The Wieger STG 940 series of rifles represented an effort by East Germany (GDR—German Democratic Republic) to develop a small arms system independent of the Soviet Union, but loosely based upon the AK74. Although the AK74 was chambered for the 5.45x39mm ComBloc cartridge, the Wieger STG 940 rifles were designed to be chambered for the 5.56x45mm NATO round.

There were to be five different variants, to include both a standard (STG 941) assault rifle with a fixed stock and a version with a folding stock (STG 942) and compact, special purpose (STG 943) assault rifle, a sniper weapon system (PG 945) and a light machine gun (LMG 944). It has been reported, but not documented, that the STG 943 was briefly in service with the STASI. The acronym “STG” stands for SturmGewehr (assault rifle) in the German language.

Development of this little-known weapon system and preparation for its series production commenced in approximately 1985. Involved in this project were the Ministry for Foreign Trade (MAH), the department of armament and chemical services (BCD) of the ministry for public security (MfS). Manufacture was to take place in Suhl with an anticipated production capacity of 200,000 rifles per year.

The exact reasons for the development of the STG 940 concept remain unclear. Most likely, it was thought that selling it would improve East Germany’s ever-worsening foreign trade balance with countries outside the Warsaw Pact. In 1981 East Germany had obtained a license to produce the AK74 without penalties to do so. Accurate production figures of the Wieger STG 940 weapons series are not available. Some sources indicate that possibly 10,000 STG 941 and STG 942 rifles were produced. And thus ended the Wieger STG 940—until now.

The wall came down and the German Federal Republic cancelled both the Peruvian and Indian orders, paying penalties to do so. Accurate production figures of the Wieger STG 940 weapons series are not available. Some sources indicate that possibly 10,000 STG 941 and STG 942 rifles were produced. And thus ended the Wieger STG 940—until now.

The STG-2000-C is a remarkable semiautomatic-only recreation of the highly regarded East German Wieger STG 941 assault rifle. It’s an absolute must for AK collectors.

The flash suppressor brings the total barrel length to 17.5 inches (444.5mm). The chrome-lined bore has four grooves, 1:12 right-hand twist (1:300mm). The weight of this rifle, empty and without a magazine, is only 6.6 pounds (approximately 3kg).

The rifle was made in Romania. I.O., Inc. had to reconfigure the rifle from its original thumbhole stock and single-column magazine to the Wieger-style furniture and a staggered-column magazine. Romanian WASR-type sheet-metal receiver bodies do not have the dimples on each side of the magazine well to guide the magazine. Instead, they have two spring fingers inside the magazine well to guide the single-column magazine.

I.O., Inc. machines away those fingers at the same time that they enlarge the magazine well to accept a staggered-column magazine; as well as its captive lock pin and spring are proprietary and derived directly from the original Wieger 940.
The open U-notch, tangent-type rear sight, adjustable for elevation only, features 100-meter elevation adjustments from 100 to 1000 meters. A battle sight setting, marked with a Cyrillic “P” indicates a target engagement range of zero to 300 meters.

I have said many times before that 1000 meters is well beyond the wound ballistics capability of the 7.62x39mm cartridge. The round post front sight is surrounded by a protective hood; and a hole in the top of the hood permits adjustment for both windage and elevation zero with the proper armorer’s tools.

To move the point of impact upward, the front sight post must be rotated downward in its base. Likewise, to move the point of impact to the left, the sight must be moved to the right and vice versa. A Warsaw Pact side rail scope mount has been attached to the left side of the receiver body.

Be advised that the sheet-metal cup that retains the two-piece forearm, as well as its lock and spring are proprietary and derived directly from the original Wieger 940 series design. As a consequence, the gas cylinder has a configuration different from most Kalashnikov-type rifles. Standard AK forearms and gas tube accessories cannot be installed on this rifle. Furthermore, to disassemble the two-piece forearm, you must pull out the steel locking pin holding the forearm assembly to the sheet-metal cup or front cap. This is not always easy to do.

The locking pin is pulled out to the left and is captive. Once it’s withdrawn, the front cap can be moved forward enough to remove the forearm halves. In all other regards, disassembly procedures for the STG-2000-C are identical to those of any other rifle in the Kalashnikov series. An eyelet on the left side of the locking pin serves as the front sling mounting point. The rear sling swivel is attached to the left side of the buttstock.

I.O., Inc. has a substantial number of reasonably priced accessories available for the STG-2000-C. They include a bipod with wire-cutting and can-opening tools that clamps on the barrel ($19.95), a variable-power 3-9x50mm AO with red/green illuminated reticle ($84.95), a laser sight ($19.95), a Warsaw Pact side mount for optical devices ($44.95), a clamp-on flashlight ($39.95) and a rifle case with five magazine pouches ($44.95).

Our test and evaluation of the STG-2000-C revealed the usual Kalashnikov series reliability. There were no surprises. Collecting semiautomatic-only versions of the AK series has become quite popular. The STG-2000-C has a fascinating and somewhat mysterious history. It is an absolute must for any AK collector/shooter.

It is anticipated that a caliber 5.56x45mm NATO version (STG-2003-C) and a sniper version (SSG-2000) in both calibers 7.62x51mm NATO and 7.62x54R will eventually be available.

Personally, I would also like to see a folding stock version using the single-strut stock of the original Wieger Models STG 942 and 943 and East German MPiKMS-72 AK.

**AKs—How They Operate**

In spite of their unique appearance, the original Wieger STG 940 series and the new STG-2000-C are AK-type weapons. Almost all Kalashnikov series assault rifles are gas-operated, but have no gas regulator. I have never seen a Kalashnikov malfunction as a result of fouling. Two variants, the Polish PMK-DGN-60 and Yugoslavian M70B1/AB2 have gas cutoffs to permit firing rifle grenades with ballistite (blank) cartridges. AKs are locked-breech designs with rotary bolts and fire from the closed-bolt position.
When the trigger is pulled, the trigger extension rotates forward secondary sear directly to the rear. When the hammer is in the primary sear on an extension of the trigger and a spring-loaded Garand. The hammer has two hooks, and there are two sears: a added strength.

The stamped sheet-metal receiver top cover in place. Soviet and into a notch on top of the receiver’s end piece and serves to hold the front retaining cap permits user separation of the guide rod consisting of two telescoping steel rods on Romanian 5.5mm after the bolt’s two locking lugs have engaged their comes to rest. The bolt carrier itself continues onward for about recoil spring then drives the bolt group forward, another round is added.

Thus, in any of its calibers, an exceptionally large extractor claw Kalashnikov provides no primary extraction during bolt rotation. Thus, to obtain full-auto fire, the operator must consciously push how the weapon should be employed in almost every instance. The top position is “safe.” In this position, the trigger is blocked, but the bolt can be retracted just enough to see if the chamber contains a loaded round.

The middle position provides for full-auto fire in selective-fire models. The next position down is for semiautomatic fire. Under stress, the operator will invariably push the selector bar all the way downward into the semiautomatic position. That is exactly how the weapon should be employed in almost every instance. Thus, to obtain full-auto fire, the operator must consciously push the selector bar back up to the full-auto notch.

M43 Cartridge—History and Wound Ballistics

Attributed to designers Nikolai M. Elizarov and Boris V. Semin, Soviet historians contend that work on the M43 (model 1943) 7.62x39mm cartridge began in 1939, was temporarily suspended because of The Great Patriotic War and then re-commenced and finalized in 1943.

Others have stated that it was derived from the German 7.92x33mm Kurz Patron (short cartridge) developed for the world’s first assault rifle produced in significant quantities, the War World II MP43/44 (StG44/45). This latter scenario is highly unlikely, as the Soviets would have required specimens of 7.92x33mm Kurz ammunition at least a year or two prior to their adoption of the 7.62x39mm round in 1943—well before the MP43 was fielded on the Eastern front (first reported use was December 1942). Whatever the case, the Soviet M43 cartridge is a true intermediate-size assault rifle round. First prototypes featured cases 40.29mm in length (thus: 7.62x41mm). The case was trimmed to 38.6mm as the original projectile proved unsatisfactory and a new bullet was adopted that required a shorter case. (It has been proposed by writer J. Hartikka that the M43 cartridge was cloned from the Genschow & Co. [GECO] 7.75x39mm cartridge of 1935, but it cannot be demonstrated that this is anything other than internet chat room speculation.)

The following countries have manufactured ammunition in this caliber: Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Egypt, Finland, France, Hungary, Iraq, Israel, Netherlands, North Korea, Norway, Peru, Poland, Portugal, People’s Republic of China, Romania, South Africa, South Korea, Sweden, Syria, United States, USSR, West Germany, and Yugoslavia. In addition to ball ammunition, it has been produced with hollow point, tracer, API (Armor-Piercing Incendiary), and IT (Incendiary Tracer) projectiles.

Special purpose loads include heavy subsionic ball (for use with sound suppressors), practice blanks, short-range loads and drill rounds. Ball ammunition will be encountered in two configurations. Most prevalent is a 123-grain boattail bullet that usually consists of a copper-washed steel jacket, lead and antimony sleeve, and a mild steel core (Soviet Type PS). Yugoslavia’s M67 ball ammunition, as well as that of several other countries, uses a flat-based bullet of approximately the same weight, with a copper-alloy jacket and lead core. Muzzle velocity of both types is between 2330 and 2400 fps.

In its boattail configuration, the 7.62x39mm bullet travels point-forward about 10 inches in soft tissue before significant yaw occurs. At that point the bullet will yaw to less than 90°, then come back down to a point-forward position, and finally yaw 180° and end its travel in a base forward position. Bi-lobed yaw cycles of this type are commonly observed with pointed, non-deforming bullets. Total penetration in living tissue is almost 29 inches.

Abdominal shots usually exhibit no greater tissue disruption than that produced by a .38 Spl. pistol bullet since, after 10 inches of travel without yawing, the bullet has generally passed through the abdominal cavity. However, of course, this round is capable of inflicting such damage at far greater ranges than a handgun.

While I was working at the Wound Ballistics Laboratory at the Letterman Army Institute of Research in San Francisco, we tested the lead-cored, flat-base Yugoslav bullet and found it to be considerably more effective. It commences its yaw cycle after only 3 to 4 inches of penetration. Once again, the yaw cycle is generally bi-lobed. The bullet reaches its maximum penetration of 23 to 26 inches traveling base-forward, somewhat flattened and retaining almost all of its original weight (two or three small fragments are shed in the area of maximum cavitation).

Although the flat-based 7.62x39mm bullet is shorter (.930”) than the more common boattail projectile (.1040”), it will be expected to cause more damage to the abdomen, liver, spleen or pancreas because the bullet passes through these organs at a...
large yaw angle. Remember, if we have neither mushrooming nor fragmentation, yawing is all that remains to maximize tissue disruption and enhance the bullet’s performance—always provided we do not sacrifice adequate penetration.

The ammunition used in our test and evaluation of the Inter Ordnance STG-2000-C was imported by Wolf Performance Ammunition (Dept. SGN, 1225 North Lance Lane, Anaheim, Calif 92806; phone: 888-757-9653; fax: 714-632-9232; Email: info@wolfammo.com; website: www.wolfammo.com) and manufactured at Tula Cartridge Works in Russia. Headstamped “7.62X39 WOLF”, the lacquered steel case has a red case mouth sealant and primer annulus. This ammunition is Berdan primed.

Boattail projectiles in the standard weight, 122-123 grains, are available in either full metal-jacketed (FMJ) or hollow-point (HP) types. In this weight the muzzle velocity is approximately 2400 fps. Testing of 7.62x39mm HP projectiles, designed originally to meet U.S. importation regulations, indicated that most often the bullets became frangible upon contact with the tissue simulant or else exhibited no expansion at all. A loading with a 154-grain soft-point (SP) bullet, designed specifically for hunting, is also available. This projectile features a muzzle velocity of approximately 2100 fps. For serious social purposes I prefer the FMJ load. In all calibers, Wolf ammunition has proven to be reliable, accurate and competitively priced.

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**STG-2000-C Specifications**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Specification</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Caliber:</strong></td>
<td>7.62x39mm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Method of operation:</strong></td>
<td>Gas-operated without a regulator, locked-breech with a rotary bolt, fires from the closed-bolt position.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Feed:</strong></td>
<td>30- and 40-round, staggered-column, two-position-feed, detachable, box magazines.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Weight, w/out magazine:</strong></td>
<td>6.6 pounds (approximately 3 kg).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Length, overall:</strong></td>
<td>36.25 inches (920.75mm).</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Barrel:</strong></td>
<td>Four grooves with a 1:12 right-hand twist (1:300mm). Chrome-lined chamber and bore.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Barrel length:</strong></td>
<td>16.25 inches (412.75mm); with M1A2-type flash suppressor: 175 inches (444.5mm).</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Sights:</strong></td>
<td>Front sight: round post with protective hood, adjustable for both elevation and windage zero with proper armorers’ tools. Rear sight: sliding tangent with an open U-notch; adjustable for elevation only to 1000 meters in 100-meter increments. There is a battle sight setting (marked with a Cyrillic “P”) just behind the 100-meter mark. In elevation, it is the equivalent of 300 meters.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Finish:</strong></td>
<td>Black oxide.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Manufacturer:</strong></td>
<td>Manufactured in Romania for I.O., Inc., Dept. SGN, 3305 Westwood Industrial Drive, Monroe, N.C. 28110; phone: 866-882-1479; fax: 704-225-8362; website: <a href="http://www.ioinc.us">www.ioinc.us</a>, and altered by I.O., Inc. after importation in compliance with US Federal Statute 922r and to accept staggered-column magazines.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Price:</strong></td>
<td>$399.95—available from Maine Military Supply, Dept. SGN, 735 Wilson Street, Brewer, Maine 04412; phone: 207-989-6783; fax: 207-989-3463; website: <a href="http://www.mainemilitary.com">www.mainemilitary.com</a>, as well as AIM Surplus, S.O.G., and other distributors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>T&amp;E summary:</strong></td>
<td>A remarkable semiautomatic-only recreation of the highly regarded East German Wieger STG 941 assault rifle. The usual Kalashnikov reliability. An absolute must for AK collectors.</td>
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Longtime Guns & Ammo columnist and practical pistol guru Jeff Cooper will be memorialized at a rifle and pistol match Sept. 1-2 at the Ben Avery range in Phoenix. Entry will be limited to 150 shooters at $225 each. The match will be run by personnel who were instructors and students under Cooper during the original Gunsite days. For more information see www.coljeffcooper.com or call (928) 636-4664.