



The History Of Sniping And Sharpshooting

By John Plaster

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The History Of Sniping And Sharpshooting By John Plaster

Thirty-six months in combat. Twenty-four years as a sniping instructor. Twenty years of exhaustive research, including decades spent seeking out hundreds of historic volumes long out of print, test-firing historic firearms, walking Revolutionary and Civil War battlefields with a laser rangefinder, and visiting military museums in the United States and Europe. Only Major John Plaster, author of the highly acclaimed **The Ultimate Sniper**, has the background and knowledge to bring you this authoritative history of sniping and sharpshooting – the first such book from a combat rifleman's unique perspective.

In **The History of Sniping and Sharpshooting**, John Plaster has assembled the most comprehensive combat history ever published on the subject. It begins in the 15th century, with the first use of "precision" musket fire in Europe and continues into the 21st century with the significant role sniping is playing the Iraq and Afghanistan and the global War on Terror. Detailing major engagements and minor skirmishes over five centuries of warfare, Plaster has unearthed hundreds of incidents where calculated precision rifle fire has changed the course of battles – and, sometimes, history. He fittingly addresses well-known sharpshooters and snipers – Hiram Berdan, Vasili Zaitsev, Carlos Hathcock – but also pays tribute to forgotten riflemen such as John Burns, Benjamin Forsyth and Arthur Wermuth, to name but a few. He also explains how the evolution of firearms and optical technology has intertwined with sniping on the battlefield and how it has influenced tactics, organizations, and capabilities – a subject that has never before been addressed adequately.

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Editorial Review

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Plaster's sprawling, copiously illustrated history of sniping as a military strategy pays special attention to the requisite skills involved. Starting with the advent of shoulder arms, Plaster describes technological innovations that allowed for ever-greater accuracy and distance, noting, for instance, an early reference to rifling in a 1476 Italian armory inventory that mentions "spiral grooved barrels" and discoursing lovingly on the development and use of the flintlock firing mechanism. Among the historical nuggets unearthed is the fact that according to a U.S. Army study, "not a single German general was lost to a sniper in the West during World War II, but three generals were killed on the Eastern Front by Russian snipers," which attests to Red Army marksmanship but also the "wide red stripe on the pants legs" of the German generals' uniforms—shades of Yankees picking off Red Coats in the American Revolution! Consider this powerful, well-researched work an essential resource on one mainstay of military science and a lavish picture book sure to please ordnance fans. --Mike Tribby

About the Author

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.

Users Review

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