

Canadian Military Mail Study Group



NEWSLETTER

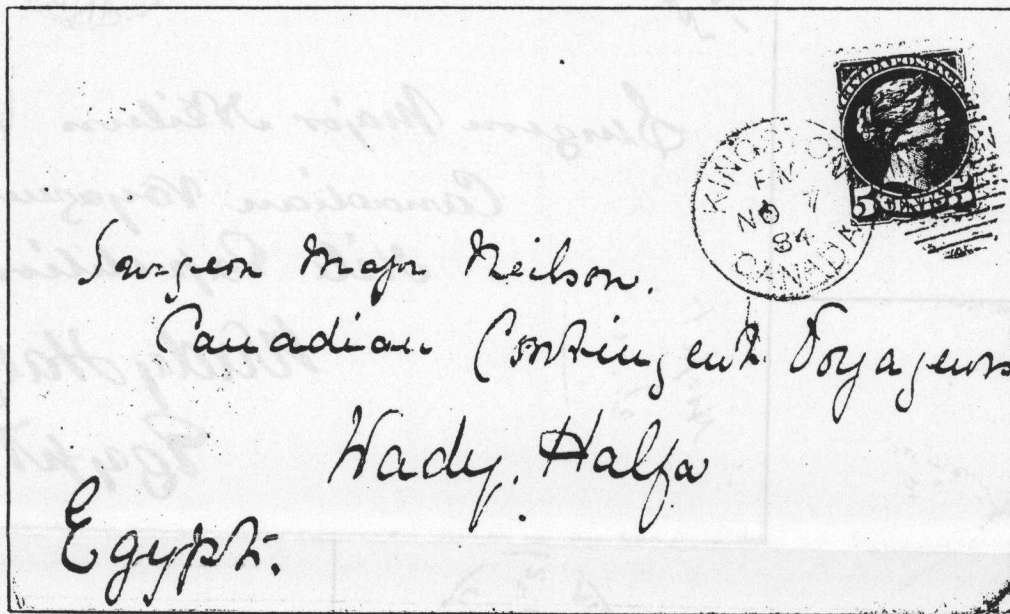
JANUARY 2002

NEWSLETTER NO. 153

Page 585

CANADA'S NILE VOYAGEURS

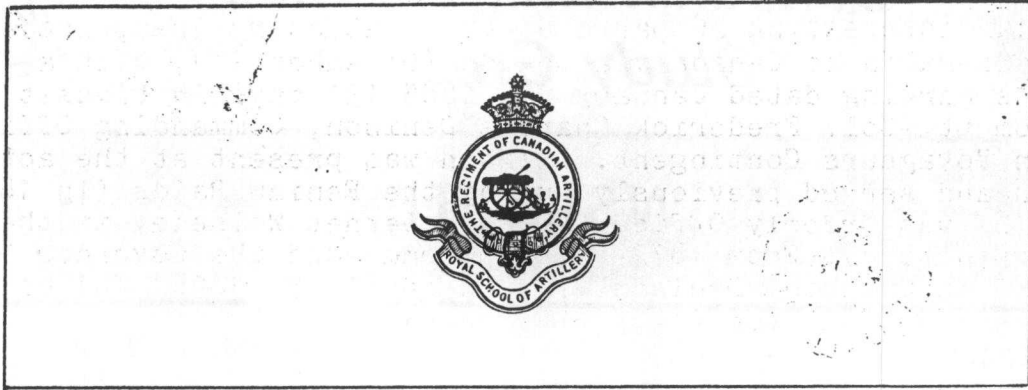
[The following covers and stationery card were contained within the late John Firebrace's military postal history sale conducted by Cavendish Philatelic Auctions Ltd., Derby, U.K. The sale was held on May 16, 2001 and indicated a very strong international interest for military mail. The sale contained a wide variety of rare and unusual items not usually seen on today's market. Members may have seen Mr. Firebrace's exhibit "Campaigns in Egypt and the Sudan" at CAPEX 1978 where it received an International Large Gold medal.Ed.]



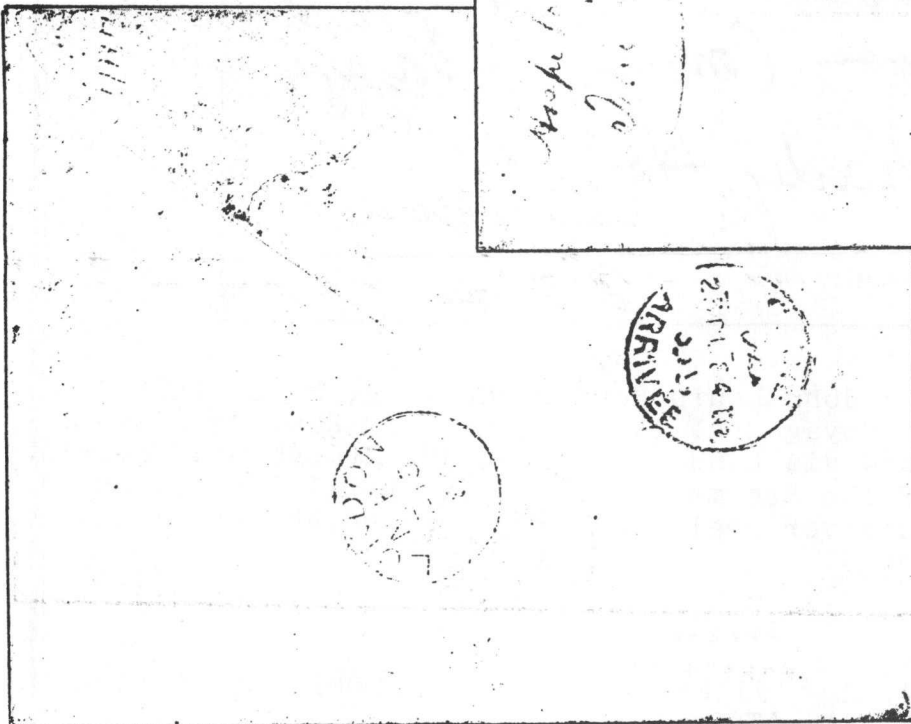
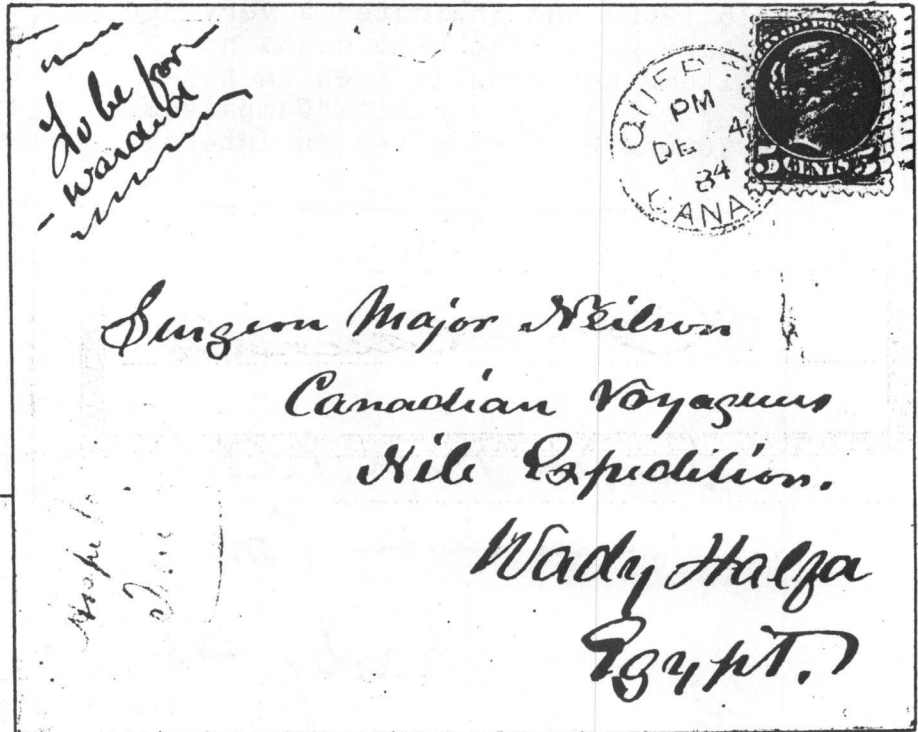
A cover to Surgeon-Major John Louis Herbert Neilson, Medical Officer with the Canadian Voyageurs. It was sent from Kingston, Ontario on November 7, 1884 via London November 18. It bears an embossed crest in blue of The Regiment of Canadian Artillery (illustrated next page). This cover realized £3200 (C\$7196.48 not including the 15% buyer's fee).

[Cont'd.]

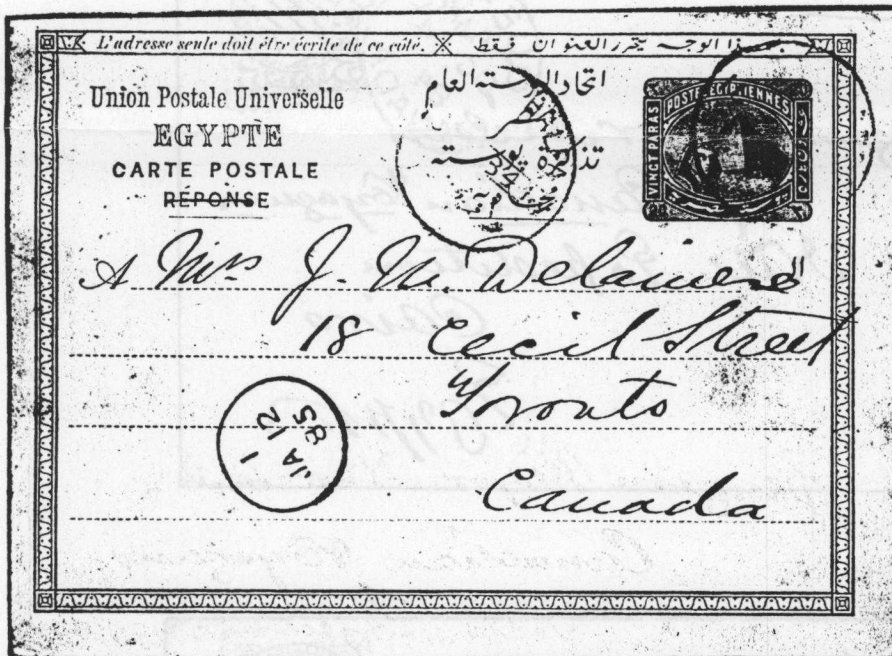
CHAIR/TREAS.: W.J. BAILEY, #5-8191 FRANCIS RD., RICHMOND, BC V6Y 1A5
EDITOR: D. MARIO, BOX 342, SASKATOON, SK S7K 3L3



Another cover to Neilson follows dated December 4, 1884 from Quebec via London (December 15) and Cairo (December 23). It bears the endorsement "To be forwarded" and "Hospital Tangour". This cover sold for £2600 (C\$5847.14) without the buyer's fee.



Here is an interesting 20 paras U.P.U. stationery (response) card from Wadi-Halfa to Canada via London (December 29), with a Toronto Carrier's marking dated January 12, 1885 (31 days in transit). It was sent from Lt.-Col. Frederick Charles Denison, Commanding Officer of the Canadian Voyageurs Contingent. Denison was present at the action at Kirbeken and served previously during the Fenian Raids (in 1866, and in 1870 he was Orderly Officer to Col. Garnet Wolseley in the Red River Expedition). From 1872-1876 he commanded the Governor General's Bodyguard in Ontario. Denison died on April 15, 1896. The card sold, before the 15% fee, for £1900 (C\$4272.91).



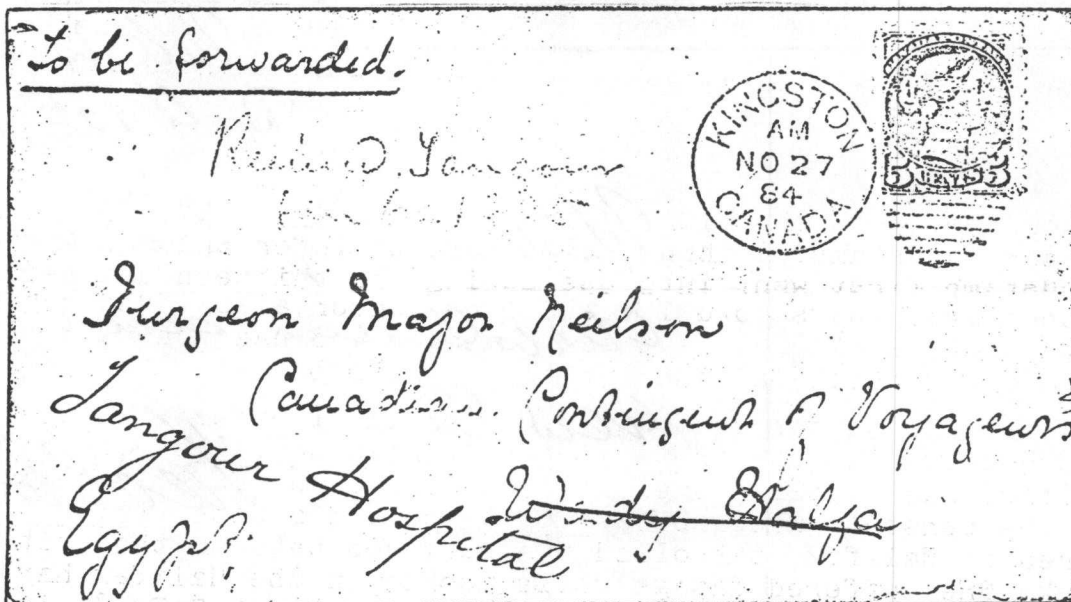
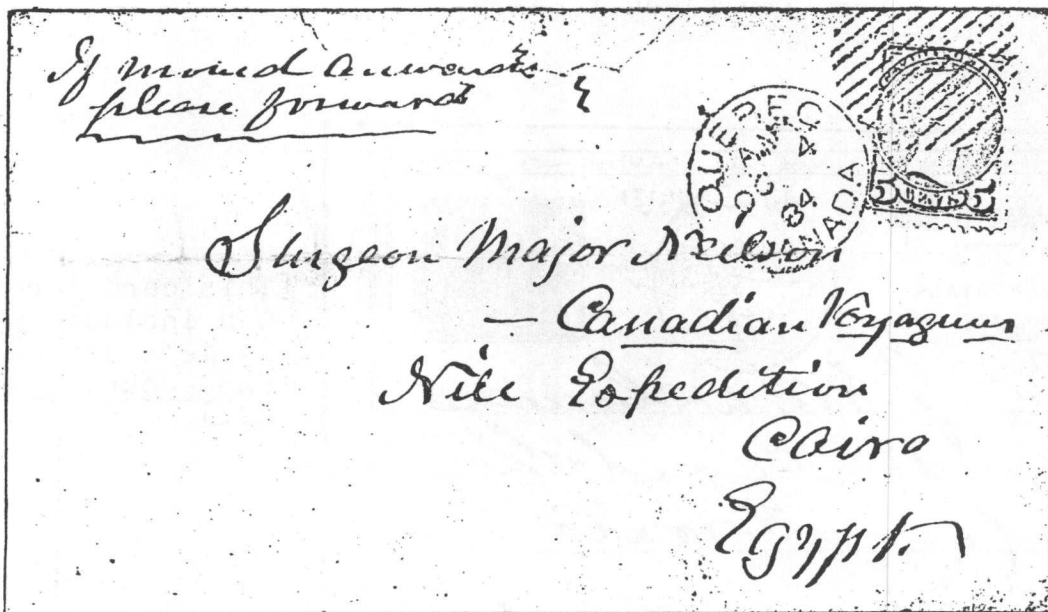
[This card (front only) was included within C. Verge's article in the PHSC Journal 99, p.6. Ed.]

*File Expedition
 Dall 12th Dec/84*

*Wishing you a every
 Christmas and a happy
 New Year. W
 F. C. Denison*

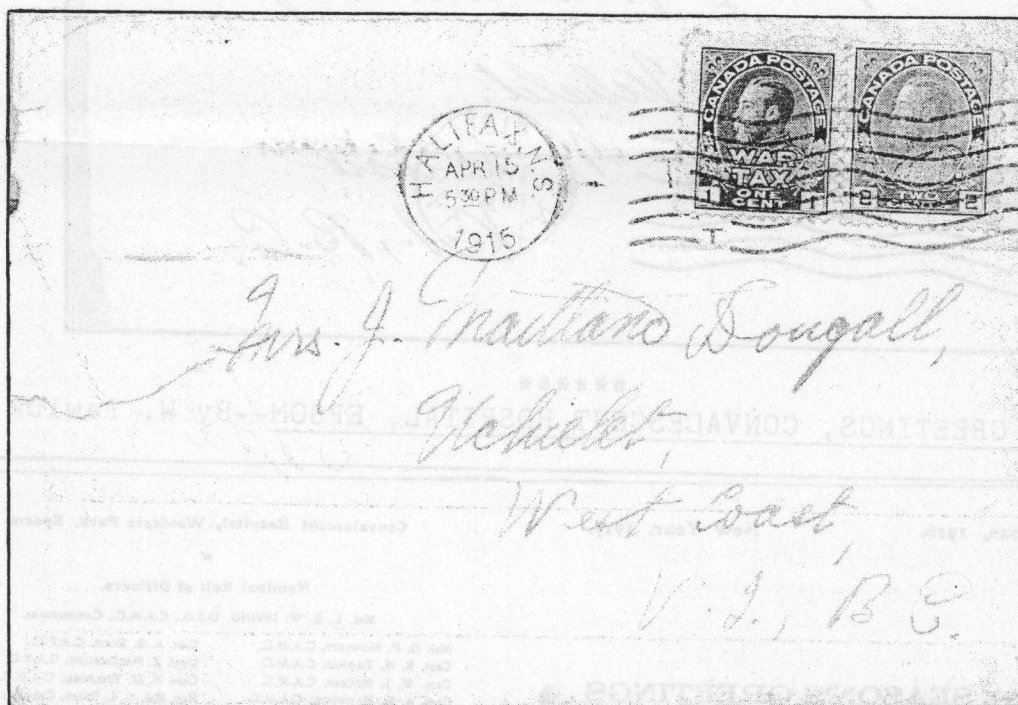
NILE CONTINGENT-CONTINUED--By J.C. Campbell

[Colin previously sent along these two illustrations which go well with the preceding piece. He notes that they are from Ed Richardson's 1968 BNAPEX Monograph #3. The top cover is now in the Brigham Collection (as illustrated within the PHSC Journal 99 and Charles Verge's article previously mentioned in the last issue, Newsletter No.152, p.577).Ed.]



THE FIRST RCN CENSOR HANDSTAMP?--By C.D. Sayles

This pair of covers from the same writer may indicate that the Royal Canadian Navy censor handstamp first appeared during the last two weeks of April 1915. I know of no earlier usage. The first cover was mailed from a Midshipman on HMCS Niobe on April 15, 1915, and has no censor markings on the envelope nor on the enclosed letter. The letter starts: "Being now aboard ship & subject to censor, I can neither put in ship or date".



The second cover which follows was mailed on April 28, 1915 and bears the censor handstamp. I think it is safe to infer that this R.C.N. censor handstamp first went into use during the thirteen day period between the first and second letters. The censor also added a handstamp with his initials "ASD". Is there a member who has the Navy List for 1915 and could supply a name for those initials?

Fortunately for us the censorship system was ineffective at this early date; the back flap has "HMCS Niobe" printed on it and the Halifax Post Office has supplied the date [and location! Ed.] This allows us to tie the censor handstamp to HMCS Niobe and a date. [HMCS Niobe, stationed in Halifax, patrolled the sealanes between that city and New York. She suffered damage while moored in the Halifax harbour from the great Halifax Explosion of December 6, 1917.Ed.]

[Cont'd.]



SEASON'S GREETINGS, CONVALESCENT HOSPITAL, EPSOM--By W. Pawluk

Xmas, 1916. New Year, 1917.

Convalescent Hospital, Woodcote Park, Epsom.

Nominal Roll of Officers.

Maj. G. P. HOWLETT, C.A.M.C.	Capt. A. B. DUCK, C.A.P.C.
Capt. R. H. THOMAS, C.A.M.C.	Lieut. A. MACLACHLAN, C.A.P.C.
Capt. W. J. McLEAN, C.A.M.C.	Capt. N. G. TRELFORD, C.A.D.C.
Capt. A. K. HAYWOOD, C.A.M.C.	Hon. Maj. G. L. STARR, Canadian Chaplain.
Capt. C. K. DOWSON, C.A.M.C.	Hon. Capt. W. F. McCONNELL, Canadian Chaplain.
Capt. J. W. BRIEN, C.A.M.C.	Hon. Capt. R. C. MACGILLIVRAY, Canadian Chaplain.
Capt. R. GOULDEN, C.A.M.C.	Maj. M. B. STACKY, 5th "Queen's."
Capt. C. C. RICHARDSON, C.A.M.C.	Capt. R. HEYMANN, 2nd Worcesters.
Capt. M. G. BROWN, C.A.M.C.	Capt. W. J. F. SYMONS, R.A.M.C.
Capt. R. F. G. PENNYFATHER, C.A.M.C.	Capt. F. W. ROWLAND, R.A.M.C.
Capt. H. G. CRAIG, C.A.M.C.	Capt. W. L. HAY, R.A.M.C.
Capt. C. A. DAVIES, C.A.M.C.	Capt. H. SAUNDERS, R.A.M.C.
Capt. H. W. BYERS, C.A.M.C.	Capt. M. V. SOUTHEY, A.A.M.C.
Capt. S. O. ROGERS, C.A.M.C.	Capt. W. H. TOPPT, A.A.M.C.
Capt. J. F. MCKINLEY, C.A.M.C.	
Capt. J. HUTCHESON, C.A.M.C.	
Capt. F. F. DUNHAM, C.A.M.C.	

THE SEASON'S GREETINGS
FROM
MAJOR L. E. W. IRVING, D.S.O.,
AND OFFICERS

Military Convalescent Hospital,
Epsom, Surrey.



CONVALESCENT HOSPITAL,
WOODCOTE PARK,
EPSOM.

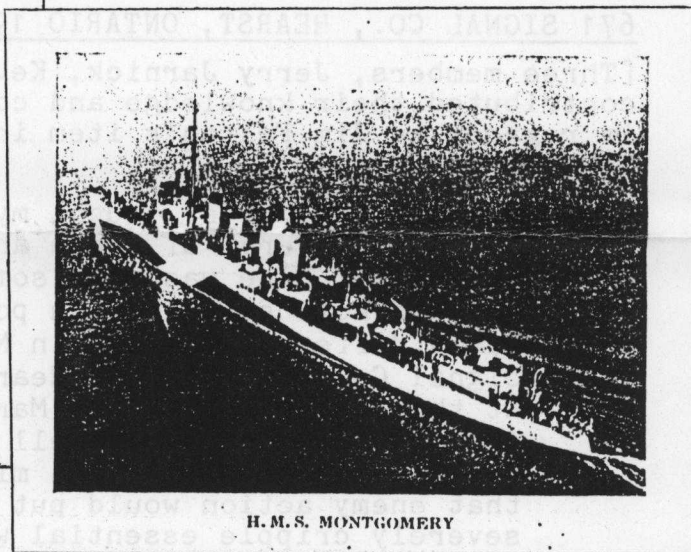
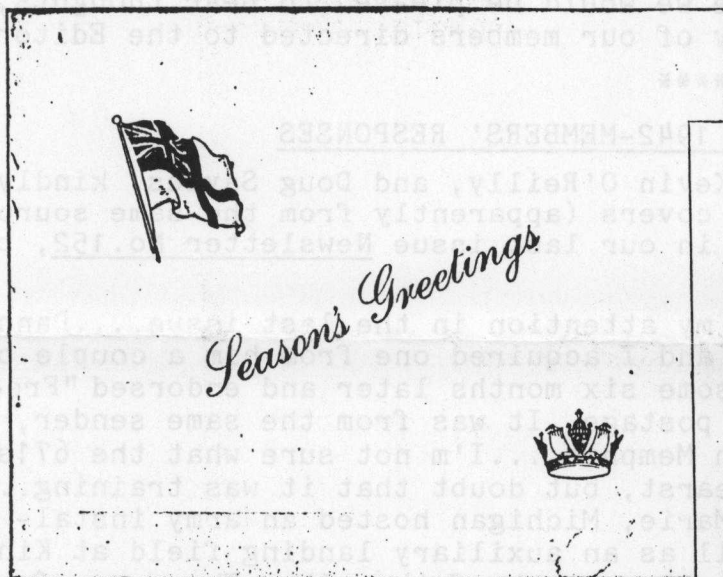
[reduced]

With best wishes
for the holidays
and the new year

CHRISTMAS 1940: H.M.S. MONTGOMERY AT HALIFAX?--By W. Whitehouse

The naval Christmas card illustrated herewith was sent to me by Dave Hanes. My first thought was that this card was from one of the fifty U.S. Destroyers (four-stackers) traded to England for British bases in September 1940 (presumably at Halifax).

[reduced to 75%]



H.M.S. MONTGOMERY

Wishing you a Merry Christmas

and a

Happy New Year.

From [unclear]

The card itself is one of the early types used by R.C.N. ships, while the photo inside represents a four-stacker in the Western Approaches camouflage of light blue panels on white, with the name HMS Montgomery (obviously, one would think, of the Royal Navy).

A check of Jane's Fighting Ships 1944-1945 indicates no ship by that name in the Royal Navy. There is, however, a USS Montgomery; a flush deck four-stacker, built in 1918 and converted to a minelayer in 1921. It was sunk in the South Pacific on October 17, 1944.

Bill Robinson was kind enough to check all reference material that was available in the Vancouver Public Library; coming up with the same results as listed above.

These cards were expensive compared to the regular Christmas cards that could be purchased ashore. There was a minimum number of these service cards that had to be ordered and they were to be paid for in advance.

With this in mind, who was responsible for the ordering and purchase of a card representing a non-existing ship? Could it have been arranged by the Royal Navy's headquarters in Halifax (HMS Seaborn and later re-

[Cont'd.]

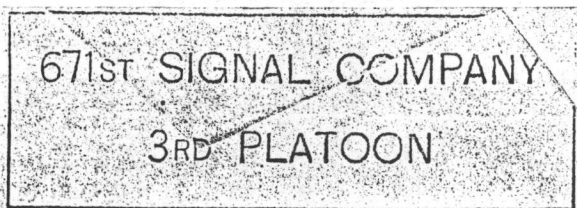
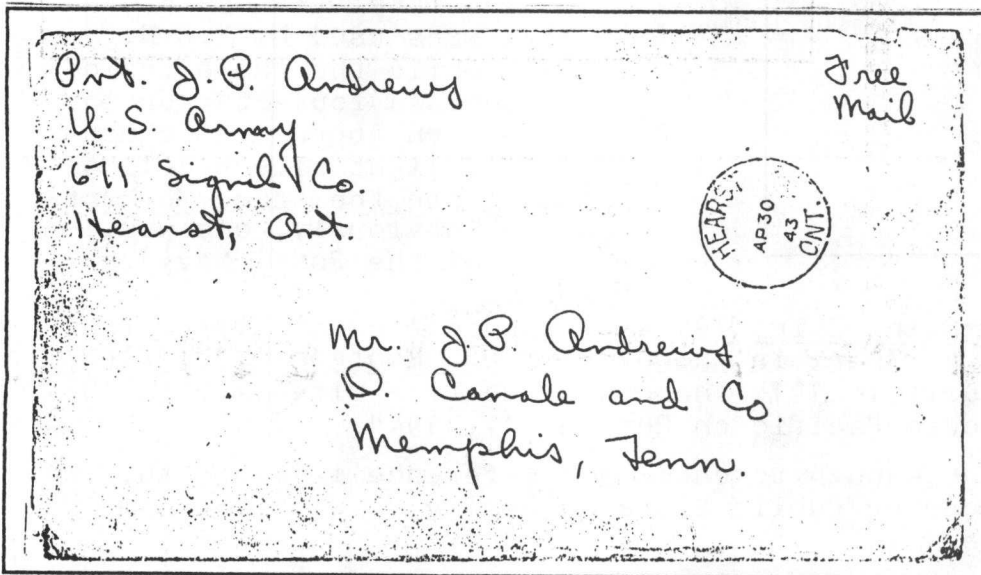
named HMS Canada) to temporarily hide from the enemy the names and numbers of the new ships in operation after the transfer in September 1940? In other words, one card was issued for all fifty ships for Christmas 1940.

Obviously the destination of the majority of these cards would have been the families in England, thus it would be interesting to hear from any member in the U.K. Of course we would be pleased to hear thoughts, or related information, from any of our members directed to the Editor.

671 SIGNAL CO., HEARST, ONTARIO 1942-MEMBERS' RESPONSES

[Three members, Jerry Jarnick, Kevin O'Reilly, and Doug Sayles, kindly contributed their knowledge and covers (apparently from the same source) in regards to Jim Felton's item in our last issue Newsletter No.152, p. 580. Jerry wrote:

"Jim Felton's cover caught my attention in the last issue....Dann Mayo had several of these and I acquired one from him a couple of years ago. Mine was sent some six months later and endorsed "Free" and did not bear Canadian postage. It was from the same sender, but a different address in Memphis....I'm not sure what the 671st Signal Co. was doing in Hearst, but doubt that it was training.... At this time, Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan hosted an army installation, Fort Brady, as well as an auxiliary landing field at Kinross, some ten to fifteen miles south of the city. There was fear that enemy action would put the Soo Locks out of commission and severely cripple essential war shipping on the Great Lakes. I suspect that the 671st played some role in communications support and relay in furtherance of this mission."



Above: Jerry's April 30/43 example-reduced. Left: the full-size orderly room hand-stamp.

A small communications unit of the U. S. Army, the 3rd Platoon of the 371st Signal Company, was based at Hearst, in Northern Ontario. Army Post Offices were not established for these small units and they had to depend on civilian mails.

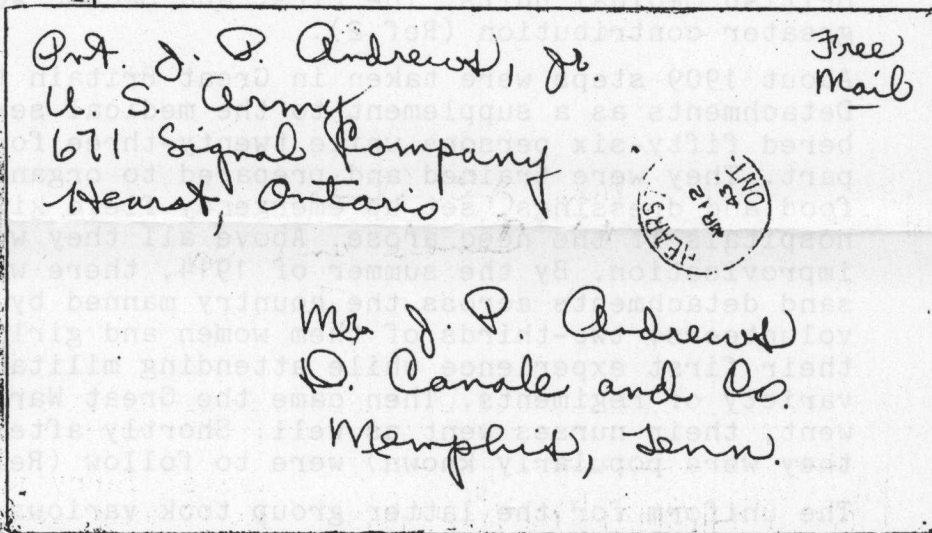
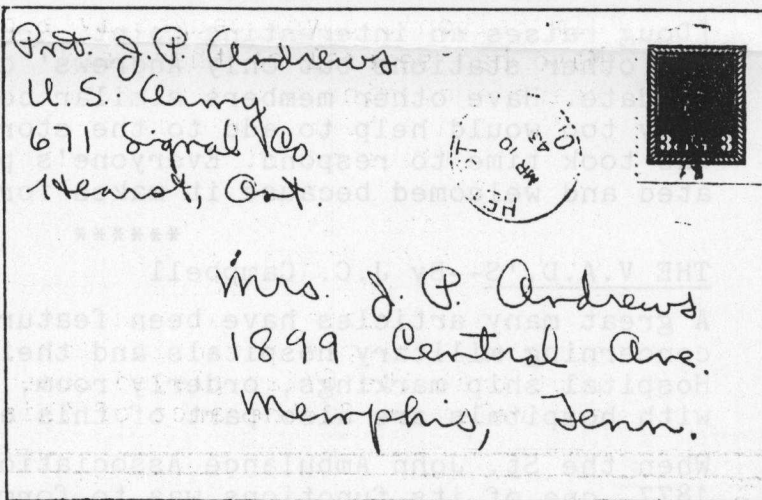
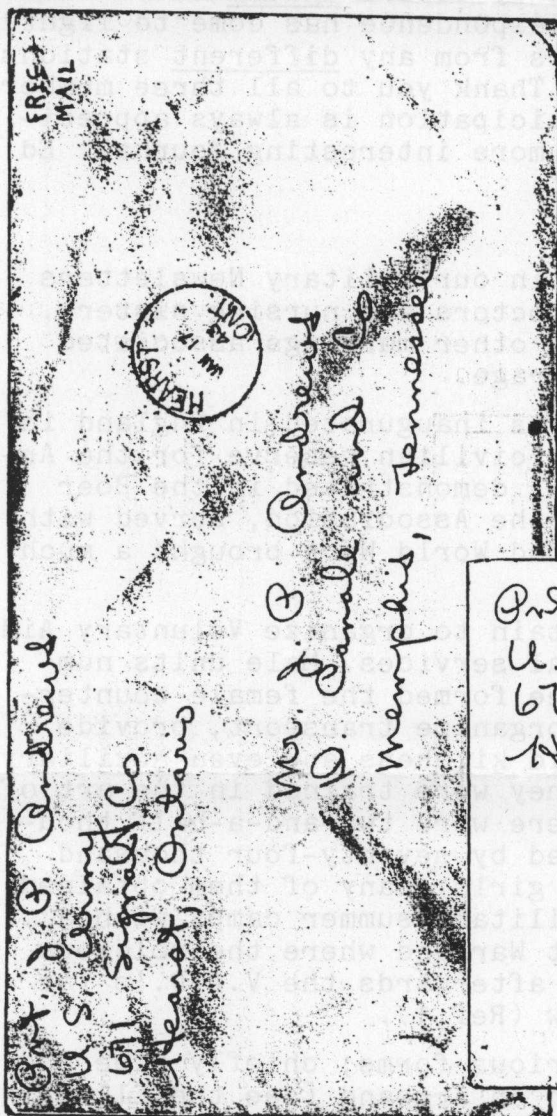
A Private assigned to that unit wrote this letter. The use of the Free frank is irregular. Postage should have been paid at the normal Canadian first class rate of 4¢. It appears that the Canadian post office honored the wartime franking privilege and did not try to attempt to collect the postage due.

[Cont'd.]

Kevin sent along three covers from Pte. Andrews dated January 17 (endorsed "FREE/MAIL"), March 10 (with a 3¢ King George VI War Issue stamp) and a March 12, 1943 also endorsed "Free/Mail". All bear similar orderly room markings on their reverse as Jerry's example. Kevin wrote:

"Canada agreed to let the U.S. build five radar stations in Northern Ontario on August 7, 1942. These were located at Kapuskasing, Cochrane, Hearst, Armstrong, and Nakina. They provided a screen across Northern Ontario to protect Sault Ste. Marie and its strategic canals. The stations were deactivated in November 1943. I presume that Jim's cover and mine are from the station at Hearst."

Kevin's covers are illustrated below (also reduced at 74%).



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Doug sent along the following contribution:

"Jim Felton's 671 Signal Co. cover is very nice indeed. C.P. Stacey, in Six Years of War, tells us how this cover came to be. The canals at Sault Ste. Marie carried more tonnage than the Suez and Panama Canals combined. The Americans feared that they were vulnerable to an air attack which (they thought) could be launched from Hudson Bay. In addition to establishing AA artillery at the canal, the Americans established radar units in Northern Ontario to cover the canal in the fall of 1942. The 671 Signals Co. was headquartered in Kapuskasing, and had subordinate stations at Armstrong, Nakina, Hearst, and Cochrane. I expect 671 Signal Co. covers could exist from any of these stations and would be very scarce and certainly worth searching for. I wonder how Pte. Andrews from Tennessee enjoyed a Northern Ontario winter?"

[Doug raises an interesting point. Certainly covers should exist from the other stations but only Andrews' correspondence has come to light to date. Have other members similar covers from any different stations? They too would help to add to the story. Thank you to all three members who took time to respond. Everyone's participation is always appreciated and welcomed because it makes for a more interesting journal. Ed.]

THE V.A.D.'S--By J.C. Campbell

A great many articles have been featured in our Military Newsletters concerning military hospitals and their doctors and nursing sisters. Hospital ship markings, orderly room, and other markings associated with hospitals are also part of this coverage.

When the St. John Ambulance Association was inaugurated in England in 1877, one of its functions was to form a "civilian reserve for the Army Medical Department". This role was well demonstrated in the Boer War when more than 2,000 men, trained by the Association, served with British medical units. The First and Second World Wars brought a much greater contribution (Ref.2).

About 1909 steps were taken in Great Britain to organize Voluntary Aid Detachments as a supplement to the medical services. Male units numbered fifty-six persons while twenty-three formed the female counterpart. They were trained and prepared to organize transport, provide food and dressings, set up emergency field kitchens and even auxiliary hospitals if the need arose. Above all they were trained in the art of improvisation. By the summer of 1914, there were two-and-a-half thousand detachments across the country manned by seventy-four thousand volunteers; two-thirds of them women and girls. Many of them obtained their first experience while attending military summer camps with a variety of regiments. Then came the Great War and where the soldiers went, their nurses went as well. Shortly afterwards the V.A.D.'s (as they were popularly known) were to follow (Ref.1).

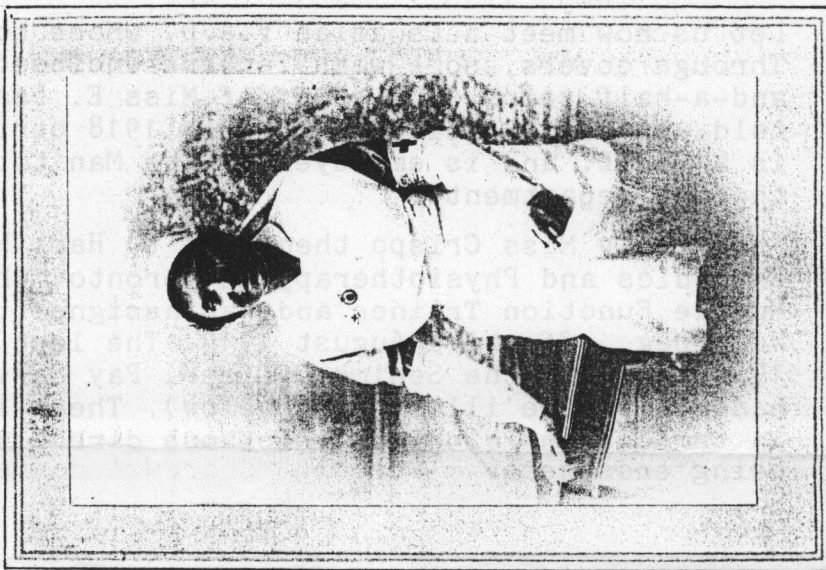
The uniform for the latter group took various forms; chiefly blue and white with a red cross on the front or on an armband [see the illustrations which follow on p.595. Ed.] As previously noted, V.A.D.'s' duties were "all embracing"; involving assistance in any form to the tasks faced by the trained nursing sisters. The V.A.D.'s served "at home and abroad".

[Cont'd.]

Far left: A V.A.D. reading to a soldier patient.



STAND UP FOR JESUS (4)
STAND up!—stand up for Jesus! The strife will not be long;
 On his day the noise of battle, the next the victor's song.
 To him that overcometh, a crown of life shall be;
 He with the King of Glory shall reign eternally.



Above: The author's aunt Gwen Campbell (1889-1970). A V.A.D. with the Alexandra Park Hospital, Middlesex County, England ca. 1917.

In Canada in March 1914, the task of setting up Voluntary Aid Detachments was given to the St. John Ambulance Association, the St. John Ambulance Brigade, and the Canadian Red Cross Society. The first V.A.D., designated No.1 (Ottawa), was formed in January 1915 under Miss Hazel Todd. In the late summer of 1916, sixty V.A.D.'s embarked on S.S. Gram-pian for overseas service; ten being assigned to hospitals in France, with the remainder staying in England. Others saw service later in Italy, Salonika, and Egypt (Ref.2).

Discipline was quite stiff for the V.A.D.'s and this anecdote by Kathleen Rhodes, V.A.D. Rouen, gives one example:

There was an enormous camp a little distance up the road from our hospital where they had great entertainment talent among the staff, and every now and then we were invited to concerts there--a great treat for us, as we were not allowed to go to any public entertainments in the town of Rouen. When our Matron received an invitation for her staff we had to walk up the road in twos, just like a school crocodile, escorted by a Regular Army Sister. But we had a very sporting one who, when we reached the camp concert hall, turned a blind eye to the row of cavalry subalterns who were all waiting for us with boxes of lovely chocolates. To their great joy--and also to ours--Sister allowed them to sit beside us. (Ref.1)

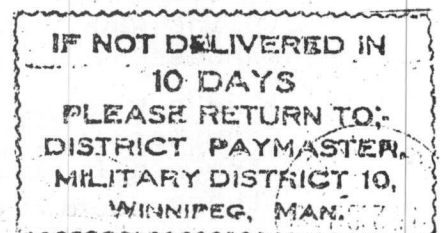
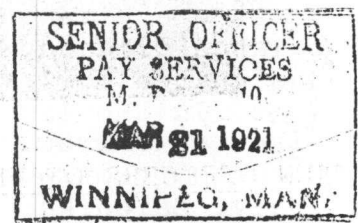
A few numbers will highlight the tremendous task facing the medical staffs in the transporting and treatment of sick and wounded soldiers as the First World War came to an end. The figures relate to the British Forces only and author Lyn Macdonald says the numbers are an "educated guess":

[Cont'd.]

Wounded (Official Figures) 2,289,860
 From France (included in above) 2,261,502
 From Malta, Middle East, Africa 29,000 (Ref.1)

Let us now meet a Canadian V.A.D. whose home was in Winnipeg, Manitoba. Through covers, some with letters enclosed spanning a period of three-and-a-half years, the story of Miss E. Beatrice Crispo can be partially told. An early enclosure of July 1918 certifies that "E. Beatrice Crispo is a V.A.D. and is employed at the Manitoba Military Hospital, Physiotherapy Department".

Presumably Miss Crispo then went to Hart House, Military School of Orthopedics and Physiotherapy in Toronto, where she graduated (84%) as a Muscle Function Trainer and was assigned to Tuxedo Military Hospital in Winnipeg, effective August 1919. The last of the covers, dated March 1922, is from the Senior Officer, Pay Services, M.D.10 (these rectangle handstamps are illustrated below). There is no family name "Crispo" in the current Winnipeg telephone directory so her story for the time being ends here.



Above is a cover to Miss Crispo dated August 9, 1919. Note the corner card "From No. 10 Man. Milt. Hospl.". Enclosed is a letter ordering her to report for duty at No. 10.

Above are some orderly room handstamps associated with some of Miss Crispo's correspondence.

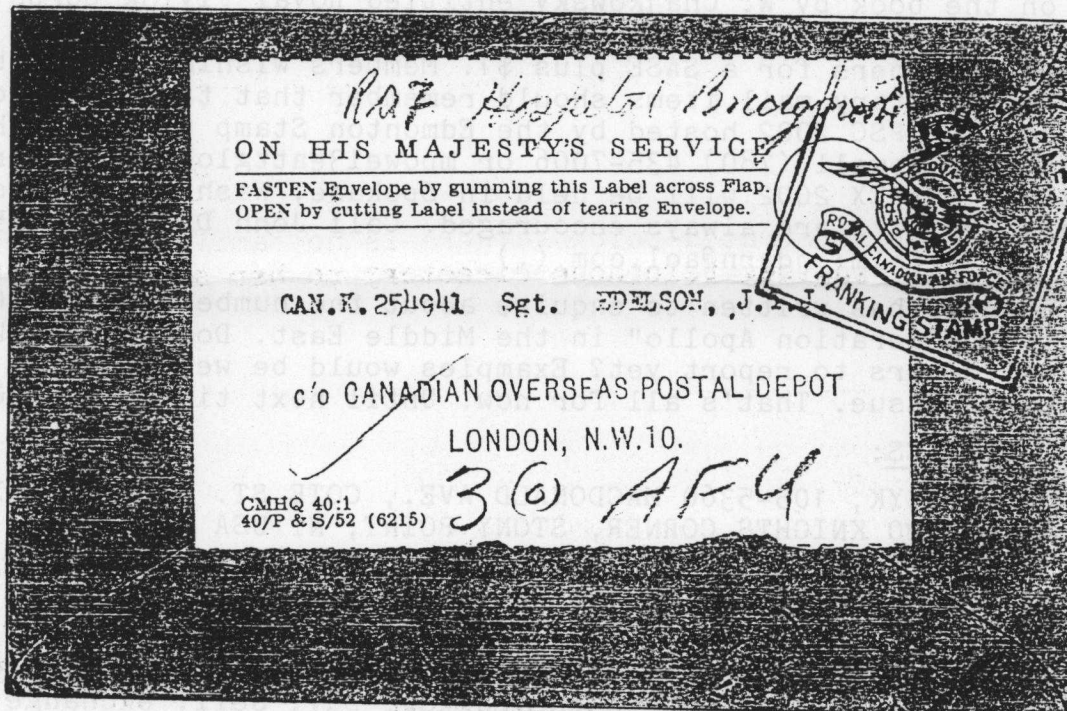
For further reading on the subject the following are highly recommended:

References

1. Macdonald, Lyn. The Roses of No Man's Land (1980).
2. Nicholson, G.W.L. The White Cross in Canada (1967).

RCAF FRANKING STAMP RE-VISITED--By John Wannerton

[Members will recall John's previous sending of these franking stamps in proof form (NL #133, Jan.'98, p.328) and sent in a used version below from FPO 859/23 JU 45 (Canadian B.A.O.R.). One does see them occasionally but not much is known about them. John noted that the bird's tail feathers are more rounded and unlike those on the proofs. The "K-S" is still unknown and more information would be appreciated. Ed.]



NEW OFFICERS OF THE M.P.H.S.--By Alan Warren, Publicity10 JANUARY 2002Military Society Elects Officers

Myron Fox was elected president of the Military Postal History Society (MPHS), moving up from his previous position as vice president. Former director Alfred F. Kugel replaces Fox as vice president for the society. Incumbents re-elected to their previous offices are secretary Robert Kinsley and treasurer Norman Gruenzner. Officers will serve the society 2002-2003.

Newly elected director is Tony Brooks. He joins re-elected board members Leonard Lukens, Harvey Tilles, and Alan Warren. The immediate past president, and also director, is James Boyden.

MPHS will convene at TEXPEX 2002, which will be held April 5-7 in Dallas, Tex. Society members collect all aspects of military mail related to all conflicts dating back to the times of Napoleon and the American Revolutionary War. In the U.S., collectors often focus on mail from the Civil War, the first and second World Wars, and the Korean, Vietnam, and Gulf Wars as well as other hostilities.

Such mail includes soldier/sailors mail, prisoner of war mail, letters to internees, censored mail, covers from or to or within occupied areas, and related material. The society publishes a quarterly journal, the *Military Postal History Society Bulletin*, edited by David Kent. For further information about the society and a membership application, write to MPHS Secretary Robert T. Kinsley, 5410 Fern Loop, West Richland WA 99353-9806 USA.

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Dear CMMSG Members:

HAPPY NEW YEAR from your Group Officers! Here's another newsletter to begin 2002 and with it our best wishes for a happy, healthy, and prosperous upcoming year. There is a lot of business so I'll begin. Mike Street kindly sent along an interesting newspaper article (from The Hamilton Spectator, June 9, 2001) on the Beamsville Flying School during the Great War. Mike noted that Ed Richardson wrote a previous article on a similar subject in TOPICS years ago and the article is based on the book by W. Chajkowsky entitled Royal Flying Corps: Borden to Texas to Beamsville. Although a bit daunting, copies can be sent to interested members for a SASE plus \$1. Members wishing to exhibit their treasured military mail items should remember that time is quickly passing for the RPSC 2002 hosted by the Edmonton Stamp Club, March 22-24. Contact John Powell (780) 435-7006 or mpowel3@attglobal.net for more information. BNAPEX 2002 will be held in Spokane, Washington this fall and military exhibits are always encouraged. Call John D. Arn at (509) 467-5521 or email him: jdarn@aol.com (.)

Jerry Jarnick has written to enquire about the numbers of the CFPO's supporting "Operation Apollo" in the Middle East. Does anyone know? Are there any covers to report yet? Examples would be welcomed for inclusion in a future issue. That's all for now. Until next time, good collecting!

ADDRESS CHANGES:

Z.B. KACZMARCZYK, 105-5360 MACDONALD AVE., COTE ST. LUC, QC H3X 2W3
D. SALOVEY, 320 KNIGHTS CORNER, STONY POINT, NY USA 10980-1653

SMALL ADS

Still only \$1 Canadian per insertion (Canadian mint stamps or equivalent is fine). Copy/payment to the Editor. Buy, sell, exchange!

FOR SALE VIA THE INTERNET: Worldwide covers (strong in war covers). Searchable text lists plus every lot scanned. VISA/Mastercard welcome. Contact L.D. Mayo at: <http://www.mayoph.com> (7/7)

FOR SALE: Canadian military and civil censored covers. I can supply priced photocopies or scans via the Internet at no obligation. John Frith, Sudbury Stamps, Box 286, Copper Cliff, ON POM 1N0 or email: johnfrith.sudburystamps@sympatico.ca (6/10)

WANTED: Covers with unit handstamp and FPO dated 1940 for the 48th Highlanders. First Division egs. from 1940 especially desired. L.G. Clinton, 1329 Elevator Rd., Saskatoon, SK S7M 3X3 (1/1)

WANTED: Letters to/from William Maitland-Dougall in period 1910-1917. Send photocopy/price required to C.D. Sayles, 25 Howard Blvd., Waterdown, ON LOR 2H4 or email: saylesd@aecl.ca (1/10)

FOR SALE: Debort MPO Nova Scotia machine cancels dated November 5, 1940-March 11, 1941. Nice strikes all on postcards @ \$3 each. I have a number of these so try your luck! SAE please outside of Canada. J.C. Campbell, #303-1260 Raymer Ave., Kelowna, BC V1W 3S8 (1/3)

Next issue: more on the Llandoverly Castle; a returned P.O.W. cover; a few Great War French hospital cachets; Canada's "Hush Hush" Army; the U.S. Naval Air Station in 1918 Halifax; and much more!
