


world, and you'll find out it's the AK-47, short for Avtomat Kalashnikov, Model of 1947. The first Russian word means automatic-type rifle, as in selective fire. The second indicates it to be an invention of the talented Mikhail Kalashnikov, who stands with John Garand and Eugene Stoner as one of the premier firearms inventors in history. Although Kalashnikov invented the AK-47, the .30 Russian Short cartridge actually preceded it by four years. The cartridge was originally designed for the 10-shot semiautomatic SKS rifle, an invention of another Russian named Simonov. The SKS became the standard army rifle for Russia in 1943 until it was superseded by the Kalashnikov design in 1947. Our test rifle, the Chinese-made AK-47S, is semiautomatic instead of selective fire, but otherwise is an extremely close copy of the original Kalashnikov.

The PolyTech AK-47S Legend was imported for about one year only, before the importation ban on rifles having pistol grips, high-capacity magazines, bayonets, folding stocks, etc., stopped it. Our test rifle was essentially new in the box, in perfect condition. The package included three 30-round magazines, bayonet with scabbard, original sling, oil bottle, cleaning kit, and detailed instruction booklet. The stock folded forward at the touch of a button, making the rifle darned near a concealed-carry gun.

With its 30-round magazine affixed, and with that business-like folding stock, this rifle defines nasty-looking. One look at it would give Sarah Brady the shivers. However, its great world-wide reputation was gained not from its looks, but from its absolute reliability. They work, come hell or high water, just like our test sample did.

The AK is a gas-operated rotating-bolt rifle, with gas tube located over the barrel. Gas from the fired cartridge is bled off into the gas tube to impact on a pushrod that, in turn, kicks the bolt carrier rearward. The

RUGER MINI-30		Price.....\$609
		
SPECIFICATIONS		Warranty: None Written
FINISH	Stainless	MAGAZINE TYPE Detachable
WEIGHT	7 lbs.	STOCK MATERIAL
OVERALL LENGTH	37.2 in.	ACTION TYPE
BARREL LENGTH	18.5 in.	TRIGGER PULL
SIGHT RADIUS	21.2 in.	LENGTH OF PULL
MAGAZINE CAPACITY	5	

Our recommendation: The Mini-30 was handy and had no bad habits other than needing a trigger job. **Big positive:** Retail availability. If you have trouble finding the other two guns the Ruger is a solid choice.

carrier spins the bolt out of lockup and pulls it rearward against a captive recoil spring located at the rear of the receiver. The empty case is pulled from the chrome-lined chamber by a very large extractor, and ejected against a protrusion within the action. The bolt then returns, picking up the next cartridge in the magazine on its way home. There is no way to lock the bolt open except by inserting a cartridge into the ejection port. Also, the bolt closes after the last shot in the magazine is fired. Tactically that might not be what the shooter likes, but because the bolt never remains open, dirt stays out. In bad conditions that always-closed bolt makes some sense.

The safety of the AK-47 design is a long lever protruding forward from a pivot pin located on the right side of the action. The forward arm of the

safety covers the bolt-handle port when the safety is on (up). With the safety on, the bolt cannot be cycled, but can be drawn back enough to let the shooter see a round in the chamber. Taking the safety off results in a loud click, which we've been told acted as a forewarning to the troops against which this rifle was employed, so they had some advance warning that they were about to be fired on. Experienced forces in Viet Nam taped or wired the safety to avoid that noise. An annoying feature of this safety design is that it drags against the outside of the action, taking the bluing off immediately and leaving a scored line. We taped the receiver under the safety to avoid marring our perfect-condition loaner. Our test version of the design had some very nice features, unlike cheaper clones. For instance, the