



Canadian Military Mail Study Group

NEWSLETTER

APRIL 1996

NEWSLETTER No. 123
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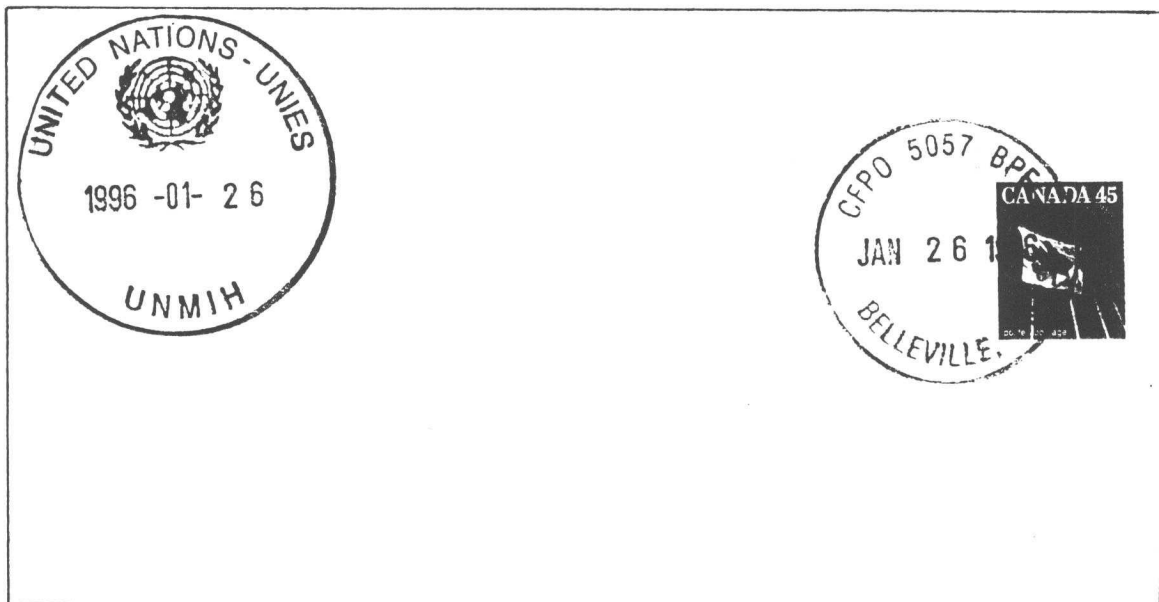
Dear Fellow CMMSG Members:

Welcome to the spring '96 issue and I hope that all is going well! There is a good bit of business included with this issue incorporating some information on the recent Ritch Toop Memorial Awards, as well as a fine array of articles by the membership. There will be a special "CAPEX '96" Newsletter next month and for those attending this event, I trust that it will be enjoyable. Our Chairman/Treasurer advises me that memberships have been "flowing in" and this is great news. Thanks too for all the member's contributions and please keep them coming! Without your support it would be most difficult. Cheers! Welcome to a new member of our Group:

SUSAN SHEFFIELD, BOX 67039, MEADOWLARK P.O., EDMONTON, AB T5R 5Y3

U.N. MISSION IN HAITI

The Canadian presence in Haiti began in 1993 with the dispatch of military personnel and the RCMP to maintain security. More recently, the U.N. Peace-Keeping operations have focussed upon humanitarian and infrastructure rebuilding efforts. The Canadians are based at Camp Canargus in Port-au-Prince. Below is a cover from this Operation. [Ed.]



CHAIRMAN/TREASURER: W.J. BAILEY, #5-8191 FRANCIS RD., RICHMOND, BC V6Y 1A5
EDITOR: D. MARIO, BOX 342, SASKATOON, SK S7K 3L3

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MILITARY CONVALESCENT HOSPITAL, QUALICUM BEACH, V.I., B.C.--By Jon Johnson

The Qualicum Beach Hotel was probably built in 1912 by the Merchants Trust and Trading Company, which was registered in British Columbia in 1910 with its head office in Vancouver. The hotel was open to the public in 1913 at which time its golf course was under construction.

In August 1915, Noel Money, Managing Director of Merchants Trust, resigned to return to England and his regiment (and subsequently became a Brigadier General). The Federal Government took over the hotel during the summer of 1915 as a convalescent hospital for wounded officers. In November 1915 the Merchants Trust went into voluntary liquidation. During the War the Government expanded the hospital by adding an east wing. Although the golf course was closed while the hospital was resident, those patients fit enough played on it. The golfers had to play around sheep who were placed on the course to keep the grass cropped! This probably was the only Government hospital with a private golf course. It is not clear when the hospital was closed but this was most probably in 1919.

The hotel was leased for four years after the War until operation was taken over by General Money. Sometime after the War a west wing was added. In 1940 the hotel was purchased by the Qualicum Beach Hotel Company. Then in 1954 the Qualicum Beach Inn Ltd. acquired the property. The hotel closed in 1969 and was sold to a developer in 1972. The hotel was then taken down to make way for houses.

The postcard below features the hospital. It is unposted but with a note from a person staying there who describes the location as wild country and too lonely. On the right of the picture is the house of R. Thompson Tinn, a former managing director of Merchants Trust.



"RETURNED FROM CANADA...."--By Steven Luciuk

During the course of the Second World War, approximately 38,000 individuals were interned in Canadian camps. About 33,800 were Class I German combatants captured under warlike conditions. The remainder consisted largely of Class II and Class III non-combatant civilian and refugee internees. Over one-half from the latter classes came from the United Kingdom; victims of rough justice following the rapid German victories in 1940. Over a period of time, most of the civilian internees were released.

Being a common name, possibly several "Oskar Mullers" were held in Canadian POW camps. Confusion with mail, therefore, was probable. Note the reference to "NOT the Oskar Muller at C" written along the censor tape on the right side of this cover (FIG.1).

In an attempt to direct this piece of mail from Germany to the addressee, 14 handstamp and manuscript marks were placed on the cover. Along with the markings tracing its odyssey to and from Camps E and C, the cover also shows two Base APO machine marks dated March 10 and March 22, 1941.

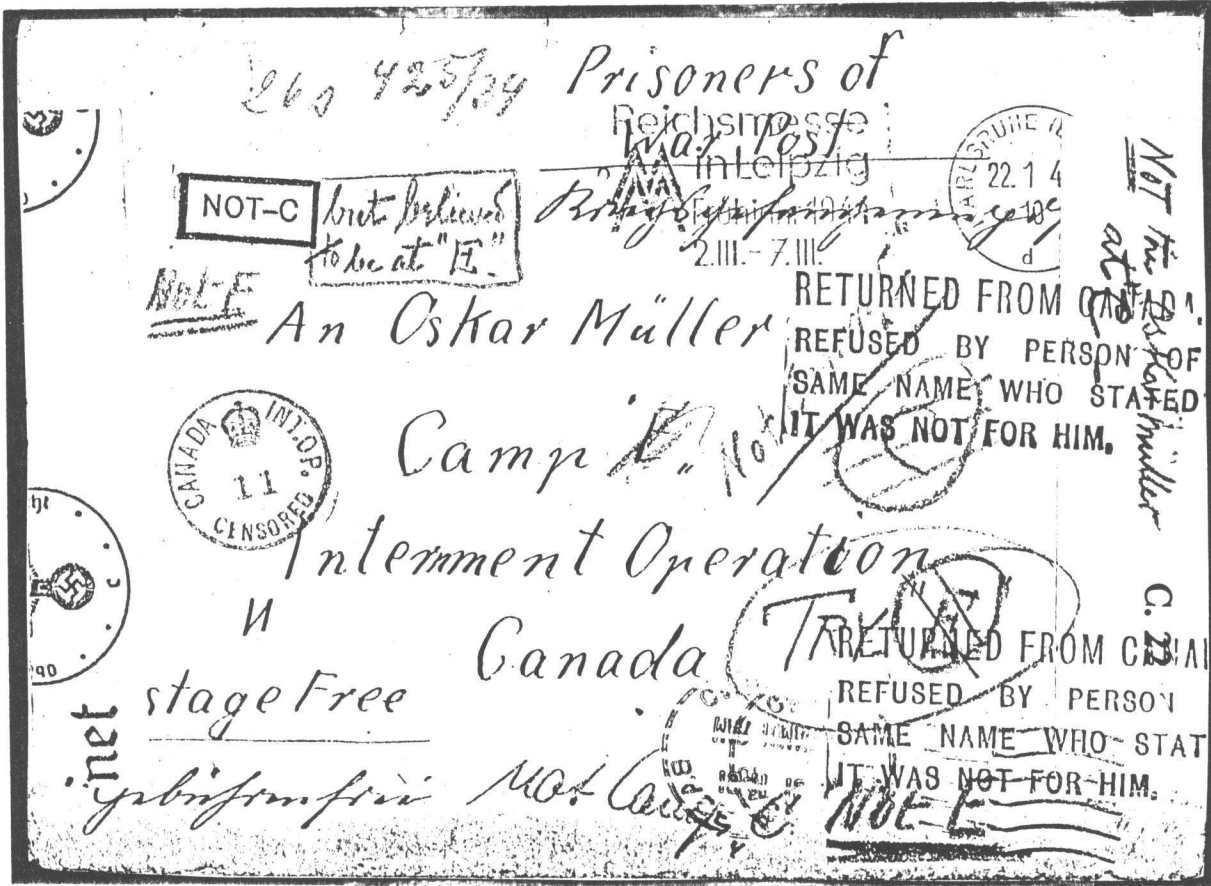
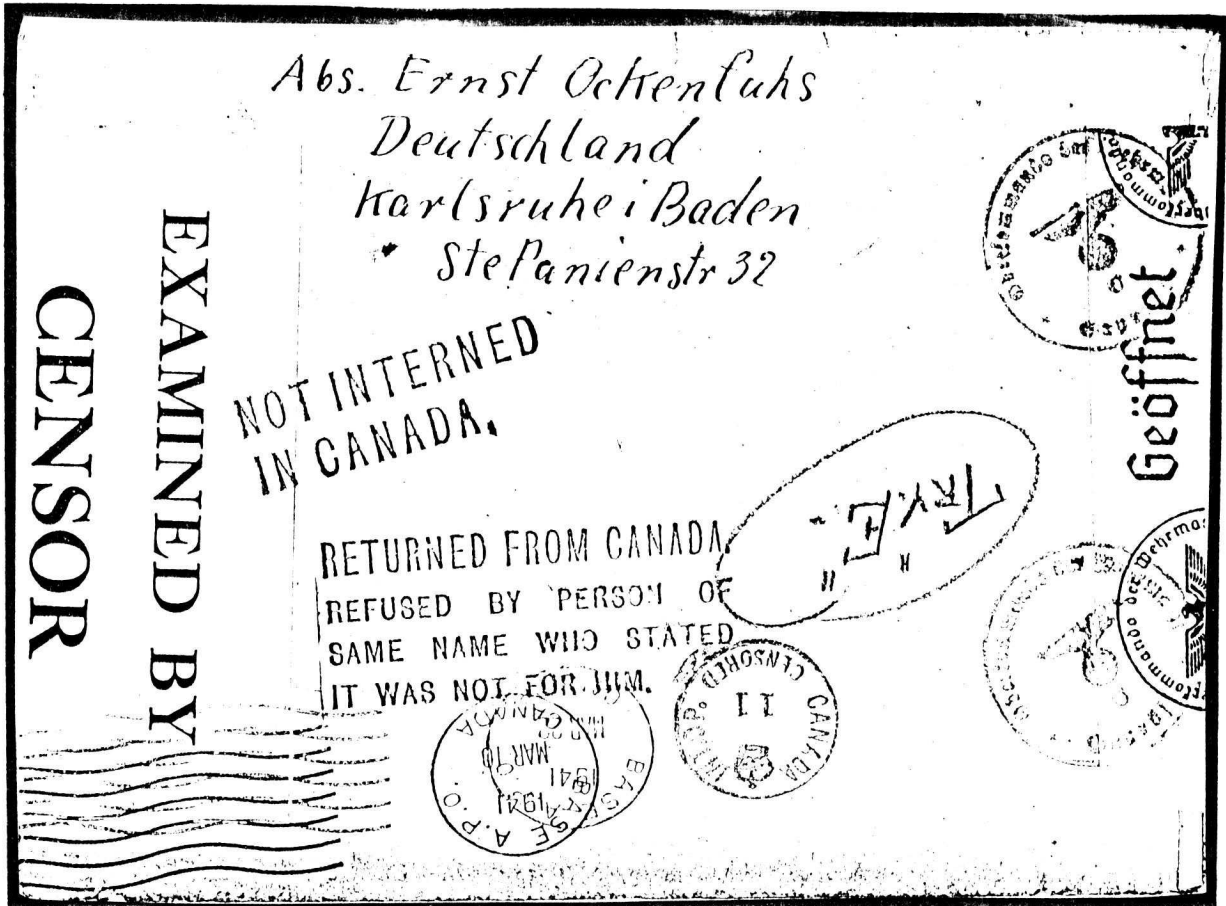


FIG.1

Camp E was located at Espanola, west of Sudbury, Ontario. It could accommodate 1200 internees. The Camp opened in July 1940 and was closed in August 1943. Camp C at Gravenhurst, on the east side of Georgian Bay,

could hold only 400 POWs. It operated from July 1940 to June 1946.

Obviously the addressee was not in either Camp. The "RETURNED FROM CANADA/REFUSED BY PERSON OF/SAME NAME WHO STATED/IT WAS NOT FOR HIM" and the boxed "NOT-C" handstamps are noteworthy (REV.).



REV.

The "NOT INTERNED/IN CANADA" handstamp is one of two basic formats. "IN CANADA" is left-side justified with a 5mm letter height. The lettering on the second type, shown below, is 7mm in height and "IN CANADA" is centred.

**NOT INTERNED
IN CANADA**

NO. 1 SPECIAL WIRELESS GROUP,
ROYAL CANADIAN CORPS OF SIGNALS--By John Frith

I recently acquired a correspondence of six Air Mail Letter Cards (Collas, Fig. 140), two Air Letters, and one letter from a member of this Unit, Pte. John W. Egilson. Egilson consistently wrote home to his mother in Manitoba during the period in which the Unit served in Australia. Thanks to the late E.R. "Ritch" Toop, I was able to obtain the history of the Unit (which was prepared prior to their leaving Darwin in the form of a souvenir booklet). I realized that this group of let-

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ters would not only add to our knowledge of postal matters, but also add to their history after leaving Darwin. As a result, before "breaking up" the correspondence and adding it to my stock, I photocopied the correspondence in its entirety. If anyone is interested in reading the contents, please drop me a note at P.O. Box 286, Copper Cliff, Ont., POM 1N0.

This Unit was formed and began its training at Gorden Head Camp, Victoria, B.C., during July 1944. On January 13, 1945, the Special Wireless Group, with a strength of 13 officers and 277 other ranks under the command of Lt.-Col. H.D.W. Wethey, embarked on the C.P.R.'s ship Princess Charlotte to Seattle, Washington, and then by rail to San Francisco. There they boarded the U.S.A.T. Monterey on January 20, 1945, and sailed that evening.

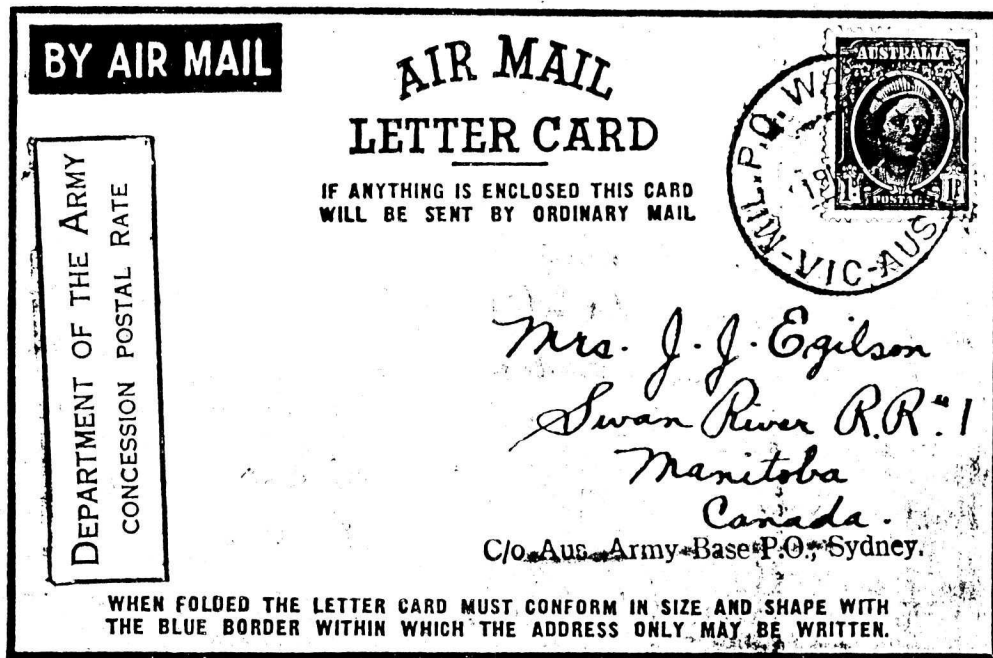
They put in at Finschafen, New Guinea on February 4 for two days to take on supplies and off-load mail, and then continued on to Hollandia, where they switched to U.S.A.T. Shawnee. They then sailed on February 10 for Brisbane, Queensland, Australia and arrived February 16, after stopping at Oro Bay and Milne Bay, New Guinea, for American passengers and oil.

The Unit was directed to Chermside Camp, where they had classes in operational procedures with No. 1 Australian Special Wireless Group, until April 4. The Unit then proceeded by train to Mt. Isa, Queensland, and arrived there after a three day journey. After a two and a half day stop they travelled by motor convoy to McMillan's Camp, Darwin, Northern Territory, arriving at their final destination on April 18. The Unit commenced operations on April 30 and they did not leave Darwin until October 24, 1945 (via M.T. convoy) for Alice Springs, N.T. They arrived on October 28. From there they travelled by rail to Terowie and then by motor convoy again to Adelaide, Melbourne, Victoria (Watsonia Camp, November 15-20), and finally Sydney, New South Wales (Ingleburn Camp, November 24, 1945-February 5, 1946). Here they had to suffer the consequences of a transportation strike (no Christmas '45 at home!). It was not until February 26, 1946, after a twenty-one day voyage, that they arrived back in Vancouver, B.C.!

Although the work of No. 1 C.S.W.G. is still classified, it is known that they were a major "listening post" against the Japanese in South East Asia. After V-J Day they facilitated messages between the liberated "C" Force POWs and Canada.

No mention of mail handling is made in the Unit history, but fortunately Egilson seems to have posted one of his letters from most of the locations of the Unit! His return address was the same on all of his letters until the Unit left Darwin: No. 1 Cdn. Special Wireless Group, C.A.O.S., c/o Army Base Post Office, Melbourne, Australia. In anticipation of their move home to Canada, the Unit address changed to: c/o Army Base Post Office, Sydney, Australia. Egilson headed his letters with whatever location he happened to be.

The following Air Mail Letter Card is a typical example from Egilson and a representation of the correspondence to his mother in Swan River.



"MIL. P.O. WATSONIA/-VIC. AUST.- 19 NO 45"

References:

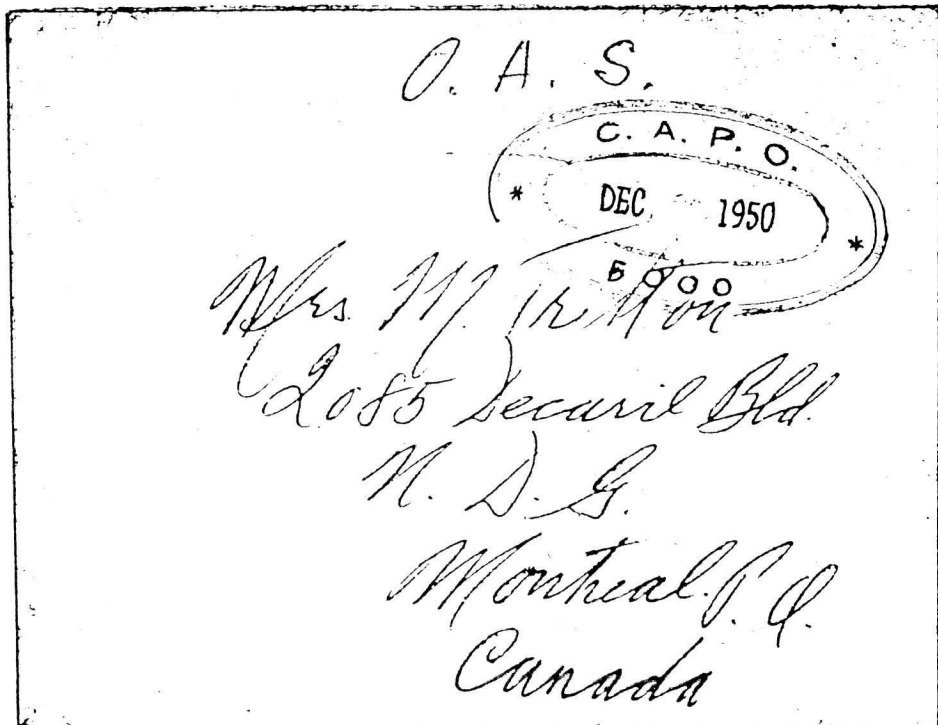
- 1) Collas P. The Postal History of the Australian Army During World War II. Melbourne, The R.P.S. of Victoria, 1986.
- 2) CSWG 1944-1945 Souvenir Booklet. Ed. Static Press, 1 CSWG. Privately printed, Darwin, Australia, August 1945. Dept. of National Defence, "D Hist.", Ottawa. Accession D-768.15, 05, 1945.

C.A.P.O. 5000 OVAL--By John Daynes

This unusual cover from Korea has an oval CAPO marking dated December, 1950. Do members have any information related or other similar examples?



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1-800-946-9696



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SHIP'S BADGE - H.M.C.S. ST. LAURENT--By W. Whitehouse

The illustrated ship badges below, attributed to HMCS St. Laurent between 1937 and 1945 poses the question: in which years were the individual badges worn?



FIG. 1



FIG. 2

The Director of Ceremonial Heraldry and Design for the Department of National Defence in Ottawa advises that these badges are unofficial as were most ship badges prior to 1945; thus no records seem to be available either as to design or periods of use. In those days the decision regarding the ship badge was left to the Commanding Officer and he was free to change the design at will.

FIG. 1 would appear to me to be the first badge of the ship. The artwork of the naval crown is very poor indeed and would conceivably prompt a new Commanding Officer to try for some improvement. The blue and gold wavy bars obviously represent the St. Lawrence River and this feature has been included in the later official badge of St. Laurent.

In FIG. 2 the artwork in the naval crown is greatly improved but the three horizontal maple leaves are no improvement on those in FIG. 1. Here the artist has decided on a new design showing a grid in two panels and this feature also has been retained in the later official badge.

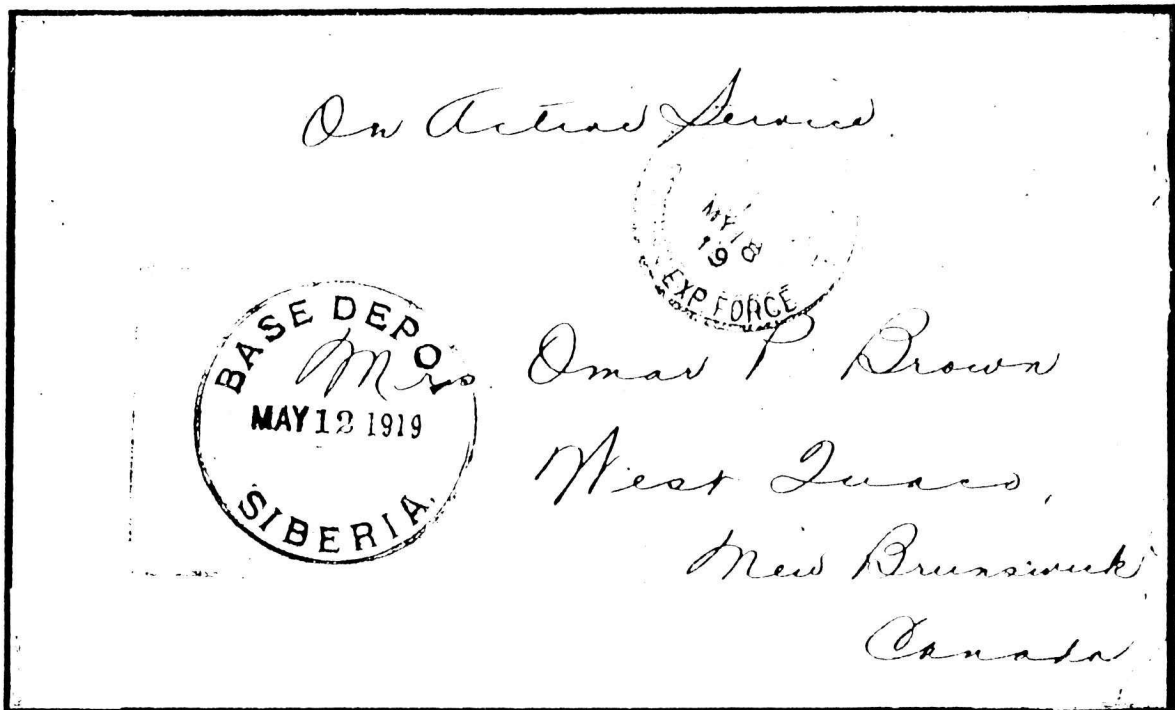
It is said that Jacques Cartier named the river in honour of the martyr Saint Lawrence who, in the year 258, was put to death by being roasted on a grid. The addition of a motto in FIG. 2 strengthens my belief that this is the second badge of the ship.

In 1948, naval officials in Ottawa decided that a special Department would provide the expertise on heraldry and design of ship badges and these are known as the official badges.

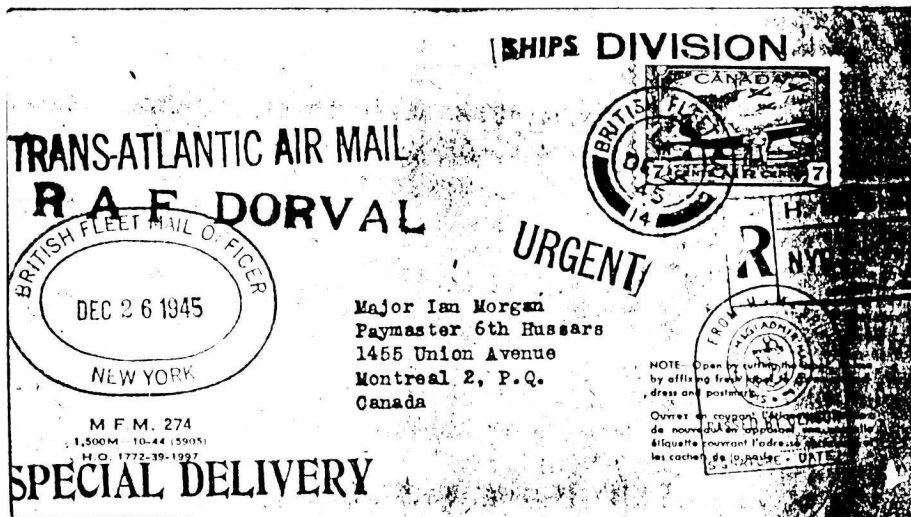
The official badge of St. Laurent was prepared for the new and second ship of the name commissioned in 1955, and paid off for disposal in 1974 (FIG. 3). If anyone has knowledge as to the years of the badges in FIGS. 1 and 2 were used, such as dated stationery, Christmas cards etc., please advise the Editor.



FIG. 3

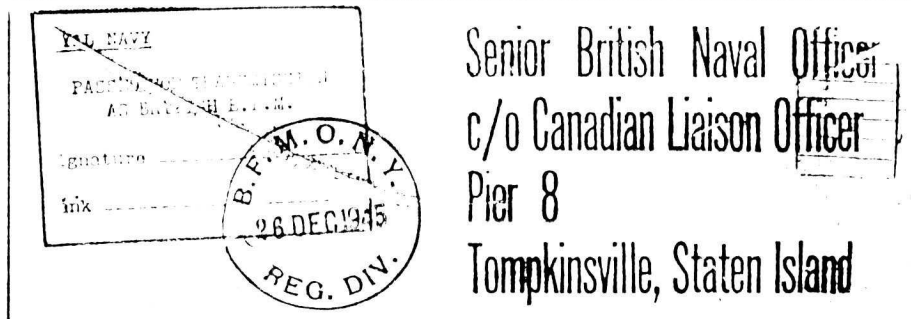


The above cover illustrates a strike of the steel hammer Number 1, dated May 18, 1919, and a strike of the "Base Depot/Siberia" handstamp of May 12, 1919. The latest reported usage of both of these devices is May 26, 1919.



CANADIAN NAVAL LIAISON OFFICE

John Burnett writes: "The item left, philatelic in origin, has many strikes and unusual markings. I wonder if some of our members might shed some light on these interesting markings and, most specifically, the oval 'BRITISH FLEET MAIL OFFICER/NEW YORK' and the 'SENIOR BRITISH NAVAL OFFICER/C/O CANADIAN LIAISON OFFICER/PIER 8/TOMPKINSVILLE, STATEN ISLAND' on the reverse?". [Morgan is to be commended for his voracity with this cover! Any members who can assist, please contact the Editor.]



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FROM OUR CHAIRMAN, BILL BAILEY--

"I've had many questions regarding the final book by W.J. Bailey and E.R. Toop. I want you all to know that it's going well and I should finish it within six months or so. It will be entitled Canadian Military Postal Markings, 1881-1995, and will be about 750-800 pages. In it we illustrate over 2,700 Canadian military markings with rarity factors, so it should be useful to every military postmark collector and dealer".

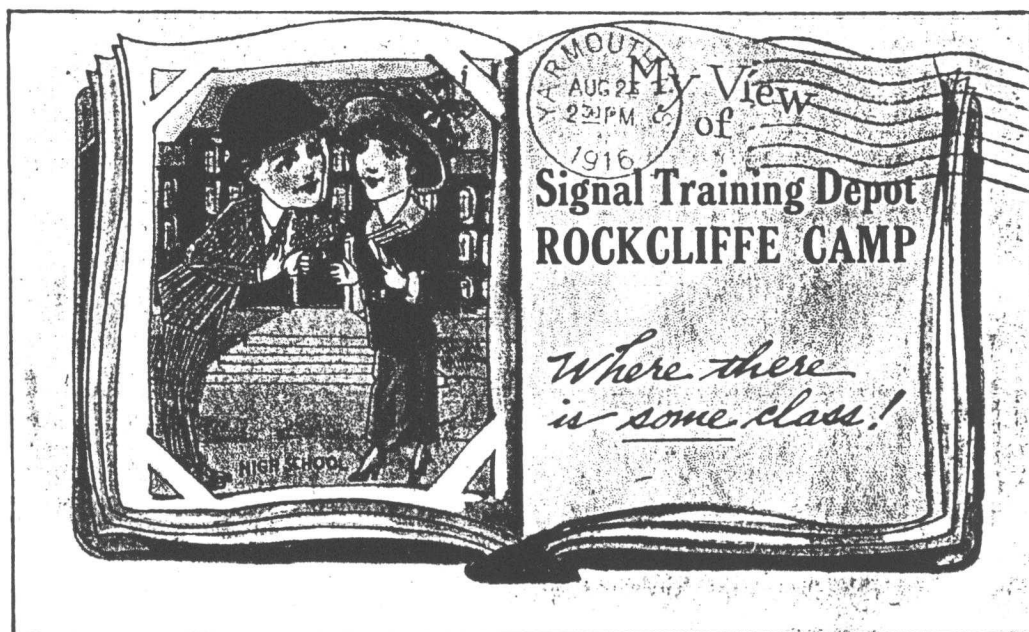
RITCH TOOP MEMORIAL AWARDS (BNAPS/PHSC)

H.M. (Mike) Street, President of BNAPS, has recently requested the members' attention regarding the above proposed award. He writes: "Several members have suggested the creation of an official BNAPS award honoring the late E.R. 'Ritch' Toop. Under consideration is an annual award recognizing the best article or book on Canadian Military Postal History published anywhere. I am asking my fellow members of the CMMMSG for their suggestions on funding such an award, and on how best to determine the winner each year, i.e. who should make the decision. The final proposal will be taken to the Board of Directors for approval later this year. If you have any ideas and thoughts on this award, please write or Email me at: 73 Hatton Drive, Ancaster, ON L9G 2H5/Email: Mikestreet@freenet.hamilton.on.ca or phone (905) 648-3737".

The PHSC has established the "PHSC Ritch Toop Memorial Award" which will be offered at ORAPEX in Ottawa, and the Edmonton National Exhibition. The award will be offered for the best military postal history exhibit. An exhibit must win at least a Silver Medal in order to be eligible, and an exhibit may only win one Memorial Award. A separate fund will be set up by the PHSC to sustain these awards. Donations may be sent to the PHSC Treasurer, Geoff Newman, 13 Scott Cresc., Perth, ON K7H 3J4, marked "PHSC (Toop Awards)".

ROCKCLIFFE CAMP WWI

The humorous card at right was published by the well-known firm of Bamforth and Co. It is with a Yarmouth machine receiver and has an "Ottawa/Aug. 21/12 M/1916/Canada Central Canada Exhibition" slogan on reverse. It seems very similar to the card from Camp Borden in N/L #86, p. 619. [Ed.]



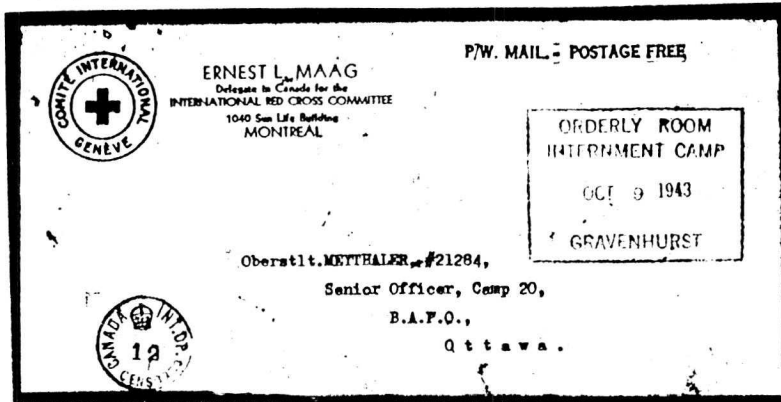
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RESEARCH REQUEST

Susan Sheffield writes: "I am seeking any information regarding the POW Camp at Gravenhurst, Ontario, Toronto's 'Little Norway', and 'Little Norway, Muskoka, Ont.'. Photocopies of postally used stationery, photos, or historical information would be appreciated. Contact me c/o Muskoka, 'A Summer Love Affair', Box 67039, Meadowlark RPO, Edmonton, AB T5R 5Y3 or FAX (403) 481-1144".

"RIEL" REBELLION ESSAY

The Auction firm of C.G. Firby recently sold a very rare copy of the brown-red Republique Canadienne/Canadian Republic single stamp in January, 1996. The four margin copy was estimated at a value of \$750 but realized \$450 plus the firm's 10% buyer's fee.

E.R. "RITCH" TOOP MILITARY MAIL VOLUMES

SPECIAL NEWS ABOUT THE TOOP COLLECTION VOLUMES!

These are available right now. See attached order form on this Newsletter.

COMING UP IN THE CAPEX '96 ISSUE!

The next Newsletter will feature some wonderful items including "Y" Force, modern ship cancels, comic WWII postcards, the Canadian Provost Corps, and odd and unusual markings! The Editor always needs items for publication so please send me your articles, new finds, and anything else!

SMALL ADS

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. Please send your ad with "real" money or mint (Canadian preferred) stamps to the Editor's attention.

WANTED: Covers or cards addressed to, or from, members of the Cdn. Provost Corps; SIS Units; or Service Detention Barracks (SDB's).

A.D. Hanes, 33 Lillian Cresc., Barrie, ON, L4N 4P8 (2/4)

WANTED: Cdn. Base Army Post Office markings on covers/cards, 1939-46. Auxiliary markings needed too. See Bailey & Toop, Vol. II, Chapter 10! D. Mario, Box 342, Saskatoon, SK, S7K 3L3 (1/2)

FOR SALE: Canadian military mail, WWI to date. Send me your wants! Philip Wolf, #5-513 8th Ave., S.W., Calgary, AB, T2P 1G3 (2/2)

WANTED: WWII "Z" Force (Iceland); Newfld. military covers/cards. D. Mario, Box 342, Saskatoon, SK, S7K 3L3 (2/2)
