Click on any of the images below to see a larger version of the image.

Introduction

I like a scope to give a reasonable amount of accuracy when mounted on a rifle. I try to avoid modifying my rifle or carbine and am always drawn to the *"No Gunsmith Required"* type of products as my first choice when selecting a mount. I have tried most of the SKS scope mounts on the market and want to impart some experiences I have had so far.

The following are my thoughts on the scope mounts I have tried or am aware of for the SKS Carbine:

Receiver Cover Type Mount

I tried and found the **receiver cover type mount** fell into the *"poor design"* category.

Sometime as an experiment remove the bolt, bolt carrier, and recoil spring assembly of your SKS and then replace the receiver cover (lock it down) and see how much play you have by moving it back and forth.

Do you really think this is a stable platform for a scope?

Granted, the parts installed in the receiver (bolt, bolt carrier, recoil spring, etc) do place pressure on the receiver cover and somewhat keep it in place. It is not constant pressure because all of the internal receiver parts move during the operation of the firearm.

Although this is a very convenient design to install, I think it is inherently a bad design for functionality and accuracy.

Some folks have great luck with these mounts and there is no shortage of them available on the market.

I have not had good luck with this type of mount and **my targets** looked like I was checking the pattern of my shotgun prior to Turkey or Duck season.

Receiver Cover Type Mount w/Screws

There is another variation of the receiver cover type mount that has screws that extend below the receiver cover on the outside of the receiver. The intended goal here is that you tighten the screws against the receiver once you reinstall the receiver cover.

This type of mount makes my point about the standard receiver cover type mount. If it was a stable platform to begin with - then why would you need to secure it any further?

The screws leave marks on the receiver. Although this sounds like a bad thing, it actually serves a purpose for the mount. Tighten the screws again in the same exact location as the last time the mount was attached. This should help to quickly return the SKS to zero or close to it.

The downside is - the screws leave marks on the receiver.

Rear Sight Scout Type Mount

I have tried another mount that replaces the rear sight and uses a long eye relief (LEF) scope. Although the rear sight is a stable scope base, you have to remove the scope every time you want to remove and clean the gas tube.

Gas Tube Type Mount

Do you really think the gas tube is a good place to mount a scope? I won't go there.

Note: *I have not tried this type of mount, I just know how loose my SKS gas tubes sometimes can be and would not use this as a platform for a scope.*

"Drill and Tap" Type Mount

Let's face it - the SKS is a difficult beast to mount a scope on and get reasonable accuracy, repeatedly.

I finally came to the conclusion that the only way to mount a scope on an SKS was to install a *"drill and tap"* type mount that is permanently affixed to the receiver.

A *"drill and tap"* type mount is a mount that you drill holes, tap (thread the hole), install the mount, and it stays in place forever. A good *"drill and tap"* type mount should allow the firearm to function normally and should not have to be removed to facilitate cleaning of the firearm.

There are two different U.S. *"drill and tap"* type mounts available. The first one is from ATI and is called the K-Mount (*as shown in **figure 4***). After installing the K-Mount, I found that I could not remove the bolt and bolt carrier with the K-Mount installed. This is a drawback in my opinion. I am always stripping out threads on screws and threaded screw holes. This happens especially if I am repeatedly removing and replacing the screws. It appears as though the mount needs to be removed to facilitate cleaning. I decided not to include this mount in the article until I can get more information from ATI. Who knows, maybe I am doing something wrong. It would not be the first time!

The second *"drill and tap"* style scope mount and the mount covered in this article is from **Choate Machine & Tool** and is described by the manufacturer as -

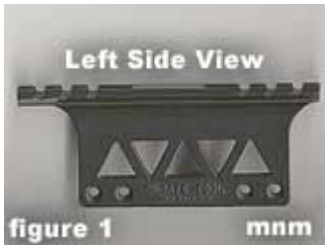
Our SKS Scope mounts are second to none in quality and workmanship. They are invest cast out of 4140 Steel and Blued to match the gun's finish. These mounts are designed to use Weaver type one inch rings and are raised to allow the shooter to use the iron sights as well as a scope.

Scope Mount kit used in article

Description	Price
180802 SKS SCOPE MOUNT **(Click on part description to see more about part or place order)**	**$38.50**

The Choate Machine & Tool Mount

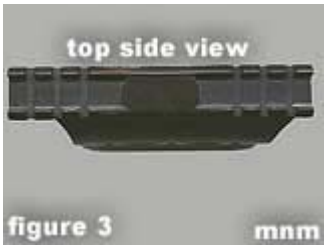
First off, the Choate mount is a heavy-duty piece of steel. It mounts to the left side of the receiver, only. Here is the manufacturer's description excerpt from the included instructions:



*This scope mount is solid invest cast 4140 Tool Steel. It is hot blued to match you weapon. It uses Weaver type rings. There are six ring screw slots (as shown in **figure 3**) so that adjusting the eye relief will be easy. The weight was reduced by the triangle voids (as shown in **figures 1 and 2**) but adds strength by the truss effect. It will mount high enough to allow disassembly of the rifle and allow the use of open sights. We provide Grade 8 Tool & Die quality screws. This mount was designed for the SKS & AK-47, but it will fit on nearly any flat sided*

rifle or shotgun.

The features of the Choate mount include - you can easily remove the receiver cover, bolt carrier, and bolt without removing the scope or mount. The mount sits high enough to use the original open sights on the carbine.



I chose to use the same Yugo 59/66 SKS that I used for the ***Williams Firesight*** article. This way I would have a totally *"tricked out"* SKS when it comes to sighting systems. This would include a really great fiber optic and aperture open sight system and a scope and mount that actually performs as they are supposed to.

As you can see as shown in **figure 4**, the ATI K-Mount is attached to both sides of the receiver. The K-Mount also sits literally on top of the receiver cover. This makes it impossible to perform the following tasks - remove the bolt carrier and bolt and use the open original sights. I don't like having to remove a scope mount ever time I want to clean a firearm.

As described, Choate includes screws for the kit but does not include tools (tap and drill bit). Choate recommends you have a gunsmith install the mount. Yes, you could do this - or you could do it yourself with the information supplied in this article!

Manufacturer's Mounting Tips: *We suggest you employ a real gunsmith to install this scope. The threads are standard 8-40 fine. The tap drill bit is #28 (.140 Dia). Every real gunsmith will have these drill bits and taps. We suggest you clamp the mount on the side of the receiver. Make sure you can see the open sights and make sure you can remove the dust cover & bolt. Align the top or bottom of the mount parallel with the bore. After that it is the usual task of spotting, drilling and tapping four holes. We strongly recommend that you use thread locking compound on the screws and also between the mount and the receiver.*

Required Tools Not Supplied

I quickly learned that you cannot get a **8/40 tap or a #28 drill bit** at you local hardware store. They are gunsmithing tools.

I like a feature that **Midway USA** has on their website. Any product they carry in the catalog, you can actually see how many they have currently in stock.

So if you overnight something - you know you will actually get it as quick as you want. I think this reduces back-orders and makes customers happy. At least it does for me. I hate it when I order something *"next day express"* and I do not receive it for a week or so because the vendor does not have it in stock.

I ordered the **Weaver Drill and Tap Set 8/40-28** for $5.97 plus shipping and handling. An ironic foot note is that when I opened the package it said it was from Brownells.

The Task at Hand

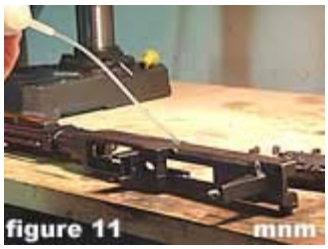
I removed the bolt, bolt carrier, and recoil spring assembly from the receiver. I replaced the receiver cover back on the receiver and locked it into place. I did this because I wanted to make sure I placed the mount at the proper clearance and height.

Next I used a pair of locking

pliers to hold the mount in place (*as shown in **figure 9***). I followed the instructions and made sure that the mount sat 1.5 inches forward of the rear of the receiver. I then made sure the mount was parallel to the barrel and checked to make sure I could see the open sights. Last I checked to make sure I could remove the receiver cover easily. Once I accomplished these steps I prepared to drill the holes.

I left the mount attached while using the #28 bit to drill the four holes. I drilled the holes through the receiver wall.

I really recommend getting an inexpensive drill press if you are going to be doing more that one mount or rifle. It is really worth the price. If you watch outlet stores or **Harbor Freight** you will be able to pick up a sturdy table top model (*as shown in **figure 10***) for less than $100.

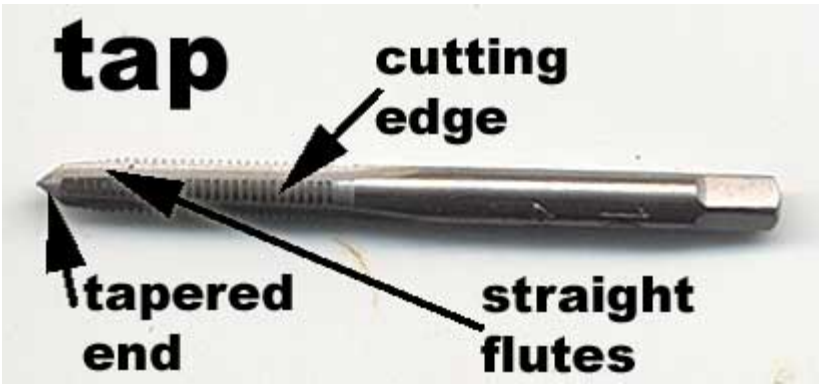


Next I removed the mount and set it aside. I placed a small amount of machine oil into each of the four holes. This helps the tap turn more easily in the hole while making threads. Half-way through the tapping process of each hole you want to apply more oil.

The 8-40 tap bit is what you use to cut threads in the receiver's drilled holes. You will have to purchase a **tap handle** similar to the one shown in **figure 12**. The prices of a tap handle ranges from $5 and up depending on the quality.

***Note:** If you plan on using the tap handle for other projects then you may want to spend a little more. The one I picked up had a tendency to allow the bit to spin at the end of the tapping of each hole, no matter how much I tightened the tool. It worked, but not as well as I had hoped.*

The MIT machinist reference describes tapping as -



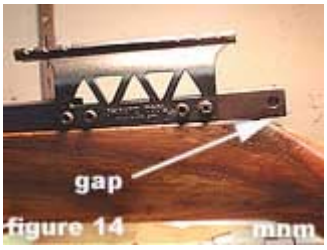
A tap has cutting edges to cut the threads and straight flutes to allow chips to be expelled. The end of the tap is tapered slightly to help the tap get started. Taps are hard and brittle so you should be careful working with them (try not to drop them or force them into a hole when stuck). Be sure that the hole you drilled is the correct size for the tap you're using or it may break inside.

Put the tap in place and apply moderate pressure as you turn the tap. It's good practice to back the tap up a bit for every quarter turn of thread you cut.

Choate recommended using thread locking compound (*Loctite is a leading brand*) to hold the screws in place. I had read somewhere that some gunsmiths use superglue in the holes as well as on the top of the receiver below the mount. This is what I chose to do. I have done this before very successfully.

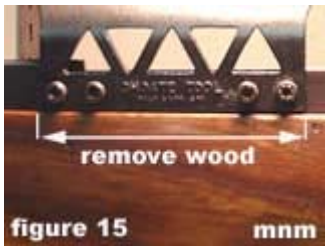
I placed a small amount of superglue between the receiver and mount and then laid the mount in place. I then put a very small amount of superglue on each screw as I installed them.

I used an allen wrench to tighten each of the four supplied screws.



Prior to installing the mount, I discovered that I would need to remove a small amount of wood from the right side of the stock.

I wanted to see if this was specific to the Yugo 59/66 and tried matching the mount to my Chinese SKS. I found I would need to modify its stock as well. **Figure 14** shows the height of the receiver on the unmodified stock and the gap.



You will need to remove the amount of wood as shown in **figure 15**. I started using a rotary tool with a wood bit but found it was easier and a more controlled task if I used a **Utility Knife**. You start by making cuts at each end. Then you can remove layers of wood like whittling, while the end cuts serve as guides to not allow you to go past the intended line.

Figure 16 shows the completed job.

I recommend taking your time.

Only remove a little wood at a time.

Be very careful not to cut yourself.

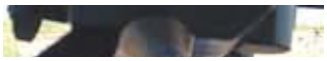
When I was finished, I used a small wood file to clean up my work and smooth out any rough edges.

When I was finished assembling the SKS, I installed a **Compact 6x32 Scope** and rings that I had from my prior experiences with mounting a scope on an SKS. The scope only cost me $35.

Figures 17, 18, and 19 show the completed job. I think it turned out pretty well! The mount is very stable and I cannot see any flexing or movement, at all. I can easily remove the receiver components and clean the receiver.

Finished Job

Range Report



As shown in **figure 20** you can see the open sights and use them.

A real plus in my opinion!

It did not take very long for me to bring the scope into adjustment.

I brought 200 rounds with me and I went through all of it in this shooting session, while shooting at different distances.

Out of all the mounts I have tried to date, I think the Choate mount is the best for the SKS.

I need to temper this comment with - I don't think the SKS is a good sniper rifle to begin with.

Please don't believe for a single second that you will get the same level of accuracy out of the SKS with a scope installed when compared to a scoped bolt-action rifle.

On Mad TV, they used to have a mock commercial about a dating service called *"Lowered Expectations"*. This is the approach you should have with a scoped SKS. You WILL get better accuracy with the scope then you do with the open sights - but not much.

Also, the folks that have failing eyes, like myself, will find it easier to sight the with the scope.

Keeping all of this in mind, **figures 22 and 23** are representative of my groupings with the Choate mount equipped SKS, at 100 yards.

My groups were considerably better than I have ever done with open sights on the same SKS, at this range.

They are not as nice as the groupings achieved with **Lil' Black Beauty**, the completely sporterized scoped m44 bolt-action carbine that I wrote about recently. I only use this as a comparison to make my point.

The Choate mount is a great addition to my favorite

SKS. I have used this SKS in prior articles and I only install products on her that I would personally purchase even if I were not writing an article. The Choate mount is one of those products.

jlm;)