



Canadian Military Mail Study Group

NEWSLETTER

AUGUST 2002

NEWSLETTER NO. 156
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POSTE RESTANTE FOR TROOPS PROCEEDING OVERSEAS-- By C.D. Sayles (c) 2002

A major problem for the Canadian Postal Corps throughout the Second World War was the improper and imprecise addressing of mail. Such letters put a real and very unwelcome strain on the CPC Directory Services. To some extent, the problem was self-inflicted; many service people, particularly those headed overseas, were not advised to which unit they would be posted on arrival and were therefore unable to provide a new address to correspondents. In an attempt to overcome at least the part of the problem where they had control, the CPC established a Poste Restante scheme for servicemen headed overseas.

Canadian Army Routine Order 3675 of September 30, 1943 gives the details. The service was intended for personnel proceeding overseas who did not know what unit they would be posted to on arrival. This included members of advance parties and those proceeding overseas on courses. The Order required that "...such personnel are made conversant with the Poste Restante service prior to proceeding on embarkation leave in order that they may advise their correspondents...". The style of addressing required by the Routine Order was as follows:

Regimental number, /Rank and Name, /Service or Unit, /C/o Poste Restante, /Canadian Postal Corps Headquarters, /Canadian Army Overseas.

Upon arrival overseas, after he had been posted to a unit, the soldier was to inform the Poste Restante service of his new address, and then all accumulated mail would be forwarded to him. Mail not applied for after sixty days was returned to the sender. The Routine Order further directed that "...a direction to this Routine Order is included in...advice of movement orders for overseas."

FIG.1: The two Poste Restante markings I have seen.

Poste Restante,
Canadian Postal Corps,
Canadian Army Overseas.



[Cont'd.]

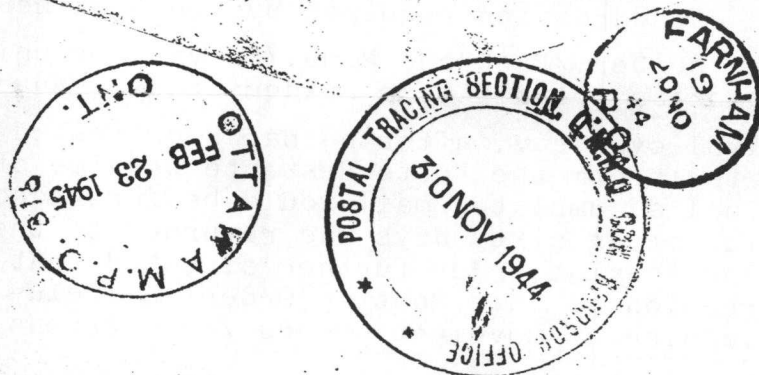
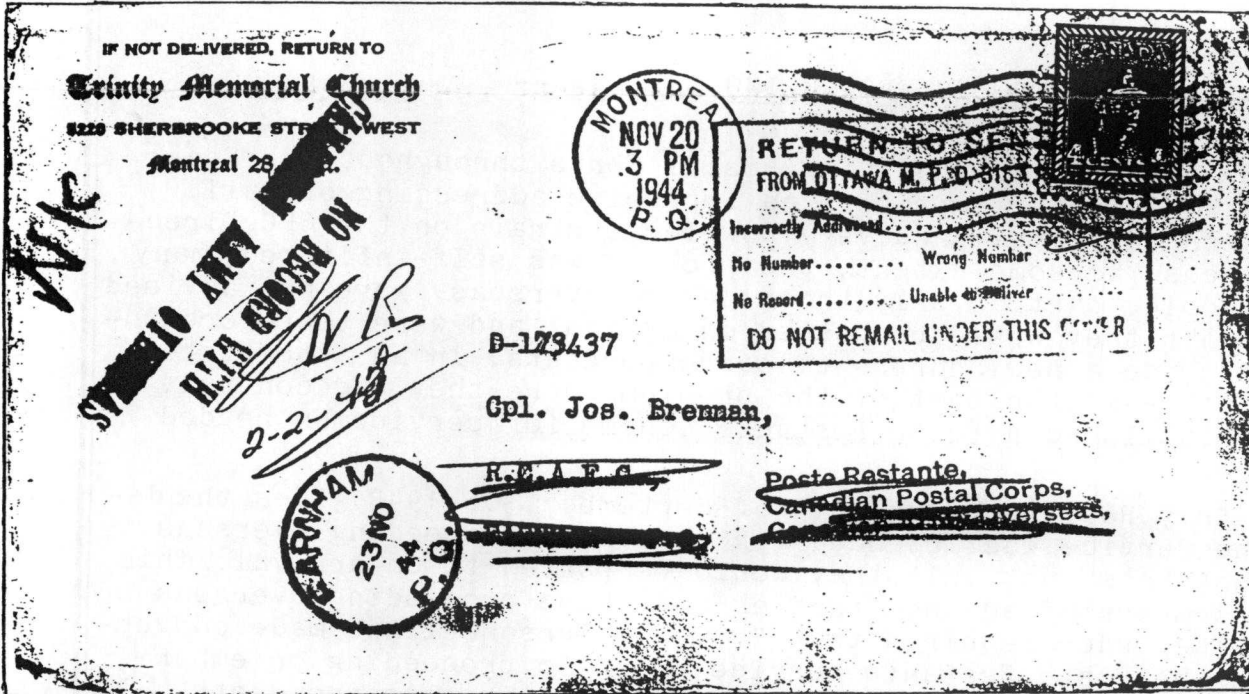
CHAIR/TREAS.: W.J. BAILEY, #5-8191 FRANCIS RD., RICHMOND, BC V6Y 1A5
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In spite of the Army Routine Order, I don't think that the Poste Restante Service was popular or much used. Covers bearing the handstamps illustrated in FIG.1 are not common, and I have yet to see a letter addressed as above to use the service.

I would guess that the circular date stamp hammer illustrated in FIG.1 was made up to help the CPC staff keep track of when the sixty day holding period had passed, at which time the letter was to be returned to sender.

FIG.2 illustrates how the straight-line handstamp was used, and also shows the sixty day limit for holding mail:



HERE IS A COVER ADDRESSED A SOLDIER AT FARNHAM CAMP. THE LETTER ARRIVED AT FARNHAM 20 NOV 44, BUT THE ADDRESSEE HAD DEPARTED FOR THE UK, AND SO IT WAS FORWARDED ON 23 NOV 44 TO COPD IN LONDON. THE POSTAL TRACING SECTION THERE RECEIVED THE LETTER ON 30 NOV 44. I WOULD GUESS THAT THE ADDRESSEE'S LOCATION WAS UNKNOWN, AND SO THE POSTAL TRACING SECTION APPLIED THE 3 LINE "POSTE RESTANTE" HANDSTAMP, AND SENT IT OFF TO THAT SECTION. THE POSTE RESTANTE SERVICE ONLY HELD LETTERS FOR 60 DAYS, AFTER WHICH THEY WERE RETURNED TO SENDER. ACCORDINGLY, THE MANUSCRIPT "NR" (No Record) WAS APPLIED ON 2 FEB 45, AND ALSO THE 2 LINE "NO RECORD WITH / CANADIAN ARMY OVERSEAS" HANDSTAMP. THE LETTER WAS RETURNED TO THE SENDER VIA MPO 318 WHICH APPLIED ITS CDS RECEIVER AND ITS RTS BOX STAMP ON 23 FEB 45.

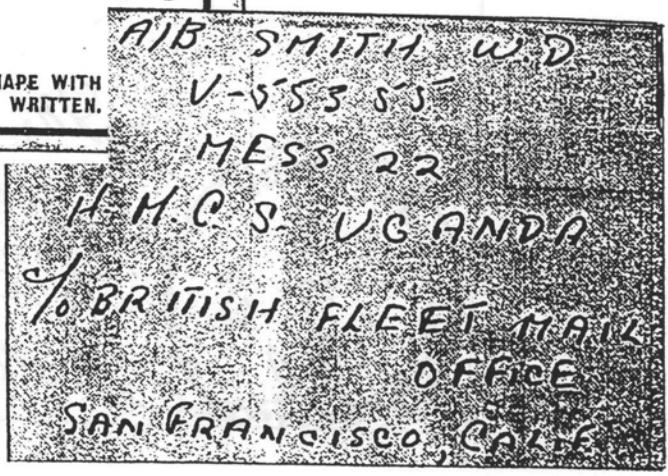
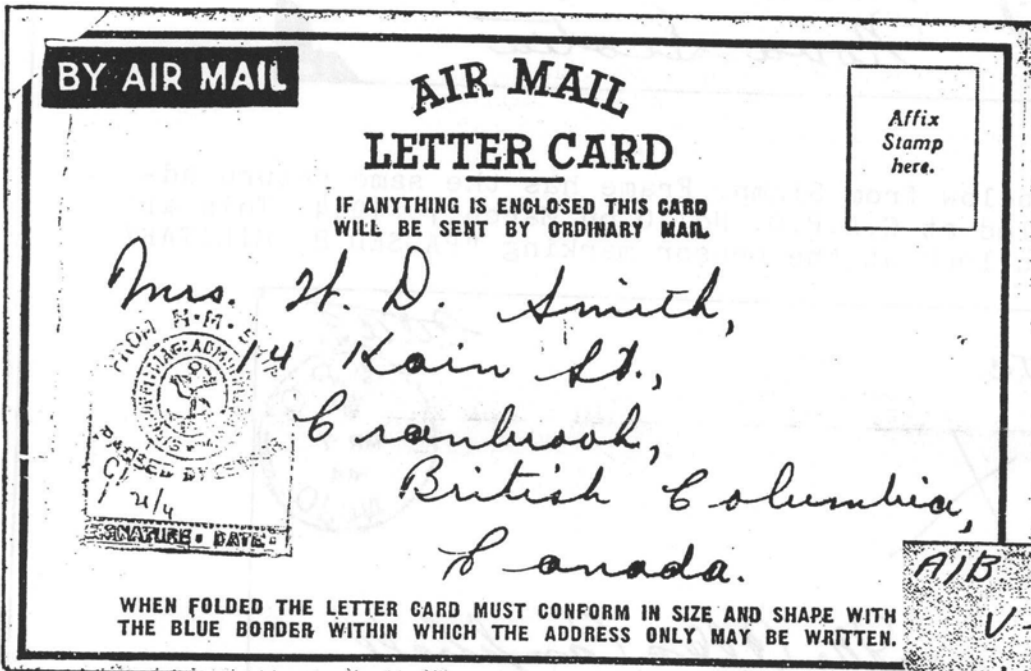
[Cont'd.]

It appears that the Postal Tracing Section applied the handstamp when they had no address for forwarding purposes (and perhaps no record at all). The handstamp was used to send the letter to the Poste Restante service in the hope that the addressee might contact the CPC, and apply for accumulated mail. Since the Tracing Section had already applied their date stamp, there was no need in this case for the Poste Restante dater shown above to be applied. Note the manuscript "N.R./2-2-45" on the front of the cover. If the letter was received by the Poste Restante section the day after the Tracing Section handled it (a reasonable assumption I think), then February 2, 1945 was the sixtieth day since the letter had been received. The CPC still had NR (no record) of the addressee and so returned the letter to MPO 318 in Ottawa.

This service appears to be very useful to any serviceman proceeding overseas, and it is a mystery to me why it was so little used. Do any of the Study Group members have the answer? Can any of the members provide additional examples or other markings?

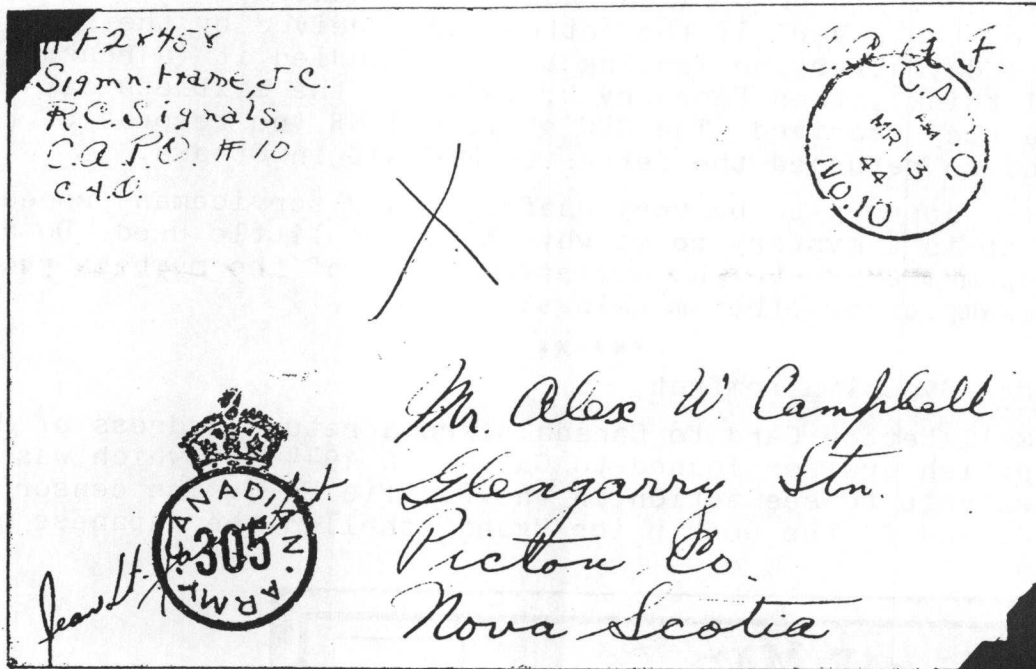
HMCS UGANDA--By Colin Pomfret

This Air Mail Letter Card to Canada bears a return address of HMCS Uganda [the British cruiser loaned to Canada in 1944 and which was the only Canadian warship to see action in the Pacific.Ed.]. The censor stamp is dated 21/4, and in the week prior Uganda shelled the Japanese airfields on Formosa.

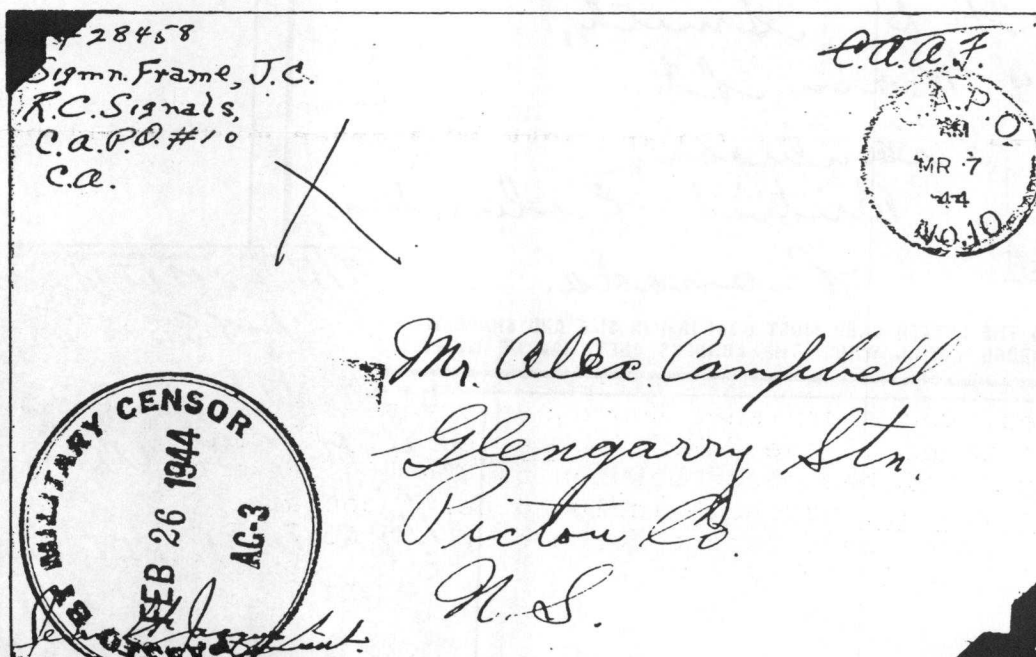


"CROWN OVER CIRCLE UPDATE"/LABRADOR'S AC-3--By Doug Hannan

This is a new report for No. 305 cancelled March 13, 1944 at C.A.P.O. No.10 in Goose Bay, Labrador. The cover is from Signalman J.C. Frame, R.C. Signals, C.A.P.O. #10, Canadian Army Overseas.

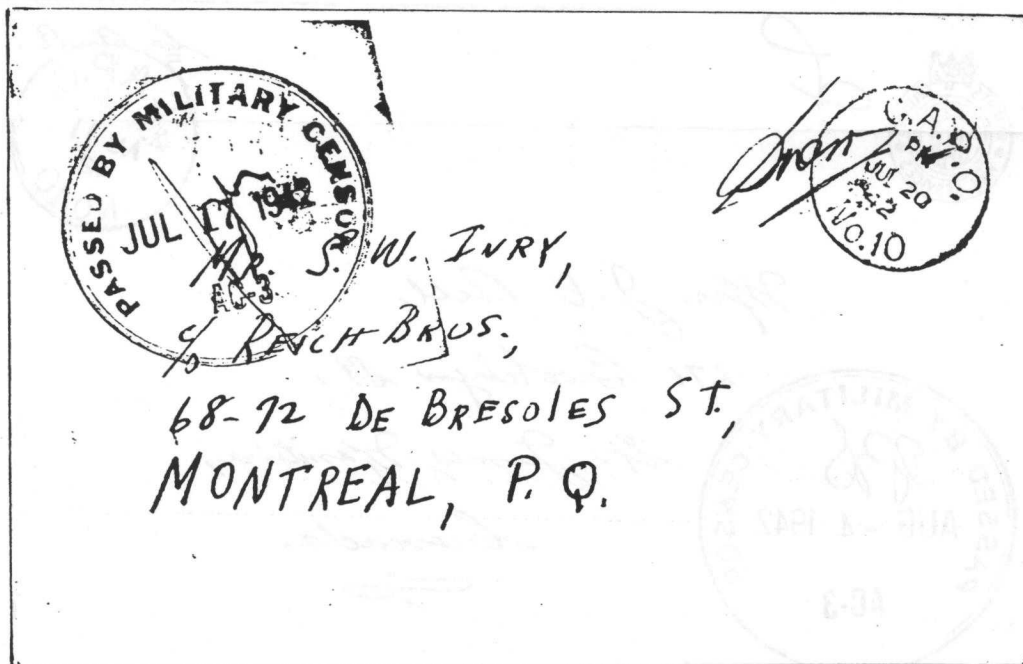


The companion cover below from Signalman Frame has the same return address and was cancelled at C.A.P.O. No.10 on March 7, 1944. This all makes sense until you look at the censor marking "PASSED BY MILITARY



CENSOR/FEB 26 1944/AC-3". This is some eight days before the C.A.P.O. No.10 cancel which would make one believe that Sigmn. Frame was stationed somewhere other than at C.A.P.O. No.10.

I will illustrate a cover and another AC-3 censor below. It was dated at C.A.P.O. No.10 on July 20, 1942 and was censored on July 17, 1942. This cover is from Capt. G.W. Meyers of the 108th Coastal Battery R.C.A. The Battery was stationed at Rigolet on Hamilton Inlet from May 18, 1942 until October 3, 1944. The AC-3 is the third in a series of markings used in Labrador in early 1942.



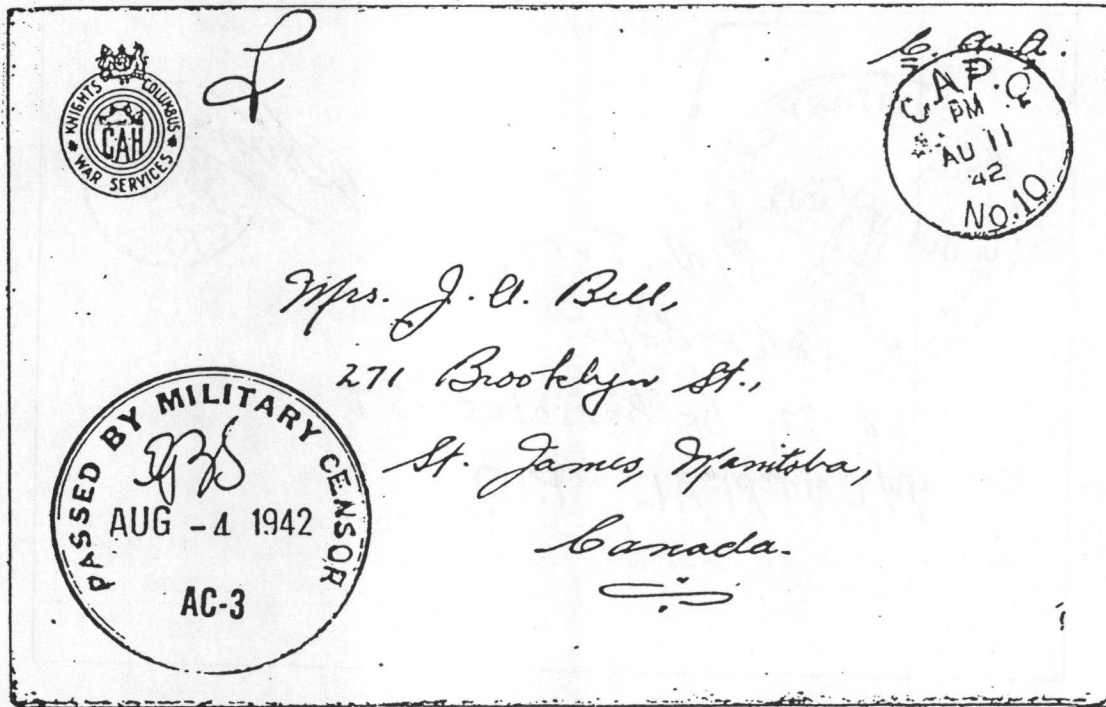
The above information leaves me with the following questions: (1) The 1942 AC-3 cover was thought to originate from Rigolet because the 108th was stationed there for a time. The time between markings would suggest this could be correct; (2) The 1944 AC-3 cover could still be from Rigolet as I have never seen a report of another AC-3 marking [other than that which Doug contributed shown later.Ed.]. The Royal Canadian Signals were in Newfoundland and Labrador from 1941-1946; (3) If the 1944 AC-3 cover is from Rigolet, would it then be possible that the "Crown over Circle #305" could also be from Rigolet or did Sigmn. Frame transfer during that short period of a week? Opinions of other members would be most welcomed.

[As noted, Doug furnished two other covers--actually the same cover--from the pages of the CMMSG Newsletter (p.314) and notes that the reference pages related occur between pp.374-400. Part of the cover's previous provenance may have included being contained with John Frith's original study on Canada's Force W and Force G. Entries, for perspective, will be included even though somewhat abbreviated.Ed.]

[Cont'd.]

LABRADOR ARMY CENSOR AC 3

We have heard about various C.A.P.O. No. 10 censors in previous newsletters (see Index). Now a new report has come in as per the photostat. The explanation put forward on this scarce item is that the unit involved, the 108th Coast Battery, R.C.A., was at Rigolet near the entrance to Hamilton Inlet only during the summer months. On freeze-up the unit returned to headquarters at Goose Bay. Was AC 3 used only away from base? The time difference between censoring on August 4, 1942 and the C.A.P.O. No. 10 cancellation on August 11 at Goose Bay adds credence to this.



[Newsletter 52 (March 1983), p.2]

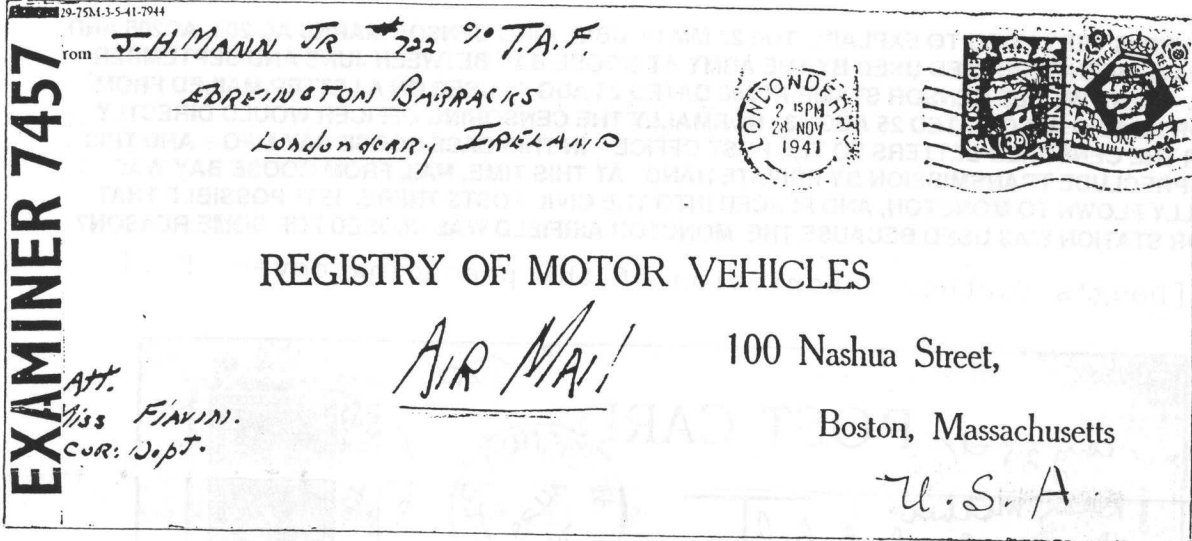
John Frith remarked: "Although postmarked from C.A.P.O. #10 in Goose Bay, the return address on the back of this cover indicates it was mailed from a Gunner in the 108th Coast Battery, R.C.A. This unit was stationed at Rigolet, which was located at the mouth of Hamilton Inlet, 100 miles by water from Goose Bay. As Rigolet was normally only serviced by a supply boat from Goose Bay on a weekly basis, this would explain the delay of a week from the date of censoring of the cover to the date of arrival at the post office in Goose Bay".

TRANS-ATLANTIC FERRY?--By Colin Pomfret

"I picked up this cover on the weekend [illustration on next page.Ed.] because of the "T.A.F.". I think that the cover may originate with the Trans-Atlantic Ferry but I have no knowledge of this command/unit. Perhaps members could contribute their expertise and send in details related to the "T.A.F." [the illustration has been reduced to 75%. Any comments? Ed.]

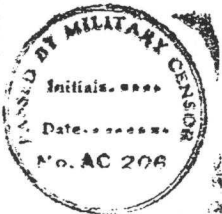
[Cont'd.]

*Capt. G. W. MYERS
108th Coast Battery
Canadian Army Labrador*

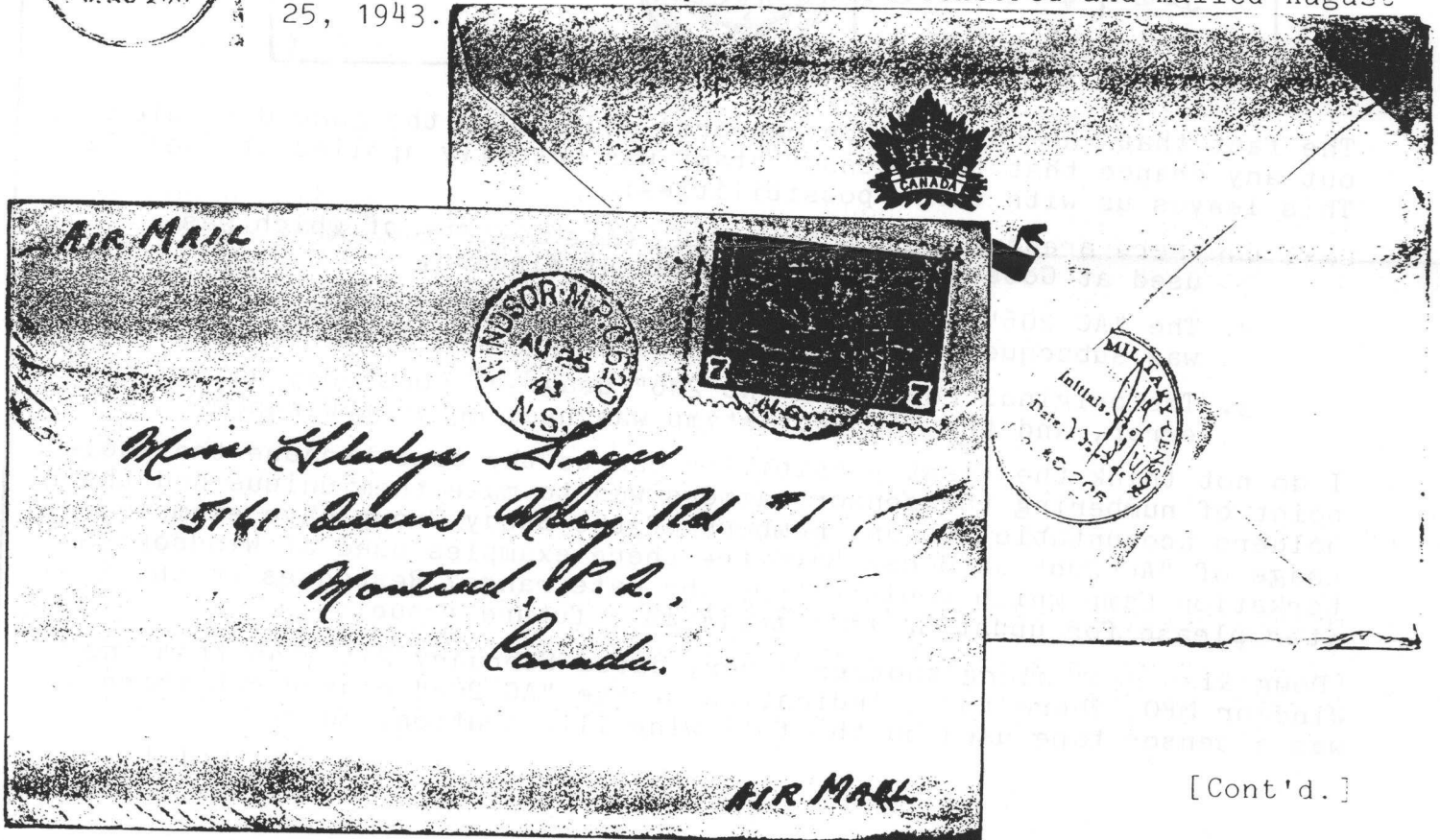


GOOSE BAY CENSOR??--By C.D. Sayles (c) 2002

Newsletter #60 contained "The Canadian Army in Labrador, 1942-1946" which illustrated the censor markings used by the Canadian Army at Goose Bay. Among these was the 27mm double-ring stamp "AC 206" illustrated below. The article stated that usage at Goose Bay had been seen in June and December of 1942, and that numbers "AC 203", "AC 205", and "AC 206" are known.



The two examples of the "AC 206" censor stamp illustrated below are both on mail posted at MPO 620--the Windsor, Nova Scotia embarkation camp. Both were censored and mailed August 25, 1943.

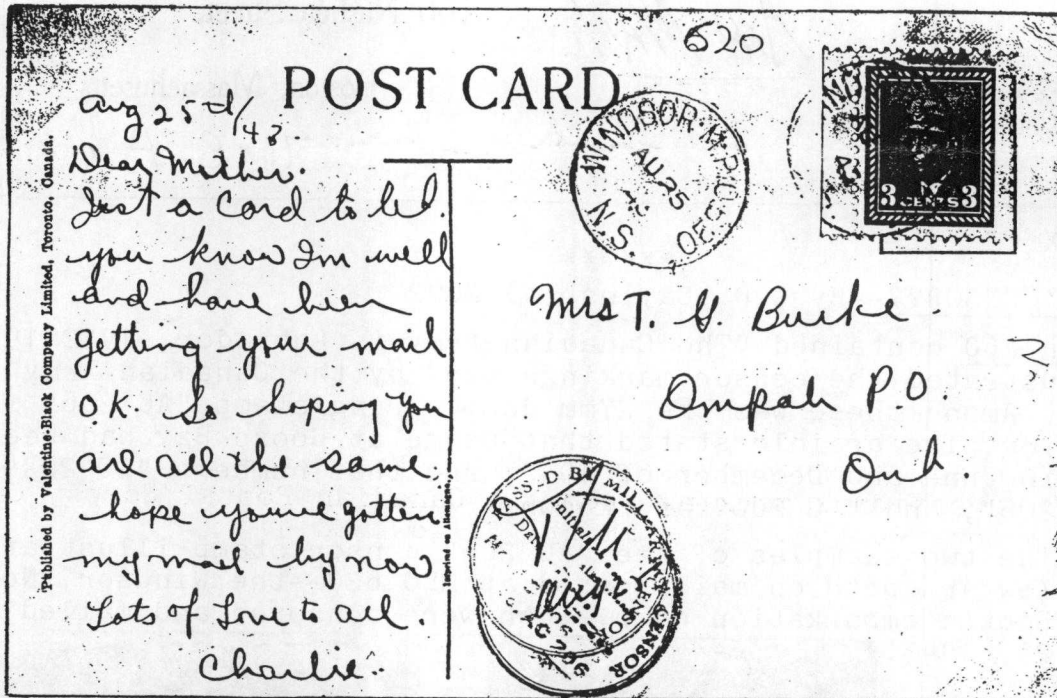


[Cont'd.]

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THIS COVER IS VERY HARD TO EXPLAIN. THE 27 MM DOUBLE RING CENSOR MARKS AC 203, AC205 AND AC206 HAVE BEEN REPORTED USED BY THE ARMY AT GOOSE BAY BETWEEN JUNE AND SEPTEMBER OF 1943. HERE WE SEE CENSOR STAMP AC206 DATED 25 AUG 43 USED ON A LETTER MAILED FROM WINDSOR NS MPO ALSO DATED 25 AUG 43. NORMALLY THE CENSORING OFFICER WOULD DIRECTLY DELIVER THE CENSORED LETTERS TO THE POST OFFICE - IN THIS CASE GOOSE BAY MPO - AND THIS WOULD PRECLUDE TRANSMISSION BY PRIVATE HAND. AT THIS TIME, MAIL FROM GOOSE BAY WAS NORMALLY FLOWN TO MONCTON, AND PLACED INTO THE CIVIL POSTS THERE. IS IT POSSIBLE THAT WINDSOR STATION WAS USED BECAUSE THE MONCTON AIRFIELD WAS CLOSED FOR SOME REASON?

[Doug's further description of the preceding cover. Ed.]



The fact that the covers were censored and mailed the same day rules out any chance that this censor stamp was actually applied at Goose Bay. This leaves us with three possibilities:

1. There are two stamps numbered "AC 206", one of which was used at Goose Bay and the other at Windsor;
2. The "AC 206" stamp was used at Goose Bay in 1942, and was subsequently transferred to Windsor in 1943; or
3. The original report of "AC 206" usage at Goose Bay was in error, and the "AC 206" stamp was used only at Windsor.

I do not think the first possibility can be the case because the whole point of numbering the censor hammers was to make them unique and their holders accountable. Do any members of the Study Group have examples of usage of "AC 206" at Goose Bay? Are there examples used at Windsor Embarkation Camp which would extend the date range? Responses to the Editor please for updating this topic in a future issue.

[Doug also sent along another cover, dated February 21, 1945 from the Windsor MPO. There is no indication of the "AC 206" censor but there was a censor tape used on the following illustration. Ed.]

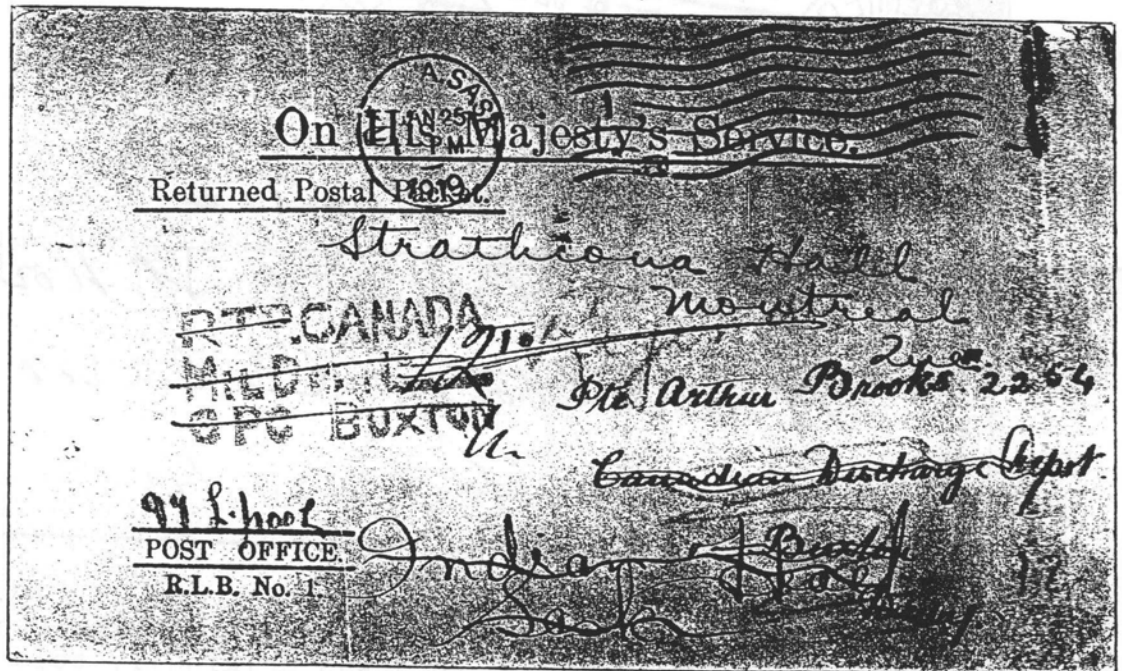
[Cont'd.]



RETURNED POSTAL PACKET, CPC BUXTON, 1919--By W. Pekonen

[Bill sent in a rather interesting re-directed cover with an unusual three-line directional marking from the Canadian Postal Corps, Canadian Discharge Depot, Buxton. His comments follow. Ed.]

R^{TD} CANADA
MILD^{is} N^o12
CPC BUXTON



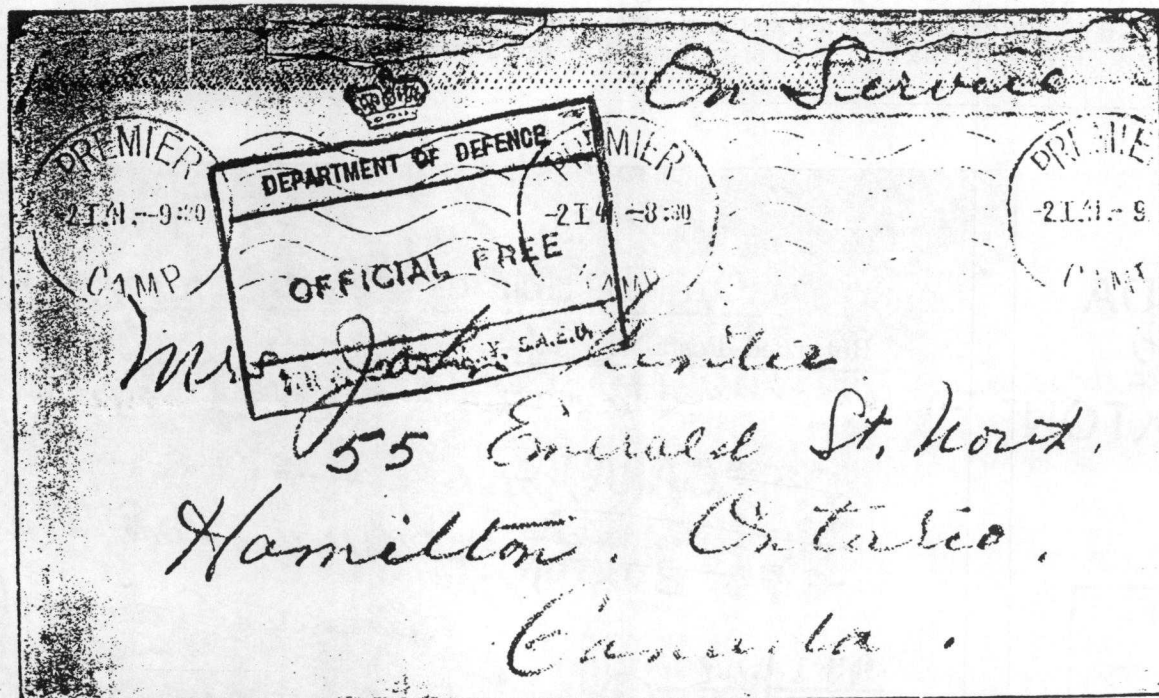
[Cont'd.]

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"While rummaging around today in some of my old covers, I found another cover--photocopy enclosed. It is a bit worn from use, but it attracted me years ago after a visit to Saskatchewan....My military reference books are two older books by Bailey & Toop....When looking up CPC Buxton, I noticed that it was one of the few which did not have any comments opposite the listing. So the thought occurred to me that you might want a photocopy for one of the newsletters.

The only information available to me is what is seen on the cover--a British Returned Postal Packet (R.L.B. No.1). It was addressed to Buxton, forwarded to Regina (where it was received on January 25, 1919), re-addressed to Indian Head (postmarked January 26, 1919 as backstamped), and then forwarded to Strathcona Hall, Montreal. There is no Montreal receiving mark. On the face of the cover is a rubber stamp as previously shown. Maybe one of your readers can come up with the appropriate response.". [Thanks Bill. I cannot find the marking in the two-volume set by "B&T" (1996) so it may be a new report! Presumably the other Military Districts would have similar markings within Buxton's C.D.D. offices. Can members supply some more information? Ed.]

[Bill also enclosed a photocopy of a cover which, presumably, originated from Premier Camp in South Africa. Was it perhaps from a Canadian Nursing Sister (see the Newsletter #58 (May 1984), pp.5-10), even though it does not appear to have been sent from a military hospital? Can members contribute more information as to its sender, or identify the correspondence? Ed.]



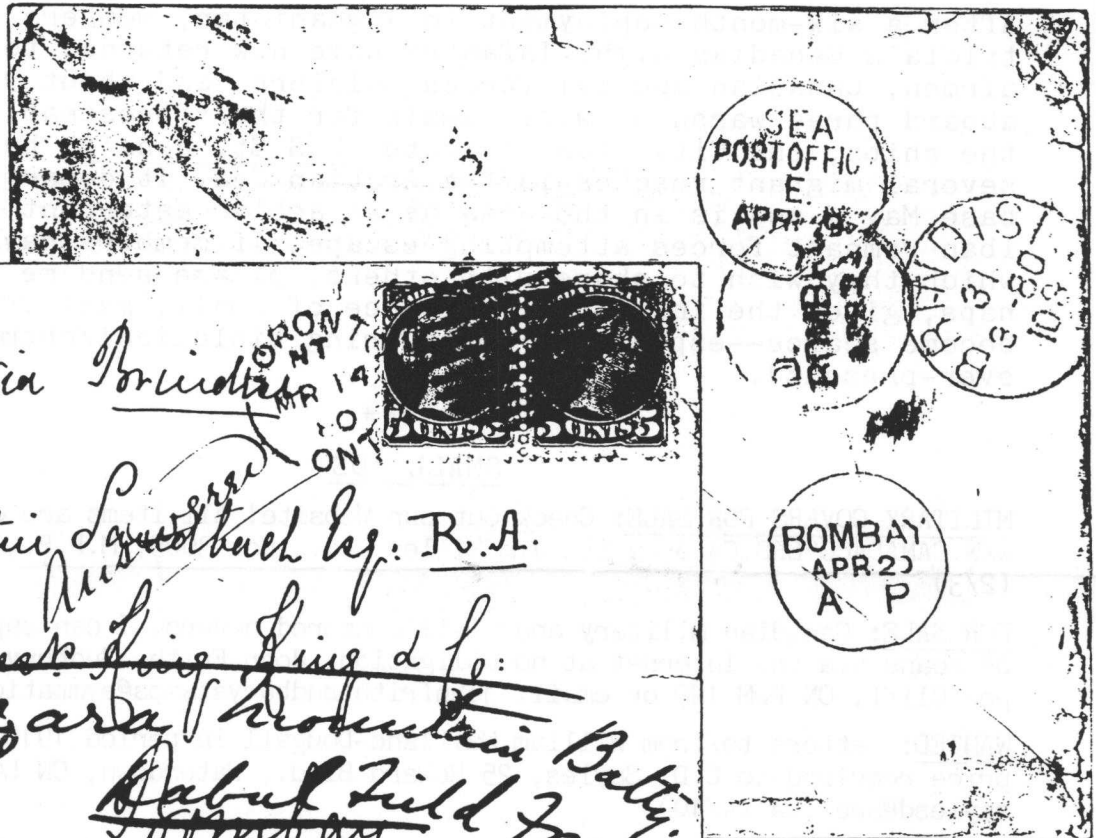
CANADA'S "HUSH HUSH" ARMY--Doug Sayles writes "The Dunsterforce story [NL #154 (March 2002), p.615.Ed.] was originally told in Vol.VIII (October 1930-July 1931) of the Canadian Defence Quarterly by Capt. Murray. Later, the Historical Section, Army Headquarters prepared Report No.84 dated October 20, 1959 dealing with the subject. As to the covers, they are just as hard as you would expect--I have never seen one...."

CANADIAN COVER TO THE KABUL FIELD FORCE, 1880--Courtesy of D.W. Thompson

[Dr. Donald Thompson kindly sent along the following photocopies of a very interesting (and scarce) cover sent to the 4th Hussars Mountain Battery, Kabul Field Force in March 1880. Originally sent to the addressee in Bombay, India, the cover was subsequently re-directed to Kabul, Afghanistan. The 10¢ rate (5¢+5¢ Universal Postal Union surtax; see G.B. Arfken's "Letter Mail to India During the Small Queen Era: The U.P.U. Authorized Surtax," BNA Topics, Vol.46(5), Sept.-Oct.1989, Whole No.433, pp.20-25) paid the cover's travels to India via Brindisi (was the cover shortpaid 5¢, according to Arfken (p.23), or was the extra charge waved as the addressee was a serving member of the R.A.?).

The late 1870's and early 1880's saw periodic hostilities erupt between the Afghans and Great Britain. In April 1880, more fighting occurred at Ahmed Khel near Ghuznee. Following several British defeats, Lord Roberts assembled a force at Kabul and began his epic march to Kandahar where, in September 1880, he defeated the Afghan forces and peace was agreed.

Given the current military situation in Afghanistan, this cover seems appropriate. Ed.]



India via Brindisi
H. Martin Lambert Esq. R.A.
2nd Dr. Kabul Field Force.
Cabul.
To be forwarded immediately.

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Dear CMMSG Members:

August means a new issue is on its way. After one of the hottest and driest July's on record, August has been quite cold and wet. Life is interesting on the Canadian Prairies! Bill and I hope that your summer went well and members are in "high gear" for another collecting season.

Spokane's BNAPEX next month (September 26-29) will soon be here too. Neither Bill nor I will be attending but a "show and tell" chaired by Joe Smith is planned. Vice-President of Study Groups Doug Lingard informs us that our meeting is tentatively scheduled for Friday from 1:00 to 2:00 p.m. Please confirm upon arrival or check updates on the BNAPS website. Have a great time and good luck if exhibiting!

Canadian-related material has been noted in our sister publications. The Military Postal History Society Bulletin contained "The Polish Army Camp of Canada-WWI" by Bob Kinsley (Winter 2002), and his Spring 2002 follow-up "The Polish Army Camp in Canada-WWII". The Forces Postal History Society's 50th Anniversary Booklet (ISSN 9051 7561) which arrived recently contained one-page articles: "On Active Service in New Brunswick, 1862" by Gerald Sattin and a Wilson patriotic cover in D.B. Hepworth's "Anglo-Boer War, 1899-1902".

After a six-month deployment in Afghanistan, members of the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry have now returned to Canada. Some 500 airmen, Canadian special forces soldiers, and about 900 Canadian sailors aboard three warships will remain for the "foreseeable future". One of the ships, the City-class frigate HMCS St. John's, has been involved in several migrant rescues in the Arabian Sea. It departed from its Halifax base May 1 and is in the area as an active deterrent to al-Qaida or Taliban remnant forces attempting escape. If members have examples of mail which they wish to share with others, please send me photocopies (perhaps, given the increasing presence of email, mail from combat zones will become scarce--especially considering biological/chemical threats now ever-present).

SMALL ADS

MILITARY COVERS FOR SALE: Check out our Website! All items are colour illustrated: WWW.CANADACOVERS.CA or write Jim Miller Ltd., Box 3005, M.P.P., Kamloops, BC V2C 6B7 (2/3)

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 (9/10)

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 (4/10)

WANTED: Canadian postcards depicting regimental mascots; Great War patriotic "silk" or embroidered postcards (regiments preferred); Newfoundland Great War covers/cards and ephemera. Photocopies/description/price to Dean Mario, Box 342, Saskatoon, SK S7K 3L3 (1/1)

Upcoming in the November issue: Christmas cards; an RCAF P.O.W.; a 1917 "horseshoe" railhead marking; No.3 C.P.C. emergency hammer and much more!
