

Creating the Sharps 'Pattern 2' Ordnance Cartridge

By
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In previous articles* I've described how to recreate blank cartridges, based on the 1860 Ordnance rounds created by Richard Lawrence (Chief Engineer for the Sharps Rifle Manufacturing Company). Lawrence developed cartridges for New Model 1859 Sharps rifles and carbines that featured a linen casing and goldbeater foil/skin base that encased a swaged 'ball'. The improved ammunition, while somewhat fragile, met the demanding requirements of those lucky Federal cavalry, infantry and specialist troops issued them. In the hands of veteran U.S. Sharpshooters, the bullet was capable of reaching targets up to 1425 yards away. For those of us modern 'Sharpshooters' who want to try to 'make the string' (10 consecutive hits, not exceeding 50 inches from center), I've created a 'how to' photo essay to make 'live' cartridges for their Shiloh, Garrett, Pederosoli and Armi-Sport 'New Model' Sharps rifles.

Materials:

- .545 Sharps balls (475 grains=cast by Dixie Gun Works; lubricated with 4:1 beeswax/coconut oil)
- ½ inch brass tube (packaging tape added to increase outer diameter to .549 inches)
- 1 ½ inch adding machine tape
- 1x1 inch hair curling paper
- Elmer's glue stick/scissors/wood dowel
- 3-FG Goex black powder/brass flask with 60 grain spout



Seat bullet in former-dab glue on rings



Roll paper 1-1/2 times



Cut paper at 30° angle



Glue leading edge

*Know when to Roll Them, Know when to Fold them: How to Make Sharps Cartridges 101 (published on March 22, 2009)

*How to make Sharps Cartridges-In Pictures (published June 14, 2012)



Finish rolling tube-leave first ring exposed



Smooth edges-let dry



Fill 60 grs. 3-FG powder in spout



Flip cartridge & raise slowly



Remove spout from tube



Insert dowel-twist & compress powder



Cut tissue paper into oval



Glue entire oval ***



Flip oval and place over tube



Push oval into tube with dowel Keep dowel in tube-push tissue down around the diameter of tube-slowly remove



Finish smoothing tissue



When dry—tap base on flat surface



Finished cartridge-base view



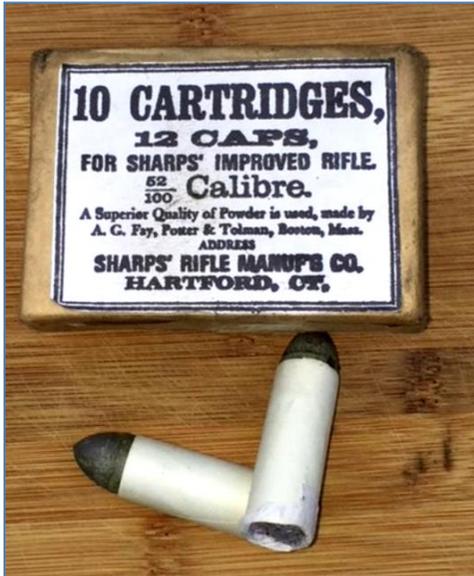
Finished cartridge-side view



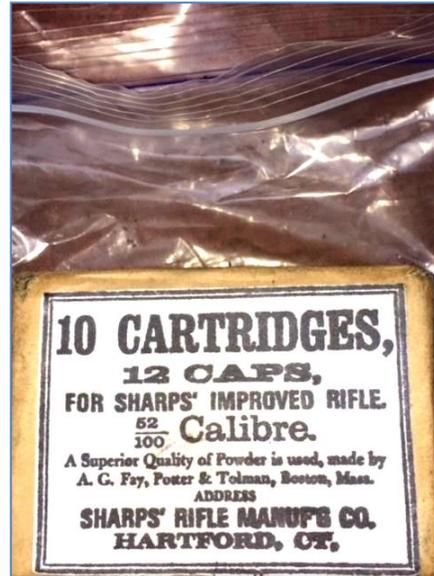
Finished cartridge in 'feed tray'



Finished cartridge in chamber



10 Cartridges fit inside Sharps Arsenal packs



Seal packs inside plastic bags until needed

*** In his book, The Sharps Rifle; Winston O Smith's diagram showed inserting the ball into the prepared cartridge tube. When I followed his instructions, using the thinner 38mm (1.5 inch) paper, I usually crushed or tore the tube paper when inserting the bullet. That is when I 'backed into' making the Pattern 2 cartridge by **(a)** apply glue to the bullets rings-this makes the paper stick to the bullet when rolling it into the cartridge tube; **(b)** cut the tissue paper into an oval; **(c)** apply glue to the oval; **(d)** flip the oval over and center it on tube **(e)** push oval into the tube with the wood dowel: **(f)** keep the dowel centered inside the tube, smooth down all of the edges; **(g)** when dry, gently tap the base of the cartridge to flatten it. This way the end of the cartridge remains intact when closing the block.

How well do they shoot?



A happy Brian White 'live shooting' for the first time



Note Brian's last 2 shots-- in the orange bullseye