

Bob Chow, Olympian rapid-fire shooter, 1948



1948 Olympics in London, England. Bob Chow is on the right.

F. Robert Chow (1911-2003) known as Bob Chow to his family and friends was born in 1911, in the U.S. to Chinese immigrant parents and passed away in 2003. He was a pioneer ham radio operator in his youth. He joined the Navy Reserve in the early 1930s. He became a non-commissioned officer, a rarity then for an Asian American.

Bob established 37 world pistol records, and in 1948 qualified for a place on the U.S. Olympic Team and competed in London. He was the first Chinese American to compete in pistol shooting in an Olympic game. Bob was the only U.S. rapid-fire shooter to score 60 hits in the match and placed 13th overall. After returning from the Olympics Bob coached young American shooters and raised the standard of American gunnery to competitive internationally.

During his stint as a movie extra he taught John Wayne, Roy Rogers and others how to increase their accuracy in pistol firing. Bob was an all around sportsman and loved Motorcycles. Bob played saxophone and banjo with American jazz groups during the Prohibition days following World War II. Eventually he and his wife Bobbie settled in San Francisco where he owned and operated a gun shop until the 1960s. He was an avid gun collector before becoming a master gunsmith. His guns are highly valued by collectors. The Nevada Museum in Elko holds a permanent exhibition containing 65 of his rare pieces.