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FOR AMERICAN MARKSMEN

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# M+M10x

When a Swiss Reservist Designs a Rifle for the American Marksman

Story & Photography by Oleg Volk

**W**hat happens when a Swiss reservist who is also an engineer and a shooting enthusiast designs a rifle for the American marksman? M+M10x, that's what! Michael Meier applied more than 15 years of experience with manufacturing and engineering parts for Swiss rifles and AK variants to the task, along with his consideration for the preferences of the users. True to its name, 10x is a precision self-loading rifle with a crisp 3.5-pound trigger and a nitrided barrel capable of holding 1 MOA with match ammunition. As a nod to its Swiss roots, the rifle features an adjustable gas regulator and a Magpul Zhukov variable-length folding stock that actually improves on the SIG 550 design. Also improving on the 550 is the ambidextrous safety selector that's easily reachable with an average size hand. For the well-equipped American user, the 18-inch monolithic Picatinny rail on top and M-LOK slots all around the forend give ample room for every accessory possibly desired.



M+M10x is chambered for 7.62x39mm, a solid short- to medium-range defensive cartridge available both in match and cheap range fodder forms. Around the world, it's one of the most common rounds for a good reason. The rifle uses inexpensive and robust AK magazines. The mag latch is a part that M+M also sells to AK owners to improve the seating of magazines. It's designed to adjust to magazines of inconsistent dimensions and hold them in precisely the same position for more reliable feeding. Unlike the AK, this rifle was intended from the start to be an accurate individual weapon. To that end, it was built from the ground up to accept optics and to shoot accurately enough to make magnified sights worthwhile. Crisp and consistent, the trigger feels lighter than its actual 4.5 pounds of pull.

The heart of this rifle is a steel receiver that's embedded into an aluminum extrusion forming the forend as well. That extrusion, thin and light but very rigid, is hinged at the front to connect to the stamped steel lower. Despite the 1.5mm thickness of the lower, the same as the Russian RPK light machine gun, the rifle is fairly light overall at 7 pounds. Much of the weight comes from the 0.6-inch thick, 16.5-inch barrel with muzzle threaded 5/8x24 (same as AR-10) for sound suppressors or flash hiders. The rifle ships with a flash hider compensator, effective yet not concussive to the shooter. At the front, an FAL-style rotary gas regulator has three positions: standard (1), more gas (2, for a dirty gun) and no gas (for suppressed straight pull operation with subsonics, for example). The piston with the recoil spring wrapped around it runs inside a removable gas tube with AK-style gas vents for a degree of additional self-regulation. That hybrid approach was selected because of the wide variation in powders between various 7.62x39mm ammo makers. That also helps in suppressed use, with additional backpressure dissipated before it can vent into the receiver.



Although the piston is not integral to the bolt carrier, this rifle uses long-stroke operation. Thanks to the extensive ventilation of the forend and a separate gas tube insulating the return spring from the barrel beneath, the spring life remains good even on the extensively used, hot-running rapid fire test gun. M+M recommends spring replacement at 4,500 to 5,000 intervals only. Likewise, the nitrided barrel still shoots 2.5 MOA after 15,000 rounds of varied, often steel jacketed 7.62x39mm ammunition shot through it rapidly on the test rifle. M+M offers most parts through their web store. A replacement barrel is \$225 and can be installed at home.

**AK-like mag release is designed to hold magazines of varying dimensions securely.**

Muzzle brake and flash hider combination works well with minimal concussion to the shooter.



The monolithic rail sits higher than the cheek piece of the stock, so lower optic mounts are possible than with the AR-15. With a red dot, line of sight height over bore is 2 inches vs. 2.6 inches for the AR-15, aiding in precise shot placement up close. The prodigious length of it permits mounting thermal or night vision optics in tandem. If a higher optic line of sight is desired, for example when using a scope with an integral base, a snap-on cheek riser may be attached to the stock. That would also allow the use of AR-style backup iron sights. The front of the rail is formed into an integral handstop, and QD sling receptacles are formed in it on both sides. Two more such receptacles are in the back of the lower and another two in the Zhukov stock. The stock also has a lip for a conventional sling, and a front loop may be attached to the rail or into an M-LOK slot. Made of aluminum, the forend can heat up during rapid fire, so the typical hand positions should be insulated with M-LOK covers. Fortunately, the extensive ventilation means at least four 30-round magazines may be fired off back-to-back before the forend temperature becomes an issue.

Accuracy of this rifle is quite impressive. With match grade ammunition, such as Hornady SST, Corbon DPX or Federal Fusion and a magnified scope, 1MOA is typical. With less precise loads, such as PPU soft points and Winchester FMJ,



Disassembly is quick and simple. Release button may be reached by folding the stock or, through the circular opening in the stock adapter, with a tool like a screwdriver.

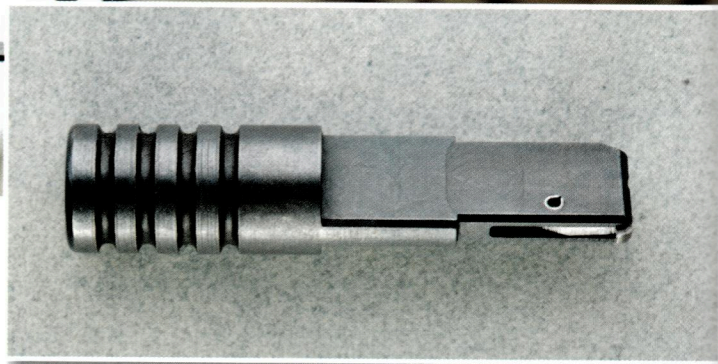


The charging handle may be installed on either side of the receiver.

2MOA is still achieved. Bulk ammunition, such as Wolf steel cased, turns in 2.5 to 3MOA, which is spectacular for that load. Using return-to-zero mounts, such as made by Bobro Engineering, it's possible to run the rifle with an unmagnified red dot for speed, swap for a highly magnified scope for precision and then go back to the red dot in seconds. An offset or angled red dot mounted as a backup to the magnified optic or a night vision scope is also possible. Recoil is light enough and goes mostly straight back, so 100-yard hits on steel can be easily observed through the optic.

Unlike most folding stocks on AR-15 rifles, Magpul Zhukov allows firing the rifle when stowed. It is easy to fold with one hand and as easy to snap open, with neither action likely to happen by accident. Once folded, the stock gives access to a recess in the lower that houses the take-down button. While the button looks like a latch, it must be pushed forward to allow the upper to hinge open. The button may also be pushed with a tool through an opening in the lower the stock still extended. Unusually, the hammer goes forward when the low is hinged open. For field stripping the recessed center of the charging handle should be pressed with a punch or a cartridge tip to withdraw it from the bolt carrier to the side. That also disengages the bolt carrier from the piston. The carrier and the AK-style bolt can now be slid out of the back of the upper. In the next revision, available by the time this article is printed, the charging handle will be removable without tools. During re-assembly, the charging handle may be inserted from either side, AKM style or FAL style. The ambidextrous safety is also undergoing a slight revision to for the paddle to sit slightly higher when in the FIRE position, making a high grip more comfortable to shooters with large hands.

The gas system only has to be disassembled if extremely dirty or if fired with corrosive military surplus ammunition. The gas regulator rotates half-turn to disassembly position and comes out forward, and so does the gas tube, with a detent of its own. In suppressed use, most of the gas comes out of the regulator, and a little bit out of the ejection port, with almost none reaching the user. All parts are either stainless or



Ambidextrous charging handle also connects the bolt carrier with the piston.

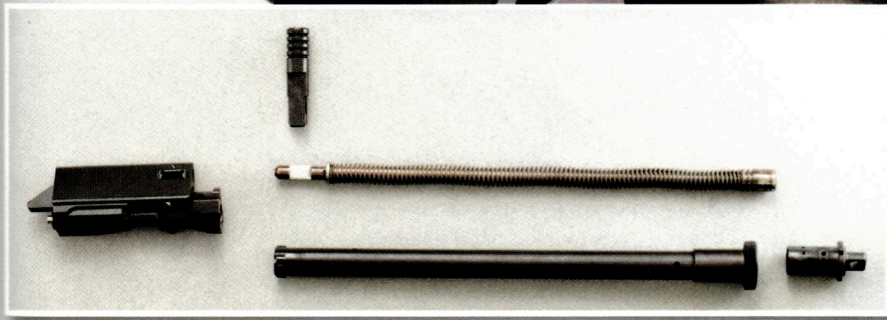
nitrided to resist the corrosive effects of surplus ammunition. The rifle is very tolerant of dirt, as the inside of the receiver is mostly open space. Maintenance is simple, as the total parts count is only 52, including every pin and screw. AKM has around 80 parts, an AR-15 around 100. When field stripped, the 10x comes apart into only eight pieces; none of them small or easy to lose. Unlike most semi-auto rifle users, the 10x owner doesn't have to deal with springs under tension during either field stripping or reassembly. The user does have to be careful to have the bolt placed into the forward position when reinserting the bolt carrier group into the receiver; otherwise it can go in partway and get stuck.

With the steel receiver protected within the upper, the entire gun can be restored from extensive damage if necessary. The barrel is screwed into the receiver, so a shot-out tube can be replaced by any gunsmith or at home. The design was intended from the start to be modular and easily upgradable. Compared to the AR-15, the SIG 550 and even the AKM, the 10x receiver is more open to the elements with two un-gasketed openings for the charging handle. However, the receiver space back of the fire control group is pretty much empty, so quite a bit of dirt can enter without affecting functioning. For people who anticipate mud wrestling as part of the range routine, M+M will have snap-on plastic gaskets available shortly to seal the receiver.

At 7 pounds, the M+M10x is lighter than XCR-L, SCAR-L or Galil ACE. It's also less expensive than its direct competitors. In my view, the M+M10x rifle has achieved the Holy Grail of semi-auto designs: AR-like accuracy with simplicity surpassing the AK and a considerable degree of modularity built into the concept. **SAR**

Gas regulator with normal, high flow and no gas positions marked.

*Inset:* Long-stroke gas system with captured return spring and variable gas regulator.



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