



Canadian Military Mail Study Group

WITH EVERY GOOD WISH
FOR THE NEW YEAR!



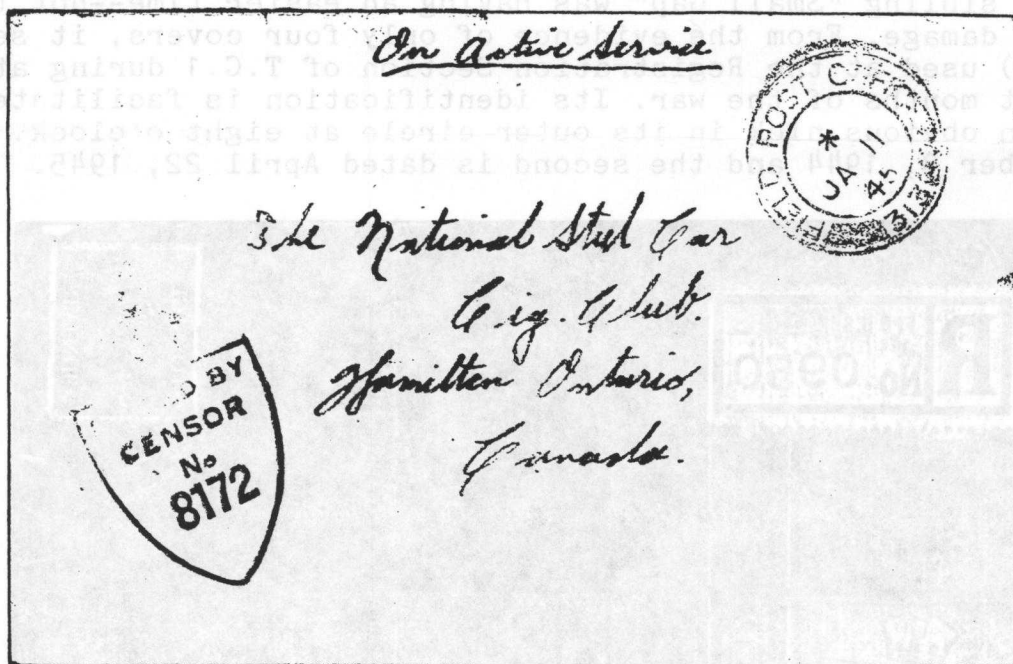
NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 2006 .

NEWSLETTER NO. 173
Page 837

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF 313: DIES I AND II--By Kim Dodwell

On July 8, 1940, the First Canadian Infantry Division started to use British Army datestamps FPO 310-314; of which 313 had two almost identical dies. Bailey & Toop's 1985 edition [The Canadian Military Posts, Vol. II Ed.] describes (and illustrates) Die I as having a smaller space between "POST" and "OFFICE". They report both dies as being allocated (at FPO T.C.1) to 1 CID's Supply Point, which was a R.C.A.O.C. responsibility.



A cover from the Saskatoon Light Infantry (MG), January 11, 1945 showing the worn 313 "Big Gap" hammer.

[Cont'd.]

CHAIRMAN/TREAS.: C.D. SAYLES, 25 HOWARD BLVD., WATERDOWN, ON LOR 2H4
(sayles@sympatico.ca)

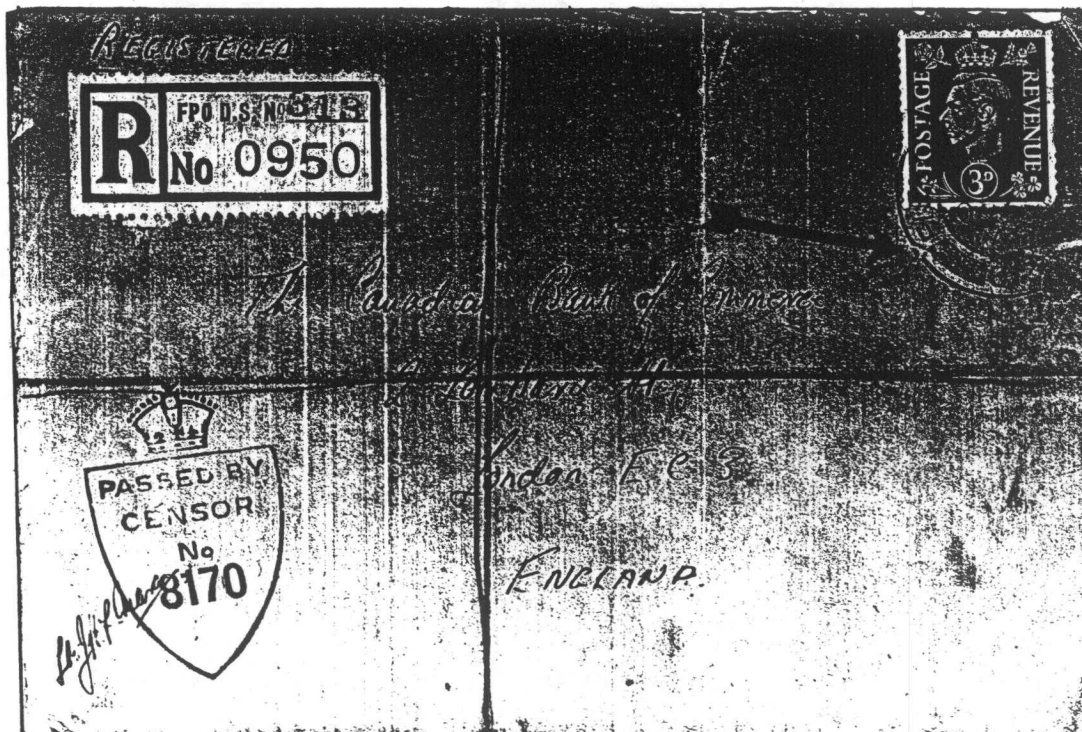
EDITOR: D. MARIO, POST OFFICE BOX 342, SASKATOON, SK S7K 3L3

Page 838

Bailey & Toop's 1996 edition [Canadian Military Postal Markings, Vol.II Ed.] however, shows datestamp M15-118 (FPO 313) as having a smaller gap in the illustration (by $\frac{1}{2}$ of 1mm!) and describes it as being used at T.C.1 at the Ration Point (which was a R.C.A.S.C. responsibility). The earlier number, M15-117 is now shown as having the larger gap with no comment as to its use. Confused? I just call them "Big Gap" and "Small Gap" and forget about the die numbers. There are other small differences shown, for example, including the length of the "I" in "OFFICE", but these do not seem to be born out with any consistency on actual covers.

"Big Gap" 313 was in continuous use at the Ration Point in England and Sicily in 1940-1943. In early 1944, when 1 CID was fighting its way up Italy, the use of individual Brigade FPO's ceased. Brigade mail went back with the ration trucks to T.C.1 for processing with datestamp 313. Thus 313 was marking a huge volume of mail and a fault in the die or its frame (first apparent in 1943) was indicated with a double arc appearing in the outer frame in the one o'clock-three o'clock sector. It had its better moments (after cleaning?), but between January 11, 1945 and February 4, 1945 "Big Gap" was taken out of use and appears no more. It was replaced on or before February 4 by datestamp 311 (which had originally been issued for use by 2 CIB's FPO C-2. With Brigade FPO personnel and equipment now seemingly pooled at T.C.1, this would not have mattered.

Meanwhile the sibling "Small Gap" was having an easier time--not that this saved it from damage. From the evidence of only four covers, it seems that it was (only?) used at the Registration Section of T.C.1 during at least the last eight months of the war. Its identification is facilitated by the presence of an obvious nick in its outer circle at eight o'clock. My first cover is October 3, 1944 and the second is dated April 22, 1945.



A registered cover from the Seaforth Highlanders, October 3, 1944 showing the nicked "Small Gap" 313 device.

[Cont'd.]



A registered cover from the Seaforth Highlanders, April 22, 1945 with the nicked "Small Gap" 313 hammer.

Was the nicked "Small Gap" used for other than registration, and can anyone extend its period of usage? There must be other covers extant somewhere.

"Big Gap" 313 could have marked more covers from Canadian servicemen during the Second World War than any other hand-held datestamp. If it could be found, with its hard-won "war wounds", it deserves a place of honour in a postal museum!

TRANS-PACIFIC WARTIME SERVICES--By David Collyer

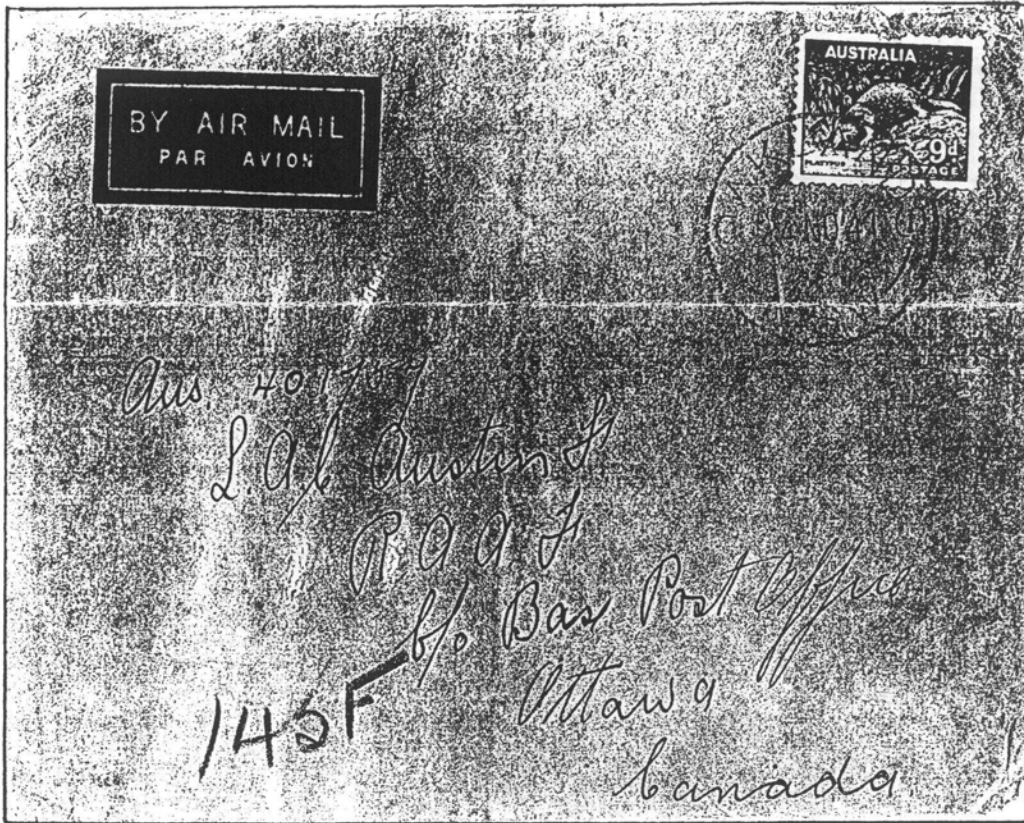
When the Empire Air Training Scheme was established, almost 10,000 Australians did their final training in Canada. The following cover was posted in Oaklands, New South Wales on November 24, 1941 to one such trainee: L.A.C. Austin. He volunteered the previous year and completed his initial training in Australia.

The cover was forwarded from Sydney by sea across the Pacific and then flown across North America to the R.A.A.F. Base Post Office in Ottawa, Canada, where it was received on January 2, 1942--a transit time of thirty-seven days. It bears an "OTTAWA MPO NO.304" circular dater backstamp.

The combined sea/air service (which was only available to servicemen and not for civilian mail at this time) cost 9d per $\frac{1}{2}$ ounce.

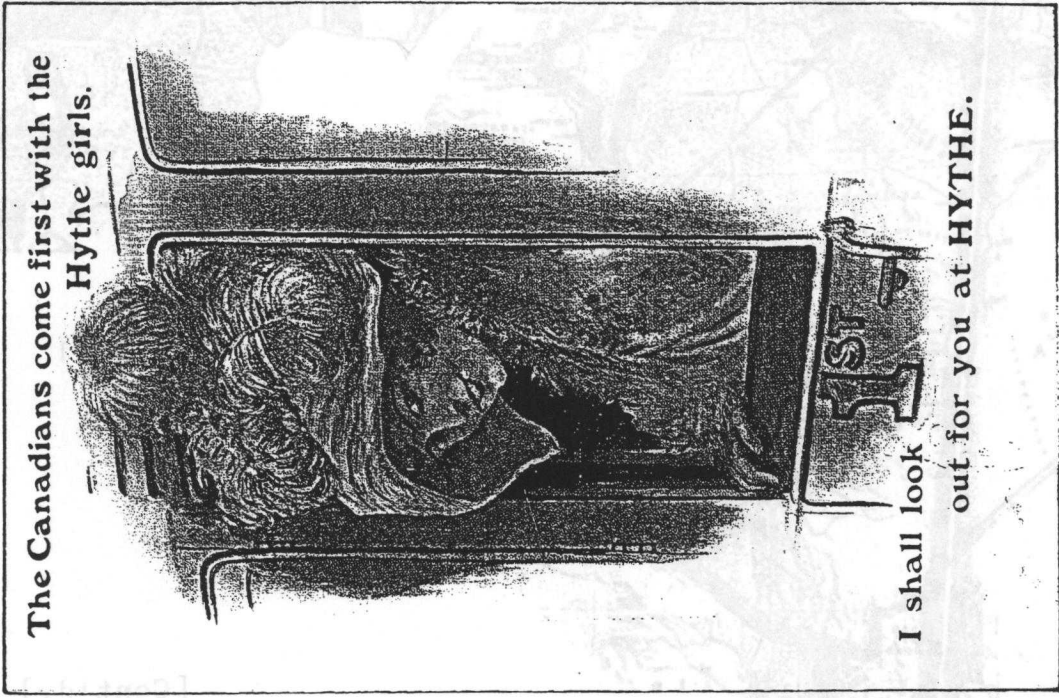
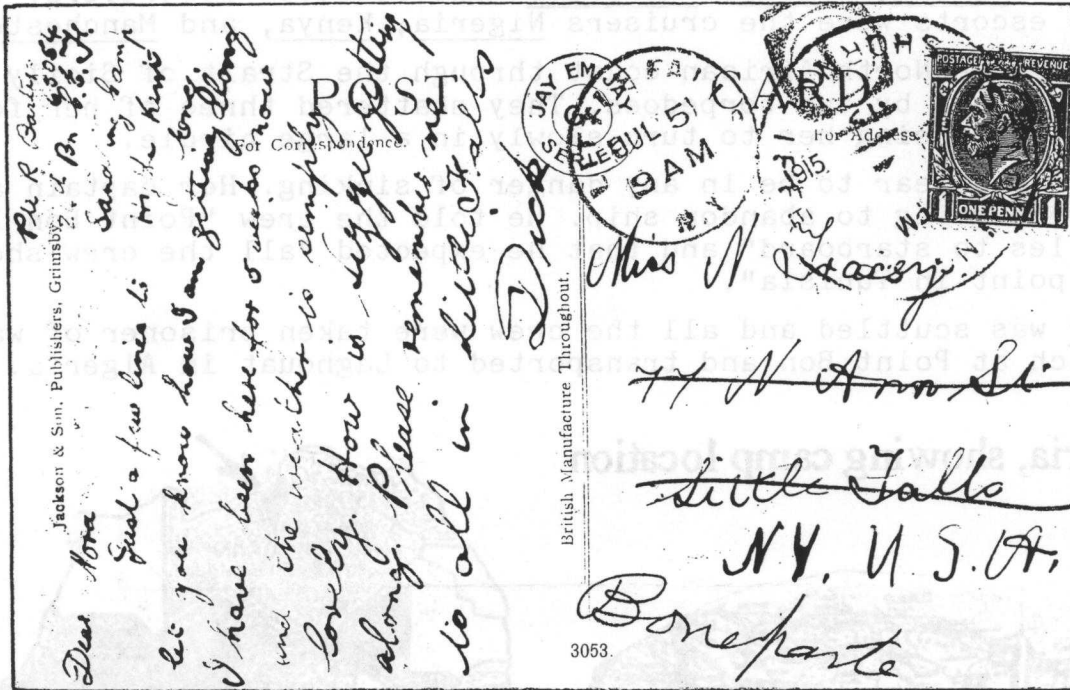
The next cover was posted by a trainee at Camp Borden, Ontario, on February 12, 1941 using Royal Canadian Air Force stationery. It was flown to San Francisco and may have left on P.A.A.'s FAM 14 service to Hong Kong on February 18, or the FAM 19 service to New Zealand on February 23. The cover was censored on arrival in Sydney. The air mail rate was 90¢.

[Cont'd.]



24TH BTN., C.E.F., SANDLING CAMP, SHORNCLIFFE--By Jim Felton

[Jim sent along the interesting postcard below. It bears the large 1915 Sandling Camp, Shorncliffe skeleton circular dater. According to J.C. Hopkins' Canada at War (1919, p.94), the 24th sailed to England on May 11, 1915 with 42 officers and 1,082 other ranks. H.Q. on mobilization was Montreal, Quebec. The original Commanding Officer was Lt.-Col. J.A. Gunn.Ed.]



Page 842

LETTER TO CANADIAN HELD PRISONER BY THE VICHY FRENCH--By John Burnett

In the late summer of 1942, conditions in Malta had reached a crisis stage. It was decided to send a convoy of fourteen merchant ships to Malta in what was known as "Operation Pedestal". This convoy was to pass through the Straits of Gibraltar.

The convoy was escorted by a fleet of Royal Navy vessels including battle-ships HMS Rodney and Nelson; aircraft carriers Eagle, Victorious, and Indomitable; cruisers Phoebe, Sirius, Charybdis; and fourteen destroyers. Operating as close escorts were the cruisers Nigeria, Kenya, and Manchester.

Running close to the North African coast through the Strait of Sicily, HMS Manchester was struck by two torpedoes. They shattered three of her four propeller shafts, causing her to turn slowly in a large circle.

Manchester didn't appear to be in any danger of sinking. Her captain announced they were going to abandon ship. He told the crew "Point Bon lies just twelve miles to starboard" and that he expected "all the crew should make for that point in Tunisia".

HMS Manchester was scuttled and all the crew were taken prisoner of war by the Vichy French at Point Bon and transported to Laghouat in Algeria.

Map of Algeria, showing camp location

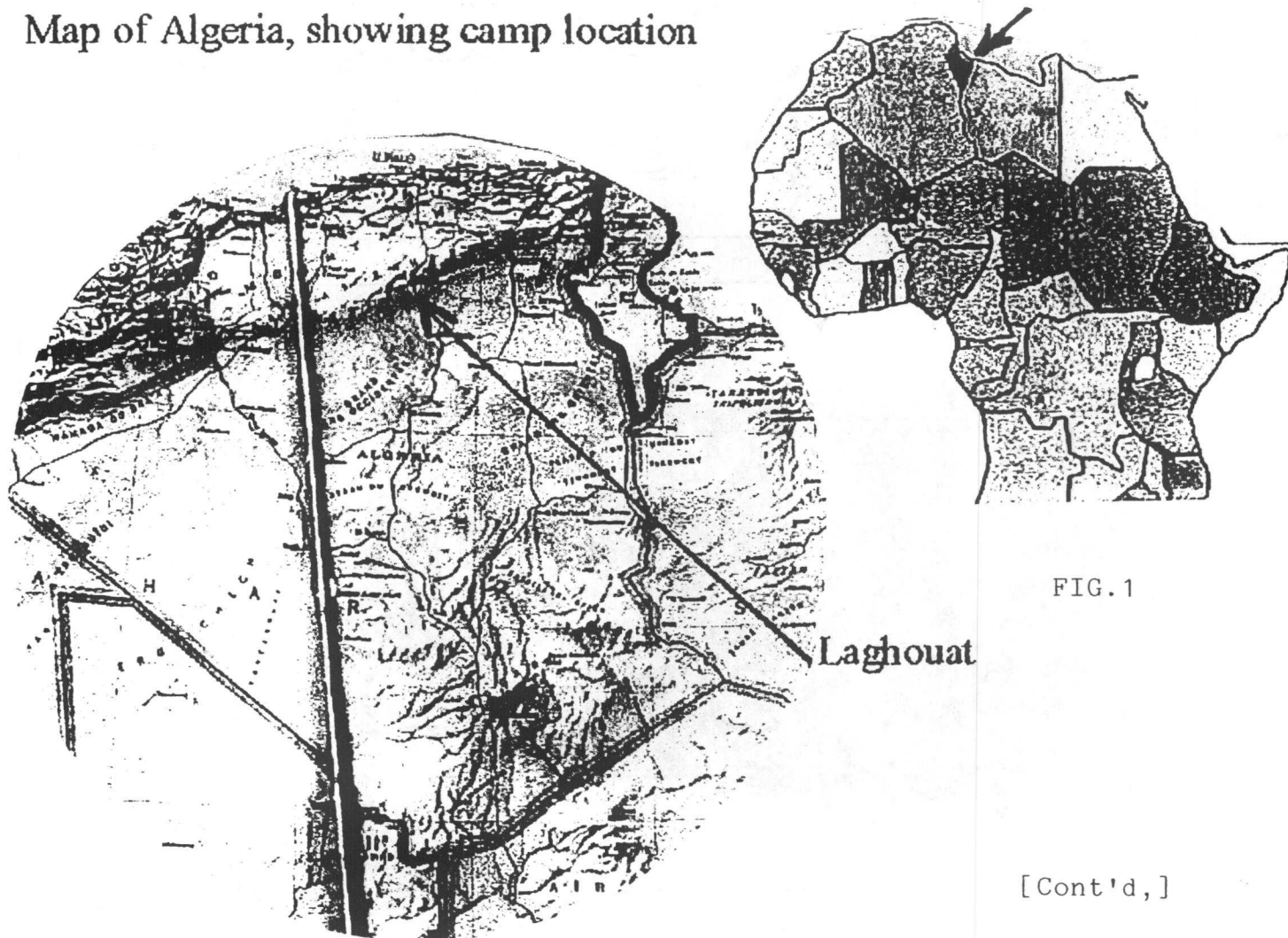


FIG. 1

[Cont'd,]

Laghouat is located some two hundred miles south of Algiers in the Sahara Desert. FIG.1 shows the approximate location of the Laghouat POW Camp.

The decision to scuttle HMS Manchester resulted in the court-martial of her captain. I believe only one Canadian was serving aboard HMS Manchester and FIG.2 shows a copy of a letter sent to him.



FIG.2

The letter was mailed from London, Ontario on October 15, 1942. It carries a transit strike from Ottawa dated October 16, 1942, directly on top of the sending strike from London. The letter was examined by both a Canadian censor before mailing and a German censor before being returned to the Ottawa Dead Letter Office on May 20, 1943.

Laghouat was liberated after the "Operation Torch" landings and the letter arrived after our Canadian had been liberated.

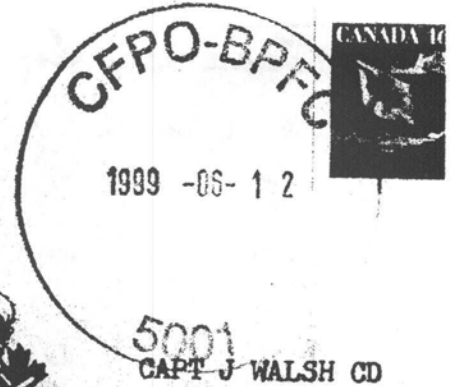
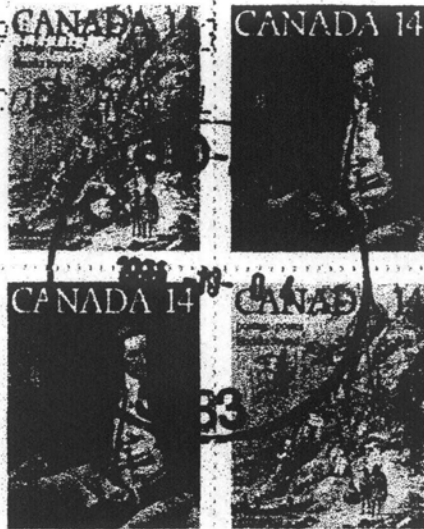
The letter, which pays the 5¢ surface rate to Algeria, has been marked with "UNABLE TO DELIVER", "RETURN TO SENDER", and "RETOURNEZ A L'ENVOYEUR".

I believe this cover is unique and I would be interested in any information about the letter's recipient. It is interesting that with all of the Royal Navy escort vessels only one tanker, the Ohio, made it through to Malta and it was badly damaged by enemy action. This small amount of supplies allowed Malta to continue her valiant resistance to the Axis.

Page 844

NEW CFPO'S--By Dave Hanes

Just a quick few lines and a few scans of the current and past CFPO cancels. The newest ones are CFPO 5000 in Yugoslavia and CFPO 5046 which was with the D.A.R.T. Team in Sri Lanka (six weeks). I don't know how many knew about this one!



unknown-Yugoslavia?

Minurca



ROYAL CANADIAN REGIMENT
BATTLE HONOURS
SASKATCHEWAN 1885
7TH WEST CANADA 1885
SERG, SOUTH AFRICA 1899-1900
WORLD WAR I
FRANCE AND FLANDERS 1915-1918
WORLD WAR II



Zgon, Yugoslavia

Aviano, Italy

CAPT J WALSH CD

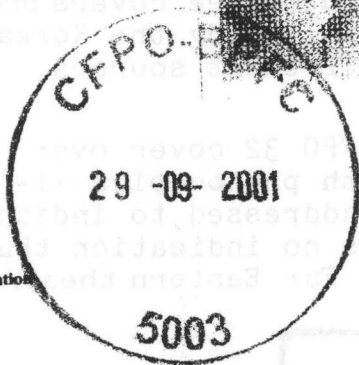


Skopje,
Macedonia



UNMEE

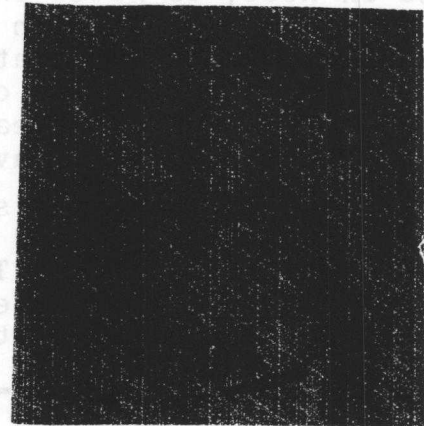
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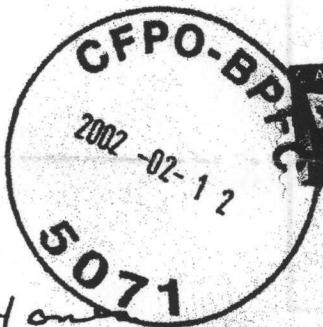
Macedonia



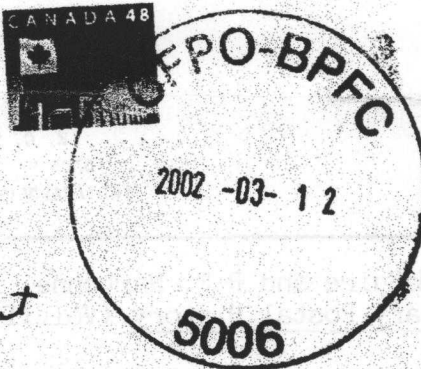
Op. "Apollo", Long-Range Patrol Det.



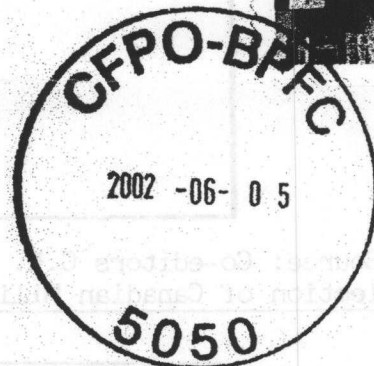
Haiti



Op. "Apollo", Fleet Logistics Site



Kandahar (27 Feb.-8 Jul. 2002)



SLOC Det. (9 Mar.-26 Jul. 2002)



Camp Polon, Op. "Harmony", Yugoslavia



Hammer replaced two originals (Yugoslavia)



D.A.R.T. (Sri Lanka)

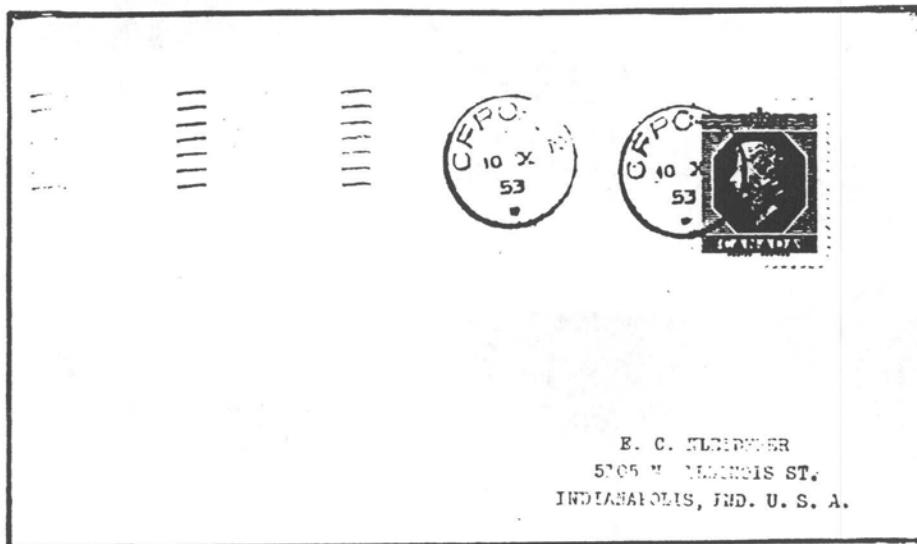
Page 846

CFPO 32: KOBE, JAPAN--By Steven Luciuk

CFPO 32 in Kobe, as noted in Bailey and Toop's Canadian Military Postal Markings (Vol.II), was open from September 24, 1953 to March 30, 1954. This article is an attempt to satisfy a nagging curiosity about three covers processed at this short-lived office during the armistice following the Korean War. All of the covers appear to have originated from different sources. The covers, shown below, have been reduced to 75%.

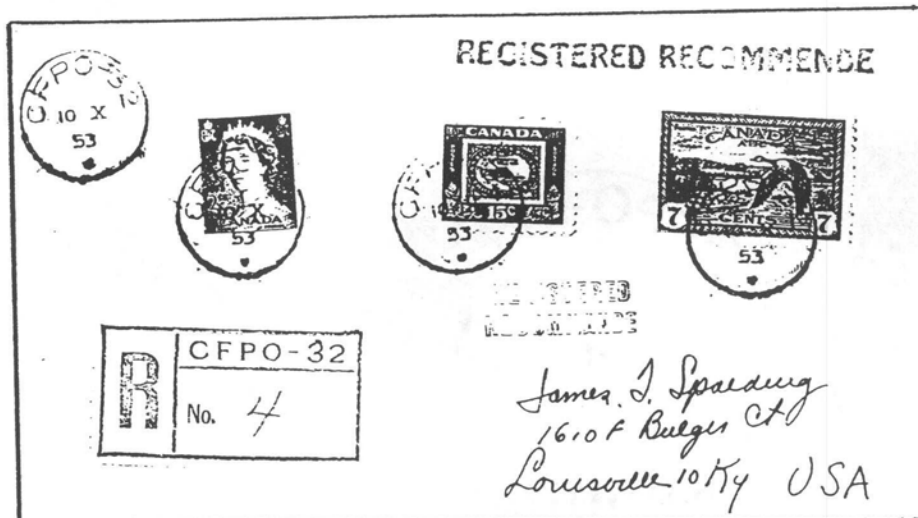
In a lengthy but fruitless search for an example of a CFPO 32 cover over several years, I've managed to come across only two; both photocopies illustrated in publications. The first cover (FIG.1) was addressed to Indianapolis, Indiana. It was dated October 10, 1953. There is no indication that the cover was associated with a Canadian serving in the Far Eastern theatre.

FIG.1



(Source: Co-editors C.R. McGuire and R.F. Narbonne. The Major E.R. Toop Collection of Canadian Military Postal History (Vol.II), BNAPS Ltd., 1996, p.9).

FIG.2



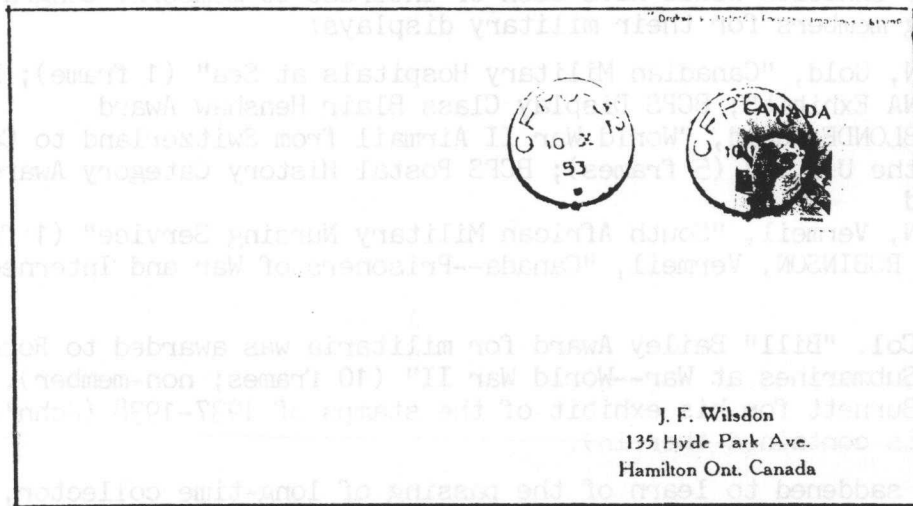
(Source: D. Mario, Editor, "The Korean War", CMMSG Newsletter, No.146, August 2000, p.496).

[Cont'd.]

The preceding second item (FIG.2) is a registered cover to Louisville, Kentucky. Again, there is no suggestion that the cover was related to an individual in the theatre. The interesting thing, however, is that the date is the same: October 10, 1953. Is this a coincidence? Curiosity is growing.

At the 2005 BNAPS Convention in Edmonton, an actual CFPO 32 cover surfaced at a dealer's table (FIG.3). The piece was obviously collector-inspired, and had only a 2¢ polar bear stamp issued in April 1953. I purchased the cover not so much for the CFPO 32 marking, but rather for the processing date. You guessed it--October 10, 1953.

FIG.3



(J.F. Wilsdon was a member of BNAPS, and was known for preparing collector-inspired covers during the Second World War and Korean War periods).

A few questions come to mind. Why do the three covers have exactly the same date? Were the covers sent to philatelic friends by the same collector? This does not seem likely. The addressing formats on the covers vary considerably. Another question relates to CFPO 32 markings in general. My information, unfortunately, is confined to only three covers. All are likely philatelic in nature. Do study group members have covers from this office that are definitely to, or from, Canadian service personnel? Or, are known CFPO 32 markings related only to collector-inspired covers?

If you have information on CFPO 32 markings, either commercial or even philatelic usage, please contact our newsletter editor. A photocopy of your cover(s) would be appreciated. Thank you. [Thanks Steve. Members are indeed encouraged to write and report their holdings and I shall publish them in a future issue to help tell this very interesting story. Was this particular device "dormant" and another was in service? The two-line marking "REGISTERED/RECOMMANDE" was a commercially-available handstamp of the period so the registered cover is, as Steve suggests, probably philatelic (note the "4" registry number--a very early usage). Where are the stampless CFPO 32 covers? Please write the Editor with your comments, photocopies etc. Ed.]

Page 848

Dear CMMSG Members:

HAPPY NEW YEAR! Doug and I hope that the coming year is filled with all of the very best. Work is slowly progressing on several projects and updates and I do hope to have many of them in these pages through the coming issues. Members' (and non) involvement is most appreciated. Please keep those articles etc. coming in! I've been reminded that our sister societies help keep the military area at the forefront, as we do, and those interested may wish to view their websites. The Military Postal History Society is at: www.militaryPHS.org (no space); the Forces Postal History Society can be seen at: www.postalcensorship.com/fphs (no space); and the Civil Censorship Study Group is at: ccsg.postalcensorship.com. If members need any more information please let me know.

Although I did not attend VANPEX, it appears that the show went very well. Given its military theme, many exhibits would have been of interest to members. Congratulations are due to the following members for their military displays:

JON JOHNSON, Gold, "Canadian Military Hospitals at Sea" (1 frame); BNAPS' "Best Researched BNA Exhibit"; BCPS Display Class Blair Henshaw Award
 CHARLES LaBLONDE, Gold, "World War II Airmail from Switzerland to Canada, Great Britain, and the U.S.A." (5 frames); BCPS Postal History Category Award; BCPS Reserve Grand Award
 JON JOHNSON, Vermeil, "South African Military Nursing Service" (1 frame)
 WILLIAM G. ROBINSON, Vermeil, "Canada--Prisoners of War and Internees, 1914-1920" (5 frames)

The special Lt.Col. "Bill" Bailey Award for militaria was awarded to Robert Rawlins for his "U.S. Navy Submarines at War--World War II" (10 frames; non-member). Congratulations to member John Burnett for his exhibit of the stamps of 1937-1938 (John's fabulous cover in his article is contained therein).

Members will be saddened to learn of the passing of long-time collector, author, and member Gale J. Raymond of Texas on September 8. Our condolences are sent to his family.

SMALL ADS

WANTED: WWII FPO covers. Condition not important but must be used during months of: FPO 434 or other 4 CIB usage: JA'42;JU'42;FE'44;MR'44;MY'45; FPO 435 or 5 CIB usage: OC'41;NO'41;OC'43;FE'44;JY'44;AP'45; FPO 436 or 6 CIB usage: AP'41;OC'41;FE'42;MY'42;OC'44;JA'45;MR'45;MY'45. Buy or trade. Kim Dodwell, Middle House, Cruckmeole, Hanwood, Shrewsbury SY5 8JN, U.K. (2/10)

WANTED: Canada Air Letters with postage paid by adhesive stamps mailed to Canadian Armed Forces personnel overseas (except Britain and Ireland) between September 1945 and December 1952. Please send with price to Mike Street, 73 Hatton Dr., Ancaster, ON L9G 2H5 or advise by email: mikestreet@hwcen.org (2/10)

WANTED: WWI Newfoundland covers/cards/ephemera. Also seeking pre-1914 Royal Navy ship covers used from Canadian ports (Nanaimo/Victoria, BC; Halifax, NS etc.). Priced photocopies to the Editor please. (1/2)

UPCOMING FOR THE NEXT ISSUE: 1940 Ceylon to Hong Kong to Iceland cover; Rock Crests at Camp Vernon, 1914-18; R.F.C. Great War mail and much, much, more.....!

Best Wishes

For The New Year