

Scout Scopes

Part I: What is a Scout Scope?

[Big Horn Armory](#) lever-action rifles are versatile firearms, capable of great accuracy, quick handling, and rapid firing. We're often asked what sights to use to maximize the rifle's capabilities. It mostly comes down to personal preference. That being said, we'll take a look at some of the options that work well on our rifles and why we like them.

Our lever-actions come from the factory with [Skinner Sights](#). These are a "ghost ring" style aperture sight combined with an ivory bead up front that makes them quick to acquire and the natural pointing ability of our rifles makes it easy to put them on target. Skinner Sights are rugged, accurate, attractive, and work exceptionally well.

Many shooters, however, want or need some sort of electro/optical sight. Whether it's because someone's eyes aren't as good as they used to be, or maybe they just want a bit more magnification or easier point of aim, there are some great options that work well with your Big Horn Armory rifle; these include micro red dot sights, full-size red dot sights, holographic sights, and scout scopes. Today we're going to look at scout scopes.

Ok, what is a scout scope? The term "Scout" scope was popularized by the late Col. Jeff Cooper as part of his Scout Rifle Concept. There have been many great articles written on the scout rifle concept, so feel free to do some Google research if you're intrigued. The scope for this rifle, a "scout" scope, is an optical sight with extended or intermediate eye relief. This means it is designed to be mounted forward of the receiver, usually with the back of the eyepiece lining up just in front of the ejection port or on top of the front of the receiver. Originally scout scopes were low power optics somewhere between 2-2.75X magnification. Scout scopes date back to at least WWII when the German Army fielded the ZF-41 forward mounted optical sight for some of their K98 Mauser rifles. This is also an intriguing story and worth an online search or two.



Bundesarchiv, Bild 1011-455-0013-37
Foto: Zimmer | 1942

There were some specific reasons for the low power and forward mounting configuration that happen to work well with our lever actions.

One of the main reasons for the forward mounting configuration is to leave the action area free and clear. While not critical for reloading like old top-loading bolt actions, it does keep the scope out of the way for the top ejection of our lever actions.



The low power of these scopes is to facilitate shooting with both eyes open.

Field of view was another consideration. While these scopes tend to have a narrower field of view than a conventional rifle scope on the same power, the forward mounting option lets the shooter see more of their surroundings when looking through the scope with both eyes open. This can be important in a hunting situation.

Another under-publicized advantage to a scout scope is the forward-mounted location is less prone to fogging up from breathing in cold weather.

Scout scopes used to be fixed power in the 2-2.75X magnification range and two great options include the [Burris Scout Riflescope 2.75x20mm](#), and the [Leupold FX-II Scout IER 2.5X28mm](#). These are great scopes because they are simple, lightweight, compact, and can usually be mounted with low rings. The unobtrusive eyepiece and objective bell let the shooter see a lot of their surroundings when shooting with both eyes open. And at nearly 3X magnification it can help extend the shooters effective range a bit and even help shoot in lower light conditions when it might otherwise be tough to see the iron sites.





Variable power scout scopes have been introduced since their popularization on scout rifles, but we'll cover those in our next installment on scout scopes!



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