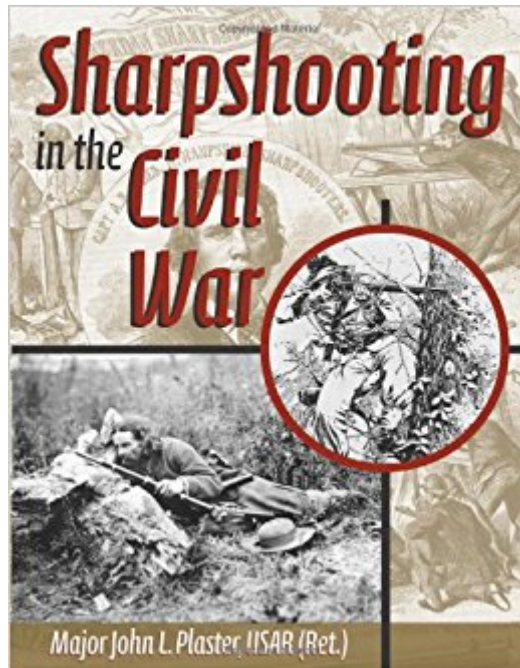


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# Sharpshooting In The Civil War



## Synopsis

Here is the single greatest volume ever published about Civil War sharpshooting, from the expert perspective of world-renowned sniping and shooting authority John L. Plaster. Comprehensive in scope, this book details how sharpshooters were recruited, trained, and organized. Plaster fully explores their armaments, their tactics and techniques, and how they operated (sometimes decisively) in battle. Discover dozens of accomplished and colorful but forgotten sharpshooters who, until now, had faded into the past. Exhaustively researched and profusely illustrated, these pages contain more than 160 rare photos, along with original artwork. Excerpted from Plaster's epic History of Sniping and Sharpshooting, this book is a must-have for historians, reenactors, and students of the American Civil War.

## Book Information

Paperback: 166 pages

Publisher: Paladin Press (May 1, 2009)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1581607032

ISBN-13: 978-1581607031

Product Dimensions: 8.4 x 0.4 x 11 inches

Shipping Weight: 1 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 stars 38 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #444,701 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #241 in [Books > Textbooks > Social Sciences > Military Sciences](#) #493 in [Books > History > Military > Weapons & Warfare > Conventional](#) #505 in [Books > History > Americas > United States > Civil War > Campaigns & Battlefields](#)

## Customer Reviews

Major John L. Plaster served three tours in the top-secret unconventional warfare group, Studies and Observations Group, in Vietnam. As a long-range reconnaissance leader, he led tiny intelligence-gathering teams behind enemy lines in Laos and Cambodia before leaving SOG in late 1971. He was decorated for heroism four times and retired from the U.S. Army as a major.

Major John L. Plaster, USAR (Ret) has written a lively and fascinating history of the elite sharpshooters and their weapons during the Civil War. Throughout American history from the French and Indian War to today's conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan, elite sharpshooters have played

an integral part in warfare. Major Plaster's book is the history of these elite sharpshooters during the Civil War. The book has the history of the men (both Union and Confederate), the weapons they used (often personal rifles that were non-government issue), the regiments they composed of, and the targets (deadly toll of officers and enlisted during battles, skirmishes, and targets of opportunity). The outstanding book is detailed in the following chapters:- Introduction  
Part One: Organizing for War  
1: Sharpshooters of the Confederacy  
2: Sharpshooters of the Union  
Part Two: Sharpshooter Weapons and Tactics  
3. Confederate Sharpshooter Weapons and Equipment  
4. Union Sharpshooter Weapons and Equipment  
5. Sharpshooter Tactics and Techniques  
Part Three: Sharpshooters in Battle  
6. Bloody Days: Antietam and Fredericksburg  
7. Three Days at Gettysburg  
8. Vicksburg to the Bitter End- Bibliography- Index  
Major Plaster highlights the elite history of individual sharpshooters who were outstanding hunters by and large before the Civil War. These outdoorsmen would bring their own hunting rifles and "try out" for the regiments. One of the first Union Officers who raised a regiment of these sharpshooters was Colonel Hiram Berdan who also had the men wear their distinctive forest green uniforms instead of the Union Blue. Confederate General Patrick Cleburne also raised an elite company of Confederate marksmen who reported directly to him and were independent of other regiments in battle. Their are fascinating background stories of a few of these marksmen such as "California Joe" who was a bear hunter and prospector in California who enlisted in the Union at the age of 52 and brought down many a Confederate soldier and officer before his eyesight wasn't as good due to his age and went back to California. The really interesting read in the book is the account of the high toll of officers of both North and South who were killed by these sharpshooters. From Confederate General Robert Garnett who was killed in 1861 by a Union Sharpshooter at Corrick's Ford which was a great loss to the Confederate Army. To Union General John Sedwick who foolishly said at the Battle of Spotsylvania, "Why they couldn't hit an elephant at this dist...."), he never finished the remark after a bullet fired by a Georgia sharpshooter smashed into his face and killed him. General U.S. Grant said the loss of General Sedwick was like losing an entire division of infantry. In the closing chapter of this book there is a listing of senior officers of both the USA and CSA who were killed by sharpshooters and where they were killed. In the early part of the Civil War many sharpshooters brought their own rifles from their previous civilian life with them when they joined the army. Colonel Berdan though was able to provide Sharp's Rifles to his regiment after demonstrating the great value and accuracy of the rifle to President Lincoln and afterwards the Berdan's Sharpshooters and other Union Sharpshooter regiments were provided this excellent rifle. Life of a sharpshooter wasn't all glory, many regiments lost sharpshooters because of the value of the men. These men were operating either in front of a battle hidden, or on

reconnaissance behind enemy lines. The sharpshooters knew that being captured was not an option and they would be shot by the enemy rather than the option of surrendering. Many of the sharpshooters were killed in the major battles of the Civil War, Antietam (Sharpsburg), Fredericksburg, Gettysburg, Spotsylvania, and Vicksburg to name a few. Major Plaster has given individual story's of these men and their officers and this makes this outstanding book more interesting to read. The contributions of the sharpshooters of the Civil War was invaluable. Many key officers were killed by the sharpshooters and this contributed majorly to a battle swinging in the Confederate or Union Victory. This is truly an OUTSTANDING book that is a MUST HAVE for any serious Civil War scholar, historian, enthusiast, student, or buff and is a VALUABLE part of my Civil War library. I didn't know beforehand, how many key generals of the north and south were killed or presumed killed by these elite marksmen, I know now. A HIGHLY RECOMMENDED BOOK!

This is a marginal work at best. The beginning chapters are good but the section on Gettysburg has so many errors in it I wonder if the author ever had it proof read by a Licensed Battlefield Guide. Here, I'll give just one example, on page 131 that's General Winfield Scott Hancock in the drawing not General John Gibbon. Not everybody who took careful aim was a "sharpshooter", To list civilian John Burns (page 121) as a sharpshooter is a stretch. Rip the Gettysburg section of this book out, yes, it's that bad, an just give a casual reading of the rest.

A fantastic book for the person who wants real life details, about the weapons and tactics of accurate muzzleloading sharpshooting, with the comparative analysis of said weapons and projectiles, including details about the people and their mindset, really and truly, this is a good book. I learned a great deal about how and why these rifles evolved to become the stuff of legend, and there was enough practical details that I was able to choose with complete understanding, others practical experience, and first-person first-hand knowledge, the best reproductions of modern made Black Powder weapons. We may not all be sharpshooters but all in all this is a good tome for the student of history as well as the person who is doing the Living History Path. Arwythur

This remarkable book relates the relatively unknown role that snipers played in the American Civil War. I have read extensively about the war and have never before been aware of the effectiveness and extent of the impact these brave men had on the outcome. The book deals with weapons, tactics and key battles where sharpshooters made much of the difference. I wish that a film would be made about this fascinating aspect of the war!

I had never given consideration to snipers in the Civil War, who would have thought that blackpowder rifles would live up to the sharpshooting role? A highly educational book backed up with true stories of sharpshooters on both sides. If you like firearms and especially long range precision shooting along with equipment knowledge this book is for you.

I wasn't aware of how accurate weapons were during this period. These marksmen in many ways equaled the performance of today's snipers in their use of cover, range estimation and windage calculations. It's also interesting the number of high ranking officers affected by their deadly accuracy.

Excellent factual book, seems to be well researched. I learned quite a lot. I would recommend this to anyone who is into "War of Northern Aggression" facts from a non-biased standpoint.

Very interesting information and great photos and drawings. Be aware however that this book is textbook like, not a novel.

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