

4-Hole OHMS Perfin Covers to Foreign Destinations 1939-1952

Purpose: The purpose is to illustrate a distinct subset of Canadian Official postal history by only exhibiting covers that contain at least one 4-hole OHMS perfin with the widest range of postal issues and rates possible. This postal history exhibit is limited to mail sent by any department of the Canadian Federal Government to any Foreign Destinations and is presented: USA, Great Britain and Empire, Europe and the Rest of the World.

Scope: The pieces shown in this exhibit chronicle the use of both 4-hole OHMS perfin patterns as well as the combination covers that may also contain 5-Hole OHMS issues, OHMS overprinted issues, G overprinted issues and non-perforated issues. The vast majority of OHMS perfins were for domestic use or had window envelopes that now no longer show the recipient's address, therefore, specifically locating items destined for the USA, Great Britain and beyond are scarce to rare. As well, foreign destinations often had high postage rates which allows us our only opportunity to locate a particular stamp issue on cover. This exhibit contains the earliest and latest known usages of both 4-hole OHMS patterns (UNITRADE now uses the BNAPS O9 and O10 prefixes), scarce and possibly unique rates and destinations including the unique \$1.00 Château Ramezay block of eighteen and the only known 75¢ airmail rate to the Belgian Congo. The exhibit is not intended to show every stamp known with a 4-hole OHMS perfin; it is intended to show only valid Federal Government use of 4-hole OHMS perfin mail used to Foreign Destinations. It also specifically delineates between each of the two known 4-hole OHMS perfin patterns and includes covers that have multiple stamps where each is a different 4-hole OHMS perfin pattern or one is an OHMS or G overprint used with a perfin.

The exhibit contains items from many Federal sources including the House of Commons; External Affairs; National Revenue; Trade & Commerce; and the Post Office Department itself. Rates include everything from 1¢ printed matter to registration mail via both surface and airmail, as well as special delivery, airmail special delivery and even a \$1.00 drop registration cover. Many transit and ancillary markings have been noted including German War Time Censor Markings from Occupied France; the Foreign Export Control Branch and O.A.T. ovals in red.

Challenge: The greatest challenge is in sourcing material still on cover since the majority of the correspondence was used during World War 2 and addressed to foreign government offices that may or may not have subsequently been destroyed. So, only collectors that had access to federal mail have been able to preserve these Canadian 4-hole OHMS perfin covers. On-cover material is typically found on #10 or larger business envelopes and as such should not be downgraded. However, material on #8 or greeting-sized envelopes are particularly difficult to locate and as such are more rewarding. The added challenge is verification that the 4-hole OHMS stamp on cover is a genuine copy. Thankfully however, according to the noted Canadian Fake and Forgery specialist Ken Pugh, there have been no reports of forged 4-hole OHMS perfins found on cover.

Knowledge: With almost 40-years of general perfin knowledge and over 35-years of specific OHMS perfin knowledge, I have become one of the foremost researchers on the subject. I have regularly challenged the traditional Wrigley listings as containing unfounded issues with even more unrealistic positions. I understand the inner workings of a perforator and am well-versed

in the postal rates and regulations from this time period including the use of government Free Frank privileges. Finally, as part of an exclusive four-person OHMS perfin study group, I have helped identify, list and value only the *confirmed-as-genuine* 5-hole and 4-hole OHMS stamp issues. Consequently, I am credited in the 2022 and 2023 UNITRADE stamp catalogue as the key contributor for pricing and a consulting expert to the completely revised OHMS perfin listings.

Census of On Hand Material:

The number of covers that I have in my possession (or have personally handled) from which to build this exhibit are summarized in the chart below. There are only 28 foreign destinations known with a total of 183 covers. By far the most predominate location with 91 (49.7%) are to the USA. A distant second is England with 30 and then Switzerland with 11. There are a total of 15 destinations that only have one.

Known 4-hole OHMS Cover Distribution Ranked by Foreign Destination				Known 4-hole OHMS Cover Distribution Ranked by Foreign Destination			
Rank	Country	Total Number	Percentage	Rank	Country	Total Number	Percentage
1	USA	91	49.7%	14	Argentina	1	0.5%
2	England	30	16.4%	14	Belgian Congo	1	0.5%
3	Switzerland	11	6.0%	14	Belgium	1	0.5%
4	Brazil	6	3.3%	14	Canal Zone	1	0.5%
5	France	5	2.7%	14	Cuba	1	0.5%
5	Netherlands	5	2.7%	14	Ecuador	1	0.5%
7	Australia	4	2.2%	14	Germany	1	0.5%
7	Romania	4	2.2%	14	Hungary	1	0.5%
9	Chile	3	1.6%	14	India	1	0.5%
9	Sweden	3	1.6%	14	New Zealand	1	0.5%
11	Colombia	2	1.1%	14	North Africa	1	0.5%
11	Ireland	2	1.1%	14	Scotland	1	0.5%
11	Italy	2	1.1%	14	South Africa	1	0.5%
14	All others	15	8.2%	14	Surinam	1	0.5%
14	Trinidad	1	0.5%	14	Trinidad	1	0.5%
28	Foreign	183	100%	15	Foreign	15	8.2%

Rarity: In general, correspondence to the United States is relatively easy to acquire so to gauge rarity one must look for scarce rates such as double weight Air Mail covers or for specific services including Air Mail Special Delivery or Drop Registration. For Great Britain, correspondence is available usually as #10 covers and many are for military purposes. In continental Europe, Switzerland (being neutral) has the highest number of recorded covers with most related to The International Red Cross Prisoners of War correspondence. All of these are unique rated covers that were thankfully saved and sold after the war to raise money for Red Cross humanitarian efforts. Other World War 2 allies, like France, Belgium and Holland, had fewer covers available likely due to the ravages of war and having fewer able-bodied collectors retaining them. Germany and Hungary remain scarce destinations, this exhibit has only one 1939 postcard to Hungary and one 1949 cover to Germany and zero during the war.

South American countries are the next most plentiful destination due to the easier preservation of material from being a non-conflict area during World War 2. Australasia material follows but most of it is postwar correspondence with the Department of Trade and Commerce. Africa remains the scarcest destination with only 2 covers in the exhibit: one is a 1947 Department of Trade and Commerce cover to Leopoldville, Belgian Congo and the other is a unique 1943 Battlefront Operations North Africa cover that was returned as undeliverable.

As well, postal issues like 50¢ Munitions, \$1.00 Destroyer and 50¢ Logging stamps values are difficult to find. Most are scarce and some are unique like the \$1.00 Château Ramezay block of eighteen; 50¢ Victoria Parliament to Lord Macmillan; 1c KGV Meteorological Wrapper with inverted OHMS pattern to Washington DC; \$1.00 Château Ramezay Registered Drop Letter; 50¢ Munitions single to Australia and 50¢ Logging to New Zealand. Other scarce items include incoming short-paid covers that have OHMS perfins applied as well as a cover to Switzerland with two Swiss Postage Due stamps affixed.

Condition: All items shown are fully owned and from my personal collection. Unique items may contain some small faults but are not distracting and can obviously not be upgraded. Other items are in the finest condition for their type and quality upgrades may not be available.

Presentation: Within the confines of thirty-two double-width pages, this Four-Frame Exhibit has limited white-space primarily due to large-sized covers however the overall balance between quality philatelic items and the pertinent text still provides for an aesthetically pleasing exhibit. After the initial introduction page that includes the Exhibit Plan, some background history, the only known 5-Hole and 4-Hole OHMS combination cover to the USA, the balance of the exhibit is presented in ascending postal rate sequence starting with rates to the USA, followed by rates to Great Britain & British Empire. This is then followed alphabetically by country name within Europe and then finally the balance of the world.

References: In addition to the exhibitor's primary research, additional information can be obtained by referencing the following articles, catalogues, handbooks, and online resources.

1. Johnson, Jon and Tomasson, Gary [Editors] (2022), Canadian Stamps with Perforated Initials, BNAPS 6th Edition page 5.O.3 - 5.O.4. <https://bnaps.org/PerfinHandbook/O%20-%20Master%202022%2008%2001.pdf>. This is the link to the perfin letter "O" that lists only confirmed OHMS items for patterns O8, O9 and O10.
2. Harris, Robin [Editor] (2022), UNITRADE Canadian Postage Stamp Catalogue – 2023 Edition, pages 662-663.
3. Pugh, Kenneth W. (2021 July) Pugh Reference Manuals of Fakes, Forgeries & Genuine, Series II - Release 5A (revised edition), The Genuine and Faked Perforated OHMS Official Stamps of Canada, privately published, Chilliwack, BC
4. Wrigley, Roy, (circa 1979), The Catalogue & Guidebook of Canadian Official Stamps, 10th edition, J & M Publishing Co. Ltd.
5. Liptak, Andrew J. (2014), Postal History Corner provides detailed information regarding Canadian postal rates from the 1800s to the year 2000, as well as articles dealing with Canadian stamps and postal history. Managed by the Postal History Society of Canada <http://postalhistorycorner.blogspot.com/>
6. Canada Post Corporation, Canada Official Postal Guides [1945 edition with the monthly supplements included]. See page 155 Letter Rates for Sweden (post June 1945 after the War in Europe ended and airmail service was re-introduced month-by-month.)