

Informal Briefing Paper

Subject: Armi-Jager AP-80

Prepared By:

Sheldon Clare
President,
Canada's National Firearms Association

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Subject: Is the Armi-Jager AP 80 a variant of the AK-47?

Here is my opinion regarding as to whether or not the Armi-Jager AP-80 is truly a "variant" of the AK-47. I hope that this information is useful.

As a collector of firearms for over 25 years I have had the opportunity to study and examine many firearms, including military small arms of the former Soviet bloc and China. Some would consider me an expert on various firearms, particularly military small arms of the twentieth century. In addition, I am a province of British Columbia certified Conservation Outdoor Recreation Education hunter safety examiner (No. 7007) and course instructor, and as such I am familiar with standard firearms actions. In my professional career, I am a college instructor at the College of New Caledonia in Prince George, BC. I hold a Master of Arts degree in military history from Norwich University.

In my opinion, the Armi-Jager AP 80 is **not** a variant of the *Avtomat Kalishnikova 1947g*, commonly called AK-47, series of firearms; the Armi-Jager AP 80 is merely one of many typical semi-automatic .22 long rifle calibre firearms designed to imitate the appearance of famous military select fire rifles. Like these other firearms, the only relationship of the Armi-Jager AP 80 to the AK 47 is that the civilian market .22 LR semi-automatic firearm was designed to resemble the military select fire rifle. The relationship is cosmetic and based purely upon marketing - there is no relationship between the two as to construction, calibre, action, or operation.

There a number of obvious differences between the Soviet bloc AK-47 family of firearms that could be considered variants of the original AK-47, and the Italian-made Armi-Jager AP 80. These basic differences are clear to anyone knowledgeable about firearms and include:

Table 1. Comparison of AK-47 & Armi-Jager AP-80 firearms

	AK-47	Armi-Jager AP-80
Origin	Purpose built military-issue service rifle; early Communist-bloc assault rifle.	Civilian-market sporting rifle intended for hunting, plinking and similar recreational firearms activities
Action	Gas-operated rotating bolt, with a fixed operating rod; selective fire.	Inertia blow-back, no fixed operating; semi-automatic only.
Receiver	Milled steel, newer types stamped & welded steel.	Cast and machined aluminum alloy.
Calibre	7.62X39mm centerfire	.22 LR rimfire.
Empty Weight	Over 9.5 lbs (depending on design features and materials used)	Approximately 5.5 lbs.
Parts	Many interchangeable with other rifles in the AK-47 series	No parts interchangeable with any AK-47 series firearm .
Manufacturer	Various state factories in Soviet and Chinese (PRC) allied and supplied nations.	Armi-Jager of Italy.

As you might see from the above table, the actions of the two firearms are completely different. The AP-80 operates on 'inertia blow-back' - typical for .22 calibre semi-automatic firearms, while the AK-47 is 'gas operated' - a typical design for post-World War Two centre-fire military firearms. These two actions are radically different in design, parts, and operation and thus these two firearms cannot be considered to be "variants" of each other on that circumstance alone. In my opinion, a variant would have to have some design and operating features in common with the parent firearm - that is simply not the case for the AK-47 and the Armi-Jager Ap-80.

The AK firearm family's action design has only two major parts groups. The AK-47 series firearms use the design features described above of a rotating bolt and fixed operating rod attached to the bolt carrier. The bolt has a single follower which engages a cam track in the receiver and a single locking lug. Most later AK family firearm receivers are stamped and welded sheet metal with blued or painted finishes; early versions are milled. The top cover is normally sheet metal. AK series firearms may have wood or plastic composite stocks, pistol grips, and hand guards. Frame parts at the front and rear of the receiver are cast or machined steel and riveted to the receiver.

The AK bolt assembly is driven by a helical spring surrounding a rod attached to a removable carrier behind the bolt. The rear of the spring/rod carrier forms the latch which retains the top cover. The spring carrier also keeps the bolt carrier on guide rails in the receiver. Disassembly is accomplished by pressing the latch, removing the cover, withdrawing the spring/rod carrier and pulling back then lifting up the bolt carrier from the stamped sheet steel guide rails.

In contrast, the Armi-Jager AP-80 receiver is made from cast aluminum alloy metal that was subsequently machined and painted black. Over this is a "U" channel shaped cosmetic cover made from stamped steel that is held in place by seven screws. The Armi-Jager AP 80 is clearly not a member of the AK-47 series of firearms.

An important authoritative reference work for information on the AK-47 series of firearms is:

Ezell, Edward Clinton. *Small Arms of the World; a basic manual of small arms*. Twelfth Edition. Harrisburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 1983. See Chapters 1 and 43 for specifics on the AK series of firearms.

Ezell's reference work contains valuable information on the AK-47 family and other military firearms. As that work is concerned with military small arms and some related developments, nowhere in this work is there any mention of the Jager-Armi AP-80; the most likely reason is that it is not considered a 'variant' of the AK-47 by anyone knowledgeable about firearms. If you have any further questions in this regard please feel welcome to contact me at the address above, by e-mail Sheldon_Clare@shaw.ca, or by telephone at (home) 250-563-2804, or (work) 250-562-2131 ext. 5602.

Sincerely,

Sheldon Clare
President
Canada's National Firearms Association