

The distinctive angled muzzle compensator on AKM-type Kalashnikovs helps to control muzzle climb during burst fire by driving the muzzle downward to a slight extent.



This slightly forward-sloping pistol grip forearm was made from a single piece of laminated beechwood. The slanted grip allowed the bottom-folder stock to close.



The fixed buttstock on this Romanian AKM is made of laminated beech, reinforced with steel pins. Kokalis prefers a fixed stock, saying it makes for a sturdier hold.

in just about every other way identical to those encountered in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The receivers are imported with magazine wells that accept only a single-column magazine. The receivers are then machined to accept the standard AK 30-round, staggered-column, detachable box-type magazine and the rifles are assembled with a specified number of key components manufactured in the United States. When the federal assault-weapons ban ended, a number of terrifying features, such as a removable muzzle compensator/flash hider, a bayonet lug and a folding stock that actually folds were no longer banned and the rifles became more authentic in appearance.

I have personally never been enamored with folding or collapsible stocks. Those riding the cramped quarters of a main battle tank or armored fighting vehicle have legitimate justification for their use. In addition, paratroopers may be well served by rifles in compact envelopes. However, everyone else is far better off with a fixed stock, as it provides a far more stable firing platform.

All of the Romanian semiautomatic-only Kalashnikovs marketed by Century Arms International, Inc. are of the AKM-type (Modernizirovannyi Avtomat Kalashnikova). For reasons not entirely clear, the first AK47 rifles were assembled using stamped, hot-rolled, sheet metal riveted and welded receivers. During World War II, the major concern of the Soviet defense industry was the manufacture of reasonably inexpensive small arms that were reliable.

However, it is also not clear why after only three years of production, the original stamped-sheet-metal-receiver-type AK47 was abandoned in favor of one with a machined-steel receiver. Some have speculated that the early stamped-sheet-metal AK47s lacked durability.

Others have postulated that after World War II, so much demand was placed upon the tool and die makers who made

stamping dies and that so many arsenals still had large quantities of milling, broaching and drilling tools that it was easier to revert back to a forged, mill-finished receiver. By the time the decision was made to go back to a stamped-sheet-metal receiver, the AK was ready for some fairly significant design improvements.

First of all, by reverting once more to sheet-metal manufacture, weight could be reduced from 9.48 pounds (4.3 kg) to 6.92 pounds (3.14 kg). Secondly, a five-component anti-bounce mechanism was added to the trigger mechanism, which delayed the hammer's fall. The rear sight was recalibrated with a maximum range setting of 1000 meters instead of the 800 meters found on the AK47. This latter modification is almost dreamlike, as the useful combat range of the 7.62x39mm cartridge is little more than 300 meters.

An AKM-type receiver can be instantly identified by the oval indentations on each side above the center of the magazine well. These indentations were designed to serve as guides when inserting magazines. Other distinguishing features include the addition of gripping ribs on the forend, strengthening ribs on the sheet-metal receiver top cover, the absence of gas vents in the gas cylinder and a small muzzle compensator that drives the muzzle slightly downward and to the left, which is the correct direction of compensation for a right-handed operator.

AKM receivers are generally fabricated from sheet metal 1 mm in thickness. The only exception is Yugoslavia, whose receivers were made from sheet metal 1.5 mm in thickness. In theory, Yugoslavian AKMs should be capable of slightly greater accuracy potential. In reality, this is difficult to confirm.

The Kalashnikov rifle's accuracy potential has been the subject of considerable discussion. Few AKs can generate group dis-

person better than 4 to 5 moa. During the recoil and counter-recoil cycles, the AKM's sheet-metal receiver is subjected to a considerable amount of temporary distortion. This certainly has some effect on the AKM's accuracy potential. However, it has been my personal observation that a substantial amount of the problem is due to the generally mediocre quality of former ComBloc small arms ammunition.

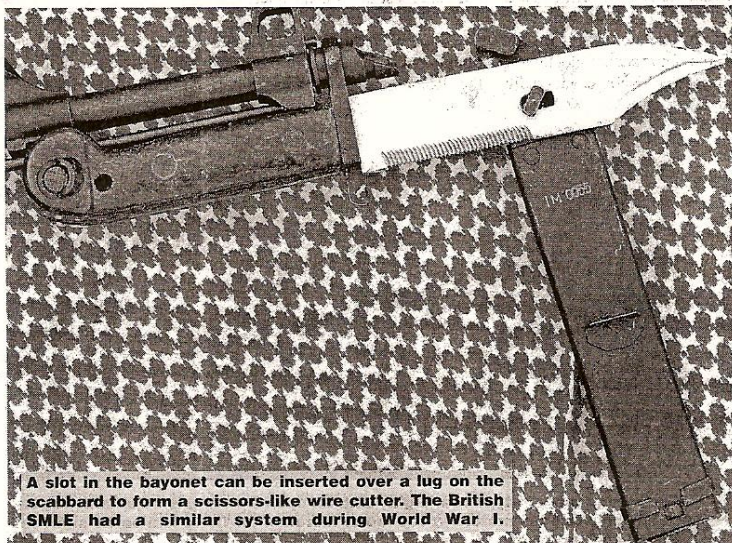
Several years ago, I tested the AK105 series in Russia. Rifles in three calibers were presented to me for test and evaluation: 7.62x39mm, 5.45x39mm and 5.56x45mm NATO. The rifles chambered for the 5.56x45mm NATO cartridge were noticeably more accurate than the others.

Examining the headstamp, I found that the 5.56x45mm NATO cartridges had been manufactured by Fabrique Nationale in Herstal, Belgium. As the AK105 rifles were identical in all regards except caliber and the 7.62x39mm and 5.45x39mm cartridges were of indigenous manufacture, I could only conclude that the FN ammunition was better.

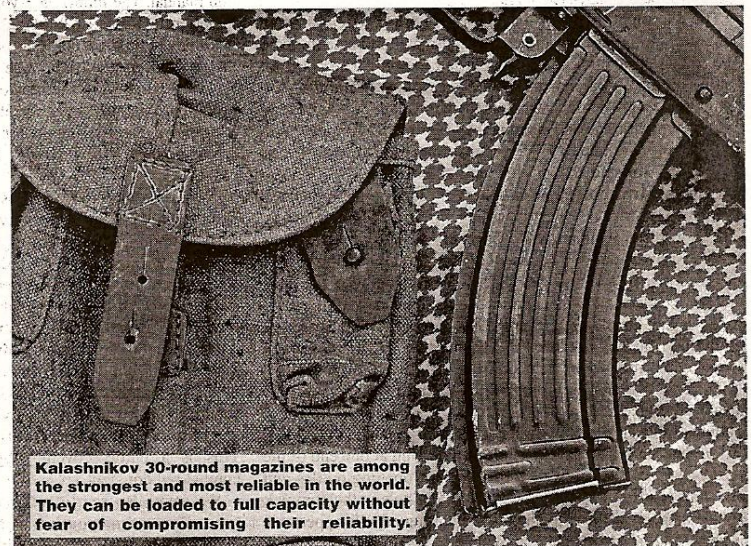
ROMARM manufactures AKM rifles in three calibers: 7.62x39mm, 5.45x39mm and 5.56x45mm NATO. Buttstock configurations are either fixed, made of laminated wood, or a side-folding stock that duplicates the East German MPiKMS-74 version. This is essentially a single steel rod bent at the rear end to form a butt. Short-barreled models are also available.

Romanian production of the AK47 commenced at the ROMARM/Cugir factory in the early 1960s. By the late 1960s, Romanian production was changed to the AKM with a vertical pistol grip forearm that became a distinguishing characteristic of all Romanian Kalashnikovs.

This slightly forward-sloping pistol grip forearm was made from a single piece of laminated beech wood. Designed to provide operators with greater control, and smaller group dispersion in burst fire, it was effective.



A slot in the bayonet can be inserted over a lug on the scabbard to form a scissors-like wire cutter. The British SMLE had a similar system during World War I.



Kalashnikov 30-round magazines are among the strongest and most reliable in the world. They can be loaded to full capacity without fear of compromising their reliability.