SHARPS 1859 & 1863 (percussion model) CARTRIDGE CASES

We produce both .45 and .54 caliber brass cartridge cases which can be loaded in advance and which eliminate the need for making paper cartridges or using loose powder and bullets. Please note that all bullets listed below have the proper "tie-on" groove on the base which allows you to make and attach original style paper powder holding bags, thereby producing an original style "paper cartridge" if so desired.
Bullet mould blocks without handles are offered as well as pre-cast bullets on cards holding 50 bullets. From the chart below select what you want to have.

CALIBER	BRASS CTG. CASE	MOULD WITHOUT HANDLES	50 PRE-CAST BULLETS	STYLE
.45	USA 517-451	USA 319-458	USA 519-458	Original Design
.45	USA 517-458	USA 317-458	USA 524-458	Modern Design
.54	USA 517-54A	USA 317-541	USA 524-541	Modern Design
.54	USA 517-54B	USA 319-541	USA 519-541	Original Design

LOADING SUGGESTIONS

Our shooting tests have shown good results with Swiss brand black powder no.2 grain size. In the 45 caliber try between 50 and 60 grains and for the larger .54 caliber try between 60 and 80 grains. Note that when using the brass cartridge cases this large amount cannot be used and the .45 cal. will take 47 to 50 grs. and the .54 will take 52 to 55 grs. (depending upon the powder grain size being used as well as the length of bullet being used). Among all the currently available powders the Swiss brand has been found to be somewhat more powerful so if you use another brand you may require more grains of powder. Lower bullet velocity sometimes produces better accuracy so full loads may not always be required or desirable. Try various powder brands and loads to determine what your rifle likes best. To prevent powder grains falling through the flash hole of the case, place a small piece of "cigarette" paper INSIDE the case and covering the flash hole. Pour in the powder charge so that the powder level is slightly above the bullet seating shoulder and carefully press in the lubricated bullet so it is fully seated against the shoulder in the brass case and also in full contact with the black powder.

WARNING

There must never be any air space between the powder and the base of the bullet as dangerous pressures can occur if any air space exists. For this reason the powder must always be compressed at least a small amount.
Just before loading the cartridge case into your rifle, punch a small hole through the paper to allow the primer flash to reach the powder effectively. When loading with loose powder and bullet, it is normal for some grains of powder to fall down into the space below the breech block. If this powder is allowed to accumulate it is possible to have it flash (small explosion) which can cause a burn or injury. Check this area by removing the breech block and lever assembly and shake out grains of powder found.

SPECIAL NOTES

1. Some shooters find an improvement if they "nitrate" the cigarette paper. This makes the paper burn faster and may not require the shooter to punch a small hole in the paper.
2. If your selected powder charge sits too high in the brass case, you can compress the powder using a well fitting compressing device which you can make yourself from a wood rod or other non sparking material. Press the powder enough to allow the seated bullet base to rest against the powder. Although some powder compression helps accuracy, too much compression usually results in a loss of accuracy. We suggest compressing powder between .050 and .100 inch (1.24 and 2.54mm).
3. The Swiss no.2 black powder has shown the best accuracy in the large .54 caliber rifles.

Use of a finer grain powder will produce higher pressures and usually poor accuracy. The .45 caliber rifles can use the Swiss no.2 as well as powder one grade smaller. This basic rule applies to other brands of powder which may be graded according to the "F" system. The .54 cal. can use Fg or FFg grade but should not use FFFg while .45 cal. works best with FFg. Always start with a somewhat reduced load and work up to maximum loads while paying attention to accuracy and pressure indications.