

## Japanese Naval-Marked Martini-Henry Line-Throwing Gun (Update)

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An article I wrote on these line-throwing guns appeared in the September, 2016 edition of Banzai (#411: pp. 218-221). In December, 2017 I had the opportunity to examine another specimen, only the second one I have seen in person. It was much earlier than mine, with a serial number in the 3XX range, and had a projectile accompanying it. Here is what I learned.

First, a *mea culpa*. In the first article I misinterpreted the characters on the right side of the gun because I did not know that Martini rifles of this type have a cocking indicator. This indicator was misinstalled on mine, but oriented correctly on the new specimen I examined (see Fig. 1). The characters should probably be interpreted as “cocked” and “uncocked”, though they literally mean “loaded” and “empty”. Second, this early specimen confirms that the marking pattern changed, with some of the markings on the top rear of the barrels of early guns moved to the top front of the action on later ones (see Fig. 2). Third, even this early gun had a cast iron buttstock and resultant very heavy weight. Fourth, this early gun also had the same type of top-mounted rope canister latch as mine. Fifth, and most interestingly, I got to see details of the projectile. It is about 41cm. (16”) long in total and consists of a sleeve that fits over the barrel to catch the gases from the blank cartridge when it is fired and a steel tail about 16cm. (6.5”) long that slips into the barrel. The rear of the sleeve has edges turned up to allow a loop of natural fibre rope to be affixed. This loop would then presumably be attached to the rope in the canister prior to firing (see Fig. 3 and 4). Please contact me at [tallteri@shaw.ca](mailto:tallteri@shaw.ca) if you come across another KFC- or BSA-marked specimen.



Right: Fig. 1 and 2. Below: Fig. 3 and 4

