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*Its sights are less-expensive versions of the classic AR's, but operate similarly and give the same high sighting plane.*

The entire gun weighs five pounds unloaded, and feels closer to three when it is loaded. Mossberg has two magazines for the Tactical .22: a standard 10-rounder and an extended 25-round combination synthetic/steel version. The sights, incidentally, are a white painted front post and a single rear aperture; no duals like a carry-handled AR would have.

#### **AN AR EXTERIOR**

Outside, the Tactical .22 is configured as just that: a "tactical" AR-15 in shorty-carbine form. The profile is similar enough to pass for a 5.56mm/.223 combat rifle at a moderate distance, with its quad-rail fore-end, tall front-sight tower, carry handle with a detachable TAPCO synthetic Picatinny rail, A2-style rear drum/wheel adjustable aperture, pistol grip and collapsible stock. Yet looking closer in hand, you find the external "body" is composed of two molded clamshell halves held together around the steel guts and barrel with several strategically located Phillips screws.

Individual smaller features such as the sight tower, Delta ring, carry handle, rear-sight section, brass deflector, forward bolt assist and charging handle, are all molded, too. The six-position ATI stock functions in the conventional way, and the Tactical .22 is equipped with a molded front sling swivel that rotates around the barrel under the sight tower for use dead-center down or on either side along



*Note the white-painted front blade and single aperture rear.*



with a standard steel swivel stud in the rear stock and a slot for alternative high sling carry.

The railed fore-end and the pistol grip are not removable from the external body. Yet, the stock is, and since the reciprocating bolt handle lives in the ejection port, there's no AR-style dust cover.

The safety is a steel crossbolt type in front of the trigger that's easily pushed on by the left thumb for righties and easily pushed off by a right-hand trigger finger for most adults and many non-adults (lefties will have to adapt, as always, but it's not difficult to do on this gun), and the mag release is a dual-sided pseudo-selector switch operable by either hand near the bottom of the magazine well.

#### **FUN IN THE SNOW**

The little Mossberg's day in the sun happened during the first week of January in 6 inches of gravel pit snow under intermittently cloudy skies while the thermometer held fairly steady in the neighborhood of 25 degrees. I normally set my iron-sighted .22 rifles at 50 yards; most