

The AR15 Advantage

The absence of conventional stock-to-receiver bedding, which allows the AR15 barrel to free-float, and the AR15's superior rear sight, are generally credited with giving the AR15 better day-to-day performance than the M14, which is infamous for its erratic behavior. The double-lug receivers that the U.S. Marine Corps, along with a few civilian builders, implemented for their M14s were developed in an attempt to reduce this problem. These lugs are threaded and bedded to provide a function similar to pillar bedding a bolt action. In a conventional M14, the trigger guard functions in place of the action screws on a bolt gun; these added receiver lugs provide action screws which can be torqued.

Despite the addition of the receiver lugs, Al Baker, a former USMC gunsmith now in civilian practice, told me that the team guns still were broken down frequently and the bedding resurfaced to maintain good 600-yard accuracy, and the guns were still influenced by temperature, such as leaving the gun overnight under air conditioning or with one side exposed to sunlight. AR15s don't show this kind of problem.