

Canadian Military Mail Study Group



NEWSLETTER

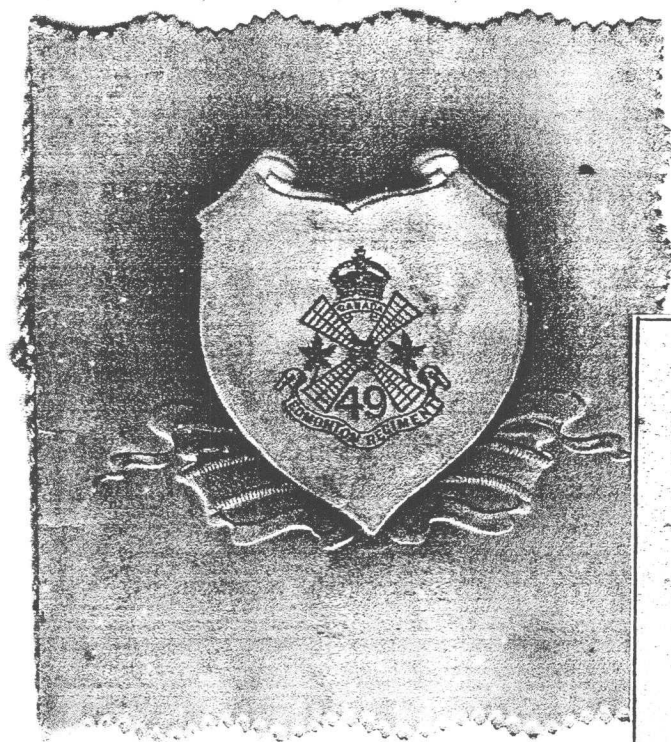
NOVEMBER 2008

NEWSLETTER NO. 187

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49th EDMONTON REGIMENT, CHRISTMAS 1918

This year marks the 90th anniversary of the Great War Armistice. The 49th's original Commanding Officer was Lt.Col. W.A. Griesbach.



It sailed on June 4, 1915 with 36 Officers and 996 Other Ranks. The regiment's headquarters on mobilization was Edmonton, Alberta.

This personalized Christmas card greeting was sent from S.W. Walch.

Christmas, 1918.

With smiles may gladness greet you
every day,
Health, wealth, good fortune meet
you all the way.



The Good Custom still we would
uphold;

The wish that no less sweet
because it's old.

A Happy Christmas

From

S. W. Walch

49th Bn.,
Edmonton Regt.

[Cont'd.]

CHAIRMAN/TREAS.: C.D. SAYLES, 25 HOWARD BLVD., WATERDOWN, ON LOR 2H4
(sayles@sympatico.ca)

EDITOR: D. MARIO, POST OFFICE BOX 342, SASKATOON, SK S7K 3L3

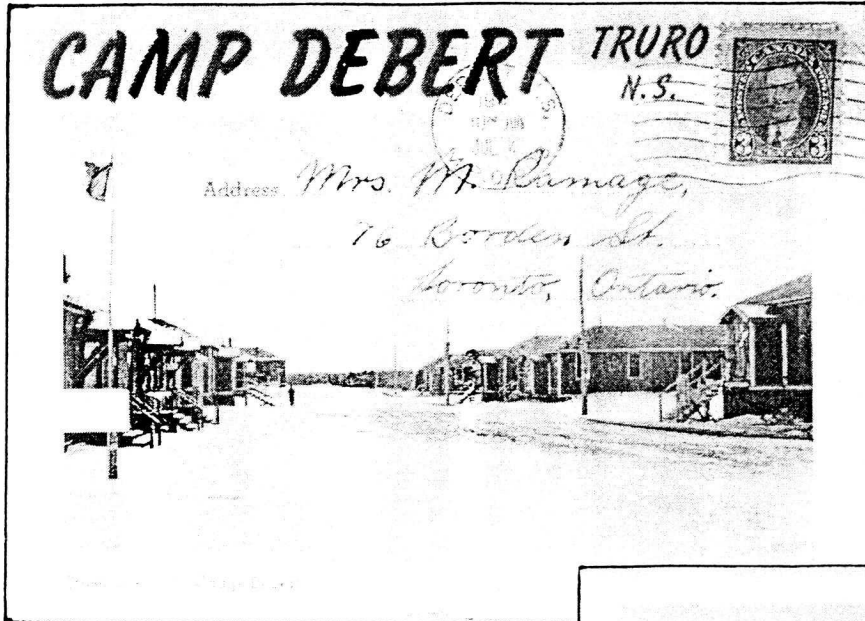
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Samuel Wellington Walch, according to his C.E.F. Attestation Paper* dated December 20, 1915, was born on July 22, 1894 in London, Ontario. He listed his occupation at the time of enlistment as a "farm labourer", presumably near Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan where he enlisted (at Caron, Sask.). His physical description lists him as being "21 years, 5 months, 5'8", medium complexion with brown eyes and dark brown hair". He was a Baptist. Walch's Regimental Number was #781503 and he initially joined the 128th Overseas Battalion. By Christmastime 1918, he obviously was in the 49th.

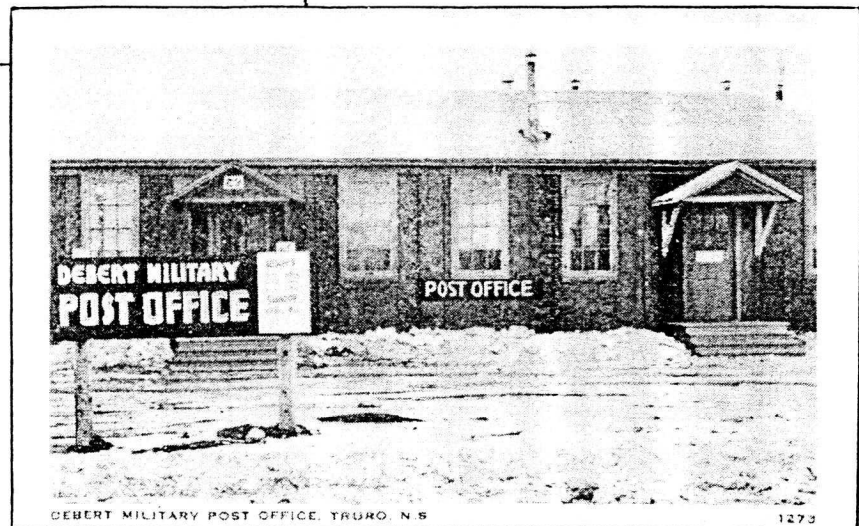
*<http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/databases/cef/001042-119.02>

CAMP DEBERT, N.S. 1941 FOLDOUT POSTCARD BOOKLET--By Mike Street

The following item is a foldout postcard (twenty-one different pictures of Debert Camp), including the cover picture and the one of the Post Office.



WARM AND FRIENDLY WISHES
FOR A MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A
BRIGHT AND HAPPY NEW YEAR



NAVAL CENSORSHIP, N.O. 3318--By Colin Pomfret

[Colin sent in this card, delayed during the Second World War for security purposes, and subject to Naval Order No. 3318. A different postcard, but also depicting "The Narrows" from St. John's, has been recorded with an unusual instructional handstamp. See D. Mario's "Newfoundland Vignettes (5), Civil Censorship, 1945" in Maple Leaves (July 2004, Vol.28, No.7, 293, pp.285-286).Ed.]



4139 "The Narrows" from the Higher Levels, St. John's, Newfoundland.

Copyright

O. H. M. S.
S. DE S. M.

*Mr. J. Perks
121 William St. W.,
Chatham,
Ontario.*

M. F. B. 1483
1,500,000 -12-43 (3245)
H.Q. 1772-33-1996

*"Don't waste words - Don't waste paper"
"Economisez les mots et le papier"*

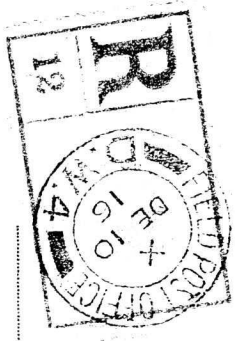
NAVAL CENSORSHIP

1 Post card.

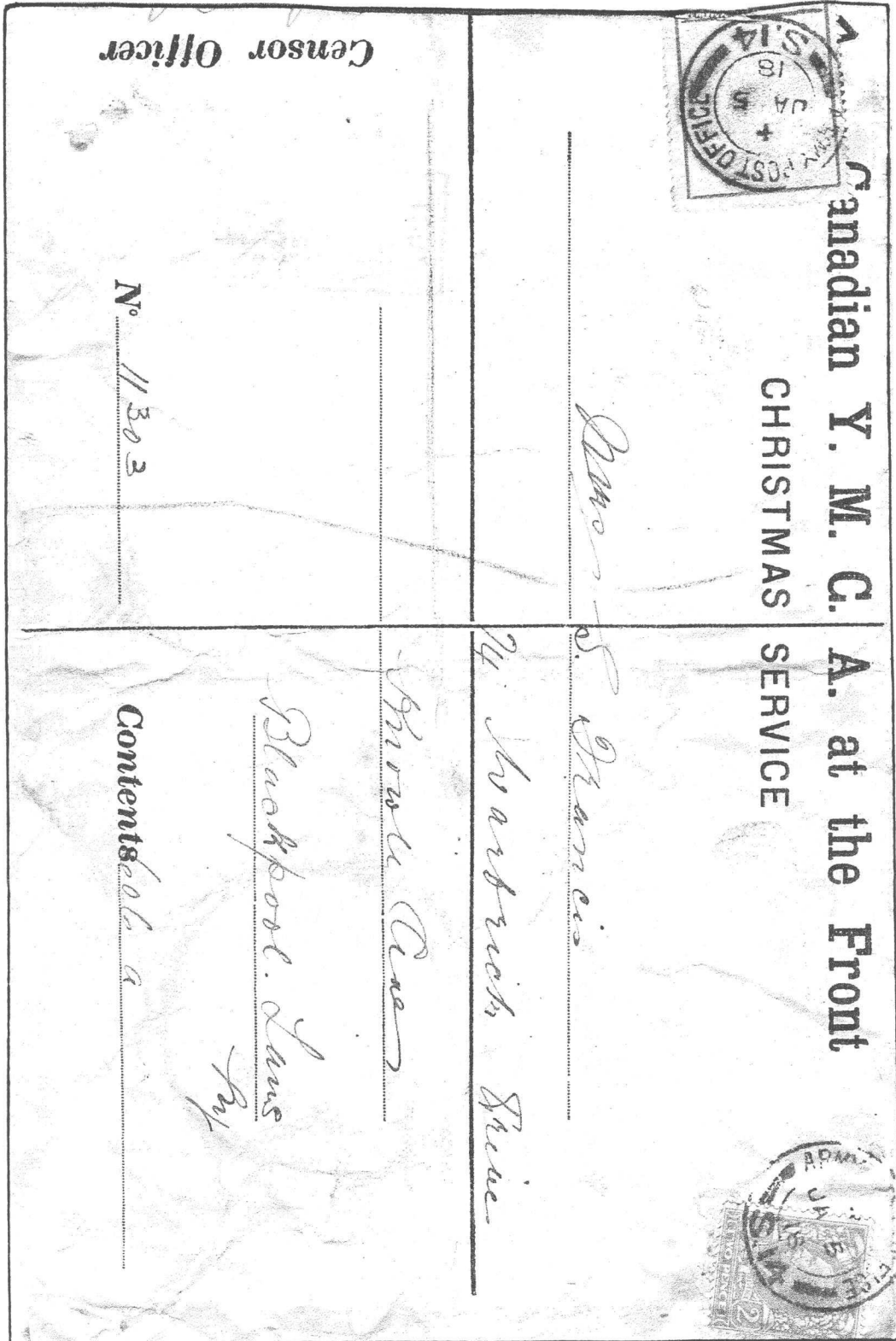
This souvenir has been delayed for reasons of Security, pursuant to Naval Order No. 3318.

SPECIAL 1916/1917 CANADIAN Y.M.C.A. CHRISTMAS SERVICE ENVELOPES

<p><i>W. G. Everett</i> Censor Officer</p> <p><i>22750</i></p> <p><i>N. 504 R</i></p>	<p><i>792.4 out 811</i></p> <p><i>792.4</i></p> <p><i>to send</i></p> <p><i>Contents 1 lb 15 oz</i></p>
<p>1916</p> <p>Canadian Y. M. C. A. at the Front</p> <p>CHRISTMAS SERVICE</p> <p><i>Miss Ann & cousins</i></p>	<p>1917</p> <p>Canadian Y. M. C. A. at the Front</p> <p>CHRISTMAS SERVICE</p> <p><i>to send</i></p>



These interesting special linen-lined packet envelopes have not been previously featured in our pages (to my knowledge). They are illustrated here full-size and were provided (at least in 1916 and 1917) for use by Canadians (and others?) to ship valuables or other



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items requiring registration. The 1916 "Christmas Service-At The Front" envelope bears an "FPO D.W.4/X/DE 10/16" (H.Q., 3rd Cdn. Div.-Security Phase II-Ancre Heights, France?) postmark along with a censor #2282 (CM5/2282). The extra registered postage was paid by a G.B. 2d Deep Orange (Die I) stamp (Scott #162). It is printed in black ink and has an area for the Censor Officer to sign. Contents are noted by the sender as "1 broach".

The 1917 envelope is similar to the previous one but bears an "FPO S.14/+/JA 5/18" (Frequent, France) postmark along with a censor #1661 (CM6/1661). A similar stamp is attached. It has been reduced a bit. Contents are listed as "606 a" or "C o C a" which is unknown.

According to J. Castell Hopkins' Canada at War: A Record of Heroism and Achievement, 1914-1918 (Toronto: Canadian Annual Review Ltd., 1919), the Y.M.C.A. provided stationery, canteens, and Red Triangle Clubs (or "huts") for Canadian troops (pp.254-255). The organization also operated "regular" camps and units, base camps, convalescent camps and hospitals throughout France, Belgium, and England.

Apparently few of these stationery envelopes have survived, perhaps given their size or usefulness for other purposes after the war. Have other members seen them? Were they printed for other years? Details to the Editor please.

A REMINDER OF A BITTER NORMANDY BATTLE--By Kim Dodwell

Some years ago, in the course of mutually satisfactory trading with a fellow group member, I acquired the cover illustrated below. It was sent by 2/Lieutenant (Nursing Sister) B. Rice-Jones on August 3, 1944 from 23 Canadian General Hospital in England to her brother, Lt. Arthur Rice-Jones. He was in the Calgary Highlanders (2nd Canadian Infantry Division's 5 Brigade) in Normandy. I was glad to get the cover as it is directly connected with a particularly hard-fought episode in Canada's 1944 Normandy Campaign.

Tilly-le-Campagne--"Tilly in the Country"-- is a pretty name for a stinking, blood-soaked heap of stones up on the bare rolling Verrieres Ridge. The ridge covers low ground south and east through which Lt. Gen. Guy Simmon's 2 Cdn. Corps was trying to advance from Caen towards Falaise. It was as important to the elite, experienced German 1st (Liebstandarte Adolf Hitler) S.S. Division holding it, as it was to the Canadian attackers. A small village of eight stone-built farms, the enemy had ample time to fortify it with their usual thoroughness.

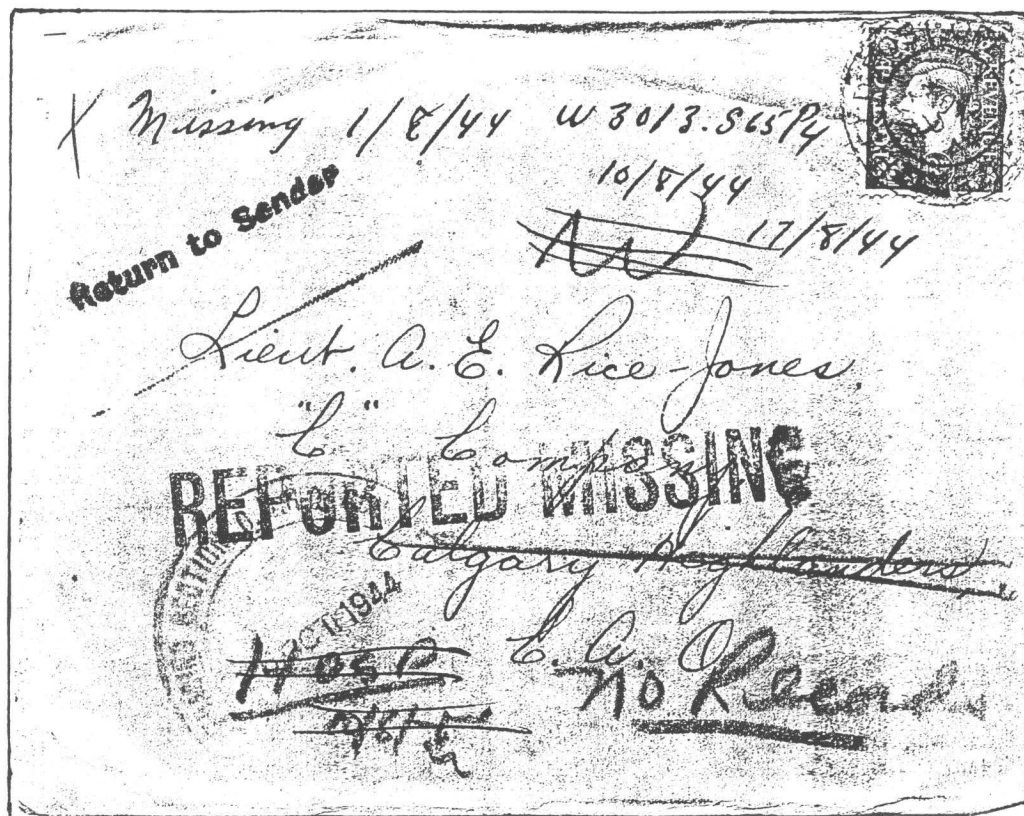
Each house had a basement which they first reinforced, and then collapsed the house above. Numerous machine gun positions in the cellars were virtually impervious to field gun and mortar fire. The approaches were heavily mined and dug-in, and camouflaged tanks and anti-tank guns made for an exceedingly tough nut to crack.

Between July 25 and August 9 Tilly was attacked five times in costly battalion-strength assaults. Each time, until the very last, the attackers were driven off with heavy losses. Battalions from succes-

[Cont'd.]

sively, the 3rd and 2nd Canadian Infantry Divisions and the 4th Canadian Armoured Division, all tried their best. It was only after the 1st S.S. had been withdrawn to fight elsewhere and had been replaced with less fanatical troops, and after Tilly had been left isolated by advances on either side by the famous Operation "TOTALISE", that the British 51st (Highland) Division captured the place (on their second attempt). In all the various attackers had lost over 500 casualties in and around the shattered hamlet.

It is with the second of this series of attacks that my cover is connected.



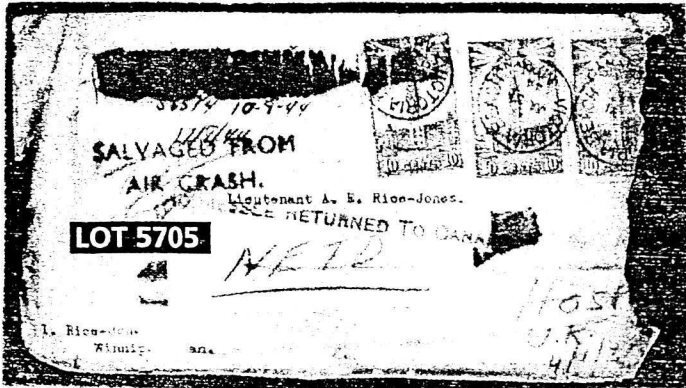
Shortly after midnight on August 1, and through much of the 1st, the Calgary Highlanders made repeated attempts to capture Tilly. The struggle is well-described in David Bercuson's Battalion of Heroes: The Calgary Highlanders in World War II (Calgary: Calgary Highlanders Regimental Funds Foundation, 1994). In it he recounts how the addressee of my cover was seriously wounded and then had to be left behind as the survivors of the gallant battalion were finally driven back to their start line. This story fits well with the markings on the cover, and Bercuson (in the book's appendix) shows Art as firstly wounded and then as a "released P.O.W.--date unknown". I wrote up my cover assuming that he was released as a P.O.W. at the end of the war, as almost all were, and then forgot about it.

I was therefore surprised to see illustrated in the catalogue for the Vance Auction of June 26, 2008 another cover to Lt. A. Rice-Jones, posted airmail from Victoria Beach, Manitoba on July 31, 1944. It had

[Cont'd.]

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been sent back, clearly marked "ADDRESSEE RETURNED TO CANADA", together with other confirmatory markings.



5705. ✉ 257 (3). Tied by Victoria Beach Man 31 Jul 1944 CDS's to charred CRASH COVER addr to a Lieut in the Calgary Highlanders with FPO #432 16 Aug receiver on reverse. It was then forwarded to other FPO's (cancels on reverse), forwarded to a hospital, stamped 'ADDRESSEE RETURNED TO CANADA' & 'SALVAGED FROM AIR CRASH'. A fascinating cover of exhibition calibre for an airmail or military exhibit. See photo on Page 86. Est 250.00+

In an effort to resolve the apparent contradiction over these two contemporary covers, I enlisted the help of my wife's cousin, a long-time resident of Calgary and Airdrie, and he came up with a number of useful names and addresses.

After a number of false starts and dead (literally) ends, I eventually made contact with Art's relatives; including both sisters who had each written one of the two "problem" covers.

From them I learned that Art had been well looked after by the Germans after his capture, and evacuated back as far as a hospital in Paris.

He was still there when the Allies entered Paris on August 25, and was taken to a Canadian Military Hospital in England; eventually to that in which his sister was working. However it was not this serendipity all the way; his leg wound, in spite of good treatment from both Germans and Canadians proved un-healable. He had been a noted hockey player and his leg meant more to him, perhaps than most, but in the end it had to be amputated. This misfortune did not prevent this gallant man leading a full and useful life until his recent death.

This seems to me to be quite a story, but that is not the end of it! The Vance Auction cover is also marked "SALVAGED FROM/AIR CRASH" which, sadly but understandably, put it beyond my budget. I am not a collector of "crash covers" and have no idea how this crash occurred. Perhaps if the lucky present owner ever reads the account he/she could, in return for this input, enlighten us as to the final part of the story. [Arguably much of the information surrounding failed military air crashes is unknown to this day. R.K. Malott's "Crash Covers," The Canadian Philatelist (Vol.39, No.1, Jan.-Feb.1988, Whole No.224) includes a brief mention of the event which is presumably connected with the "Vance" cover in Kim's article. Malott (p.57) notes that a few Armed Forces Air Letters "...to Canadian personnel overseas, mailed from Canada in July 1944 [,] were in a crash sometime prior to 10 August 1944. Salvaged from an air crash they were marked as such in a two line purple cachet, 'SALVAGED FROM AIR CRASH'." He described the event as a "Canadian Forces RCAF Crash in U.K. August 1944". If members have more information, please send it in to the Editor! Ed.]

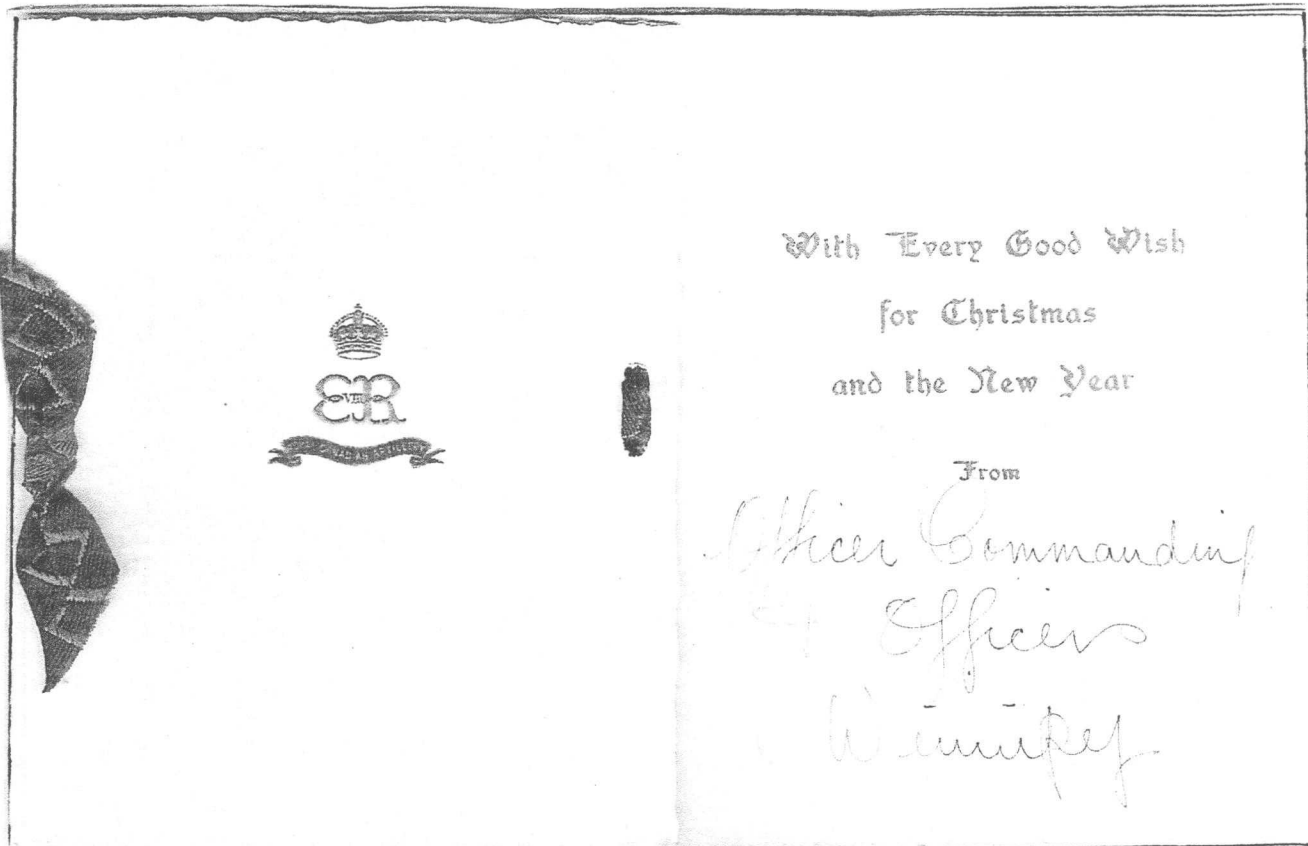
1st C.C.D., WITLEY CAMP 1918

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An unused real photo postcard depicting Depot Post Office personnel.

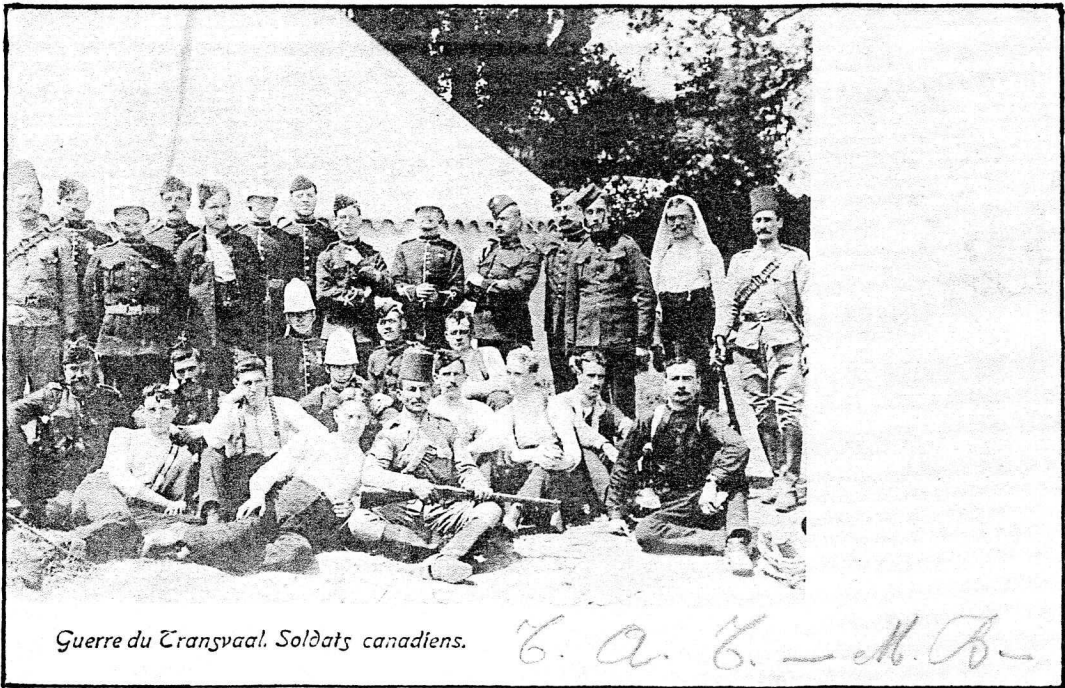
ROYAL CANADIAN ARTILLERY, WINNIPEG-CHRISTMAS 1936



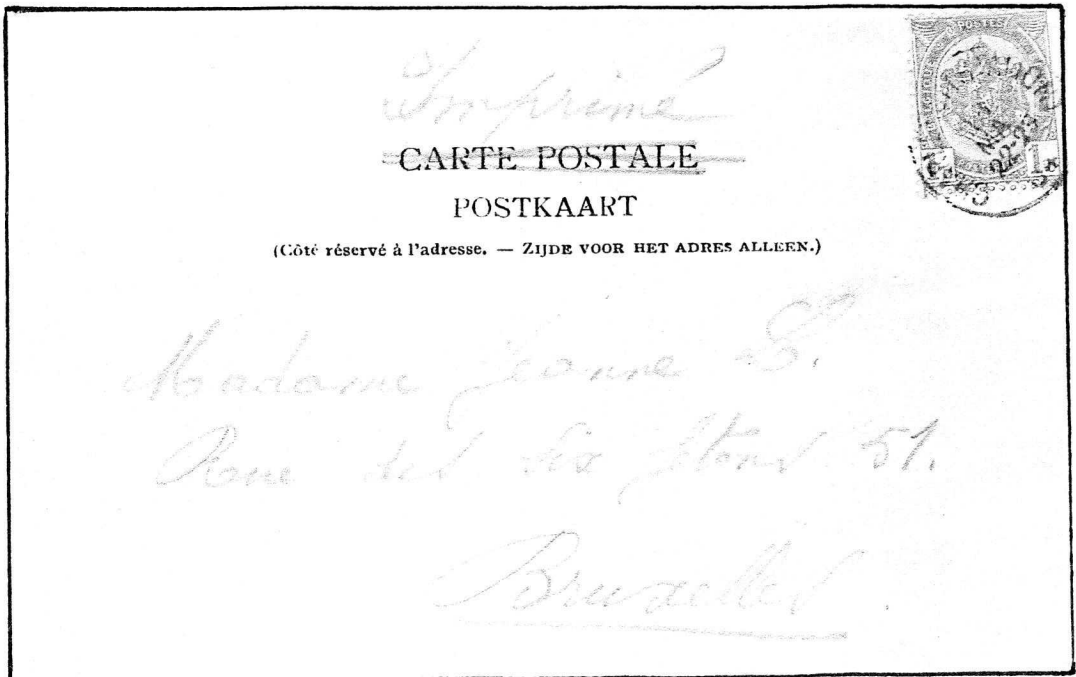
A very unusual Christmas and New Year's greeting card from the R.C.A. in Winnipeg. King Edward VIII abdicated December 11, 1936 so [Cont'd.]

presumably new cards would have been ordered and printed with the new royal monogram for the following Christmas.

BOER WAR POSTCARD



This unusual picture postcard, depicting Canadian soldiers "at rest" in the Transvaal, may have been of Belgian manufacture. It was used in that country in 1904, just after hostilities ended. Have members

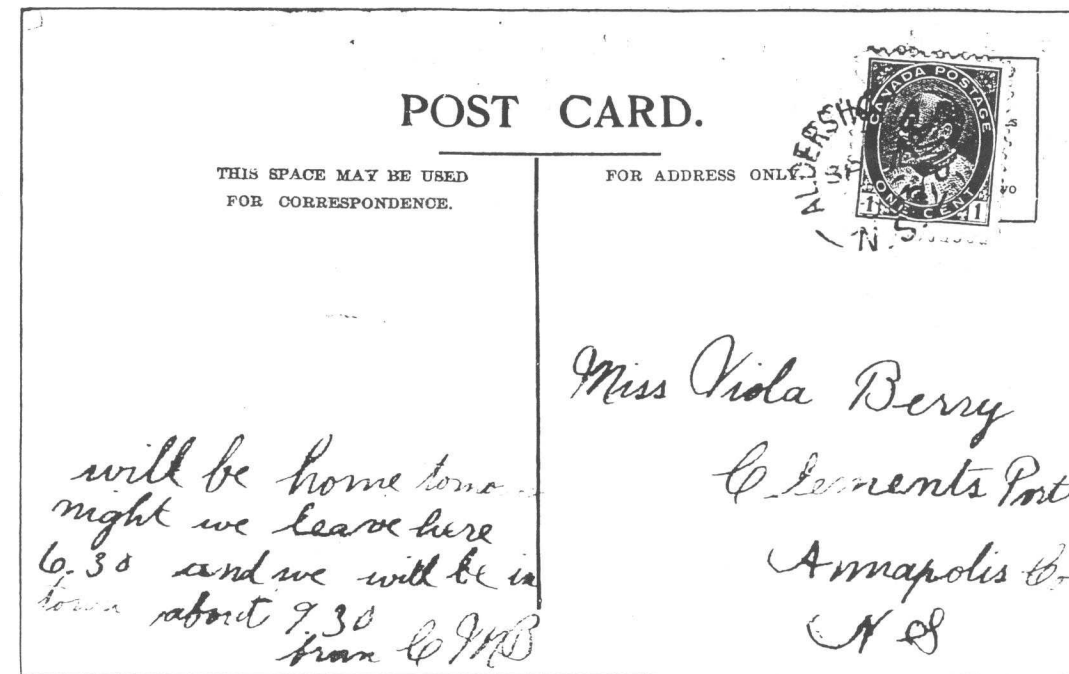
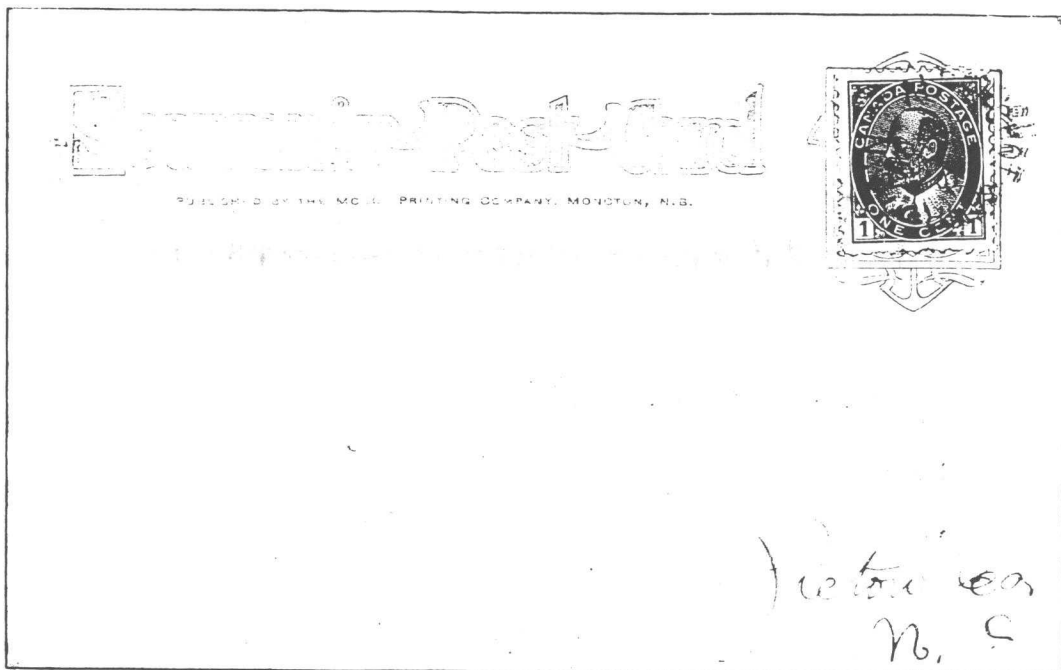


seen similar cards of foreign manufacture from this period?

ALDERSHOT CAMP SPLIT-RINGS: TWO DIFFERENT DEVICES--By Colin Pomfret

The Aldershot Camp split-ring impressions are never well-struck, but these two examples, measured from the outer "A" to the outer "P", illustrate the two sizes.

September 18,
1906 (24mm)



September 17,
1909 (20mm)

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Dear CMMMSG Members:

Your group officers hope that everyone had a nice fall season and both Doug and I do hope that members have a wonderful Christmas season and a very HAPPY NEW YEAR!

From most accounts, BNAPEX 2008 in Halifax, Nova Scotia was a successful show and convention. Congratulations to our members (and non-members): David Hobden (non-group member), "In Defence of the Border-Canadian Military Mails, 1667-1885", Allan Steinhart Reserve Grand Award, Sam Nickle Award (Best Military Exhibit), Gold; Jon Johnson, "Canadian Military Hospitals At Sea" (1-frame), Gold; Doug Sayles, Ed. Canadian Military Postal Markings, Vol.III, E.R. "Ritch" Toop Award. Hobden's exhibit was awarded a Gold, Best Novice Exhibit Award (AAPE), Best Military Postal History Award (E.R. Toop Award, PHSC) at ORAPEX 2008 and a Gold, Grand Award at ROYAL 2008.

I am saddened to report to members that Leslie G. Clinton, Saskatoon, passed away on October 21, 2008. He was a member of our group for many years and a veteran of the Second World War. Les, a specialist in the military postal history of Saskatchewan and the Salvation Army (among other military areas), was a kind friend to our group. Always modest, Les desired anonymity with his kind donation of mint postage for our mailings (as noted in a previous issue). A card of condolence was sent on behalf of the members to his family.

Member Jim Miller has notified us (jmillerltd@shaw.ca) that the late Wilfrid Whitehouse's estate and military mail collections have been purchased and will be for sale soon. Wilf was one of our group's most knowledgeable members when it came to naval matters, AFAL's, and other military subjects.

We continue to send out our very best wishes to members who have had, or continue to have, health issues.

JANUARY 2009 CALL FOR DUES

Members are fully aware that our group operates on a very tight, and limited budget. We only call for dues when the bank account is low and needs replenishing. Our Chairman and Treasurer Doug Sayles informs us that our bank balance is getting low so we will call for dues early next month (why not send a cheque payable to "Douglas Sayles" now to arrive before the Christmas "mail rush"). Doug's address is on the front page. Once again, dues are \$20.00 Canadian for Canadian members, and \$20.00 in U.S. funds for American and International members. If you do not wish to continue your membership, please contact Doug too so that we can amend our membership list. Thank you very much and we do hope to get a 100% positive response.

Seasons Greetings

