



*Click on any of the images below to see a larger version of the image.*



**F**inding historical data on the Albanian SKS is a pretty difficult task! None of the SKS books I own have anything about them and the web is fairly barren as well. Not only is the Albanian not a widely known variant, it is different in appearance than your typical SKS carbine in many ways that I will describe later.

I have received a lot of email asking me to write about the Albanian SKS, so when I found one locally - I could not pass it up.



When I first saw the one I finally purchased, I was really happy to find that it was literally caked in cosmoline. I know this sounds weird, but..... I had been hoping to find a rifle or carbine in this condition for a future article on removing cosmoline from a milsurp rifle. When I finally wiped away some of the cosmoline to see what I was buying, I saw something that really caught my attention.

This was not your typical SKS carbine!

**Where the deviation begins:**

**Albanian SKS Carbine vs. Typical SKS Carbine**



**I**n **figure 3** you will see the size of the Albanian's handguard (*bottom of figure 3*) as compared to the normal SKS handguard (*top of figure 3*). The Albanian is almost twice the size!

I think this gives the carbine the look of a shortened Russia M1940 Tokarev Rifle.



The Albanian's bolt carrier handle as shown in **figure 4**, has the appearance of an AK47 bolt carrier. In my opinion it is not as easy to grip or pull back as the proto-typical SKS bolt carrier handle.

I really like the dense wood of the Albanian's stock, it is very pretty and has a nice grain.



**Figure 5** shows a very serious design flaw - obviously someone who never shot the Albanian carbine decided to put the rear sling swivel on the left side of the stock where your cheek is going to rest while sighting the SKS. You really have to be careful when shooting. Can you imagine the damage you could do to your face in the heat of battle?

*My other theory is that some left-handed armorer with a serious grudge against right-handed people decided to play a nasty joke!*

The butt cover has two storage compartments. A very handy feature in my opinion. You can carry a cleaning kit and an oil bottle.



My carbine did not come with either a cleaning kit or oil bottle.

**Note of interest:** *I did find a very old and dry oak leaf in the butt stock. Not really something you would expect to find in a rifle butt stock. Kind of makes you wonder when and where it came from.*

Even the Albanian magazine (**figure 7**) is different in shape than the typical SKS as shown in **figures 7 and 8**.



**A**s I stated earlier, I was going to use this carbine as the basis for a **"How to Article"** on removing cosmoline.

Can you believe the Albanian actually had too much cosmoline on it? It took me almost 8 hours to remove the build-up. Believe me - there is no price in the world that I could pay my daughter to spend 8 hours photographing me playing with kerosene or mineral spirits and a firearm, outside in my backyard. I will have to find a lesser coated specimen for the future article!



**F**inally after getting the carbine cleaned and serviceable, I was ready to go to the range. While firing, I noticed for the first time - the trigger pull.

I have been looking for a candidate SKS trigger assembly that is in need of stripping it down and smoothing out some of the parts to see if I can do it. Out of all of my SKS, the Albanian has the **weightiest and roughest** trigger pull.

I don't have a trigger pull gauge, but I would have to guess the pull would measure somewhere in the VERY high teens. If not higher.

Even so I was able to shoot a reasonable grouping as shown in **figure 10**. I have read another review of the Albanian that stated just the opposite experience with the trigger, so maybe my experience was specific to this carbine. I hope.

Overall this is the oddest looking SKS I own. Not that I don't like it, it just takes some time to get used to.

I have read in message boards that other shooters that have purchased the Albanian complain of inferior workmanship. Other than the odd deviations of the look of the carbine and the marginal trigger pull, I could not find anything wrong with the quality of the Albanian SKS.

They are a highly collectable carbine that sells for \$229 to \$269, depending on condition.

If you are interested in purchasing an Albanian - you can find them at -

<http://www.aimsurplus.com/index.html>

jlm ;)

Copyright 2003© Jamie Mangrum