

CLASSIC ARMY'S AUG

WITH ITS LONG BARREL, 330 ROUND HICAP MAGAZINE AND GREAT ERGONOMICS, WE NEVER COULD UNDERSTAND WHY WE DIDN'T SEE MORE AUGs OUT ON THE SKIRMISH FIELD, BUT CA ARE AIMING TO CHANGE THAT, WITH THEIR NEW INTERPRETATION OF THE ASSAULT RIFLE!

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Of all the real-deal bullpup rifles in service in the world today, the AUG can arguably be described as the best. The FAMAS is not exactly renowned for being the most reliable out there, and the SA80? Well, if you haven't heard of the problems with that rifle you've been living on another planet for the last 15 years! In service with the Austrians, the Irish, the Australians, US Customs, the Italian Mountain Troops and the Falklands Islands Defence Force (who were lucky in that they had a choice – the SA80 wasn't forced on them) it's certainly got about a bit geographically, so it should come as no surprise that there's an airsoft version.

Some may decry Classic Army for producing this AEG, after all, Marui got their first and many would say 'So what? Why don't they do something different?' But that's not quite the point. Marui have discontinued the Military model AUG, and Classic Army have decided to fill that gap in the market. True to form though, CA haven't

exactly left things standard – they've manufactured it from higher quality materials and put an upgraded gearbox in it to boot.

APPEARANCE

Starting on the outside, it's all familiar to those that have handled an AUG before. Starting with the materials used for the synthetic part of the receiver, Classic Army have used a nylon-reinforced composite compared to the ABS plastic used by Marui. This will be able to deal with a good deal more abuse than its ABS ancestor

could. The mouldings are of high quality and the two sides of the receiver are well glued together with only a small ridge where the two parts meet.

Sitting at the back there is a rubber butt plate that covers the battery compartment. One of the biggest complaints about Marui's AUG was that this item had a habit of going AWOL. There isn't much of a change here, but at least CA have had the good sense to release spare butt plates just in case you do manage to lose it.

The synthetic part of this AEG has the handgrip and trigger guard moulded into it. It's a rather cunning design that means the AUG has the bare minimum of sub-assemblies, not to mention leaving a rifle that's remarkably smooth and free from parts that could snag on clothing or equipment. The foregrip is made of the same material, and is adjustable from the vertical to horizontal positions.

The magazine packaged with the CA AUG is a 330 round Hicap magazine. Just like the real thing it's made from translucent plastic, so a quick glance will enable you to estimate how much ammo you still have available to you.

ESSENTIALS

Leaving the synthetic side of the AUG, its time to look at the rest of the package. Like Marui's AUG, the upper receiver, scope, barrel and flash-hider are all metal. Given that there is so much metalwork on this AEG it should be no surprise that it's weighty, coming in at 3.6kg loaded with its 330 round Hicap and small battery fitted. Even with this weight it's well balanced, as the Version 3 gearbox sits at the back of the receiver, with only a small amount of space behind it for the battery and butt plate. This nicely counterbalances the weight of the upper receiver and metal barrel.

Casting of the metal parts is of high quality with no extraneous flashing and no ridges showing die misalignment during the casting process.

Finishing off the metalwork is the front sling loop, located on the upper receiver, with a corresponding loop on the left-hand side at the rear of the receiver. For those that are left handed, the rear sling loop can be swapped to the other side of the

receiver.

One of the neatest tricks that the AUG has is ease of field stripping. It takes no more than twenty seconds to split the AEG down to lower receiver, upper receiver and barrel sections.

Not only does stripping aid cleaning, but it also allows easier storage as well (split down, the longest assembly is 590 mm). And lets face it, for those that have seen the Luc Besson film *Nikita*, assembling your AEG in the safe zone looks damn cool.

Having split the AEG down to these parts, we can see that CA have copied Marui's plastic hop-up unit. A bit of a shame as it's easily damaged if disassembled roughly. We'd have liked to see a metal hop-up unit just for the sake of making the design bullet-proof. The hop-up unit is on the end of a very long barrel, in this case a 509mm long 6.08mm (internal) diameter brass barrel and it's easy to access via the ejection port. The barrel length is the same as that fitted to the M16a2, yet with its bullpup configuration the AUG has an overall length of 805mm compared to the M16's 986mm. It may not

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SPECS

WEIGHT: 3.6kg (with full mag of .2g BBs)
MAGAZINE: 330 rnd Hicap Excel 0.2 BBs used throughout
GROUPING AT 20M: 8.3cm
ROF: 970rpm
BATTERY: 8.4V
FPS: 340.5fps (average over a 10 shot string)

seem much, but if you're skirmishing at an urban site it makes the AUG noticeably easier to handle.

The upper receiver, as explained before, is a full-metal affair. Sitting within it is a 1.5x magnification telescopic sight. To some this may seem on the low side of the telescopic world, and yes it is, but it's a trade off between practicality and magnification. With the lower magnification you get a wide field of view, and with some practice its actually possible to use the scope with both eyes open.

INTERNALS

After dealing with the external parts, its time to have a look inside the AEG. The gearbox itself is heavily upgraded when compared to a Marui AUG. With a polycarbonate piston and head, steel gears, full metal spring guide and with it all sitting in a reinforced gearbox casing the internal parts should perform as well as anything else from the CA stable

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nowadays. Performance is excellent, and the AUG gives chrono results of an average velocity of 340.5fps, with a high of 341.8 and a low of 338.1. This might be slightly too high for some skirmish sites in the UK, but over five to ten thousand rounds we'd expect this to drop a little. Rate of fire wise, the AUG gives you 970rpm from its small 8.4v battery pack. Given Classic Army's offerings of late, it's about what we expected.

On the range the AUG delights. The hop-up is easy to dial in, and the telescopic sight is easy to zero. Shooting at 20 metres is simple. Line up the cross-hairs, pull the trigger to the first fire position and the BB flies out of the barrel and dead straight to the target. Pull the trigger even further back and you get full auto. The beauty of the two-stage trigger is that there is no messing around with a fire selector. When it comes to hardcore skirmishing, anything that can give you even the smallest advantage is worth investigating. Accuracy at twenty metres was a ten round group of 8.3cm with no fliers.

Range testing is only part of the story though. After all, an AEG could be well put together and perform admirably and yet still not be able to cut it on the skirmish field.

Such talk however, certainly doesn't apply to the AUG. Once you get used to the magazine being in the 'wrong' place the AEG becomes easy to use. The low power optics have great eye-relief making them easy to use. If the optics don't do it for you, there are iron sights cast into the top of them for use in an emergency.

The vertical foregrip may not be to every

player's taste, but it can be folded up out of the way. Shooting from the prone position is comfortable, but changing magazines when in this position is a little more involved than swapping magazines in a conventional AEG (probably the biggest drawback of the bullpup design).

One thing that should be noted with the magazines is that they are slightly larger than M16 magazines, and a pouch that can take 3 Armalite mags will only take two AUG ones.

ACCESSORIES

The only people who are likely to be disappointed with Classic Army's AUG are those who like to accessorise their AEGs to the max. Bolt-on goodies are rather thin on the ground. There are some carbine conversions floating around that chop the barrel length down to that of an M4. There are also some phantom conversion kits from First Factory and King Arms that give you a fully suppressed AUG. Laylax supply a small section of RIS that affixes to the upper receiver to allow you to attach a flashlight or laser. To be honest though, the AUG doesn't really need accessories.

If you have to, then a decent suppressor is about the most we'd

THANKS

★ Many thanks to ASG A/S Denmark - European distributors for CA products. Check www.actionsportgames.com to find your nearest CA appointed retailer.

RATINGS

MATERIALS: 10/10
DESIGN: 10/10
PERFORMANCE: 10/10
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OVERALL: 10/10

recommend. We tried various silencers on the CA AUG and strangely enough, the one that seemed to look most at home was King Arm's 320mm OPS unit. Originally designed for the M4 range, the beauty of the OPS unit is that even though it looks like you have a short outer barrel fitted you don't. The barrel slides approximately halfway into the suppressor where it attaches via the standard 14mm anticlockwise thread.

SUMMARY

So how can we finish this off then? Well, what we can say is that the CA AUG is a very impressive AEG. It's got the materials, the design and the performance. In fact, it's the best AEG we've seen to date, and so far it's the only winner of A's coveted Top Gun Award.

