

NEWSLETTER NO. 58  
MAY 1984

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BNA Study Groups have become very popular. A recent Newsletter from John Burnett, our study group co-ordinator, says that two new groups have been formed. They are Duplex Cancels of BNA and the 1972-78 Definitives and Landscapes. For more information please see the March-April 1984 TOPICS, page 5.

John also announces that Frank Waite has agreed to be the editor of the Study Group Column in TOPICS. Our co-ordinator also turns out a Newsletter for the Study Group leaders to keep them informed of all that is happening in this line. As you can see, John really has things going!

Now is a good time to advise you to plan on attending BNAPEX at San Francisco on September 6, 7, & 8. Our Study Group is meeting on September 7th, first thing in the morning. We would appreciate hearing from you re the format for this meeting. Volunteers are needed to fill out the program.

**NEW MEMBER** Dr. Robert C. Smith is our latest new member. Bob is the fellow who has turned up a 'find' of Canadian Siberian Expedition mail, as well as other items. You will have seen his article in the PHSC Journal and he has a page herewith for us. His address- Box 9383, Alta Vista Terminal, Ottawa, Ont., K1G 3V1.

**NEXT NEWSLETTER** Our next Newsletter will be ready for BNAPEX in September so do try to be there and have it 'hot' off the photocopier.

**LAST NEWSLETTER** Had a very nice letter from our friend at the Forces Postal History Society, Allan Brown. Herewith quoting several parts of his letter for your information.

1) **S IN A CIRCLE FROM WWI.** Some ten years ago I was intrigued by finding a number of covers with this mark and wrote about them in the FPHS Newsletters. They all occur on letters from the BEF, from British, American, or Canadian soldiers. Most of them are addressed to countries other than France or the UK and this led me to believe that this was a form of special censorship which dealt with letters from soldiers to such countries. However, subsequently one or two were found on letters from American soldiers to the UK, which invalidated this theory. My final theory, so far not contradicted, was that this certainly indicated a form of special censorship, which dealt with letters from soldiers in France to other than their homeland - in other words, from Canadians to say, as in the example shown in your Newsletter, the USA, from Americans to the UK, or from British to non-Commonwealth countries such as Denmark or Holland, all of which I have, or have had reported with the S.

There is also a similar mark, but with the S in a square, which is found on similar covers from soldiers in Italy.

2) **THE OBLITERED FIELD CENSOR.** This was a common procedure, presumably for security reasons, on covers to the USA. This is usually found on letters from US Army personnel training(?) with the British Army. Usually the censor number was scratched out with something like a pen knife, and I have not seen the rectangular handstamp shown on the cover you showed (though a similar type of handstamp was used in WWII in the BEF for the same purpose).

SEE PAGE 4.

Early Censorship in Siberia

by Robert C. Smith

Censorship regulations for the Canadian Expeditionary Force (Siberia) were laid out in General Routine Orders No. 1, dated October 23, 1918, as explained in the article by this writer in the PHSC Journal #36. A long section of these orders dealt with postal censorship, and required that a censoring officer frank each item of correspondence by writing his name on the envelope, which would then be passed on to the "stamping officer", who would impress a censor stamp on it, seal it, and pass it on to the Postal Corps.

It has been established that the "Passed by Censor" handstamps did not reach Siberia until December 5, 1918, when the R.M.S. MONTEAGLE docked there. The Advance Party, however, had arrived in Vladivostok on October 26, 1918, and mail had certainly been forwarded back to Canada from them, subject to the provisions of the censorship orders mentioned above. One question which naturally arises is, what was used in the period before the MONTEAGLE arrived in place of the "Passed by Censor" handstamps required by these orders?

An examination of the C.E.F.(S.) covers known from this 40-day period after the arrival of the Advance Party in Vladivostok and before the arrival of the "Passed by Censor" handstamps there is illuminating. A search of the literature (the Faulstich Auction catalogue, the National Postal Museum article in "The Post-Rider", and the articles by Webb and by Richardson in "The Canadian Philatelist") reveals six covers bearing November 1918 dates, in addition to the card postmarked on October 26 by the steel postmarking hammer 2. Five of the six November-dated covers show the rectangular boxed "No..... / BASE HEADQUARTERS / (date) / C.E.F. SIBERIA" handstamp, and the other has the circular "FIELD POST OFFICE / CANADIAN / Siberian Exp. Force" rubber handstamp, all in addition to strikes of the steel postmarking hammer 1. An unpublished manuscript seen by the writer refers to the "seven recorded November dated covers", and all except the cover with the circular rubber handstamp marking mentioned above show the BASE HEADQUARTERS handstamp.

Apart from the one known piece dated in October (and it has a censor's signature), it thus appears that the provisions of General Routine Orders No. 1 concerning the use of "Passed by Censor" handstamps were satisfied by using handstamps available at Base Headquarters in Vladivostok until the censor stamps arrived in early December. From that time onward, the boxed "Passed by Censor" handstamps were used as specified until General Routine Orders No. 35 dispensed with them on February 15, 1919. To the best of the writer's knowledge, the rectangular BASE HEADQUARTERS marking has not been seen on later covers, lending further credence to the hypothesis that it was used as a temporary censor stamp on the mail until December 5, and then retired to use as a regular office receipt mark to be applied to letters and other documents (as opposed to their covers: many pieces of correspondence in the files of the Public Archives of Canada are stamped with this marking).

Ed Richardson, in his article in "The Canadian Philatelist" (p. 289) deduced that censorship had been carried out from the beginning in Siberia, as evidenced by the presence of censors' signatures on all the early pieces known. He also noted the presence of the BASE HEADQUARTERS mark on the November covers; the significance of this marking was not apparent at the time the article was written, however, because it was then not known exactly when the "Passed by Censor" handstamps had arrived. While the evidence cited above does not prove conclusively that it was used as an early censor mark, it nevertheless does point strongly in that direction.

The founding date of the Corps goes back to November 2, 1910 with headquarters at Ottawa. By 1914, in the permanent force, there were five detachments in Canada located at Toronto, Kingston, Winnipeg, St. Jean, P.C. and Quebec City.

When the First World War began only two mobile sections were close to being ready for war service. Winnipeg's No 1 Section was the first to leave for Valcartier late in August 1914 with a strength of three Officers and 23 other ranks. Here they found some 9000 horses employed in the task of building the camp. Shortly after the section's arrival influenza broke out among the animals and veterinary services were in considerable demand.

Some 7,636 horses accompanied the First Contingent with 86 dying before reaching England. On arrival all were moved to Salisbury Plain where considerable numbers died after contracting pneumonia from the cold and wet conditions.

The principal duties of the Corps were twofold, to ensure the care and well-being of the horses employed for military purposes and to maintain the requisite number of horses in all branches of the Canadian Forces during hostilities.

Each Division of the C.E.F. had a senior veterinary officer. Veterinary officers were attached to each infantry and artillery brigade, ammunition column and divisional train. Under their jurisdiction were first-aid sergeants and farriers (shoeing smiths), and a mobile veterinary section also served with each Division.

In November 1914 Numbers 1 and 2 Canadian Veterinary Hospitals arrived from Canada and set up at Salisbury Plain. In April of the following year No 1 C.V.H. followed the First Division to France and set up shop at Havre. No 2 C.V.H. was moved to Shorncliffe and for three years served as the regimental depot, hospital, training and re-inforcing base for the overseas C.A.V.C.

The postcard illustrated is believed to have originated at Shorncliffe Camp in Kent. The C.A.V.C. marking in magenta ink has been sketched for clarity.

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POST CARD

The Daily Mirror CANADIAN OFFICIAL SERIES (Photograph passed by Censor)

STAMP HERE

ADDRESS ONLY

Victor Best Jun  
Paliano Island  
BC  
Canada

dad's  
got a  
dog

NO 2 CANADIAN VETERINARY HOSPITAL  
2 SEP. 1917  
C.A.V.C.

Photorevue - Publish. Z.

Over 23,500 horses were used by the Canadians in France and 2500 in the British Isles. The training of Officers and men went on throughout the war to administer to the needs of "man's noblest friend".

The Battles of the Somme (1916 and 1918), the Vimy front (1917) and Paschendale (1917) were particularly devastating to the horses engaged and the work of the C.A.V.C. was taxed to the limit.

In closing this brief look at the Veterinary Corps it is of interest to note that the Lord Strathcona's Horse (R.C.) sold the regiment's horses in the Spring of 1919 to the Belgian Government before returning to Canada. Thus their wartime mounts helped in the restoration of that country from the ravages of war.

#### BIBLIOGRAPHY

- 1 Lineages of the Canadian Army 1855-1961 compiled by C.E. Dornbusch (1961)
- 2 Canadian Almanac, 1914, Copp-Clark Company Limited, Toronto.
- 3 Canada in the Great World War by various authorities, Vol V, United Publishers of Canada Limited, Toronto (1920)
- 4 "Stand to your Horses", by Captain S.H. Williams, M.C. (1961)

By J.C. Campbell.

From letter of Allan Brown (continued from page 1)

#### 3) CANADIAN MILITARY MAIL FROM CEYLON IN WWII

The killer cancel shown in Figure 5 is not as described, a "Barred 8" but a "Barred CO" the letters presumably standing for COlombo. It is a fairly common mark, and I have an example clear enough to show the C beyond doubt. Probably it was used at Colombo, there fore, not Koggala."

Perhaps this, in 1) & 2) clears the matter up for Larry Mathews, Bill Robinson, and the contributor, Colin Campbell.

Regarding 3) Have rechecked the examples I have here of the 'CO' and they are very difficult to decipher, infact is is next to impossible! Thanks Allan for your letter on these matters.

This Newsletter goes out with varried contents as follows:

- 1) Your regular 'News' page.
- 2) Early Censorship in Siberia by BOB SMITH.
- 3) Canadian Army Veterinary Corps by COLIN CAMPBELL
- 4) Canadian Nursing Sisters in South Africa by BRIAN PLAIN.

CANADIAN NURSING SISTERS IN SOUTH AFRICA  
WORLD WAR II

By B.C.Plain,MD.

In the early stages of the Second World War, movement to Britain of casualties from the Western Desert was jeopardized due to enemy action. In order to reduce the need for such transport, a number of hospitals were opened in South Africa. These hospitals had a combined capacity of some 8000 beds, and there were not enough trained nurses to staff them. In June of 1941, the Union of South Africa approached the Canadian Government and requested permission to recruit 300 Canadian trained nurses for duty in the South African Military Nursing Service(S.A.M.N.S.) Permission was granted by Ottawa, and the Royal Canadian Army Medical Corps was given the responsibility of selecting, examining, and documenting the volunteers. The original contract was for a one-year period, with an option to renew for the duration of the war plus not more than six months. Only one nurse was released from the R.C.A.M.C. to serve in Africa and that was Acting Matron Christine MacDonald of Regina.

From November 15, 1941 to May of 1942, five groups of nurses embarked from New York and Victoria, and either went to South Africa directly or via England and the No. 15 Canadian General Hospital at Bramshott.

The largest hospital was just outside Johannesburg and was the 1000 bed hospital at Baragwaneth. It was officially opened in September 1942 by General Jan Christian Smuts. Other hospitals were located at Durban, Pretoria and Pietermaritzburg and at a few other locations in South Africa.

Known 'orderly room' type markings are listed below and are shown on the illustrated covers following.

Cover # 1	Military Hospital Cullinan
# 2 & # 6	Military Hospital Premier Mine
# 3	Military Hospital Roberts Heights
# 4	Military Hospital Lenz
# 5	Cottesloe Military Hospital Johannesburg
# 7	Oribi Military Hospital
# 8	This cover is a bit different in that it has no Orderly Room marking but shows censoring by Nursing Sister M. P. DOBBIE.

Cover # 1: This cover bears no stamp and is addressed to Edmonton. No date is visible. It has an 'OPENED BY CENSOR' label and has the notation 'ON SERVICE'.

Cover # 2: Has a bilingual (Boer-English) censor label and 'ON SERVICE' printed on the front. It is addressed to Victoria, B.C.

Cover # 3: Addressed to Edmonton with 'ON SERVICE' plainly visible. Return address is N/S Jessie B. Archer / c/o Dept. Defence H.Q. / Capetown, South Africa.

Cover # 4: Addressed to Edmonton with 'ON SERVICE' plainly visible. Return address is N/S J. Archer / Lenz Military Hospital / P.O. Klipton, TVL (Transvaal) / South Africa.

Cover # 5: Addressed to Edmonton and has a Cottesloe Johannesburg Military Hospital marking. The larger cities used the current machine cancellation to also cancel the covers. 'ON SERVICE' in M/S at top.

Cover # 6: Addressed to Edmonton and has 'ON SERVICE' on the front. A bilingual censor label is also in place. The oval marking is different from all the others in that it bears a definite date, whereas all the others do not. The return address reads; 316625 Sister R. Ramsey SAMNS/ c/o Sisters Mess / Premier Mine Military Hospital / PO Cullinan / TVL / S.Africa.

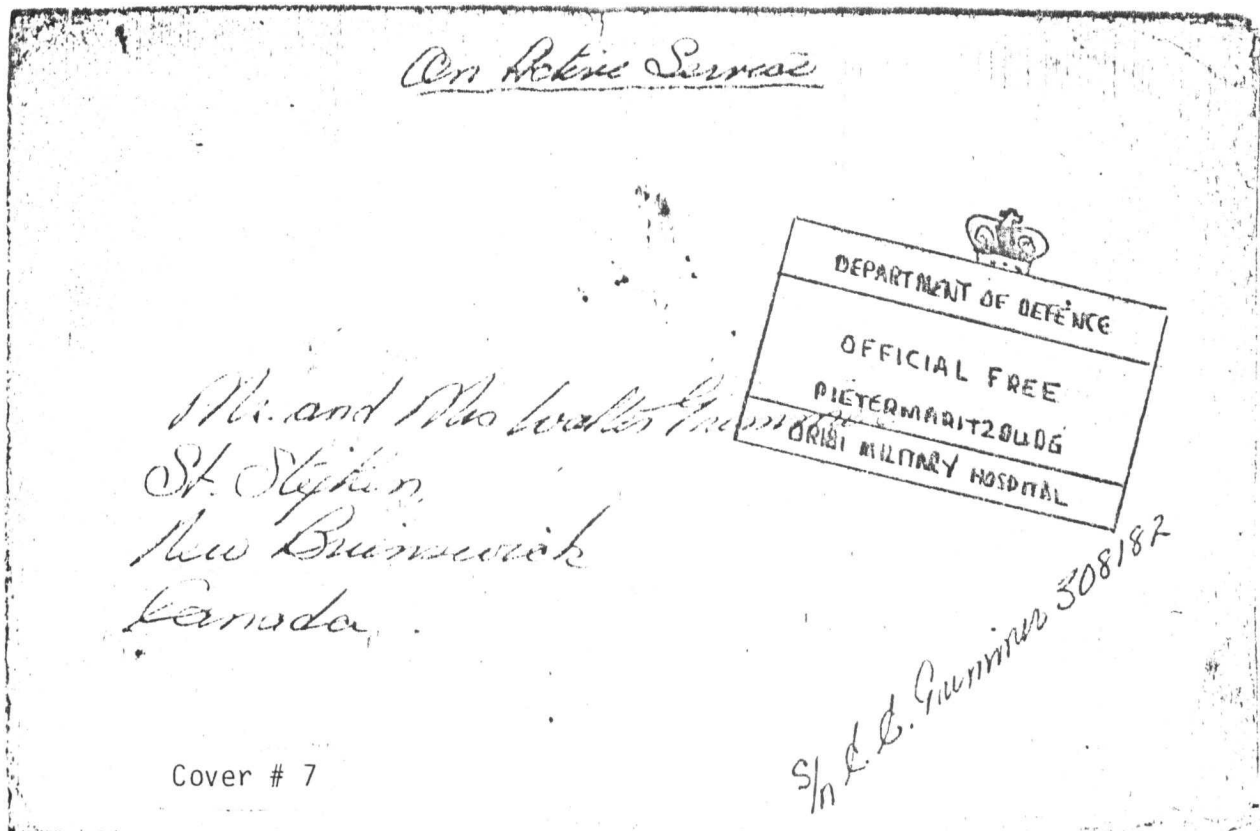
Cover # 7: This cover, addressed to St. Stephen, N.B., was from the Oribi Military Hospital. The M/S 'ON ACTIVE SERVICE' was added at the top and the writer's signature on the cover may indicate writer censoring.

Cover # 8: This cover, addressed to Merritt, B.C. is the only cover seen with a manuscript signature indicating censoring. It also has 'ON SERVICE' marked at the top and was further opened by a censor using a bilingual label. It carries the Durban machine cancel of the time and is the only cover seen with postage stamps. A small printed notation almost hidden by the cancel indicates that the letter was to be sent by air mail. The return address is: N/S Marion P. Dobbie 308097 / Baragwaneth Military Hospital / Johannesburg / Union of South Africa.

REFERENCES:

Nicholson, G.W.L.: CANADA'S NURSING SISTERS; Published by the National Museum of Man, Ottawa, pp. 174-177.

I would also like to give credit to Ken Ellison and Bill Robinson for the loan of material and to Mrs. J.Bowman for information concerning the hospitals.



OPENED BY

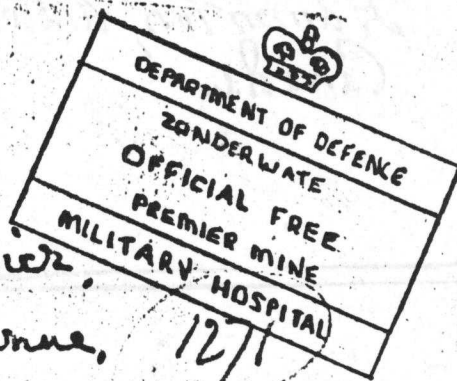
COVER #1



OOPGEMAAKT CENSOR.

SERVICE.

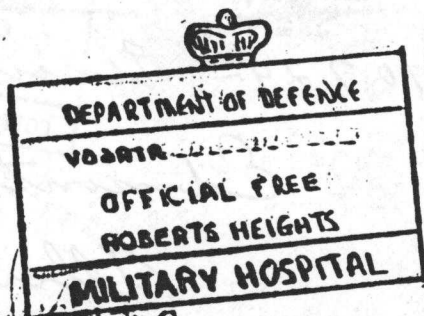
COVER #2



Mr P. J. Grier,  
Union Avenue,  
Victoria, V.I.  
British Columbia  
CANADA

On Service

COVER #3



Miss L. E. Johnson  
Royal Alexandra Hospital,  
Edmonton, Alberta,  
Canada.

ON SERVICE

COVER #4

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENCE  
OFFICIAL FREE  
LENZ  
MILITARY HOSPITAL

Mr. R. J. Nicholls,  
405-6 W. Hood Building,  
Edmonton, Alberta,  
Canada.

ON SERVICE

JOHANNESBURG 14 III 12-13:30

JOHANNESBURG 14 III 12-13:30

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENCE  
OFFICIAL FREE  
MILITARY HOSPITAL

10729 - University Ave,  
Edmonton,  
Alberta,  
Canada

Cover # 5



*On Service*

COVER #6

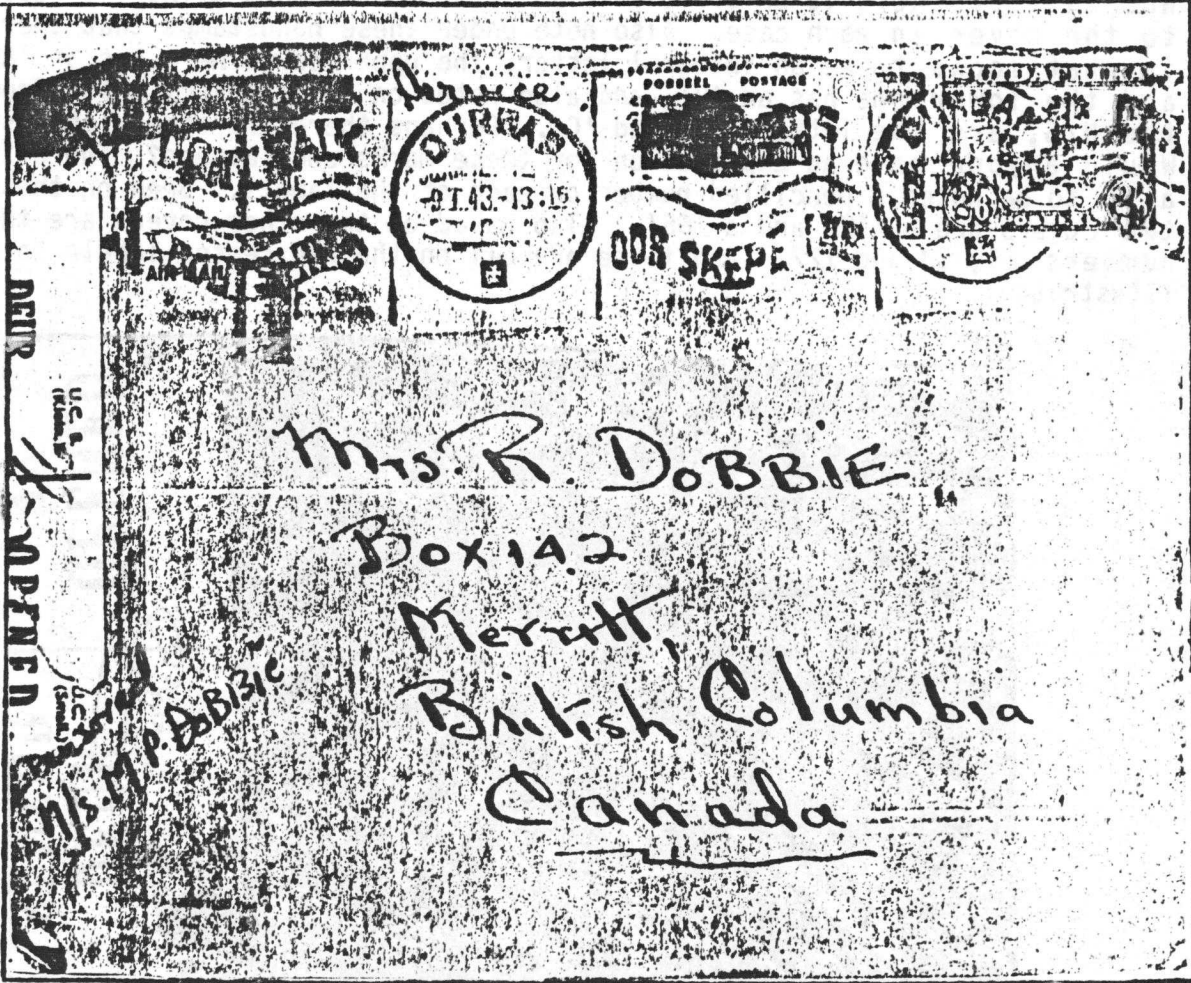
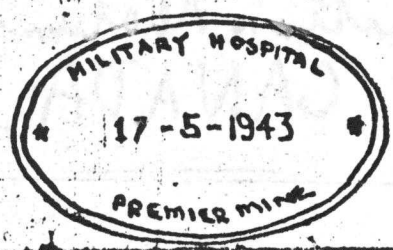
U.C.B.  
(Small)

OPENED

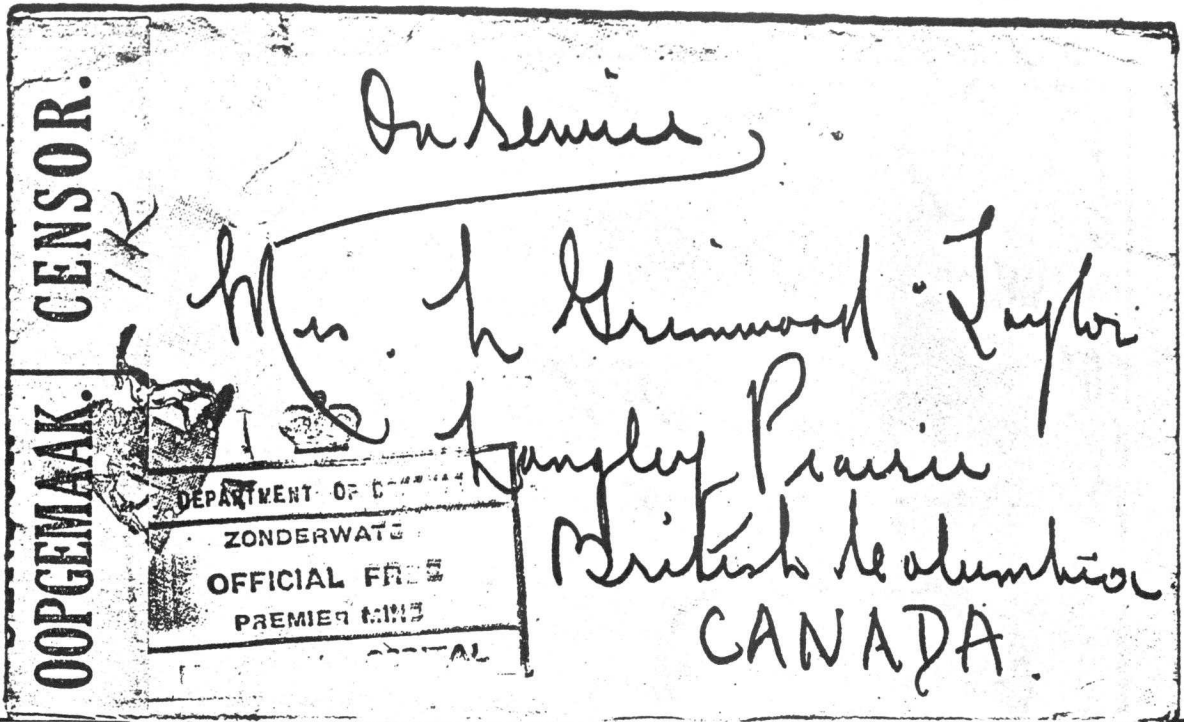
*Dr. J. L. Nicholls.  
405-6 McLeod Building  
Edmonton  
Alberta  
Canada*

U.C.B.  
(Klein)

DEUR



Cover # 8



Filler Page

Top Cover: This is very similar to Illustrated Cover No. 2, but is somewhat clearer. Note on this cover and the one below (reverse of cover No. 2) that there is an official Coat of Arms handstamp tying the label to the cover in each case. Also note under these handstamps that there is what looks to be an integral letter. The upper cover here has an 'A' and the lower one has an 'R', and also noted on other covers, also from the N/S, are the letters 'B' and 'C'. Perhaps there are other letters. Would anyone have an explanation for these marks and letters? There is also to be noted a pencilled number on each of the labels. Seen on these two covers are a '1K' and a '66'. Also noted on the other covers are the numbers 16, 53 and 127, and these are all on the red censor labels here illustrated.

