

NEWSLETTER # 62
MARCH 1985

CANADIAN MILITARY MAIL STUDY GROUP

Winter is showing great signs of retreat in this part of the country, and we are seeing the sun again after what seems like interminable ages.

This past week we made a small sortie to the Coast and stopped in Seattle and Vancouver. While in Seattle, called on BNAPS'er Lew Ludlow and his wife Mac. Apparently your editor was their first visitor in the new home here. Lew, while mainly of the RPO persuasion, has plans to start a BNAPS Regional Group in the Northwest (B.C., Washington, and Oregon), and we are all in favor. Next stop was Vancouver in time for their regular monthly bourse. Amongst others, had a good talk to Bill Bailey and learned of his publishing projects which you will soon be hearing more about.

The Questionnaires are still coming in and there would seem to be no great change in members interests as noted in N.L.61. Had a good letter from Ed Harris of Calgary. Ed suggests we might have a mail auction of military items and he would like to know who would be interested. He is willing to look after it, so please advise him of your interest and what material you would be able to put in an auction. Just in case you think it is too much trouble to look up his address-----

Ed. Harris 620-75th Ave., NW, Calgary, Alta. T2K 0P9

Plan to attend BNAPEX 85 in Calgary on September 12, 13 & 14. We will be having our usual Military Mail Seminar. Although the above Ed Harris is also the General Chairman of the Show, we are also appointing him the M.C. (or is it O.C.) of the Seminar. Ed requests that each of you bring, say, five pages from your collection on one particular military aspect of your choice. Lets all give Ed our support on this, and advise him on what you will be bringing.

A military mail exhibit, especially with a western orientation (if possible?) would help to make the show even better. Please give it your consideration.

Herewith in this Newsletter we have John Frith's article on the Royal Canadian Navy in Newfoundland in WW II. This completes our series on this area and we are now looking for more articles on any other aspect of our studies. Next issue will feature Dave Hanes' Post War RCAF Stations.

Please note the following address change:

Gordon M. Hill 320 - 1001 13th Ave. SW, Calgary, T2R 0L5

And just in time, a new member, please welcome:

Martin Haller CP 35, St. Hubert, P.O., J3Y 5S9

As this is being typed there are great rumbles about a postal strike here in Canada. I hope this gets through without delay!

EXTRA — Since we are OVERWEIGHT (POSTALLY) - Colin's "RFC POSTCARD"

401



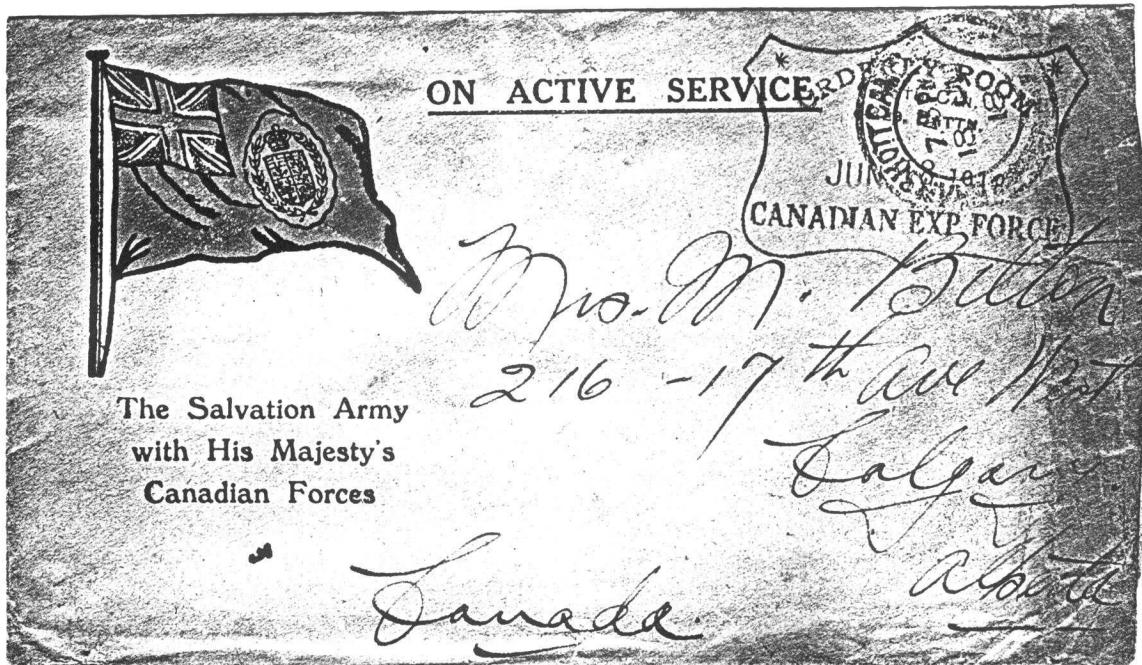
FROM A STUDY
GROUP MEMBER -

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B.O.
18 Ju 18

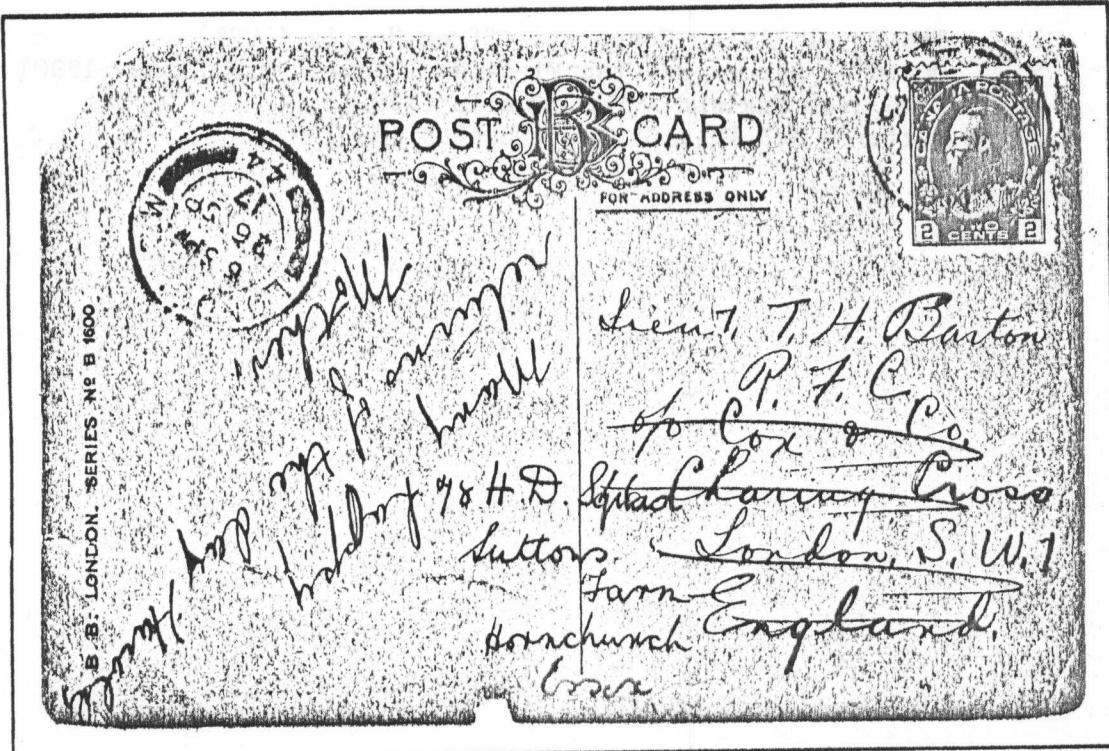
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POSTCARD TO A CANADIAN IN THE ROYAL FLYING CORPS

The postmarks on this card are not military. It is the final address that recalls for readers a little known action in which Canadians served during WWI.

The card was mailed at Beeton, Ontario SP 1 17 to Lieut. Thomas Harold Barton, R.F.C. and was readressed in London, England SP 26th to 78 H.D. Squad., Sutton's Farm, Hornchurch, Essex.



78 Home Defence Squadron was one of eleven, plus one in reserve, responsible for combatting air raids on England by German airmen, beginning in December 1914 and continuing into August 1918. During the first $2\frac{1}{2}$ years Zeppelins carried out the raids being replaced, mainly by bomber aircraft, for the remainder of the war. Casualties amounted to 1,400 killed and 3,340 injured chiefly among the civil population. Approximately 8,200 bombs were dropped.

June 1915 marked the beginning of an organized defence against the raiders with a few R.F.C. aircraft located at temporary landing grounds such as Joyce Green, Hainault Farm and Sutton's Farm. By the end of the year about a dozen aircraft were employed in home defence. By mid 1916 elements of the Royal Naval Air Service joined home defence, their targets mainly Zeppelins.. The night of September 2/3 witnessed the largest airship raid with 16 leaving Germany with one being downed.

It was mid 1917 when German Gotha aircraft first began operations and their successes exceeded those of the Zeppelins. Their safety from British fighters lay in their ability to fly at considerable height making interception very difficult. The R.F.C. at this time was employing 110 aeroplanes and approximately 220 Officers and other ranks in home defence. The Army manned anti-aircraft guns and search-lights with a large force thus reducing manpower on the Western Front.

According to one reference, by December 1917, 31 Canadians were serving in H.D. Squadrons. Some of the names were Brophy, Watkins, Bishop, Humphreys, Love, Lawrence, Smith, Stevenson, Thompson, Partridge and the late A/V/M/ A.E. Godfrey,

R.C.A.F. (1890-1982) who, in the fall 1917, as a Captain, commanded a flight in 78 Squadron.

Lieut. T.H. Barton survived the war after serving in four different squadrons and in 1940 enlisted in the Security Branch of the R.C.A.F. He retired in 1946 at the rank of Wing Commander.

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

- | | | |
|---|------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|
| 1 | The Royal Flying Corps - Geoffrey Norris (1965) | |
| 2 | Canadian Airmen and the First World War - S.F. Wise (1980) | |
| 3 | Fire Over England - H.G. Castle (1982) | |
| 4 | letter - N.D.Hq., Ottawa (October 1983) | By J.C. Campbell |

THE ROYAL CANADIAN NAVY IN NEWFOUNDLAND - WORLD WAR II

by: John Frith

NEWFOUNDLAND FORCE

The role of the R.C.N. in Newfoundland at the beginning of the war was quite limited. An agreement between the Governments of Canada and Newfoundland assigned to the R.C.N. the primary responsibility for the protection of sea communications in the coastal zone and the naval defence of St. John's and Botwood. However, by the end of 1940 the German submarine attacks on Allied convoys had reached so far west that it was decided by the Admiralty of the Royal Navy to base an escort force for the convoys on Newfoundland.

When the Admiralty decision reached it, the R.C.N. immediately offered to escort convoys in the Newfoundland area with a force which would include all the available Canadian destroyers and corvettes under the Command of a Canadian officer. The Admiralty accepted this offer and Newfoundland Force was established June 6, 1941. The force was to be based at St. John's, which had been designated H.M.C.S. AVALON on May 31, 1941.

H.M.C.S. AVALON

Newfoundland Force altered the purpose of the naval base at St. John's. Previously, it had been planned as a base for Canadian local-defence forces only, but now it was destined to play an important part in the "Battle of the Atlantic".

Originally designed to provide shore facilities capable of supporting a force of about sixty warships, the base rapidly expanded. From July 1941 to December 1942 the number of warships entering and leaving St. John's nearly tripled. As a result of the increased activity, the personnel of the base nearly doubled every six months, until its peak strength of 5000 all ranks was reached at the end of 1944. H.M.C.S. AVALON ended its operations in July 1946 by which time all Canadian personnel had left for Canada.

CENSORING DEVICES

Except for registered mail, early mail from personnel serving at H.M.C.S. AVALON cannot be separated from mail originating from ships using the dockyard. The reason for this is that the censors at Avalon used the "tombstone" and "boxed" type of censoring handstamps common to all Canadian naval bases and ships until early January 1943. However "WHITEHOUSE" figures 3 and 5 (types #2 & #5) are known to have been used at Avalon.

The R.C.N. at that time introduced numbered, single and double line censoring handstamps which make possible the identification of mail originating from H.M.C.S. AVALON. Although the R.C.N. has no records of which numbers were assigned to Avalon, some covers have been reported which are known to have been used there. The single line numbers known are "WHITEHOUSE" figure 9 (DB/N 14 177 & 178). The double line numbers known are "WHITEHOUSE" figure 10 (DB/N 500 to 512 and 537).

It is because none of these numbered censoring devices were required to be dated that the separation of the G.P.O. triangle franks used at H.M.C.S. AVALON is so difficult. Censor numbers 14, 177, 178, 500, 502, 504, 506, 512 and 537 are known on mail originating from the accounting section in Avalon II barracks.

POSTAL FACILITIES

The R.C.N. has no record of the postal facilities at H.M.C. Avalon and as a result little is known of their operations. However, it is believed that mail rooms known as Fleet Mail Offices (F.M.O.) were established at two locations - H.M.C. Dockyard and Avalon II barracks. (Definitely known to have had an F.M.O.).

GENERAL POST OFFICE (G.P.O.) TRIANGLES

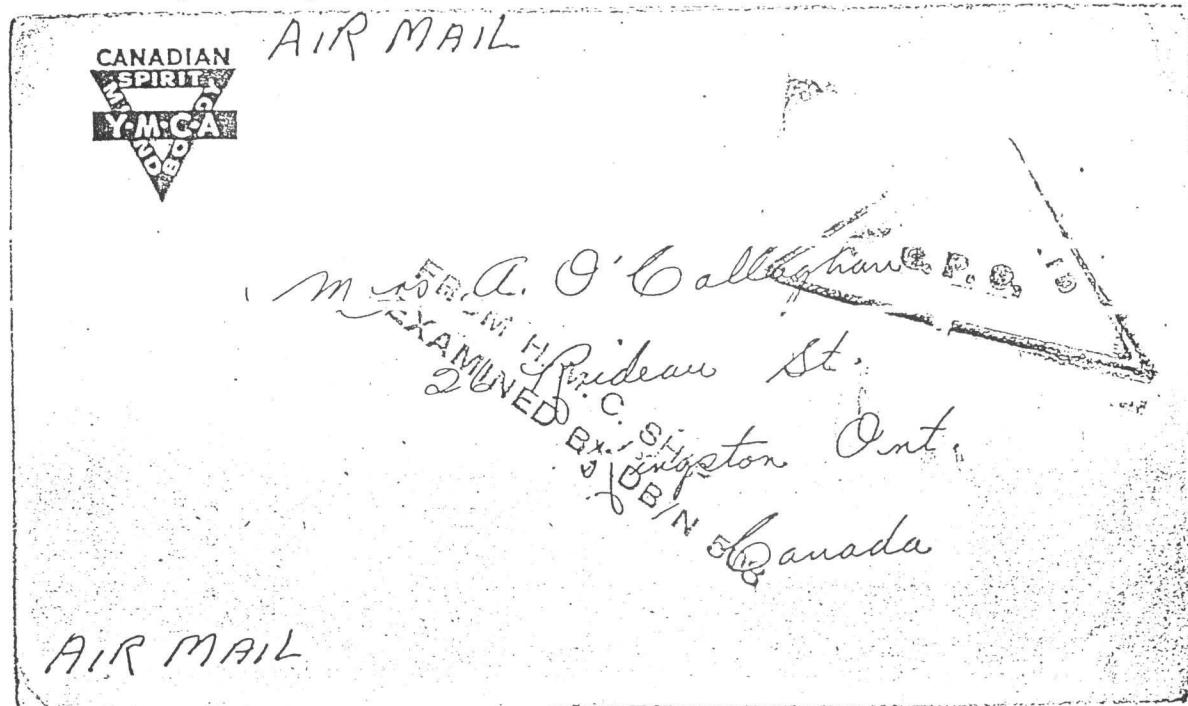
Upon the establishment of H.M.C.S. AVALON in June 1941, the R.C.N. for reasons of security, did not want Canadian or Newfoundland stamps or postmarks appearing on mail coming from the base.

As a result, an arrangement was made whereby the postage required for any letters mailed would be collected by the clerks in the F.M.O. (mail rooms) at Avalon. They would then take the mail to the main post office in St. John's and pay any fees required to the G.P.O. clerks handling the naval section. The mail would then be franked with the G.P.O. triangular hammers, indicating that postage had been paid. These franks would not or should not appear on ordinary letters sent by surface means, as their presence indicates postage having been paid for air mail, registration or other special service.

The presence of a G.P.O. triangle does not mean that a letter originated at Avalon, only that it passed through the base. A letter mailed from a ship docked at Avalon for example, would receive the G.P.O. triangle frank but would have a censor marking peculiar to that ship applied to it.

Because all the G.P.O. triangle hammers were made of rubber, they were prone to breaking up and three of the seven known hammers had breaks in them. The hammers are distinguished from each other by the measurement of their bases and the known hammer measurements cited of 45mm, 50mm, 52mm and 65mm bases are only approximate because of their rubber construction. Also because of the rubber construction, the pressure applied and amount of ink used, variations in letter size appears. This is also true of the postmark hammers.

The G.P.O. frank system remained in use until censoring was ended in May 1945, when the franks were replaced by the use of Newfoundland stamps and F.M.O. AVALON postmarks.



An undated cover mailed from H.M.C.S. AVALON with a heavily struck example of G.P.O. 1A? which gives a rough idea of the surface measurements of the hammer. (44mm x 34mm).

<u>G.P.O. HAMMER</u>	<u>BASE</u>	<u>DESCRIPTION</u>	<u>REPORTED PERIOD OF USE</u>	<u>PHOTO</u>
G.P.O. I		Distinctive G in G.P.O.	All 50mm base triangles	
G.P.O. IA	50mm	St. John's, N.F.	Civilian-non RCN	(fig. 1)
IA1	50mm	"St. John's, N.F." partially removed	14/10/41-only date	(fig. 2)
IA2	50mm	"St. John's, N.F." completely removed	29/5/42-8/12/42	(fig. 3)
IA3	50mm	Break on lower left side	29/1/43-only date	(fig. 4)
IA?	50mm	Two breaks left & right side & break in base (final state)	13/5/43-only date	(fig. 5)
IB	50mm	Large "POSTAGE PAID" lettering	24/3/45-only date	(fig. 6)

NOTE: IA3 through IA? are allocated to cover the different states of the break-up of hammer IA. Although not seen it is assumed all the breaks in IA? did not occur at the same time.

G.P.O. II	-All 65mm base triangles			
IIA	65mm	No period after G in G.P.O.	22/9/43-only date	(fig. 7)
IIB	65mm	Period after G in G.P.O.	no reported dates	(fig. 8)
IIC	65mm	As IIA but longer - in no reported dates G of postage		(fig. 9)
G.P.O. III	-All 45 mm base triangles			
IIIA	45mm	No period after G in G.P.O. not seen		
IIIA1	45mm	As IIIA but break in base at left	no reported dates	(fig. 10)
IIIB	45mm	Period after G in G.P.O., Tall G.P.O.	2/12/44-30/1/45	(fig. 11)
IIIB1	45mm	As IIIB but break in base at left	no reported dates	(fig. 12)

G.P.O. IV	-All 52mm base triangles
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Note: No 52mm hammers have been seen on R.C.N. mail but are known used from US APO 862 and 865 and also on civilian mail and may show up on R.C.N. mail. Known usage 20/1/43-23/6/43.

CANCELLING DEVICES

Except for their use as backstamps on registered mail postmark hammers were not used as cancellation devices until after mid-May 1945 when East Coast censorship ended. Until that time the G.P.O. triangles (see above) were used to indicate postage paid. The hammers were all rubber circular date stamps and with one exception (AVALON/F.M.O. NO. 2) the rim lettering on them was AVALON/F.M.O.. Because of this it has not been possible to establish in all cases which hammers were assigned to each F.M.O.. No proof strikes are known of any hammer but it is believed that they were all locally manufactured.

<u>F.M.O. AVALON HAMMER</u>	<u>Diameter</u>	<u>Rim Rings</u>	<u>Letters</u>	<u>Added Difference</u>	<u>Reported Period of use</u>	<u>Photo</u>
P.M.1	29mm	two	Gothic		9/12/42-15/12/42	Fig. 13
P.M.2	30mm	one	Gothic		24/9/43-24/3/45	Fig. 14
P.M.3	27mm	one	Gothic		6/6/45 only date	Fig. 15
P.M.4	29mm	one	Serif		18/6/45-1/8/45	Fig. 16
P.M.6	29mm	one	Serif	Time Mark	15/9/45 only date	Fig. 17
P.M.5	29mm	one	Serif	Coloured Slug	18/8/45-27/10/45	Fig. 18
P.M.7	31mm	one	Gothic		3/1/46-7/1/46	Fig. 19
P.M.8	29mm	two	Gothic	F.M.O. No.2	29/5/45-12/9/45	Fig. 20

Note: Hammers 2, 5, 6, and 8 are found on covers known to have originated from the Accounting Section located in Avalon II barracks and presumably mailed from the FMO located there. Hammers have been numbered in order of earliest reported dates but are not necessarily the order in which they were issued.

<u>F.M.O. AVALON REGISTRATION HAMMER</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Reported Period of use</u>	<u>Photo</u>
R1	Dotted Rectangle	Full box Squat R	14/10/41-only date	Fig. 2
R2	Dotted Rectangle	No period after O in F.M.O & 15/12/42-only date box missing right side, squat R	15/12/42-only date	Fig. 21
R3	Dotted Rectangle	Full box, Tall R	Reported but not seen	
R4	Dotted Rectangle	Box missing right side, Tall R	22/9/43-27/3/45	Fig. 6&7

Note: It is possible that R2 and R4 are broken states of R1 and R3 but until further reports are received they are being treated as separate hammers.

All markings can be found in different colours or combination of colours. (e.g. censor & G.P.O.). Colours noted are red, black, purple and blue with the

latter being the most predominant.

Orderly Room stamps noted are Accountant Officer/H.M.C.S. "AVALON" (Fig. 7), Fleet Mail Office/St. John's/Newfoundland (Fig. 22) and Pay Office/HMS Avalon III (R.N. accounting section, naval headquarters).

REFERENCES:

TUCKER, G.N.: THE NAVAL SERVICE OF CANADA, It's Official History - VOLUME II ACTIVITIES ON SHORE DURING THE SECOND WORLD WAR.
Kings Printer, Ottawa, 1952.

GUERTIN, H.E.: THE WARTIME MAILED AND STAMPS OF CANADA 1939-46.
Private Printing, Toronto.

BNAPS Canadian Military Mail Study Group News Letters, various issues.

I should like to thank the following members of the CMMSSG who contributed to this study through the loan of material and information provided:

K. V. Ellison, Oyama, B.C.
B. C. Plain, M.D., Kelowna, B.C.
C.A. Stillions, Washington, D.C.
W. Whitehouse, Kamloops, B.C.

R. C. McGuire, Ottawa, Ont.
J. Purcell, Kingston, Ont.
E. R. Toop, Ottawa, Ont.

I should also like to thank Mr. Stan Coagie, former member of the R.C.N. who was stationed in the Accounting Section, H.M.C.S. AVALON, from 1943 to 1945, for his valuable assistance and for providing me with his letters to his girlfriend (Donnelly/Mrs. Coagie), which provided the basis for this study.

Fig. 22

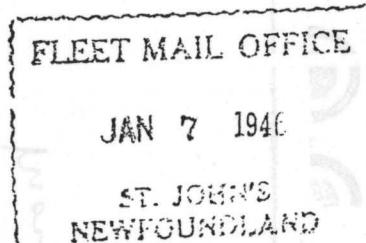


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Fig. 6

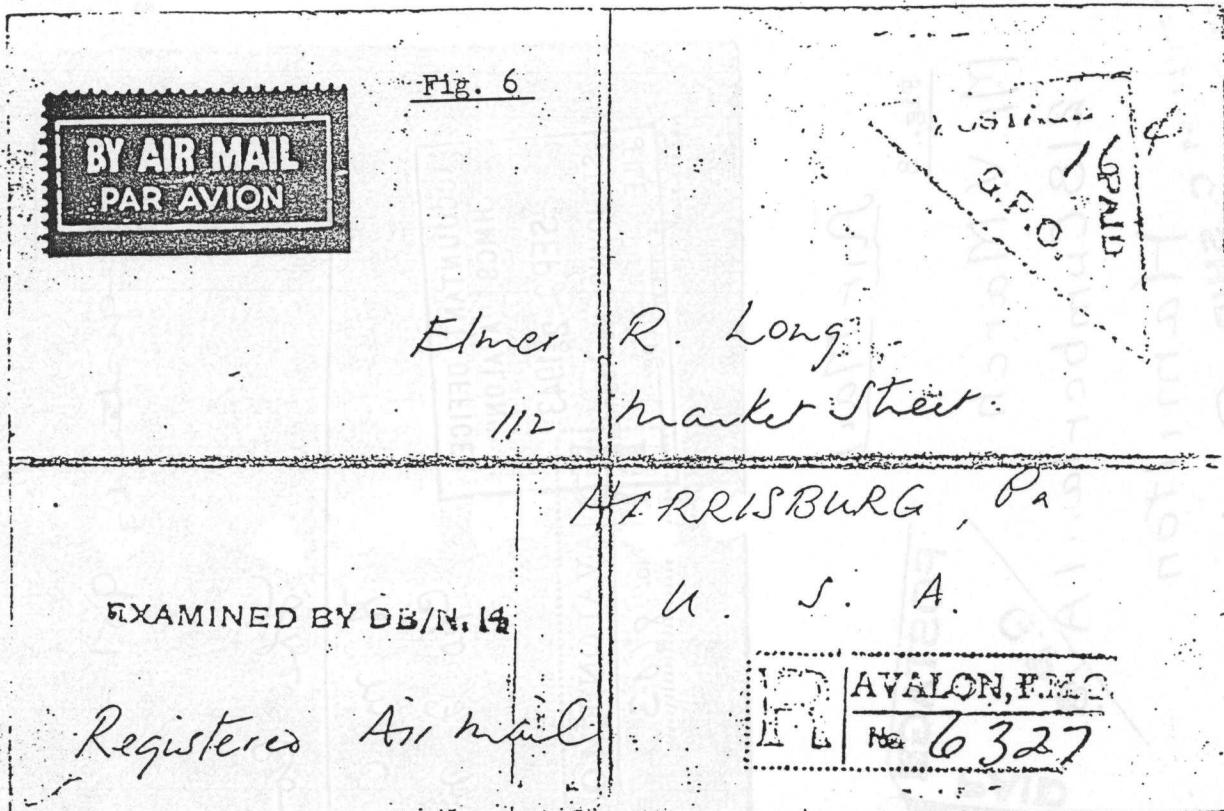
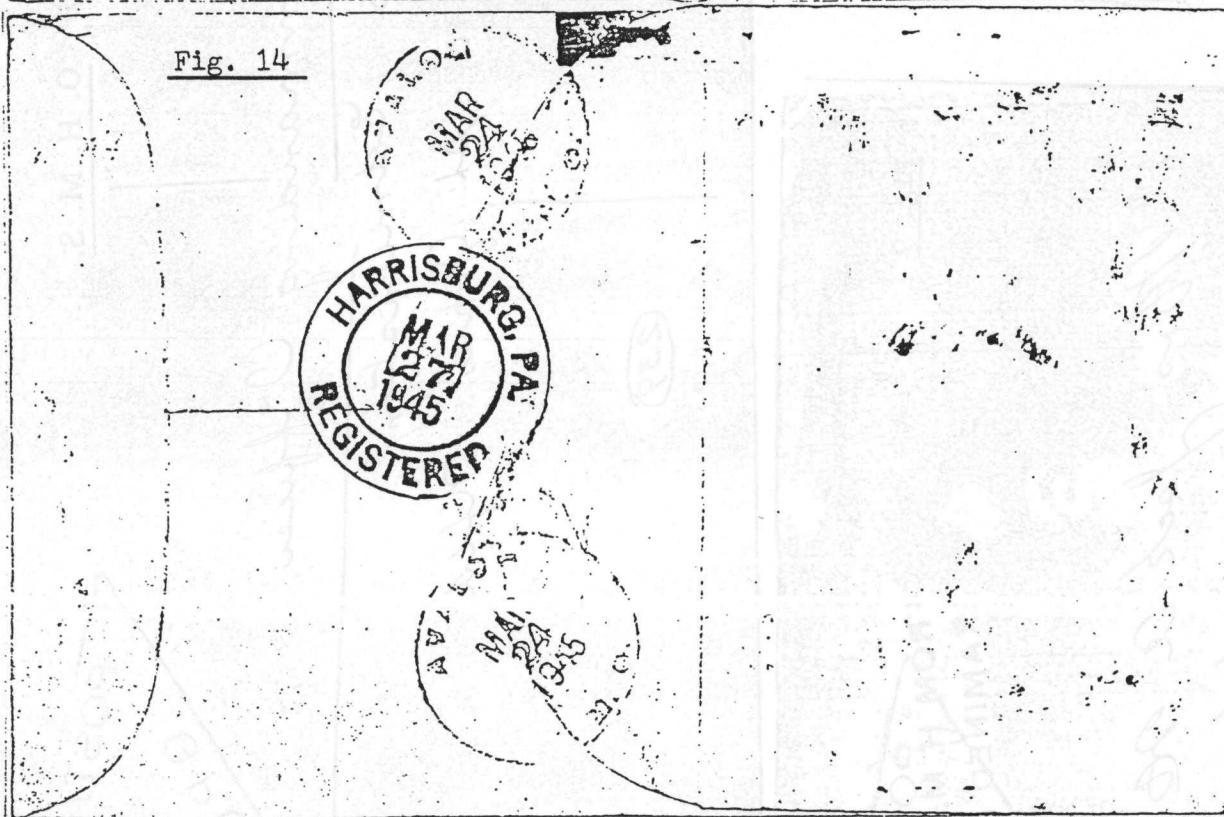
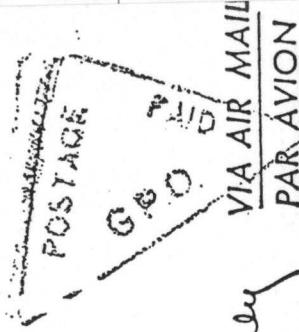


Fig. 14



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Fig. 10.



Mrs Rosemary Domeray
14 Murray St.

Minneapolis
Minnesota
CANADA



Mr & Mrs R. A. Thompson,
1221 Belmont,
Minneapolis,
Minnesota.
Canada

RCM H. M. C. CHIP
REMAINED BY DSN 501

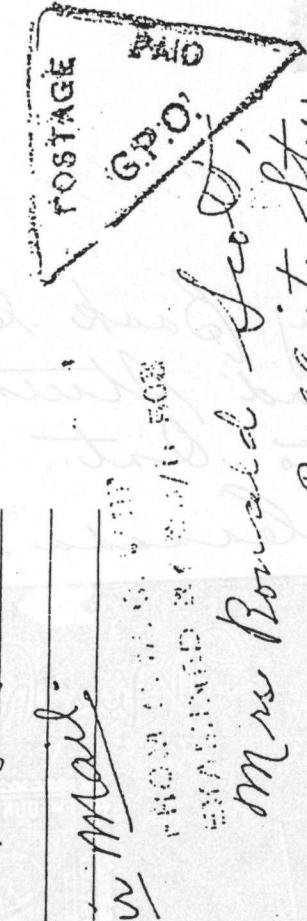
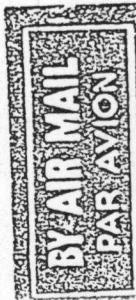


Fig. 12

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Mrs Rosalie Scott,
Dartmouth,
Nova Scotia,
Canada.

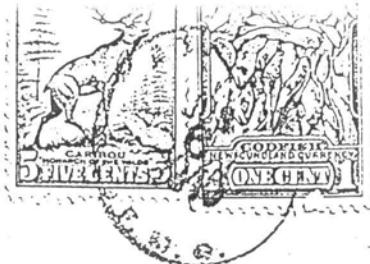
Fig. 11



BY AIR MAIL
PAR AVION

412

Fig. 15



Doubleday Book Club
105 Bond Street
Toronto Ont.
Canada.

FIG. 20

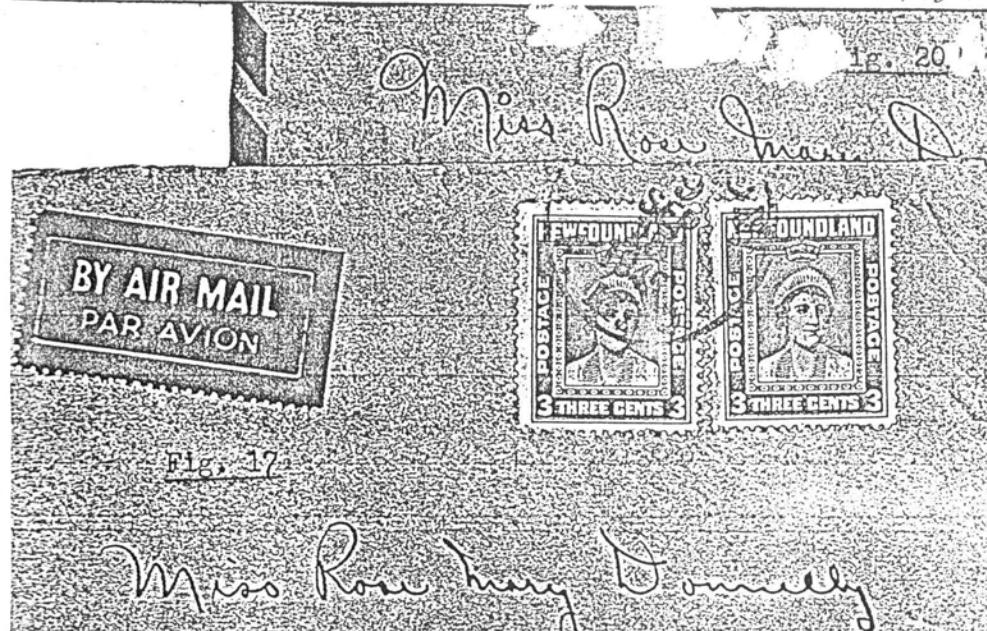


Fig. 17

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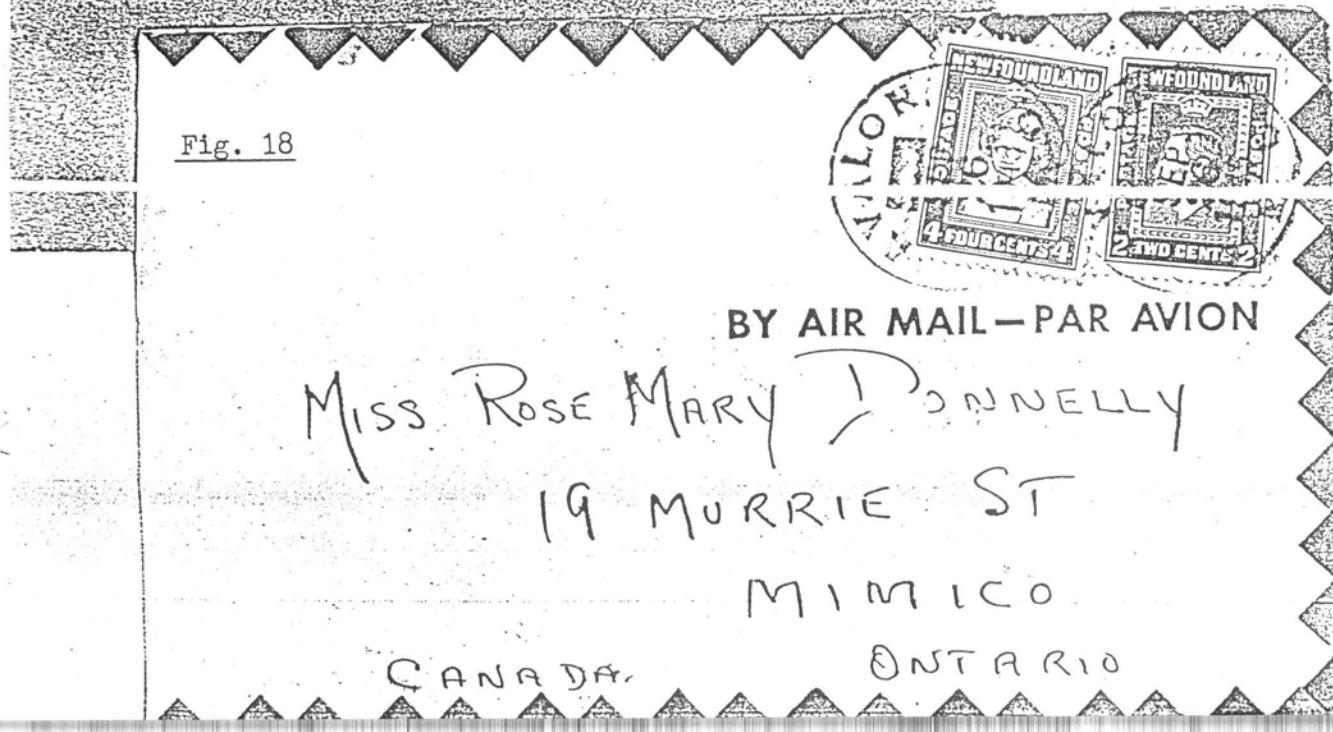


Fig. 18

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Fig. 21

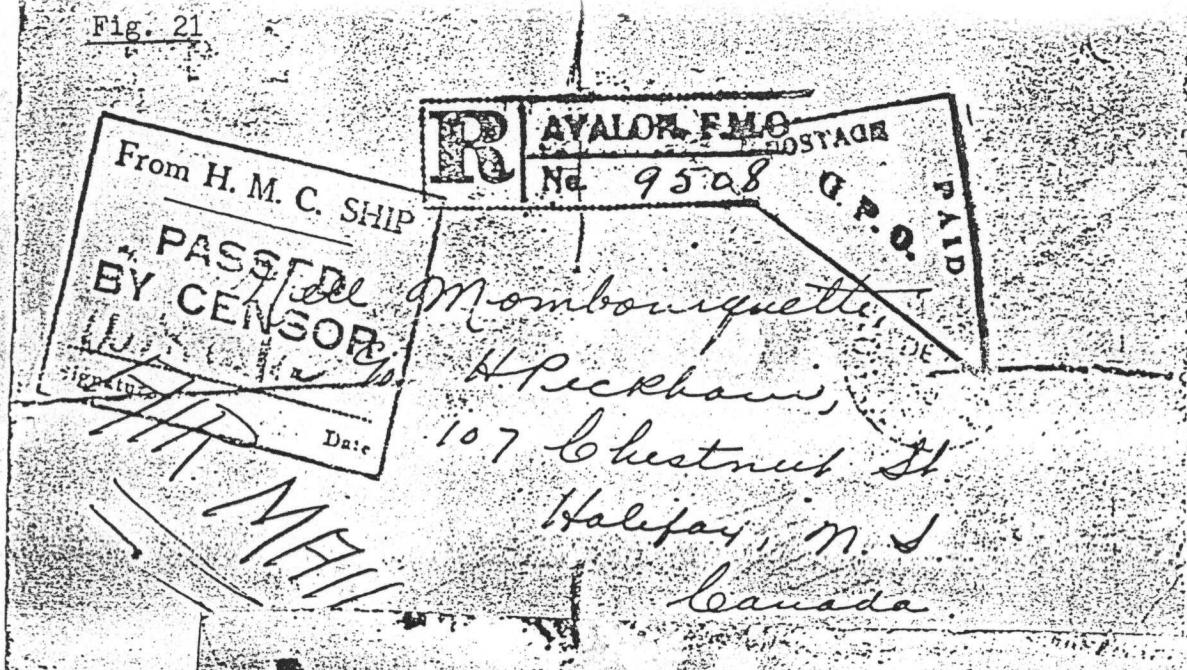


Fig. 13

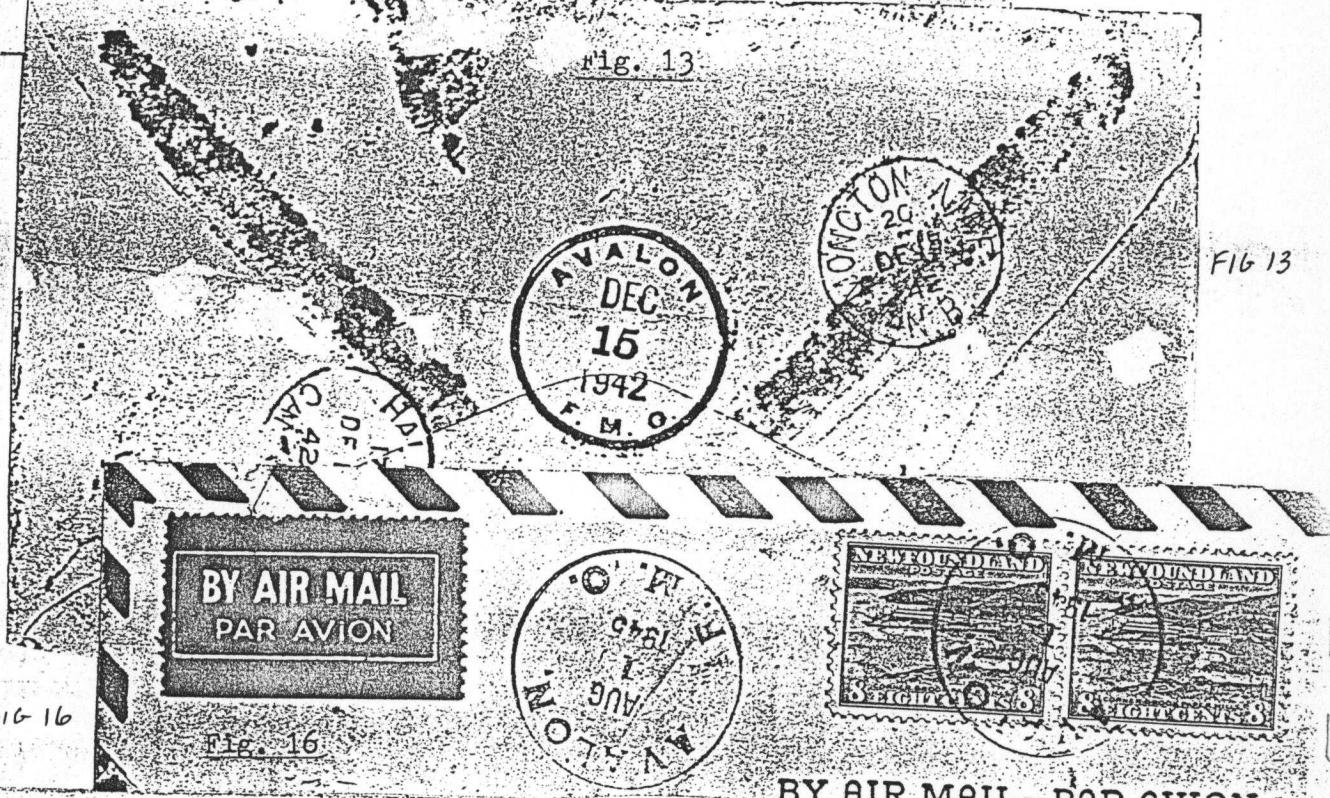


FIG 16

Fig. 16

Fig. 16

BY AIR MAIL-PAR AVION

H.M.C.S. AVALON

M. HERTZBERG

736 Hillgirt Circle

Oakland 10, California

