



Robinson Armament

XCR

Does the XCR top the AR?

By David Kenik

ROBINSON ARMAMENT XCR

Let me start by professing my affection for the AR platform. My safe is stacked with AR variants chambered in .22LR, 5.56 NATO, .300 BLK and .308 Win. Some are stock, others are modified, and I have assembled a few from choice components. My adoration is due to the platform's ergonomics, modularity and accessories galore. That said, there is still some room for improvement.

The genesis for this article was my search for a perfect trunk gun that is easy to transport and maneuver in tight confines. It had to be chambered in a hard-hitting caliber yet still be easily carried in a small case that did not look like a rifle case.

A gun in .300 BLK was the natural choice because the cartridge was designed for full-power ballistics from a short barrel. To reduce the gun's length, I favored a folding stock rather than a collapsible design. I chose a pistol configuration over a short-barreled rifle (SBR) because of the burdensome federal and state regulations, and I can carry a .300 BLK pistol everywhere my pistol permit reciprocity allows.

Unlike a SBR or rifle, a pistol can even be legally carried loaded inside the passenger compartment of a vehicle.

My research led me to the Robinson Armament's XCR pistol. Examining its design and features, I found many advantages over the venerable AR-15 design.

The XCR

Robinson Armament builds the XCR's lower receivers from 7075 forgings, and the uppers are made from a proprietary aircraft-grade aluminum. The pistol is offered with a Gear Head Work's Tailhook pistol brace or endcap.

Available in 5.56 NATO, .300 BLK, 7.62x39 and 6.8 SPC, the barrels are button rifled and chrome plated. Barrels are available in 7½, 9½, 10, 11 and 12 inches; custom lengths are available, too. The XCR is also available in SBR and rifle configurations in 5.56 NATO, .300 BLK, 7.62x39, 6.8 SPC, 6.5 Grendel, .308 Win., .243 Win., .260 Rem. and 6.5 Creedmoor, along with various barrel profiles and lengths.

My XCR pistol for this test came with a Tailhook arm brace in Olive Drab. Chambered for .300 BLK, it features a 9½-inch barrel with a 1:7-inch twist. Robinson Armament's folding sights are included as standard fare.



While the XCR resembles an AR-15, the gun is a unique, proprietary design featuring numerous advantages over an AR.

XCR-L Pistol

Type	Piston-operated, semiautomatic
Cartridge	.300 BLK
Barrel	9.5 inches; 1:7-in. twist
Overall Length	26.5 – 28.5 in.
Weight	7 lbs.
Width	2.63 in.
Height	7 in.
Grip	A2
Finish	Anodized or Cerakote
Trigger	2-stage
MSRP	\$1,995
Manufacturer	Robinson Armament robinsonarmament.com



The XCR is designed as a modular system. Components can be easily swapped as needed.

Comparing The Platforms

Picking up the XCR, it feels like an AR, thanks mostly to its use of an A2 pistol grip. Another thing I noticed right away was the very slender handrail. Measuring a scant 1⅞ inches wide, it feels good in the hand and is easy to grasp. Rather than the AR platform's traditional bolt catch, the XCR has paddle levers located along the forward edge of the triggerguard on both sides.

The stock length is adjusted by pressing levers that are located on both sides simultaneously and is locked with a knob. It folds by lifting the stock upward and swinging to the right until it locks in place.

The XCR's trigger is a two-stage design with a pull weight of 4 pounds. It is a nice, smooth pull, but it's not a precision trigger. Its heft is designed for battlefield durability.

The gas block is easily adjustable with either a cartridge tip or a small, flathead screwdriver through the side of the handguard. After running it full bore for the first 60 rounds, as suggested in the manual, I

reduced it one step at a time until the bolt would not lock back on an empty magazine, then increased it a step. I ended up at setting five out of seven for my ammunition selections, and it ate everything I fed it with ease.

The XCR's action is smooth and feels solid. Side charging is much easier than charging an AR, especially when shouldered. Locking the bolt back and releasing it is easily accomplished with either hand.

The XCR's stock is a heftier, more durable metal version that AR's could benefit from. There is no rattle when locked. The monolithic upper combined with the all-metal rearend makes the XCR very robust and solid.

As for discreet carry, I chose a Dropshot case by Hazard 4. It has an appearance of a racket case with tall sidewalls that makes it easy to store guns when they're folded. The case is fully padded and has several extra compartments for spare magazines and other gear.

For an optical sight, I mounted an Aimpoint

ROBINSON ARMAMENT XCR



CompM5 red-dot sight. Its five-year battery life is derived from a single AAA battery. The CompM5 enjoys Aimpoint's great reputation for durability and reliability.

I learned early on that there is no such thing as a single firearm that is perfect for every situation. The adaptability of the Robinson Armament XCR line allows it to fit numerous missions with accuracy, reliability and numerous advantages. The more I shoot it, the more impressed I am with it.

To top it all off, Robinson Armament has an extraordinary satisfaction guarantee. If you are dissatisfied with a firearm for any reason, it may be returned within 15 days of purchase for a full refund of the purchase price, excluding shipping. That's impressive. **CARBINE**

16 WAYS THE XCR BEATS THE AR

1. Piston Operation

The XCR platform was designed as a gas-piston system and utilizes a long-stroke piston similar to an AK. Unlike the AR's gas-impingement system, which feeds hot, dirty gas from the barrel into the upper receiver to cycle the action, a piston system uses the barrel's gas to manipulate a piston to cycle the action. None of the hot, dirty gas enters the receiver. This keeps the gun's components cleaner and cooler, thus increasing reliability and longevity.

2. No Carrier Tilt

Yes, many ARs are built with and can be retrofitted with piston systems, but they suffer from various degrees of carrier tilt. This is due to the AR piston impacting the bolt carrier above its plane of travel, tilting the carrier and causing increased friction and wear. Modifications to the bolt carrier's design have reduced carrier tilt, but it cannot be totally eliminated. The Robinson Armament XCR's inline piston design does not cause carrier tilt.

3. Folding Stock

Unlike the AR platform that has its spring and buffer tube behind the lower receiver, the XCR's recoil spring rides within the upper receiver. With no need for an AR-style buffer-tube system, the XCR can support a folding stock.

4. Functional When Folded

While a few manufactures offer folding stock adapters for the AR platform, they can only be fired once when folded as the bolt carrier group won't cycle. This is because the buffer and buffer spring are not engaged when the stock is folded. The XCR's recoil system remains fully functional when the stock is folded, allowing the gun to be fired continuously. That makes getting the fire-arm into action much faster in an emergency situation.

5. Quick Change Barrels

Changing barrels on the XCR requires just a single tool, a ¼-inch Allen wrench. It takes three revolutions of the wrench and the barrel can be lifted up and out. Unlike an AR, there is no need to remove the handguard or secure the upper receiver in a vice. This makes changing barrel lengths or calibers much easier and faster than the AR, and it can be done in the field. As with the AR platform, complete XCR uppers can be switched out as well.

6. Monolithic Upper

Unlike most ARs, which have a separate handguard that fastens to the upper receiver, the XCR's upper is a monolithic design. The advantage over the AR is the overall strength is increased and optics and accessories can be placed anywhere along the rail without worrying about "bridging the gap." As such, there is no need for cantilever mounts for magnified optics with the XCR.

Performance

LOAD	Velocity [fps]	Standard Deviation	Extreme Spread	Avg. Group [in.]	Best Group [in.]
Black Hills 125-gr. OTM	1,979	9	29	1.2	.75
Nexus 125-gr. Match	2,069	16	67	1.3	.83
Black Hill 220-gr. OTM	908	11	38	2.5	1.5



With a long-stroke piston, the XCR's chamber and receivers stay cooler and cleaner.



The adjustable, folding pistol brace is quite hefty, adding to the gun's durability.

7. Ambi Controls and Adjustable Gas Block

The XCR has an ambidextrous 60-degree selector, magazine release and bolt catch. The gas block is adjustable, allowing the shooter to tune the pistol to specific ammunition. While some specialty ARs offer these features, they are not standard.

8. Side Charger

The XCR utilizes a nonreciprocating, side-charging handle. I find it much easier to manipulate than the AR's rear charging handle, especially when shouldered.

9. Better Feeding

The cartridge's path from the magazine to the chamber is straighter, resulting in smoother feeding. With the XCR, there are no failure-to-feed problems unless the magazine is faulty.

10. Better Extraction

The XCR uses an extractor that does not require spring pressure to maintain contact with the cartridge's rim. The result is more positive extraction and a near-zero-maintenance extractor.

11. Better Ejection

The XCR has a solid ejector, similar to that of an AK47, which also does not require a spring to do its job. The ejection is very positive.

12. Stronger Bolt

The bolt has beefier lugs than the AR-15. You will never see a broken XCR bolt lug.

13. Near-Frictionless Bolt Carrier

Like an AK, there is very little friction between the bolt carrier group and the upper receiver. The result is reliable and smooth operation.

14. Materials

All XCR structural parts, including buttstocks, are metal. Only the human interface parts such as grips, handguards, buttpads and checkrests are plastic.

15. Overall Strength

The XCR is designed to survive adverse circumstances that would destroy an AR, such as shooting with a bullet lodged inside the bore. Robinson Armament states that shooters should NOT try it though.

16. Ease of Maintenance

The XCR has fewer internal parts and is extremely easy to clean and maintain.