

## PRODUCT REVIEW

# KALASHNIKOV AK47

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## SELF-LOADING SERVICE RIFLE



wire folding stock

GP WASR-10 HI-CAP

Mikhail Kalashnikov's AK47 (c. 1947) is the most prolific service rifle in the world due to its unmatched combination of reliability, ruggedness, simplicity and firepower.

Most AK type rifles use a 1mm thick sheet metal receiver introduced on the AKM (c. 1959) instead of the original model's heavier machined steel receiver.

Most AKM's use a five part delay mechanism to prevent an out-of-battery discharge due to the change in bolt bounce characteristics during automatic fire, unless fitted with a heavier RPK type light machine gun receiver (typically 1.5mm thick).

If commercial or reloaded rounds (usually with primers more sensitive than mi-spec) are used an out-of-battery slam-fire can occur as most AKs have free-floating firing

pins, which will destroy the rifle and injure the user.

If your AK does not have a firing pin spring have one fitted by a gunsmith if commercial or reloaded rounds might be used in it.

Thirty-shot magazines are standard but 20-shot mags provide all the firepower one needs for most uses, are less likely to catch on cover, clothing or vegetation, and allow you to get closer to the ground when firing prone.

Steel magazines are heavy but very reliable and durable (unlike many plastic mags).

AK type rifles are now available in a variety of calibres, but the 7.62x39mm round used in the original AK47 is best as it is much better at penetrating light cover than the small calibre 5.45mm and 5.56mm rounds, which fragment or tumble.

Short barrel variants are less reliable, so use a folding stock if you need a shorter rifle.

The East German/Romanian wire folders are best as they are strong, inexpensive, do not block any controls when folded, and easy to use if fitted with the East German style release lever instead of the hard to use button fitted to most Romanian folders.

The main ergonomic flaw of AK rifles is the poor safety/selector lever location, which can be alleviated by fitting a Krebs Enhanced Safety.

I recommend the low-cost but well made Cugir Arsenal GP WASR-10 HI-CAP Rifle (1mm stamped receiver), which have proven to be very reliable and durable.

Have it fitted with a firing pin spring and a reflex sight like the AK-IronDot as it greatly aids rapid aiming.

## LARUE TACTICAL AK-IRONDOT

The AK is not well suited to use with optical sights due to its dust cover design.

Side mounts add bulk, place the optics too high and get in the way of folding stocks.

A forward mount like the UltiMAK AK Scout Mount allows one to mount a scout

type scope or red dot type sight, but optics mounted this far forward hamper speed and can suffer from heat build up.

The best combat sight is the LaRue Tactical AK-IronDot, which is a Burris FastFire II red dot sight attached to an integral metallic rear sight.

The AK-IronDot's integral metallic rear sight can be used if the CR2032 battery failed, while the standard rear sight can be quickly put back on if a heavy impact damaged or dislodged it (you can remove the FastFire from its housing if the lens was damaged).

## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

AK pattern rifles have an unmatched combination of reliability, ruggedness, simplicity and firepower, and are readily available worldwide, thus ideal for militia use.

## ACCESSORIES

### Sling

Tactical Sling (TAS-AK). [Eagle Industries]

### Selector/Safety Lever

Mark IV Enhanced Safety (with hold-open notch). [Krebs Custom]

### Front Sight Blade

24/7 Tritium Stripe. [XS Sights Systems]

### Flash Suppressor

Vortex AK-47/AKM. [Smith Enterprise, Inc.]

### Maintenance Tool

Samson Field Survivor FS-003-AK. [Samson Manufacturing Corp.]

### Folding Stock

AK Romanian Side Folder. [DPH Arms]



## HOT TIP

Download magazines by at least 10% to help prevent metal fatigue to their springs.

## MANUFACTURER

Cugir Arsenal (Romania)