

From Captain I.S. Fraser

Canadian Armed Forces Headquarters
330 McLeod Street
Ottawa, Ontario.

12 August, 1965

Dear *Dr. Raddall,*

I am writing you in the hope that you will be able to offer some information concerning the musket carried by an early French regiment in Canada in 1665.

We are trying to establish details with respect to the representation of the Carignan-Sallieres regiment in the Canadian Armed Forces Tattoo to be produced across Canada in 1967. At the moment, we are having great difficulty in establishing just what musket was carried by the soldiers of the regiment when they served in Quebec in 1665. We have every desire to make our representation as historically accurate as possible but no one, including many sources in North America and Europe can tell us precisely what weapon was carried. The thought occurred to me the other night that you might be able to cast some light on this by virtue of your knowledge of Canadian history, and I would be most grateful if you could give us a line either on the weapon carried or where we might be able to get the information.

As you may know, we are attempting to bring a measure of Canadian military history before the Canadian public in our Tattoo. The fundamental success of a venture of this type, as I am sure you will agree, depends a great deal on the absolute accuracy of every aspect of the presentation. Hence our need to establish detail with respect to the musket.

Although we have never met, our paths did cross briefly a few years ago when you received a letter for me from the CBC drama department and I, in turn, received one meant for you. I often wish that I could have delivered that letter personally, since I have always been a great admirer of your work and I would have been delighted to have had an opportunity to chat with you for a few minutes about some of your novels. I do hope this request does not inconvenience you, but I could think of no one who would be in a better position to either give us the information we require or to tell us where this information could be found.

Yours sincerely,

I.S. Fraser
(I.S. Fraser)
Captain
Producer

The Canadian Armed Forces Tattoo.

August 16, 1965

Captain I.S.Fraser,
Canadian Armed Forces Hq,
330 McLeod Street, Ottawa.

Dear Captain Fraser:

I'm afraid I cannot say with any authority what sort of musket was carried by the Carignan-Sallieres Regiment in Canada in 1665.

As you probably know, the cheap and fairly reliable (that is, reliable in firing the charge) matchlock continued in use until about 1700, although by that time the wheel-lock was common, and the first flintlocks had appeared about 1650.

H.W.Bowman in his book "Antique Guns" (Arco Publishing Co., New York, 1955) says:-

"By 1650 certain improvements, such as combining the flash pan cover and the frissen mechanism in one unit, and the safety feature of the half-lock, gave us the flintlock, a modification of the snaphance, which was to be changed but little until the first patent on the percussion method after 1800."

Thus it was a period of transition in the art of making firearms, and the Carignan-Sallieres could have been armed with matchlocks, wheel-locks or flintlocks. My guess is that troops posted in Canada in 1665 were most likely to have the oldfashioned and familiar matchlock.

Sincerely,