



RIFLE REVIEW: PROOF RESEARCH ELEVATION MTR 6.5 CREEDMOOR

By Dave Benfell

Excellent eye relief, illumination and 92% light transmission! ... all for under \$1000

ABOVE:

The Proof Research Elevation MTR is, in my opinion, a thing of beauty both to look at and to use. The quality of the construction – from the stock all the way through to the minor details – is clear to see. It's not often a rifle manufacturer will give a claim of sub-MOA guaranteed, so I was keen to see if that was true. The bipod was provided by MTN, which was a great addition to the set-up.

The NZ hunting market is driven by economy to mid-bracket hunting rifles; however, we do have a rich history with alpine hunting, where the demands placed on the hunter's fitness, mountaineering skills and marksmanship can be extreme. This environment has driven a lot of research and development into ultra-light, medium- to long-range hunting rifles like the rifle on review: the Proof Research Elevation MTR.

The manufacturing processes, carbon barrel, engineering and high-quality components obviously make these rifles expensive – but are they worth it? If you're going to spend premium money, you want to be sure it's a premium product, so let's take a closer look at how the Elevation MTR stacks up against its competitors.

OVERVIEW

The designation Proof Research has given the Elevation is 'MTR', meaning Mountain Tactical Rifle, and right from the outset, every ounce of this rifle feels fit for purpose. It's lightweight at sub-7lbs (bare action), rugged, stripped down to essentials, yet still has fantastic features like the 20 MOA rail, adjustable TriggerTech trigger, Zermatt Origin action and Proof Research's tried and tested

Proof Research's claim that the rifle is guaranteed sub-MOA (within one Minute of Angle) is very bold and a claim you won't find on many rifles; it either shows supreme belief in a premium product, or a willingness to play fast and loose with marketing strategy! That's why we review rifles: to evaluate claims, allowing the buyer to understand what a rifle has been designed for and enabling them to make more informed decisions.

Proof Research are an American company that cut its teeth making some extremely well-regarded, highly engineered and accurate barrels and have since moved onto manufacturing entire rifles, mostly in the premium to mid-level price range. Proof Research has certainly built a very respectable

reputation with its barrels and rifles.

CARBON STOCK/ALUMINIUM PILLARS AND BEDDING

Inspecting the inner workings of the stock, I found the bedding to be smooth, flush and consistent in the right areas. As you'd expect with a rifle as accurate as the Elevation, there's minimal contact with the receiver apart from the essential areas to give the rifle its rigidity and firm fit. Getting the balance right is important – not enough and you affect the rigidity under recoil, too much and you increase



ABOVE:

This beautifully conditioned red felled and rolled three metres after being hit at the base of the neck at 320m. This is no bush pig rifle, so a good carrying system will come in handy for the Alpine hunter who needs to break through some monkey scrub.

RIGHT:

The recoil recess and lug provide a generous contact area – a known aid to accuracy and consistency.

The Elevation features a Magpul 5-round magazine.



This is the most accurate off-the-shelf rifle I've ever reviewed. What was even more surprising is that it shot economy ammunition almost as well as premium.

the chance of temperature change and heat affecting your zero.

The recoil recess and subsequent lug is rectangular and has a large surface to create the accuracy-crucial bond between lug and stock; this type of system has proven consistent on many rifles known for accuracy.

PUSH FEED VS CONTROLLED FEED

A feature I've not seen in a review rifle for a very long time is the controlled feed system used by the Elevation. The most common way to transfer a bullet from your magazine to the chamber is called 'push feed' and is seen on most actions today. Push feed is a good system, but it has its weaknesses and is not as dependable as controlled feed. Controlled feed used to be seen on mid-priced to premium rifles, and on many older actions in the pre-2000s, but it requires more components and a touch

more engineering; thus, over time, it's lost favour in the effort to cut manufacturing costs. It's great to see this feature back in a premium rifle.

In basic terms, the differences between the two are:

- In the short time the bullet is in transit from the magazine to the chamber with push feed, as the name suggests, the bullet is merely being pushed by the bolt and is not secured by the bolt face.

- With controlled feed, the bullet is held in place by the extractor lip during the entire transition period between magazine and chamber.

- In practical terms, if you stop mid-chambering and pull the bolt backwards, with controlled feed, the bullet moves back with the bolt. With push feed, the bullet stays in limbo and often loose on top of the magazine or part inserted into the chamber. This sets up the dreaded double feed with one loose bullet and

potentially another one picked up off the magazine and jammed against the first bullet. You'll rarely see this in a controlled-feed action that's working properly.

- Another factor is that during cycling, there's no lateral pressure on your projectile with controlled-feed action, whereas for a short period of time, there's pressure on the side of your bullet during extraction. This is important for us handloaders, like me, who load their bullets very long. The slight pressure can be enough to damage ballistic tips, and in the worst case, dislodge seated projectiles, creating a horrible mess – usually at the worst time!

It is in essence a small difference with a few advantages, but I love the fact that it's included in the Elevation, because if you pay premium prices, you should get premium features – like controlled feed. I'd love to see a mainstream revival of this feature.



LEFT:

The action is made by Zermatt Arms, who sell actions, firearms accessories and upgrades and recently released a new stock.

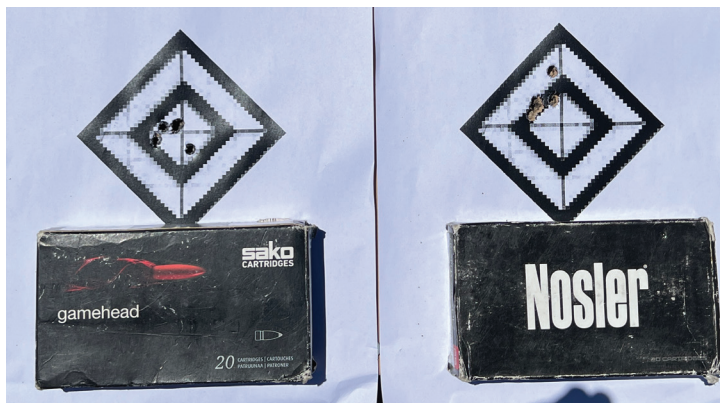
BARREL AND SUPPRESSOR

Proof Research cut its teeth making high-end barrels from all the standard metals but made a name for itself with its high-tech carbon fibre barrels. Barrels are still the backbone of Proof Research, but the company is growing, so I predict diversification and expansion on the horizon. The barrel is match grade, is ►



ABOVE:

The carbon fibre stock is designed, like a lot of rifles in this bracket, to be fired prone with virtually no drop in the comb. The camouflage colouration looks amazing, whilst still being robust, rugged and practical.



RIGHT:

This is the most accurate off-the-shelf rifle I've ever reviewed. Although the Elevation MTR is made of some premium parts sourced from other manufacturers, for all intents and purposes, it is 'off the shelf'. It shoots small groups with a variety of ammunition.



24 inches long and threaded, and came with an ASE Ultra suppressor with a 5/8 x 24 UNEF thread.

ZERMÄTT ARMS ACTION

Admittedly, I'd not heard of Zermätt Arms or its products before, so some online research was needed. Zermätt Arms is an American company that sells actions as its main product but has just launched a high-end, tactical aftermarket stock. The action on the Elevation has a floating bolt head, which aids the centralising and consistent alignment of the bolt in relation to the chamber; this is another great piece of engineering you won't see on most standard firearms. It's lightly fluted, and the action is smooth and silky.

In practical terms, it's hard to ascertain how much of an effect additions like floating bolt heads make other than to say whether a rifle is accurate and consistent or not, which I do in the accuracy paragraph and results in this review.

One thing to note is that the floating bolt head can be changed – should a user ever look to change calibres. The barrel is a screw-in type and pre-chambered replacements are available to order. The action is based on a Rem 700 and the rifle uses AICS pattern bottom metal, so

additional magazines are easy to source.

ACCURACY

All the flash marketing words, features and high-end additions sound great, but they have to equate to accuracy and consistency – which occasionally they don't. The claim of a sub-MOA rifle is significant, so I eagerly tested the rifle over five days with over six different types of ammunition.

Initially, the plan was to handload for the Elevation, but before that, I decided to test out some factory ammunition to see what the base data set would look like. It quickly became apparent that although handloading would be an interesting exercise, it wasn't necessary. This is the most accurate off-the-shelf rifle I've ever reviewed. What was even more surprising is that it shot economy ammunition almost as well as premium. The star of the show was the Sako Gamehead, which averaged a group size from four five-shot groups of just under an inch, with some groups going as small as half an inch. However, the Whitetail and Federal Power-Shok were not that far behind!

All groups were shot in the field at 100m in field conditions and extreme variations of weather and temperature.

One observation was on an extremely hot day after five shots fired rapid; the zero moved approximately 1cm to the right, which was no doubt due to the rifle heating up.

FIELD TESTING

The end of 2024 was insanely busy; however, I finally found time to take the Elevation on a couple of walks up the Rakaia catchment. It was timely, as with Christmas rapidly approaching and a house full of Benfells to feed, it became imperative to secure some venison. No pressure. After two days of carrying the rifle, my main observations were that it's designed and fit for purpose in every way. Light, easy to use and carry, and comfortable to fire – there's not much else to add. Personally, I think the addition of an adjustable cheek piece and some flush cups to give you an alternative sling method would make it close to the perfect mountain rifle.

On the first day of the hunt, I observed a lot of hinds tucked away high up in hanging basins and on bluffs – a bit too far for an afternoon jaunt, but it was good to see a few animals.

On the second morning, I woke pre-dawn and got into a good position where I



ABOVE:

My first experience with German Precision Optics (GPO) was positive; the scope was great to use, and the addition of an extension handle to ease the adjustment of the magnification just adds to its user-friendliness. In a competitive scope market, often it's the little things that matter.



ABOVE:

Calibres like the 6.5 Creedmoor are, I consider, a bit more surgical given the extra wind bucking, high BC bullets and pretty good long-range ballistics. They don't provide the hitting power of the bigger thumper calibres, so accuracy is imperative.

could observe a nice face. Lo and behold, a huge velvety stag appeared 500m away. I watched him, but never even considered shooting him; he was an impressive velvet stag and will be a great trophy if I can catch him out in a few months.

With a few animals about, I was confident when some movement caught my eye; next to a patch of beech and scrub, a beautifully conditioned stag was feeding 400m away on an adjacent face. I could close the distance safely, so I moved through the scrub towards it getting to 320m without much fuss. Lining up on the stag, the rifle felt comfortable – the GPO optics were clear and bright – and the stag was calm. I touched off the base of the neck to save some meat, and the stag took two steps and disappeared. The possibility of a miss was off the table, as I'd heard the distinctive 'whoopf' of a solid hit.

It was a long haul in horrible scrub to get up to him. From when I lost sight of him, he'd taken an additional step before the 6.5 Creedmoor had laid him down. A cracker hunt, and a great shot from the rifle.

As mentioned, the additions I'd like to see are flush cups and an adjustable cheek riser, as some of the high-angle shots will require a bit of neck cranking.

SUMMARY

Often, it's hard to justify an expensive

rifle like the Elevation MTR, as there are a lot of different ways to get a premium rifle out of 7k plus. However, as soon as you get your hands on an MTR, you can see and feel that every line and detail has been thought through carefully and nailed down. Although the designation of 'Mountain Rifle' shows you for whom and for what purpose it's designed, I wouldn't hesitate for a second to use this rifle in a precision-rifle or long-range shooting situation. It's also the most accurate 'off the shelf' rifle I've ever reviewed. Agreed, you could argue that the components from other manufacturers make it more of a hybrid, but that doesn't really matter to you, the buyer ... all you need to know is, it shoots tiny groups with loads of different bullets.

If you want an off-the-shelf, accurate, lightweight mountain rifle, you'll not regret purchasing the Elevation MTR. My personal preference for calibre would be 6.5 PRC from a performance perspective and the addition of an adjustable cheek piece, but apart from that, this rifle is a stunner. In a hunting environment, where consistency and accuracy mean the difference between a trophy on the deck or a full freezer, the Elevation MTR won't let you down ... if you've put in your range time! ■

WHY BUY FROM US!!

We know our products and we totally guarantee them!!



BROWNING
TRAIL CAMERAS

Browning Spec Ops Elite HP5

NEW 24MP high quality trail/security camera. Records 1920 x 1080 Full HD video @ 60 frames per second. Built-in viewing screen, multi shot photo burst, fast 0.1sec trigger speed, smart IR video recording. No-Glow LEDs plus heaps of other features - Model: BTC-8E-HP5

UOVision Select 30

NEW 30MP trail/security camera. Ultra-small in size(130x100x70mm) Records 4K/2.7K/1080P/720P & WVGA quality video with sound. Fast trigger speed (0.2sec) Features a 2.0 inch viewing screen, 1-10 photo burst mode, time-lapse mode, No-glow LEDs plus heaps of other features. Operates on 8 x AA batteries.



UOVision

UOVision Select 30 4G LTE "Cloud"

NEW - Open Sim Version. Simply put in an activated Sim card with data credit on it, and all is good to go. Easy setup via the FREE LinkEazi Web-Portal and the Mobile App. Works with Vodafone, Spark and 2-Degrees. 30MP photos & up to 4K video recording with sound. Camera features a 2.0 inch viewing screen, multi-shot photo burst, fast 0.2 sec trigger speed, SD card over-write, password protect, selectable Start-Stop operating period, long range detection plus much more.



New Zealand's exclusive distributor for Browning & UOVision Cameras



Can be purchased from sports, outdoor stores or go to our website.

a.j.productions@actrix.co.nz
Phone 07 847 0124
www.ajproductions.co.nz