

## WEAPONS CORNER

# Can You ID These Rifles?



This issue of *Infantry* introduces a new feature dedicated to friendly and enemy infantry weapons. In this and succeeding issues, readers will find photos and data on small arms, grenades and mines, improvised explosive devices, antiarmor weapons and demolitions, and any other weapons that our Soldiers employ or can expect to encounter on the battlefield. As our readers around the world, you will have seen these and other weapons. We welcome your comments, and will include your photos of weapons, descriptions of their effectiveness, and the circumstances under which you have observed them in an issue of our branch magazine.

This first Weapons Corner will be an easy one. Check out the pictures and match the number of the rifle with the weapons' designation beside the photos.

**Match picture with correct weapon designation**

- a. AKM with 30mm GP 25
- b. AKM
- c. AK-47
- d. AKMS

**See page 48 for answers and discussion.**

In this first installment of Weapons Corner, we present the Kalashnikov assault rifle and several of its variants. Mikhail T. Kalashnikov, a Red Army tank commander in World War II, began formulating the idea of a compact, tough submachine gun for tank commanders while he was hospitalized recovering from wounds. Assigned to the small arms research directorate in 1942, he produced the first prototype of his rifle — the AK-47 — in 1945. After testing, the weapon was accepted for service in 1947 and fielded to the Soviet Army starting in 1949. The AK-47 and its variants have been manufactured in at least nine other countries, and U.S. forces have faced it in combat across the globe in large numbers ever since the earliest days of the war in Vietnam. The standard box magazine for the Kalashnikov assault rifle hold 30 rounds, although the rifle may be seen with 20-round box, 60-round double stack, and 100-round banana magazines, and a 75-round drum. The 7.62x39mm cartridge is slightly less powerful than the popular .30-30 Winchester Center Fire hunting round, but the round's ballistic performance is similar. The 7.62x39mm is so named because of the 7.62mm bullet (.308 caliber) and its 39mm long cartridge case. This is the standard European system of cartridge designation: the 7.62 NATO round is the 7.62x51mm in European parlance, and the German 8mm Mauser service round of World War II — still in use by insurgents around the world — is actually the 7.92x57mm.

A force protection note: huge numbers of Kalashnikovs and their variants have been captured by U.S. and Coalition forces, and some were sabotaged prior to capture, particularly the SVD sniper rifles. In at least two cases, the upper handguards of the SVDs had been removed, a hole bored through the barrel or chamber, and the handguards replaced. All captured weapons must be inspected by an armorer before they are fired or issued for training.

The illustrations and weapons information have been provided courtesy of Geoff Wollin, G-2 Directorate, United States Army Infantry Center.

## Differences Between the Kalashnikovs

### AK-47

- Milled/machined receiver
- More robust and reliable
- Older than the AKM
- More expensive to produce
- Many different variants

### AKM

- "M" stands for modernized
- Stamped receiver
- Easily identified by the numerous rivets
- Shorter life span
- Numerous variants as well

### Weapon and Cartridge Characteristics

- Type of operation:** Gas operated
- Magazine capacity:** 30 rounds
- Overall length of rifle:** 31.5 inches
- Weight, loaded:** 9.5 pounds
- Bullet weight:** 122 grains, FMJ
- Muzzle velocity:** 2,329 feet per second
- Muzzle energy:** 1,469 foot pounds
- Rate of fire, full auto:** 600 rounds per minute



- A) Front sight post assembly
- B) Barrel
- C) Gas tube and upper hand guard assembly
- D) Cleaning rod
- E) Lower hand guard
- F) Rear sight assembly
- G) Receive dust cover
- H) 30-round magazine
- I) Receiver
- J) Trigger assembly
- K) Pistol grip
- L) Butt stock
- M) Rear sling swivel
- N) Driving spring guide
- O) Fire selector lever
- P) Magazine catch
- Q) Charging handle
- R) Gas tube and upper hand guard assembly release lever
- S) Front sling swivel
- T) Muzzle nut (barrel accessory receptor)

## Technical Data

**Overall Length:** AK-47 - 900mm  
AKS-47 550 - 800mm

**Feed Device:** 30-rd box magazine  
60-rd "Double Stack"  
20-rd box magazine  
75-rd drum  
100-rd "Banana" magazine

**Weight loaded:** AK-47: 9.5 lbs  
w/ 30-rd magazine AKM: 7 lbs



Answers: 1)B 2)D 3)A 4)C