

Rolling .58 Cal Civil War Cartridges

By Lew Zervas, June 26, 2004

This article tells you how cutout, roll, seal, load, and fold ends of cartridge tubes for use in .58 caliber muskets.

Description:

Paper tubes are used to hold black powder as "loads" for Civil War era muskets while reenacting.

Safety:

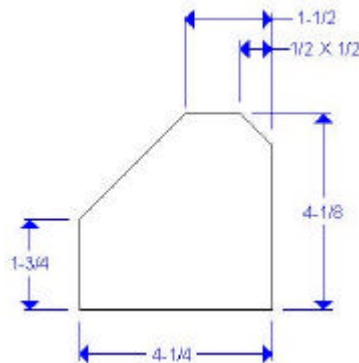
Extreme caution should be used in handling and storing black powder, and the disposal of any material used in the construction of cartridges. This includes the storage of finished tubes. This instruction is for information only and the author assumes no responsibility for errors and mishandling by the user.

Materials needed:

Paper (white or off white, beige) bond commonly used for computers.
Black powder (FFF is most widely used for large bore muskets).
Rolling pin, ½ inch diameter wood dowel.
Funnel, plastic.
Wax (Gulf wax available in grocery stores)
Powder Measure (65 grains).
Surface cover (newspaper, wax paper).

Cutout Paper:

Using the pattern at the right, layout 6 per 8-1/2 X 11 inch sheet of paper (butting patterns up against each other. Make copies. (Keep master for future coping.) Lay master on a stack of copies and using a box cutter, cutout pattern through all.



Roll Paper:

Use a ½ inch dowel (I have a wood ball cemented to one end as a knob) for this step. This is slightly less than the caliber but allows more loads to fit in the cartridge box if placed neatly, side by side. Place the dowel on the edge of the paper that has the "4-1/8" dimension above. Roll completely to the other end.

Slip the paper slightly off the end of the dowel by about 5/8-inch. Twist end while holding the paper on the dowel from moving. Press stub toward end of dowel on a hard surface.



Dipping Paper:

Heat wax to melting point in a small pan. (I use aluminum foil around the stove element to avoid a mess.) Dip twisted end of cartridge in wax. Place tubes to cool. (I have a wood 2 X 2 with nails driven in it. Slide the dipped tubes over the nails.)



Filling Tubes:

Using a plastic funnel that will fit in the end of the tube, pour 65 gr. of black powder in each tube. Fold the end of end of the tube at least twice, then put a "V" fold perpendicular to that to prevent unfolding.

Storing Tubes:

I use sandwich size zip lock storage bags to put 50 rounds into. I also put a small note with the date and number 50 (amount of rounds). Store in a safe place.

