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Ballistic Eyewear Shoot-Out!

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Revision vs. Wiley-X: Head to Head – Literally

by Frank Borelli

I need to start this article out with a straight statement and then a slight historical review: The statement is this:

Revision Military Eyewear has been purchasing advertising space on the Borelli Consulting website and in New American Truth magazine for going on two years, as have other companies. None of the writing we do – the evaluation and review reporting – is in any way ever dependent on what companies purchase in advertising. Additionally, we don't see it as our job to confirm the advertising content.

Now the slight history:

Back in October I decided to do some shoot testing on a pair of Revision Eyewear Sawfly glasses. This is the protective eyewear that is currently being issued to soldiers in training (US Army). Their advertising says that they shot a pair at a distance of sixteen feet with a six-shot shotgun round and the glasses took 39 hits with no penetrations. I thought about that and figured that if I get hit in the face with a blast of six-shot at a distance of five yards (approximately), I probably won't be worried about my eyes. I'll probably be more worried about my ability to breath or the blood squirting across the room from lacerated arteries and veins in my neck.

“I have to admit: I got my ass up on my shoulders a bit at having my integrity questioned... Off to the range I went.”



So what I did instead was to shoot the glasses with eight-shot from a distance of fifteen yards – forty-five feet. I felt that size shot and distance would give a person a reasonable chance of survival so that they could be worried about their eyes. I mounted the Revision Sawfly glasses into a cardboard target backer and fired the first shot. The one-piece lens separated from the frames and the nosepiece, but no shots penetrated any of the above. The first shot scored sixteen hits on the lens. I put the lens back in the frame and remounted the glasses on the target and fired again – a second round of 8-shot from 45 feet. Again no penetrations. The second shot added another 23 hits to the lens for a total of 39 hits fired from a distance of 45 feet with no penetrations.

Feeling a bit abusive and wondering just how much more such abuse the glasses could take, I remounted the glasses on the target and fired a third round of 8-shot from the seven yard line (21 feet for those who are mathematically challenged). With that

third round I added another 53 hits to the lens for a total of 92 hits from all three shots. NONE of the pellets penetrated; not even the ones fired from 21 feet.

So, quite happy with the Revision Sawfly protective eyewear system I took my shot up glasses (which are sitting here next to me as I type this) and went home to write up the report. That was published on October 22, 2007 on the Borelli Consulting website and recreated with permission by Revision Eyewear on their website on October 29th.

About a week later, in the first week of November, I received contact from a representative of a competitor company in the industry who took umbrage with the fact that I hadn't specifically tested the Sawfly glasses to confirm the claims made in the Revision Eyewear advertising material. I explained that wasn't the purpose of the testing and that performance is performance. The Sawfly glasses survived the three shots with no penetrations. Again I received a response, but this time the response intimated that perhaps I was writing nice stuff about Revision's products because they purchase advertising space from my companies. Hmm... That wasn't exactly something I appreciated hearing. I actually sat back and asked myself if Revision's patronage played any role in my writing. The conclusion I came to was this: I fired three shots on those glasses. They took it with no penetrations. I reported that in a factual manner. If the glasses had failed I'd have reported that in a factual manner as well. So, no... the fact that they advertise with my companies has nothing to do with what I wrote – or what I write today.

The competitor company I was hearing from was Wiley-X. Now, please understand, I've been a Wiley-X fan for a long time and I've written reviews for their products as far back as June of 2002. I have always found their protective eyewear to be comfortable and to provide good coverage. But I have to admit: I got my ass up on my shoulders a bit at having my integrity questioned and I let that be known. In the end I felt that the only fair thing to do would be to do side-by-side testing of comparable Revision and Wiley-X products. Off to the range I went.

The testing:

To do this testing I wanted to insure a few things:

- 1) I wanted to make sure I had a completely impartial witness on hand. I did.
- 2) I wanted to make sure that the mount for the glasses was stiffer than a single cardboard target backer. I glued three cardboard backers together to form the mount.
- 3) I wanted every shot fired to impact BOTH pair of glasses at the same time. In other words, the glasses would be shot with the same round from the same gun at the same distance at the same time. I got that set up.
- 4) Since I already knew that the Revision Eyewear Sawfly glasses would survive a hit at the 21 foot mark, I saw no need to start farther back. I fired from the 21 foot / seven yard line.

After having put the cardboard backers together, I poked holes in them so that I could mount the glasses. From Wiley-X I used a pair of PT-1SCL glasses. Per the Wiley-X website on December 12th, 2007, the PT-1s meet the following standards:

ANSI Z87.1
MIL-PRF-31013

From Revision Eyewear I used another pair of Sawfly glasses. Per the Revision Eyewear website on the same date, the Sawfly glasses meet the following standards:

ANSI Z87.1
MIL-PRF-31013

Now, I'm no brain surgeon but even I can look at those standards and recognize that they're identical. From the promotional information the glasses appear to have the same qualifications. The question of coverage is one for measurement and lots of math. When I put either pair on they both cover my eyes and if I put my fingers at the rear-most tip of the lenses where they wrap around, I end up with my fingers well behind my eye orbits. Both are comfortable to me although, to be blunt, I always felt the Wiley-Xs were a bit more stylish.

With both pair of glasses mounted in the “head” of the target, I prepared myself at the seven yard (21 foot) line. My test weapon was a Remington 870 with a twenty inch (20”) barrel. My test ammunition was Federal 2.75” 8-shot. I loaded and fired the first round from a distance of 21 feet.

I was quite surprised at the results. The Revision Eyewear Sawfly glasses were still there and intact. The Wiley-X glasses had come apart and fallen out of the target. By “come apart” I mean that the lens separated from the frame and the nose piece. Additionally, the lens had broken in half just right at the bridge of the nose. I collected the pieces of the Wiley-X PT-1s and set them aside.



Then I went to the 21-foot line and fired a second 8-shot round, as described above, at the Revision Sawfly glasses. The second shot blew the glasses through the target and they did come apart. The lens separated from the frame and nose piece. When I picked everything up I found the lens intact with a bend at the bridge with a mark that made me believe that the shotgun round had impacted that spot. I bent them back to near proper shape, put them back in the frames and slid the nose piece back on. Then I started counting impacts...

To the best of my ability using both the glasses in hand and a high-resolution picture of it, I count 103 impacts to the frame, lens and nose piece. NONE of the impacts on any of them penetrated. At that point I realized what I had:

I had a pair of Wiley-X PT-1s that had broken on the first shot. I also had a second pair of Revision Sawfly glasses that I had put more than one shot onto with no penetrations. Whether I liked it or not; whether Wiley-X would like it or not; the results were the results. “It is what it is.” The independent witness stood next to me looking at the pieces of the Wiley-X and then examining the Revision Sawflys. He shook his head in disbelief.

Now I freely admit that I can conduct these tests again and the results may come out different. I freely admit that this wasn’t a laboratory environment where foot pounds of energy are measured and mounting brackets are adjusted using calipers to insure exacting stability. Here’s the other side of that: I don’t know a cop or soldier who works in such an environment. We tend to work in all weather, all temperatures, all levels of precipitation and often times with people hitting us with or throwing objects at us. I want to wear protective glasses that can take it all the time, every time.

So, to recap:

October 22nd report shows Revision Sawfly glasses taking:
2 rounds of 8-shot from 45 feet
1 round of 8-shot from 21 feet
No penetrations from any of the above

November 11th testing shows Revision Sawfly glasses taking:
2 rounds of 8-shot from 21 feet
No penetrations from any of the above

November 11th testing shows Wiley-X PT-1 glasses taking:
1 round of 8-shot and breaking in half

I have to point out that I still haven’t tested Revision’s Sawfly glasses in such a way as to confirm their advertising. The ugly truth of it is that I don’t care if their advertising is accurate. I’ve seen what salespeople do for a living and I know that virtually any statistical data can be twisted. Additionally, I could probably find a way to shoot either pair of the glasses tested in such a way as to have them survive a round from a .308 sniper rifle. It would simply be a matter of distance and angle. That said, to perform



Red hash marks indicate 103 impacts from # 8 shot fired from Remington 870 12 gauge shotgun.

this side-by-side test, I did all I could to set it up so that the glasses being tested were receiving the same impact from the same shot from the same shotgun fired at the same distance. I can't do any better than that.

The Revision Sawfly glasses took two shots and didn't fail. The Wiley-Xs broke on the first shot. I anticipate performing this same type of testing with Revision side-by-side with protective eyewear from other manufacturers. Every time I mention this to representatives from Revision they welcome the idea. Somehow, when I've mentioned this to other manufacturers the answer I get is, "We didn't ask for impact testing." I ask you: what is the point of a company advertising ballistic eyewear that is supposed to protect your eyes from impact if the same company is afraid of impact testing?

More in the future. Stay tuned....

39 STRIKES... NO PENETRATIONS

From a shotgun blast at 16 ft.



PRESENTING THE REVISION DESERT LOCUST™ GOGGLE
To find out more, visit www.revisioneyewear.com.



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