

POLYTECH LEGEND AK-47S

Price.....\$1,500



Our recommendation: The PolyTech AK-47S Legend is stout, reliable, and well made. If you can find one at an affordable price, buy it. It'll go bang every time.

SPECIFICATIONS

Warranty: None Written

FINISH	Blued	MAGAZINE CAPACITY	30
WEIGHT	8.4 lbs.	MAGAZINE TYPE	Detachable
OVERALL LENGTH	34.5 in.	STOCK MATERIAL	WOOD
LENGTH (STOCK FOLDED)	25 in.	ACTION TYPE	Semiauto
BARREL LENGTH	16.2 in.	TRIGGER PULL	4.2 lbs.
SIGHT RADIUS	15.0 in.	LENGTH OF PULL	13 in.

The Cartridge

The 7.62 x 39 was developed by the Soviets for the Simonov-designed SKS rifle, which became the Soviet bloc's standard in 1943. The Russians got the idea from the German 7.92 Kurz (short) used in Hitler's *Sturm-gewehr*, the first "assault rifle." Also called the .30 Russian Short, the 7.62 x 39 has a tapered case 1.5 inches long. The pronounced taper is what causes high-capacity magazines to have that curved "banana" shape, and also adds to the reliability of rifles that chamber it, because the cartridge goes into and comes out of the chamber easily. Ballistics are mediocre, the 122-grain bullet generally leaving the muzzle at somewhat under 2,400 fps. Currently, we're seeing lots of Russian-made non-corrosive but non-reloadable hollowpoint ammunition for sale at low prices. It performed well in our testing, in spite of the fact that the Russian powder produced a foul-smelling smoke.

Many sportsmen use the SKS—usually with sporting stock, and sometimes a scope—for deer hunting, and the cartridge and that rifle are both useful for deer, but that's about the upper hunting limit. The .30 Russian Short cartridge has more power than a .30 Carbine, but less than a .30-30. Although the SKS or Mini-30 might make good deer rifles, taking the folding-stock PolyTech Legend hunting would seem to be an exercise in misuse of a design. For one thing, the sights of the Legend are simply not the best for precision shooting. We have fired a scope-mounted fully auto version of the AK-47, and in single-shot mode it had questionable accuracy for hunting. The rifle's design required a high scope mount, was uncomfortable, and we don't recommend that setup for hunting.

Much of the surplus ammunition available today is not reloadable. However, with soft-nose ammunition so inexpensive and readily available

now, there is little reason to reload it. If you insist, many makers offer reloading dies, and you can buy reloadable U.S.-made brass from numerous sources. If you reload, try to match your choice of bullet to your rifle. Overseas-made rifles commonly have a groove diameter of 0.310 to 0.312 inch, rather than our common .30-caliber size of 0.308. However, several bullet makers offer slugs for this cartridge in a variety of sizes. Pick one to match your barrel. Some reloading dies come with two expander balls for different bullet sizes. Although the Ruger bore is made for 0.308 bullets, it will handle the many sizes of surplus ammunition. Slightly oversized bullets don't give pressure problems at the relatively low intensity to which this cartridge is loaded, but you'll never get best accuracy or longest barrel life if the bullets don't match the bore.

We tested three types of ammunition, Russian surplus with a ballistically gorgeous hollowpoint, steel-jacket, copper-clad, boattail, 122-grain, 0.309-inch bullet in non-corrosive-primed steel cases; Winchester FMJ with 123-grain, gilding-metal, 0.310-inch bullet in brass (reloadable) cases; and Czech-made Sellier & Bellot FMJ ball with 122-grain, steel-jacket, copper-clad, 0.311 bullet in non-corrosive steel cases. SAAMI nominal size for the cartridge is 0.310. Here's how the guns stacked up.

Poly Technologies, Inc. Legend Series AK-47S

Our recommendation: A fine example of the world's most prolific firearm, the \$1,500 pre-ban PolyTech Legend with 16.25-inch barrel is not a hunting rifle, but a fun gun or study example for the dedicated student of firearms history. It is one extremely reliable rifle, simple, rugged, and well made, and it ought to last many lifetimes. Buy it if you can find it.

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