



Canadian Military Mail Study Group

NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER 1995

NEWSLETTER No. 120

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Dear Fellow CMMMSG Members:

I am very pleased to help co-edit (along with the welcome assistance of Ritch Toop and Ken Ellison) our Group's next few Newsletters. Although a neophyte in many areas of Canadian military mail, I am looking forward to learning a great deal more from our members. I also hope that these issues will be interesting and informative. The tentative schedule will be as follows:

- Newsletter #120 (Oct.-Nov.), end of October, 1995
- Newsletter #121 (Dec.-Jan.), end of December, 1995
- Newsletter #122 (Feb.-Mar.), end of February, 1996

Thanks to Henk Burgers for his work as Editor. A special thank you to Messrs. Bailey, Toop, Ellison, Campbell (and others) for their dedication and tireless efforts on behalf of our Group. All members are encouraged to send me articles, new reports, acquisitions, and participate in some upcoming research projects. Remember, this is your Group and your support is most appreciated!

BNAPEX '95 EDMONTON, ANNUAL CMMMSG MEETING--By Ken Ellison

Our seminar at this year's BNAPEX was held at 13:00 hours on 2 September, 1995. There were fifteen members at the meeting and we welcomed one new member:

DAVID H. WHITELEY, #1210 - 525 ST. MARY AVE., WINNIPEG, MB, R3C 3X3.

In the absence of our Chairman, Bill Bailey, and our Treasurer, Ritch Toop, the meeting was convened by Ken Ellison. Our present status was reviewed and it appears that new life has been injected into the Study Group. Handed out at the meeting was Newsletter #119 with the remainders going into the mail soon after.

The financial statement was not available due to the recent transfer of the files and monies from Henk Burgers to Ritch. It is believed that all is well in this department and a call for dues may come early next year. With postage costs near 50 cents each there is a big drain on our funds (a good thing John Wannerton made it again to the show--it certainly saved us some airmail postage!). It was good to see many members at the meeting--how about more next year?

E. R. 'RITCH' TOOP

We are very sorry to inform you of Ritch's passing on the 13th of October 1995. As you all know, Ritch has been the main stay of our Study Group for some years and he will be sorely missed in all philatelic circles. To Maureen goes our heartfelt sympathy.

Good news came in the announcement that Dean Mario has volunteered to put out our Newsletter for awhile. This offer was gratefully accepted by all present. It is believed that there will be some articles now in Ritch's possession but, as always, articles are needed and should be sent to Dean at Box 342, Saskatoon, Sask. S7K 3L3.

The meeting's "best wishes" went out to Maureen and Ritch Toop in the form of a card. We all wish Ritch the very best and hope that he is back home soon.

The seminar part of our meeting was on the First World War Canadian usage of the British Field Post Office markings. John Frith explained the problems he was having on the allocations of the FPO's and quite a bit of input from members ensued. Thank you John.

[Thank you too Ken for providing the Group with this report and acting as chair for the Group meeting. Ed.]

ARMED FORCES AIR LETTER UPDATE--By Wilf Whitehouse

In Newsletter #119, page 184, Dr. Brian Plain mentioned an Air Letter from Burma and illustrated it in his item #2. He suggested that this A/L was somewhat unusual and that it could possibly have been printed locally.

The membership may be interested to know that there is nothing unusual about this A/L. It was probably printed in Canada in January 1945. The idea behind this letter was that officials believed, with the end of the War in sight, the Armed Forces Air Letter would be inappropriate for the flood of civilian correspondence expected when the War ended. A new printing was thus ordered.

When stocks of the AFAL (1944 printing) began to run out, supplies of this new printing with "CANADA" above the "AIR LETTER/PAR AVION" box were sent overseas. They were used as early as March 1945 from the United Kingdom, and can also be found used by released POW's in Japanese hands. These have the additional imprinted rubber stamp "POSTAGE PAID" or "LIBERATED P.O.W.". Some were used by released German POW's upon their arrival in the U.K.

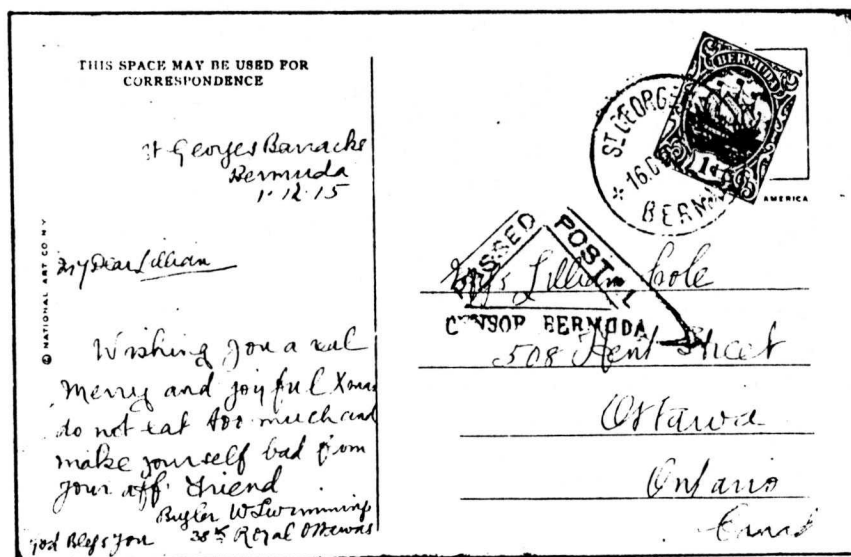
There are a number of varieties due to different printings; some without a watermark and others with the watermark "ROLLAND CROYDON AIR-MAIL CANADA".

I have never bothered to write about these A/L's because they are not specifically a military item as per the AFAL forms written up in 1977. They still enjoyed wide use among the Armed Forces towards the end of the War.

BOER WAR BOOKS REPRINTED

The following books have recently been reprinted: The Canadian Contingents (1901); With The Guns (1901); and Canadian's in Khaki. Contact E.G. Ursual, Box 8096, Ottawa, Ont., K1G 3H6 for more information.

WWI CANADIAN FORCES IN BERMUDA--By Colin Pomfret



The above picture postcard was sent to Ottawa from Bugler W. Swimming of the 38th Royal Ottawas. The 38th Battalion sailed from Canada on May 30, 1915 and relieved the Royal Canadian Regiment on August 12, 1915. The R.C.R. left the 38th Royal Ottawas to perform the garrison duty on the island. The Regiment sailed for England on August 17 where it joined up with the 7th Brigade, 3rd Canadian Division. The 38th Battalion served in Bermuda until May 30, 1916 when it left for England and joined the 12th Brigade, 4th Canadian Division. The postcard bears the "ST. GEORGES/16 DEC. 15/BERMUDA" circular datestamp as well as the triangle censor marking. Note the return address of "ST. GEORGES BARRACKS".

WWI BRITISH ARMY DATESTAMPS AND CANADIAN CORPS USAGES POST-JANUARY, 1919--By John Frith

Since the original article on allocations of British Army datestamps to Canadian Corps Units (N/L 41, Item 333), a lot more covers have surfaced and a lot more information has been generated. With the proviso that I do not have enough information on the divisional railhead operation dates, I believe the following statement to be correct:

With the exception of the 3rd Canadian Division units which were in the process of leaving for England, all of the "P" series hammers reverted back to their respective Canadian Corps offices after February 1, 1919. They were then used by these offices until each of the units in their turn left for England later in 1919.

In addition to covers in my own collection (FIG. 1), and those I have handled (and thanks to reports generated by my censor study) I am aware of covers used from all units except "TP1", "1P", "DP4", and "RP4" during this period. I am sure confirmation of usages from all of the units during this period would be welcomed by the editor and members of the Study Group. FIG. 2 details the R.O. from the 14th C.F.A.

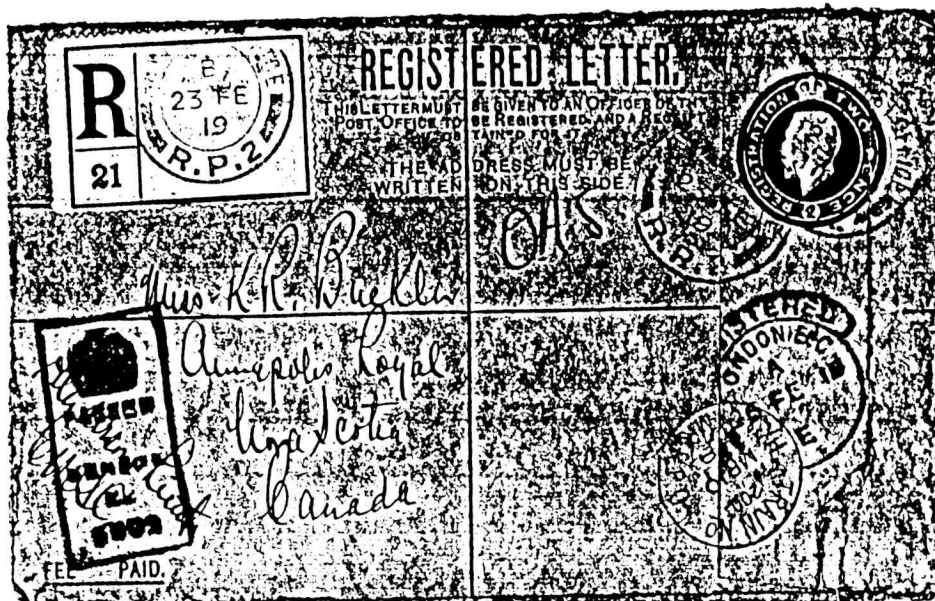


FIG. 1

ROUTINE ORDERS
by
Lt.-COL. G. G. CORBET, Commanding
14th Canadian Field Ambulance....

January 5th, 1919 AFTER ORDER

POSTAL CENSORSHIP-

1. Regimental censorship of letters will be discontinued forthwith. Correspondence will be still liable to examination at the Base and all ranks are reminded that the censorship orders are still in force, except as regards those orders cancelled by G.R.O. 5682.
If the examination at the Base shows that breaches of the Censorship Orders are common in any units, it will be necessary to re-impose regimental censorship, on those units.
2. All letters and postcards must bear a censor stamp, except those posted in accordance with the latter portion of Censorship Orders, par. 30.
3. All letters and postcards must bear in the left hand bottom corner of the address side, the name and rank, if any of the writer. They will be handed closed to the officer i/c of the censor stamp, and will not be opened by him except for the purpose of identifying writers who have failed to comply with this order.
(G.R.O. 5941, 29-12-18).

G. G. Corbet Lt.-Col.,
O.C., 14th Canadian Field Ambulance.

FIG. 2

THE IMPERIAL MUNITIONS BOARD: A
DOMESTIC CANADIAN EFFORT IN THE GREAT WAR--By Brian Plain, M.D.

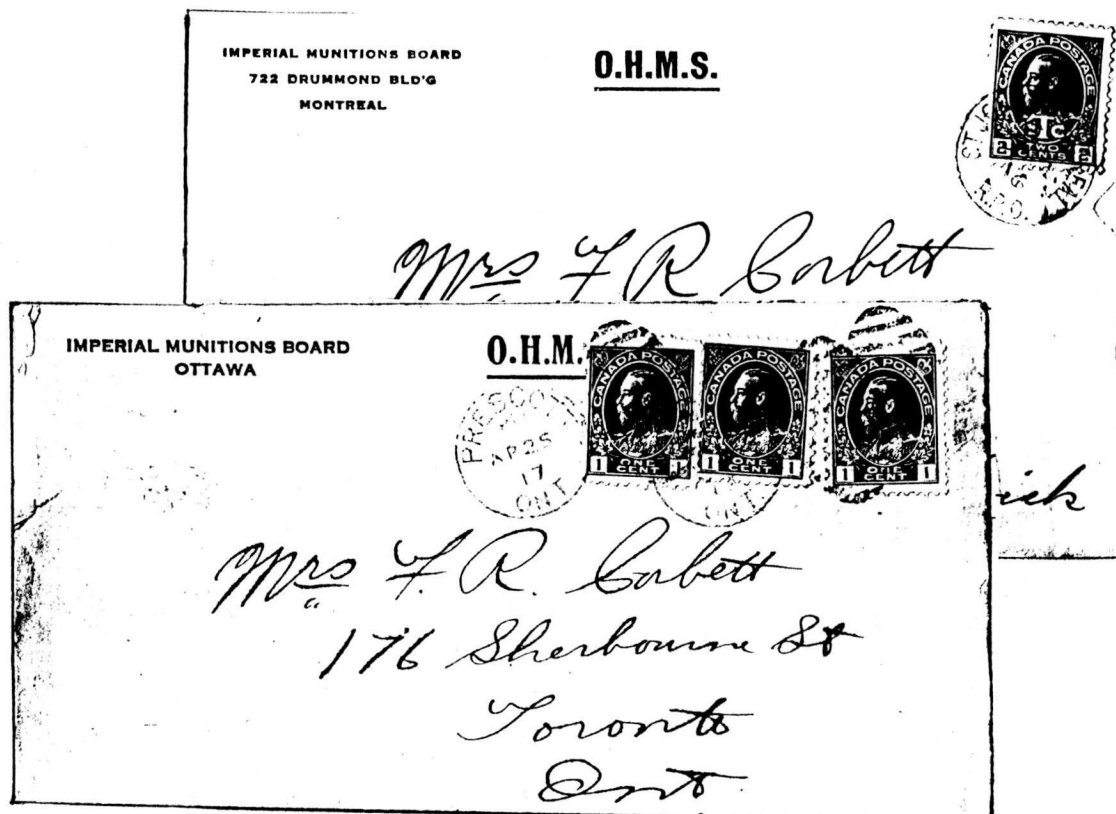
In 1914 Canada had no significant munitions industry. Within one month of the outbreak of war, however, the Minister of Militia and Defence the Hon. Sam Hughes recognized Canada's capacity to do so and set up a Shell Committee. In January 1915, 50 Canadian manufacturers, both large and small, were actively producing shells for the British Government.¹ Operations were carried out by this committee until November 29, 1915 when the Committee was replaced by the larger organization of the Imperial Munitions Board (Canada). This committee acted on behalf of the British Ministry of Munitions in obtaining all war supplies purchased in Canada.² The policy of the Board was the direct purchase of raw materials of every description and to pass them from one contractor to another, each being paid successively for his labour. This plan saved contractors the large capital outlay necessary to create complete shells, and at the same time ensured a proper distribution of the available resources. The most effective use of money, time, and materials was thus obtained. Ultimately, the operations of the Board covered every available type of war material and assisted in the creation of previously non-existent manufacturing industries.³

The two items shown below are postal reminders of Canada's significant domestic contribution to the war effort which accounted for fully 15 percent of Britain's expenditure on munitions.

¹Swettenham, John. Canada and The First World War, National Museum of Man (Ottawa, Undated) p. 30.

²Duguid, Col.A. Fortescue. Official History of the Canadian Forces in the Great War, 1914-19, General Series, Vol. 1 (Aug. 1914-Sept. 1915), (King's Printer, Ottawa, 1938) p. 115.

³Hopkins, J. Castell, Canada at War: A Record of Heroism and Achievement, 1914-1918, The Canadian Annual Review Ltd., 1919, pp. 207-209.



LOOKING ASTERN--By Wilf Whitehouse

With the commissioning of H.M.C.S. Regina at Esquimalt, B.C. on September 30, 1994, we are reminded that this is the second ship known by that name (FIG. 1).



FIG. 1

On hand to witness the commissioning were thirty-three veterans of the first Regina, a "Flower" class corvette, which was commissioned at Halifax in January 1942.

After a brief tour of escort duty out of Halifax, Regina along with a number of other corvettes, sailed for England to be fitted with additional radar and anti-aircraft armament in order to take part in Operation "Torch" (the invasion of North Africa on November 8, 1942).

In February 1943, as a member of Escort Group 27 escorting a convoy off of the Algerian coast, Regina came onto the Italian submarine Avorio in the darkness. The submarine was hit with 4-inch gunfire and sunk; the crew being rescued by Regina.

The Armed Forces Air Letter (FIG.2) was written a few days later by a member of the ship's company urging his mother to save any newspaper reports about R.C.N. ships. This was certainly a neat way of telling your family that something "big" had taken place without attracting the keen attention of the Censor Officer!

Fold Here

FROM:
(Sender's full name and address)

M. J. WHITEHOUSE
HMCS REGINA
G.P.O. LONDON
ENGLAND

(REV.)

ARMED FORCES
AIR LETTER

AIR MAIL

MAR 25 1943

POST OFFICE

If anything is enclosed in this letter it will be sent by ordinary mail.

From H.M.C. SHIP

PASSED BY CENSOR

Date: 25/3/43

Signature: [Signature]

BOX 974
PARIS, ONTARIO
CANADA

Fold Here

O.P.Q. 11
40/P&S/1448 (10/42)

FIG. 2

On completion of Operation "Torch", Regina returned to the North Atlantic as a member of Escort Group C-1 until the spring of 1944. At that time she was allocated to Western Approaches Command at Liverpool for duties connected with the Normandy invasion.

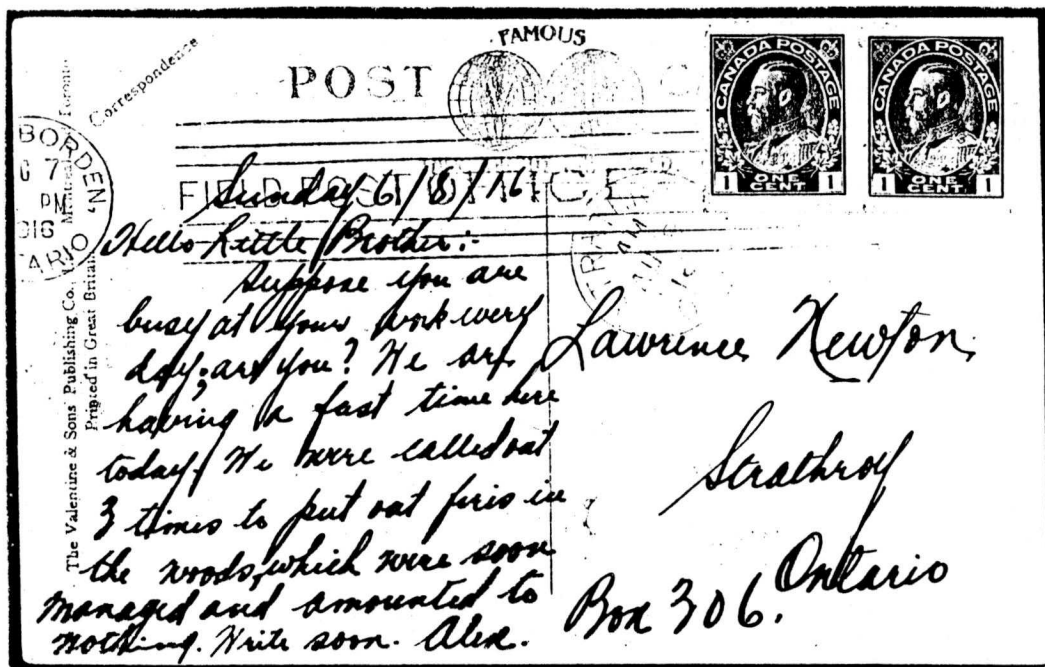
While carrying out escort duties of coastal and Channel convoys she was torpedoed and sunk on August 8, 1944, with a loss of 30 of her ship's company.

CAMP BORDEN UNIVERSAL MACHINE--By J. Colin Campbell

Trying to establish an earliest date of usage of a specific cancellation isn't always an easy matter. The writer has been told that proofing dates for machine cancels do not exist so the one illustrated may be a case in point.

D.F. Sessions, in his handbook The Early Rapid Cancelling Machines of Canada (1982) on page 126, lists the earliest known Universal machine cancellation from Camp Borden, Ontario as August 7, 1916 (see illustration). The Camp was officially opened July 11, 1916. Can members pre-date the August date of usage?

While on the subject, can any reader post-date an October 7, 1917 date of usage for the same machine cancel? A note, with photocopy to the editor or the writer, would be appreciated and the results will be published in the next Newsletter.



Universal machine from Camp Borden, Aug. 7, 1916
Strathroy receiver, Aug. 8, 1916
Note manuscript date Sunday 6/8/16



THE SIBERIAN CAMPAIGN, 1918-19--By David H. Whiteley*

On August 12, 1918 the Privy Council (Canada) authorized the despatch of a Canadian contingent as part of an allied Expeditionary Force to Siberia to support the White Russian forces and to establish an Eastern Front in order to prevent the Axis powers from moving reinforcements to the Western Front.

Initially the Privy Council approved the despatch of a contingent of 5,000 Canadian troops. The force, known as the Canadian Expeditionary Force, Siberia [also known as the C.S.E.F. Ed.] consisted of the following units:

H.Q. 16th Infantry Brigade	"B" Squadron RNWMP (Cavalry)
85th Battalion Canadian Field Artillery	6th Signal Company
259th Battalion Canada Rifles (lt. inf.)	260th Btn. Canada Rifles
20th Machine Gun Company	No. 1 Divisional Train
No. 16 Field Ambulance	No. 11 Stationary Ambulance
No. 9 Ordinance Detachment	No. 5 Postal Corps (1 officer/18 OR's)**
25th Btn. Middlesex Regt. (British)	1/9th Btn. Hampshire Regt. (British)

The Canadian elements of this force were despatched to Vladivostok between October 11, 1918 and February 12, 1919. The advance party of 677 men, including General Elmsley, his staff, and 4 members of the Postal Corps sailed from Victoria, B.C. on October 11 aboard the C.P. Liner R.M.S. Empress of Japan and arrived at Vladivostok on October 26. The special C.E.F. Siberia cancelling device accompanied. A further contingent of 353 men, including Lt. Col. Stayner who was carrying the postal censor stamps, sailed on November 17 aboard the C.P. Liner S.S. Monteagle. Further contingents departed as follows:

Nov. 17, 1918	85 men	aboard	<u>S.S. War Charger</u>	Arr. Vlad.	Dec. 14
Dec. 22, 1918	891 men	"	<u>S.S. Teesta</u>	"	Jan. 12
Dec. 26, 1918	1,807 men	"	<u>S.S. Protesilaus</u>	"	Jan. 15
Jan. 10, 1919	24 men	"	<u>S.S. Madras</u>	"	Jan. 27
Jan. 31, 1919	57 men	"	<u>S.S. Monteagle</u>	"	Feb. 14
Feb. 12, 1919	311 men	"	<u>R.M.S. Emp. of Japan</u>	"	Mar. 1
Mar. 28, 1919	7 men	"	<u>S.S. Cyclops</u>	"	Apr. 14

With the cessation of hostilities in the West in November of 1918, the need for an Eastern Front evaporated and the Canadian Government faced a growing demand to bring the troops home. In April of 1919 a decision was made to withdraw the Canadian contingent from Siberia:

Apr. 22, 1919	1,076 men	aboard	<u>S.S. Monteagle</u>	Arr. Van'r.	May 5
May 9, 1919	766 men	"	<u>R.M.S. Emp. of Japan</u>	"	May 21
May 19, 1919	1,524 men	"	<u>R.M.S. Emp. of Russia</u>	"	May 30
Jun. 5, 1919	655 men	"	<u>S.S. Monteagle</u>	"	Jun. 18

With the sailing of General Elmsley and his staff on June 5, 1919, the Canadian involvement in Siberia effectively came to an end. Fifty-three

Canadians volunteered to remain in Siberia for up to a further six months to serve with the British Military Mission. Twenty others volunteered to remain in Siberia to serve with the Canadian Red Cross. The final units to leave Siberia, including a RNWMP contingent, sailed from Vladivostok on August 2 aboard the S.S. Perza. They landed at Tsingu, Japan on August 4 and then sailed from Yokohama on August 16 aboard the R.M.S. Empress of Asia. The ship arrived in Vancouver on August 27, 1919.

*The information for this compilation was taken from J.F. Skuce's Canada's Soldiers in Siberia, 1918-1919 (Ottawa: Access to History Publications, 1990).

**No. 5 Canadian Postal Corps regularly increased its size to two officers and 21 OR's, then five officers and 13 OR's etc.

WWII FPO SC 16 AND BFPO 548--By John Frith

In the N/L item 212, the WWII FPO checklist, FPO 548 is listed as "Army, U.K. NW Europe, Feb. '42-Apr. '45" and does not assign it to a specific C.P.C. Office. Bailey and Toop, in their Canadian Military Posts, Vol. II at page 231, assign BFPO 548 to FPO SC16 from 1943. However, the SC16 listing at page 251, lists hammer D2, BFPO 649 and hammer D3 showing an illustration of BFPO 648! They give the ops. data for FPO SC16 as "Glasgow, Scotland, U.K., May '43-Dec. '43", used for the departure of the 1st and 5th Divisions to the C.M.F.

The above data obviously creates confusion and I believe that the two covers illustrated can help to clarify the situation (FIG. 1, FIG. 2). In addition, they also illustrate a couple of C.P.C. handstamps that I don't believe have been previously reported (FIG. 1 and FIG. 2 REV.).

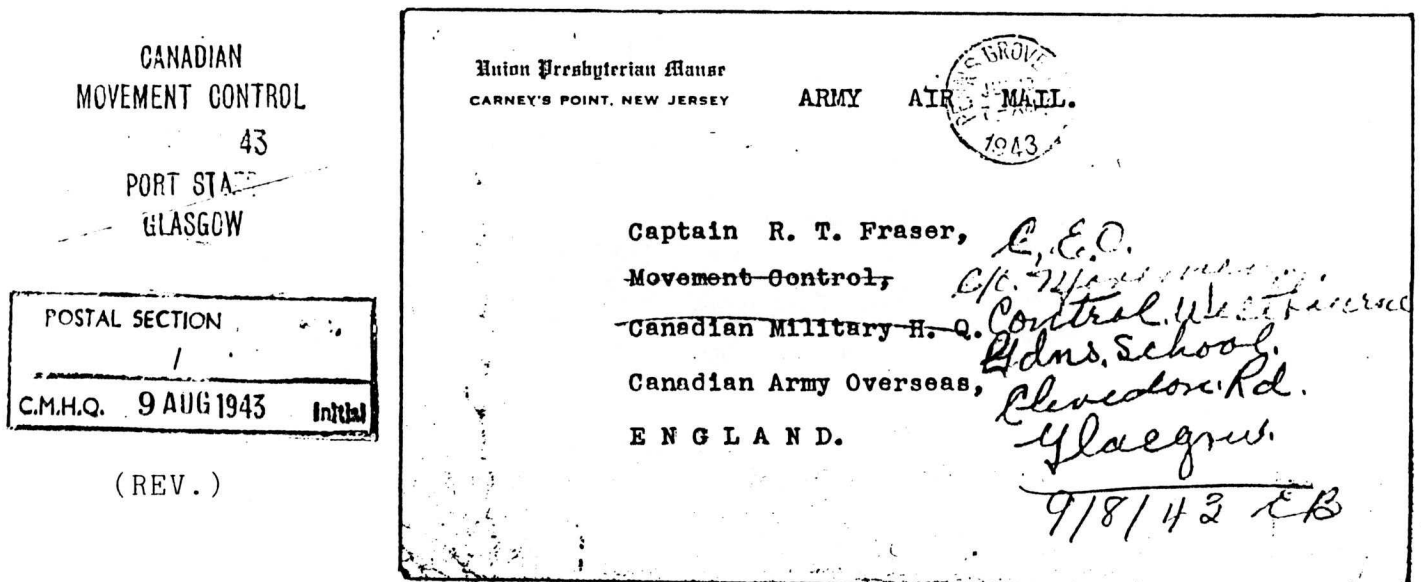


FIG. 1



(REV.)

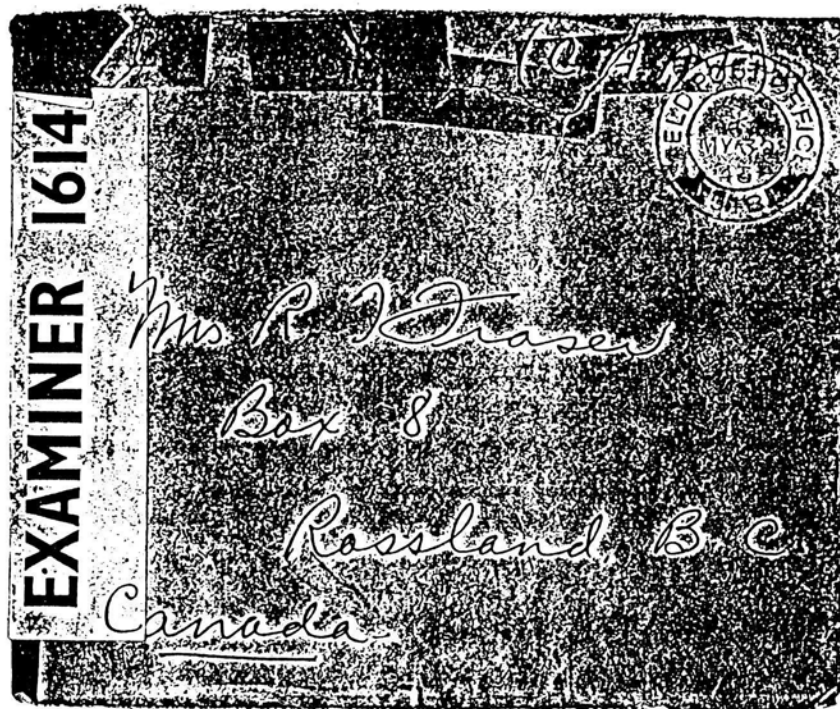


FIG. 2
(FPO 548/* /MY 30/43)

"THE SHIP THAT BROUGHT ME HOME"--By Colin Pomfret

The postcard below, illustrating H.M.T. Olympic, is probably quite familiar to many members. What might be more interesting is finding out the various dates of the card known. New reports to the editor would be most helpful [I have a card showing "May 10th" and "May 16th". Ed.]



Editor's Address-- Please ^{Send} your notes and articles to:
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