

The GUNSTOCK WARCLUB (Notini-Towin-Mistik)

Historically, there was a fairly large variety of war clubs that were designed and used across North America. It was well known among Indigenous Nations that every warrior regardless of their Nation or Tribal affiliation carried some form of war club.

During the sixteenth century, Indigenous Warrior Societies began fashioning the Gunstock War Club based on various weapon examples noted throughout their regions and other territories that were occupied by their adversaries.

During this era, the inspiration and design of the Gunstock War Club most certainly came from warriors observing the effective “physical” impact power of a spent musket (wielded by the barrel) swung at an adversary in hand-to-hand confrontations providing devastating results.

A period musket (e.g. *Brown Bess Musket, 1722-1838*) could weigh over 10lbs (5kg) with a length of around 60 inches (150cm), 40 inches (110cm) of this was actually barrel length of the weapon. Through visual experience and hand-to-hand combat engagements, Indigenous warriors simply applied the Gunstock War Club (model and design) as a practical and effective combat weapon through their personal experience.

The visual impact of the Gunstock War Club is also another effective consideration for the warrior as it also was used to misinform the enemy that they were in possession of firearms, or at least, multiple weapons. This was especially applicable when warriors were seen from a distance with a Gunstock War Club sitting in combination with a Coup Stick or Lance. It most definitely looked like a firearm with this type of set up on the Great Plains.

Most Gunstock War Clubs were anywhere from 63 centimeters up to 76 centimeters (average length of 25-30 inches) in length. The length was reflective to the territory where the tribe patrolled through. If in the woodlands, the Gunstock War Club would be shorter in length compared to a longer Gunstock War Club in the Plains.

The Gunstock War Club hits with incredible force and throughout history it proved to be extremely deadly as their lethality was also enhanced with the addition of a Blade or Spike on the outside elbow (curve) of the weapon. The Gunstock War Club became a common weapon among all Indigenous peoples from the Great Lakes, Woodlands and Great Plains regions and thus remained a part of person’s individual arsenal up to the 1880’s.

Below is an illustration indicating the components of the Gunstock War Club in English and Plains Cree Languages (*Gunstock War Club – Notini-towin-mistik*)



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