

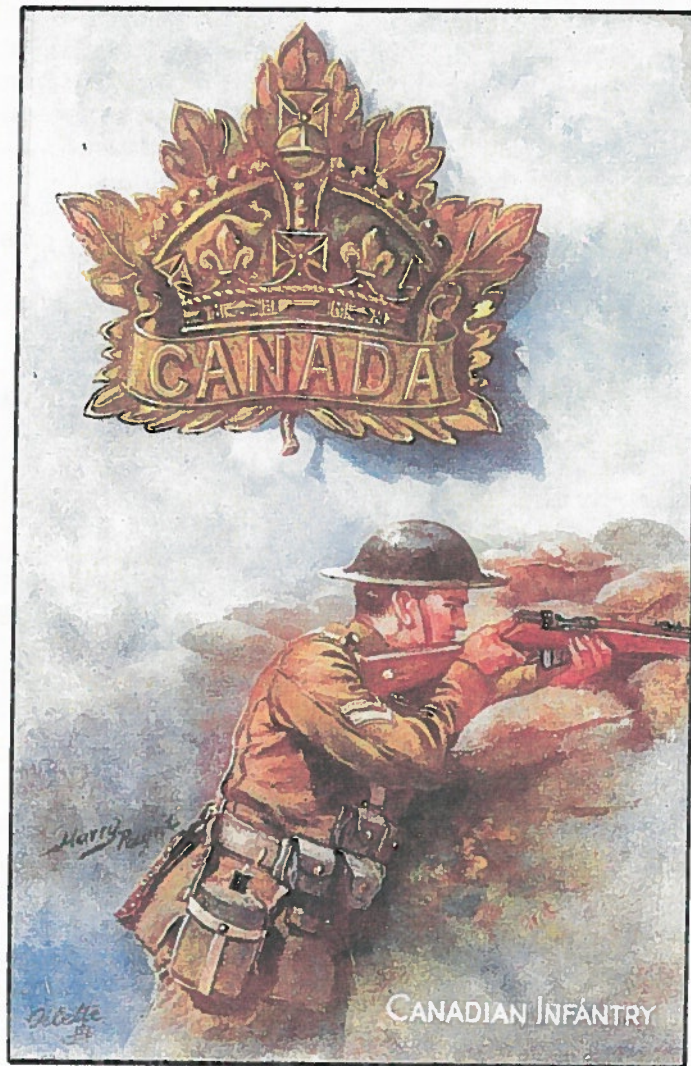


Canadian Military Mail Study Group

NEWSLETTER

Newsletter #200

AUGUST 2011
Page 1159



HARRY PAYNE'S ICONIC GREAT WAR "OILETTE"
RAPHAEL TUCK & SONS

Dear CMMSG Members:

WELCOME TO NUMBER 200! This is a momentous occasion for our Study Group and a significant milestone for our parent society BNAPS.

Doug and I wish to especially thank all those members who contributed to this very special issue, along with those (past and present) who have submitted articles, participated in meetings at our BNAPEX conventions, and given their support to our group over the years. A very big "thank you" to everyone!

Since our group's formation in Calgary in 1973, through this publication, our members have greatly contributed to the research and study of Canadian military postal history. In perusing some back issues I came upon some poignant observations by our late former Editor J. Colin Campbell. Colin wrote in the September 1986 Newsletter (Issue #69, whole p. 464): "We would like to think that the study group has advanced the research and recording of Canadian Military Postal History a considerable distance". That was an amazing twenty-five years ago and I believe that his comments still ring true today.

Given this special occasion it is naturally time for us to reflect upon our past and the many significant contributions made by our fellow members, students, and friends within our study group "family" who we have lost over the years. This anniversary issue is dedicated to their memory.

We would also wish to salute our group's former officers: Colin Campbell, Ken Ellison, Henk Burgers, E.R. "Ritch" Toop, and W.J. "Bill" Bailey for their tireless efforts, hard work, and dedication which greatly assisted in bringing our group and this publication so far.

We hope that members enjoy this anniversary issue. Our next issue will continue with our regular format. A CMMSG meeting will be held on **SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 3, 2011 AT 2:30 PM** at the **NORTH BAY, ONTARIO BNAPEX 2011!**

C. DOUGLAS SAYLES
Chairman/Treasurer

DEAN W. MARIO
Editor

Congratulations to the BNAPS Military Mail Study Group on their 200th issue. Since 1973 your Group has listed, described and illustrated a wide variety of items related to mailings by, or addressed to, members of the Canadian Armed Forces. There also has been considerable material related to the procedures of mail distribution in the services. The information has resulted in several major handbooks. Almost as impressive as reaching a 200th issue is that the newsletter has been maintained over a period of almost 38 years, and has averaged more than five issues a year over that period. As President of BNAPS I want to express my appreciation to all the contributors over the years, and especially to the previous newsletter editors, Colin Campbell, Ken Ellison, and Henk Burgers and to present editor (since 1995!) Dean Mario. Well done.

Robert Lemire. President BNAPS

Boer War Connections

Henk Burgers

CANADA sent troops overseas for the first time when it became involved in what was actually the Second Boer War in 1899 when Great Britain requested that it send a military force to South Africa to assist in the fight against the Boers. Prime Minister Wilfrid Laurier decided to raise a special force, the 2nd (Special Service) Battalion of the Royal Canadian Regiment of Infantry.

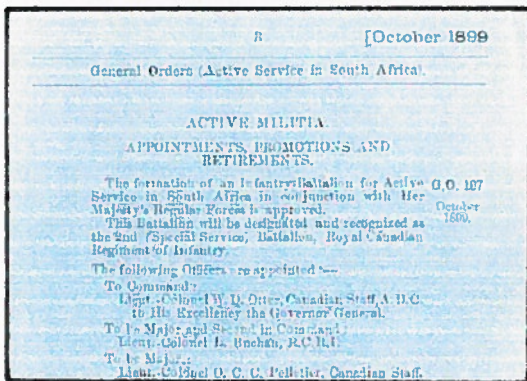


Figure 1. GENERAL ORDER 107 of 1899 for the Militia, authorizing the raising of an infantry Battalion for Active Service in South Africa.

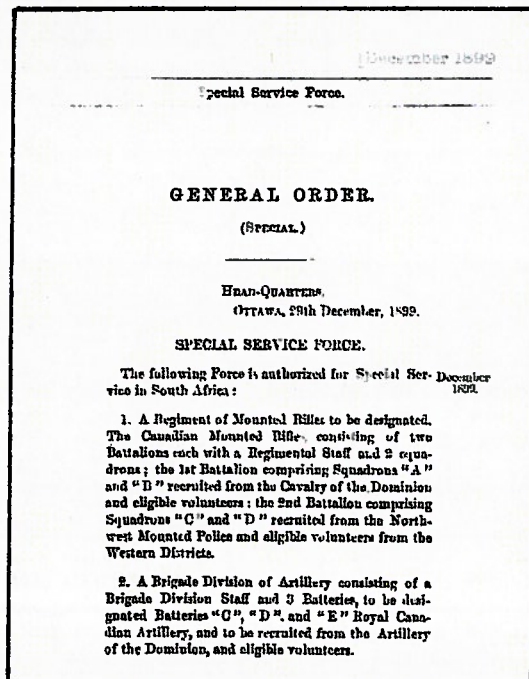


Figure 2. Special GENERAL ORDER authorizing a Force for Special Service in South Africa consisting of The Canadian Mounted Rifles and a Brigade Division of field artillery consisting of Batteries "C", "D" and "E" Royal Canadian Artillery.

En Route

On 30 October 1899, the first contingent of 1000 soldiers sailed from Quebec City on the Allan Line's *SS Sardinian*, a converted cattle ship. They arrived in Cape Town on 29 November 1899 and on December 1 boarded trains for Belmont, where they joined the British rear guard for the next two months.

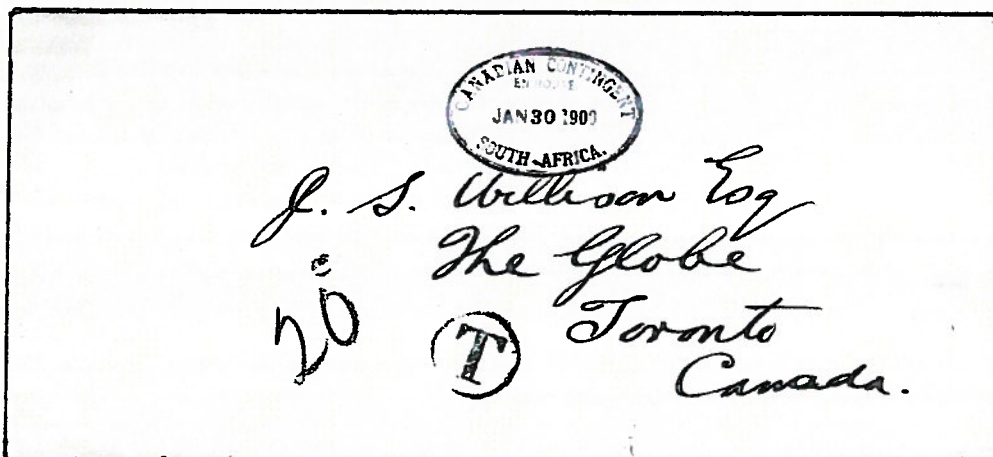


Figure 3. The EN ROUTE marking used on 30 January 1900. Cover to The Globe newspaper in Toronto from unidentified soldier. It did not receive the concessionary rate and was assessed 20c due. Front has "T" in circle and mss 20. Reverse has a ghost impression of the T due marking plus a Toronto split circle arrival marking 9/FE 16/00.

The second contingent included the five-member Postal Corps detachment, commanded by Lt WR Ecclestone of Hamilton. It left Halifax on the *SS Laurentian* on 21 January 1900. Its postal kit included an oval rubber date stamp inscribed "CANADIAN CONTINGENT EN ROUTE SOUTH AFRICA". This stamp was used on 30 January 1900 when letters were posted at St. Vincent in the Cape Verde Islands where

the ship stopped for coaling. It was also used on 31 January and 15 February 1900.

After arrival in South Africa, the "EN ROUTE" part was removed and this stamp and another one were used on Canadian mail in Capetown until 27 December 1900.



Figure 4. Letter to Truro, NS, from Canadian soldier Kaulbach, son of the Archdeacon of NS, to his mother, posted in St. Helena on 15 December 1899.

There are ten covers known from St. Helena. Rank or first name of Kaulbach is not known, because none of the covers are endorsed with the name of his regiment or rank. This was his first letter home and was written en route to South Africa, and posted in St. Helena, 5000 miles from home. The reverse bears a Truro arrival marking of JA 15/1900. The envelope flap bears the shipping line (Union Steam Ship Company Limited) seal in blue. The ship arrived in Capetown on 16 December, 11 days sailing from S. Helena. It would appear that the St. Helena date stamp may be wrong and should be 5 December.

The Canadian postal detachment was part of the British Army Post Office system in South Africa. This explains why many covers are seen bearing the cachet plus a British military postmark.

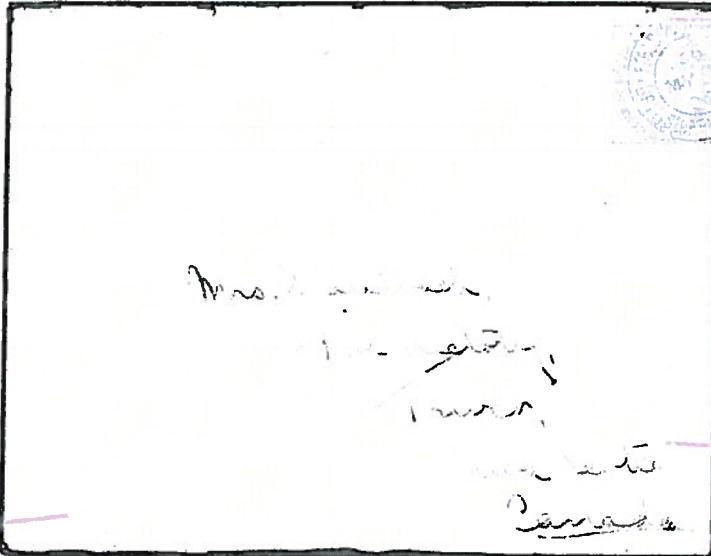


Figure 5. British Army Field Post Office with Indicia 36 DRCDS dated 7 May 1900 ties GB 1d lilac on cover to Mrs Kaulbach at The Rectory, Truro, NS. Stamp selvaige used to seal homemade envelope.

The letter in Fig. 5 was posted at APO 1, located then in Brandfort, Orange River Colony. It served the Army Headquarters of the South African Field Force.

The other Canadian contingents used civilian offices or British Field Post Offices, depending on what they had access to. Only a third of the Canadian mail received the cachet, as mail was presorted and bagged for Canada in Bloemfontein or Pretoria so there

was no need to do this again in Cape Town. Some BFPO numbers seen include 1, 17, 21, 30 and 100. APOs include 43, 50, 52, 54 and 55.

The postal staff returned to Canada on 20 January 1901 and the corps was disbanded for the time being. After this, all Canadian mail used APOs or civilian post offices.

Marching to Pretoria

On 21 January 1900, the first members of the 2nd Canadian contingent sailed from Halifax. On board the *SS Laurentian* were two artillery batteries (D and E) from the Royal Canadian Artillery. The ship arrived in Cape Town on 17 February. They were followed on 27 January by the 2nd Battalion, Canadian Mounted

Rifles, sailing on board *SS Pomeranian*, which arrived on 26 February. The final draft left Halifax in February, on board the Elder-Dempster liner *SS Milwaukee*, and carried the 1st Battalion, CMR, along with C Battery, RCA.

The Second Contingent cover in Figure 6 was sent on 25 July 1900 by Pte BC d'Easum of the 2nd Bn CMR to his father in Hamilton.

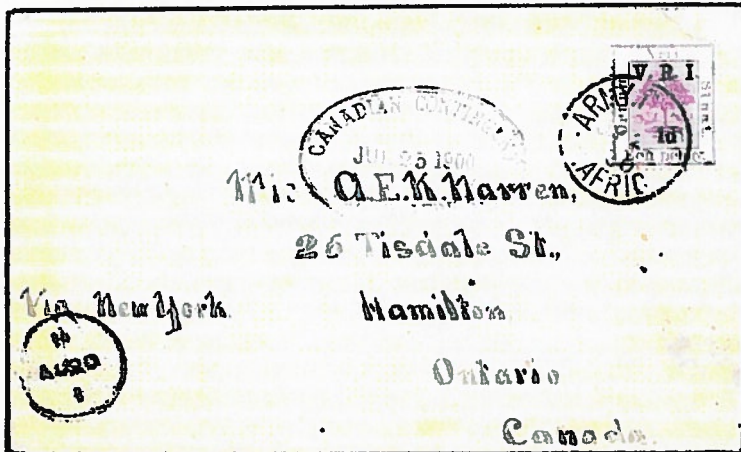
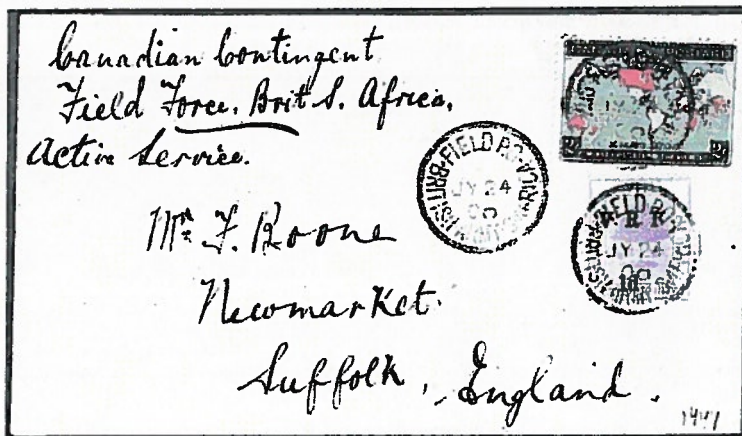


Figure 6. Orange Free State franked cover to Hamilton, endorsed "Via New York". Stamp overprinted VRI/1d and cancelled by ARMY [P.O.]/[S] AFRICA/JL 25. NY arrival marking AU 20 on front and Hamilton arrival CDS of AUG 20 on reverse.

The gunners of course also sent mail home. This is a m/s endorsed "Canadian Contingent Field Force Brit. S. Africa". Three strikes of FIELD P.O. / BRITISH ARMY S. AFRICA. Proud Type IV datestamp, locally made, with a damaged

second 0. Used by FPO 43, 2nd series. This was the Advanced Depot at Bloemfontein from 1 May 1900 to 7 August 1902.

Figure 7. Canadian Contingent Cover with Orange River Colony 1d and Canadian 2c Map stamp to Newmarket, Suffolk, England. Posted at Bloemfontein by Pte M. Boone of 'E' Field Battery, RCA.



The reverse bears Newmarket arrival marking CDS AU 20/00. The map stamp was perhaps used as a patriotic label; the cover may be philatelic. However, an article in *SG Stamps* of Oct 2008 states that often stamps of soldiers' home countries were used, as well as GB stamps. This is one of 2 known entires with Canadian stamps; illustrated in Rowe, p. 82.

The South African Constabulary

The British government raised a para-military force to police the conquered Boer republics. For this purpose they set up the South African Constabulary (SAC). In August 1900, two months after the fall of Pretoria, Major-General Robert Baden-Powell, was appointed to command the force. However, despite the British optimistic expectation that the 8,500-strong constabulary could assume responsibility for pacifying the countryside, the Boers continued to fight on following the capture of their capitals.

Figure 7 shows a letter from a member of the SAC to Merritton (now part of St. Catharines), Ontario.

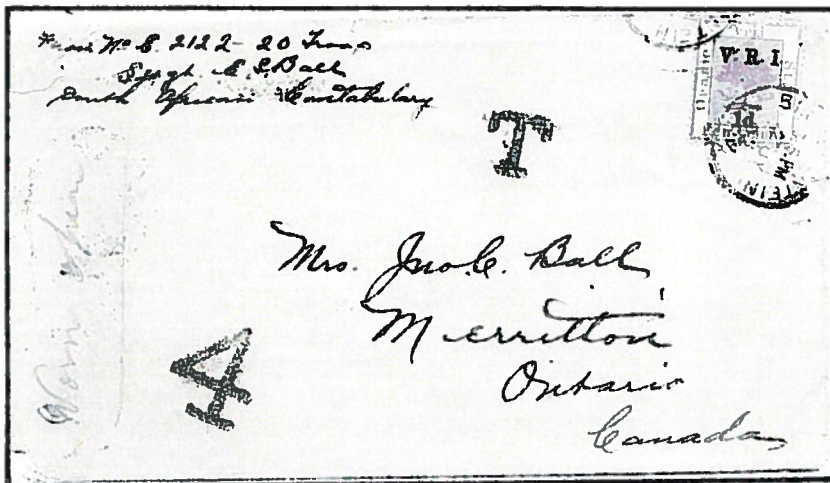


Figure 7. Cover from Sgt Ball of 20 Troop, SAC, in Bloemfontein to Merritton, ON. The 1d Orange Free State VRI surcharge is cancelled by Bloemfontein civilian cancel 4 July 1902. Also rated "T" and 4 due, but should not have been collected as soldier's mail was free. Reverse with superb strikes of APO Bloemfontein dispatch marking, Hamilton CDS transit marking and Merritton square circle receiving marking.

Patriotic Passions

There was a good deal of patriotic fervour in the British Empire and Canada certainly shared this. One of the results was an outpouring of postcards, preprinted stationery and other items all demeaning the Boers.

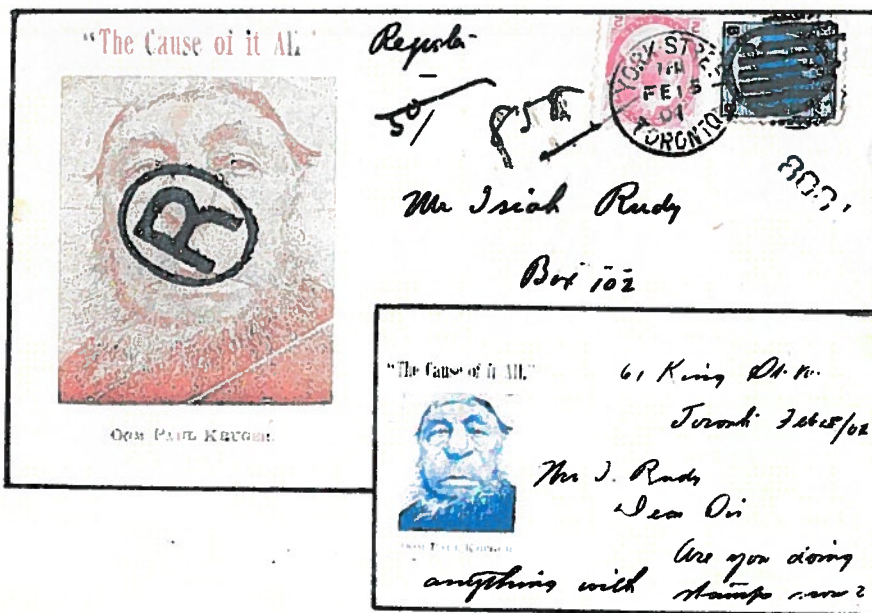


Figure 8 shows an example of this rather undignified propaganda.

Figure 8. A registered letter from Toronto to Pittsburgh, PA featuring "Oom" (Uncle) Paul Kruger, The Cause of it All". York Street duplex cancel FE 15/01 and letter contents. Reverse bears another York Street duplex, a Toronto split ring, a Buffalo NY transit marking, another transit marking, and a Pittsburgh Registration Div. arrival marking in violet.

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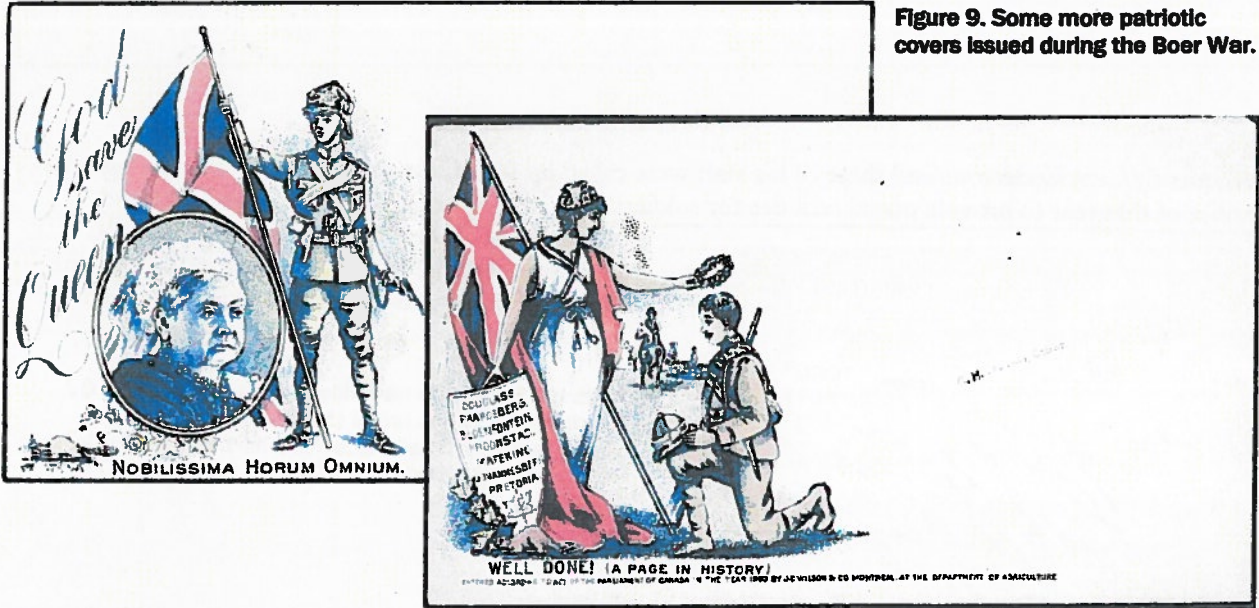


Figure 9. Some more patriotic covers issued during the Boer War.

The Home Front

Some 2000 other troops served as garrison troops in Halifax, Nova Scotia, to allow British troops to serve at the front, or landed after the fighting ended. Canada replaced the British regiment in Halifax for the duration of the war with a Canadian unit, the 3rd (Special Service) Battalion, Royal Canadian Regiment of Infantry. Figure 10 shows an example of correspondence to a member of the battalion.

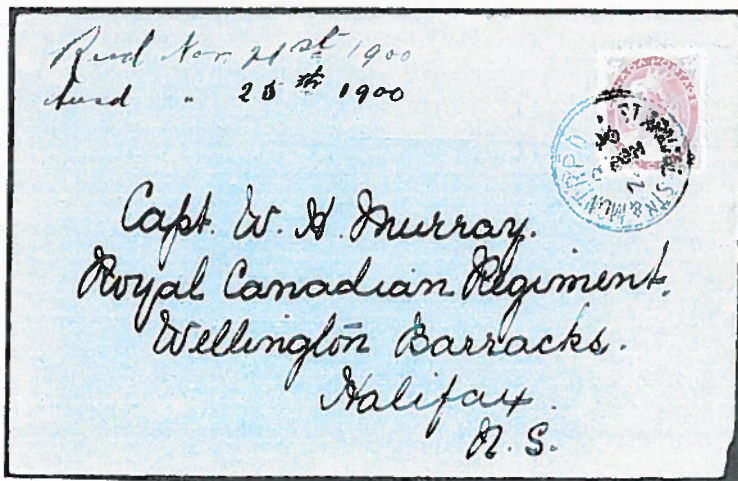
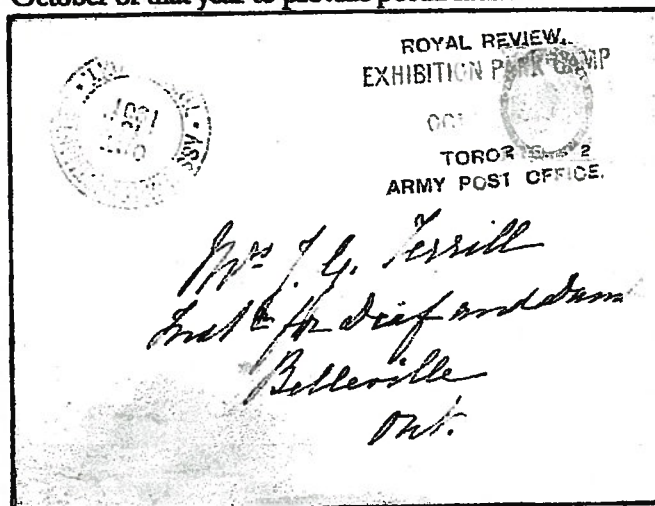


Figure 10. Letter to Capt WH Murray, RCR, Wellington Barracks, Halifax (he was with the 3rd (S.S.) Battalion). 2c numeral tied by St. Armand Stn & Mont RPO. Backstamped with Halifax arrival marking Nov 20. Same correspondent as shown in Rowe p. 29.

Royal Review Souvenir Marking

Although strictly speaking not Boer War covers, the postal arrangements for the Royal Review of 1901 are usually discussed in the same breath. The postal corps detachment had returned to Canada in January 1901 and was promptly disbanded. The men went back to their civilian jobs in the post office.

Subsequently Capt Ecclestone and three of his staff were called up for Militia service in Toronto during 8-12 October of that year to provide postal facilities for soldiers mustered there for the visit of the Duke and



Duchess of Cornwall and York. It was at this 'ROYAL REVIEW' on 11 October 1901 that the first souvenir military postal marking was used.

Figure 11. Cover to Belleville, ON, franked with 2c QV numeral. Front has round stamp of Assistant Postmaster Toronto in blue. Reverse bears Belleville CDS arrival marking OC 16/01.

The South African or Second Boer War as it was also known, lasted from 1899-1902 and involved more than 7,000 Canadians, including 12 female nurses. A total of 267 soldiers died in the conflict. Six contingents were sent overseas between 1899 and 1902. The last draft of the sixth contingent consisting of part of the 4th Regiment CMR and the 5th Regiment sailed from Halifax on the *SS Corinthian* on 23 May 1902 and arrived at Cape Town on 18 June 1902.

The first to return (at the end of their enlistment period) was the 2nd (SS) Battalion RCRI on 1 October 1900 on the *SS Idaho* from Cape Town, arriving in Halifax on 1 November 1900. Peace was signed at Pretoria on 31 May 1902 and the last of the sixth contingent returned via Liverpool, boarded the *SS Lake Erie*, on 3 September 1902 and disembarked at Quebec on the 13th. A number of Canadians remained in South Africa with the South African Constabulary and some other, more or less irregular, units such as the Canadian Scouts.

References

- [1] W.J. Bailey & E.R. Toop, *Canadian Military Postal Markings, 1881-1995* (Charles G. Firby Publications, Waterford, MI, 1996).
- [2] W.J. Bailey & E.R. Toop, Ed. E.B. Proud, *The Canadian Military Posts*, Volume 1, (E.B. Proud, 1984).
- [3] K. Rowe, *The Postal History of the Canadian Contingents in the Anglo-Boer War 1899-1902*, (Vincent G. Greene Philatelic Research Foundation, 1981).
- [4] Canadian War Museum, http://www.warmuseum.ca/cwm/exhibitions/boer/boerwarhistory_e.shtml
- [5] The Canadian Encyclopedia, <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/index.cfm?PgNm=TCE&Params=M1ARTM0012043>
- [6] Proud-Bailey Co. Ltd, *History of the British Army Postal Service, Vol. 1*, Edward B. Proud, Ed, 1982.
- [7] Canadians Troops to South Africa, 1899 - 1902, <http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~abwcobit/LER/Boer/index.htm>
- [8] W. Sanford Evans, *The Canadian Contingents and Canadian Imperialism*, (Eugene G. Ursual, Ottawa).

**CANADIAN RAILWAY TROOPS IN PALESTINE AND SYRIA--
IN THE SHADOW OF T.E. LAWRENCE**

--Robert Toombs

The summer of 1918 saw General Sir Edmund Allenby's Egyptian Expeditionary Force (E.E.F.) holding a front from Haifa on the Mediterranean in the west to the Jordan River in the east, just north of the Dead Sea. Allenby was planning a major offensive against Turkish Forces; he requested of the War Office in London for a contingent of expert railway bridge builders. Canadian railway troops in France were approached on August 3, 1918 and this assignment was approved on August 20, 1918. Six officers and 255 men were assembled mainly from eight Canadian railway battalions, by the 12th Battalion, Canadian Railway Troops (C.R.T.), at Verton, France. This newly-formed 1st Bridging Company, C.R.T., sailed from Marseilles September 20, via Malta, and arrived in Palestine on September 30, 1918.

While the 1st Bridging Company was in transit from France to Palestine, the Meggido battles had commenced on September 19, 1918. The Turkish Army was soundly beaten there and retreated, following the Haifa--Dera'a connector of the main Hejaz Railway line, eastwards up the Yarmuk River which joins the Jordan River, a few miles south of the Sea of Galilee near Samakh (see FIG. 1). In so doing, they sabotaged two key 180-foot long bridges near Samakh (see note below). The retreat continued north from Dera'a, up the Hejaz Railway main line through Syria.

The brilliant destructive work done on the railway line approaching Damascus from the south by Lt. Colonel T.E. Lawrence leading Emir Feisal's troops, likely precluded a regrouping of Turkish forces about Damascus which fell to the British and Allies on October 1, 1918. This Turkish retreat yet continued beyond Damascus. On October 9, Allenby accepted an offer from Emir Feisal to operate northwards from Damascus with 1,500 cavalry and camel-men against Turkish forces between Hama and Aleppo (see note below). The retreating Turks, under the Austrian General Liman von Sanders, blew up railway installations in the Hama. On October 26, the British entered Aleppo and then advanced eight miles beyond it along the Hejaz Railway line towards Alexandretta. An Armistice was signed with Turkey on October 30, 1918, formally ending hostilities in this theatre.

An operating railway was urgently needed by the British to supply their rapidly advancing forces and to consolidate their increasing territorial gains. Starting October 5, 1918, shortly after their September 30 arrival in Palestine the 1st Bridging Company, assisted by 560 men of the Egyptian Labour Corps, began the restoration of two of the key bridges on the Yarmuk River near Samakh (T.E. Lawrence had attacked these bridges behind Turkish lines in 1917 but failed).

These Canadian railway troops were ravaged by poor local health con-

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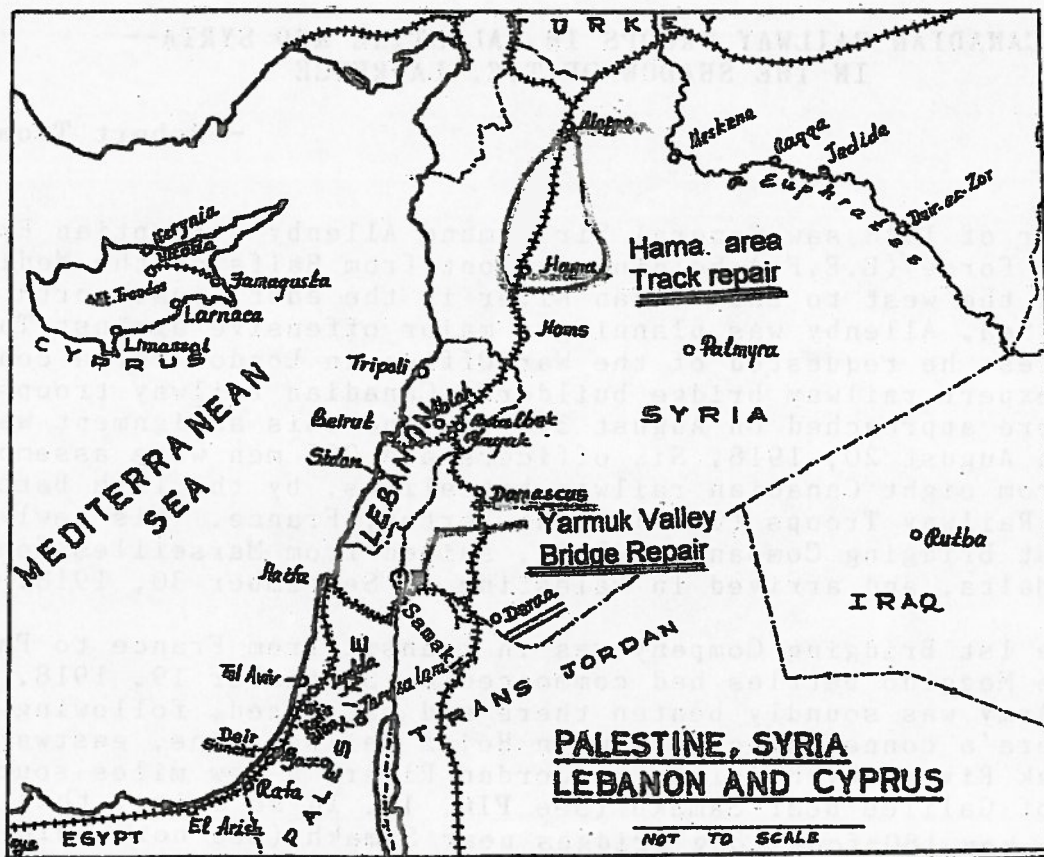


FIG. 1. Sketch map shows a portion of the Hejaz Railway route running from Arabia to Constantinople. The branch line from Dera'a west via Samakh terminates at Haifa on the Mediterranean. Shown are the general areas of operations of the Canadian Railway Troops at Samakh (in present day Jordan) and around Hama (in present day Syria).

ditions in the swampy Yarmuk River valley in the Samakh area. By mid-October sickness (malaria and influenza) had reduced the 1st Bridging Company's strength by 75%. Many were hospitalised; two died from malaria and two from pneumonia. However by October 26, the bridges at Samakh were restored to service and British rail traffic then flowed through to Damascus.

At the end of October 1918 the Canadians relocated to the Hama area, north of Damascus, to restore the railway line until the first week of February 1919. One month later on March 14 the 1st Bridging Company, C.R.T., sailed for France. Some of its members remained behind in hospitals to recuperate.

FIG. 2 shows a cover addressed to St. John, New Brunswick, postmarked

[Cont'd.]

December 26, 1918 at Safed, Palestine. The sender was Sapper Emil Ramm, a thirty-year old Norwegian-Canadian batchelor who enlisted at St. John in 1916. The cover was censored by Lt. J.F. Sandersoon, C.R.T.

The postmark "Field Post Office/X/26 DE 18/SZ 61" is a stationary post office attributed to Safed, Palestine from November 1918 to February 1919 (Kennedy and Crabbs, p. 154). The Censor Marking No. 1386 is of the CM7 Type (numbers ranging from 701 to 4501) in use by the E.E.F. between November 1915 and January 1919 (K & C, p. 145). There are no back markings.

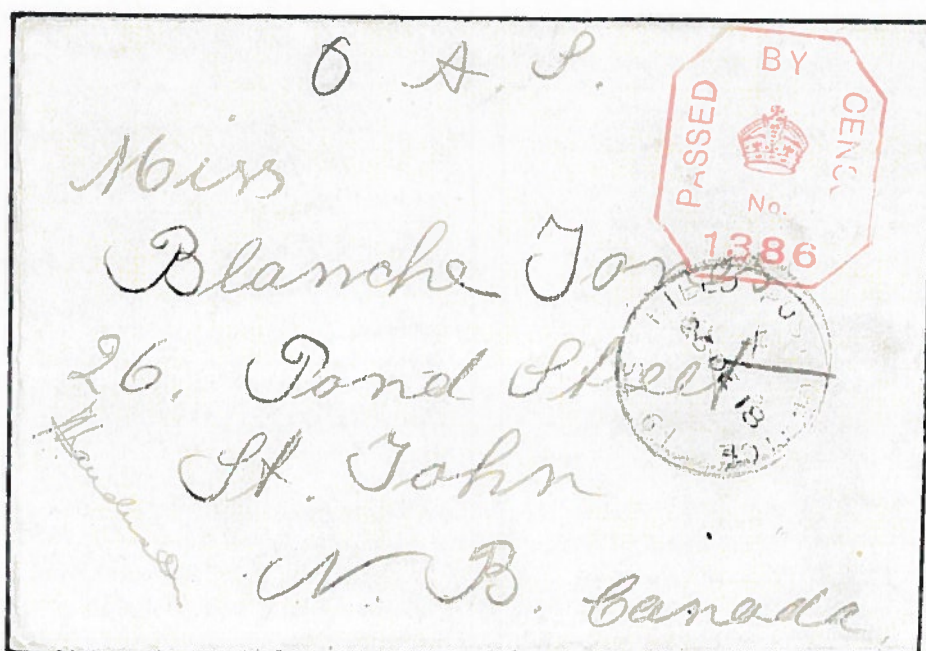


FIG. 2. The only recorded cover (to date) from the Canadian Railway Troops in Palestine and Syria. Postmarked "Field Post Office/X/26 DE 18/SZ 61".

A four-page letter from Sapper Ramm was enclosed in the above cover. As far as is known, this is the first reported correspondence from the Canadian Railway Troops in Palestine and Syria. FIG. 3 illustrates the enclosed letter [reduced to 60%.Ed.] and a full transcript follows.

[Cont'd.]

FIG. 3. A letter from Sapper Ramm, C.R.T., Palestine.

Palestine 23.12.1918

Dear Miss,

I suppose you will rather be surprised to hear from a stranger, got your address from a girl friend of yours, and though I may write you a few lines from this so called holy Land. I want to tell you her name you have to find that out yourself we are here a few hundred Canadians in a Coy. called "The first Canadian Bridging Company". At present we are close to the Sea of Galilee building Bridges across the Yarmuk River, which runs into the Sea of G. After doing our bit in France for about two years, we

2.
volunteered to come out here. Been cursed that day ever since. This Country is no good for white men, too much sickness. Only been over here now three months and out of that nearly every man in the Coy. spent a month in Hospital. I was in Hospital in Alexandria for 34 days, pretty sick. Don't like that Place at all, and never want to see it again. The War is over now and let's hope the day will soon come for us to leave this Country for Canada. I hear the Spanish "Flu" is very bad over there. Hope you will steer clear of it, as it is no fun to be sick. Well Miss Christmas is only a day off.

3.
now. Hope you will have a merry one and a happy New Year and lots of them. Sorry to say that we have to go next year we will have at home. My address is now, if you want to answer, 473128, Sapper E. Ramm, 1st Canadian Bridging Coy., Canadian Railway Troops, E. & F., 70 of Army Post Office London.
It better to send Mail there as we never know when we leave here. I always have a record of all Troops

4.
Now News is getting scarce, so I have to close for this time. Hoping to hear from your side of the World soon.
I remain yours sincerely
Sapper E. Ramm
One of the H.Q. Co.
Please write soon.

[Cont'd.]

Sapper Ramm's letter [as written.Ed.] is transcribed below:

"Palestine 23.12.1918

Dear Miss.

I suppose you will rather be surprised to hear from a stranger. Got your adress from a girlfriend of yours, and thought I my write you a few lines from this so called holy land. I wont tell you her name you have to find that out yourself. We are here a few hundred Canadians in a Coy. called the "first Canadian Bridging Company". At present we are close to the Sea of Galilee building bridges across the Yarmuk River wich runs into the Sea of G.

After doing our bit in France for about two years, we [2] volunteered to come out here. Been cursen that day ever since. This country is no good for white men, to much sickness. Only been over here now three months and out of that nearly every man in the Coy, spent a month in Hospital. I was in Hospital in Alexandria for 34 days, pretty sick. Dont like that place at all, and never want to see it again.

The war is over now, and lets hope the day will soon come for us to leave this Country for Canada. I hear the spanish "Flu" is very bad over there. Hope you will steer clear of it, as it is no fun to be sick. Well Miss Christmas is only a day of [3] now. Hope you will have a merry one and a happy New Year and lots of them. Sorry to say that we have to spent it in such a God forsaken Place. Never mind next year we will have at home. My adress is now, if you want to answer, 743128. Sapper E. Ramm 1st Bridging Coy. Canadian Railway Troops E.E.F. c/of Army Post Office London.

It better to send mail there as we never know when we leave here. The alway have a record of all Troops [4] now news is getting scarce, so I have to close for this time. Hoping to hear from your side of the World soon. I remain yours sincerely Sapper E. Ramm One of the 115 Batt. Please write soon."

A partial copy of the 1916 Attestation Paper of Ramm follows in FIG. 4. Although this is the first recorded postal history from the C.R.T. in the Near East, there are possibly a few such other "sleepers" out there awaiting discovery. Good hunting!

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Kennedy and Crabb. The Postal History of the British Army in WWI-Before and After: 1903-1929. February 1977.

Swettenham, John A., Captain, Royal Canadian Engineers. Report No. 85, Historical Section (G.S.), Army Headquarters, Operations in Palestine, 1918-1919. Directorate of History, Canada, October 20, 1959.

Virk, D.S. Indian Army Post Offices in the Second World War. The Army Postal Service Association, New Delhi, 1982.

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[Cont'd.]

TRIPPLICATE.

115th Battalion, G. E. F.

ATTESTATION PAPER.

No. 743128.

Folio.

CANADIAN OVER-SEAS EXPEDITIONARY FORCE.

QUESTIONS TO BE PUT BEFORE ATTESTATION.

(ANSWERS)

- 1. What is your surname?..... Ramm
- 1a. What are your Christian names?..... Emil
- 1b. What is your present address?..... No. 270 British St. St. John N.B.
- 2. In what Town, Township or Parish, and in what Country were you born?..... St. John N.B.
- 3. What is the name of your next-of-kin?..... Sabah
- 4. What is the address of your next-of-kin?..... 270 British St. St. John.
- 4a. What is the relationship of your next-of-kin?..... Sister
- 5. What is the date of your birth?..... 8 April 1888
- 6. What is your Trade or Calling?..... Longshoreman
- 7. Are you married?..... No
- 8. Are you willing to be vaccinated or re-vaccinated and inoculated?..... Yes
- 9. Do you now belong to the Active Militia?..... No
- 10. Have you ever served in any Military Forces?..... No
(If so, state particular of former Service.)
- 11. Do you understand the nature and terms of your engagement?..... Yes
- 12. Are you willing to be attested to serve in the }
CANADIAN OVER-SEAS EXPEDITIONARY FORCE? } Yes

DECLARATION TO BE MADE BY MAN ON ATTESTATION.

I, Emil Ramm, do solemnly declare that the above are answers made by me to the above questions and that they are true, and that I am willing to fulfil the engagements by me now made, and I hereby engage and agree to serve in the Canadian Over-Seas Expeditionary Force, and to be attached to any arm of the service therein, for the term of one year, or during the war now existing between Great Britain and Germany should that war last longer than one year, and for six months after the termination of that war provided His Majesty should so long require my services, or until legally discharged.

Date 8th April 1916. E. Ramm (Signature of Recruit)
P. Pratt (Signature of Witness)

OATH TO BE TAKEN BY MAN ON ATTESTATION.

I, Emil Ramm, do make Oath, that I will be faithful and bear true Allegiance to His Majesty King George the Fifth, His Heirs and Successors, and that I will as in duty bound honestly and faithfully defend His Majesty, His Heirs and Successors, in Person, Crown and Dignity, against all enemies, and will observe and obey all orders of His Majesty, His Heirs and Successors, and of all the Generals and Officers set over me. So help me God.

Date 8th April 1916. E. Ramm (Signature of Recruit)
P. Pratt (Signature of Witness)

FIG. 4. Part of 743128, Sapper Ramm's enlistment papers.

**THE CANADIAN EXPEDITIONARY FORCE:
SIBERIA, 1918-1919**

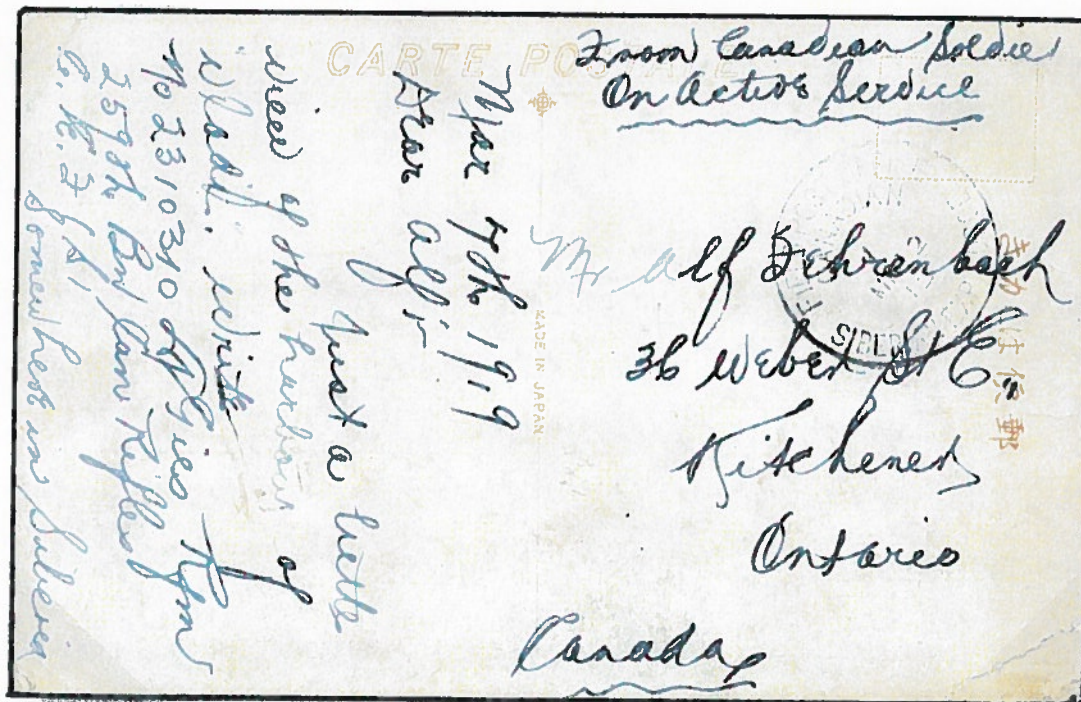
--Ged Taylor

One of the least-known Canadian military undertakings was that in which over 4,000 troops were sent to Siberia during 1918-1919. Some reasons for their despatch originated with the Russian Revolution, the subsequent break-down of the Eastern Front, and the Allied need to support friendly troops still fighting in North Russia.

British and Canadian troops were committed to this Russian area of operations and were landed at Vladivostok during August (British), October 1918, and January 1919 (Canadian).

With the Canadian advance party went an officer and three other ranks of the Canadian Postal Corps; equipped to operate a full postal service. Part of their equipment included special "Siberian Force" hammers. The Canadians complimented British forces as well.

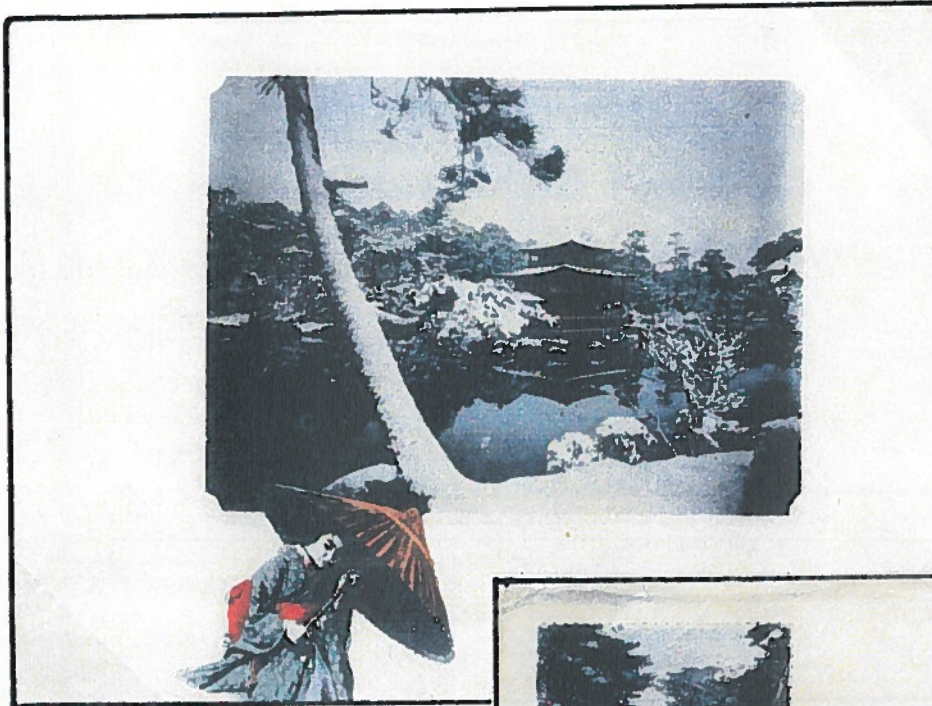
During the Unit's seven months of operation, many difficulties were experienced in moving the mail in and out of the area. A good deal of mail transport was dependent upon Japanese mail steamers operating through Vladivostok to Japan, the U.S.A., and Canada.



Post card view of Vladivostok Harbour to Kitchener, Ontario dated March 12, 1919 from a Rifleman in the 259th Battalion, Canadian Rifles, C.E.F. (S).

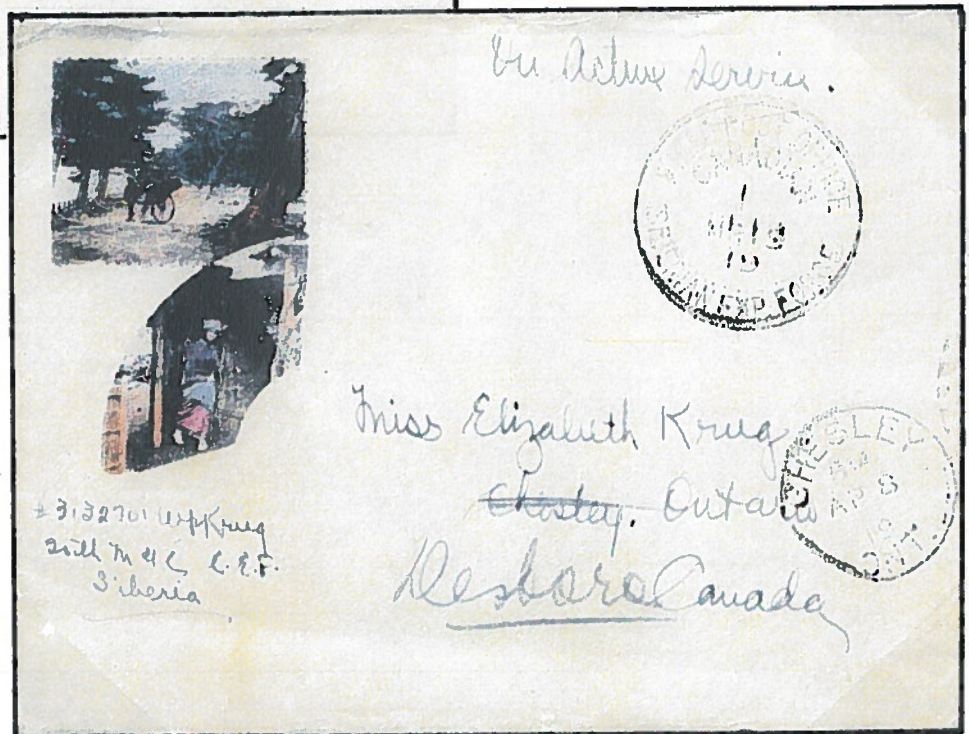
Due to the difficulties of securing troopships in 1918, the advance party of 700 Canadian troops did not reach Vladivostok until October 26, 1918. The main body of 2,700 all ranks followed on, arriving in the port on January 15, 1919.

Lt. Ross (No. 5 C.P.C.) had, after initial problems, established a satisfactory postal service from Vladivostok. In addition to the Canadian units, the C.P.C. also serviced mails for the British Mission and British Forces along the Trans-Siberian Railway as far as Omsk. The Field Post Office closed May 27, 1919.



A letter and contents on Japanese pictorial note-paper written on March 12, 1919 from a soldier in the 20th Canadian Machine Gun Company to his sister.

It bears the Siberian Exp. Force hammer dated March 19, 1919.



The enclosed letter, from #3132701, W.P. Krug, 20th Machine Gun Company, C.E.F. Siberia, follows:

"Dear Elizabeth,

To-day I'll drop just another line as this afternoon being devoted to sports gives me breathing time for a little correspondence. I hardly think this is gentlemens [sic] correspondence paper but one thing I've found it to be very poor quality.

On Monday, Ireland and I took a walk down town. We had an all day pass. I found the city very interesting as the stores were open and the business section seemed unusually busy. I was pleasantly surprised with the large departmental stores. These show considerably empty shelves and bears evidence to the difficulty of procuring goods and perhaps also to unsettled conditions in Russia.

Hong Kong must be a city of some size and importance. Textiles, groceries and [?] of all description comes here from Hong Kong, Shanghai, and Japan. But everything is so dear Ireland bought an ordinary bath towel and paid 15 roubles which is about \$1.50. We were in Chinatown and went thro [sic] their market. Many things were on display and I made no purchases except a pair of sandals as its no use buying when space in your kitbag is nil and besides we never know whether we'll be going home or proceed up the line.

To-day I'm told is the anniversary of the Russian Revolution and a holiday all over Russia. By the way this morning I addressed a parcel containing two sheets of music to you at Chesly....

I suppose you know more of our movements than we do. We all hope to come home in April. We're not having to [sic] bad a time but will consider our happiest moments in Siberia when on a ship we see Vladivostok fade in the distance.

To-day the boys are playing baseball just outside the barracks. It has also started to snow and after this inning the game will be postponed. This is the first snowstorm I've seen in Siberia and the ground now is almost white.

All morning we had field tactics and I was taking ranges. Most of the time I lay on the dead grass almost asleep in the sun. "Ain't it funny what a difference just a few hours make".

But now I'll close, the paper is giving out and I've only one envelope per sheet.

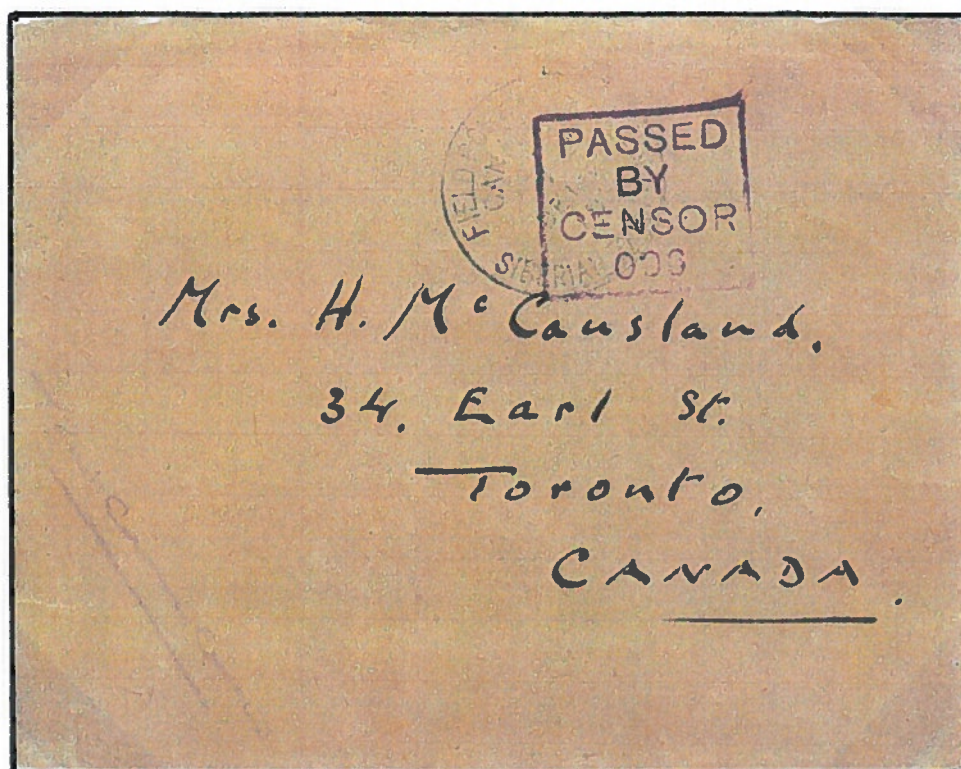
With love,

Weel"

[Cont'd.]

Censor marking devices numbered 001 to 035 were prepared and taken to Russia in December 1918. Numbers 021 to 035 were not issued, and numbers 008, 011, and 015 have not been seen.

The largest known number of any of the devices is seven of number 007 which was used by the Canadian Base Depot in Vladivostok (located in the East Barracks, some two miles outside of the city) for a period of sixty-nine days.



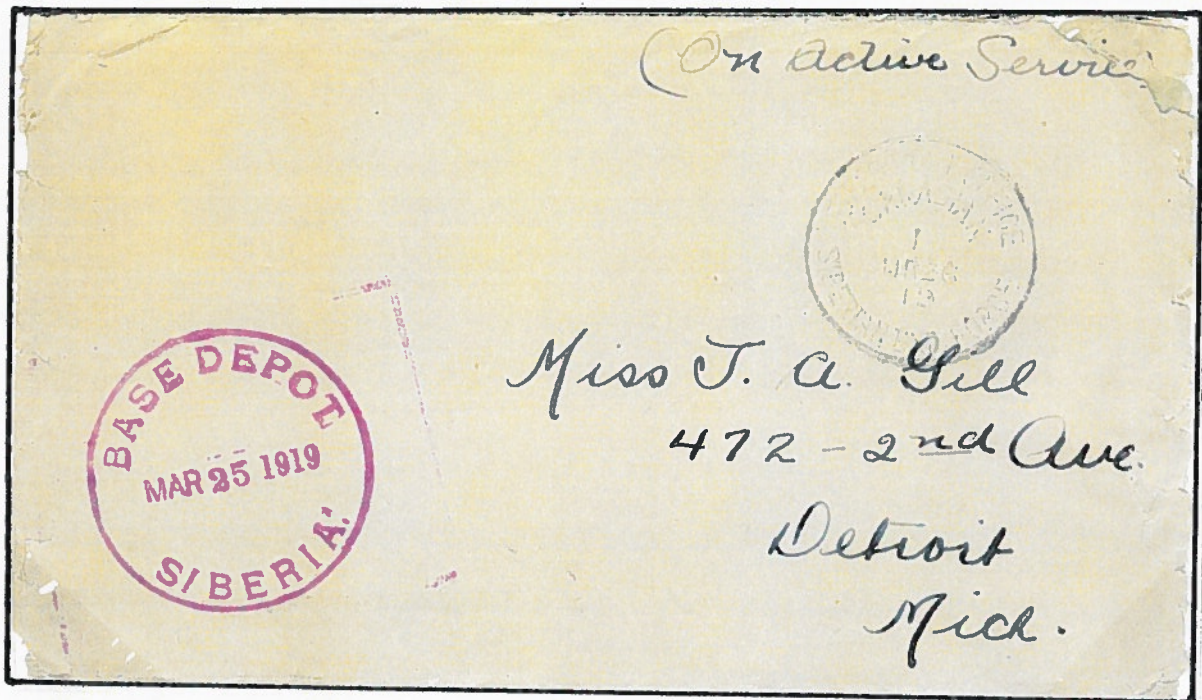
The "PASSED/BY/CENSOR/006" device. It was used by the 5th Canadian Postal Corps Unit. They occupied premises close to the Egerscheldt Docks in Vladivostok.

The censoring officer's signature is that of Hon. Major H. McCausland, the Senior Protestant Chaplain.

Another interesting marking related to the Canadians in Siberia is that of the circular "BASE DEPOT/SIBERIA." which is often seen in coloured ink.

The following cover, addressed to the U.S.A., is dated March 26, 1919. The Base Depot Orderly Room handstamp in purple ink is dated one day earlier. It bears no censor markings.

[Cont'd.]



Cover from #3037910, H.T. Symons, 85th Battery,
Vladivostok.

His enclosed letter, dated March 23, 1919, was a lengthy eight-pages of which part is reproduced below:

"Dear Julia,

You can't imagine just how happy I was to hear from my wee aunt once more. It sure seemed an age since I heard from anyone, so I went near crazy when a mail arrived day before yesterday postmarked Detroit. It seems to me everyone are [sic] holding their letters back until they hear from me, which I suppose is very foolish to me for I suppose they are all held up between here and Canada for we sure have a poor mail service [mail arrived on March 22, 1919 on the S.S. Suwa Maru.GT].

If I had been wise I would have had you send letters straight out here for the U.S. mail service is so much better.

It has been hard to write letters here after the first couple went, everythjng and every day is the same, just filling in time and the last couple of weeks we have been confined to our barracks on account

[Cont'd.]

of [a] Bolshevik uprising down town. At least that is who we blame it all on when the troops leave this place it will simply be one H...for since rumours have been going around that the troops are leaving there have been hold ups and even worse.

Vladivostok has a name of being a bad city and it sure deserves it all. I never saw such a rotten place in my life. It even beats Creighton mine when it was in its worse state. However if all rumours are true we will be home very soon. Perhaps as soon as this letter for the very latest one is we are sailing next Thursday but that hardly seems probable [the first Canadians to depart for home left on the S.S. Montegale on April 21, 1919.GT].

The last papers we had from home said we would all be out before the end of April which might just be paper talk. It will be just as well for there doesn't seem to be any chance to go up the line. And all we are doing here is keeping order to a certain extent amongst the Russians I understand the Yanks are staying a while longer. Poor fellows have had seven months of it already. I suppose you heard we are all getting the D.S.O. when we return to Canada (Didn't See Omsk)....".

BOER WAR CHRISTMAS GREETINGS, 1897-1898

--Hal Kellett



FIG. 2.

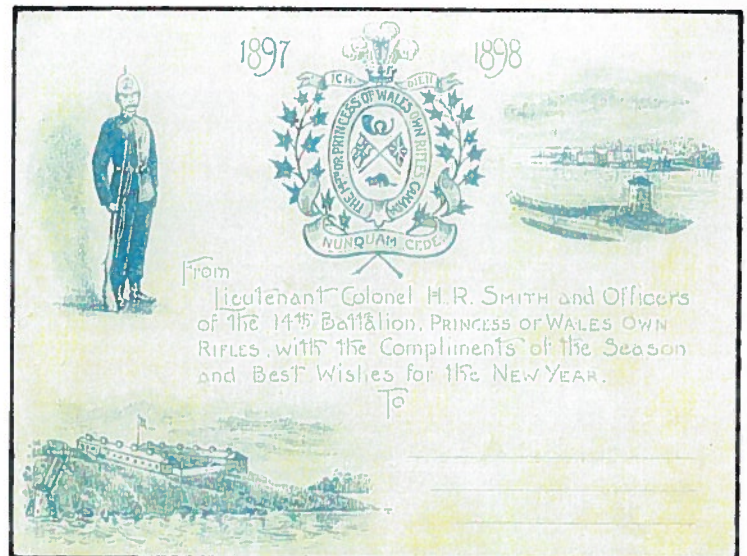


FIG. 1.

The Princess of Wales Own Rifles (P.W.O.R.) was created on January

[Cont'd.]

16, 1863 as the 14th Battalion Volunteer Militia Rifles of Canada. Shortly after the wedding of the Prince of Wales (later King Edward VII) to Princess Alexandra of Denmark, the Regiment became the P.W. O.R.

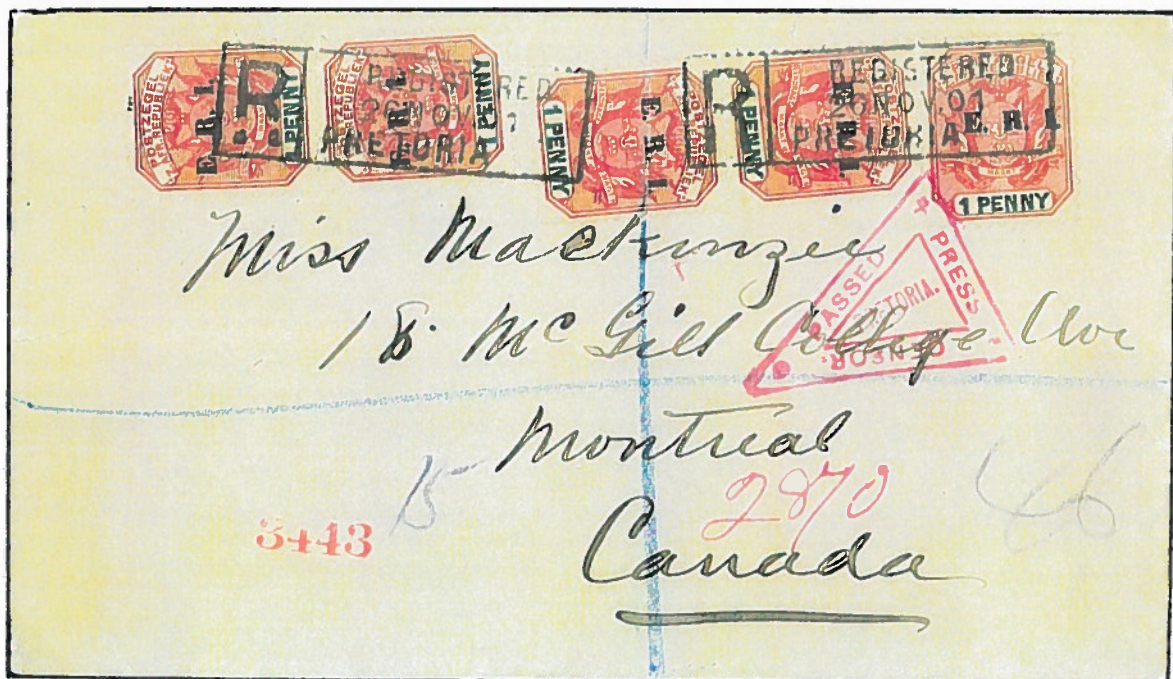
FIG. 1 illustrates a Christmas item dated 1897-1898, and is from Lt.Colonel H.R. Smith and Officers of the 14th Battalion, P.W.O.R. This regiment subsequently went to South Africa.

The booklet shown in FIG. 2 was sent by Lt. Colonel McLean and Officers of the 62nd St. John Fusiliers as a Christmas and New Year's greeting in 1898. The recipient was the Minister of Militia for Canada during the Boer War, Sir Frederick William Borden. Borden's son, Lt. Harold Borden, was killed in the war.[Both items reduced to 60% Ed.]

**UNUSUAL BOER WAR RATES: REGISTERED TO CANADA AND
A SHORT-PAID PARCEL RATE**

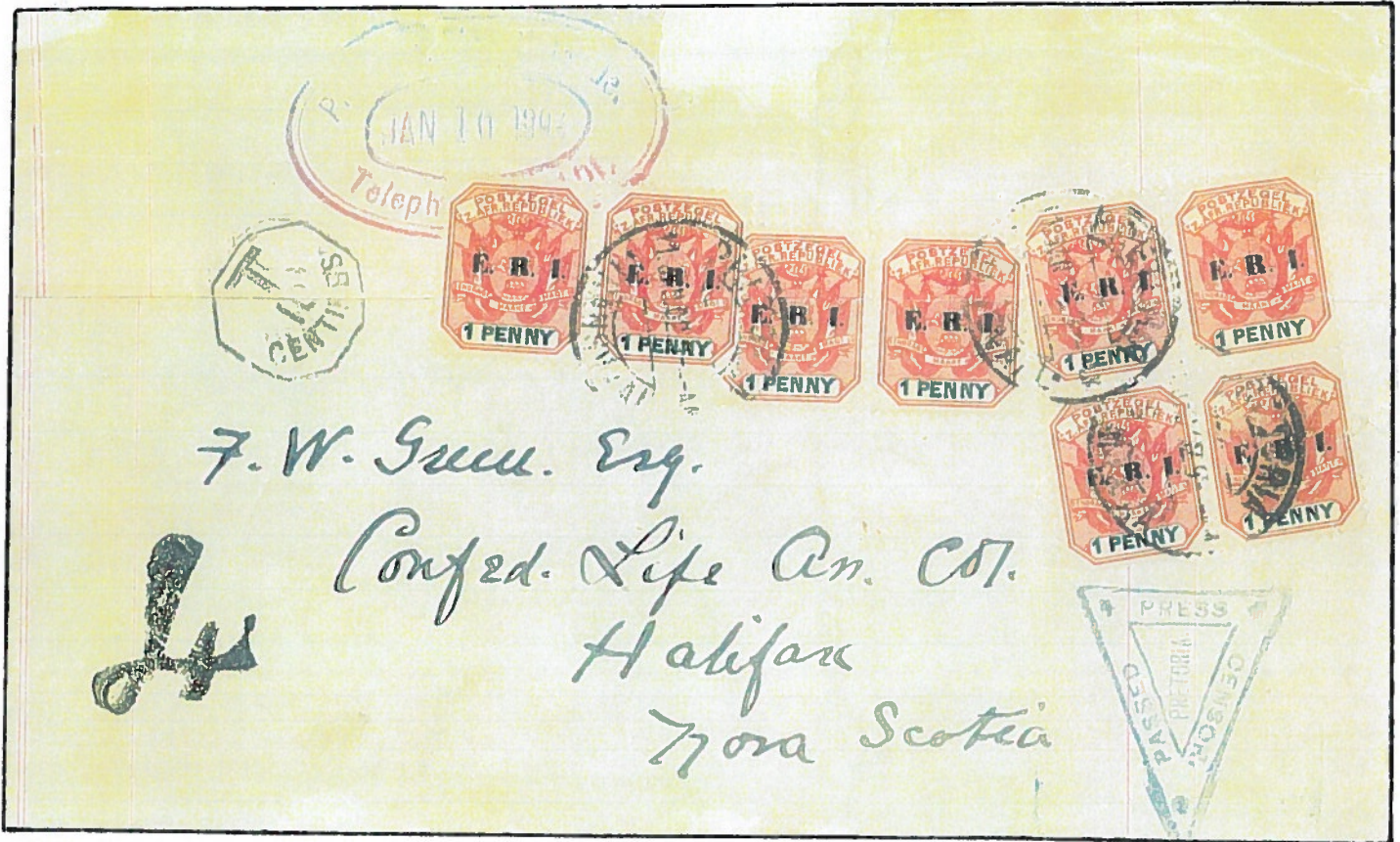
--Hal Kellett

Registered covers from the Boer War are not common. The cover shown below is registered to Montreal, Canada and is dated November 26, 1901 at Pretoria. There is a red triangular Pretoria "PASSED PRESS CENSOR" marking on the front. The back of the cover bears a London registered cancel dated December 22, 1901, and a Montreal receiver of 1902.



[Cont'd.]

The following parcel wrapper was sent by Canadian soldier Private (Trooper) Green who remained in South Africa and joined the South African Constabulary Force (Canada's first peace-keeping mission).



The item was mailed from Pretoria, Transvaal on January 11, 1902 and was addressed to Halifax, Nova Scotia. The stamps are the Transvaal British Occupation "E.R.I." Provisionals (Scott #248). Eight stamps short-paid the 9d Empire Rate for a thirty-six ounce parcel (eighteen x ½d per two ounces) by 1d. It was taxed "10 centimes" (2¢) and charged to collect 4¢ for double-the-deficiency at Halifax. A triangle "PASSED PRESS CENSOR" from Pretoria was stamped on the front. Here is a scarce South Africa Constabulary 4th class rate.

POSSIBLE FIRST KOREA AIRMAIL COVER TO THE UNITED KINGDOM

--Mike Street

The following cover, obtained recently on eBay, was mailed to Swindon, Wiltshire, England by a Lance Corporal in the 191st Canadian Infantry

[Cont'd.]

Workshops, Royal Canadian Electrical and Mechanical Engineers, serving in Korea. It bears a CDS CFPO 27 dated "15 IX 51".

The 45¢ in postage pays the correct triple airmail rate (15¢ per ounce) as if the letter had been mailed from Canada to the United Kingdom. As far as I know this is the first known airmail cover to the U.K. from a Canadian serving in Korea. Neither Ritch Toop nor, as far as I can remember Steve Luciuk, had such an item in their collections.



THE S.S. EROS

--John Burnett

With this article are illustrated two covers from my King George VI Canadian collection. Both covers ended up at the same location and figuring out just what happened was a real challenge.

The first cover FIG. 1 is addressed to Paris, France from Montreal. The cancel dates the mailing as May 29, 1940.

FIG. 2 was mailed from Aquadell, Saskatchewan on May 24, 1940 and is addressed to a Canadian Army trooper in care of the "Base Post Office" in Ottawa, Ontario for forwarding to an active duty military person.

Both covers ended up in Montreal for sea transport to England (mail to Paris was routed via London), and the Canadian trooper was probably in

[Cont'd.]

England awaiting deployment.

The mail was loaded on the 5,888 ton ship S.S. Eros which also carried raw copper, Ferro chrome and small arms. On June 3, 1940 [Hoggarth and Gwynn note May 30, p. 250.Ed.] the Eros departed Montreal and was nearly across the Atlantic when, on June 7 at 0322, she was spotted by the German U-48 and fired upon from a range of 3,000 meters. Eros was seriously damaged and the crew of sixty-two abandoned ship. U-48 left after seeing the crew abandon ship.



FIG. 1. Montreal to Paris [reduced to 80%. Ed.]

Eros was taken in tow by HMS Berkley and assisted by HMS Bandit (an ocean-going tug who was nearby looking for another ship that had sent out a "mayday" call the day before). HMS Bandit towed the sinking Eros to Tory Island (off the coast of Northern Ireland) and beached her. Eros had some holds flooded and some were still dry. Once beached the cargo was off-loaded (including the mail).

The cover to France was stored in a dry hold while the cover to the army trooper ended up wet (as evidenced by the condition of the envelope and the missing stamp). Both covers were marked "SALVED FROM THE SEA" (a British term meaning "salvaged") [Hoggarth/Robin Eros Type 2 cachet. Ed.], and then forwarded to London for continuation of their journey.

During the period all this was happening, France fell to the Germans and so FIG. 1 received another handstamp "SERVICE SUSPENDU" (meaning

[Cont'd.]

mail service to France had been suspended due to war). This envelope was returned to Canada and was received by the Dead Letter Office in Ottawa on August 14, 1940 where it was opened, the address found and noted in pencil in the upper left corner of the cover, and it was then officially sealed by postal sealing tape.

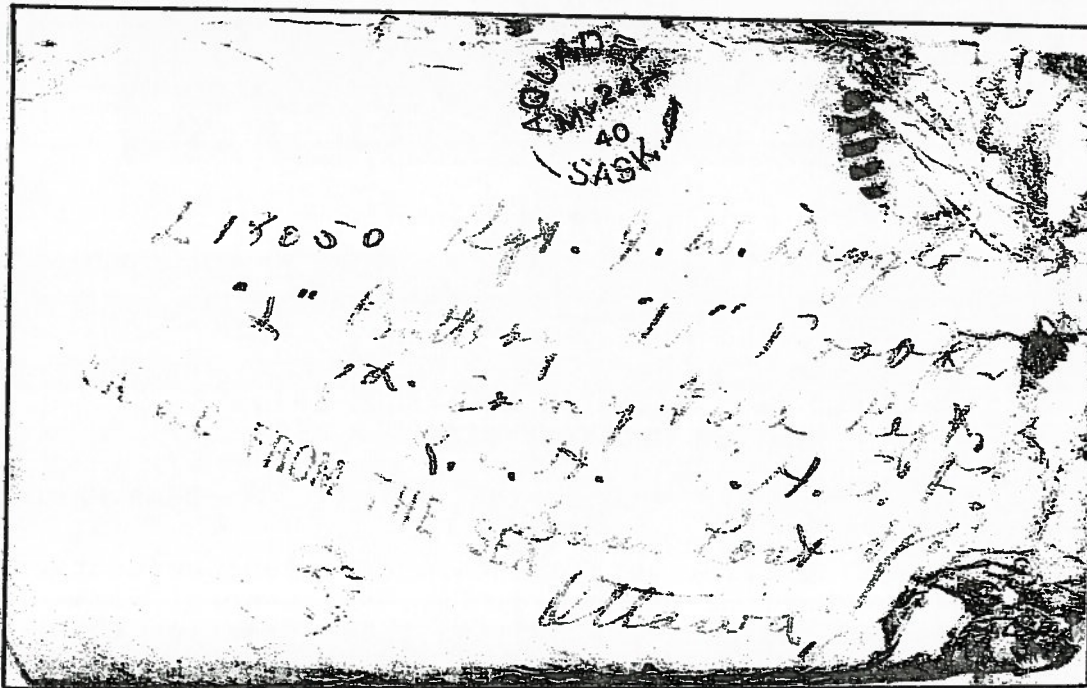


FIG. 2. Aquadell to Ottawa [at 80% Ed.]

The envelope to the Canadian trooper was forwarded but to this day the contents have not been removed as they became totally stuck together by being submerged in water in a flooded hold. Eros is seen in FIG. 3.

ⁱ
You might think "how does he know all this stuff about these covers?". The answer is "the Internet" and lots of time devoted to the research. This is something you can do just as easily and I encourage you to try and write something about your collection for the Study Group's News-letter.

[For more on the Eros and other Canadian-related military ship disasters, members may be interested in J.E. Kraemer's "The Battle of the Atlantic and Canadian Mail," The Canadian Philatelist, 268, Vol.46 (3), May-June 1995 and N. Hoggarth and R. Gwynn's Maritime Disaster Mail: A Study of Mail Salvaged From Maritime Disasters, as Casualties of War, Collision, Fires, Shipwrecks, and Stranding. Bristol: Stuart Rossiter Trust, 2003. Ed.]

[Cont'd.]

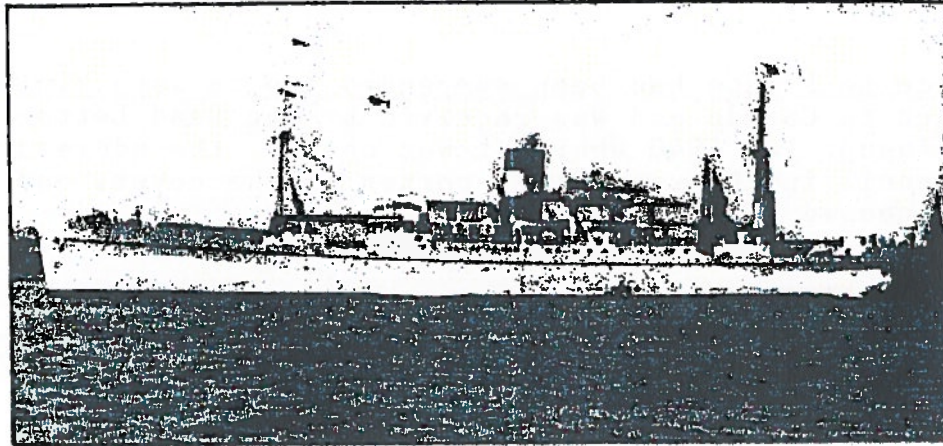


FIG. 3. S.S. Eros

7TH FIELD CO., CANADIAN ENGINEERS 1916
LONDON MILITARY CAMP

--Dean Mario

A permanent engineering corps unit was formed in 1903 under the guise of Major-General the Earl of Dundonald, CB, CVO, General Officer Commanding, who expanded the Canadian Militia transformation (from 1902-1904). This rather unusual registered cover was sent from a member of

the Canadian Engineers while at the London Military Camp and bears the CDS dated "PM/AP 17/16". The rate was 5¢ for the registration fee and 2¢ per ounce plus 1¢ War Tax for a domestic letter. The sender presumably overpaid by 1¢. An Edmonton, Alberta CDS dated April 21 is on the reverse.

The London Military Camp CDS was proofed on June 26, 1915.



Bailey, W.J. and E.R. Toop. Canadian Military Postal Markings, 1881-1995. Vol.I. Waterford, MI: C.G. Firby Publications, 1996, p. 140.

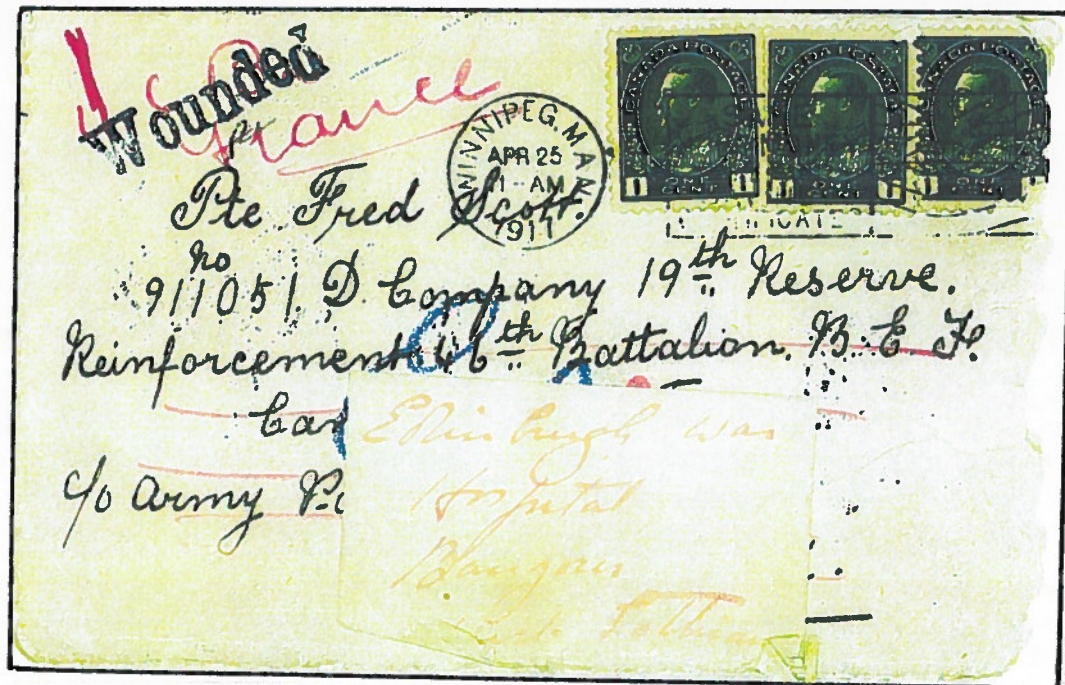
**A 1917 COVER FROM SASKATCHEWAN THAT MADE IT TO FRANCE,
ENGLAND, AND BACK TO REGINA**

--Robert Henderson

This envelope, which is now separated from its contents, was sent by Mrs. Fred Scott of Willowbrook, Sask. It passed through Winnipeg, Manitoba to her husband on April 25, 1917. He was thought to be serving in France with the 46th Battalion, C.E.F. Fred was part of "D" Co., 19th Reserve Reinforcements.

The 46th Battalion had been formed in Moose Jaw, Sask. on February 1, 1915, and was sent to France by August 16. A book entitled The Suicide Battalion by Jim McWilliams and R. James Steel [Hurtig Publishers, Edmonton, 1978.Ed.] provides a history of the unit.

Postmarks on the reverse indicate that it passed through FPO 182 on June 18, 1917 (4th Canadian Brigade), APO 2. CAN. SEC. on July 13, 1917 (Rouen, France), and the CANADIAN RECORD OFFICE/POSTAL DESPATCHED on July 25, 1917 (London, England).



A "Wounded" purple ink marking, over a red pencil mark indicating "France" is on the front cover upper left. A gummed label over a portion of the original address redirects the letter to Edinburgh War Hospital, Bangore, West Lothian.

The cover turned up, some ninety-four years later, in the hands of a

[Cont'd.]

Regina antique dealer where it was recently acquired. [Several companies of the 46th fought at Vimy Ridge; especially engaged in the assault on "The Pimple" (a prominent knoll atop the northern end of the Ridge). Could Scott have been wounded at Vimy Ridge? Ed.]



GREAT WAR ORDERLY ROOM MARKINGS

--Dean Mario

The study of orderly room markings has been virtually ignored by military postal history collectors. Those from the Great War are especially difficult to find. However markings such as this shield type from the 10th Canadian Reserve Battalion (dated February 21, 1918) are appealing and a study of them would be challenging.

