

American Rifle Team

The musical score for "American Rifle Team" is presented in a single treble clef staff. It begins with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a time signature of 2/4. The piece is divided into two main sections, A and B, each marked with a boxed letter. Section A spans the first two lines of music, and Section B spans the third and fourth lines. The score includes various chords (D, G, D, A7) and first/second endings. The first ending of Section A leads back to the beginning of Section A, while the second ending of Section B leads back to the beginning of Section B. The piece concludes with a final first ending of Section B.

"American Rifle Team" is an American hornpipe in 2/4 time and D Major. The parts are played AA'BB'. The tune was composed by Edwin Christie - not the blackface minstrel of 19th century Christie's Minstrel's fame, but rather a "respected if not particularly successful composer who probably worked in the Boston area".

Music researcher Don Meade says American rifle teams won victories against an Irish team in 1874 and 1875, and 1876. "The American Rifle Team" honors the American rifle team led by Major Leech that won an international match in 1874 held at the Creedmore Range, Long Island. Meade also notes that a number of melodies were inspired by this feat. As the Americans won by only the slimmest of margins, a return match was held the following year at Dolly Mount, Ireland (the team sailed on the Inman Line's City of Chester). Again, the Americans were victors, and a final match in 1876 was held between teams of Ireland, Scotland, Canada, and Australia for a final American victory. The Wimbledon Cup, a silver trophy that was presented to the 1875 winners at Wimbledon by Princess Louise on behalf of the riflemen of Great Britain, has been ever since been the annual honor for the long-range shooting match. The country was ecstatic and with a surge of national pride treated the members of the team as conquering heroes upon their return.

The B part of the tune begins in third position on the violin which is unknown territory for most traditional fiddlers.

It was printed in Ryan's **Mammoth Collection** (1883) and Cole's **1000 Fiddle Tunes** (1940).

It was recorded Frank Ferrel on **Yankee Dreams: Wicked Good Fiddling from New England** (1991).