



Canadian Military Mail Study Group

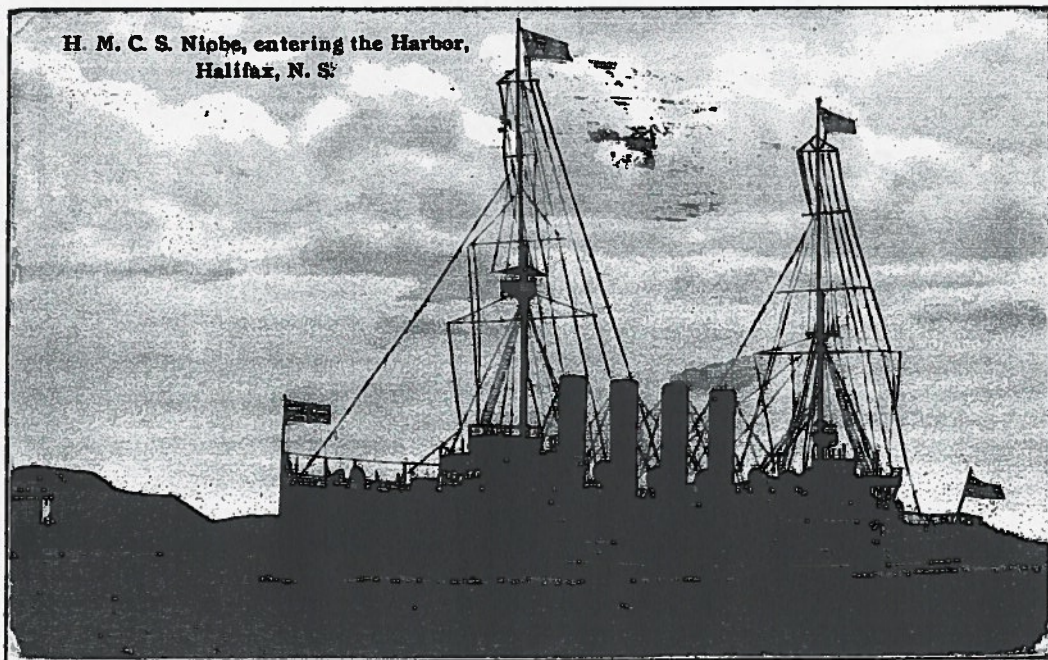
NEWSLETTER

MAY 2010

NEWSLETTER NO. 195
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1910-2010--HMCS NIOBE AND THE ROYAL CANADIAN NAVY'S 100 YEARS

Canada's Naval Service Bill was passed, after considerable debate and controversy, on April 20, 1910, and the Naval Service Act received Royal Assent on May 4. The Canadian government made arrangements to purchase two British cruisers from the Royal Navy,



Rainbow (which would serve primarily with the Pacific Coast Squadron) and her sister ship Niobe (on Atlantic duties).

[Cont'd.]

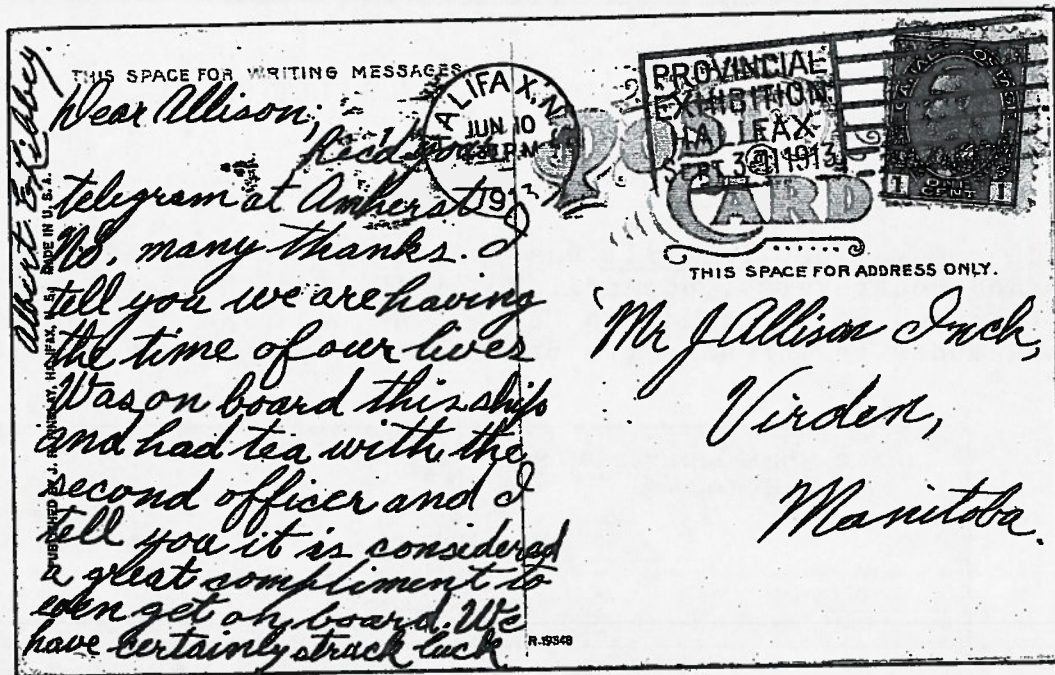
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HMCS Niobe, launched in 1897 (February 20), was built by Vickers, Barrow-in-Furness and was one of eight ships in the Diadem Class. She had a displacement of 11,000, a speed of 15 knots, and a crew of 677. Her dimensions were 466'x69'x26', and her armaments included sixteen-6" guns, twelve-12 pdrs., five-3 pdrs., and two-18" torpedo tubes.

Niobe arrived at Halifax on October 21, 1910. Her Canadian experience was uneventful until she went aground off Cape Sable on July 30-31, 1911. Her



repairs were not completed until December 1912. She served as a stationary training ship at Halifax until the beginning of the First World War. She then went on contraband control off the coast of New York as a member of the Royal Navy's 4th Cruiser Squadron.

In the fall of 1915, Niobe became a depot ship, and then was severely damaged in the December 6, 1917 Halifax Explosion. Her repairs were extensive and she remained inactive through the remaining war years.

On May 31, 1920 Niobe was paid off and she was sold for scrap. Two years later she was broken up at Philadelphia. Note the message on the postcard!

Sources

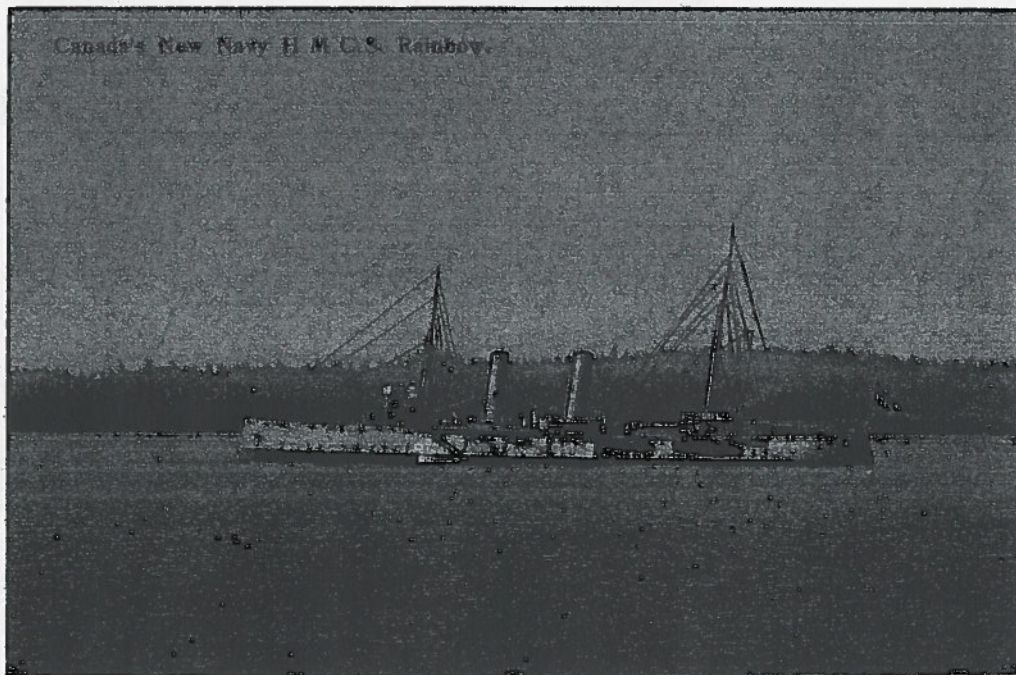
Macpherson, Ken R. Canada's Fighting Ships. Toronto: Samuel Stevens, Hakkert & Company, 1975.

Macpherson, Ken R., Ron Barrie. The Ships of Canada's Naval Forces, 1910-2002. Third Edition. St. Catharines: Vanwell Publishing, 2002.

1910-2010--HMCS RAINBOW AND THE R.C.N. CENTENNIAL

HMCS Rainbow was the first ship commissioned in the Royal Canadian Navy on August 4, 1910 (the Niobe was commissioned on September 6). She was built by Palmers, Hebburn-on-Tyne and launched on March 25, 1891. She served in the Royal Navy from 1893 until she was sold to the Canadian government for service on the West Coast of Canada. Rainbow arrived at her base at Esquimalt, B.C. on November 7, 1910, where she carried out training duties, fishery patrols, and ceremonial visits until the end of 1912.

She sat idle until the beginning of the Great War and throughout August 1914, Rainbow was ordered to search for the German Navy's Leipzig but to



no avail. After the Battle of the Falkland Islands in December, and Admiral Graf von Spee's squadron defeat, Rainbow resumed her patrols along the Pacific Coast; travelling as far south as Panama.

After some success, and several seizures of prizes, most of her crew were transferred to Halifax and she became a depot ship at Esquimalt. She was first paid off on May 8, 1917 but was recommissioned again on July 5 to serve once again as a depot ship. She was finally paid off on June 1, 1920 and was sold to a Seattle, Washington shipbreaker.

Rainbow was one of twenty "second class protected cruisers". She displaced 3,600 tons and was 314.5'x43.5'x16.5'. Her top speed was 12 knots. She had a crew of 273. Her armaments included two-6" guns, six-4" guns, eight-6 pdrs., and four-14" torpedo tubes.

Sources

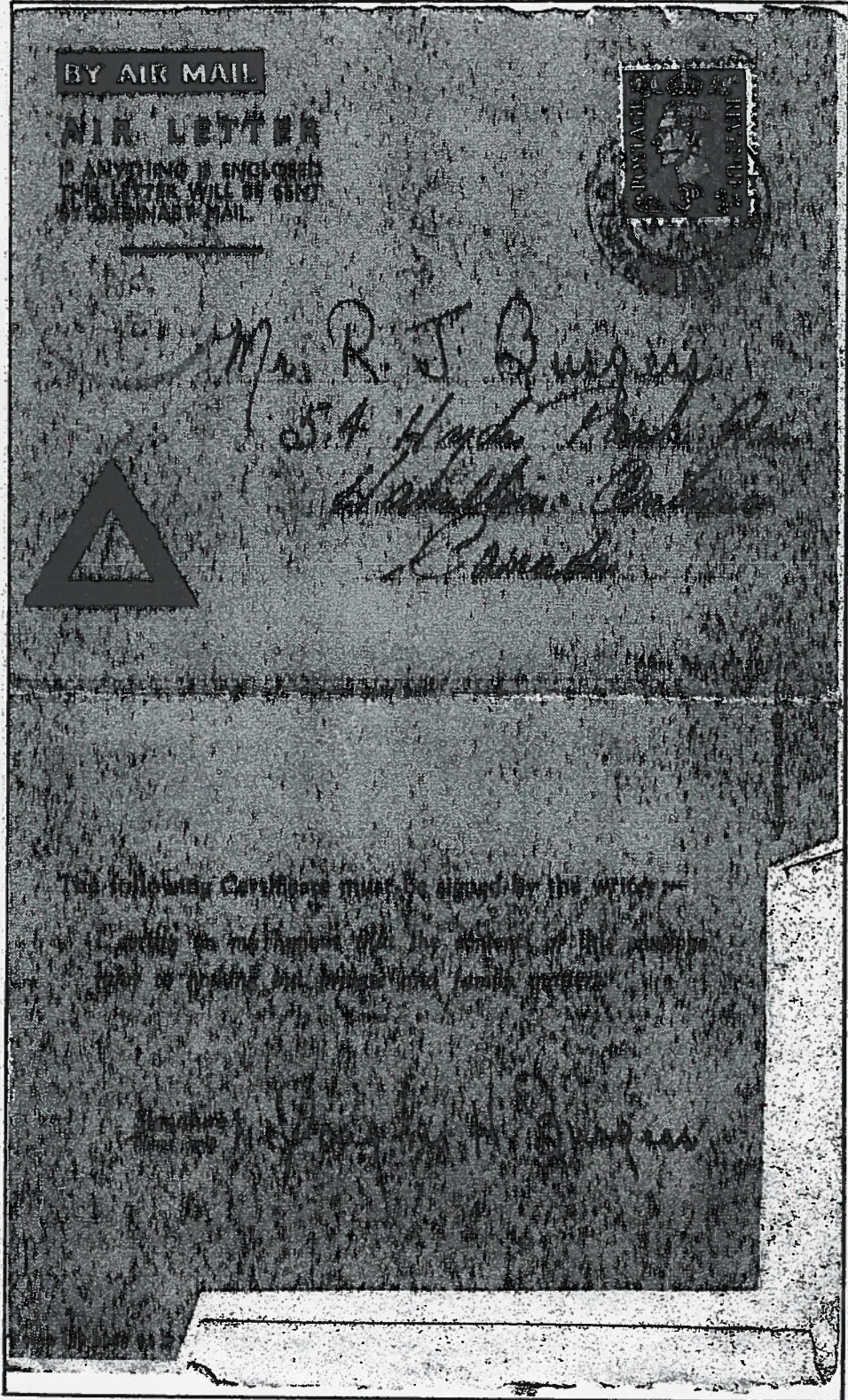
As previous article.

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NO.1 PROVOST COMPANY, SANT 'AGATA AREA, ITALY--By A.D. Hanes

This Air Letter to Hamilton bears an "FPO 313/MY 29/44" datestamp. It is from a member of the No.1 Provost Company as noted from the inside address details.

May 27/44 B-15254 4661 Burgers D.A.
 No. 1 Provost Coy
 Cdn Army Overseas
 C-15-17



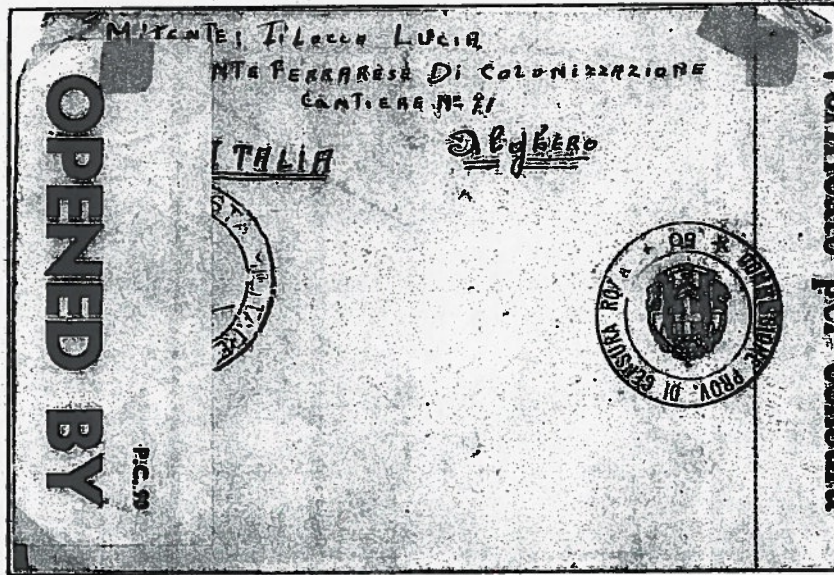
1940 P.O.W. COVER FROM ITALY TO QUEBEC--By Lee Dowsley

This cover is a bit of a mystery. It comes from Alghero, Sardinia, Italy and is dated September 5, 1940. It is directed to an Italian P.O.W. in the Citadel, Quebec City, Canada.

Italy only entered the Second World War in June 1940, so having an Italian P.O.W. (he was probably an Internee) in the Citadel is fast action. I cannot find any record of P.O.W.'s or Internees at the Citadel during the war. Of course anything is possible in wartime.

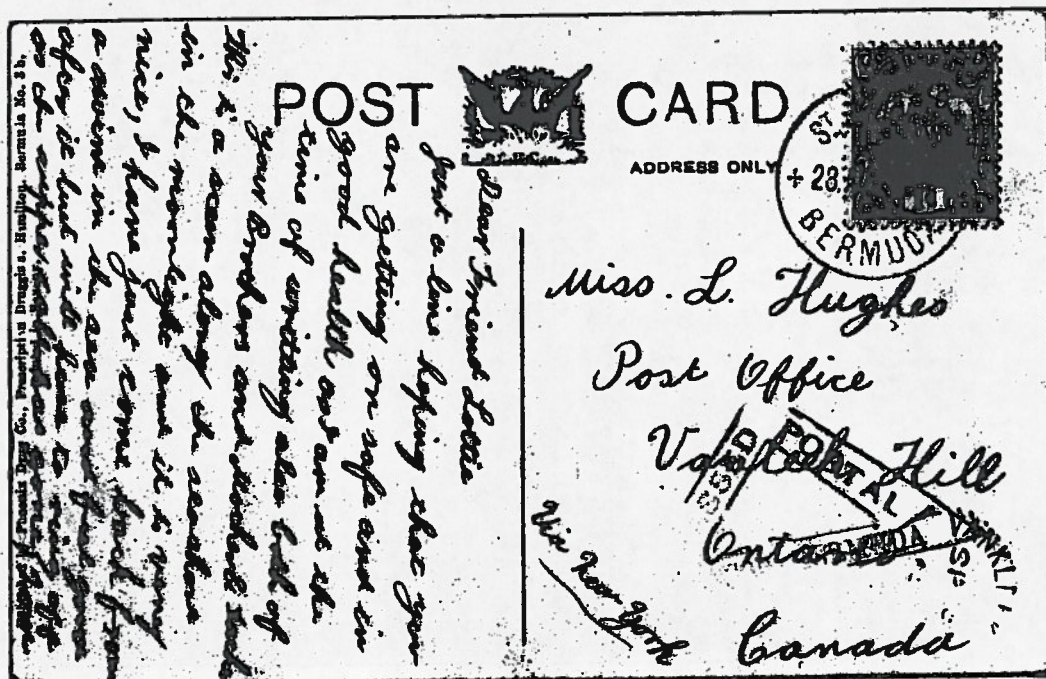
The cover bears an Italian civil censor tape "Verificato per censura" tied with two circular "COMMISSIONE PROV. DI CENSURA ROMA/50" hand-stamps. An English Type 1A label (EXAMINER 5361) re-seals the opposite edge. It is also strange that while both Italian and British Examiners inspected the contents the Canadians, with offices in both Quebec City and Ottawa, did not. [Presumably Canadian authorities did not feel the need for further censorship, as partners within the Imperial Censorship System, since the cover's contents were examined by British officials. Section 1178. Postal Censorship (DEFE 1/333; DEFE 1/334, Public Records Office, Kew, London) noted that mail between the U.K. and Canada was, by agreement, examined by the U.K. to ensure that U.K. financial policies and regulations were followed during the early days of the war. Why did the addressee denote "Royal 22 Eme Regiment"? Is the connection with the Royal 22nd Regiment (Van Doos) a coincidence? Members are urged to contact the Editor with their comments. Ed.]





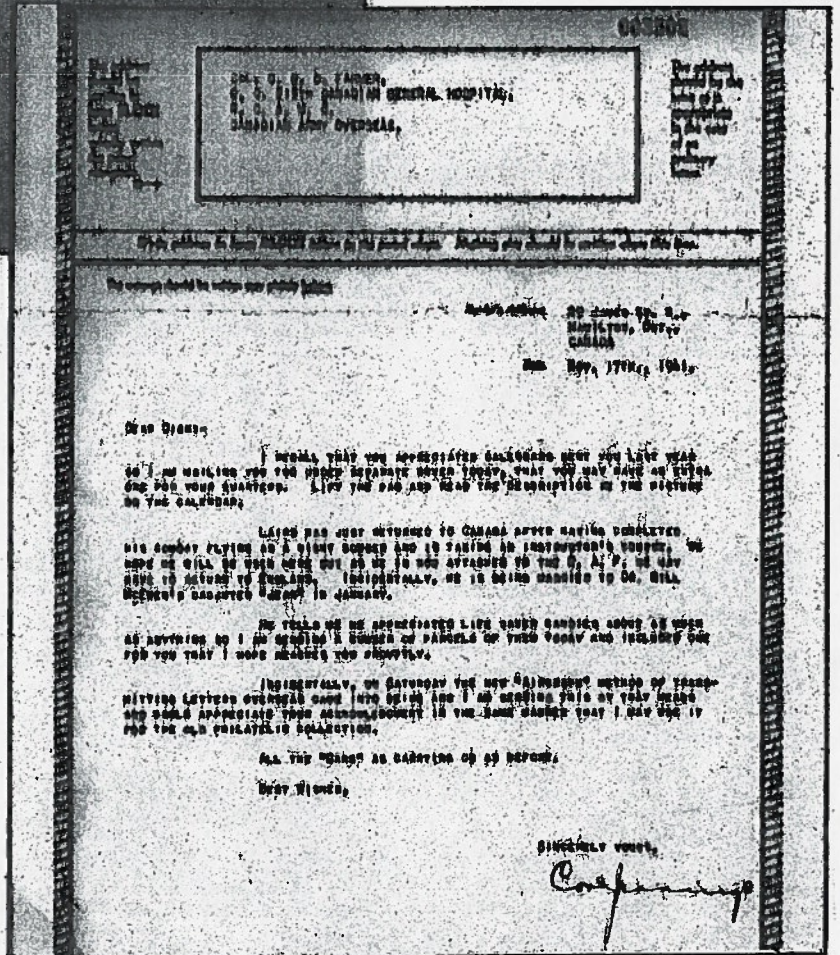
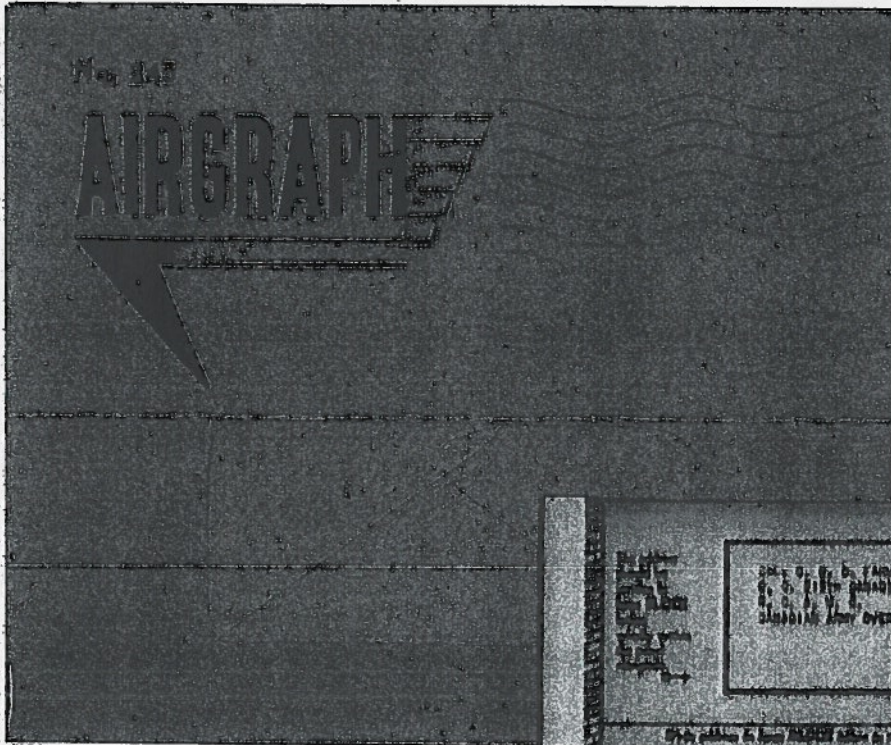
BERMUDA "PASSED POSTAL CENSOR" TRIANGLE TO CANADA--By Colin Pomfret

This postcard, from St. Georges, Bermuda, is dated August 28, 1915 and bears the usual triangle censor. The card may possibly have been from a Canadian soldier. The Royal Canadian Regiment saw garrison duty in Bermuda but had sailed for England on August 17. The 38th Royal Ottawa Battalion had sailed from Canada on May 30, 1915 and relieved the RCR's on August 12. The Royal Ottawa's remained on garrison duty on the island until May 30, 1916.



1941 OVERSEAS AIRGRAPH, CANADA TO #15 C.G.H.--By Jon Johnson

This is an Airgraph sent from Hamilton, Ontario, Monday, November 17, 1941 to #15 Canadian General Hospital at Bramshott, England. The enclosure mentions that this is just two days after the airgraph programme began. The No. 243 envelope is postmarked "Postage/Dec/1941".



Dr. J. B. TAMM,
15 CANADIAN GENERAL HOSPITAL,
BRAMSHOTT, ENGLAND.

For airmail
use of
this
envelope
is
not
permitted

NOV 17 1941
HAMILTON, ONT
CANADA

Dear Sirs:

I would like to see you again. I am writing you the first time since we left you in the hospital. I hope you are well and that the doctors are all well.

There was just a message to Canada from the hospital. It says that you are well and that the doctors are all well. I hope you are well and that the doctors are all well.

I hope you are well and that the doctors are all well. I hope you are well and that the doctors are all well.

I hope you are well and that the doctors are all well. I hope you are well and that the doctors are all well.

All the best as always to all persons.

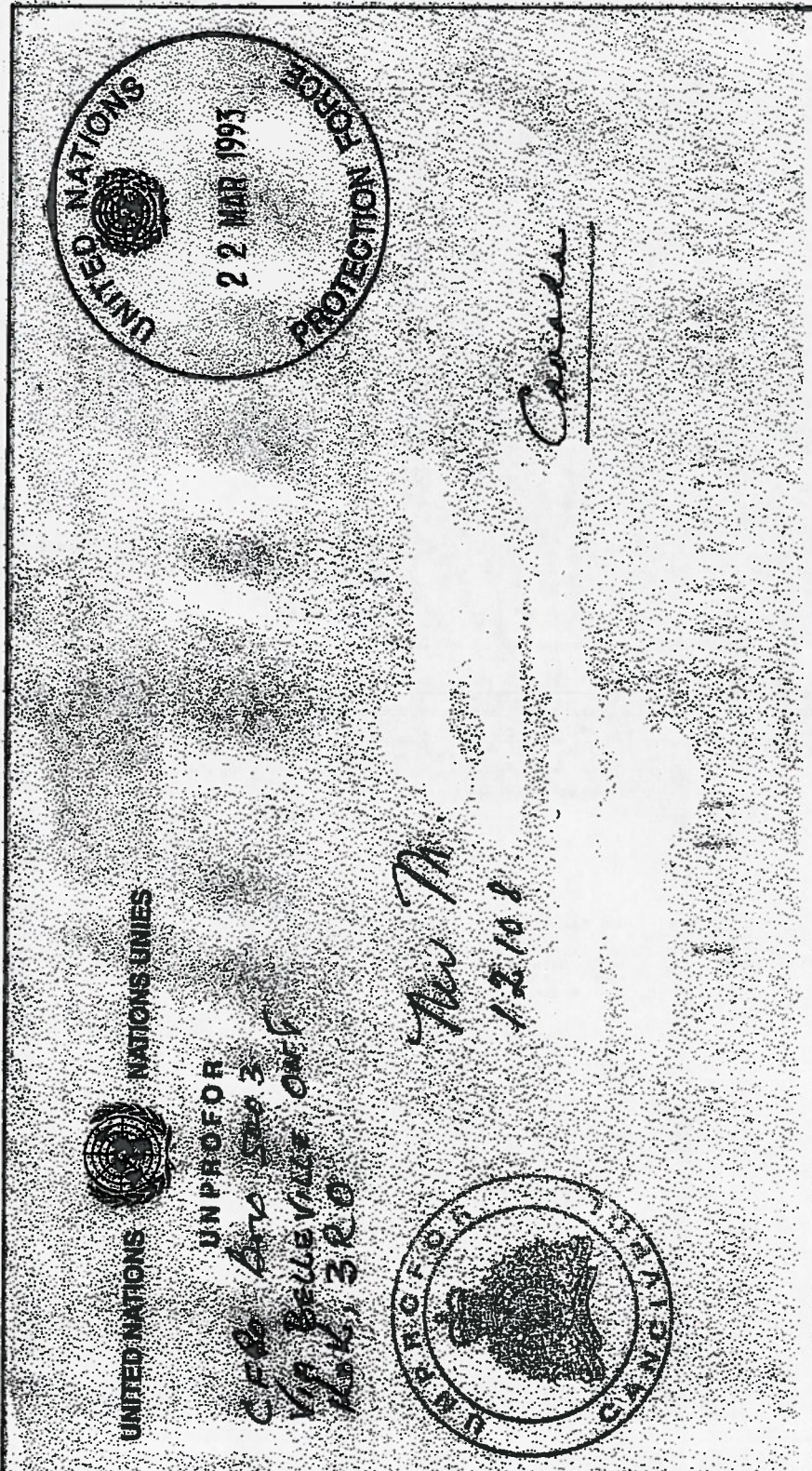
Very truly,
Jon Johnson

Sincerely yours,
Jon Johnson

CANCIVPOL/RCMP, 1993 UNPROFOR, YUGOSLAVIA--By A.D. Hanes

Here are two items associated with the Office of the R.C.M.P. Commissioner and the UNPROFOR Protection Force in the former Yugoslavia.

[For illustration purposes the oval receiver handstamp and cover have been slightly cropped. The addressee has been partially removed for privacy reasons.Ed.]



FORCE "C" P.O.W. RELATIVES ASSOCIATION, JULY 1942--Submitted by
Robert Henderson

THE CANADIAN PRISONERS OF WAR RELATIVES ASSOCIATION

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News Sheet No. 8

718 Sun Life Building, Montreal, P. Q.

July 1942

HONG KONG

The Canadian Prisoners of War Relatives Association are pleased to announce to their readers and to all relatives of the Canadian Forces captured at Hong Kong that one thousand and fifty-one books collected in May with the help of the Provincial Branches are now on their way to Japan. These have been sent in care of the International Red Cross Delegate there, and will be distributed by him to our Canadian prisoners.

We have also been informed that additional supplies of food, clothing, mail and the Personal Parcels have been sent in this shipment. Hopes were raised and relief was felt when the following letter was received this week from the Department of National Defence, Ottawa, by the relatives of Canadians serving in the Forces taken at Hong Kong.

July 24, 1942.

"Further to my letter of July 7th, I am now able to inform you that arrangements for the despatch of letter mail to and from Canadian Prisoners of War in Japanese hands have now been completed by the Post Office authorities.

Under this arrangement, you may write as often as you wish, addressing the letter as follows:

Prisoner of War Post Postage Free
(Write name of soldier here.)
(Write name of regiment here.)
(Write soldier's number here.)
Taken Prisoner of War at Hongkong
C/o Japanese Red Cross, Tokyo.

Your name, address, and relationship to soldier should be written on the back of the envelope.

Your local Post Office will have instructions as to forwarding mail addressed as above.

All letters will be censored both in Canada and on arrival in Japanese territory, so that it is important there be no information in the letters that is useful to the enemy. It is also important that no recriminations against the enemy be written in the letters, since it may result in their failing to reach those to whom they are addressed.

Photographs and snapshots, unmounted, may be included in the letters.

It is suggested that letters should not be more than two pages, but as pointed out above, there is no limit to the number of letters.

No postage is required on letters addressed to Prisoners of War.

The arrangements made are for letter mail only, so please do not send parcels as they can not be forwarded.

The arrangements made also permit Prisoners of War to write home, so that you should, in due course, receive answers to your letters."

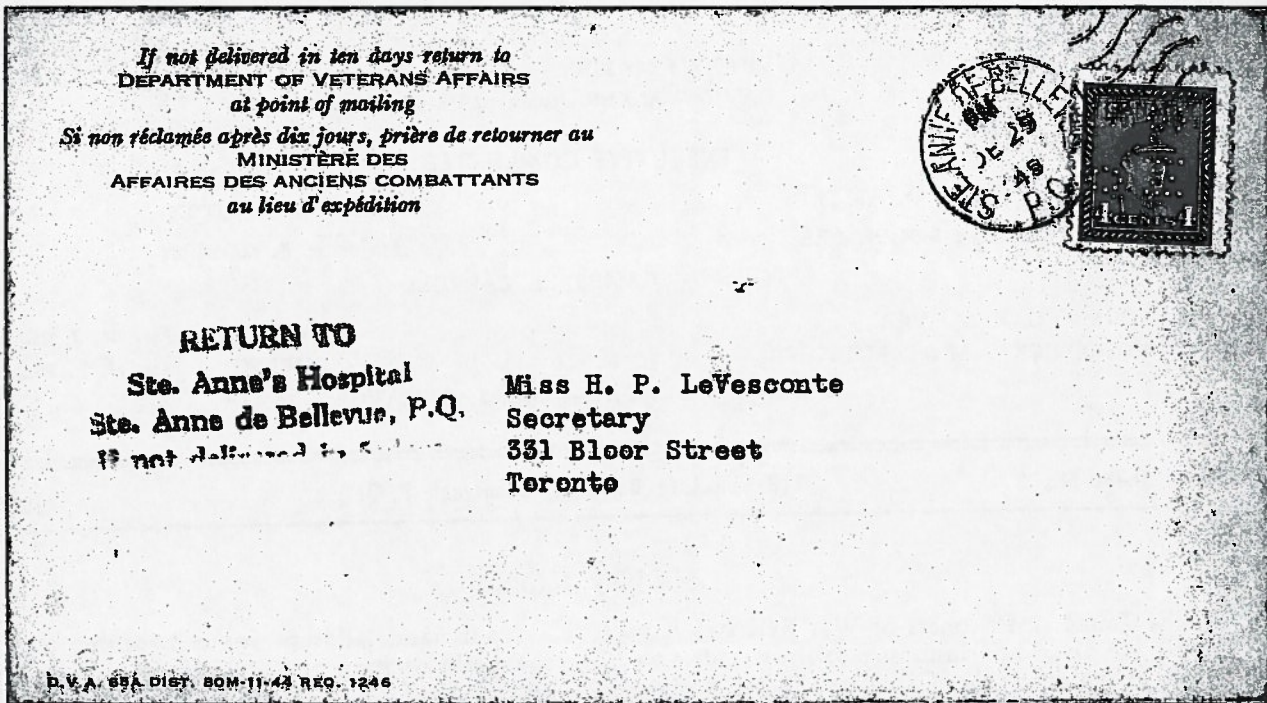
Yours sincerely,

(Signed) F. W. Clarke, Lt.-Col.

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ST. ANNE'S HOSPITAL, D.V.A. 1945--By Joh Johnson

The following cover, dated December 29, 1945, is from the St. Anne's Hospital, Ste. Anne de Bellevue, Quebec. The D.V.A.-related usage also allowed for the four-hole OHMS perfin on postage.



RE-DIRECTED CARD FROM ST. THOMAS MPO 101 TO CHRISTIE ST. HOSPITAL--By Jon Johnson

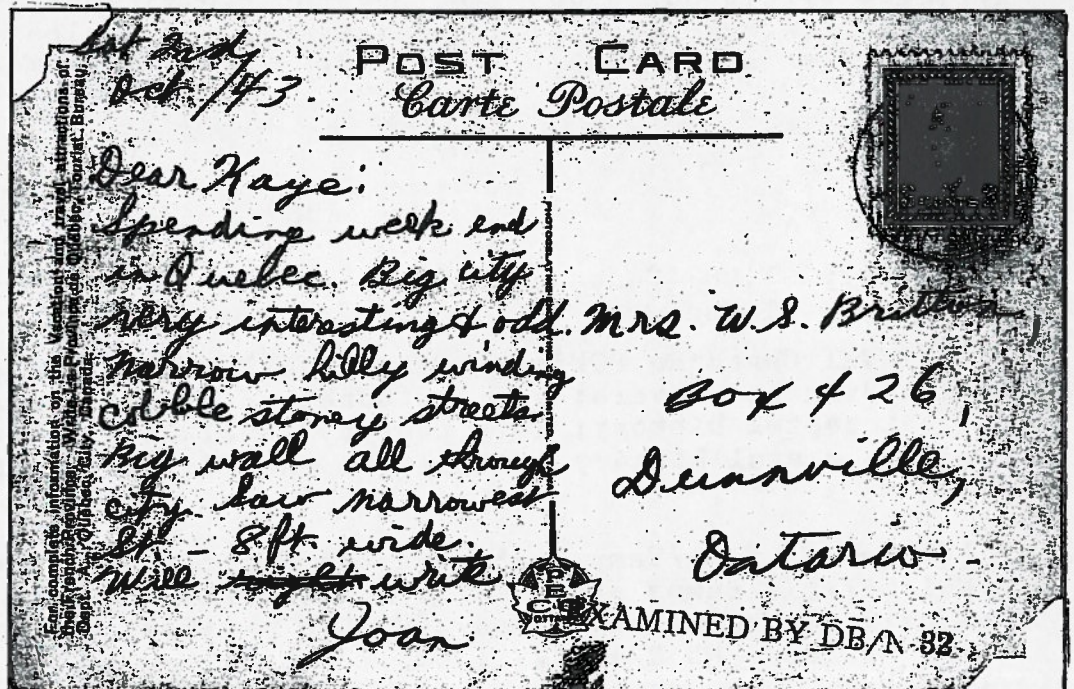
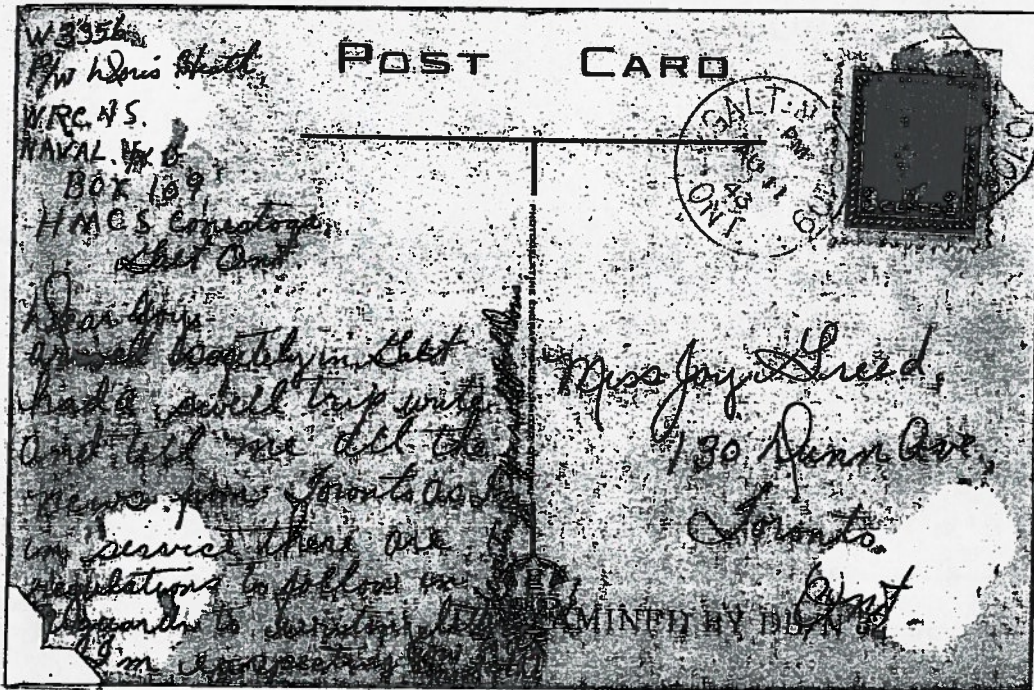
Here is a postcard addressed to "Wing 1, Squad 1, E21-BC-9, TTS RCAF

St. Thomas" which also bears an MPO 101 dater of July 27, 1942. It was forwarded to the Christie Street (Military) Hospital, Toronto, Ontario.



DB/N 32: TWO DIFFERENT N.P.O.'S, 1943?--By Colin Pomfret

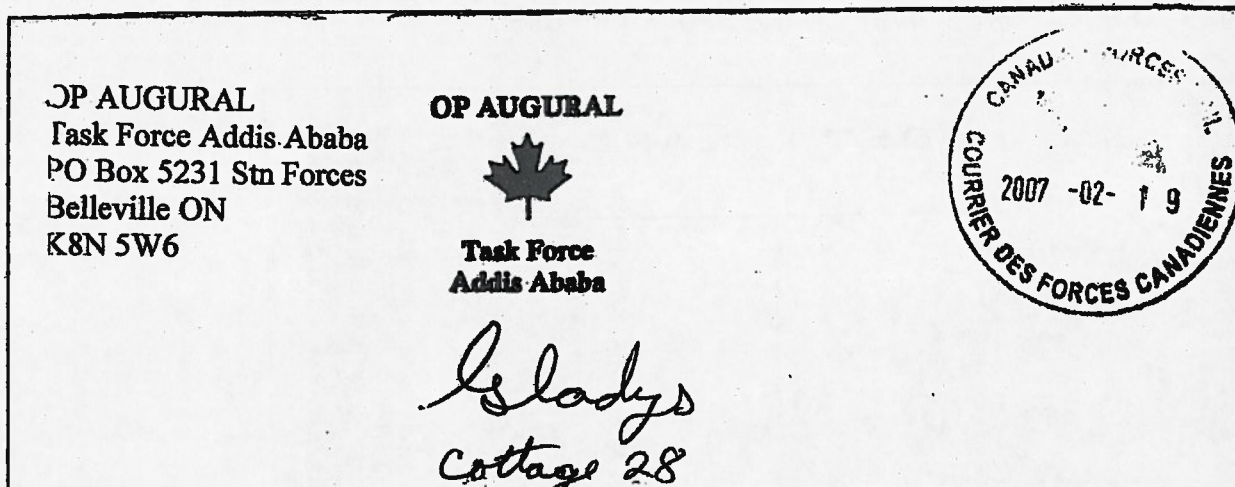
These two postcards have similar "EXAMINED BY DB/N 32" handstamps but were used at different shore establishments in 1943. The first card, with a CDS "Galt NPO 109" is dated August 11. Note the return address: "NAVAL P.O./BOX 109/HMCS CONESTOGA/GALT, ONT." The second card, dated October 5 1943, has a "St. Hyacinthe NPO 403" CDS.



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OPERATION AUGURAL, ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA, 2007--By A.D. Hanes

Here is a cover with the "CANADIAN FORCES MAIL/2007-02-19/COURRIER DES FORCES CANADIENNES" CDS in blue. This U.N. Mission mail is not common. [Addressee partially removed for privacy reasons. Edver reduced. Ed.]



Dear CMMSG Members:

Spring is in "full gear" and with that comes another May issue! Although the cupboard is not completely empty of articles, I hope that all members able to send along something will do so because it is your support which keeps this newsletter going! While one format is not usually "useful" for longer articles, I would urge members with these in mind to consider them for TOPICS. Nevertheless, should members wish to see longer articles within our pages (ie. one topic/article per issue or a serialized article over several consecutive issues), please let me know. Until August, have a wonderful late spring and early summer!

SMALL ADS

Still only \$1.00 (Canadian) per issue (mint postage at face ok). Copy to the Editor please.

WANTED: WWII Canadian POW's in OFLAG IVC & Buchenwald covers; F.S.S.F. (Devil's Brigade) covers; WWI Newfoundland cards/covers; Victoria Cross recipient postal history; 19th century Royal Navy & pre-1920 Royal Canadian Navy postal history. Details to the Editor or: blueputtees@hotmail.com (4/6)

WANTED: Sewell Camp/Camp Hughes postal history on postcards and covers. Pre-WWI militia camps and 1915/16 C.E.F. eras. Eagerly seeking registered mail, incoming mail, and EKV, LKV strikes. Darcy Hickson, RR#2, Box 24, Brandon, MB R7A 5Y2; (204) 725-0621; or email: hicksondj@mts.net (2/10)
