

# KAHLES **K4i**

BY HUGO VAN SCHALKWYK

The Kahles K4i fixed 4x power magnification scope is designed for use on AR-style platforms, and built for rapid target acquisition and engagement at close to medium range.

We mounted the K4i onto a Norinco CQA 5.56 AR, and took the scope out to the range to put it through its paces in a multi-faceted test. Our aim was to test all the qualities of this scope: Clarity, turret tracking, and speed of zero acquisition.

We then decided to shoot a five-shot grouping off a range bag at 50 m, followed by putting the shooter and scope through its paces in a speed test in a 2-2-4-2-2 target transition drill at close range.

### HOLDOVER HASH MARKS

Finally, we tested the holdover hash marks in a 300 m gong shoot. We were shooting Hornady Superformance® 5.56 mm rounds to eliminate the risk of ammunition being a factor if we experienced poor performance from the rifle.

Mounting and zeroing the scope is a simple task as the K4i comes with integrated picatinny rail mounts that mount directly onto the rail system. We torqued the scope down to the prescribed 10 nm as required, and set up a 25 m target to set our zero and obtain an initial assessment of the scope's clarity.

### RANGE BAG

We shot the scope off a range bag that secured the rifle and scope well, and allowed us to shoot an initial sighting grouping. The first two rounds landed on target with perfect elevation, and just 15 cm off to the left. This translated into a 40-click correction as the scope adjusts in 0.15 m increments of the exposed windage and elevation dials mounted to the front of the housing.

These dials are recessed so that they can't be adjusted accidentally during transport, or when manipulating the rifle under pressure. To adjust the windage and elevation dials, the user needs a reasonably large flat-head screwdriver. When adjusting, the clicks are audible, and enjoyably crisp and tactile, giving great feedback to the user when adjusting the impact.

### INITIAL GROUPING

After the initial two-round sighting grouping, we fired off another round that was 1.5 cm off of zero. To assess whether or not it was shooter error, we shot another round. The fourth and fifth rounds were on zero. Thus we were zeroed within five rounds and ready for the testing to begin.

While zeroing the rifle and spending time behind the scope assessing the impacts we had on the sighting target, one could not help but be impressed with the crisp image projected through the K4i's main tube. Kahles states that the K4i has 91% light transmission, which is clearly evident when you are behind the optic.





### GENEROUS EYE RELIEF

The eye relief of 9.5 cm is generous, but for my shooting style I found it to be just a little too short. This required me to adapt ever so slightly to the optic, and being unable to adopt my normal shooting position. I had to shorten the stock by one click to bring me closer to the optic by a fraction. However, when I got used to the marginally shorter stock position, the shooting and sight acquisition were fairly easy to index, and the Circle-Dot reticle was easy to pick up.

We decided to carry out the 2-2-4-2-2 shooting test at 10 m. Our test consisted of engaging three targets (we used IDPA targets) with 50 cm spacing between each target at 10 m, and only hitting the Zero-Down (Centre Mass) section of the target in sequence. The shooter could choose if he/she wanted to shoot from left to right, or vice versa.

### SHOOTING DRILL

The shooting drill ran as follows: Two rounds on Target A, two rounds on Target B, four rounds on Target C, transitioning back to Target B to shoot two rounds, and then transitioning back to Target A for two rounds, giving ten rounds in total. Only centre-mass shots counted.

We practiced getting sight acquisition of the reticle as quickly as possible, as this was critical. It was with this test that we found the fixed magnification to be of a hindrance to speed. Due to the inevitable fact that any scope with a lens system has an eye relief section, we found that adapting to this under time and competition pressure meant inevitably that times were not as fast as when shooting with iron sights.

## MAGNIFICATION POSED A CHALLENGE

### SHOT PLACEMENT

We were able to get the times for the drill down to the 5.5 second mark, but no faster without sacrificing shot placement. The challenge with the optic is the magnification. Being fixed 4x when the scope is brought up to the dominant eye, the shooter tends to lose his orientation relative to the target if as close as they were, costing time in obtaining the correct sight picture before engaging the target.

Fortunately, with the circle portion of the reticle at point-blank range as this drill was carried out, the shooter only needed to place the circle on the target and pull the trigger to effect a scoring hit. Therefore this justifies the three picatinny rails machined into the main body of the optic, as it would make sense to mount a red dot optic for really close-range shooting purposes.

### RELATIVELY HEAVY

The scope weighs 680 g, relatively heavy for mounting on your AR platform, which in itself is a lightweight rifle platform. No doubt the solid aluminium housing and high-quality internal mechanisms and top-quality lenses amount to a heavy scope.

This scope does feel heavy, especially when attempting to manipulate the rifle in rapid transitions between targets.

We carried out the same drill at 15 m, and found the scope to perform much better here. We shot a five-shot 50 m grouping. We were very impressed with the performance of the optic in what was now pretty harsh lighting conditions. Shooting a standard, budget-class AR with high-quality ammunition, we were able to achieve a 2.4 cm edge-to-edge five-shot grouping, which translated into a 2 MOA grouping. The optic was definitely not the restrictive factor in the grouping.

### RINGING STEEL

We took the rifle and optic out to shoot steel targets at 300 m. Using the holdover hash marks in the reticle, we were able to ring steel consistently at 300 m. The scope clarity was superb, and hits and misses were easily detectable in the late afternoon sun.

## THE BUILD QUALITY IS IMPECCABLE

As the light died down, the illuminated reticle came into its own. The illuminated reticle was clearly visible. Although in a scope built for close range, I would have preferred to have the reticle's illumination much brighter, so that the shooter's eye can pick up the reticle while getting a correct cheek weld from the low ready position.

## THE ILLUMINATION RHEOSTAT IS SMOOTH

### EASY TO OPERATE

The illumination rheostat is smooth, with no clicks, and easy to operate. However, in my opinion, the illumination is not bright enough to provide the maximum benefit one could get out of this premium optic.

The build quality of the scope is impeccable. Without a doubt, the scope is built to last a lifetime. It is the epitome of Kahles Optics' 120-year reputation for high-quality optics, carrying on its legacy of superb clarity and high-quality premium rifle optics. •

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