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The **SKS** is a utilitarian tool. It is not pretty. It is not terribly accurate. It is designed to - **1)** function in almost any condition or climate, **2)** be disassembled and reassembled without any tools and with little to no training, **3)** be manufactured cheaply out of mostly stamped pieces of steel, and **4)** supply maximum firepower against its enemies.

The SKS is and does all of these things.

Most people see the AK 47 as the arsenal or tool of revolution. The AK gets all of the glamour and glory, but the SKS was the sturdy and reliable Hammer and Sickle of revolution. It has been used in almost every conflict on the face of the planet for most of the past 50 years, and in great numbers. Very few firearms have that distinction.

I had not shot a SKS prior to this outing. I had shot several semiautomatic AKs and assumed it would be pretty much the same. My friend Tony loaned me one to complete the SKS section on SurplusRifle.com and this is the one I used for this article.



Ammo



I really do not know why anyone would ever load **7.62x39**. I have never seen non-corrosive ammo

so inexpensive in my life. I could not believe it when I paid \$1.97 per twenty round package. Put away the calculator - that is \$.09 per round. If you purchase by the thousand - you can get the price per round down to the \$.07 to \$.08 range. Amazing, for a rifle cartridge. Most ammo I reload cost me more than twice that per round, if not more! I grabbed three packages and headed out to the range.

Shooting



Tony went with me and helped take some of the pictures and do set up for the test. Interesting point of note - **Figures 2 and 3** show time-lapse photos of the bolt in the closed position in **Figure 2** and then caught in **Figure 3** open with gas escaping, just before sliding forward and chambering another round!



Loading the SKS can be accomplished in a couple of ways, by loading single rounds through the top of the receiver or by using a stripper clip. Using the stripper clip can load ten rounds very quickly - if you know the trick.



The trick is to pull back on the bolt a little bit as shown in **Figures 7 and 8**. Even still, you have to push down pretty hard to get the ten 7.62x39 cartridges into the magazine. I can imagine during battle, with the adrenaline flowing, you probably would not even notice. I loaded my first ten rounds and fired off. I really could not get the hang of the trigger. I have never found a trigger with so much spring like drag until the hammer releases.



I figure it would take some time to get used to the trigger. Since the SKS was not really designed to be a sniper's rifle - trigger pull was probably the least important

design issue they had to worry about. **Figure 6** shows my spread. I kind of expected this type of grouping. Remember, the weapon is designed to place bullets into the mass size of a man and nothing more. Expecting it to group into the proverbial **black** was not one of my expectations.



So when Tony placed his shots as well as he did as shown in **Figure 5** - I have to tell you I was surprised! He only had one shot place out of the **black**. To say the least - I was embarrassed.

Hopeful, I loaded up another ten cartridges and practiced. After another thirty rounds or so I was able to start bringing in respectable groups. I was getting used to the trigger. For most of my rifles - I have the trigger pull memorized. I have practiced enough that I know when they are going to break.

One funny and contradicting note - I took my Swedish Mauser m96 with me for Tony to try out and when I loaded it up and shot it for the first time after shooting the SKS, the trigger felt as light as a feather. I had to retrain myself to use the Swede's trigger - I kept pulling too hard and having the trigger break long before expected. This caused me to jerk the rifle.

I am probably going to pick up an SKS for myself. You can't go wrong for cheap plinking. Ammo is almost as cheap as .22 rimfire and very plentiful. I have my eyes on a nice little Romanian down at the shop.

jlm

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