

Gun Snobs of America

A History Lesson

Recently engaging in a conversation with Jim Petriello, proprietor of The Hunter's Hut, he stated that much feedback about the "made in America" IO AKs he is promoting, centered on the fact that AKs do not have milled receivers. I know that here in America we have so much available to us that many tend to use every last detail to provide a filter through which the smallest number of contenders can purge. Many of these filters are invalid and to an extent wrongly discriminatory, this "milled receiver" definitive being the very one with which I must take issue. We are fond of using this delineator to separate the AR from the AKs and their variants because we want to find reasons to justify the superiority of the AR. This is only normal to have pride in the products of your country over others but the IO AK is made here. Regardless of the origin or manufacturer of the AK, let's for just a moment take a look at weapons that have receivers that are not "milled".

Israeli Uzi

Israeli Galil

FN FAL G1 (NATO Standard Issue worldwide), Metric and inch, made in many countries

Argentine FMK-3 (Uzi derivative)

Russian Kalashnikov AK47 and derivatives

Bulgarian AK74

Hungarian AMD65

Polish AKMS

Polish Tatnal AK74

Romanian RPK

German HK 33, G36, MP MG4 and all their derivatives

British G3

Cobray MC 10, 11

British Sten, still winning smg competitions

Polish PPS-43

Finnish Suomi M31

And there are just as many not listed, certainly not too shabby a resume for receivers that are not milled. If you don't recognize many of the weapons on this list you probably shouldn't have an opinion anyway.

Could it be that there are advantages to receivers that are not milled and could it also be that there isn't any reason for a semi or fully automatic receiver to be milled?

In point of fact, any firearm in which the bolt locks up into the barrel needs the receiver not for strength but for a guide, a protective housing and a skeletal structure. In this type of design the receiver is not the component that must overcome the energy of the explosion inside the chamber. We are a nation of armchair experts who know nothing of use in the field or how a particular detail in construction transfers to asset or liability on the street or in battle. We learn talking points to reinforce our opinion but these points are not founded in practical experience, they are passed down from person to person, none of which have any real world experience and again no one really ever explains the detriment of the fact that the receiver is stamped, just that it is.

Facts from the book "The Gun" by C.J. Chivers

The AK is the firearm that has had the most massive global impact, period. Our current state of global insecurity and unrest lies not in the atomic age but in the Kalashnikov age and without the development of that particular weapon, the entire world might look very different. Many of the third world victories and radical insurrections that have propelled our world into this 21st century turmoil

were possible only because of the AK47. In the development of the Kalashnikov, the Russians originally deployed a simple, robust, cheap, accurate, light weight, reliable fully automatic weapon that could function in spite of the dimwitted, technologically disinclined, uneducated, inexperienced and unsophisticated disposable armies of 2nd, 3rd and 4th world countries. It could be manufactured in any factory with low tech equipment, it is not temperamental about environment, weather or maintenance, and until recently it cost less than ¼ the cost of an AR. And might I add that all these attributes existed from the start, not after a 50 year period of refinement and evolution as in the case of the AR. Cheap, easily obtainable personal machine guns were and are the mainstay of third world armies and terrorist groups in every county in the world and to this day the AK retains the number one spot in this category due to all of the reasons mentioned above.

If we look at 200 yards as the outside of the envelope for which many of these modern military rifles were designed, we see that the 7.62 X 39 has decent ballistics capable of lethality. Without getting overly complicated, and looking at typical loads for the 2 calibers at a distance of 300 yards, while the foot pounds of energy is almost identical at that range, 7.62 X 39 = 668 ft lbs vs. 5.56 = 602 ft lbs, the holdover or drop with a 100 yard zero would be 25" for the 7.62 X 39 vs. 10.9" for the 5.56. At 500 yards the drop for the 7.62 X 39 would be 108" vs. 50" for the 5.56. That effectively limits the 7.62 X 39 to a practical maximum range just a bit beyond of 200 yards unless a shooter is really experienced while 300 yds. might be the outside of the envelope for most applications and shooters using the 5.56 as a defense round. I am not a fan of the 5.56 beyond this range unless the target is in the fox/coyote class baring longer barrels and heavier (77 grain) bullets. Wind drift alone becomes a nightmare and there are limitless choices of superior long range calibers. This discussion is academic at best anyway, besides varmint hunters, how many black gun owners have ever shot their rifles at 200 yards??? Probably not 10% really, no matter how much they talk up the range potential.

If there is an area in which the AK is inferior, in it's original form, to the current AR, that would be the lack of modularity and understand that this is comparing apples to oranges as the original ARs were not flexible either. As issued AKs never

had the advantage of picatinny rail systems to accommodate mission specific, easily changeable optics and accessories but today there are aftermarket picatinny rail pieces that make the AK just as flexible as the AR. The picatinny rail is really a recent addition even to the AR platform, as are the accessories, many of which cost more than the rifles themselves. To the point, with a 200 yard intended purpose many of the battery eating accessories were not even considered.

In addition to ease of manufacturing, economy and reliability, another considerable advantage of the AK design is the absence of the recoil spring housing tube protruding from the rear of the lower on an AR. This allows configurations with folding stocks and pistol grips that make the AK even more compact than the AR.

I could go on forever on the historical importance and the virtues of the AK platform but the bottom line is, many AR owners only want a self defense weapon for their home and property and for that purpose the AK and especially the "made in the USA" IO piece sold by Hunter's Hut is a great choice. Take a look at the review posted by Jim and the super cool tactical units he has put together on this platform and please reserve the word "milled" for oats. After it comes out of the back end of horse it is something else entirely.

Joe Piazza