

41st Regiment of Foot (Military Living History Group) JOURNAL



January/July 2005

The Current Season

The 2005 reenacting season begins in Canada with the Battle of Longwoods, held at Longwoods Conservation Area on the week-end of May 7-8. The event is hosted by the Upper Thames Military Reenactment Society (UTMRS), who also make up the bulk of the 1st (Royal Scots) Regiment.

Over the years this event is becoming more and more attractive. It has a wonderful location with woods, a gully, open, rolling fields and plenty of space for encampments, as well as a real Sutlers' Village, with old log cabins on site.

One thing that is exciting about the event is the sense of anticipation as the season begins. Winter cobwebs are brushed aside, and there is a genuine sense of relief as the season gets under way, at least in Canada.

The Forty First Regiment of Foot (MLHG) *Journal* is published six times per year.

Editor: Ray Hobbs

The Journal and the Military History Group are dedicated to the life and work of the British soldier during the War of 1812, especially those who served in the 41st Regt. in the Canadas from 1799-1815

ray.hobbs@sympatico.ca

<http://www.fortyfirst.org>

Other events that we agreed upon at the AGM in October include the Siege at Fort Meigs, Ohio, at the end of May. Fort Meigs has undergone a massive renovation and last year's Grand Tactical was thrilling to be part of.

This original siege in 1813 was

very much a part of the 41st's history, and, as several members recall, the mortar pits and other emplacements are still visible today.

The staff at Fort Meigs are always the most hospitable and welcoming, and it was a joy to be their guests again.

At the time of writing, the Regiment has taken part in not only Longwoods and Meigs, but also Stoney Creek, and the Grand Tactical at Fort George. Stoney Creek this year was one of the largest events on site, certainly in terms of the spectators. The atmosphere at Battlefield House was very good, and the tacticals exciting.

The Grand Tactical at Fort George on July 15-17 was an absolutely wonderful event. In spite of the rain, high temperatures and even higher humidity, spirits were not dampened, and the event was attended by almost one thousand reenactors. The American line was unusually large and this added to the general spectacle. The camps were extensive, and the tacticals - an amphibious landing on Saturday afternoon, a British defence of the fort on Saturday evening, and the British sortie against the fort and its successful capture - were the most exciting I have participated in. Large numbers give the opportunity of creative tactics, and the two divisions of British infantry on Saturday evening, the shuttling of companies on Saturday afternoon, and the "checkerboard advance" on Sunday afternoon simply added to the authenticity of the tacticals. It was thrilling to be part of such an event.

The Forty First has done well this season, fielding no less than seven muskets so far.

One other event that we were honoured to participate in this season was the visit of His Honour James

Bartelman, Lieutenant Governor of Ontario to Hamilton to celebrate United Empire loyalist Day on June 18th. We were privileged to be invited to act as his Honour Guard, and made a good, colourful impression on all present. It is hinted that this might be an annual commitment.

For the remainder of the season we have the Siege at Fort Erie on August 5-7, and the Tactical at Fort Niagara, New York on August 19-24. Also the timeline at Fort Malden on July 30-August 1, the Brantford Historical Museum event on August 1, and event at the Dundas Historical Museum on September 17. More on this event below.

New 41st Lecture Series

On April 22nd the first lecture in the newly launched 41st Lecture Series took place. We were privileged to have as our first speaker, Okwaho (Wolf) Thomas, of the Six Nations, Brantford, and War Leader of the British Native Allies affiliated to the Crown Forces. Wolf also holds a Captain's Commission in the Crown Forces.

Wolf's topic is "Native Perspectives on the War of 1812: An Untapped Oral Tradition". The session was held at the Wellington Brewery, Guelph and began at 7.00pm. Within the Native culture historical traditions which feed the present self-understanding are kept alive by oral traditions passed on from generation to generation. The information in these oral traditions rarely finds its way into standard western historical treatments of the war, which are dependent upon written document-ation and "primary sources".

Pre-literate societies flourished under the nurture of these oral traditions. The "Icelandic Sagas", transmitted in song and poetry through the ages, have kept Norse national pride and knowledge alive. Oral traditions like this are more dynamic, and more immediate to the tradents, and their audiences.

We learned from Wolf's presentation, and we were honoured to have him as the opening speaker for the series.

Future events will be addressed by Robert Malcomson on November 18th. Robert, a well-known historian of the War of 1812, will be speaking on Maj. Gen. Shaeffe and the British Army at Queenston Heights. Special attention will be given to the 41st Regt. In April of 2006 Captain (Hon.) Vic Suthren, RCN, will be our presenter, and will speak on "Jack was every inch a sailor: British Naval Development on the Great Lakes in the War of 1812". Vic is Commodore of the Naval Establishment attached to the Crown Forces, and a knowledgeable historian. He was formerly the Director of the Canadian War Museum.

Negotiations are still under way for the Fall of 2006, but it is hoped that we will maintain the high standard

set at the beginning by these three excellent speakers.

In this venture we are proud to be associated with Wellington Brewery, Guelph.

Buying a Musket for Reenacting

Being a compendium of some things I've learned along with some opinions and conjecture

By **Cpl. Andrew Bateman**, 41st Reg't of Foot MLHG

Getting kitted out for this wonderful hobby we call 1812 reenacting is an expensive proposition, full of traps for the unwary. It is necessary for the newbie to solicit advice from those who have been in the hobby a few years to find out exactly what to buy, what will work, and what won't. With this in mind, I have endeavoured to put together some notes about buying what will probably be your biggest single investment in this hobby – your musket. This marvelous



The inscribed barrel of a 41st Regiment India Pattern Brown Bess, currently located in the research collection of Ft. Niagara, New York. It is dated 1807



contraption is the infantryman's *raison d'etre* – the thing that allows him to sling large chunks of lead at our misguided brother Jonathan (or at least simulate doing so). These few humble paragraphs are the result of the research I did when I was a green recruit in 1998 supplemented with anything else I have learned since then. I am quite interested in replica black powder weapons and have kept an ear to the ground over the years for new developments in this field.

First, a little historical background. When the 41st Foot arrived in Canada in 1799 they were probably armed with what was the standard infantry shoulder weapon in the British Army at that time – the Short Land pattern musket, sometimes called the "Second Model Brown Bess" by modern scholars. It was distinguished by its 42" barrel, four ramrod pipes, flat sideplate with a "tail" at the back, and an acorn-shaped brass plate on the wrist of the stock called the

“escutcheon”. Coincidentally, 1799 is the same year that the British Army stopped acquiring the Short Land pattern (which was getting too expensive to make) and standardized on the “India Pattern” musket. The India Pattern was not built in India – it got its name because it was originally built by the British gun trade for the British East India Company’s private army. This musket incorporated several cost saving measures. The barrel was shortened to 39”, the number of ramrod pipes was reduced to three, a convex sideplate without a tail was used, the wrist escutcheon was deleted, and the jaws of the cock were simplified somewhat. This, then, was the standard infantry weapon of Wellington’s army and of all the British regiments that arrived in Canada to participate in the War of 1812. By the outbreak of the war in 1812, original documents indicate that the original consignment of Short Land pattern muskets that the 41st had brought over from Ireland were in sad shape from years of service and many were unserviceable. We haven’t uncovered the exact records yet, but in the 41st Regiment MLHG we believe that the 41st were mostly re-equipped with the India Pattern by the time the war broke out, and that this was the arm that saw the most service.

This presents a problem for the 1812 reenactor because in the past, most of the market for replica flint muskets has been driven by the American War of Independence reenacting community, which was, and remains, much larger than the 1812 community. That means that many companies have produced replicas of the Short Land pattern musket of varying quality, but (with the exception of the Canadian-built “Seamore”) nobody bothered to produce a replica of the India Pattern until quite recently. There was an explosion of Short Land replicas around the time of the American bicentennial in 1976, most of them built in Italy or Japan, and many of these muskets can still be found on the field today. Now, I will attempt to provide a run-down of all the replica Brown Besses I know about, complete with favourable and unfavourable points about them, and then I will conclude with some recommendations.

The Seamore Musket (India Pattern)

I’ll dispense with this one first because although it is an excellent replica of the India Pattern musket, you are unlikely to see one except in the display racks at Parks Canada sites like Fort George and Fort Malden. Some of the older reenactors may be able to correct me but I believe they were built for Parks Canada in the ‘60’s or ‘70’s by an armourer from the Toronto Police named Seamore. Those who have used one as part of a summer job at these sites praise the quality of these guns, but unfortunately their maker has passed on and we will be seeing no more new ones. I understand that Coghlin & Upton bought the remaining stock of parts.

The Rifle Shoppe India Pattern

This is the *ne plus ultra* of available replicas. The Rifle Shoppe is a small company in Jones, Oklahoma that makes parts kits for everything from medieval “hand gonnies” to

Civil War muskets. I recommend their catalog for the drool factor alone. (Want a copy of Sgt. Harper’s volley gun? It’s in there.) They will sell you the furniture and lock castings or an assembled lock with properly tempered springs, then you must find a custom builder to supply a stock and a barrel and put it together for you. I recently saw a finished one for sale at Track of the Wolf’s website, but it was over \$4000 US. If you have the means, you can get a true museum-quality replica this way.

The “Japanese” Musket (Short Land Pattern)

A company in Tennessee called Dixie Gun Works, which has been a respected presence in the muzzleloading world since the 1950’s, once had an arrangement with Miroku in Japan to build replicas of the Short Land musket. (I think they were sold by Navy Arms at one time too.) However, once interest in the Revolutionary War started to peter out in the ‘80’s, the market for replica Brown Besses shrank and the Japanese Bess became a casualty by the early ‘90’s, but I will cover this musket because you still find them for sale on the used market, and a few of the members of the Regiment carry them. The “unit loaners”, acquired back in the late 80’s, are Japanese Besses.

Pluses: This musket is well built and reliable, especially the lock, which has a strong spring and throws a good shower of sparks. Japanese Besses have a reputation for reliable firing. They can be an economical choice if you can find one cheap and take good care of it.

Minuses: Many of these muskets are 20 to 30 years old by now and time is beginning to take a toll on them. Barrels rust out, stocks crack, and springs break, and spare parts are getting hard to find. Dixie Gun Works is sold out of major parts like mainsprings – if one breaks a new one will need to be fabricated by a gunsmith. Most parts will not interchange with the more readily available Pedersoli. Also, appearance-wise, this musket has some funky styling. The trigger guard is noticeably out of round (some say the trigger guard of the musket the Japanese copied must have been dented at some point); the forend is chunky and noticeably flat-topped instead of being slender and blending into the barrel; the markings on the lock plate are odd-looking machine made symbols that do not really resemble anything on an original musket (especially the stylized crown); and the stock wood has a blonde colour to it that some people find objectionable, especially when the finish starts to wear off. Has an overall “machine made” feel to it.

The Pedersoli “Second Model Brown Bess” (Short Land Pattern)

Currently one of the most popular choices for beginning reenactors, the Pedersoli is the only Italian-made replica to survive the shrinking of the Brown Bess market and remain in production. Many members of the 41st own these, including myself.

Pluses: It is currently in production and spare parts are easy to find. It is rugged and reliable (if not quite as sure-fire as a properly functioning Japanese musket). The styling is quite handsome and certainly better than the Japanese musket, and the stock is European walnut of a good colour.

Minuses: At \$1300 Cdn new, it's not the cheapest musket available. And, of course, it's a Short Land and not an India Pattern. Bears the date "1762" on the lock. That is ideal if you're reenacting 1776, but the idea that a musket that old could be still in service in the 41st in 1812 is stretching credibility.

The Indian Made Muskets

There are muskets being produced in India these days that are quite attractive from a price standpoint, but it is **buyer beware** as far as quality goes! These Indian muskets are currently the most popular reenacting musket in the UK, are making inroads in North America, and are often seen in TV shows and movies. They are available from various sources and cutlers.

Pluses: Cheap. (comparatively speaking. About \$650 Cdn)

Minuses: The ones that Track of the Wolf and Discriminating General sell have odd styling, with crude stocks lacking the details found on original muskets and with postwar New Land pattern nose caps. The forend is too chunky and the butt is too skinny. Metal parts tend to be finished crudely, and the stocks are made of an open-grained Indian rosewood that does not take a finish well and does not really resemble walnut. Quality control is spotty. Some of these muskets function acceptably but too many of them are plagued with gritty functioning and soft lock parts that tend to wear out quickly because heavy springs are used to cover up for poorly fitted lock parts (a common problem with replicas right up to the cowboy era). A consignment brought in by a reenacting unit a few years ago was particularly bad, but arms from more recent shipments seem to be getting better reviews. There is another possibility that shows some early promise, however....

Loyalist Arms "Brown Bess East India Pattern (Third Model)"

There is a company in Nova Scotia called Loyalist Arms & Repairs that is importing a variety of replica weapons for reenactors including the Pedersoli line and an expanding variety of muzzleloaders from India. They are apparently using a different manufacturer in India than other importers, and from the photos on their website, it looks as though their India pattern musket is the best one available from an appearance standpoint. It's not perfect, but it seems to me to match up pretty well compared to an original.

Pluses: Cheaper than the Pedersoli by \$500. It's an India pattern, so it is more correct for 1812 than the Pedersoli. A correspondent from the US Marine unit on the USS Constitution reports that one of their members who works at the Springfield Armory national park has compared this musket to originals in the collection and pronounced it to be the best India pattern available.

Minuses: I haven't seen one of these in person and cannot comment on its quality, function, or reliability. The comments about the faithfulness of this replica above may be damning with faint praise – it may just be that, of all the muskets available, this one is the least bad.

CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Which musket you choose to buy will depend on your needs and desires.

If you have \$1200 in ready cash and you want a musket that you can be sure of the quality of, and you are willing to settle for a Short Land instead of an India Pattern, you can't go wrong with the Pedersoli.

If you have less cash available (\$400-\$800), but want a musket you can be sure of the quality of, and are willing to settle for a Short Land, you may try to buy a used Japanese or Italian musket.

If you have \$742 in ready cash and want to have an India pattern, and if you are willing to "take one for the team" by buying a musket of unknown quality, I encourage you to contact Loyalist Arms and order one of their India Pattern muskets so we can all see what they are like! If I like them I may even get one myself as a loaner/backup musket. If I like it a lot I'll make it my primary musket and retire my Pedersoli to loaner/backup status.

If you like adventure, buy any other Indian made musket new or used.

A Night on the Town

An Evening with Henry Procter
Lance Corporal Tom Fournier

It is not hard to walk the streets of Old Quebec today and imagine what it might have been like to walk those same streets 200 years ago. Close your eyes and listen to the clatter of horse shoes on the cobblestone streets, open your eyes and take in the grandeur of the old stone buildings, the old world feel of the narrow streets and towering fortifications and then walk by the sophistication of the British Officers' Club just inside the gates across from the Esplanade.

Travel back in time through those 200 years to March 17, 1804. Picture Lieutenant Colonel Henry Procter of the 41st Regiment of Foot. Procter gained his appointment in September 1800 coming to the 41st from a majority in the 43rd Regiment. Up until that point, Procter had spent his entire military career in the 43rd. It is not hard to imagine that by the spring of 1804, Procter was beginning to gain confidence in his ability to command the 41st and he had also begun to build sound relations with members of his officers' corps.

Procter had spent that evening with his officers in the mess of the 41st Officers. At a certain point, Henry decided that his evening had come to its end and it was time to return to his quarters. Nightfall still came early to Quebec that late in the winter, and it was through darkened streets, perhaps illuminated by candles in the windows of

dwellings or lanterns hanging outside of doors, that Procter walked.

It was at this point that Henry Procter's night took a rather strange twist as he encountered James "Mad Dog" Sinclair, private in the 41st. What sort of character was Sinclair? Some details from his service file:

December 1794: For being drunk on garrison parade, sentence was 300 lashes but received pardon.

May 1797: For being drunk and striking the sentry, sentence was being reduced from Corporal and 100 lashes. He received 100 lashes.

December 1797: For being drunk and attempting to force the sentry, sentence was being reduced from Corporal and 200 lashes. He received 200 lashes.

February 1798: For being drunk on duty, sentence was 500 lashes. He received 200 lashes.

Now that we have established the antecedents of Private James Sinclair of the Light Infantry of the 41st Regiment of Foot, let us return to the night of 17 March 1804.

Procter later wrote that he had drank sparingly that night and was confident that he had a complete recollection of the events of that evening. As he walked along the street, he heard a very noisy commotion. He saw a private of the 41st "in liquor" trying to force his way into a Public House.

Henry Procter, please meet James Sinclair.

Procter ordered Sinclair back to his barracks. At this point, Sinclair was also resisting the efforts of a sentinel who had come to help deal with the disturbance. In his agitation, Procter grabbed Sinclair by the bayonet belt. Sinclair let loose with what was in Procter's words, "the most threatening and abusive language that he had ever heard!"

At this point Sinclair struck Procter with his fist "a most violent blow on the face". Procter admitted to being momentarily stunned due to the force of Sinclair's punch. Procter felt it was Sinclair's good fortune that a Sergeant of the 41st come upon the scene and also helped in the intervention. Procter claimed that he had begun to draw his sword and felt quite justified in doing so to help in his self defense.

Try to imagine Sinclair, being forcibly dragged away, still shouting at Procter, struggling to get at Procter so that he can deliver another blow and then coming to the self realization that he is wearing his bayonet belt and trying to free his bayonet as he is being restrained.

Procter claimed that Sinclair was identifying him by name in his threats and insults and was most certainly aware of who it was that he had struck and was still trying to reach once again.

James Sinclair was immediately jailed in Quebec, waiting as Procter wrote to Lieutenant-General Hunter

requesting a full formal court martial for Sinclair. There was no further communications or documents around this incident in this group of records. We do not know the outcome of Sinclair's court martial but it is not hard to imagine the final result.

Source: National Archives of Canada, "C" Series, Record Group 8, Volume 909

"A Day in the Life of an 1812 Soldier" September 17, 2005 - Dundas Historical Museum

On September 17, 2005 the Regiment has been invited to do a "show-and-tell" at the Dundas Historical Museum, Park Street, Dundas. During early discussions with the staff of the Museum and members of the Dundas Valley Historical Society, I was surprised to learn of their relative ignorance of events during the War of 1812 which affected Dundas. British officers and NCOs were billeted throughout Dundas in 1813. In early October 1813 2500 Natives and their families arrived on the door of the community (which numbered less than two hundred), and demanded food. Several members of the local militia regiment company transferred to Runchey's Company of Coloured Men, which indicates that the black population of Dundas at the time was relatively large.

Such discussion led to the organization of "A Day in the Life of..." and it is being enthusiastically supported by the Museum and the local business community.

Preliminary plans are for the day to begin at 10.00am with a march from the Museum to the Driving Park (about 1/2 km) where we will hold a musket demonstration.

Following this we will march back through the centre of town, stopping at a suitable spot for a "Mini-Militia" demo. Back at the Museum we will have established a small row of wedge tents, an officer's marquee, a campfire setting, a recruiting post, a musket information station, and a medical post. At each of these sites we will offer relevant information to museum visitors.

The day will end at 4.00pm, and it is hoped we will retreat to the Winchester Arms for a suitable repast.

All are encouraged to attend this event. we will be assisted by "Dr." Bill Longo of the Glengarries, and a few members of the 1st Royal Scots Grenadiers. Negotiations are under way to have a few musicians present.