

The Lanco Tactical Guide to

300 Blackout

By Dave Buffington

I really wanted to want an AR. They're reliable and versatile, and they can be very accurate.

But I hate how noisy they are. (When someone fires one at the range everyone looks to see what animal is being tortured.)

And I hate the blast they make. (And so, after the first shot gets your attention, the second one blinds you.)

But most of all, I hate the tiny bullets they shoot. (You can call it a "5.56" or ".223" all you want, it's still a .22 mag, but even more obnoxious.)

Thank goodness, there's now a solution.

The 300 Blackout.

The Only Thing

Here's the first thing – and arguably the only thing – you need to know about ARs chambered for 300 Blackout cartridges:

300 Blackout ARs are identical to traditional .223/5.56 ARs except for the barrel.

They use the same bolts, the same receivers, the same lowers, the same stocks, the same magazines and all the same accessories as a traditional AR.

So you can convert your existing AR simply by switching the barrel.

Or you can buy a 300 Blackout upper and just put it on your existing lower.

Or you can buy a whole AR in 300 Blackout and use all the same goodies you use with your traditional AR.

And you can get it all at Lanco Tactical.

(By the way, if you're shopping for this stuff and see the expressions "300 Blackout", "300 AAC Blackout" or "300 Whisper", don't worry. They're all functionally the same thing and interchangeable. I'd explain the names, but do you really want a boring lecture on trademarks, marketing and SAAMI? I didn't think so.)

The Advantages

Here's big advantage to 300 Blackout:

You're shooting a bullet that 0.308 inches in diameter.

Yup, you're shooting the same size bullet used in the .308. the 30-30, the .30-06 and a bunch of other popular cartridges. The same bullet that's brought down millions of deer, bear, moose ... and men. The same bullet that's won thousands of matches at Camp Perry and around the world. The same bullet that you can find in hundreds of variations from dozens of makers.

And since you're pushing a bigger bullet out the barrel, you're typically using slower powders ... which typically means you're being less obnoxious.

In fact, the bullet and the cartridge combo were originally intended for suppressor use, hence the original name: 300 Whisper.

Sound can be a difficult thing to quantify, but consider this ... With a suppressor installed, the sound of my 300 Blackout AR has been frequently compared to a pellet gun or staple gun.

As opposed to a raped raccoon.

The Disadvantages

With a 300 Blackout AR, the volume of cartridge is roughly the same as the .223/5.56 volume, and that's considerably smaller than the volume of .308 or .30-06 brass.

So you can't put as much powder in the brass, and so, you can't put as much velocity into the bullet. Let's compare some Hornady factory loads:

.223, 75 grain bullet, muzzle velocity = 2,930 fps

300 Blackout, 110 grain bullet, muzzle velocity = 2,375 fps

.30-06, 125 grain bullet, muzzle velocity = 2,700 fps

So, in this example, the 300 Blackout bullet is slower than both the lighter .223 bullet and the heavier .30-06 bullet.

All of this means that 300 Blackout has a lower practical range than the .223.

But still, that 300 Blackout bullet is traveling 1,596 fps at 300 yards. Which will still hurt you if you step in front of it.

What Loads?

As of this writing, the number of 300 Blackout factory loads is increasing steadily. I've tested nine so far, and here are my favorite supersonic factory loads:

Hornady 110 grain V-MAX

Remington 115 grain UMC (a.k.a., "White Box")

Remington 125 grain Premier Match

All three are accurate in my CMMG upper, but surprisingly, the cheapo Remington UMCs seem the most accurate of all of these. Go figure.

Subsonics for Suppressors

There are a few special considerations if you are planning to use your 300 Blackout AR with a suppressor.

You can use suppressors with supersonic loads, and you will see a dramatic reduction in noise. (Indeed, much of what you, as the shooter, will hear is the mechanical noises coming from the gun itself.)

However, to avoid the "crack" made by a bullet traveling at supersonic speed, you must use subsonic loads. These loads typically use heavier bullets (200 to 220 grains) propelled at much slower speeds (around 1,000 fps).

With these low-velocity loads, your practical range is naturally much lower than with supersonic loads. I'd say 150 yards or less.

Also, *some* of these subsonic loads may not cycle properly in *some* ARs. (Remember, there are a LOT of variables in how ARs are set up and maintained.) So, if you're having cycling problems, don't do anything rash, like drilling a bigger gas hole in the barrel.

Instead, make sure your gun is properly cleaned and lubricated.

Then, try a softer recoil spring. Wolff makes a "reduced power" recoil spring, and if you're comfortable with making a minor mechanical mod, you can cut a few coils off your existing recoil spring.

My favorite subsonic factory load is the Hornady 208 grain A-MAX. It feeds and cycles very reliably, and it's accurate.

Stretching the Envelope

Me? I was looking to get even more accuracy and less noise out of my 300 Blackout AR. That sent me to the reloading bench, and after a LOT

of error and trial, here's the recipe that works for me and my AR. Your mileage may vary:

Bullet - Hornady 208 grain A-MAX

Case - Remington 300 Blackout (resized)

Primer - CCI Small Rifle Magnum

Powder - 8.4 grains Vihtavouri N110

COL - 2.26 inches

Note that this COL (cartridge overall length) is right at the SAMMI max, and thus, I'm just begging for feeding problems. However, it also gives me 1/2-inch groups at 50 yards with low noise, low smoke and low flash. Still, I've had no feed issues when using plain old USGI alloy magazines.

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