

Schmidt and Bender Scopes

By Rob Ormond

Schmidt and Bender is a well know name in rifle scopes. Since 1957 when Helmut Schmidt and Helmut Bender started their company they have been a leader in the field. First making hunting scopes and then into the tactical field with their PMII line which I will talk about as they are the scopes we use in competition. Over the years I have owned almost the whole PMII line and didn't find a bad part about any of the scopes.

Schmidt and Bender is well known in the military as well with the USMC using their 3-12x50 as their sniper day scope. Also recently the USSOCOM awarded S&B the contract for their new precision rifle scope to be used by the Army, Navy, Air Force and Marine Corps Special Forces.

As a team we use the 5-25x56mm PMII scopes, which in my opinion are the perfect scope, for long range competition and the 1.1-4x20 Short Dot on our ARs for 3 gun competition. We find the 5-25x to be an excellent power range for matches as you have the higher power when needed for smaller targets but also can dial down and have a wider field of view for moving targets or if the mirage picks up as it does. Being a first focal plane the reticle can be used on any power and still subtend correctly.

The S&B 5-25x56 is set up with pretty much any option the shooter would need. It has an excellent dual turn knob with a built in zero stop at about .6 mils below 0. The dual turn knob has 14 mils per revolution and a pop up yellow indicator to tell the shooter they are on the second revolution. All well thought out. S&B also offer an MOA version of this knob as well as a version with MTC (More Tactile Clicks). The 5-25x offers a lot of elevation with around 93 MOA so using 20-40 MOA bases with this scope are not a problem.

The Windage knob is set up with 6 mils of right and left wind on the knob. More than enough if you dialed wind although I hold for my wind using my reticle.

Speaking of the reticles, the 5-25x has some very usable reticles in the lineup. They offer the Klein, P4, P4F, and the newest reticle the H2CMR, which has become my favorite with its .2 mil marks on the horizontal and round hollow mildots. Pictures of all the reticles can be found on Schmidt and Bender's site or with a quick search over at Sniper's Hide Forums. Another reticle designed by Finn Accuracy but available in the S&B is the MSR reticle. It's main crosshair lines fall between the P4 and P4F in thickness and they offer an "L" shaped ranging bracket as well in the lower left quadrant. All the reticles offer different amounts of illumination as well from the 11 position illumination knob on the left side of the scope tube.

The glass on the S&B PMII line barely needs mentioning as it's the pinnacle to which others strive. Crisp, clear and bright from edge to edge.

Another feature worth mentioning to the tactical rifle match shooters is the ability for the 5-25x to adjust down to 10 meters for parallax. Most scopes are 50 yards/meters which can make taking those really close shots that come up at matches difficult but with the 5-25x they are easier to make.

The 1.1-4x20 Short Dot we use is an excellent quick optic for an AR rifle. With the power range shots from point blank to 600 yards are achievable. That's what makes the scope such a good scope for 3 gun competitions.

The reticle we use is the CQB reticle which has mil and half mil marks for easy hold overs or unders and also an illuminated red dot for quick shots on closer targets. The scope has locking turrets so bumping them in the heat of 3 gun competition isn't a problem.

You also don't have to worry about service on your scope as Schmidt and Bender USA has a full service center where they build, service and repair scopes in Ashburn, Virginia. Mark Cromwell, Phil Cookson and crew can work on changes you want to your scope or if ever there is a problem with the scope for warranty work. They also have the USMC service contract for their contract scopes.

Don't think Schmidt and Bender has been resting on their laurels though. They are set to introduce two new scopes that will set the scope world ablaze. The first is their new 3-20x50 PMII. The scope features locking MTC knobs, large 50mm eye piece, which makes getting behind the scope a joy, and all in a smaller lighter package about the same size as their current 4-16x50.

The other scope is the 1-8x30. This is scope is truly innovative in that it's a true 1x scope. On the power ring when you dial down to 1x it's listed as CC and when you turn here you hear a click and the parallax is adjusted down so the scope can be used and clear at close range. It also features a new mil based reticle which will help its use for the longer range the extra 4x on the top end will give you.

Keep an eye out for these new scopes and the whole Schmidt and Bender line if you are looking for a new optic for your rifle.