



Canadian Military Mail Study Group

NEWSLETTER

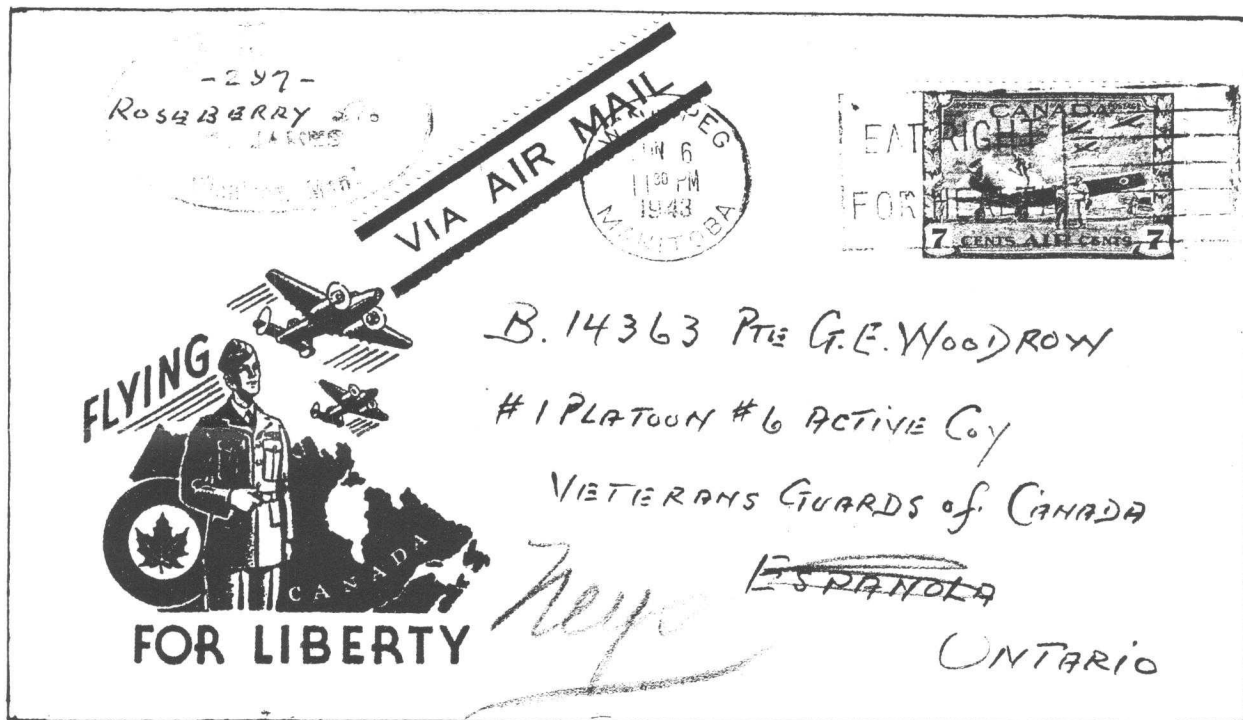
MARCH 2009

NEWSLETTER NO. 189

Page 1027

V.G.C. ESPANOLA/NEYS 1943--By A.D. Hanes

[Dave sent along this attractive patriotic cover addressed to a member of the Veterans Guard of Canada. The V.G.C. had, as part of their duties, members attached to various P.O.W. and internment camps across Canada. Camp 21, Espanola, was part of a deserted pulp mill and closed November 1943 (the cover is dated June 6, 1943). Camp 100 (W), Neys, closed in 1946.]



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

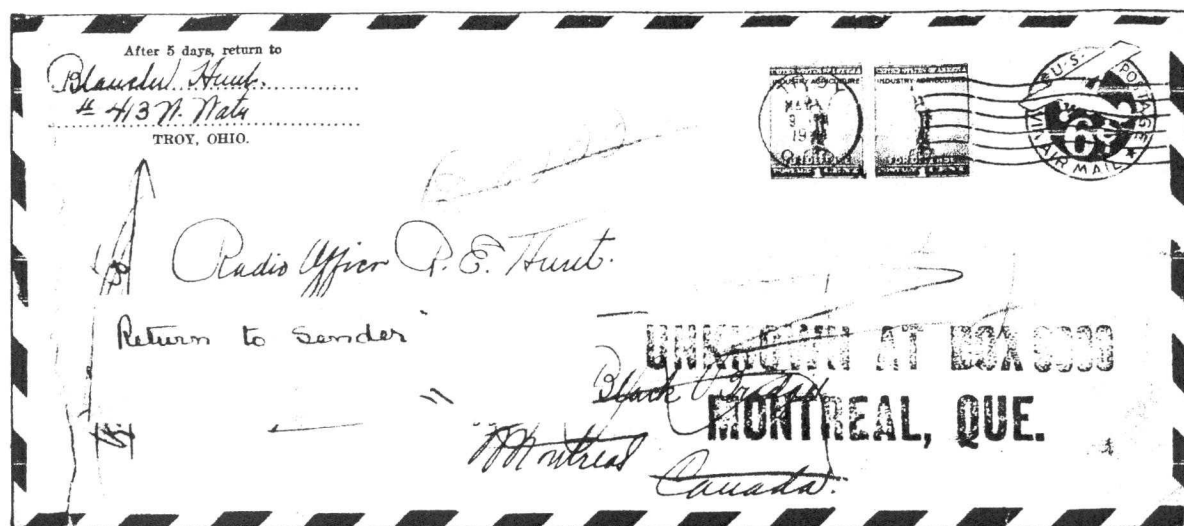
EDITOR: D. MARIO, POST OFFICE BOX 342, SASKATOON, SK S7K 3L3

Page 1028

BOX 9000, MONTREAL--By Jerome C. Jarnick

This May 17, 1944 cover from Troy, Ohio is addressed to Radio Officer P.E. Hunt on the merchant ship Black Bridge, and was directed to Box 9000, Montreal, Quebec. The full address is obscured by a home-made "Return to Sender" label. A blue handstamp reads "UNKNOWN AT BOX 9000/ MONTREAL, QUE."

Box 9000 was established in July 1943 by the Naval Control of Shipping Officer in Montreal in an effort to improve the morale of merchant seamen by expediting mail and parcels. With Lt. Norah Cooper, W.R.C.N.S. in charge of the operation, mail was forwarded to intercept ships all over the world. It efficiently handled an average of 35,000 letters, 600 parcels, and 150 telegrams a month.

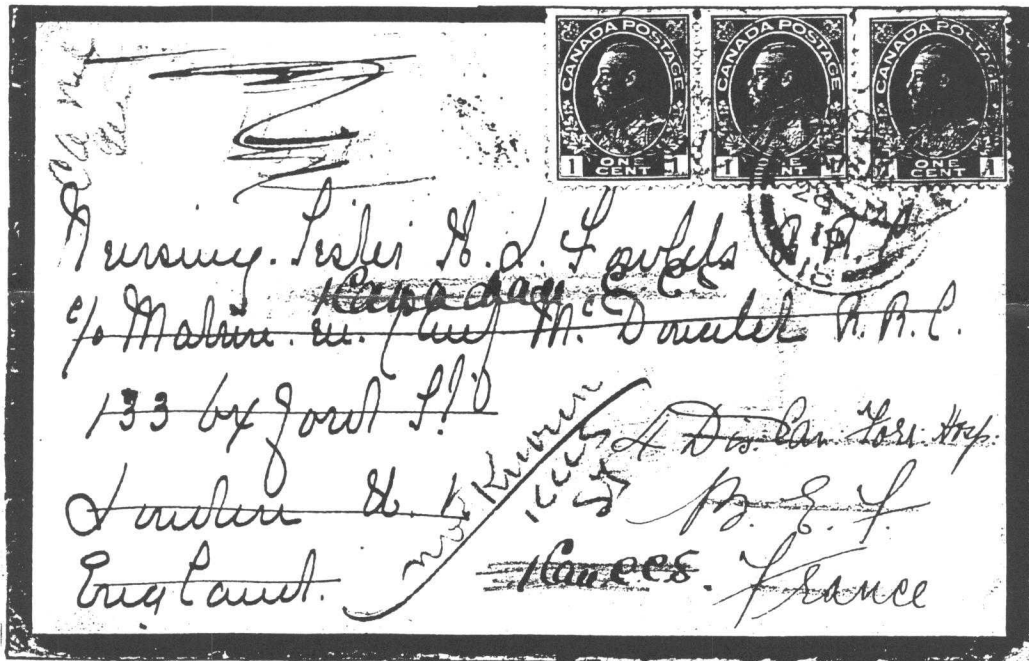


1919 RE-DIRECTED N/SISTER COVER--By Jon Johnson

The following cover was addressed to Nursing Sister Helen Lauder Fowlds, RRC, c/o Matron-in-Chief J.McG. Macdonald, RRC, London. It was then forwarded to 4 Dis. Canadian Forestry Hospital, B.E.F., France, and then again to #1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station. The cover was forwarded to #3 Canadian General Hospital which is crossed out. There are no markings to indicate that the cover was returned. [My sources indicate that Fowlds was part of the Reinforcing Draft and she had been attached to the C.A.M.C. Her next of kin is listed as a "F.W. Fowlds, Hastings, Ontario". She was born in Canada and was taken on strength in London, England in February. On March 16, 1919, Fowlds was taken on strength from #3 Canadian General Hospital and was attached to the #8 Canadian Stationary Hospital (which at that time was at Dunkirk). Although the cover does not indicate re-direction to #8, presumably the cover was eventually sent there and found her. There seems to be some inconsistency with her award of the Royal Red Cross. Sir Andrew Macphail's The Medical Services (Ottawa: King's Printer, 1925)

[Cont'd.]

lists her as having received the Associate Royal Red Cross (R.R.C., 2nd Class), but some of the official records indicate her receiving the R.R.C. I suspect that she received the former, but like most nursing sisters during the Great War, was well-deserving of any award. Ed.]



STANLEY FLYING SCHOOL, NOVA SCOTIA 1943--By A.D. Hanes



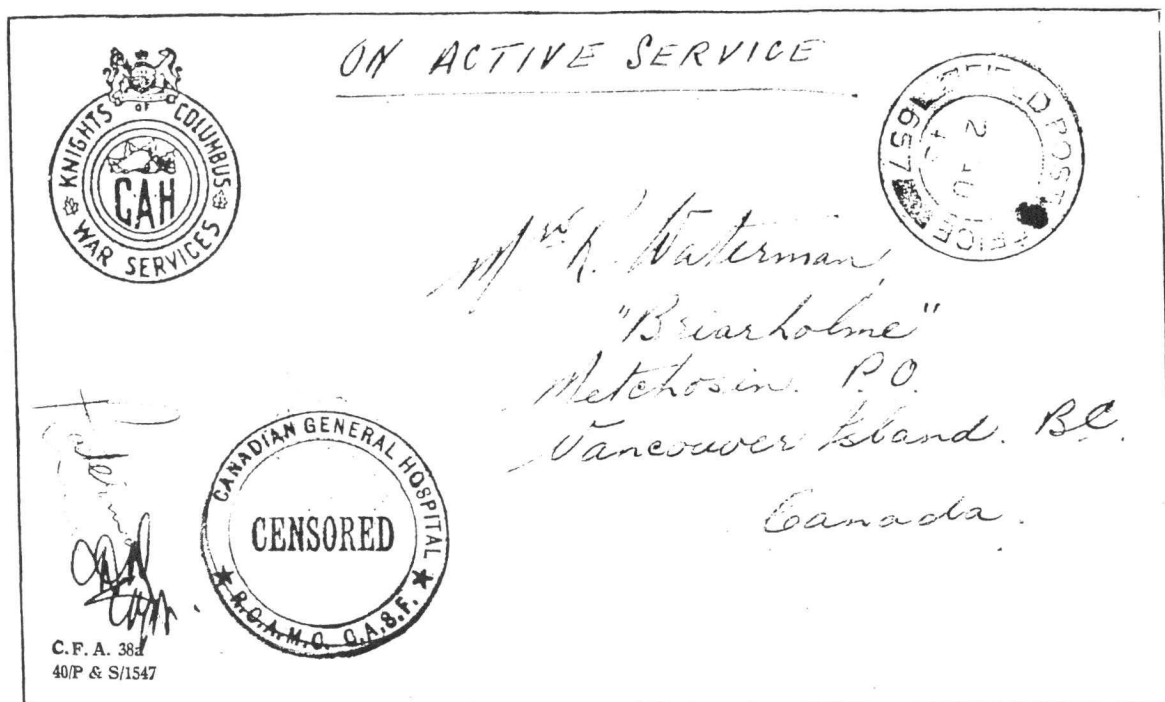
[Cont'd.]

Page 1030

This flying school did not have its own cancellation device and Mosher-ville was less than a mile from the field.

#5 CANADIAN GENERAL HOSPITAL, SICILY--By Jon Johnson

Here is a self-censored cover by Major Waterman. The cover bears an unusual hospital censor marking and initials of a captain. It was posted at #5 C.G.H. when it was in Syracuse, Sicily (for eighteen days).

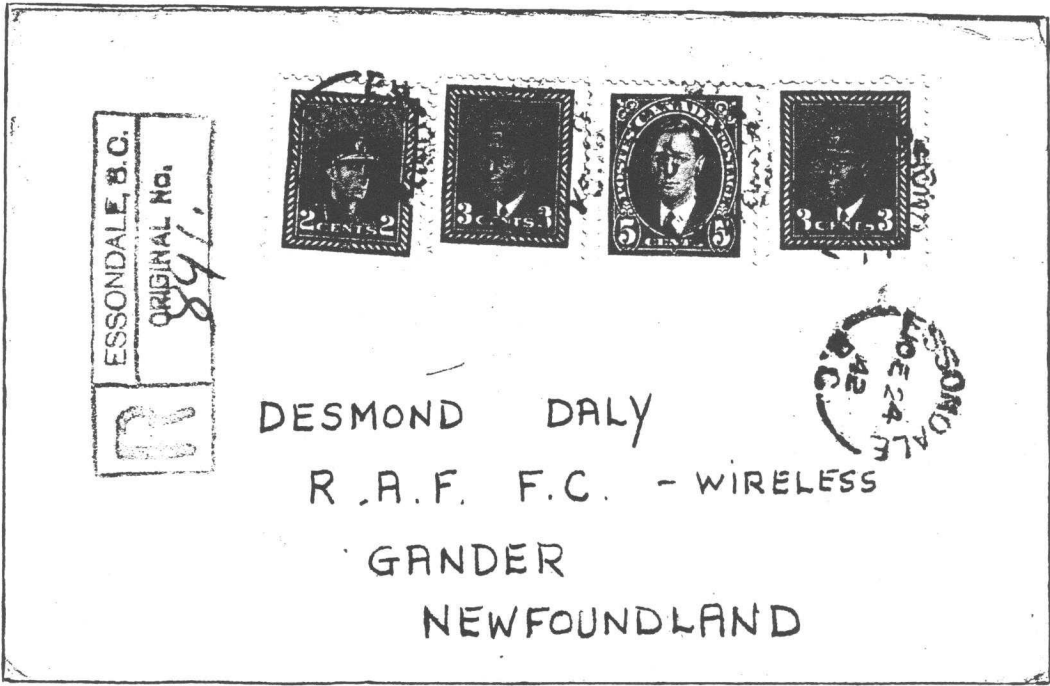
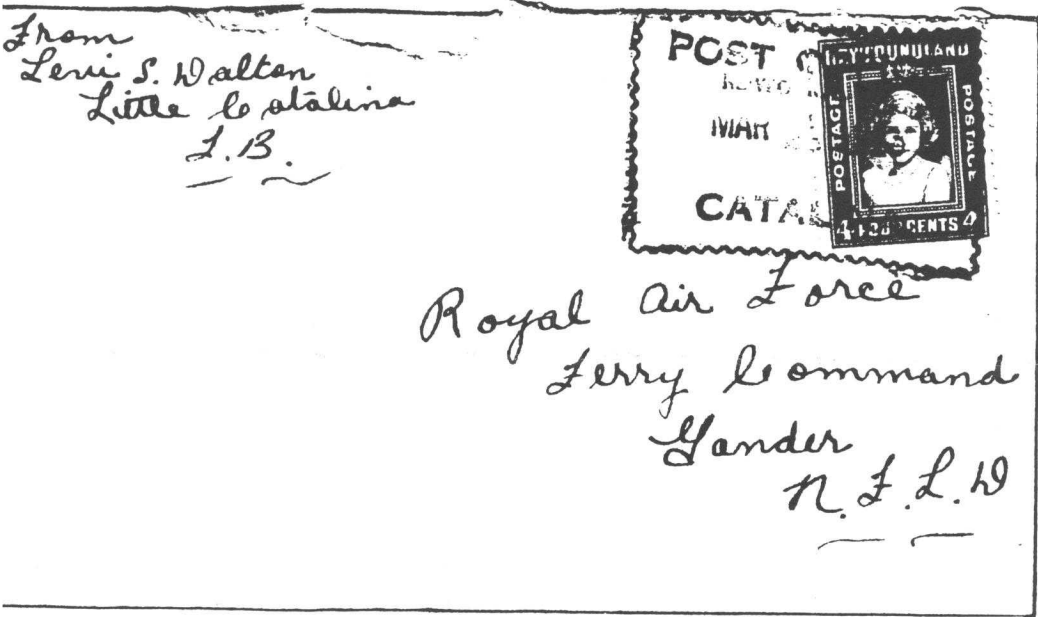


R.A.F. FERRY COMMAND, GANDER, NEWFOUNDLAND--By A.D. Hanes

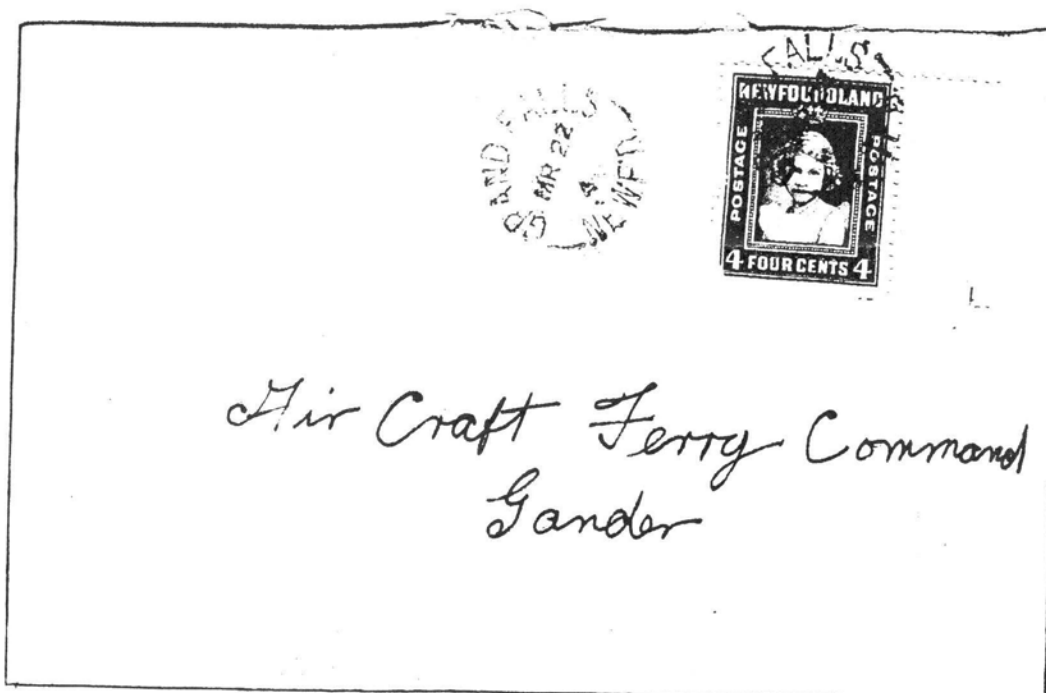
[Dave sent along several interesting items related to Ferry Command in the Second World War. Members know that covers to (and from) the ferry service are unusual. The registered cover from Essondale, British Columbia, to a Wireless Operator in Gander, is especially nice. It may have contained a welcome Christmas gift but may have been delivered a bit late!]

According to The Canadians At War: 1939-1945 (Montreal: Reader's Digest Assoc., 1976), Gander's Hattie's Camp airfield was a lonely and desolate place (p.116). Dedicated crews participated in one of the most important operations during the war; eventually transporting almost 10,000 airplanes to Great Britain. The ferry service delivered various planes across the Atlantic Ocean, including Hudson bombers, Liberators, Lancasters, and Flying Fortresses. Ed.]

[Cont'd.]



Page 1032



CHINESE REPATRIATION CAMP, WILLIAM HEAD, B.C. 1920

China declared war on Germany in August 1917. Part of the country's contribution to the allied war effort was a contingent of some 200,000 "coolies" to work behind the lines in France and Flanders. The Chinese Labour Corps maintained numerous companies which participated in various tasks, including the often nasty work of body removal and grave reclamation.

In late 1917 and early 1918, many of these Chinese labourers travelled across Canada in bond from Vancouver, British Columbia. A camp was established for them at Petawawa, where they rested and trained before continuing on to France.

After the Armistice, according to James Morton's In The Sea of Sterile Mountains: The Chinese in British Columbia (West Vancouver: J.J. Douglas Ltd., 1974), a noticeable wave of concern and "anti-orientalism" swept through British Columbia in late 1918. This tension peaked when residents learned that some 45,000 coolies would be returning through B.C. west coast ports from France (p.231).

Just prior to victory celebrations on November 11, 1918, some 1,450 Chinese arrived by train heavily guarded by Imperial and Canadian troops. They were quickly transferred to the Princess Charlotte and taken to William Head, the quarantine station on Vancouver Island (the Canadian government operated a station there from 1881 to 1958). There they awaited the next ship to transport them back to China. Two months later another 3,500 arrived; bringing the total at William Head to an estimated 8,000 (p.232).


Frustrated with growing impatience, dismal living conditions, and a reluctance to be returned to China, some 2,000 Chinese broke out of their enclosure and rioting began in March 1919. Most were rounded up and troops herded them back; often at bayonet point. Many Chinese, however, simply slipped away and melted into Victoria's Chinatown.

The situation worsened when the bulk of servicemen returned home to B.C. in 1919. Growing resentment intensified by a lack of support from an uncaring and indifferent peacetime government, and a public increasingly weary of the war and its participants, lead many ex-servicemen to form groups opposed to enemy aliens, strikers, and the Chinese (p.232). In order to combat a potentially explosive situation, officials hastened their efforts to return the Chinese to China from William Head and avoid disaster.

Morton noted that very little is known about Chinese Canadians' participation in the Great War. Although there is evidence that Japanese subjects volunteered, were conscripted, and applied for exemption for military service, the Public Archives of Canada can find little evidence of Canadian Chinese in the Canadian Expeditionary Force (p.229). Certainly some were probably conscripted, and it is known that at least one platoon of the 52nd Battalion was largely composed of Chinese which fought bravely in the Ypres Salient in 1917. Chinese Canadians were, however, very patriotic and in 1919 set their quota in the Victory Loan campaign of \$50,000. A second goal of \$100,000 was also easily achieved.

The following unusual, and presumably scarce piece of ephemera, is related to the Repatriation Camp at William Head. Unfortunately I do not know the circumstances surrounding the dinner (was it near the end of the camp's existence?). Is the April 4, 1920 date significant?

Chinese Repatriation Camp
William Head, B. C.
•••
Officers' Mess



Plenty chow, but I
Can't eat enough!

好
食
飯

但
是

不
够
呢

[GOOD]
[FOOD]
[BUT]
[NOT]
[ENOUGH]
[GRAMMATI-
CAL PAR-
TICLE]

The interior menu courses were typed on carbon paper (hence the lack of clarity). Certainly the menu may have been changed on a daily or weekly basis, but the front page of the menu has been printed as stock. I am indebted to members of the University of Saskatchewan's Department of Religion and Culture, who kindly translated the traditional Chinese characters into English. Now, can our members add to the story by sending copies of their covers from this camp?

U S S U. April 4th 1930.

OLIVES.

CELERY.

Salted Almonds.

OYSTERS ON HALF SHELL.

Cream of Tomato.

Fried Fillet of Halibut,
Maitre de Hotel Sauce.

Stuffed Roast Chicken,

Corn Fritters,

Waldorf Salad,

Julienne Potatoes,

Green Peas.

Cream Puffs,

Petit Fours.

COFFEE.

FRUIT.

Page 1036

A WAR CORRESPONDENT'S WEDDING BELLS--By Jon Johnson

Here is a cover from #1 Canadian General Hospital from Lt.(P/A) Stevens to Lt. William Boss (dated April 30, 1943), with a wedding invitation enclosed. [Members are no doubt familiar with Ross Munro, a well-known war correspondent for The Canadian Press. Munro's name was commonplace in Canadian homes; having been on the 1942 Dieppe Raid and covered the Canadians' landing in Sicily in July 1943. On D-Day, June 6, 1944, he was attached with combat forces of the 3rd Canadian Division for the Normandy invasion; landing, moving inland, and then reporting the story. For more on Munro, see the aforementioned The Canadians At War (Readers' Digest), p.329.

Lieut. William Boss.

The pleasure of your company is requested

at the marriage of

Helen-Marie,

daughter of

Mr. & Mrs. Cecil Lake Stevens,

Dunnville, Ontario,

with

Mr. Robert Ross Munro,

at St. John's Church, Horsham, Sussex,

on Saturday, May 8th, 1943,

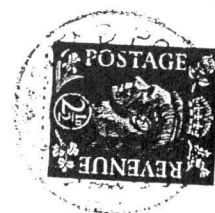
at 3 o'clock,

and afterwards at

The Nursing Sisters Mess, R.S.V.P.

No. 1 Canadian General Hospital.

*Lieut. Wm. Boss.
H.Q. 2nd Canadian Corps.
C.H. England.*



Munro's bride, physio-therapist Helen-Marie Stevens, also has an interesting story. On March 8, 1941, Nursing Sister Stevens was dining at a London restaurant when it was struck by a German air raid. A bomb had exploded at the Café de Paris, killing and wounding many of its patrons. Lt. Stevens, affected by nerve shock from the explosion, still managed to assist the wounded. She quickly became the heroine of the London press, although she didn't see anything special or unusual in her actions. The modest nursing sister was interviewed the following [Cont'd.]

* * * * *

Here is a re-directed A.F.A.L. from Hamilton, Ontario to Cadet "Bob" Hyatt. Note the oval marking in the lower right corner of the front address panel. I have never seen this one previously recorded.

ARMED FORCES AIR LETTER		BY AIR MAIL	
IF ANYTHING IS ENCLOSED, THIS LETTER WILL BE SENT BY ORDINARY MAIL TO			
Number, Rank and Name R-225017		Cadet Bob Hyatt	
Unit (Company, Squadron, Battery, etc.)		No Such Post Office	
Regiment or Branch R.A.F.		Service Royal Canadian Air Force	
FROM (Sender's full name and address)			
Mrs. R. Hyatt 5711 1st Ave. S. Hamilton, Ont., Canada			
CAN. MILITARY		HEADQUARTERS	
ROYAL CANADIAN AIR FORCE		HEADQUARTERS	
ROYAL CANADIAN AIR FORCE		HEADQUARTERS	

* * * * *

Page 1038

Dear CMMSG Members:

Spring is almost here (although perhaps a bit slow here in Saskatchewan) and it's time for the March issue. I want to extend my sincere thanks to Dave Hanes, Jerry Jarnick, and Jon Johnson who helped fill the breach of potentially empty newsletter pages with their contributions. Thanks too to Ken Ellison for sending some material which is also useful. I've heard from a few other members and welcome their submissions in the near future. Doug has reported that memberships are coming in steadily which is good news. Thank you to those who have paid their dues and your support is appreciated. Doug has also conveyed the news that many members have been very kind in sending a bit "extra" to help out with ever-increasing postage costs, copying etc. Kind thanks are extended to Messrs. Sawatzki, C.D. Sayles, and R. Toombs. Your kind notes and support are also appreciated. Colin Pomfret's sendings are always great.

Don't forget that our special 200th issue is quickly approaching. Contact Doug with suggestions!

Tentative details are posted for BNAPEX 2009 SEAWAYPEX in Kingston, Ontario on the Society's website: www.bnaps.org (.) Doug will chair the meeting in the Toronto Room from 11:00am-12:00pm on Saturday, September 12, 2009. Check the website for any future changes.

Doug and I extend our very best wishes to all members for a nice spring (or fall for our southern members) and a happy Easter season.

PETAWAWA FIELD POST OFFICE, 1941--By Colin Pomfret

A March 16, 1941 cover with the Petawawa F.P.O. machine cancelling the two upper stamps and the Militia hammer (29mm), dated the same, tying the lower stamp to the cover. [Thanks Colin. Certainly an unusual usage with both devices on the same cover.Ed.]