



BRITISH COLUMBIA  
POSTAL HISTORY  
RESEARCH GROUP

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Volume 13 – Number 2

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**B.C. RESEARCH MEETING – VANPEX – OCTOBER 8 to 10, 2004**  
**Best Western Hotel, Richmond**

At the request of the VANPEX organizing committee the B.C. Postal History Research Study Group will hold a meeting in conjunction with VANPEX – the time and location to be announced. It is hoped members of the study group will attend.

**Topic – Is a standardized system of cancellation identification necessary?**

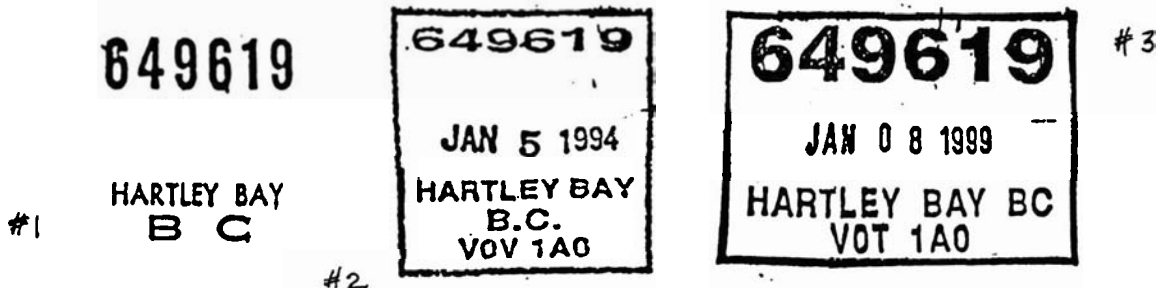
Ever since collectors started collecting cancellations attempts have been made to develop systems of classification of postal hand stamps. Some systems are simple such as the Squared Circles that are divided into Type 1 and Type 2. Others, such as the R.P.O. hand stamp types developed by Lew Ludlow, identify 35 major marking types some of which are divided into more than 20 subtypes. The Topping/Robinson system of using “A” through “E” plus “M” to identify metal hammers has worked reasonably well, although some complain that it does not distinguish minor variations in wording, such as “BRIT COL” from regular “B.C.” hammers.

Andrew Scott is presently working on a listing of British Columbia POCONs much as Mike Sagar has done with the MOONS and is looking for a simple, easy to use method of identification of basic POCON types. Mike Sagar divided the moons into 18 types and since the production of the MOON daters was standardized by the Post Office Department the classification works very well. Initially the POCON daters were more or less standardized and issued by the Post Office Department but over the past few year a wide variety of shapes and sizes of postal daters have been introduced making the development of a classification system difficult. At the same time daters with the same arrangement of wording may exist in a wide variety of sizes ranging from square to rectangular. To add to the confusion a large number of daters have suffered badly from incorrect inking or simple wear causing a change in shape or size.

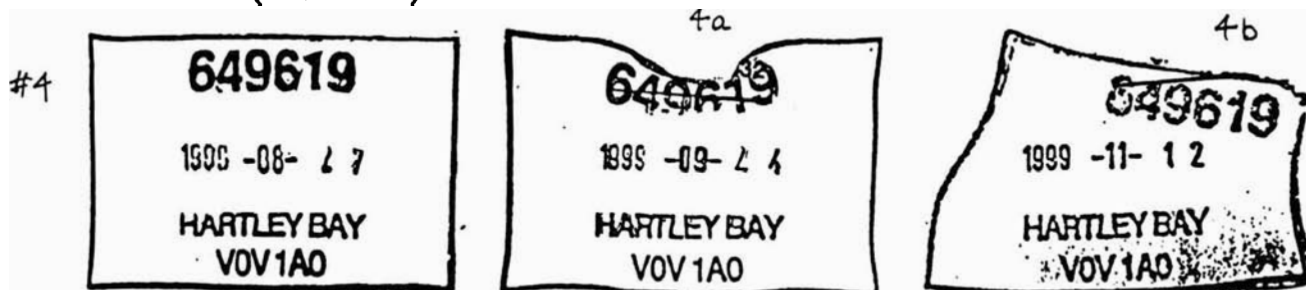
This brings us back to the original question. – Is a standardized system of cancellation identification necessary? If so how much detail is required? Should the system be alphanumeric or simply numeric to accommodate computer listing? How detailed should the identification be? And finally should each dater have an individual identification number?

If you have views on the topic plan to attend the VANPEX meeting. For time and place phone Bill Topping , 604-261-1508 after October 1.

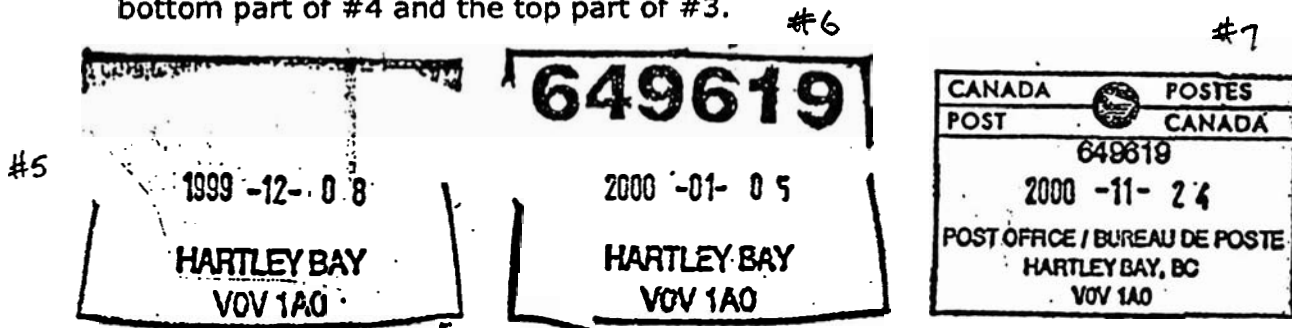
Hartley Bay, a small and isolated Tsimshian First Nation village located on BC's north coast, has had an unusual series of POCON datestamps and poses a bit of a mystery. What happened here?



Datestamp #3 (EKU 24/FE/98, LKU 25/JU/99) has a postal code error, with VOT instead of VOV. Postal employees may have tried to obscure the incorrect code, or alter or remove it, perhaps damaging the canceller in the process. Then datestamp #4 (EKU 27/AU/99, LKU 12/NO/99) arrived, with the correct code. This device collapsed and deteriorated very quickly, however (see below).



Next we see datestamp #5 (EKU 01/DE/99, LKU 08/DE/99), which is the bottom part of device #4 with the POCON either excised or with part of another postal marking being used at the top. Then, another novelty, datestamp #6 (EKU 24/DE/99, LKU 05/JA/00), a makeshift device using the bottom part of #4 and the top part of #3.

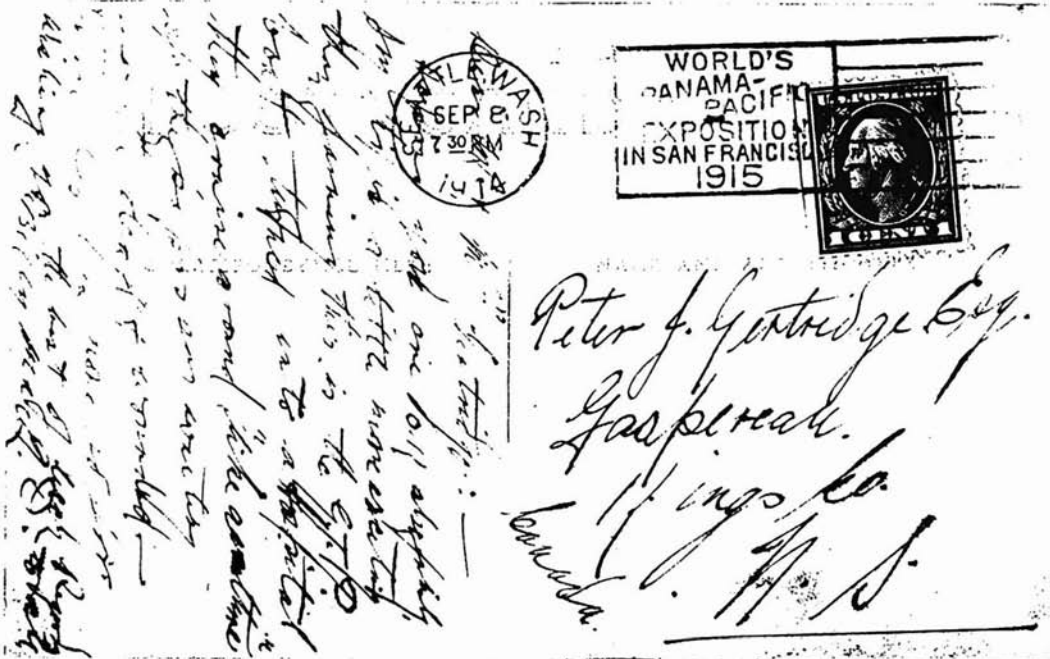


Finally Canada Post came to the rescue with one of the first of BC's new "wing" datestamps (EKU 24/JA/00), which is still in use. (The earliest recorded BC wing is Mackenzie, EKU 11/JA/00.) Marking #1 (EKU 23/AP/76) is known in blue ink. #2 (EKU 07/OC/91, LKU 02/AP/97), #3, #4 and #7 are known in black and blue inks.—submitted by Andrew Scott

### HMCHS PRINCE GEORGE

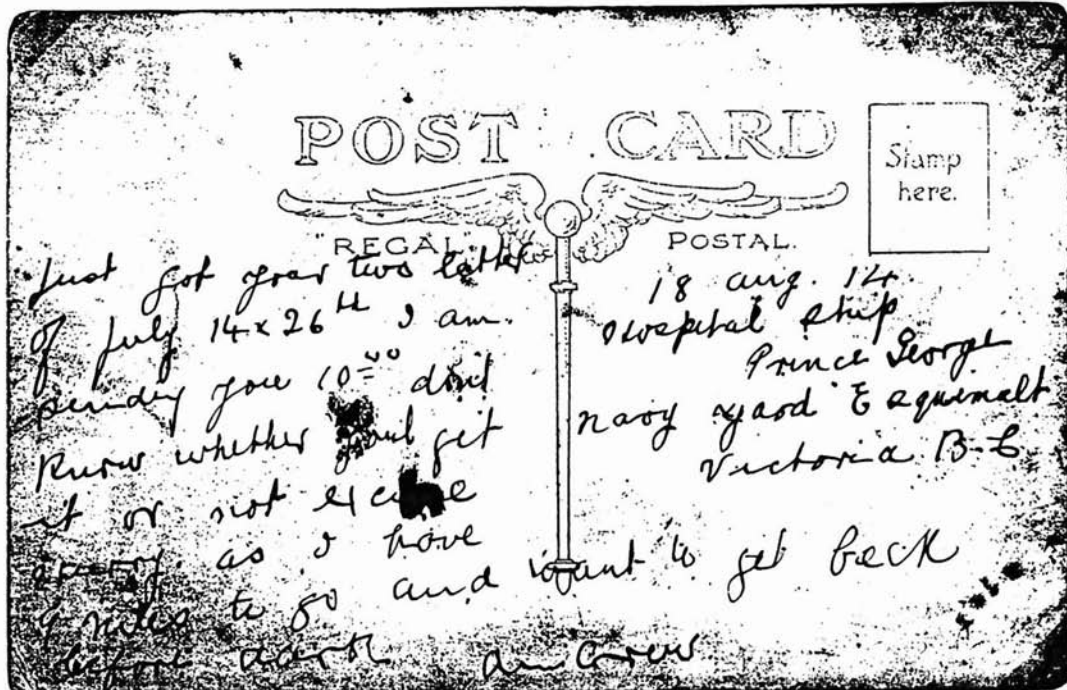
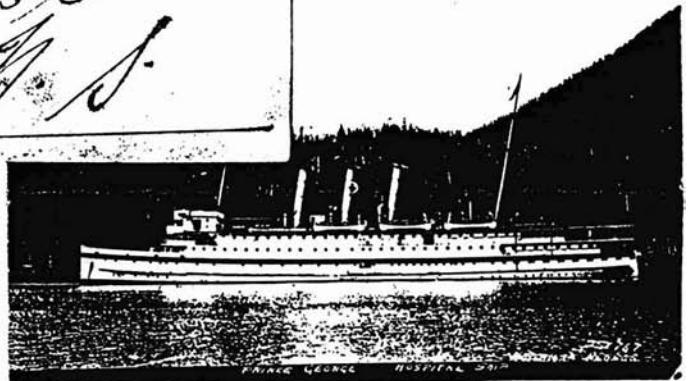
His Majesty's Canadian Hospital Ship (HMCHS) PRINCE GEORGE was Canada's only Naval hospital ship, staffed by a Naval medical unit. The ship went into service August 8, 1914 (11 days before the first British hospital ship). She was only in service for 33 days on the Pacific Coast.

Service: 8/8/14 - 10/9/14, 1 voyage, 1 patient, capacity n/a



Text: This is the G.T.P. boat turned into a hospital. They cruise around like a vulture as the papers say waiting for the dead and wounded. There has been none so far.

HMCHS PRINCE GEORGE at Ketchikan, Alaska in a quest for fuel oil.



Postcard of SS PRINCE GEORGE (printed May 1914), text written at Esquimalt Navy Yard, August 18, 1914

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## HOSPITAL SHIP S.S. PRINCE GEORGE

### McBRIDE'S NAVY – August 1914

The item on the previous page from Jon Johnson regarding the S.S. *Prince George* during its 33 day service as a Hospital Ship reminded me of what can only be described as a Gilbert and Sullivan type farce. The farce involves; an obsolete naval cruiser that served its time during the Boer War and threw much of its wooden superstructure overboard to increase its speed; a coastal steamer that was converted to a hospital ship and its sole casualty involved a sprained ankle; and finally the formation of the short lived British Columbia navy that consisted of two submarines and existed for three days.

During the last few days of July 1914 Government circles in Victoria were absolutely certain that German Admiral von Spree and his China squadron intended to bombard Vancouver and Victoria. The West Coast local defenses had been neglected and with the exception of stationing the 30 year old H.M.C.S. *Rainbow* at Esquimalt in 1910 most of the armaments dated back to the Boer War and were not capable of firing a single round. At the same time the powerful German cruisers *Nurenberg* and *Leipzig* were thought to be operating off the coast of Mexico and Lloyd's of London had issued a warning that German war ships were operating on the west coast of North America.

In the last week of July the *Rainbow* was preparing for her annual patrol of the northern sealing-grounds when a war zone "warning telegram" was received from the Admiralty in Victoria. As a result the *Rainbow*, despite the lack of any high explosive, was ordered south to San Francisco, on August 1, to provide escort service for a grain ship heading there. For reasons only known to the crew, shortly after heading north from San Francisco the crew threw most of the flammable woodwork overboard. Following the discovery of the flotsam near the Golden Gate, the story quickly spread that the *Rainbow* had been sunk by enemy action.

While this was happening, Premier Richard McBride received word that two submarines, ordered by the Chilean government might be available in Seattle. McBride immediately informed the Commander-in-Chief at Esquimalt and urged him to refer the matter to Naval Service Headquarters for referral to the Admiralty in London. Before any decision was made in London, McBride realized that, should war start, the American neutrality laws might come into force, making the purchase impossible. On August 3, McBride sent Captain W.H. Logan, Lloyd's representative in Victoria, to negotiate the purchase of the submarines. The negotiations were completed on August 4 and arrangements were made for the two submarines to be delivered that night, under the utmost secrecy, to a position some five miles outside Canadian territorial waters near Trial Island. Following an inspection by a retired naval officer, who found them to be in satisfactory condition, the submarines were accepted on behalf of the British Columbia government by Commander Bertram Jones. At the same time "Sir Richard McBride's personal messenger", the Chief Janitor from the Parliament Buildings presented the official of the Seattle company with a check from the Province of British Columbia for \$1,150,000. Following the purchase, Commander Jones piloted the two submarines, referred to as the CC1 and the CC2, to Esquimalt where their unexpected appearance on the morning of August 5 caused a near panic.

On the same day, a signal from Naval Headquarters reading; "Prepare to purchase submarines. Telegraph price". McBride sent back the message "Have purchased submarines". Although the submarines were placed at the disposal of the Admiralty the fact that British Columbia owned its own

private navy was not well received by the federal government. The situation was corrected three days later when the Admiralty assumed control of the ships and the search for an experienced crew began. Fortunately a retired Royal Navy submarine officer, Lieutenant Adrian Keyes, was located working in Toronto and he was asked to take command of the two ships which he accepted. Lieutenant Keyes and a Midshipman friend departed for Esquimalt dressed a straw hat and a blue suit as neither man had a uniform. Keyes was able to simulate his rank by adding a strip of gold braid, that he had acquired from a train conductor, to his sleeves. Apparently the authorities had not been informed of their appointment and upon arrival at the Esquimalt Naval Base both men were placed under close arrest at gunpoint. The matter was eventually sorted out and the two submarines, under the command of Lieutenant Keyes, remained on the B.C. Coast and providing escort service between Victoria and Vancouver for the remainder of the war.

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EXTRA

# The Daily Colonist.

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12. NOON AUGUST 5TH

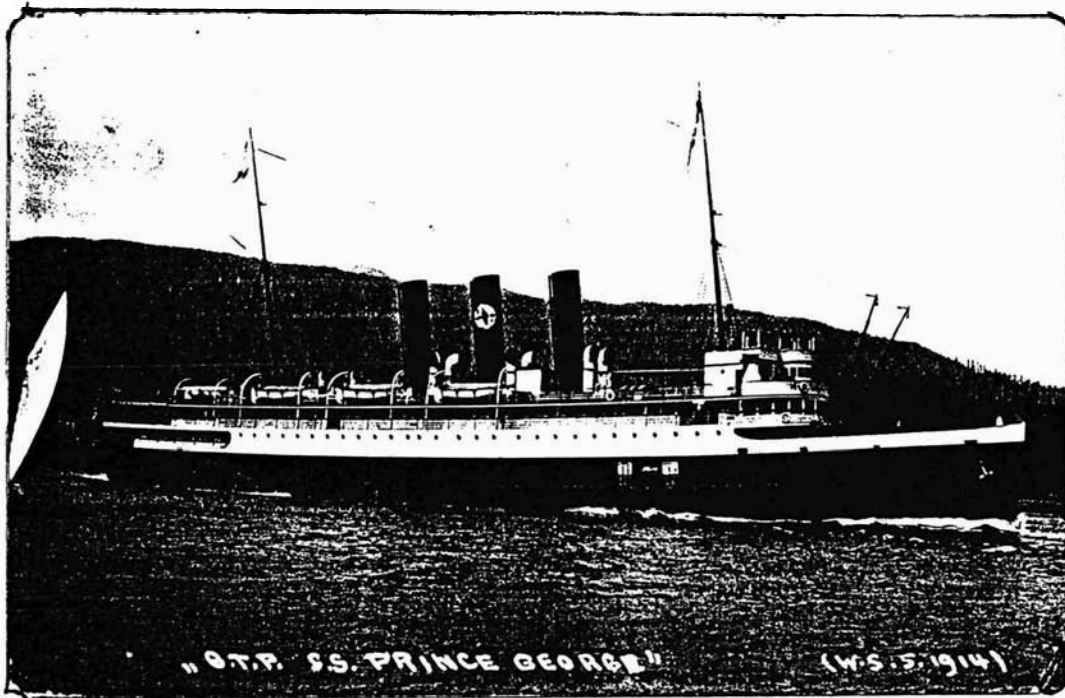
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In behalf of the Dominion Government and with their concurrence, Sir Richard Irvine, representing the Province of British Columbia, some days ago completed the lease of two submarines, which are now lying at anchor in British waters ready for use, under the command of Lieut. Jones, R. N., submarine expert. Lieut. Jones is a highly trained submarine expert, in fact his knowledge of submarine warfare is not excelled in the Empire. Every preparation necessary for naval warfare is complete. The submarines are newly built and said to be of the most destructive class. Ottawa has been advised of the action of the Local Government and the vessels now form part of the national forces.

Following the outbreak of the war and the reported sinking of the *Rainbow* the directors of the Grand Trunk Pacific briefly ordered the S.S. *Prince Rupert* and S.S. *Prince George* to seek the safety of American waters and sent them to Seattle. The stay in Seattle lasted only a few days during which time the Esquimalt naval base decided a hospital ship was needed to search for survivors of the reported sinking of the *Rainbow* and it was decided to commandeer the S.S. *Prince George*. The command of the ship was given to Lieutenant-Commander A.M. Kinnersley Saul R.N.R. who at the time was chief officer on the lighthouse tender *Quadra*. The crew of the HMCHS *Prince George* consisted of the entire Grand Trunk crew, 30 Royal Canadian Navy volunteers, three navy signalmen, and the medical and nursing staff from the Royal Jubilee Hospital. It took four days to assemble the crew and during this time, because of the heavy rain, the crew was unable to paint the ship white as required by international law. The ship was dispatched to Vancouver and while there it was learned that the *Rainbow* had gone north to investigate a report that an enemy cruiser had been sighted in Queen Charlotte Sound and the *Prince George* was immediately sent to assist.

Although the HMCHS *Prince George*'s days as a hospital ship lasted a little over a month they were not without incident. Because of inclement weather the ship left Vancouver with only the port side of the ship having been painted white. It was not until a week later that the job was completed and the green strip on the side added although the funnels remained black instead of white. The red cross on the ships side was never added but the GTP emblem was replaced with a small red cross. Communication along the coast was poor and the crew of the *Rainbow* were unaware that the *Prince George* was in the Queen Charlotte Sound area and when they saw this sleek three-funneled ship with a cruiser stern they were under the impression that it was the German cruiser they were looking for. It was only when a crew member spotted the matron's white suede shoes drying in a port hole that the crew realized it was not a German cruiser. By this time the *Prince George* was running short of oil and none was available at Prince Rupert so the ship proceeded to Juneau, Alaska, to refuel but the American authorities would only supply enough oil to get the ship back to Prince Rupert. A few weeks later the ship returned to Esquimalt and was transferred back to civilian duties on the North Coast route to Prince Rupert.



HMCHS *PRINCE GEORGE* on route to Vancouver with port side only painted white. Note red cross replacing the company logo on the middle stack.

By this time the German cruiser scare was over and with the arrival of the H.M.S. *Newcastle* from the China Station and the return of the *Rainbow* to Esquimalt the naval activities returned to normal. In the mean time both the German cruisers *Nurnberg* and *Leipzig*, which had started the scare, were sunk in the Battle of the Falklands Islands in December 1914.

Has anyone seen a Vancouver sub office cancel dated prior to 1900.

on back

H. Fletcher

re B.C. P.O. 11/88  
P.O. 11/88

ans 5/30/88

Post Office Inspector's Office

Victoria, B.C.

21 May 1888

Gentlemen

- The Postmaster General having authorized the establishment of a street letter box service at Vancouver, it is proposed to place four boxes as follows:
- No 1. On Granville Street, near the corner of Pacific Street.
  - No 2. On the North West corner of Carroll and Oppenheimer streets
  - No 3. On the North West corner of Gore Avenue and Powell street
  - No 4. At the foot of New Westminster Avenue near False Creek Bridge.

and I beg to request your permission to have the boxes placed accordingly.

Sam. Gentles  
Your obedient servant

H. Fletcher

To His Worship  
The Mayor  
& Municipal Council  
Vancouver

P.O. Inspector

**VANCOUVER MPP UPGRADE**

See page 406

The Vancouver MPP is in the process of undergoing a major upgrade with the introduction of new Jet Spray Printers (JSP) and the replacement of the 25 year old Culler Facer Cancellers (CFC) by the newly developed Edger Facer Machines. CFC numbers 1 and 8 were withdrawn in early 2004 and the other CFC machines numbers 2, 3, 4 and 7 are slated for replacement shortly.

In July JSP 081 was replaced as was JSP 084 with new JSP equipment. The new JSP equipment was installed on all five OCR with the earliest reported date being 20 July, 2004.

Late dates for Imaje 1000 - JSP 081 – 04 07 28 01:27

Late date for Fox Jet 7400 MLOCR – JSP 084 –04 07 19 22:11

Early dates for new JSP equipment \_\_\_\_\_

OCR 080 04 07 20 20:20  
OCR 081 04 07 30 00:27  
OCR 082 04 07 22 20:20  
OCR 083 04 07 28 23:08  
OCR 084 04 07 27 20:07

040722 20:20 V6B 3A0 082 11111111  
www.canadapost.ca 11111111  
www.postescanada.ca 11111111

The jet spray lines are 3 mm high with a 4 mm gap between each line. The equipment, like earlier equipment appear to be able to spray single or multiple line and to date one line two line and three line markings have been reported. A visit to the Vancouver MPP is planned for October by which time the update should be complete. Watch for further details in the next News Letter.

040726 23:22 V6B 3A0 080 11111111 040810 04:08 V6B 3A0 084 11111111  
www.epost.ca/www.postel.ca.11111111

More pictorial daters – further contribution appreciated.

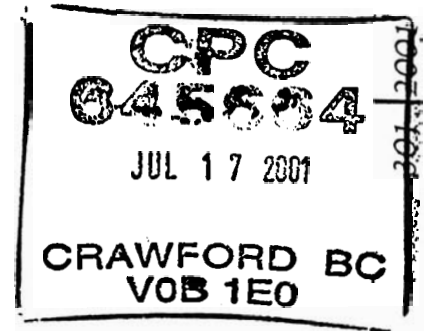
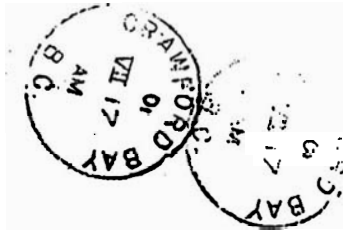




WHAT'S NEW IN CANCELLATIONS

CRAWFORD - CRAWFORD BAY

Crawford Bay is currently using a CDS reading CRAWFORD BAY and at the same time a POCON reading CRAWFORD BC



RPO & GMO POSTAL METERS

A new style postal meter has been introduced in low level postal dealerships. The design is similar to the WINGS daters.

B.C. GOVERNMENT

Prepaid parcel post hand stamp used in Victoria and Vancouver RC 00677744



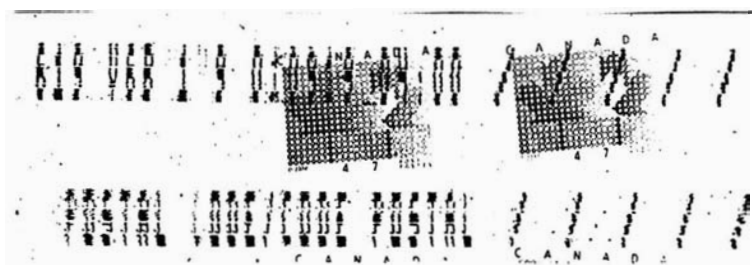
DUNCAN KLUSSENDORF

Note new size of letters



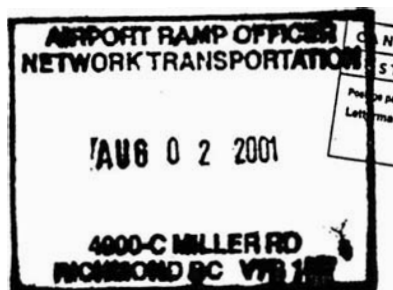
FSM 619 (VANCOUVER)

narrow style introduced



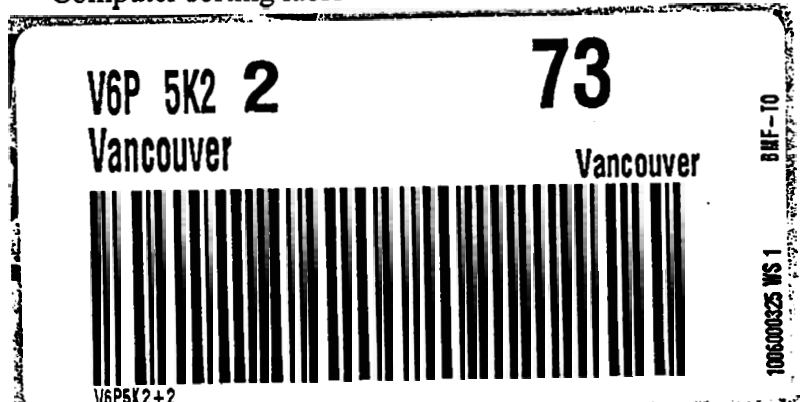
AIRPORT RAMP OFFICER

Located at Priority Post office



VANCOUVER PARCLE DEPOT

Computer sorting lable



# Out of the hopper: new Edger Facer Machines speed

By E. Lisa Moses

"Put it into the hopper" is an informal way of saying to get some action going. Among the dictionary definitions of "hopper" is "a funnel-shaped receptacle," a "person (or insect) that hops" and "a baseball that jumps up from the ground after it has been hit."

At Canada Post, a hopper is an important machine that gets the mail-sorting action going. When mail from street mail boxes enters a plant, it is placed into a hopper that controls the volume of mail being moved to the edger, its Siamese twin in the mechanized

**Designing guys:** (clockwise from left front) engineer Steve Selig; engineering technician Paul Rivet; technical advisor Hal Sullivan; and manager, Engineering Services Jocelyn Lauzon. Absent from photo: Shawn Stewart, engineer, and Nidio Guedes, technical advisor.

sorting system. The third step in the stream moves the mail from the edger to another sibling, the facer. After that, mail is moved to a different family of machines for cancelling.

The success of a prototype machine in the Ottawa Mail Processing Plant has given the

## Nuts and bolts

The EFM is an advanced piece of equipment that scans both sides of the mail to find stamps or indicia (marks such as meter impressions and the like).

"Before mail pieces can be mechanically sorted, they have to be lined up on their longer edges," explains Lauzon. "Envelopes arrive from the hopper every which way. The edger stacks them onto their long edges, while the facer scans both sides of the envelopes. If it doesn't detect any indicia, it sends the mail items to a reject stacker."

EFMs can sort mail based on four

different orientations (two long edges, front and back). CFCs are more limited in their ability to scan and sort mail.

Canada Post's in-house engineering team gave birth to this intuitive machine. "In the past when we needed new equipment, we would provide manufacturers with specifications, then they would recommend machines to meet the requirements," says Lauzon. "In this case, the in-house team specified the nuts and bolts of the entire design, so short of building it ourselves, we created the whole thing."

The new EFM machines can sort up to 25,000 mail pieces an hour, slightly more than CFCs. They also do a better job at detecting the indicia on mail items, especially on envelopes made of recycled paper. According to Lauzon, improvements in efficiency will offset the \$210,000 investment in each machine.

"We have also applied for a patent on the facer module, which collects statistics on each mail piece," he concludes. "This is a feather in our engineering cap, since we've created a valuable design that the company can own." ■



green light to the rollout of a new generation of technology to perform those processes.

"Over the next year, 38 new Edger Facer Machines (EFMs) will replace our 25-year-old Culler Facer Cancellers (CFCs)," says Jocelyn Lauzon, manager, Engineering Services and Equipment Support. "This will improve delivery by reducing the amount of mail ejected from the mechanizing stream for various reasons." The rollout begins this summer in Ottawa, Toronto and Vancouver plants, taking up to nine machines, then moves on to smaller plants in the fall.

EFMs are quieter and easier for operators to access. Each machine has a touch-screen monitor so operators can see how it is doing at any point in the

process. Machines are also equipped with protective covers and manual emergency stop mechanisms.