



# Canadian Military Mail Study Group

## NEWSLETTER

AUGUST 2007

NEWSLETTER NO. 181  
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TRANS-PACIFIC WARTIME SERVICE-UPDATE--By Bob Toombs



FIG. 1

I'd like to follow-up on the previous article "Trans-Pacific War-time Service" by David Collyer as seen on p.868 of NL#175 (May 2006). In his article David quoted from Ted Proud's History of the Australian Military Postal Service, 1914-1950; especially about how the Americans allotted space for fifty pounds of mail to Empire Air (British Commonwealth Air Training Plan--BCATP) trainees in Canada on their Air Traffic Command (ATC) return service from Australia to the U.S.A. Incidentally, the first des-

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patch left Melbourne for San Francisco July 1, 1942 and arrived in Canada on July 31.

FIG.1 shows an airmail envelope franked with 4d postage and addressed to an R.A.A.F. airman in Sydney, Australia. The postmark date on the stamps is "22 APR 42", however on the reverse is the ink marking of a dater showing "JUN 17 1942" in blue. Both front and back of the cover show a handstamp marking in red with "C/O R.A.A.F./BASE P.O./OTTOWA/CANADA". Note the incorrect spelling of "Ottawa".



FIG.1 REVERSE

David noted Proud also refers to the advent of 7d airletters from September 11, 1945.

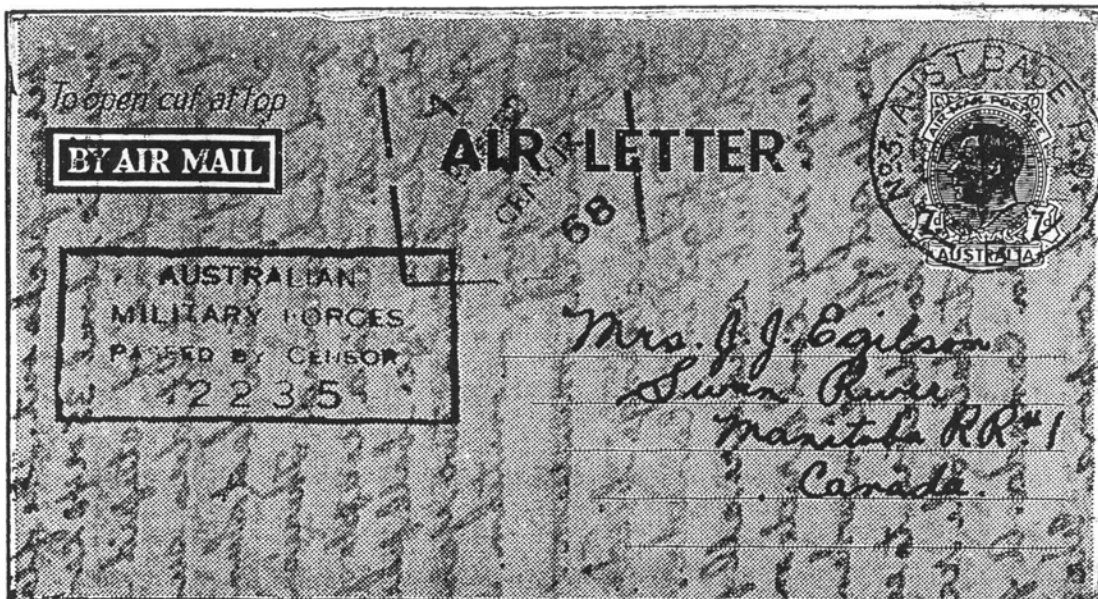


FIG.2

[Cont'd.]

FIG.2 shows such an example dated "21 DE 45" from "No.3 Australian Base P.O. B". It was written by Canadian Private Egilson of the No.1 Canadian Special Wireless Group, Canadian Army Overseas, to Manitoba. The return address is given as "Army Base Post Office, Melbourne, Australia".

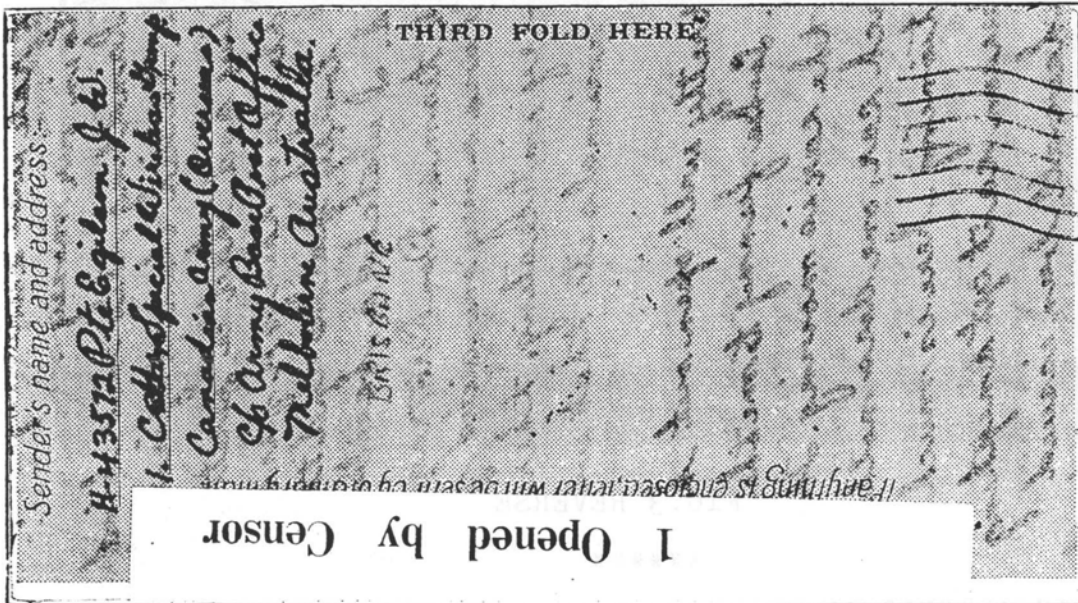


FIG.2 REVERSE

Noting the association with "Base Post Office" in both the above instances, did the December 21, 1945 airletter travel by civilian or military mail back to Canada, and via Pacific or Atlantic?

FIG.3 depicts another 7d airletter cancelled by "R.A.A.F. BASE P.O.-Lindfield".

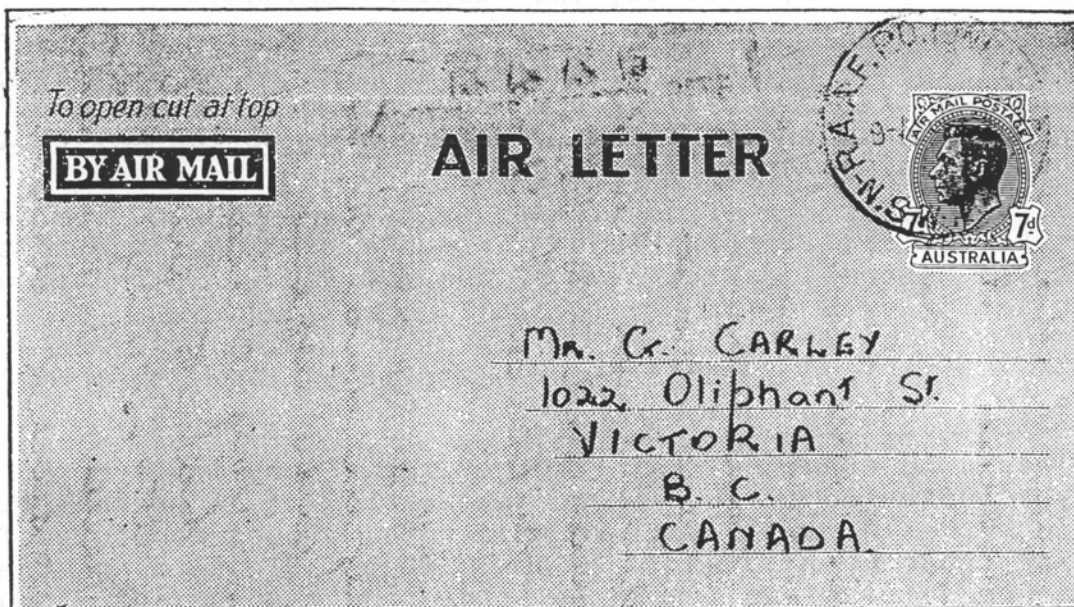


FIG.3

[Cont'd.]

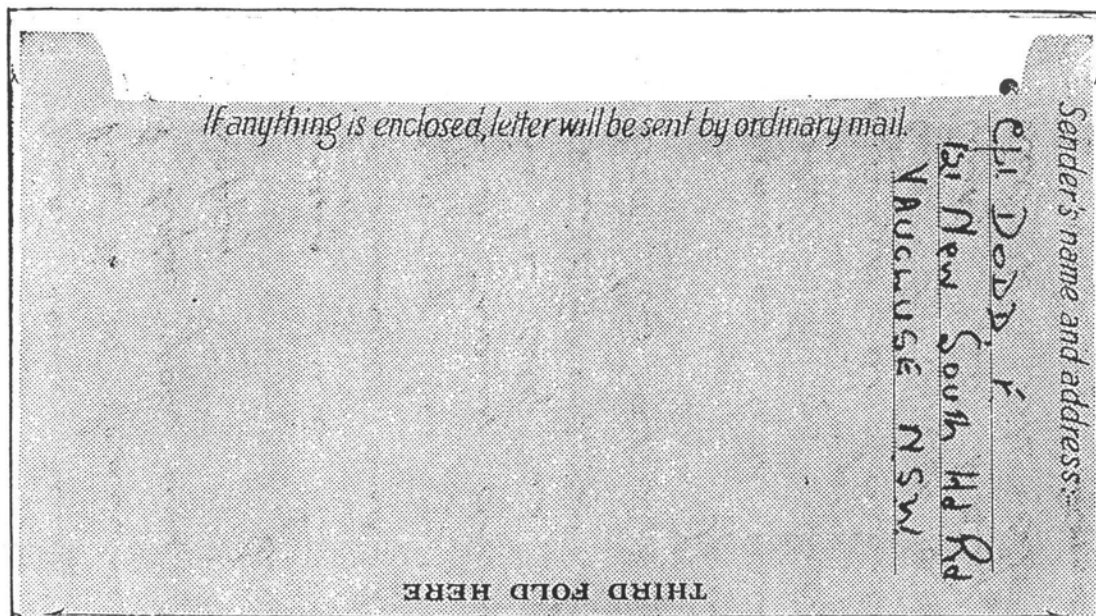


FIG.3 REVERSE

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"DR. McFOG": AN ADDITIONAL COMMENT--By Bob Toombs

[Bob sent along the following with the above: "Another connection per the Addendum to Dean Mario's note on the "58th Frontier Force Rifles, Indian Army: A Canadian Connection" (NL#175, p.869). BNAPSer Dr. Ian McTaggart-Cowan referred to in this article had a famous brother, Dr. Patrick McTaggart-Cowan. Dr. Patrick was Chief Meteorologist seconded from the Federal Department of Transport to the Second World War Ferry Command (Dorval H.Q.). This organization at Dorval ferried some 11,000 aircraft from the factories of North America to battle fronts around the world (Australia, Europe, Africa, Asia, and Russia's Murmansk, Siberia, and Caspian regions).

At the time, "experts" said it could not be done. It was! The aircraft loss was about 2%; well inside military limits of the time and circumstances. "Dr. McFog" played a key role calling the meteorology daily for the flights. Further reading on Ferry Command may be found in Ocean Bridge by Carl A. Christie (University of Toronto Press, 1995).

During the war, aircraft took off or landed every two minutes from Dorval at its service peak. For this international air hub experience, the United Nation's choice of Montreal as the seat of the I.C.A.O. (International Civil Aviation Organization) was eminently logical." Thanks Bob! Ed.]

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STUDY GROUP MEETING, CALGARY BNAPEX 2007

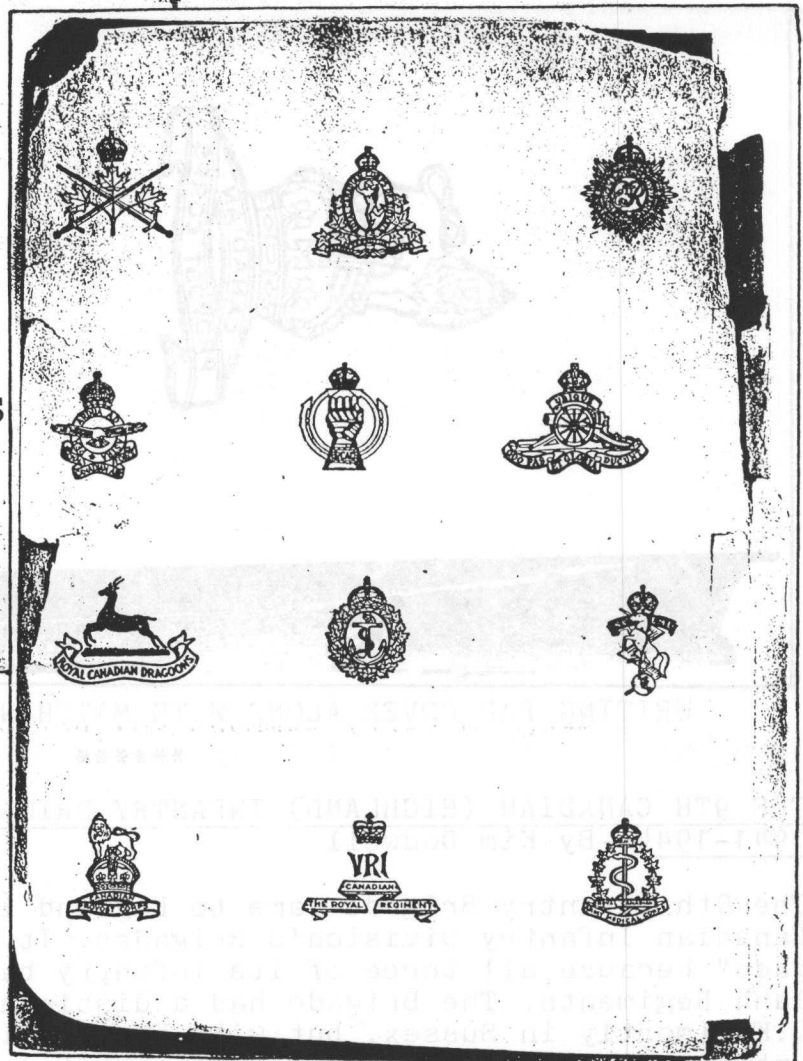
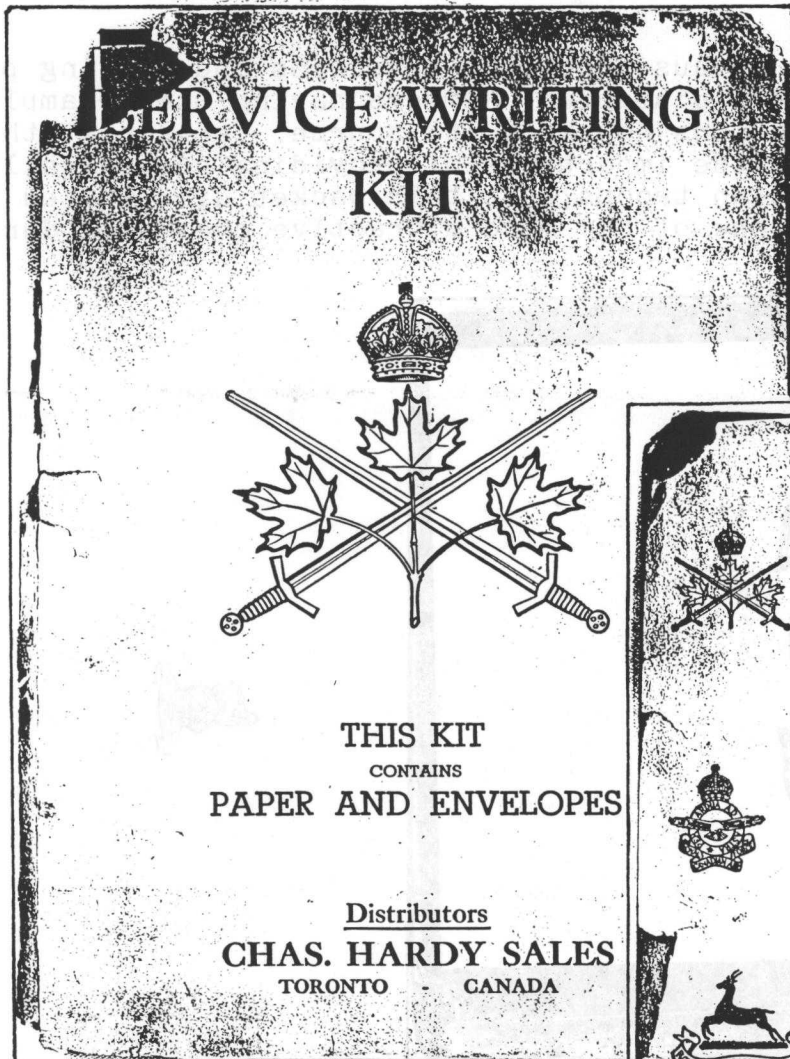
We are very pleased to announce that (at the time of publication) Ed Harris, OTB has kindly volunteered to conduct an interesting slide presentation and talk on the Second World War! I believe that we have been scheduled for the Saturday morning (September 1) at 10:30 am-12:00 pm. Please check the web-site for any changes. Doug and I hope to attend and members are encouraged to stop by. A VERY brief business meeting will precede Ed's discussion so members having any comments or suggestions for the group are invited to share. Thank you Ed!

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SECOND WORLD WAR "SERVICE WRITING KIT"

Members might find the following item of some interest, even though it does fall under the "stationery" category only. Reduced to 64% of the original, the "Service Writing Kit" was manufactured or distributed through the Charles Hardy Sales Company of Toronto, Canada.

The card-cover "packet" is a dark buff in colour with blue printing. It measures approximately 150mm x 212mm (6"x8<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub>") and opens out to reveal a left



folder containing several envelopes (each with a small insignia/badge illustrated on the back-flap--in this case it is the Canadian Provost Corps), along with a small writing pad with the insignia printed on the front cover (illustration follows). The front of the "kit" and reverse are illustrated here.

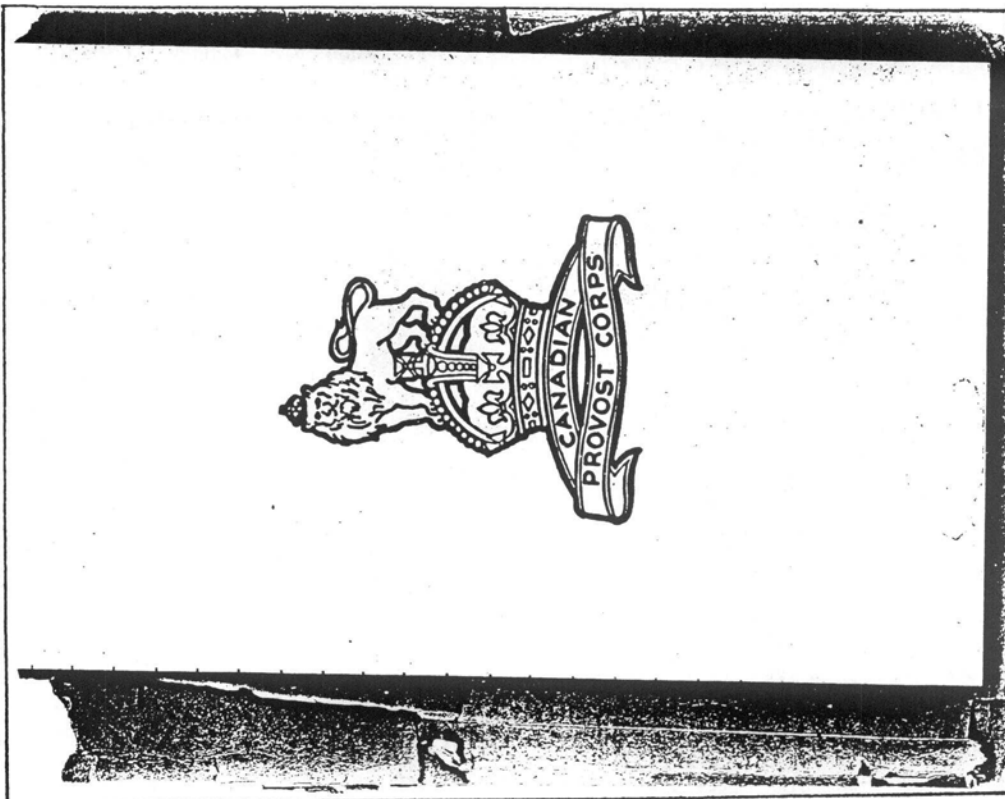
Envelopes bear the matching badge and, presumably, this was the case for all examples of the units illustrated on the kit's reverse. Note that the company used many of the larger units and Canadian Corps (perhaps for marketing purposes and increased sales!). Units illustrated include the Royal Canadian Corps of Signals, the Royal Canadian Army Service Corps, the Royal Canadian Armoured

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Corps, the Royal Canadian Artillery, the Royal Canadian Dragoons, the Royal Canadian Navy, the Royal Canadian Air Force, the Royal Canadian Electrical and Mechanical Engineers, the Royal Canadian Regiment, Royal Canadian Army Medical Corps, the Canadian Provost Corps, and the Canadian Army Headquarters.

Most of these kits didn't survive because when the envelopes and writing pad were used the packet would have been discarded. Members having used examples of this stationery in their collections now know its source. Certainly other stationers and printers recognized the importance of providing conveniently-packaged mailing supplies to Canadian troops, but this packet distributed by Charles Hardy Sales may have been one of the more attractive ones used during the Second World War.



WRITING PAD COVER ALONG WITH MATCHING BADGE ON ENVELOPE BACKFLAPS

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THE 9TH CANADIAN (HIGHLAND) INFANTRY BRIGADE'S ORDERLY ROOM HANDSTAMPS, 1941-1944--By Kim Dodwell

The 9th Infantry Brigade came to England in the summer of 1941 as one of 3 Canadian Infantry Division's Brigades. It was known as "The Highland Brigade" because all three of its infantry battalions were from Canadian Highland Regiments. The Brigade had a distinguished history. It trained in the U.K. (mostly in Sussex, but with periods in Surrey, Scotland, and Hampshire) until it achieved fame as a participant in the D-Day Normandy landing on June 6, 1944. It fought through the savage Normandy battles, went across France and the Low Countries, and came victoriously through the heavy fighting of the Battle of the Scheldt. It then endured the bitter, bloody, muddy Rhineland Campaign of February to March 1945. It was then temporarily attached to the British 51st Highland Division for the assault crossing of the

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Rhine. It remained in the front line right through to the end of the war with Germany.

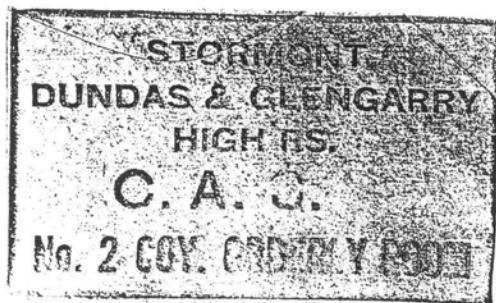
The Orderly Room handstamps illustrated below are those that I have in my collection. Some from the Brigade's order of battle are still missing (e.g. 14 Field Regiment, R.C.A.'s Third Battery, No.34). There is a huge variation in the usage of handstamps between different units. The Stormont, Dundas, and Glengarry Highlanders is unique in retaining its pre-war system of styling its rifle companies by number (1,2,3 and 4), and not adopting the conventional system of lettering them (A,B,C, and D) until 1943. Additionally, it used company handstamps on outgoing mail far more than other units so there is a plethora of marks to be found. The North Nova Scotias, at the other extreme, seem to have only used one handstamp for all purposes.

The wording on the various handstamps follows no particular pattern. Units variously describe themselves a part of A.F.(A.F.), C.S.A.F., C.A.A.F., C.A.O., C.A.(A.F.) etc. It is unlikely that the man on the ground paid much heed to his varying status! The North Nova Scotias are alone in including the words "3rd Division" in its handstamp.

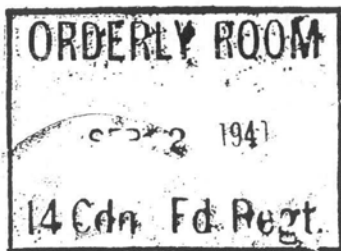
The large Brigade Support Group marking is, regrettably, indistinct [noted as "X".Ed.]. The outer circle reads "9 BRIGADE GROUP (CAMERON HIGHLANDERS OF OTTAWA)" and inside that is "3 CANADIAN DIVISION SUPPORT BATTALION". The Brigade Support Groups were formed in 1942 with the object of providing Brigade Commanders with their own supporting heavy mortars (4.2"), medium machine guns (Vickers), and anti-aircraft guns (20mm.). The arrangement proved cumbersome and a year after they had been formed, they were disbanded and their mortars and machine guns reverted to the direct command of the Divisional Machine Gun Battalions. The Anti-Aircraft Companies were abolished as the threat from the Luftwaffe was, by now, almost eliminated.



The Highland Light Infantry of Canada  
C.A. (A.F.)

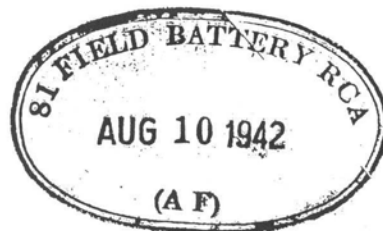


No. 3 COMPANY,  
Stormont, Dundas & Glengarry  
Highlanders, C.A.S.F.



14 Cdn. Fd. Regt. R.C.A.

66 FIELD BATTERY, R.C.A. - A. F.







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177TH BRIGADE, R.F.A. 1918--By Colin Pomfret

*Mention July 29*  
*Recd. Aug 27/1918*

*O.A.S.*

*George Spence*

*20 Heath St*

*Toronto*

*Canada*

*177th Brigade*

[Cont'd.]

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The cover to Toronto opposite was self-censored by Lt. William Hutchinson Sparrow, 177th Brigade, R.F.A. with Censor No.6/6645. It bears the FPO T.X and is dated July 30, 1918 (16th Division Train, Imperial).

The infantry of the 16th Irish Division was shattered in the March retreat of 1918 but the divisional artillery was relatively intact. It was transferred to the Canadian Corps from July 17 to September 7, 1918.

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78 H.D. SQUADRON, R.F.C. 1917--By J.C. Campbell



This card was mailed on September 1, 1917 at Selton, Ontario to Lt. T.H. Barton, R.F.C. It arrived in London, England on September 26, 1917 and was readdressed to "78 H.D. Squad, Suttons Farm, Hornchurch, Essex".

A map facing p.238 in S.F. Wise's Canadian Airmen and the First World War (1980) shows 78 Squadron was based on England's south-east coast between Portsmouth and Dover. It was one of eleven Home Defence Squadrons of fighters guarding against German attacks using aircraft and zeppelins. The year 1917 was especially active in sorties by H.D. aircraft.

On p.250 of Wise's work there is a reference to Suttons Farm. On p.255 78 Squadron is also mentioned. Page 257 records "...by December 1917 there were 31 Canadians serving with H.D. Squadrons. From September 1, 1917 to the Armistice a total of 145 Canadians were posted to home defence". Is it possible that 78 Squadron in September 1917 was in Essex County as per the address on the card, not in Sussex as shown on the map facing page 238?

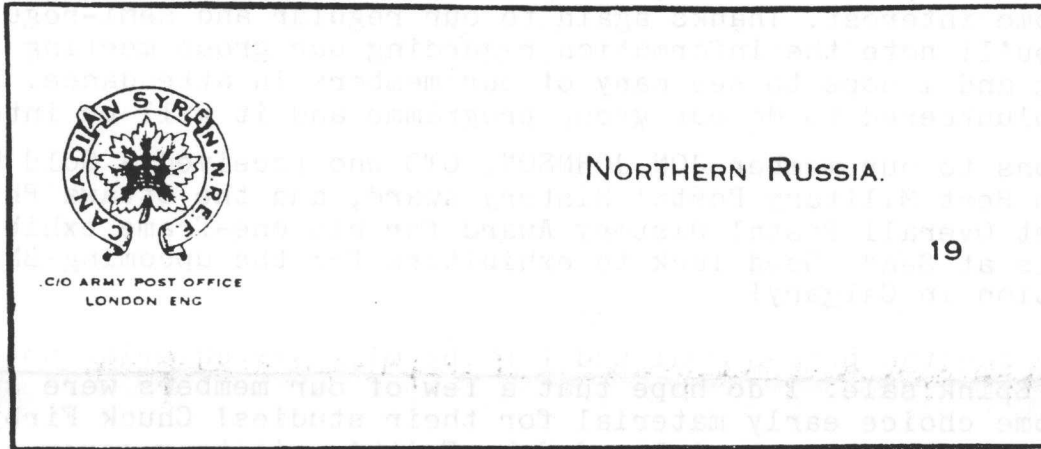
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CANADIAN SYREN NORTHERN RUSSIA EXPEDITIONARY FORCE STATIONERY

In perusing C.D. Brenner's "The North Russian Campaign, 1918-1919" in Theo. Van Dam's The Postal History of the A.E.F., 1917-1923 (APS, 1980), I came upon the interesting item shown opposite. The author noted that it was a

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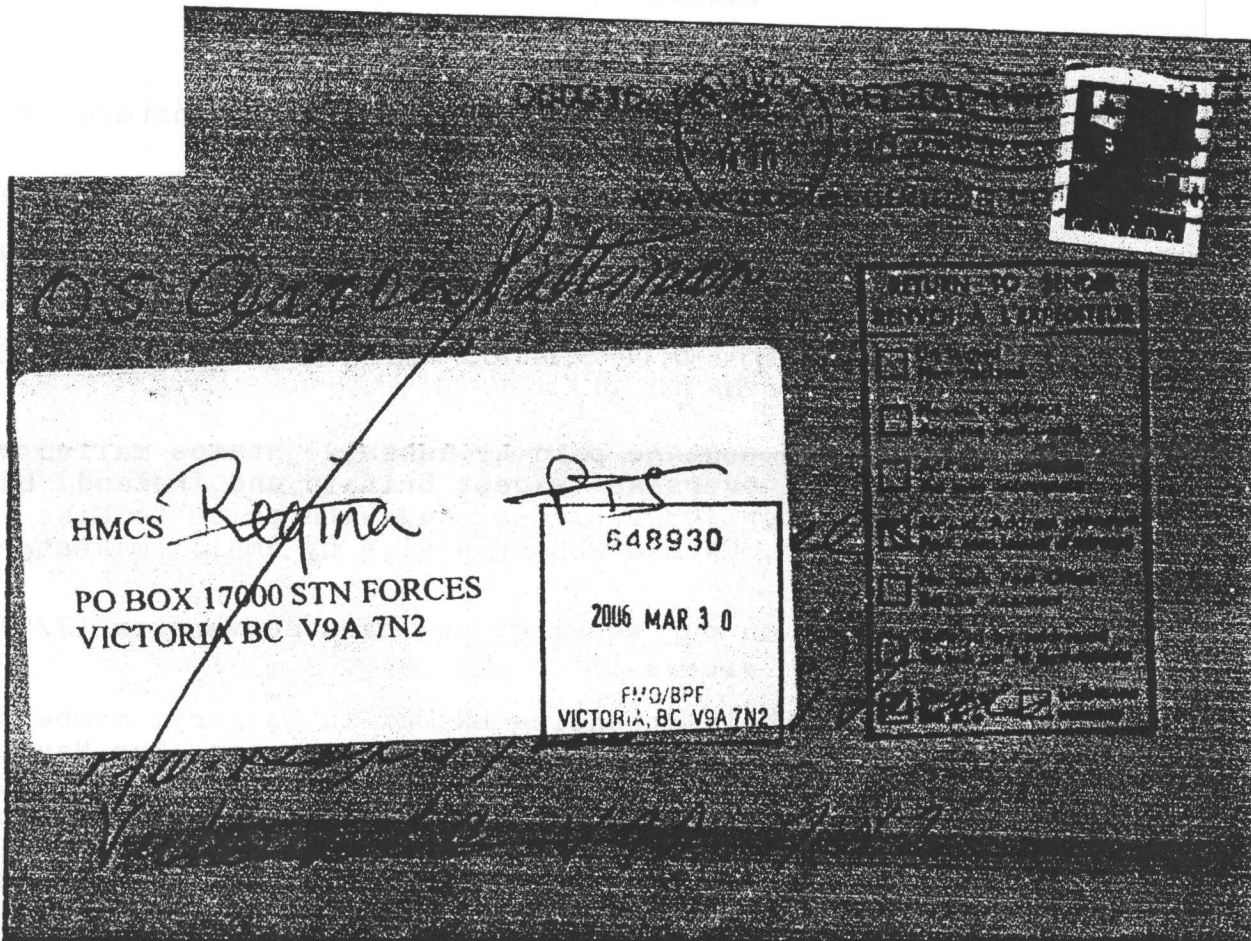
"...letter sheet supplied to Canadian troops" (p.162), and surmised that a matching envelope must have been issued but had not been reported at that time. I do not believe that this item has been illustrated within these pages, and do so in the event that members can add to the story.



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F.M.O. VICTORIA, B.C. POCON, 2006--By Dave Hanes

[Dave sent in an interesting "returned to sender" cover dated March 30, 2006 with a rather uncommon Fleet Mail Office-Victoria postmark. Thanks Dave!Ed.]



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Dear CMMMSG Members:

Doug and I hope that everyone is having a nice summer (or winter for our members in the "Deep South")! Another issue is due and I hope that members find it of some interest. Thanks again to our regular and semi-regular contributors. You'll note the information regarding our group meeting in Calgary and Doug and I hope to see many of our members in attendance. Ed Harris has kindly volunteered to do our group programme and it will be interesting.

Congratulations to our member JON JOHNSON, OTB who received a Gold Medal, the E.R. Toop Best Military Postal History Award, and the Ottawa Philatelic Society's Best Overall Postal History Award for his one-frame exhibit "Military Hospitals at Sea". Good luck to exhibitors for the upcoming BNAPEX/CAL-TAPEX convention in Calgary!

I have yet to see the prices realized for the military material noted last issue in the Spink sale. I do hope that a few of our members were successful in obtaining some choice early material for their studies! Chuck Firby's sale of Steve Luciuk's P.O.W. material and John Frith's military cover stock has been delayed but members may receive their sale catalogues in the coming weeks. It should be another good sale and offering of fine material.

The cupboard is not bare but please keep those articles, fillers etc. coming or hand them to me in Calgary. Thank you.

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SMALL ADS

Buy, Sell, Trade! Insertions are only \$1 Canadian (mint face postage is ok) per issue. Payment to the Editor please.

WANTED: WWII FPO covers. Condition not important but must be used before May 6, 1945. A-600 censors (crown over shield type) include #'s: 1278;1289;1291;3038;3991;5156;6278;6889;7588;7976;7979;8038;8614;8899;9165;9204;10723;10731;10733;10742-43;10745-46;10751;10753-56;10759;10764;10768;10772;10780;10783-84;10786;10798;10800;11357;11793-94;11810;11816-20;11830;11837-40;11844;11847;11849-50;11856;11858;11860;11867-69;11997;12714;13238-39;14455;14462;14604;14630;14665;14670;14828;15196. K. Dodwell, Middle House, Cruckmeole, Hanwood, Shrewsbury SY5 8JN, U.K. (10/10)

WANTED: Canada Air Letters with postage paid by adhesive stamps mailed to Canadian Armed Forces personnel overseas (except Britain and Ireland) between September 1945 and December 1952. Please send with price to Mike Street, 73 Hatton Dr., Ancaster, ON L9G 2H5 or advise by email: [mikestreet@hwcen.org](mailto:mikestreet@hwcen.org) (10/10)

FOR SALE: Big Military Section on our website: [www.canadacovers.ca](http://www.canadacovers.ca) (7/9)

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BNAPEX 2007 ADDITIONAL NOTES: While attending BNAPEX in Calgary, members may be interested in the city's array of military-related museums. The Naval Museum has been called "Canada's largest naval museum" devoted to the history and artifacts of the Royal Canadian Navy. Calgary's Military Museums, in the fall of 2007, will bring together the Museum of the Regiments, the Naval Museum of Alberta, and the Air Force Museum Society of Alberta! Contact the Military Museums, 4520 Crowchild Trail S.W., at (403) 240-9723 or at: [themilitarymuseums.ca](http://themilitarymuseums.ca) (.) Contact Tourism Calgary: [tourismcalgary.com](http://tourismcalgary.com) or or toll-free in North America: 1-800-661-1678.

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