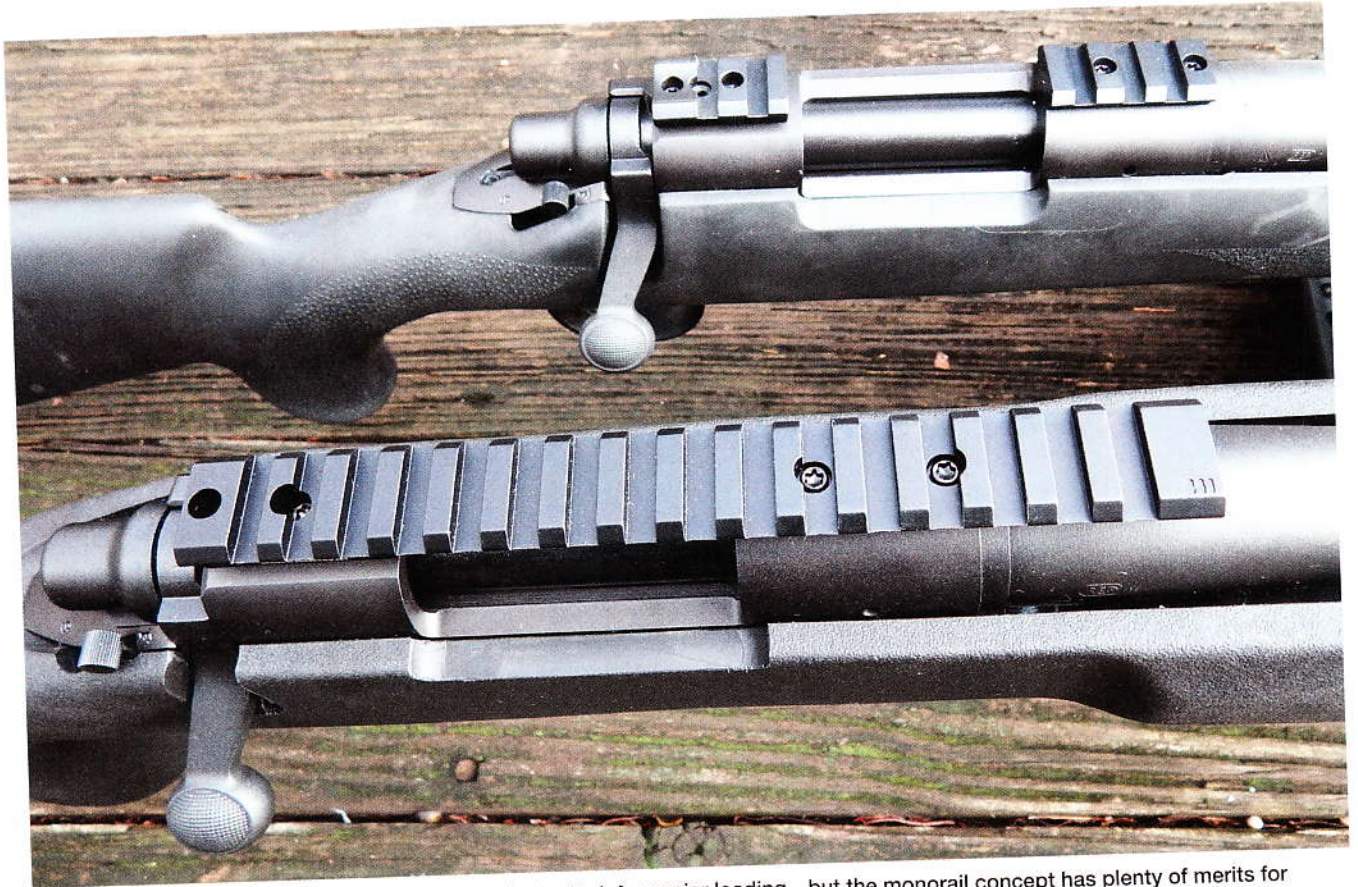
the manufacturing process. With its pillar bedded construction, it's a quality stock for the asking price, but it flexes if you put pressure on the forend and it in turn touches the barrel, affecting accuracy... if you are serious about tweaking that extra ¼-to-½ MOA of accuracy out of your Rem 700, it's time to go shopping.

HOGUE'S SOLUTIONS

One of the easiest solutions for Hogue fans to solve the stock flex problem is to opt

for their upgraded #70032 precision-machined, full bed block stock. This Over-Molded design features a V-shaped billet aircraft-grade aluminum block that completely surrounds the rifle's action and extends full length into the stock's forend for total rigidity and zero flex. Problem solved, but the MSRP to make this upgrade is \$280. I decided to try a different manufacturer's aluminum bedded stock and opted for the Choate Machine & Tool Rem 700 Tactical version.

The attraction of the Choate product for me was its lower cost (\$270 MSRP/\$225 street), adjustable length of pull (via removable ½-inch polymer inserts), multiple mounting points (four recessed sling-swivel studs), a raised cheek weld, large aft grip for my XL hands, a wider beavertail forend, a sliding bipod rail, plus an ergonomic cut or "hook" on the underside of the butt that is a convenient rest for the shooter's off hand to help steady the shot. The Choate Tactical stock's tough Rynite polymer construction is



Individual scope bases leave the chamber less obstructed, for easier loading...but the monorail concept has plenty of merits for strength and fighting torque.

This outstanding half-MOA group didn't come easy, or cheap...but with the right upgrades, it was very doable.



practically indestructible and is no lightweight at almost 3 3/4 pounds, but it's a great complement to the Rem 700 SPS Tactical's heavy barrel.

SCOPE BASES

Both of my Rem 700 SPS Tactical models feature an internal box magazine with a removable floor plate to facilitate quick cartridge dumps when a range ceasefire is called. This style of loading (down into the receiver opening) will impact what type of scope bases you might choose, which are not included with your base Rem 700 package. Depending on your budget, you can go for the basic split Weaver mounts (Burriss XTR Base, \$22 at Amazon.com) or a one-piece Picatinny rail that adds 20 MOA to your elevation (like the Blackhawk extended slot base, \$30 at Midway USA). You can also go top shelf and pay \$100 or more for a precision rail like the Leupold Mark 4 (\$119 at Optics Planet). I went with one of each type, installing the Burriss XTR split Weaver bases on my .223 Rem SPS Tactical and the one-piece Blackhawk Picatinny rail on the .308 Win version.

Be advised that with the scope installed,



Choate's tactical stock mates exceedingly well with the barreled action, and readily accepts a bipod.

it is a minor PITA to top-load the .223 Rem 700, but a major obstacle when trying to load the .308 weapon, due to the rail and the scope all competing for a limited amount of space in the chamber opening area and trying to stuff larger/longer .308 WIN ammo into the hole.

SCOPE RINGS / MOUNTS

Since your standard Rem 700 probably wasn't equipped with any, it's time to go shopping again. Scope rings come in all

machined aluminum TR-100/101 (\$124) or steel TR-102/103 (\$157) rings that are uber beefy and could probably survive an alien invasion or low scale nuclear attack.

These rings are adjustable along the length of your scope tube and allow you to line up the Weaver or Picatinny rail base with the scope tube, in conjunction with your optic's optimum eye relief position that dovetails with your cheek weld on the stock... you got all that? A scope mount is a cast or machined aluminum 1-piece design

“ If you are serious about tweaking that extra 1/4-to-1/2 MOA of accuracy out of your Rem 700, it's time to go shopping... ”

shapes, sizes and prices but most commercial scope tubes are either 1-inch or 30mm in diameter. These rings can be as inexpensive as Leupold's lightweight "Rifleman" aluminum mounts (less than \$20 at Midway USA) or as pricey as Trijicon's excellent

with a pair of rigid arms and rings and is typically only compatible with a flattop 1913 milspec Picatinny rail base. Although it offers a more rigid grasp on your scope's tube, you will need to match it to your optics to insure that they both fit together

Contact These Top Brands

BLACKHAWK
www.blackhawk.com

BURRIS
www.burrisoptics.com

CALDWELL
www.caldwellshooting.com

CHAMPION
www.championtarget.com

CHOATE MACHINE & TOOL
www.riflestock.com

HOGUE
www.getgrip.com

LEUPOLD
www.leupold.com

MEOPTA
www.meoptasportsoptics.com

NIKON
www.nikon.com

PELICAN
www.pelicancases.com

seamlessly, while also determining the best spot to lock it all down to achieve the all-important eye relief and cheek weld.

OPTICS

This is where you can totally fry your tactical accessory budget in a nanosecond. You can buy a decent Nikon 3-9x40 ProStaff scope for \$175... or you can purchase a gold standard Leupold Mark 4 3.5-10x40 scope for \$1,600... with many dozens of acceptable quality optics solutions somewhere in between. I have had excellent luck with both Nikon and Meopta scopes that all range in cost from \$175-\$500. Once you clear the \$600-\$750 price range, you typically aren't getting as much bang for your buck, but just tweaking those last bits of accuracy... it's a very personal thing that depends on how your eye sees objects through the looking glass. I would say that if you are looking to shoot tight groups on paper targets at 100 yards, a 3-9x40 is the



Nikon's ProStaff is a fine optic for most shooters, and here rides in top of the line Trijicon rings.

minimum magnification you should seek. For 200-300 yard targets, I'd recommend something in the 4-12x50 or 5-15x50 range to get more light and magnification. I was able to print consistent sub-MOA groups with a \$175 Nikon ProStaff 3-9x40 on my Rem 700 .223 and a \$499 Meopta MeoPro 4-12x50 on the .308 model, so you don't

need to break the bank to shoot straight.

RIFLE RESTS

As soon as you start adding a fully-bedded aluminum tactical stock, heavy duty bases and rings and a variable power scope to your Rem 700, the pounds start to pile on. With my twin Rem 700s I've used the Deadshot (\$20 at Midway USA) and Tack Driver (\$45 at Midway USA) shooting rests that are made by Caldwell Shooting Supplies. These bag rests are filled with corn-cob media and are somewhat malleable and shape-shifting.

lying prone.

While the Deadshot is a basic "bean bag" shape with a dimple in the center for your rifle, in contrast, the larger (about twice the size and weight of the Deadshot) Tack Driver's self-tightening surfaces grip more of the Rem 700's forend and really help you settle in for your shots.

If the bags aren't your thing, then you can always get a steady sight picture using the extremely portable and handy bipod. I employ both a Harris 9- to 13-inch and a Champion 6- to 9-inch bipod for my bench shooting and target practice needs when

The Six Pack:

TACTICAL STOCK:
Hogue Stock: #70032

SCOPE BASE:
Blackhawk Extended 20 MOA Scope Base

SCOPE RINGS:
Trijicon TR-100 Scope Rings

SCOPE:
Meopta MeoPro

RIFLE RESTS:
Deadshot

TRAVEL CASE:
Pelican

“ This is where you can totally fry your tactical accessory budget in a nanosecond... ”

Champion also makes a comprehensive lineup of pre-filled bag rests like the Monkey bag, Mini Gorilla, Gorilla and others, all ranging in price from \$30-\$80. They sure beat the cruddy wet sandbags that are often available at your local range and enable you to get onto a nice groove when sending rounds downrange, also working on less conventional surfaces like a vehicle hood, or

not using the "bean bags" and these are reasonably priced between \$35 to \$80, depending on the model and features. My Rem 700's Choate Tactical stock features a sling swivel mount that slides in a rail positioned in the underside of the beavertail forend. You simply set the bipod in the best position to insure a quality shot, tighten it down and make it rain.

Both the Burris and Blackhawk bases are solid options, but have different merits: ease of loading vs strength and a 20MOA gain for long, long range shooting.

TRAVEL CASE

Now that you have a totally kickass tactical rifle setup with the best of everything that your money can buy, how are you transporting it to and from the shooting grounds? While some folks might go to extremes and get a high-impact polycarbonate Pelican travel case (\$250 to \$300) that would survive being dropped out of a low-flying helicopter or an unscheduled trip downriver over Niagara Falls, a more affordable solution to protect your girl from bumps and bruises is a padded canvas bag that has a few dedicated zip pouches for some requisite accessories like ammo, your bipod, and some tools. Basic canvas case gear from Bulldog, Midway, Leaper's, Uncle Mike's and the usual suspects will provide pedestrian protection for a price that won't break the bank (\$25 to \$45). If you need something more sophisticated, the Voodoo Tactical Ultimate Sniper drag bag can be had for \$130 to \$160 and there are also various models of canvas rifle cases that dou-



ble as make-shift shooting mats. Whichever one meets your mission needs and budget, go get it and keep your baby safe.

IN CONCLUSION

Accessories like these have transformed

my pair of Rem 700s into deadly twin tack drivers that will shoot sub MOA groups the first time, every time, all the time! Hopefully they can do the same for you. Be safe out there and be sure to practice your 2A rights. **TW**

Q: Why does a free-floated stock—that doesn't ever touch the barrel—actually matter?

A: Because anything touching the barrel affects its harmonics, and unless you can exactly replicate the place and pressure of a thing touching the barrel—every time, under every circumstance—the differences in where and how the barrel are touched will have profound differences on accuracy. It's best to ensure nothing touches that barrel at all!

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