



Canadian Military Mail Study Group

NEWSLETTER

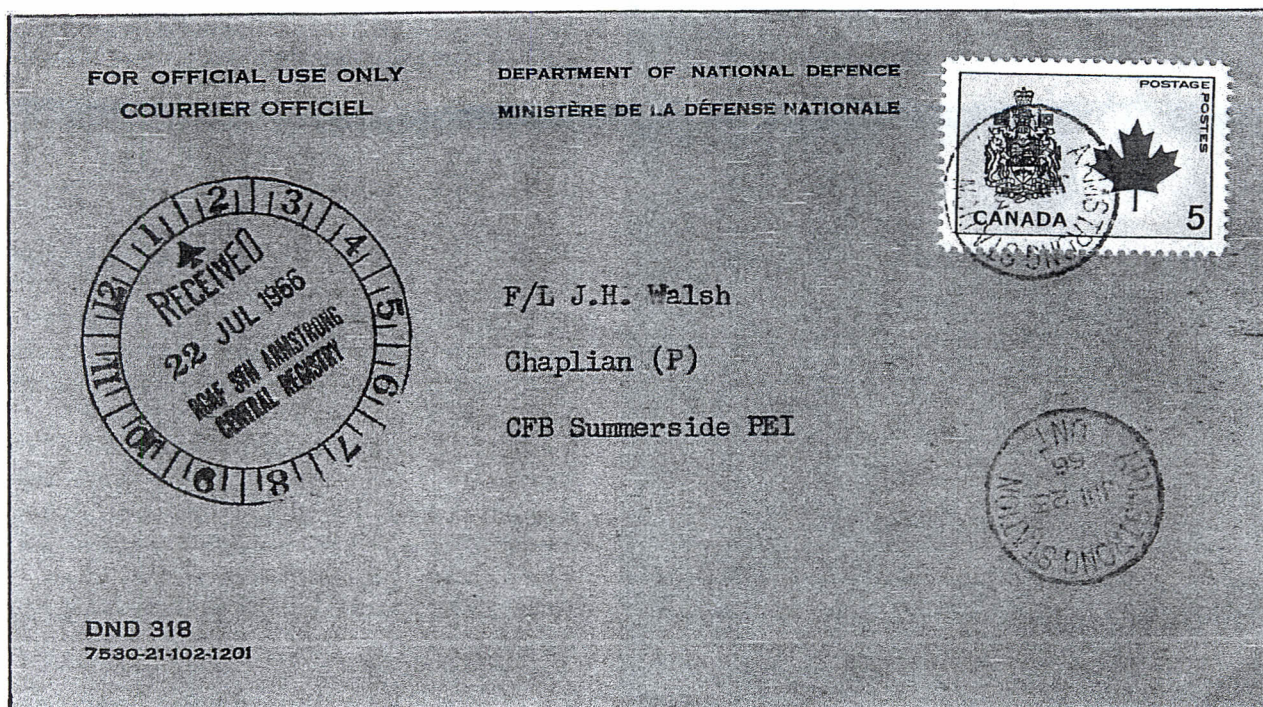
JANUARY 2013

NEWSLETTER NO. 207

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R.C.A.F. STATION ARMSTRONG, ONTARIO--By N.F. Lee Dowsley

Here is a "philatelically-inspired" cover from R.C.A.F. Station Armstrong, Ontario dated July 22, 1966. The Station's "Central Registry" time-clock is an unusual addition. A closed circular "Armstrong Station, Ontario" is dated July 23. Armstrong Station was the nearest civilian town to this Radar Base. An R.C.A.F. CDS was never issued.



[Cont'd.]

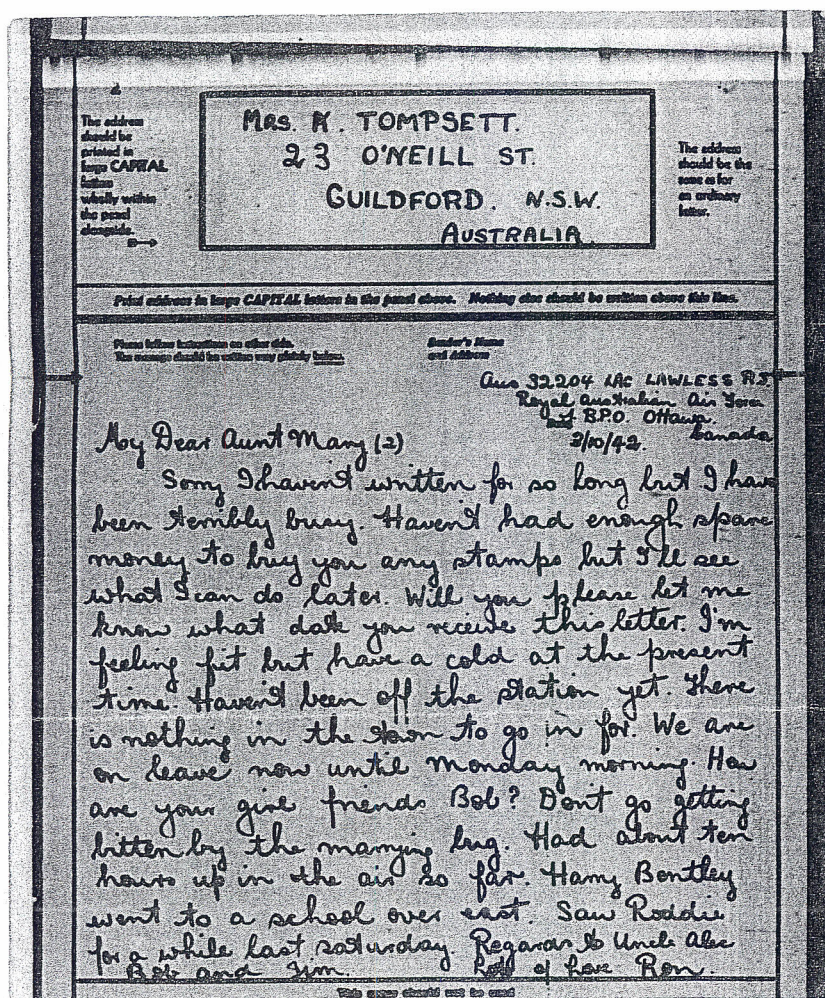
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[Thanks Lee. Members will recall George Sawatzki's previous cover and registry marking from this unusual station (NL#204, May 2012, pp. 1227-1228). This cover illustrates the variety of markings from this "Pine Tree Line" NORAD general surveillance radar station. George noted it was open from 1952-1974. Reverend/Captain Jack H. Walsh, CD was an avid contemporary collector and, like those who preceded him, collectors owe a debt of gratitude for helping to obtain (often obscure) collectible markings to study and collect.Ed.]

CANADA-AUSTRALIA AIRGRAPHS, 1942--By David Collyer



The airgraph service to Australia did not officially open until 1943. However it was possible for Australians with the Empire Air Training Scheme (E.A.T.S.) in Canada [B.C.A.T.P. here in Canada.Ed.] to send airgraphs from September 1942 onwards.

In July 1942 a microfilm mail service was available to U.S. service personnel. The V-Mail service operated under contract between Eastman Kodak and the U.S. War Department.

Shortly after this service commenced, it was decided to offer space on V-Mail film to Australian airmen undergoing training with the E.A.T.S. in Canada. The service operated under special conditions from September 1942 to June 1944, and was supervised by U.S. authorities. From June 1944 onwards the service was handed over to the British Pacific Air Transport Service.

In July 1942 the Canadian Post Office also informed flying schools of forthcoming arrangements that would operate once

the V-Mail service to Australia had been established. The rate for an airgraph would be 6¢ (Canadian). Letters could only be posted at Military Post Offices or designated civil offices. Letters were to be collected and dispatched in an envelope (7A) on a regular basis. A similar system operated to that then used in Britain using covering envelopes. The covering envelopes were to be addressed:

[Cont'd.]

District Director of Postal Services
Vancouver, BC
(Airgraph)

At Vancouver the messages were to be counted, assembled for filming, then sent by registered airmail to Kodak, San Francisco, California. The inaugural service left Canada on September 10, 1942 and was handed to Kodak (Australasia) on September 22, 1942. New Zealand was not aware of the portended service as the Mail Branch, Melbourne was asked to send with the N.Z. prints an explanatory note to the Director General of Posts at Wellington.

The airgraph mails and V-Mails arrived in Australia at the U.S. Base Post Office in Brisbane. The film was sent to Melbourne for processing by Kodak (Australasia).

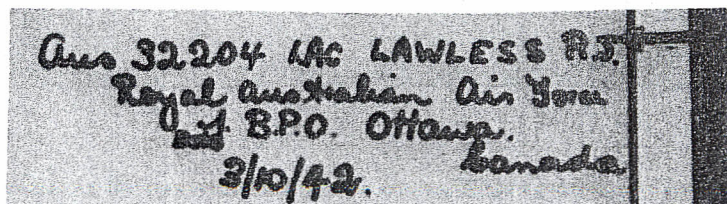
To assist in the quick dispatch of finished prints, envelopes with a cut-out panel were used; enabling the address panel on the print to be used as the envelope address. Initially such envelopes were not authorised for use by Australian postal authorities. In August 1942 the Chief Inspector of Postal Services informed the mail branch in each state capital that no special envelopes were available and that the prints would have to be sent out in plain-face Departmental envelopes that would require additional addressing. It is not known for how long this system was used but envelopes with a cut-out panel were used when the Australian Civil Airgraph Service commenced in July 1943.

In December 1943, U.S. authorities refused an approach by Australia to provide airgraph facilities for Australian personnel serving in the West Indies. In May 1944, the Australian legation in Washington received notice from Canada that it was prepared to assist provided the addressee, in addition to his name, rank, and serial number, included the superscription:

c/o Canadian Airgraph Service
Toronto
Canada

Recently a Canadian airgraph written on October 2, 1942 from Leading Aircraftsman (LAC) R.J. Lawless, with a return address of "Royal Australian Air Force, B.P.O. Ottawa, Canada" has been seen. Unlike members of the E.A.T.S., LAC Lawless had a five-digit serial number that indicates he was a member of the R.A.A.F. sent across to Canada to administer the system and not a trainee. This example is interesting as it was folded once instead of the normal double-fold of airgraphs in an open panel envelope.

(enlarged detail)



Ans 32204 LAC LAWLESS R.J.
Royal Australian Air Force
B.P.O. Ottawa.
Canada.
3/10/42.

Reference

Collyer, D.J. Airgraphs and Australia. Self-published, 1986, p. 186.

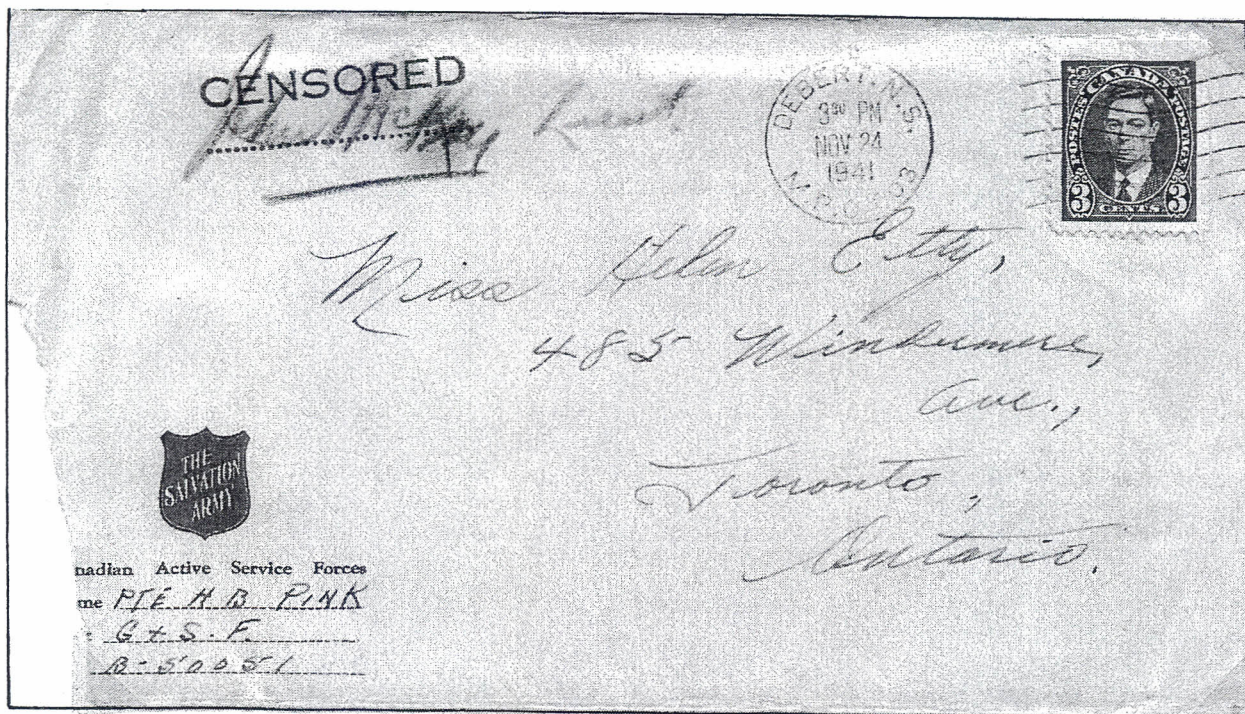
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REVISITING "Q" FORCE--By Jerome C. Jarnick

This November 24, 1941 cover, addressed to Toronto, is postmarked "Debert, N.S./M.P.O. 603". Sent by Private H.B. Pink of the Grey and Simcoe Foresters, it was censored by Lieutenant John McKay.

When France surrendered on June 22, 1940, the country was divided with Germany controlling the north and west. An unoccupied zone, the zone libre, was established under the newly-formed Vichy government headed by Marshal Philippe Petain. The proximity of St. Pierre and Miquelon to Canada, and the then British colony of Newfoundland, constituted a major threat. Negotiations immediately ensued between the American, British, and Canadian governments as to the future of France's territories in the Western Hemisphere.

Despite the views of American Secretary of State Cordell Hull, that the status quo be maintained leaving St. Pierre and Miquelon under the control of the pro-Axis Vichy government, Canadian military authorities began to prepare a secret strategic plan for the invasion of the islands on May 28, 1941. It envisaged the landing of a small Canadian military force on the islands. The force, designated "Q" Force, was based upon "C" Company of the Lake Superior Regiment with auxiliary troops from the Irish Regiment and the Grey and Simcoe Foresters. The plan called for the invasion to be launched on a six-hour notice.



The question of a Canadian invasion became moot when, on December 22, 1941, the Free French Vice-Admiral Emile Henri Muselier acting on orders from General Charles de Gaulle, sailed from Halifax with three French corvettes and took control of the islands in a bloodless invasion. In late January 1942, Ottawa decided to disband Force "Q" which had been

[Cont'd.]

kept operational at Camp Debert.

Now, is the cover shown actually from Force "Q"? Probably. The circumstantial evidence indicates that it is. The sender is from a known "Q" Force unit, the time period and location are right, and the censorship of a domestic cover lends credibility. However, while the known evidence favours that conclusion, it cannot be stated with absolute certainty that the cover is actually from a member of Force "Q".

[Members may wish to also review some previous articles on this interesting Force. We've seen this cover before in Brian C. Plain's "Force 'Q': 1941-1942," CMMSG Newsletter #68 (May 1986), pp. 460-463 but the additional information is useful. Readers may also wish to revisit Dave Hanes' "Force 'Q'," CMMSG Newsletter #100 (August 1991), p. 755 for an additional cover from this unusual period. Ed.]

MAIL FROM SECOND WORLD WAR U.S. MILITARY BASES IN NEWFOUNDLAND
HANDLED BY THE NEWFOUNDLAND POST OFFICE--By Paul Binney

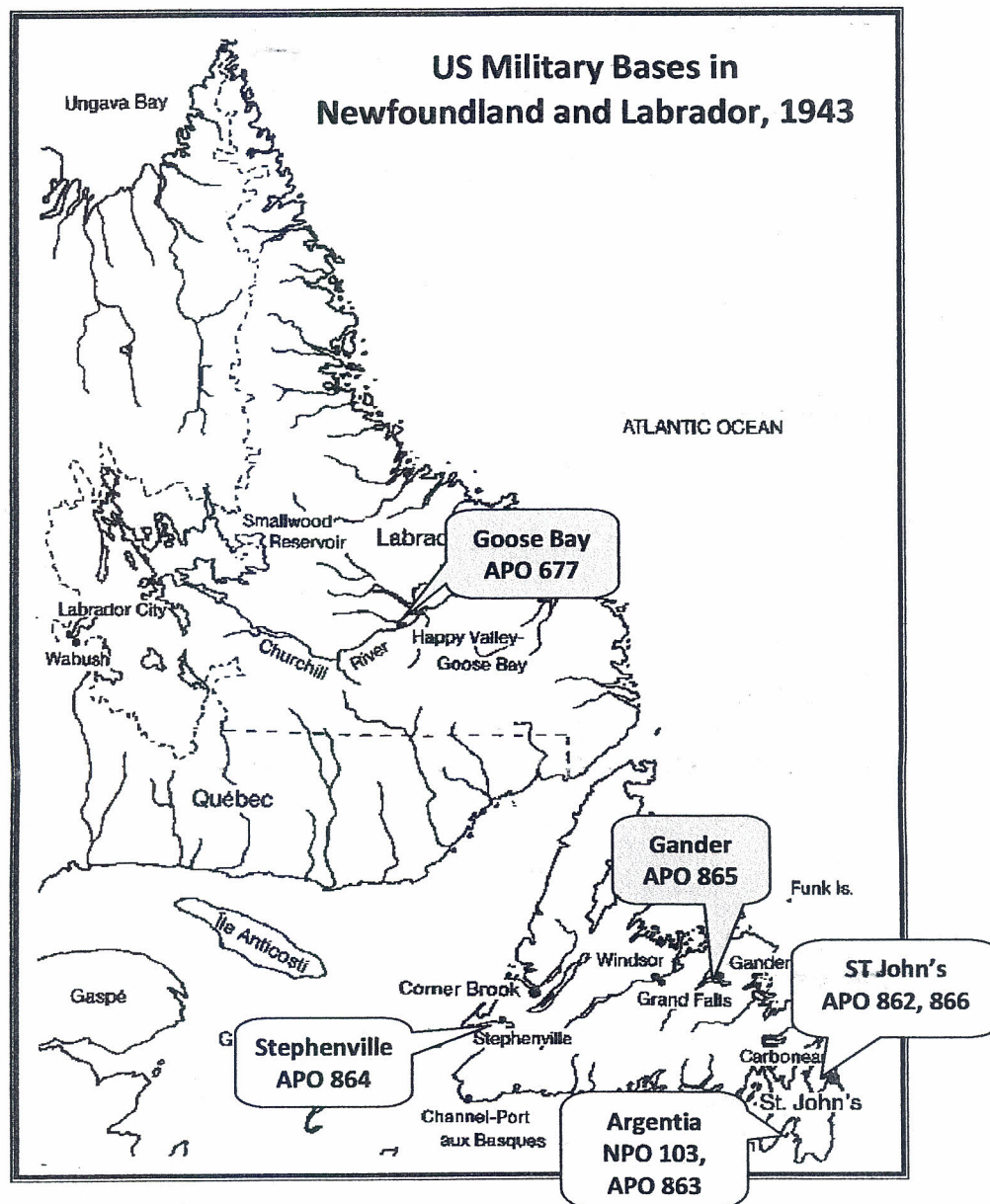
Commencing in 1941, the United States participated in the militarization of Newfoundland through the establishment of bases at St. John's (Fort Pepperrell), Argentia, and Stephenville (Ernest Harmon Field). It was also granted military use at the established airfields of Gander and Goose Bay. Purposes for U.S. participation through its construction of military bases included: ferrying of aircraft to the United Kingdom through Stephenville, Gander, and Goose Bay; coastal defence and convoy escort from these same airfields; and naval convoy escort and repair facilities from the base at Argentia. Fort Pepperrell, at St. John's, served as a headquarters for all of the Army Airbase operations in Newfoundland. All of the bases on the island of Newfoundland (shown on the accompanying map), were served by main or branch lines of the Newfoundland Railway which ran from St. John's through to Port aux Basques.

A formal postal arrangement existed between the United States bases in Newfoundland and the local postal authorities that paralleled the arrangements for the Lend-Lease bases developed in other British colonies:

It was agreed, during mid-February (1941), that United States post offices would be established within the leased areas for mail to or from other United States post offices, that domestic mail originating within the bases would be sent out under frank, and that no mention of censorship would be made in the agreement. [1]

Furthermore "...the United States by a separate exchange of notes undertook to examine all such mail moving to and from the bases." [2] As a result of these agreements, two classes of mail originated at the U.S. military bases in Newfoundland. Most correspondence was sent to wives, girlfriends, family, and friends in the United States and this forms the bulk of the collectable material from the Army Post Offices in Newfoundland during the Second World War. A much smaller number of covers originated at U.S. military bases in Newfoundland, were censored by United States military censors, and then entered the civilian postal system,

[Cont'd.]



franked by Newfoundland stamps or other post paid markings. Most of this correspondence was to Newfoundland or Canadian addresses although from the wording of the agreement, mail to Great Britain should also occur and one cover is illustrated that was mailed to the U.S.A. from a civilian on base.

A sampling of this material is illustrated from my own collection, and scans generously provided by Kevin O'Reilly. Many of the covers were provided with the same "non-identifying" treatment that was accorded the H.M.C.S. Avalon mail but the presence of backstamps on some envelopes provides an indication of time of use.

[Cont'd.]

ORIGINATING UNIT / BASE	CENSOR MARKING	NEWFOUNDLAND PO MARKING	DATE
Fort Pepperrell, APO 862	Boxed oval 520	St John's <i>machine</i>	5 Mar 1943
Station Hospital, APO 862	Base Army Examiner 2xxx	St John's G.P.O. <i>large circle</i>	28 Jun 1943
421 st AAA Bty, APO 862	Boxed oval 552	None, cancelled at Riverton, Man	Apr 3 1945
Bty D, 24 th Coast Artillery, APO 862	Boxed oval 556	GPO2 triangle <i>in black</i>	Unknown
Fort Pepperrell, APO 862	Base Army Examiner 2195	GPO2 triangle <i>in black</i>	Unknown
HQ Co, Fort McAndrew, APO 863	Boxed oval 546	Marquise NFLD. <i>large circle</i>	9 Apr 1945
8 th AW Comm. Sqdn, APO 864	Base Army Examiner 53	GPO2 triangle <i>in black</i>	16 Jul 1943 (bs)
Trans Canada Airways, APO 864	Base Army Examiner 53	Maul, Stephenville split ring	Jun 7 1945 (?)
71 Air Base Sqdn, APO 865	Self censored (signature)	GPO2 triangle <i>in red</i>	8 Nov 1942 (bs)
U.S. A.A.B. Gander, APO 865	Boxed oval 529	GPO2 triangle <i>in red</i>	After Jun 1 1943
AP0 865	Base Army Examiner 2196	GPO2 triangle <i>in red?</i>	Unknown

The number of covers from a variety of originating bases struck with G.P.O. triangles [3] indicate that most of the U.S. military mail, at least until mid-1943, was transported to St. John's for transfer to the Newfoundland Post Office. This mail is very similar to the H.M.C.S. Avalon mail in that stamps are not used. Many of the covers have the postal fee written in pencil in the upper right corner. An alternative explanation for the markings on these covers is that additional G.P.O. triangles were produced and shipped to the post offices at Stephenville and Gander to indicate payment on unstamped military covers for Canada and Newfoundland that originated at the U.S. bases. Many covers from 1943 and later have Newfoundland stamps. Some of these covers are cancelled at St. John's, with an example from Fort McAndrew cancelled at Marquise, and one from Harmon Field cancelled at Stephenville.

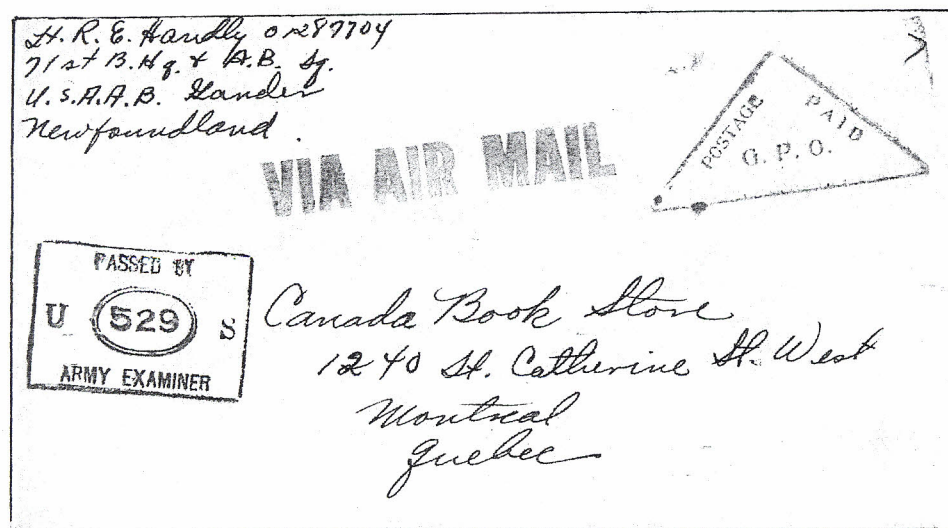


Figure 1: Letter from US Army Airbase Gander (APO 865). No postage stamps but 7 (c) for airmail to Canada noted in pencil in upper right. Censorship with US "boxed oval" marking number 529. GPO triangle indicated payment of postage at General Post Office. Destination is Montreal, Quebec and date would be after June 1, 1943 when airmail rate came into effect. Size 75% of original.

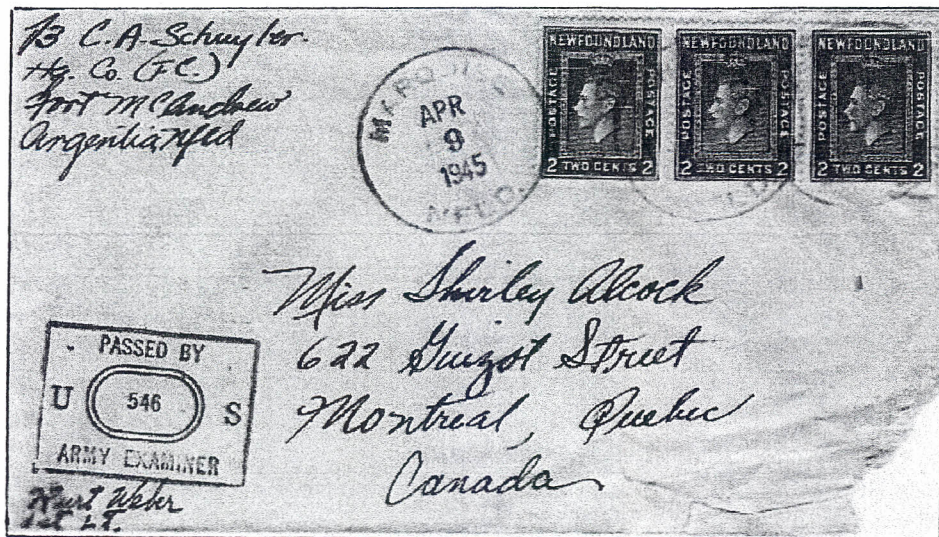


Figure 2: Late war cover from Fort McAndrew (APO 863) on April 9, 1945. Censorship with US "boxed oval" marking number 546. Censored correspondence was transferred to the Marquise post office where datestamp was used to cancel Newfoundland postage. 6¢ overpays the ground rate to Canada. Size 75% of original.

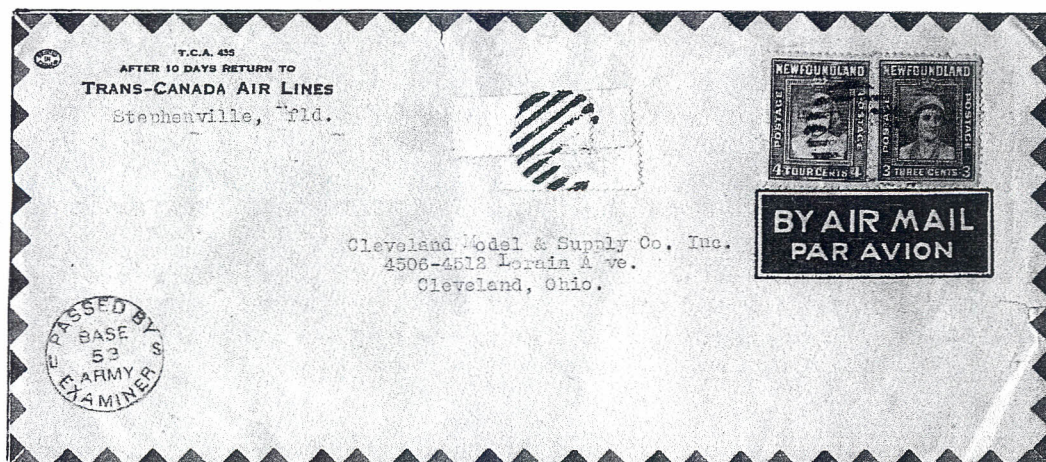


Figure 3: "Business" mail from Harmon Field at Stephenville to Cleveland, Ohio. Censored by Base Army Examiner 53 (Harmon field) and then put in the Newfoundland Postal System at Stephenville (split ring under stamp selvages). This item had a non-military origin but was still censored on leaving the base (airfield) and paid the Nfld 7¢ airmail rate of June 1, 1943 for mail to the USA and Canada. Size 60% of original.

To date all of the covers are from U.S. bases on the island of Newfoundland. No covers from Goose Bay have been seen.

Common identifying features for all of these covers include:

1. All covers originated at U.S. bases in Newfoundland but not all covers were from military personnel.
2. All correspondence was censored by U.S. Army censors with normal markings used at the respective bases.
3. All covers include either Newfoundland postage stamps or G.P.O. markings to indicate payment of appropriate fees.
4. Destination for military-sourced items was Canada or Newfoundland.
5. Destination for non-military sourced items can be Canada,

[Cont'd.]

Newfoundland, or U.S.A.

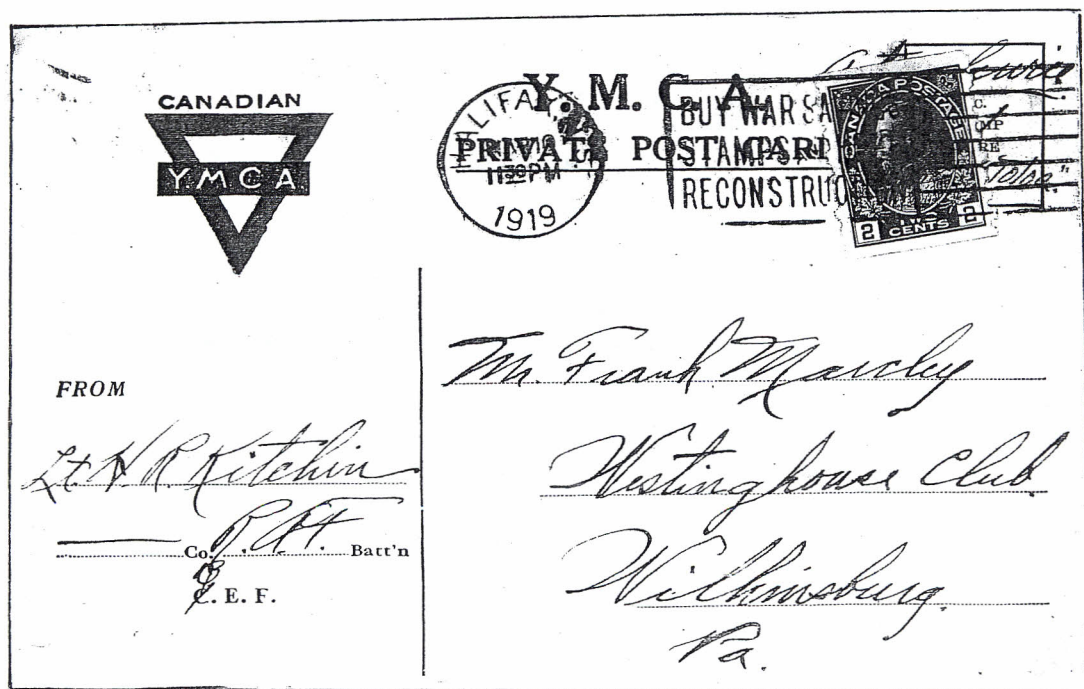
Any additional information or scans of covers would be most appreciated.

REFERENCES

- [1] Conn, Stetson, Rose C. Engelman, and Byron Fairchild. Guarding the United States and Its Outposts. Washington: Centre for Military History, United States Army, 2000, p. 372.
- [2] Ibid.
- [3] Binney, Paul. "A Re-Examination and Classification of G.P.O. Triangles on Naval Mail From H.M.C.S. Avalon, St. John's, Newfoundland". BNA Topics. Vol. 69 (2, 2012).

"LOOK TO SEE ME AROUND": A 1919 HALIFAX/H.M.T. TOLOA CARD--By Colin Pomfret

Lt. H.R. Kitchin, R.A.F. wrote this card to his friend in Pennsylvania while on board H.M.T. Toloa docked at Halifax on March 10, 1919 (date postmarked).



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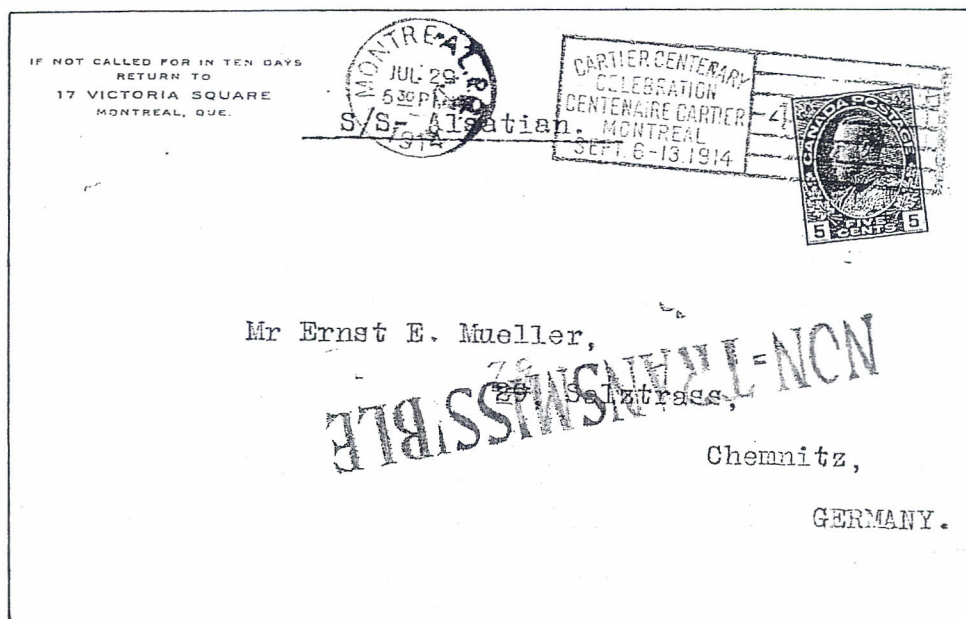
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Dear Friend:
A.M.P.S. "Volga"
March 9, 1919
You can look to see me around
the club in about a week's time. Will
arrive in New York Wednesday March 12th
am on board ship at Halifax now.
From
your old friend,
A. R. P. Litchman

SOME GREAT WAR GEMS--John Watson

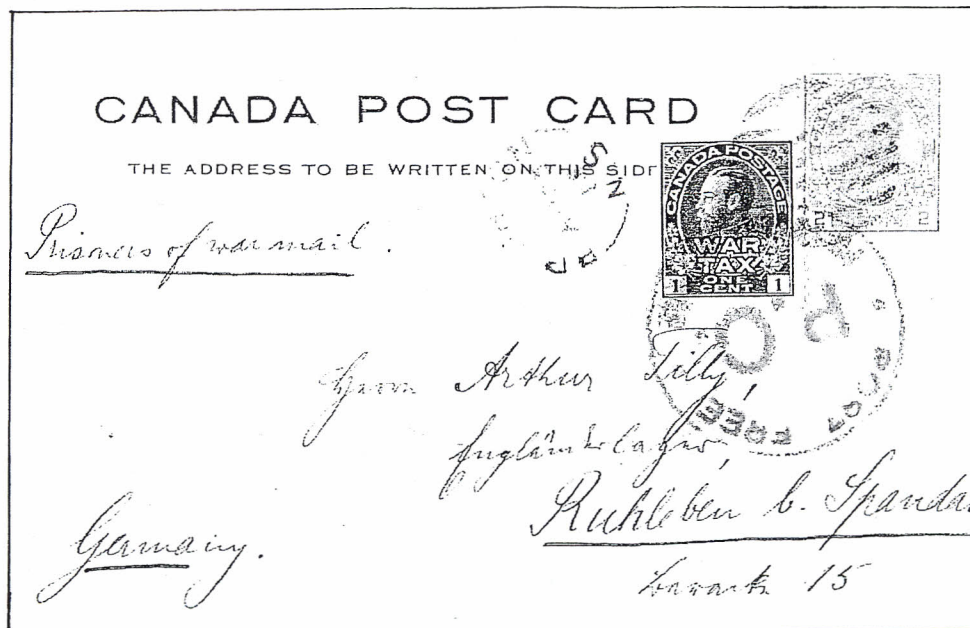
[John sent along some wonderful scans which, I hope, are legible given the reproduction process available to me. I have enhanced a few of the markings for greater clarity. All are at 70% of originals.Ed.]

A July 29, 1914 Montreal, Quebec "Embargo" Cover to
 Chemnitz, Germany
 Large "NON-TRANSMISSIBLE" Marking Condemning Delivery

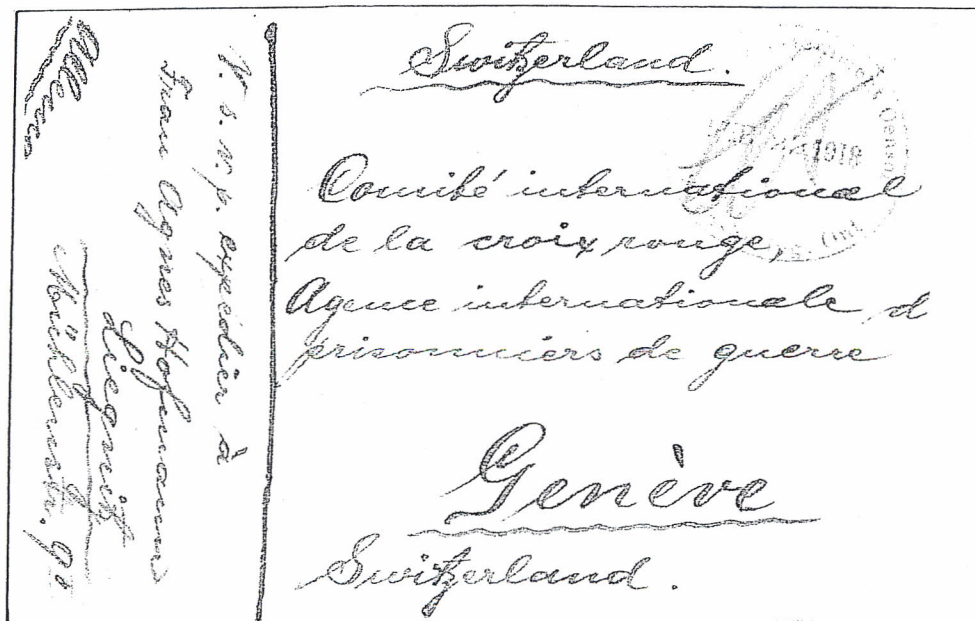


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An Up-Rated Postal Stationery Post Card From Brighton,
Nova Scotia to a P.O.W. at the Well-Known Camp, Ruhleben
(Englanderlager Ruhleben)



A Missive to the Red Cross, Geneva, Switzerland
From Kapuskasing, Ontario, February 22, 1918
Passed by Internment Censor



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Dear CMMSG Members: Henk and I want to wish you the very best for the coming year. Thank you again to all contributors who help to make each and every issue possible. Remember, if you have an item you wish to include, please do so!

Our membership retention rate was remarkable. Only two former members have not renewed! Thank you to ALL who have "re-enlisted". A warm welcome back is extended to **Alan Baker**, current Hon. Treasurer of our sister society, the Forces Postal History Society.

Our group is also indebted to the following benefactors who have kindly donated extra funds and/or postage: **P.R. Sanderson; G.H. Sawatzki; R. Toombs; C.R. McGuire; A. Baker; and C. Pomfret**. Current balance on hand (not including this issue's expenses) is \$1,385.54 (as of January 30, 2013).

Canada Post's 2013 stamp programme will include issues commemorating the 150th anniversary of the Princess of Wales' Own Regiment; the War of 1812 (Laura Secord/Charles de Salaberry); along with special covers for the 100th anniversaries of the Lincoln and Welland and 49th Field Artillery Regiments.

Work is progressing on a membership list and will follow in due course. It will be included as a separate attachment for members' use only and will not be included in archives or library copies.

SMALL ADS

Small ads from members are always welcome. Buy/Sell/Trade. Only Cdn.\$1 per insertion (or mint Cdn. postage at face ok). Copy and payment to the Editor.

WANTED: Camp Hughes, Sewell Camp, Camp Shilo postal history on covers and postcards. Buy, sell, trade. Contact: Darcy Hickson, R.R. #2, Box 24, Brandon, MB R7A 5Y2; (204) 725-0621; hicksondj@mts.net (1/10)

WANTED: All covers/cards related to Great War Newfoundland; Canadian POW's IN Germany (WWI/WWII); Canadians in Gibraltar/Malta during WWII. Contact: The Editor or blueputtees@hotmail.com (1/5)

[Wayne Curtis kindly wrote in regards to Bill Pekonen's May 2012 (NL#204, p. 1225) cover and curious address to Lt.Col. Louis Keene. A Canadian Forces Armoury, Oakville, was originally built in 1929 as the Gibson Building. It was previously used as both a dairy and bowling alley! Currently at 90 Thomas Street, it supports the operational requirements of Canadian Forces Reserve and Cadet units and is purported to be the smallest armoury in N.A.T.O. Thanks very much Wayne! Ed.]
