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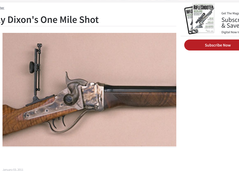
Billy Dixon's One Mile Shot



January 20, 2022
By Rich Hacher

With its heavy barrels, set triggers and hefty powder charges, the 1874 Sharps was the ideal rifle for long-range shooting.
By Rich Hacher

Cimarron offers a copy of the rifle Billy Dixon used to make an incredible shot.

With its heavy barrels, set triggers and hefty powder charges, the 1874 Sharps was the ideal rifle for long-range shooting. Buffalo hunters frequently made killing shots exceeding 500 yards, but Billy Dixon did that range some better in 1874.

Dixon was a 24-year-old buffalo hunter at a rendezvous'd settlement known as Adobe Walls, the scene of a massive Indian attack 20 years earlier. Now the Comanche, Kiowa, Cheyenne and Arapaho were planning to attack the supply post again. The Indians outnumbered the 28 people at Adobe Walls 30 to 1.

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The attack commenced on June 26 and raged for three days, with an estimated 700 warriors slain and 70 wounded. Frustrated, the Indians gathered on a distant bluff to reconsider their strategy. Seeing one of the warriors silhouetted, Dixon, who had lost his "Big 50" Sharps in a stream, grabbed a friend's .50-90 Sharps and fired. The warrior toppled from his horse. Their confidence shattered, the Indians grabbed the body and hastily rode away.

Later, the Army sent a team to verify the distance. It was 1,538 yards—1.9 of a mile. Years later, Dixon admitted it was a lucky shot. But he was also quoted as saying, "I was not without confidence in my marksmanship."

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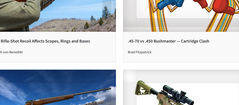

Today, Cimarron Firearms sells a creditable copy of the Sharps that Dixon used. The Billy Dixon, made by Pedersoli, features double set triggers, checkered walnut stocks, a 32-inch octagon barrel, and weighs 10 LB, 2 pounds. It's available in .45-70, .40-90, and .50-70 calibers.

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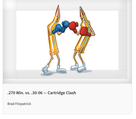

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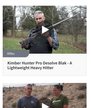

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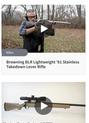

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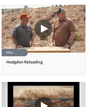

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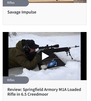

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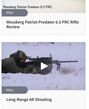

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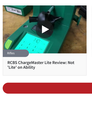

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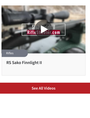

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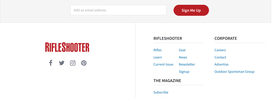

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