



Canadian Military Mail Study Group



NEWSLETTER



Christmas and New Year's Issue



No. 108

December 1992

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Editorial Ramblings

With the United Nations issue just out of the door, here it is almost Christmas. How time flies... I've put together a bit of an eclectic year-end issue with some Christmas items, a bit of this and a little of that.

I have two corrections to the last issue. Ritch Toop tells me that his report on BNAPEX '92 should have mentioned that our member John Wanneton won a Vermeil for his Boer War exhibit. Congratulations, John! The second one is my omission: I should have credited Allan Steinhart for the Canada Post Corporate Manual item listing the UN locations where UN members have free franking privileges. Sorry about that!

As the festive season draws close, I want to wish each of our members the very best for the holidays and a happy and prosperous 1993. Enjoy this last issue of 1992, I'm looking forward to compiling our next one sometime in late January. Happy New Year!

Henk Burgers



Coming in Future Issues:

The mid-winter issue, with more obscure information from the Canada Official Postal Guide and, of course, lots of interesting news items submitted by our members.

The Canadian Military Mail Study Group Newsletter is the publication of the Canadian Military Mail Study Group of the British North America Philatelic Society.

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Please address mail to:
Henk Burgers,
c/o HBA Ltd.,
2660 Southvale Crescent,
Suite 301,
Ottawa, ON
Canada K1B 4W5

Fax: 613-737-7704

Paper Witness: Notes on a World War Two Military Christmas Postcard



By Steven Luciuk

The year 1944 produced some interesting and distinctive Canadian military Christmas mail designs and formats. Illustrated are three views of an unusual folded post card of a type possibly unfamiliar to some members of our study group.

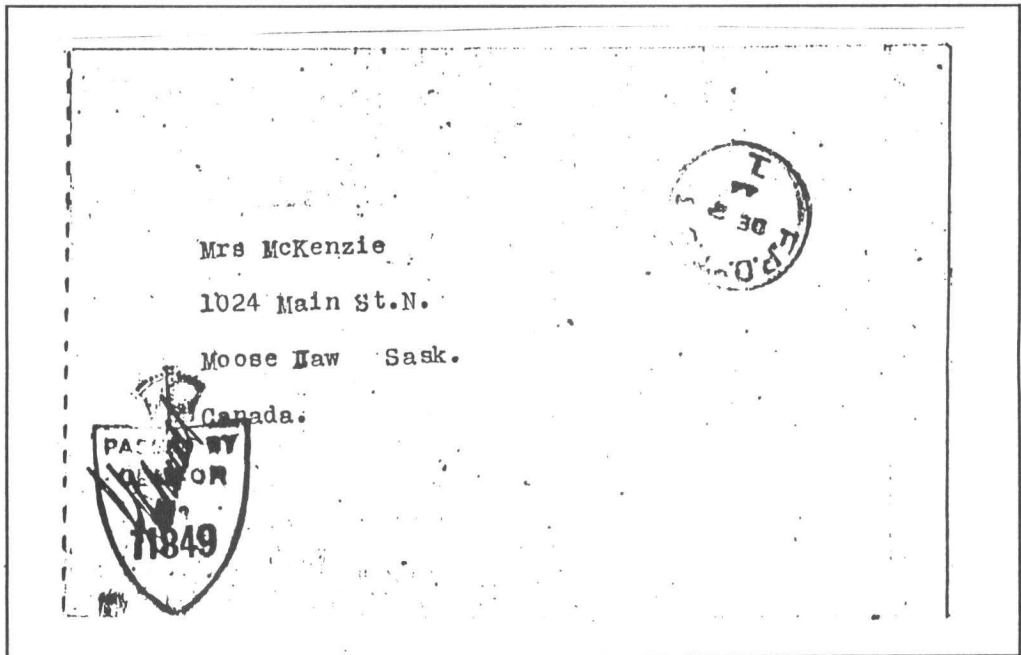


Figure 1: Front of the cover.

Figure 1 shows the front of this folded Christmas post card. Along with a "PASSED BY CENSOR No. 11849" crown and shield marking, an "F.P.O.-T.C.3 1" postmark was applied. This FPO was used by the 3rd Canadian Infantry Division in the Netherlands from 26 November 1944, to February 1945. The postal marking is illustrated and examined fully in Bailey and Toop (Volume 2).

The inside left of the post card is shown in figure 2. Note the printed instructions along the side. Figure 3, the inside right half of the post card, illustrates the Christmas tradition of giving (*See front page - Ed.*). In this case, the soldier's gift to the Dutch child probably represents an item of food. The idea of giving is also evident in the message of appreciation for a gift sent by the Ladies Auxiliary of Prairie Airways Limited.

Prairie Airways, based in Moose Jaw, was one of many small, early air transport company. Along with several other smaller companies, Prairie Airways was absorbed in the creation of Canadian Pacific Airlines fairly early in the war. For a while, however, the small companies continued to operate under their own names. Prairie Airways was to play an important part in the success of the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan in the Canadian West. It operated a major repair depot for the Plan at Moose Jaw. As well, this company was given a contract to operate an air observer school in Regina. Obviously, a major function of the Ladies Auxiliary of Prairie Airways was to provide comforts for the forces.

Corporal Fotheringham, the sender of this post card, was a member of the Regina Rifle Regiment. As well as drawing from the Regina area, this infantry unit included men from several parts of Saskatchewan, neighbouring provinces and even the northern United States. In the way of mild ridicule, men of this prairie regiment were called "Farmer Johns". In turn, the Regina Rifles came to view "the Johns" as a label to be worn with pride.

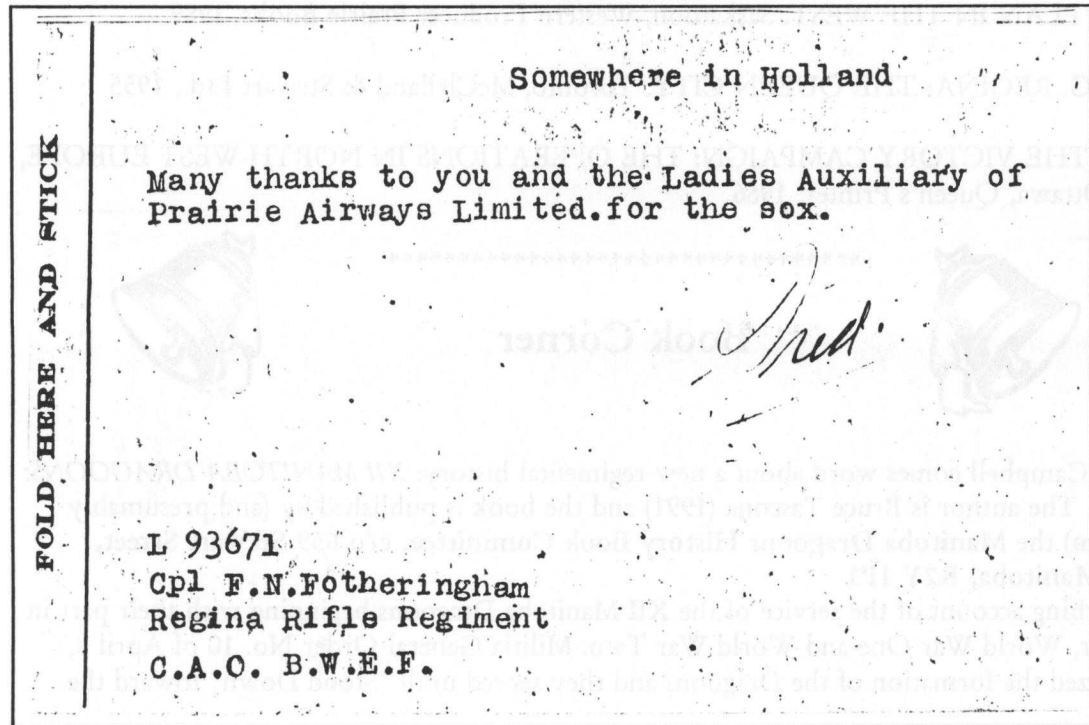


Figure 2: Inside left of postcard.

After a long period of waiting in the United Kingdom, the Regina Rifles saw action in the invasion of Normandy. They were one of the Canadian units landing on Juno Beach, D-

Day, June 6, 1944. As part of the 3rd Canadian Infantry Division, the regiment fought in a number of engagements associated with the campaign in North-West Europe. Included was a role in the liberation of Holland.

At the time this post card was mailed, in December of 1944, the first Canadian Army was in a winter position along the Maas River. Following fierce fighting in the Battle of the Scheldt, a three month static period occurred beginning in early November. This respite from heavy military activity, the only one of the campaign, allowed the Canadians to re-group and prepare for the final drive against the German forces.

How does one assess the significance of this post card? On the one hand, it can be viewed as a minor piece of mail associated with a distant Christmas of almost a half century ago. In terms of postal history, and mindful of the markings on the card, such an assessment may be correct. On the other hand, however, one can argue that it has value. As a paper witness to a stirring time, a period when an important chapter of Canada's military story was being written, this post card deserves some dignity. Items such as this, possibly only on the periphery of postal history, are treasured by this collector and by other.

REFERENCES

Bailey, W.J. and E.R. Toop. THE CANADIAN MILITARY POSTS: BETWEEN THE WARS AND WORLD WAR TWO - 1920 to 1946 (Volume 2). Edited by Edward B. Proud, 1985.

Conrad, Peter C. TRAINING FOR VICTORY: THE BRITISH COMMONWEALTH AIR TRAINING PLAN IN THE WEST. Saskatoon, Western Producer Prairie Books, 1989.

Drake, Earl G. REGINA: THE QUEEN CITY. Toronto, McClelland & Stewart Ltd., 1955

Stacey, C.P. THE VICTORY CAMPAIGN: THE OPERATIONS IN NORTH-WEST EUROPE, 1944-1945. Ottawa, Queen's Printer, 1966.





Book Corner

By Philatelia

From Colin Campbell comes word about a new regimental history: *XII MANITOBA DRAGOONS: A TRIBUTE*. The author is Bruce Tascona (1991) and the book is published by (and presumably available from) the Manitoba Dragoons History Book Committee, c/o 659 Stewart Street, Winnipeg, Manitoba, R2Y 1P1

It is an absorbing account of the service of the XII Manitoba Dragoons beginning with their part in the Boer War, World War One and World War Two. Militia General Order No. 10 of April 8, 1893 authorized the formation of the Dragoons and they served until "Stood Down" toward the end of 1964.

As well, I want to draw your attention to the availability of two other books. First, our Canadian Military Postal History Anthology is still available from Bob Lee (order form attached as last page). Secondly, *CSEF: Canada's Soldiers in Siberia 1918-1919* is still available from Pelorus Publishing. You can get their catalogue by writing them at 336 Crestview Road, Ottawa, Ontario, K1H 5G6.

Letter Box

Michael Rixon, a BNAPS member and a director of documentary films, is looking for information of any kind about the Canadian Voyageur Contingent sent to Egypt as part of the Khartoum Relief Expedition. He needs research material such as diaries, prints, newspapers, drawings, photographs advertisements, military documents, awards, etc. If you have any such material or know where it may be found, please contact Michael Rixon, 749 Agnes St., Montreal, Quebec, H4C 2P9.

Season's Greetings from The Western Cavalry

J. C. Campbell

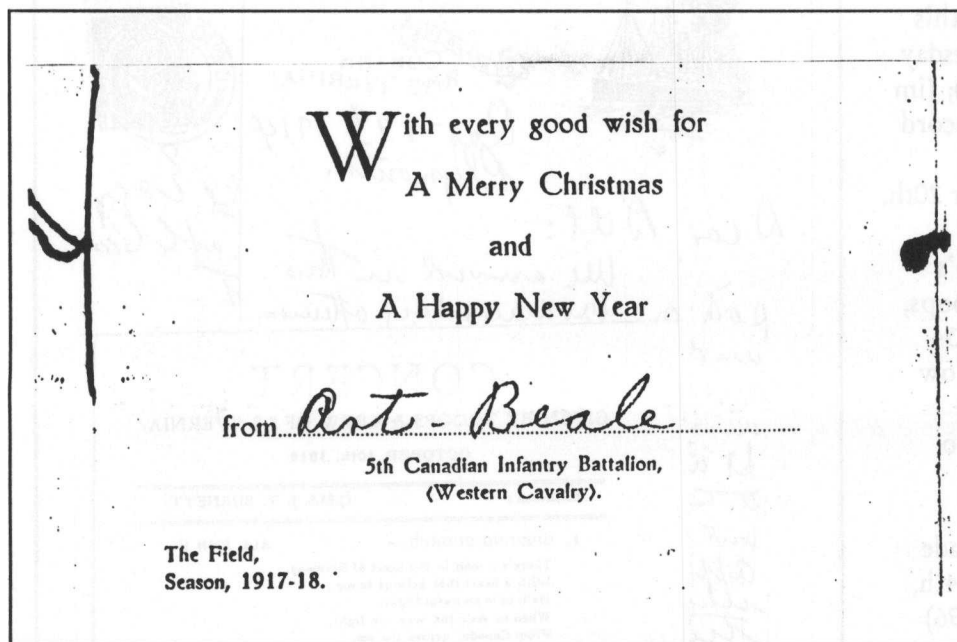


Figure 2: Inside leaf of the card.

The Christmas card bears the signature of Arthur Thomas Beale, Reg. No. 12817, B Company, 5th Battalion, C.E.F. The 5th arrived with the First Contingent, disembarking on October 20, 1914 at Plymouth, England. Their active service is detailed in the regimental history of the XII Manitoba Dragoons and makes exciting reading. The battalion was disbanded at Regina

on April 24, 1919.

The 5th Western Cavalry hat badge is shown on the front cover of the Christmas card. This is an enlargement, the original is in deep brown tone. This was the official cap badge and is most interesting as it shows some of the various units which made up the 5th Battalion. In clockwise direction these were:

30 BCH	British Columbia Horse
31 BCH	British Columbia Horse
35 CAH	Central Alberta Horse
C of G	Corps of Guides
29 LH	Saskatchewan Light Horse
27 LH	Saskatchewan Light Horse
16 LH	Saskatchewan Light Horse
12 MD	12th Manitoba Dragoons

The title "Western Cavalry" was in the name only as the 5th Battalion was actually an infantry battalion.

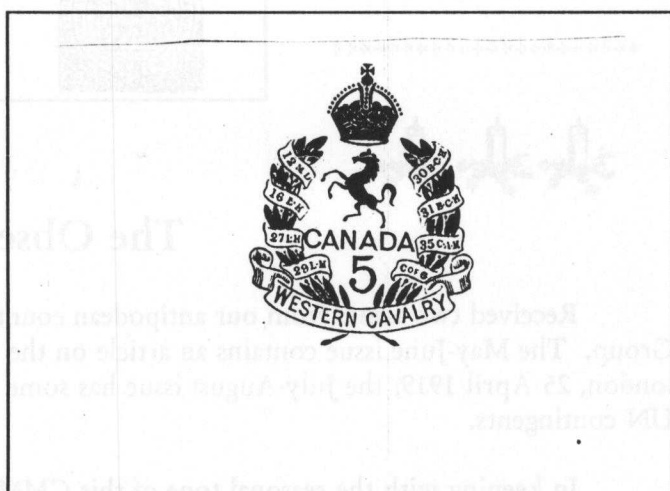


Figure 1: Front cover of the Christmas card.

Another Link with the Canadian First Contingent

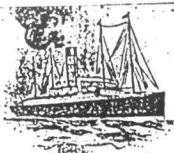
By J. Colin Campbell

"We arrived in this port (Plymouth) Wednesday afternoon", (Oct 14, 14); Jim wrote to Bill and the record gives their date of disembarkation as October 20th.

On board the troopship were the ship's crew of 233 and 917 troops, all ranks. In addition, 634 horses were in stalls below decks and they did not emerge for 25 days. Two animals died during the passage. The troops comprised the 2nd Brigade C.F.A. H.Q. staff (49), 4th, 5th and 6th Batteries (596) and two Ammunition Columns (272).


Note the English stamp cancelled 1:45 PM, 19 OC 14 at Devonport where the offloading took place. See also the logo from the back of the envelope. A program for one of the concerts held on board is illustrated.





ON BOARD THE
CUNARD
R.M.S. "IVERNIA"

Oct 17th 1914
Plymouth.



Dear Bill -
We arrived in this port on Wednesday afternoon

CONCERT

GIVEN BY TROOPS & CREW OF S.S. 'IVERNIA'


OCTOBER 10th, 1914.

Chairman : - - - Q.M.S. J. T. BURNETT.

1. OPENING CHORUS :- ALL JOIN IN.
There's a man in the heart of Germany,
With a heart that belongs to me ;
He'll be in an awful fright,
When he sees the way we fight,
From Canada, across the sea.
Oh Germany, old Germany,
That's the place where we long to be,
There's a man in the heart of Germany,
With a moustache too long for me.
(Tune, Heart of Maryland)
2. SONG Sig. B. Kimberley
3. SONG Gnr. S O'Dell
4. TRIO (A little rag) Gnr. H. P. Hamilton,
Sgt. C. L. Weldon, Corp. G. I. Rice
5. SONG Corp. J. E. Eastlake
6. LAUDER SONGS Wlr. Hughes (Sandy)
7. " I love the ladies " Steward T. E. Ward
8. SONG Gnr. Gunn
9. DRUM SOLO Dr. P. Lindsay (Paddy)
10. MEDLEY CHORUS ALL JOIN IN.
" Annie Laurie " " Where the river Shannon flows "
" Tipperary "

" GOD SAVE THE KING "

Accompanist Corp. G. I. Rice



The Observer

Received two issues from our antipodean counterparts, the Australian Forces Mail Research Group. The May-June issue contains an article on the farewell march of the Australian troops in London, 25 April 1919; the July-August issue has some interesting news on the various Australian UN contingents.

In keeping with the seasonal tone of this CMMSG Newsletter, I also spied out a Salvation Army Christmas cover illustrated in PHSC Journal No. 71 of September 1992. The authors are wondering whether there was a pattern in the use of the two types. *Continued on next page*

Continued from Page 76

Canadian Forces Philatelic Society Bulletin No. 4 has an update on newly opened CFPOs in the former Yugoslavia. K. Zografopoulos submitted illustrations of CFPO 5003 operating in Croatia and CFPO 5004 in Bosnia-Herzegovina. If space permits, I'll try to illustrate these in this issue.

Moving right along, your ever vigilant correspondent noticed a brief mention of the Beamsville FPO cancel in Vance Carmichael's auction. I'll try to fit it into this issue as well. (See below).



Beamsville Camp FPO

Courtesy Vance Carmichael

Only a few miles away from Smithville lies the town of Beamsville, in the heart of the Niagara fruit belt. Most people do not know that, during World War I, it was the site of a very active Royal Flying Corps airfield that served as a school for aerial gunnery from 1917 to 1918. The aerodrome covered 300 acres and contained 60 wooden structures, including 9 flight hangars (see Figure 1). By war's end, the camp had trained 1200 pilots to meet the challenges of aerial warfare in Europe.

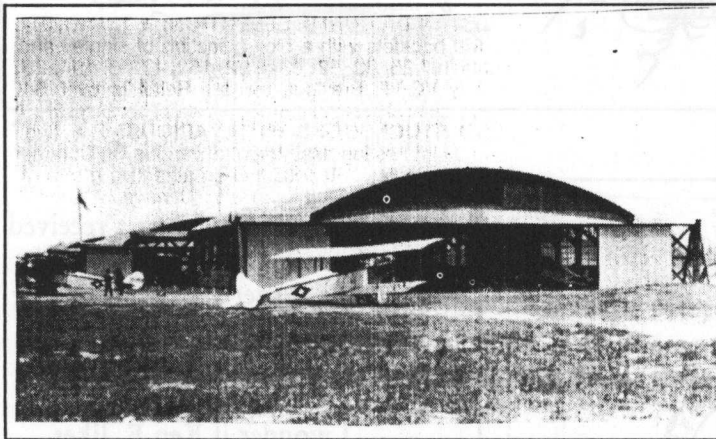
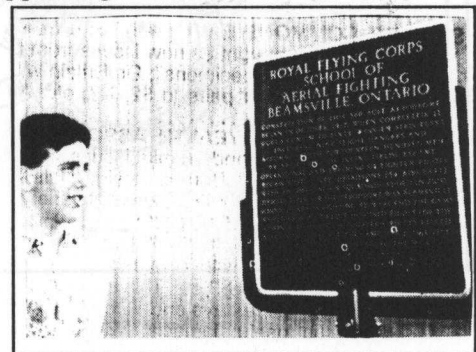


Figure 1: A 1918 photo of a hangar at Beamsville.

The airfield also brought Beamsville its own little piece of philatelic history. For a few months during 1918, it had its own Field Post Office and cancellations from it are exceedingly scarce.

Continued on Page 80

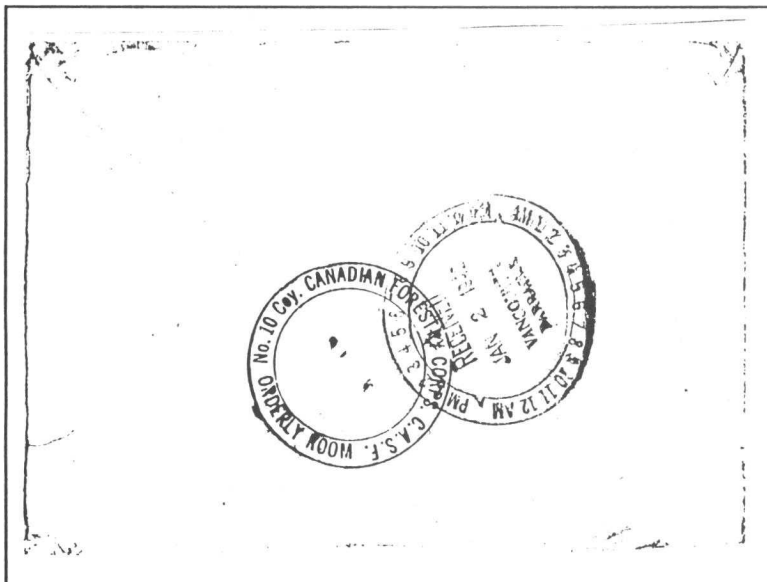
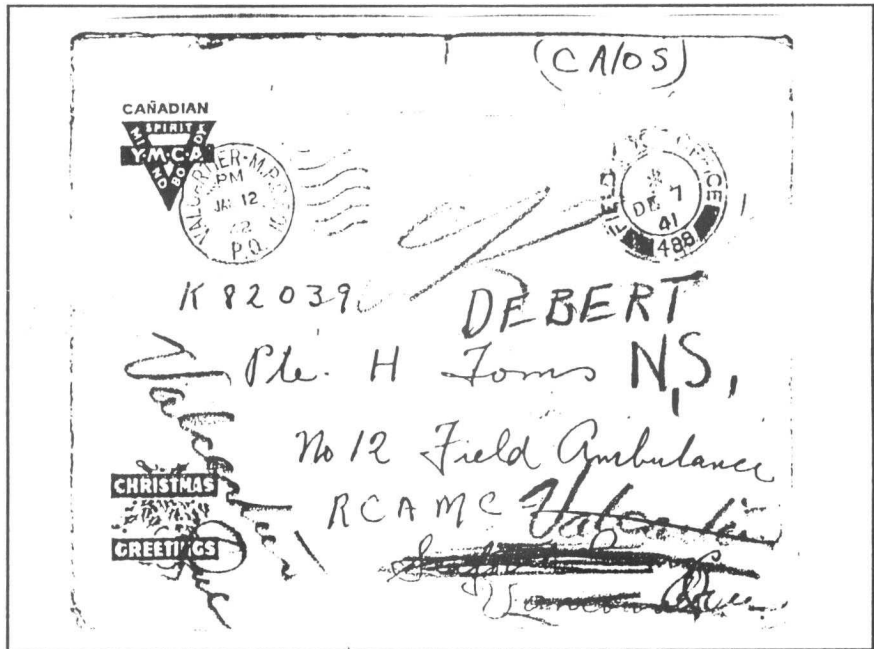
After the war ended in 1918, the airfield was closed and the property gradually reverted to fruit farming and houses. Over the years, the military buildings were either torn down or destroyed by fire. A couple of years ago, I discovered that one of the hangars had miraculously survived. It is now the home of a horticultural business and a historic plaque stands outside it (see Figure 2). Despite renovations over the years, you can still see the rows of original wooden lattice supporting the roof.



Christmas Greetings from the Canadian Forestry Corps

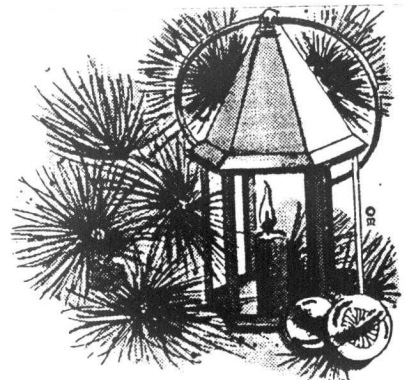
By Philatelia

Here is a redirected mail item in the Christmas spirit. A YMCA cover sent by a soldier with the Canadian Forestry Corps (seems very appropriate to the season!) to a private serving with 12 Fd Amb, RCAMC, Seaforth Camp, Vancouver, BC. It was cancelled by FPO 488 in Scotland on 7 December 1941. However, the medic had moved on and the cover was redirected to Valcartier, where it received a Valcartier MPO 501 duplex cancel. Since Pte Jones was not in Valcartier either, it was then sent to Debert, NS, where it presumably found a good home (at least for a while).



The reverse bears a received stamp from Vancouver Barracks in red and an Orderly Room marking of No. 10 Coy, Canadian Forestry Corps, CASF, also in red.

I wonder if Ken E. likes this one?

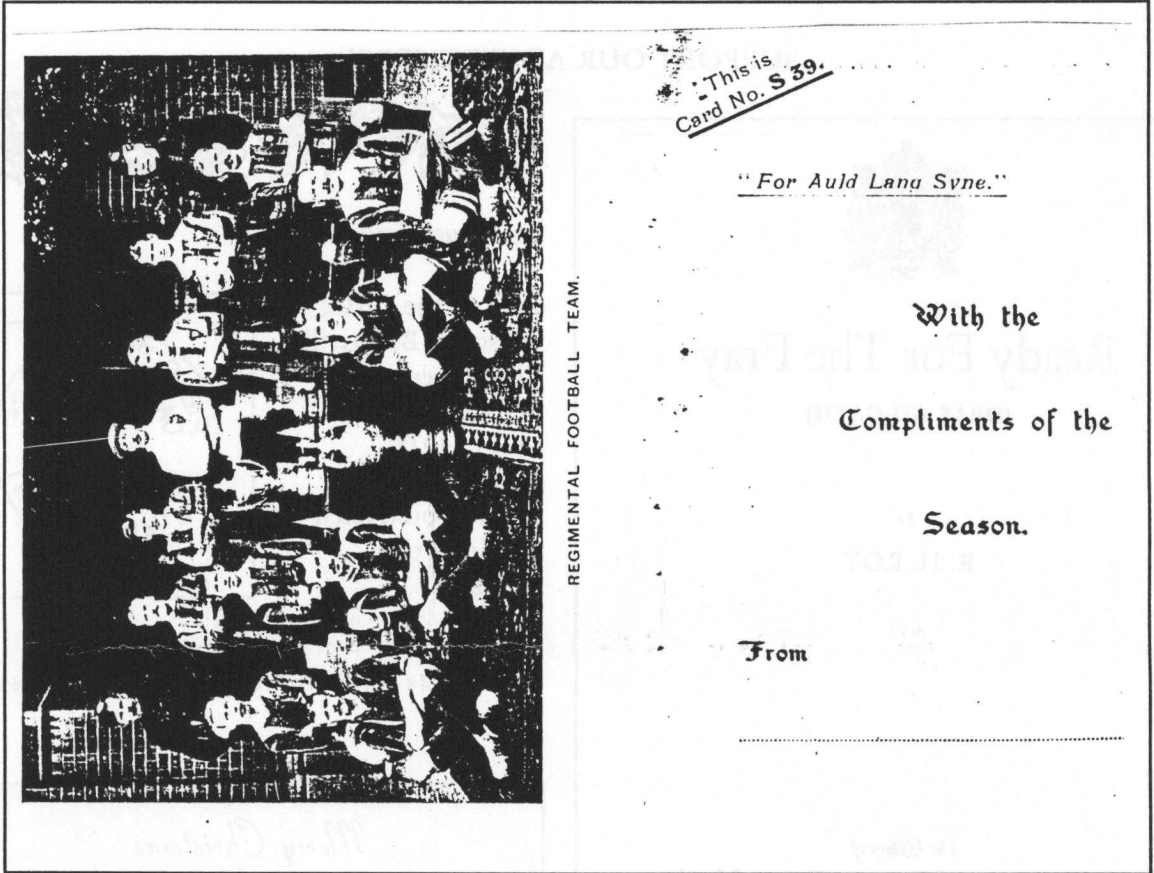


Christmas Football?



Here is an item that I cannot identify: it is a regimental Christmas card from what appears to be a Scottish Regiment (Scottish Rangers?). The regimental cap badge is featured on the front and the inside contains a photograph of the regimental football (soccer) team and season's greetings.

Can anyone identify this positively? (I know it's not Canadian, but it's Christmas).



The Newsletter will accept small ads from members. One insertion of up to four lines for a Loonie! (For our overseas friends, that's a Canadian dollar) Send your ad with real money or mint (Canadian preferred) stamps.

FOR SALE: CMMSG MILITARY MAIL ANTHOLOGY. Hard Cover - \$44.89 in Canada; US\$40.00 for USA and overseas; Soft Cover - \$32.05 in Canada; US\$30.00 for USA and overseas; Post Paid. Order from: Robt. A. Lee, #203-1139 Sutherland Avenue, Kelowna, BC V1Y 5Y2.

WANTED: Falklands Island invasion material (yes, Falkland Islands!). Please send photocopies/prices desired. Have material for trade (modern Canada/UK/USA). Dean Mario, Box 342, Saskatoon, SK S7K 3L3.

FOR SALE: READY FOR THE FRAY, History of the Canadian Scottish Regiment. (See illustration below) J. Colin Campbell, 1450 Ross Road, Kelowna, BC V1Z 1L6.

CANADIAN FORESTRY CORPS: Lost track of the number of responses to my C.F.C. ad. Thanks to all who replied! Covers, postcards still wanted, especially WW I. Ken Ellison, R.R. # 1, Oyama, BC V0H 1W0.

Wanted: FIRST SPECIAL SERVICE FORCE Canadian covers. (See article in the N/L); even photocopies will do! By the way, I had about 8 replies to my Cdn Forestry Corps request through this medium. Ken V. Ellison, R.R. #1, Oyama, B.C., V0H 1W0.

NEWFOUNDLAND WANTED: Covers to and from Newfoundland servicemen, all periods. Civil and Military censorship covers concerning Nfld. also desired. Send photocopies, even if you do not want to trade the material. Doug Hannan, 23 - 1950 Burtch Street, Kelowna, BC V1Y 4B2.

SUPPORT OUR ADVERTISERS!



Ready For The Fray

(DEAS GU CATH)

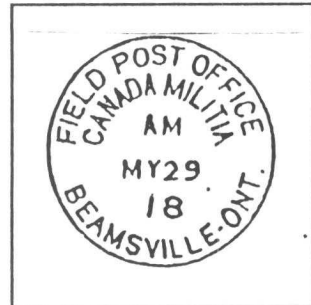
by
R. H. ROY

*The History of
The Canadian Scottish Regiment (Princess Mary's)
1920-1955*



Continued from Page 77

Back in the 1970s, we sold a Beamsville FPO on cover in our auction for about \$40.00. Today I am sure that it would fetch ten times that amount.



*Merry Christmas
and a
Happy New Year!*