

Ahern Under the Gun: Centurion 39,



Clockwise from top: 1.) The Centurion 39 with 30-round magazine and Crimson Trace light/laser/vertical fore end unit. 2.) The manufacturing data and an American Flag can be seen on the Centurion 39's receiver. 3.) In addition to the muzzle, the laser and the light, the orange post front sight is readily visible here. 4.) With the five-round magazine in place, the AK-type rifle will have a lower profile for bench and prone positions. A 30-round magazine is shown below the rifle.

By Jerry Ahern, Photos by Sharon Ahern

I've lately become an ardent fan of the AK-47 type rifle. Most of these rifles found in the United States are an amalgam of overseas-made parts that are legally importable and U.S.A. made parts that conform to all the BATFE regulations, so the result is a semi-automatic only military sporter, which cannot be converted to selective fire in the normal course of events. Oft times erroneously, gunny people, including writers like myself, will refer to these AK-type firearms and similar militarily inspired weapons as semi-automatic or civilian-legal assault rifles. Granted, in a pinch, with really fast trigger work, an operator familiar with the firearm can lay down a pretty decent amount of suppressive fire in semi-automatic mode only. These are sporterized military firearms that can be used defensively; but, where legal to do so, can be taken into the game fields or used in recreational shooting activities for target practice and the like.

What was missing up until this time was an AK-47 type firearm made completely from American parts, one that was capable, without alteration, of accepting Picatinny/universal rail accessories,

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accepted conventional AK-47 magazines and had a stock that was upsized to allow greater compatibility with the typically larger American physique.

The most widely disseminated personal weapon on the planet in the modern age is the AK-47. As this is written in November of 2010, the next day will be the tenth and that will be the 91st birthday of the AK-47's designer, Mikhail Kalashnikov. As Americans, we may not have always

been thrilled with the uses to which AKs were put; but, since its finalization in 1947 and still to this day in military service, the AK-47 has an enviable reputation for ruggedness, simplicity and reliability.

This all-American-made AK-47 has some other unique features not found on all AKs. The receiver is machined from a solid block of ordnance steel. I mentioned this to my friend Sid Woodcock, the designer of the Detonics .45 and an all-around world-class weapons expert. Without hesitation, Sid told me the weapon would probably last a lifetime because of that.