

NEWSLETTER 54  
SEPTEMBER 1983

This edition of the Canadian Military Mail newsletter is being put together in time for the Winnipeg BNAPS gathering on September 1st to the 3rd. We will be having a seminar and it is hoped that several of the 'Eastern' members will be showing us some of their material.

The feature article in this newsletter concerns the Royal Navy Privilege envelopes. You are all likely familiar with the buff colored envelopes with the green printing as used by the army in World War II, but how many R.A.F. and R.N. envelopes have you seen - probably none! Your editor has watched for these items for some time and has managed to come up with one R.A.F. and four different R.N. envelopes used by, or to, Canadians. Perhaps we had better let Wilf Whitehouse tell the story.

Two elusive World War I items have fallen into the hand of our relentless west coast collector. Photostats herein show the Toronto Field Post Office and the Niagara Camp Field Post Office machine cancels. Both were used in 1918 and are excellent strikes.

In the book department, one we have not mentioned before is Oliver Lindsay's AT THE GOING DOWN OF THE SUN: HONG KONG AND SOUTH EAST ASIA, 1941-45. It is published by Hamish Hamilton Ltd., London at \$17.05 and is cloth bound.

You will remember in N.L. 42 Item 225 Oliver Lindsay's account of the fall of Hong Kong which he presented in THE LASTING HONOUR. AT THE GOING DOWN OF THE SUN relates the events befalling the defenders of the Crown Colony after the surrender to the Japanese Army on December 25, 1941. Many references are made to the Canadian contingent sent there and the story is very well presented. (Have just finished reading this excellent book.)



Mr. Raymond Carter  
Alcatraz, Illinois  
U.S.A.

347 N. Main St.

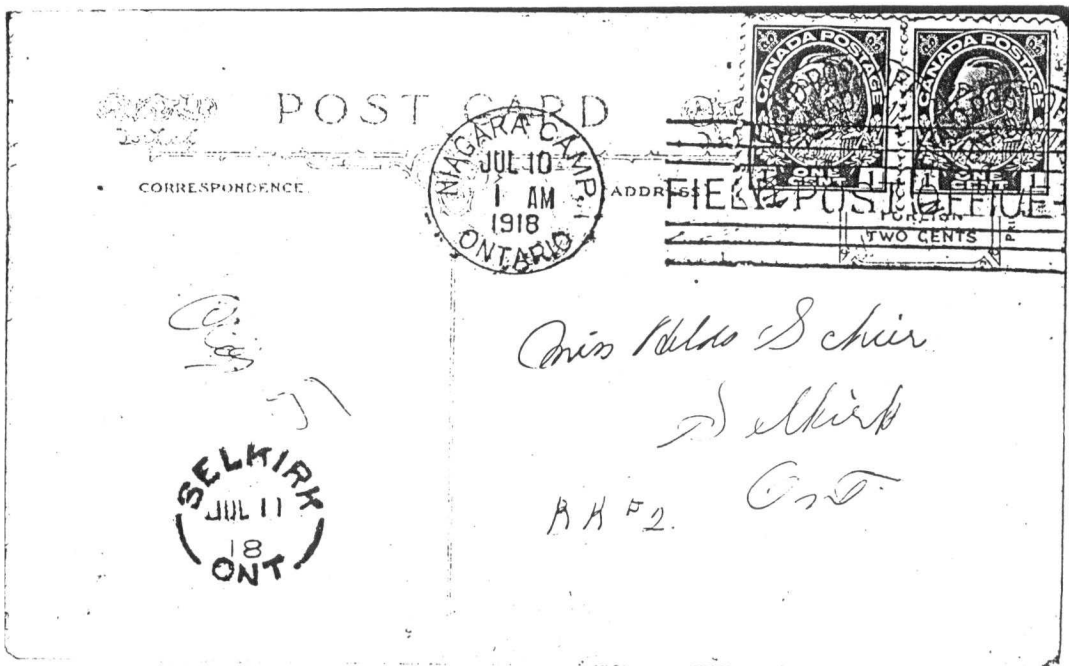
FW

Recently we had a most informative letter from Michael Dobbs, the Hon. Secretary of the Forces Postal History Society in England. You may remember that Colin made reference to Michael's researches into No. 6 (RCAF) group in N.L. 50, and now his researches cover all RCAF bomber squadrons in the UK during World War II. A copy of this research is in the Editor's hands and any queries would be welcome. Am afraid that the 22 pages is more than this newsletter can handle!

Another of Michael Dobbs' specialties is the Royal Engineers, Home Depot from 1939 to the present day. Accordingly, here are his comments re Item 403 in N.L. 47. Quote 'The Home Depot, Royal Engineers (Postal Section) was established in Bournemouth, Dorset on 1 December 1939. On 28 February 1940 six other ranks from No. 3 Divisional Postal Unit, Canadian Postal Corps (serving the 1st Canadian Division) arrived at the Depot to form the nucleus of the Canadian Section, Home Depot.

The Canadian Section left the Depot in July 1941 and transferred to Manchester. While in Bournemouth the Section was allocated Home Depot datestamps numbered 1 and 2 from 22 November 1940 to 9 May 1941. (Note: This is not the type illustrated in Item 403.)

The Home Depot moved to Nottingham in May 1941 and the following year was renamed HOME POSTAL CENTRE, ROYAL ENGINEERS. It remained in Nottingham and kept this title for the remainder of the war. The Canadian Section, which moved to Manchester, eventually became the CANADIAN OVERSEAS POSTAL DEPOT.'



The Newsletter is getting in desperate need of articles and it is hoped the members will come forward and present us with some. There are many subjects that need writing up, or perhaps you could tell us what you would like to see covered.

The next Newsletter may be a bit later due to, as they say, 'pressure of business'.

"Honour" or "Privilege" concession in the R.C.N.

W. Whitehouse

Little if anything has been written regarding the "honour" or "privilege" concession available to Canadian servicemen during WWII. The subject was dealt with as it pertained to the AFAL in the series "Canadian Armed Forces Air Letters-1942/45" which was carried in our NL during 1978.

The object of this article is to deal with the concession as it applied to the Royal Canadian Navy, leaving the Army and R.C.A.F. to those more knowledgeable about those two services.

By way of a brief background, British authorities made available to all three of their services what was known as "honour" or "privilege" envelopes. The use of this envelope allowed the letter to pass uncensored through the Officers of ones unit of service in favor of the impersonal censorship at the base. These envelopes were buff in color, for Army use the printing was in green ink, for the Royal Air Force, blue, and for the Royal Navy the printing was in black ink. (Fig. 1)

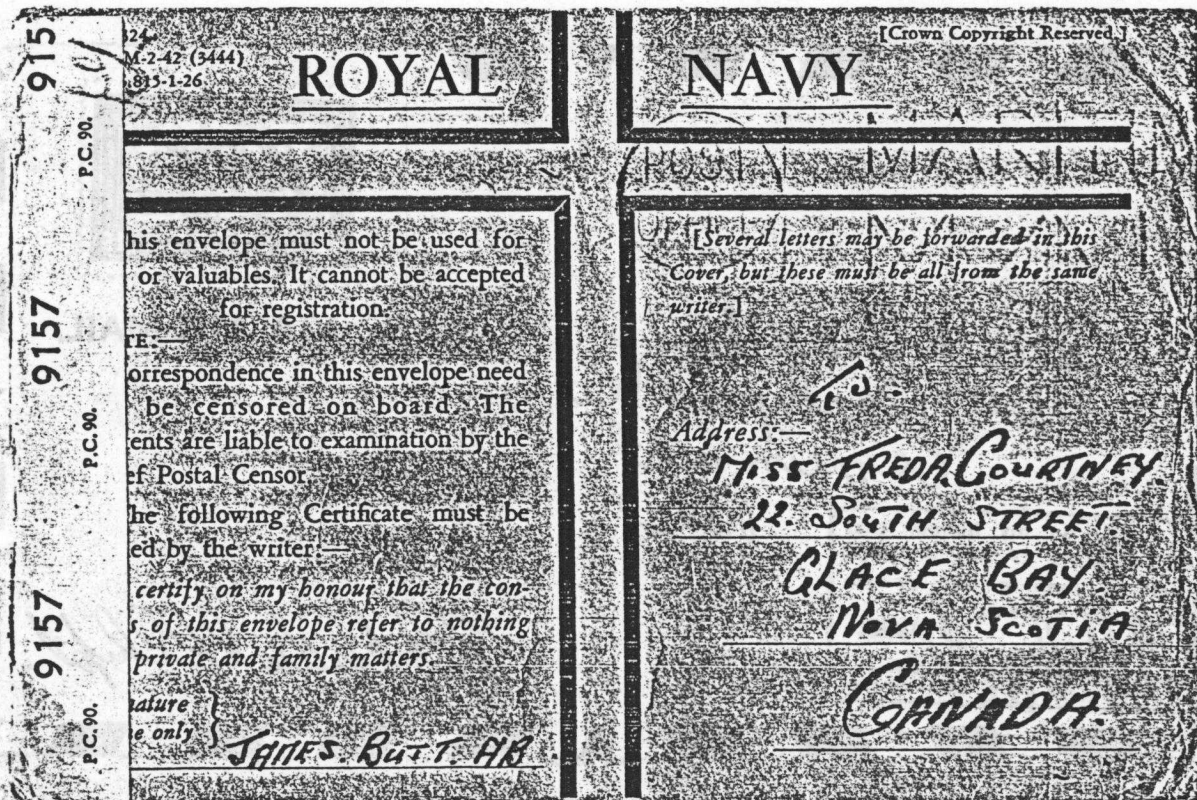


Fig. 1 - 1942 printing of the R.N. envelope used by a member of the R.C.N. while in the U.K. Although undated, the "Post Office - Maritime Mail" cancellation indicates the use as 1943 or later.

In contrast, Canadian authorities provided the R.C.N. with a rubber stamp containing the "honour" certification, whether all ships and shore establishments were issued with this marking is a matter of some speculation. Indeed, there are so few examples known of either the rubber stamp, handwritten certification, or the Royal Navy "honour" envelope, one is left to conclude that even though the rubber stamp were issued to all ships and establishments, little use was made of this concession by R.C.N. personnel.

Two varieties of the rubber stamp certification are known, the first measures 50 X 25mm sans serifs (Fig. 2), while the second measures 47 X 26mm with serifs (Fig. 3). Both examples shown here were used on the East Coast having passed through the F.M.O. Halifax in 1940 and 1941 respectively.

No examples used from other areas where the R.C.N. operated during WWII have come to light at this time.

An example of a handwritten certification, in this case typewritten, used from the West Coast in 1941, is illustrated in (Fig. 4).

Needless to say the Editor will be pleased to hear from any of the members who have additional information on this subject, or examples used from other areas, varieties, or dates other than those mentioned above.

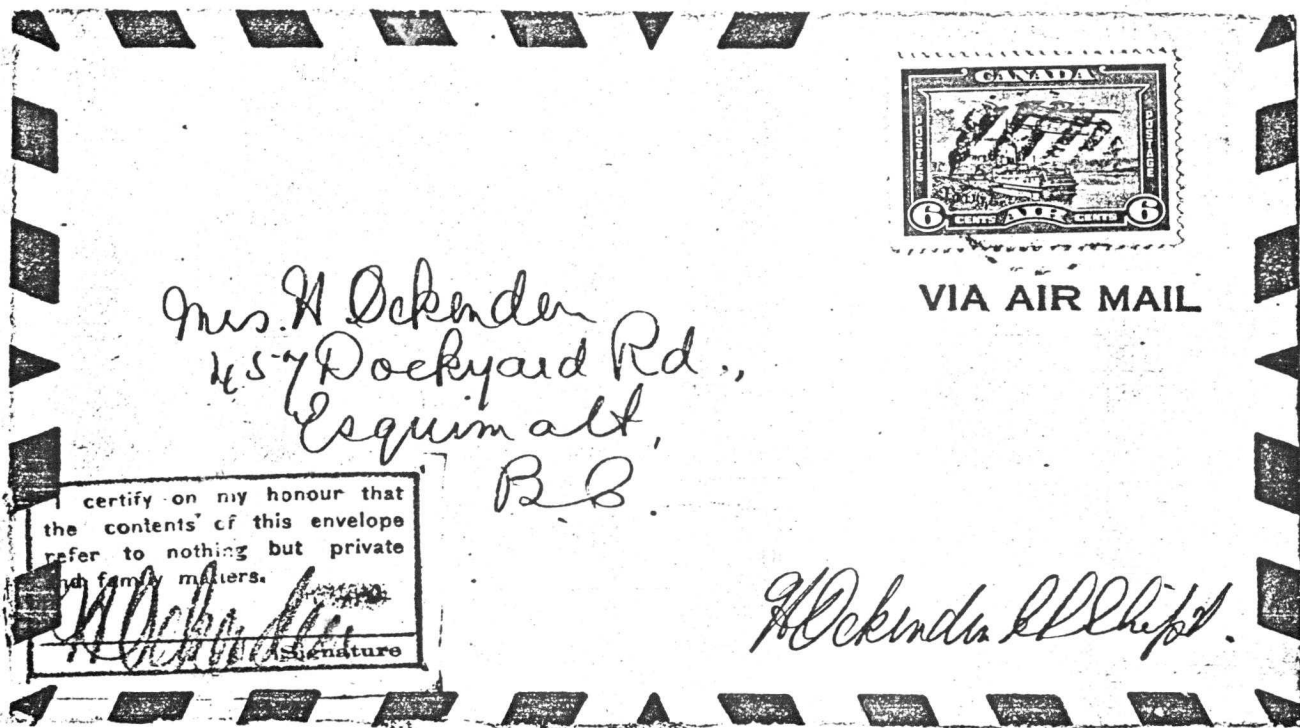


Fig. 2 - Although undated, it is known that the cover passed through the FMO Halifax and that the writer was serving in "Assiniboine" based on Halifax during 1940. The ship departed for the U.K. in January 1941.

- Note that the cover was never opened by censors.

I certify on my honour that  
the contents of this envelope  
refer to nothing but private  
and family matters

*L. W. Griffith*  
Signature

*Thumbs up!*

*Van der Mark*

*Grants, Ont*

*17 Loran Ave.*

*Mrs. Jennie Griffith*

Signature *Griff*  
Date *7/12/41*  
BY CENSOR  
PASSED  
From H.M.C. SHIP



Fig. 3 - Used from an unidentified ship on East Coast.

M. P. B. 298  
1200M—9-40 (6783-4-5)  
H.Q. 1772-39-278

Winnipeg, MANITOBA.  
592 Sanford Street,

Mr. & Mrs. Jones,



I certify on my honour that  
the contents of this letter refers  
to nothing but private and family  
matters.

*Sig. F. Evans R.C.N.*

Fig. 4 - Used from an unidentified ship on West Coast.

THE CANADIAN ARMY IN ALASKA 1942 -43

The United States entered World War II formally on December 7, 1941 when Japan attacked Pearl Harbour. This greatly changed the face of the war and put the Pacific coast of Canada and the USA in the "front lines".

Bringing this home was the Japanese air attack on Dutch Harbour in Alaska on June 3, and their capture of Attu and Kiska Islands on June 7, 1942.

On June 1, 1942, the 22nd Anti-Aircraft Battery of the Royal Canadian Artillery arrived at Annette Island airfield in the Alaskan Panhandle, and stayed until November 27, 1943. Postal facilities here were entirely US using US Army Post Office 935. (See Illustration No. 1)

Plans were being made by the United States to re-take Attu and Kiska in the Aleutians, and the Canadian Army was asked to provide some troops. The Brigade Group embarked from B.C. ports on July 12, 1943 and arrived at Adak on July 21 where additional specialized training took place. The major units involved were the Canadian Fusiliers, the Winnipeg Grenadiers, the Rocky Mountain Rangers, Le Regiment de Hull, the 24th Field Regiment of the R.C.A. and other support units.

Kiska was invaded by the US and Canadian forces on August 15, 1943. Unknown to the Allies, the Japanese had evacuated the island beforehand and there was no opposition. In addition to the Canadian Infantry Brigade, other Canadians took part as members of the First Special Services Force. This was an elite commando unit formed jointly with the US Army and it saw service in several parts of the world.

Canadian mail from the Kiska force was handled by the Canadian Army Post Office, C.A.P.O. 51 (4). Before this hamper arrived near the end of August the Canadian Postal Corps No. 1 cancel was used (3). All the Canadian mail passed through US ARMY censorship and was marked by their censor markings (5) (6) etc. after a preliminary censoring by the Canadian unit officers. United States airmail postage was required on airmail, but surface mail was carried free of postage.

C.A.P.O. 51 at Adak July 21/43 to August /43  
at Kiska August 31/43 to January 12/44

REFERENCES

R.W.Helbock. Military Postmarks of Territorial Alaska. 1977.  
C.P.Stacey. The Canadian Army, 1939-46. Ottawa. 1948.  
H.Guertin. The Wartime Mails and Stamps of Canada, 1939-46.

ILLUSTRATIONS

- (1) US A.P.O. 935 Annette Island R.C.A. here.
- (2) Cover from Canadian in 1st Special Services Force.
- (3) Canadian Postal Corps No. 1.
- (4) Canadian Army Post Office, C.A.P.O. 51.
- (5) US Army Postal Censor marking, oval type.
- (6) US Army Postal Censor marking, circular type. Some other types of provisional censor markings were used in the early period.



From H.M.C. SHIP

PASSED BY CENSOR

Signature *E. Merrill* R.C.A. K 65894

A.P.O. 935 Seattle Wash

AFTER FIVE DAYS RETURN TO

Sgt *H.R. Powell* D-72227  
6th Coy 1st Regt F.S.S.F.  
A.P.O. 730 Seattle Wash.



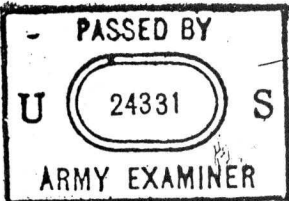
*Mrs L. Powell*

M601317 Mrs *Arnold*, J.  
85 Bly R.C.A., 1/2 R.M.N.  
C.A.P.O. 51, Vancouver, B.C.

free C.A.A.



*Answered*



*W. Capt. F. Spark*  
1st Bn. 6th. Fusiliers, C.A.  
C.A.P.O. 51, Vancouver, B.C.

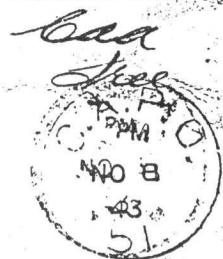


C.A.A. Free

*G.W. Storey*

*Mrs Alan Sobby*

*Lieut W.D. Stewart*  
99th Base  
C.A.P.O. 51  
Vancouver B.C.



*Mrs. M.L. Clegue*  
1486 Crosse St. Apt 5