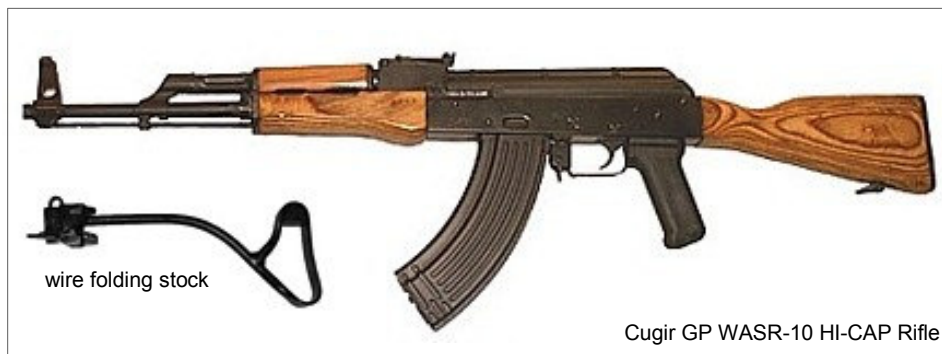


KALASHNIKOV AK-47

BY RICHARD LUTZ

MAY 2012

SELF-LOADING SERVICE RIFLE (7.62x39MM)



Cugir GP WASR-10 HI-CAP Rifle

Mikhail Kalashnikov's AK-47 (c. 1947) is the best service rifle due to its unmatched combination of reliability, durability, robustness, simplicity and firepower.

Development began during WWII in response to the use of assault rifles by Nazi troops.

Most AK type rifles use a 1mm thick sheet metal receiver introduced on the AKM-47 (c. 1959) instead of the original model's heavier machined steel receiver.

Most AKMs 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 1.5mm RPK light machine-gun receiver.

If sporting rounds are used (usually with primers more sensitive than mil-spec) an out-of-battery slam-fire can

occur as most AKs use a free-floating firing pin, which will destroy the rifle and injure the user, so fit a FP spring if it does not already have one.

I prefer 20-shot magazines as they are far less likely to snag on clothing or cover and provide all the firepower one needs with a semi-automatic.

Steel magazines are heavy but very reliable and durable, unlike most plastic magazines.

AK type rifles are now available in a variety of calibres, but the 7.62x39mm round used in the original AK-47 is best as it is much better at penetrating light cover than the smaller, faster bullets used in the 5.45mm and 5.56mm rounds that readily fragment.

Short barrel variants are less reliable, much louder, and have a shorter sight radius, so fit a folding stock if you need a shorter rifle.

The East German/Romanian wire folders are best as they are rigid, do not block any controls when folded, can be used with a conventional scope mount (fitted to the receiver), and are easy to use if fitted with the East German style release lever instead of the button that most Romanian folders are fitted with (wrap it with paracord for comfort).

The AK selector/safety lever is poorly located, which can be alleviated by fitting a Krebs Mark IV Enhanced Safety (bolt hold open version).

I recommend Cugir Arsenal's GP WASR-10 HI-CAP Rifle (1mm receiver) marketed by Century International Arms, which has proven to be very reliable despite its low price.

A Picatinny rail handguard (a modified laminated wood handguard will do) facilitates the use of lights and lasers.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The ideal rifle for militia use due to its unmatched combination of reliability, durability, robustness, simplicity and firepower.

ACCESSORIES

Cleaning Kit

Hoppe's BoreSnake/Gunzilla BC-10. [Hoppe's/Gunzilla]

Dry Fire Rounds

A-Zoom Snap Caps. [Lyman Products Corp.]

Ear Plugs

EarPro EP3 or EP4 Sonic Defenders. [SureFire]

Flash Suppressor

Type 84 flash hider. [Rifle Dynamics]

Folding Stock

AK Romanian Side Folder. [DPH Arms]

Front Sight

24/7 Tritium Stripe. [XS Sights Systems]

Handbook

7.62x39mm AK-47 Handbook. [Arms & Militaria Press]

Maintenance Tool

Samson Field Survivor. [Samson Manufacturing Corp.]

Selector/Safety Lever

Mark IV Enhanced Safety. [Krebs Custom]

Sling

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

TRIJICON RMR (RUGGEDIZED MINATURE REFLEX)



Trijicon's tough RMR sight is ideal for an AK. I prefer the Dual Illuminated versions as a failure prone battery is not used. The best way to attach one is via a MI/US P.A.L.M. Optic Specific Top

Cover (MI-AKH-RMR) from Midwest Industries, which must be mated with the M1-AK Universal AK47/74 Handguard. It can be attached via an AK Side Railed Scope Mount (MI-AKSMMI), which can also be used to mount a telescopic sight.

HOT TIP

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

BEST PRODUCERS

Cugir Arsenal (Romania)
Izhmash (Russia)