



Keith Wilson

March 20, 2012

The Honourable James Moore
Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A6

Dear Mr. Moore

Re: Canada's 150th Birthday - 2017

Attached is a letter I received March 13 from the Honourable Minister Peter MacKay in response to a letter I wrote to him on October 14, 2011. Mr. MacKay advises in his letter that your department is “leading the government efforts” regarding celebrations up to and including 2017 and it is in that regard that I’m writing to you. In my letter to Mr. MacKay I proposed that, in celebration of Canada’s 150th birthday in 2017 the Canadian Armed Forces present a military tattoo along the lines of the tattoo performed for Canada’s 100th birthday and that was Tattoo 1967,

As a former member of the Armed Forces and a participant in Tattoo 1967 during Canada’s 100th birthday I know firsthand what impact Tattoo 1967 played in the centennial celebrations in 1967. Tattoo 1967 was more than a band concert albeit military bands participated in the tattoo; it was a military display such that Canada had not seen before. Tattoo 1967 was a military pageant portraying Canada’s military history starting from the French in Canada in 1665, the British in 1782, the Navy in 1813 and 1911, Canada’s involvement in the Boer War, World War I and II, the Korean conflict and its peace keeping role up to 1967. The tattoo also contained other sections of humour, band music and a gymnastic display. All in all, there was something for young and old alike.

When it was all said and done, the Tattoo 1967 had performed over 150 shows from coast to coast in that centennial year. To get a feel for what Tattoo 1967 was all about, please visit my web page at <http://tattoo67.com/index.html>. On my web page I’ve included photos of the show scenes, newspaper clippings, videos both by the CBC and NFB and miscellaneous photos. I have also attached to this letter some copies of newspaper articles from across Canada to give you a

flavor of what Canadians felt about the Tattoo. Tattoo 1967 was a fantastic success and I am proud to say, even after all these years since, that I was one of the participants in what the Calgary Herald called, "the greatest single presentation of centennial year."

When you review the attached documents you will see what affect Tattoo 1967 had on Canadians. As the Toronto Telegram described it "*If it isn't the Greatest Show on Earth, it certainly rates high as the greatest spectacle ever seen in Canada*" and from the Windsor Star, "*The tattoo is one of the finest presentations of this kind ever offered in Canada. What is more remarkable is that it is conceived, designed, and portrayed by members of Canada's three armed services.*"

In summary then and quoting from the Brandon Sun of May 3, 1967, "*The Armed Forces Tattoo is more than a concert combined with action, noise and variety. The Tattoo is a 'happening,' an evening that turns the viewer out rather emptied as after an emotional experience, yet filled with a kind of pride in Canada and her history the watcher did not know he could feel two hours and 18 minutes earlier, when the show opened.*" And finally from The Ottawa Citizen of 1967, "*What better way is there to leave all their (the military) achievements to our imaginations than the tattoo?*"

If the Government wishes to leave Canadians with the greatest memories of Canada's 150th birthday in my opinion there is no better way than to do it than with another Tattoo such as performed in 1967. I look forward to your response to my proposal for Tattoo 2017.

Respectfully submitted,

Keith Wilson (Sgt. retired)

(address omitted)

cc Chief of Defense Staff
General Walter Natynczyk

Addendum -Tattoo 1967 – excerpts from the press (pp. 3-4)
Letter from a Mrs. K. Fisher of May 1967 (p. 5)

ADDENDUM - TATTOO 1967
Excerpts for press coverage of Tattoo 1967

Peterborough Examiner

"...the show is an excellent one."

Barrie Examiner

"Canadian Armed Forces Tattoo received a standing ovation last night from a packed house at the Barrie Arena. It was a fitting tribute to two and a half hours of breathtaking excitement, and probably will be repeated in every one of the 150 performances the Tattoo will play this year."

Windsor Star

"The tattoo is one of the finest presentations of this kind ever offered in Canada. What is more remarkable is that it is conceived, designed, and portrayed by members of Canada's three armed services."

London, Ontario Free Press

"The tattoo is a magnificent production — sparkling with imagination, originality, color, pageantry and music. It came to London last night for a three-day stay and was greeted with a thunderous ovation by the more than 3,000 persons who jammed the Gardens. No Canadian should miss the production. They may never see one like it again."

Regina Leader-Post

"The Tattoo is not a military band. It's billed as the greatest road show ever put together in North America and lives up to its advance publicity."

Lethbridge Herald

"The Tattoo, a two-hour long professional performance of precision delight, has to rank as a top crowd pleaser across the country. Following the grand finale they rose to the occasion with a standing ovation as the cast of more than 200 performers marched off."

Calgary Herald

"Twenty million Canadians won't be wrong when they acclaim the Canadian Armed Forces Tattoo which opened last night for a three-day run at the Corral the greatest single presentation of centennial year."

Vancouver Hello There (tourist magazine)

"Vancouver to Thrill to Mightiest Tattoo Ever Staged on Continent."

Montreal Gazette

“When the Canadian Armed Forces Tattoo opened in Windsor, the town’s 6,000-seat arena was only half filled. At the closing performance three nights later, 3,000 people had to be turned away, and as the sound of the last chords of the *Marche Vanier* faded, the audience rose spontaneously and sang *O Canada*. . . . It is a show guaranteed to appeal to the very young and the very old-and to raise a lump in every legionnaire’s throat.”

The Ottawa Citizen

“The Canadian Armed Forces Tattoo is truly a fabulous production. It is deserving of every multi-syllabic superlative that comes to mind. It was so good, so inspiring and so entertaining, it was almost enough to make one want to enlist.”

The Toronto Telegram

“...a dazzling show and colorful almost beyond description.”

“...it exudes Canada’s pride in her 100 years of nationhood...”

“If it isn’t the Greatest Show on Earth, it certainly rates high as the greatest spectacle ever seen in Canada.”

“The tattoo’s success has exceeded all expectations.”

“The tattoo not only deserves to be shown outside of Canada, it should be, as part of national policy.”

The CNE “bowed to popular demand and has asked the Canadian Armed Forces Tattoo to give an unprecedented Sunday performance. Thus the Grandstand’s Never on Sunday rule is finally shattered.”

CNE General Manager Bert Powell

“We’ve never had anything like it — fabulous and fantastic. My phone is never quiet. I’m even getting professional critics and entertainers begging for tickets and that’s the ultimate tribute. I simply cannot satisfy them either.”

Hamilton Spectator (of the last performance of the stadium version of the Tattoo)

“When the lone piper plays his last sad lament tonight at Civic Stadium and the Canadian Armed Forces Tattoo comes to a close, it spells the end for the greatest spectacle ever seen in Canada. . . . But Canada is almost certain to see another Tattoo — even if it means waiting two or three years to do so. The show’s coast-to-coast success has been so tremendous that Ottawa seems to have been taken by surprise.”

John W. Fisher – Centennial Commissioner 1967

“The Tattoo does not glorify war nor does it remark on famous generals or battles won or lost. It does pull at your heart strings with memories or recollections of the ‘ordinary’ Canadians who fought and died in past wars.”

(retyped from the original letter copied to the Tattoo staff on May 8, 1967)

Brigadier, C. A. Peck
Director General Centennial

Dear Sir:

Our family of four children and two adults were at the Canadian Armed Forces Tattoo last night and were so very delighted. They asked me to write, and tell you how we felt. We are all enthused about our centennial, and feel our city was very fortunate in having the Tattoo, and am so glad we were able to go. Other than Expo, this must be the best thing that Canada, as a whole, is doing.

The men were just wonderful. Each and every one did a tremendous job. It sure gives your heart a lift, to know that these are the men who are protecting our Country. It was so nice to see all these forces merge together, and put on such a splendid show, and seem to enjoy it. The behind the scenes men, also did a wonderful job. The costumes, lights, sets, weapons, and the music, just couldn't have been better. The commentator was very good, and had a perfect voice for this.

I wish I could write to every one and let them know how we, and I'm sure everyone who saw it, feel. The children just can't stop talking about it, and I know we will remember it, all the rest of our days.

I hope these boys will be able to go back to regular work, when this year is over, they all seem like good "ham" actors now.

But God bless them all, and thank you and who ever also is responsible for such a fabulous show.

Mrs. K. Fisher

I am also writing to Prime
Minister Pearson and Paul
Hellyer.