

THE

GRENADIE

GONG
SHOW

I do not consider myself to be an overly creative person. Instead of being proficient in right-brained activities such as art and design, my left-brain characteristics, such as logical thinking and problem solving, are inherently more advanced, and so I tend to struggle whenever I have to create something artistic or aesthetically pleasing. Such was the case when I developed the logo for the Battle at the Border.

Fortunately Mother Nature was on my side. On the evening of February 20, 2008, as I sat across from my chess board trying to brainstorm ideas for the logo, something happened that only occurs once every nineteen years: a lunar eclipse in the sign of Virgo! Normally I do not put much stock in astrology – in fact I did not even know there was an eclipse, or about its relationship with the Virgo sign, until much later – but that night I could definitely *feel* something was different, and the end result was the temporary destruction of my mind's creative barrier.



For a few hours my brain was flooded with ideas. The piece of brainstorming paper in front of me that typically stays blank for hours was overrun with possibilities, and out of that creative foray came the grenade icon.

“The bomb squad proceeded to evacuate an entire city block while their robot retrieved my package, placed it into an explosion-resistant bag, and blew it up.”

After completing a rough sketch of the logo my attention was drawn to another challenge: how could I acquire a few replica grenades to give away at the Battle? An eBay search revealed that most grenade sellers were located in the United States (go figure...), but most refused to ship to Canada. I spent several weeks searching for a Canada-friendly vendor, and when I found one I ordered three replica grenades.

Around the time the grenades were supposed to arrive I received a letter from Canada Post saying that I would not be receiving my package because it was illegal to ship inert/replica ammunition through their delivery infrastructure. It was a minor setback, but after doing some research into the various shipping options available I discovered that UPS would gladly ship replica grenades to Canada, and so I once again placed an order – this time for nine of them.

Three days before the grenades were supposed to arrive I received a phone call from the Lloydminster RCMP. The Constable I spoke with was puzzled as to why I would try to ship ammunition into the country, but after I explained my reasons the Constable said, “It looks like this whole ordeal is a big misunderstanding, but before I let you go I’d like you to know how much trouble you caused.” Apparently my package entered a post office in Toronto, and after a worker realized there were grenades inside he called the police, who then dispatched the bomb squad. The bomb squad proceeded to evacuate an entire city block while their robot retrieved my package, placed it into an explosion-resistant bag, and blew it up. “Needless to say” the officer continued, “this ordeal cost the city of Toronto a fair amount of money, so just don’t do it again”.

As I hung up the phone my heart sank into the pit of my stomach – I had another shipment of grenades coming in three days! What would I do if I got stuck with a bill from the bomb squad for thousands of dollars, or even worse, what if I got arrested? I spent the remainder of that afternoon on the phone to various government agencies, and ultimately I managed to notify Canada Customs (via a voicemail message) of my impending replica grenade shipment.

Thankfully, I did not receive a subsequent phone call from the RCMP, or a bill from the bomb squad, and shortly before the Battle began I even received my package of grenades. They had avoided the authority’s detection by being labelled as paperweights.