

Aux armes, les Canadiens

Voila! It's come at last. Canada is finally at war. I, for one, am glad. It's high time we show those Frenchies up in St. Pierre and Miquelon that we're ready to die like men to save our sacred cod and hake.

One Canadian frozen fish stick is worth more than all the morue a la creme dieppoise in France.

Maybe negotiations were once possible. That was until the surly French actually had de Gaulle to delay a planeload of Canadian tourists arriving in Paris. Is nothing sacred?

C'est la guerre. Aux armes, les Canadiens!

The first thing we should do is to invade, following Argentina's splendid example when it invaded the Falklands, another wretched colonial outpost filled by insolent British fishermen. D-Day for St. Pierre and Miquelon!

Never mind those critics who will quack about us not having any fighting troops except in Europe. Or a rust-bottomed navy that can't afford the fuel to get to the invasion zone.

There are enough pleasure boats to put an army of bully Canucks ashore on St. Pierre and Miquelon. We'll run up the old Maple Leaf and change the name to the Waterloo Islands.

When the French navy comes with all its show-off aircraft carriers, cruisers and troop ships we will stage a fighting retreat to Toronto.

We'll burn down every McDonalds between Riviere de Loup and Oshawa, leaving nothing but scorched earth for the horrid French, whose armies, as Napoleon wisely noted, march on their stomachs.

I'm ready here in Toronto. My residence has been turned into a mini-Gibraltar. I have a super Yves St. Laurent camouflage outfit with a Lanvin red paratrooper beret and mean jump boots by Longchamp.

My sandbags are all hand-stitched in a lovely muted olive color by Montana.

I even have a wonderful leather knapsack from that dear Louis Vuitton.

Dior was kind enough to send over some of his brand new macho combat face paint, the green

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and black stuff that makes you want to yell "Kill, kill, kill!" when you daub it on.

Those froggies won't starve me out either.

I've laid in a month's supply of essential combat rations. Vichy water. Twenty cases of robust, combat-proven Bordeaux and 10 of velvety Burgundy for in-between fighting.

And then for apres-battle, some wonderful bottles of fine old Armagnac. For my first-aid kit, a few flagons of eau de vie as a restorative.

In my combat larder goes jambon de Bayonne, sausage from Lyons and Arles, black olives from St. Tropez, goat cheese from the Dordogne, Normandy butter, pickles from Alsace, and much more. I shall fight to my last croissant.

And for any French soldier unlucky enough to fall alive into my hands, I have prepared a special welcome. Au diable with the Geneva Convention. I will make them drink Ontario wine and listen to live debate from Parliament.

That will teach them to invade our holy soil.

Of course, la guerre is always unpredictable.

Who knows, we might be betrayed by fifth columnists and traitors. Everyone knows the French never fight fair and maybe they'll come up with some below-the-belt way of overcoming our defences.

Just to be on the safe side, I've also come up with an armistice plan.

We'll hand over the Maritimes, Quebec and Labradors. They want cod—voila! They shall have it. Next, we will agree to rip out our vineyards and grow only wheat to make brioche.

Bagpipes will be banned in Canada.

Expressions like French letters or taking French leave will be expunged from the language. Anglo-Canadian politicians will be forbidden to speechify in what they think is French but that sounds like Somali spoken by a Greek.

In exchange, the French Republic will solemnly undertake to provide each defeated Canadian with an annual airplane ticket to the Riviera, a free hotel room for two weeks and three meals in a two-star restaurant.

French chefs will be stationed in Toronto to bring gastronomic enlightenment. Special crack units of the food inspectors will be dispatched from Paris to close down those spurious Toronto Italian restaurants whose owners seem to know more about evading the Casablanca vice squad than making rigatoni.

If Canadians continue to fight, the French will probably come out with their piece de resistance: A 15% discount on all designer women's wear and 20% off on French cosmetics. And if all else fails, five free spa treatments for the vanquished. Mon dieu! How can mere flesh and blood resist?

La guerre, she is terrible, n'est-ce pas?