



Canadian Military Mail Study Group

NEWSLETTER

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CANADIAN SPORTS DAY, VLADIVOSTOCK 1919--By Joe Smith

[Joe sent along these two real photo ("ARTURA" stamp boxed) post-cards. The first depicts a group of spectators (including women and children) which was not included among those illustrated in R.C. Smith's A Canadian in Siberia, 1918-1921 (BNAPS Exhibits Series No. 12, September 1999, pp. 39A-39B). The second depicts a group of mounted horsemen preparing for a race. Ed.]



CANADIAN SPORTS DAY 1919 VLADIVOSTOCK.

[Cont'd.]

CHAIRMAN: H.M. (MIKE) STREET, 73 HATTON
DRIVE, ANCASTER, ON L9G 2H5
(mikestreet1@gmail.com)

EDITOR/TREASURER: DEAN MARIO, P.O. BOX 342, STATION MAIN, SASKATOON, SK S7K 3L3
(blueputtees@hotmail.com)



REDIRECTED MAIL TO OVERSEAS SOLDIERS IN U.K. AND FRANCE DURING THE GREAT WAR--AN UPDATE--By Wayne Schnarr

What happened during WW I when mail to a soldier arrived at its destination and the soldier was no longer there? Many good articles have been published on various aspects of redirected mail. I am taking this opportunity to provide a quick update, highlight some new markings and ask for any additional information which members may have (send to gwschnarr@rogers.com).

- **Transferred, units amalgamated or gone to France from a UK camp:** the CPC mail system would forward the mail. We have very few covers which fit that description because they were not saved or were destroyed when the soldiers entered the trenches.
- **Wounded and at a hospital in France or England:** the Canadian Section, GHQ, 3rd Echelon was established in Rouen in March 1915 as a section of the Deputy Adjutant General's Office. Members of the CPC in the office of the Deputy Assistant Adjutant General in Rouen were *focused on redirecting mail for casualties* and became the Canadian Postal Records Section (CPRS). It has also been referred to as the Canadian Section, Base APO 2. A CPC detachment was also located at the Base APO in Boulogne [approximate opening and closing dates of March 1915 and June 1915 (source: Webb's book published by the PHSC in 2014)] but this detachment was later moved to Rouen.

The military mail markings of CPRS have been most recently described in Third Echelon by Brian Plain (Appendix B in Webb's book). Earlier articles by Bill Robinson & Colin Campbell are in two BNAPS publications: CMMMSG newsletter #41 and BNA Topics / November - December, 1981, pp. 20 -21. The most common marking is the 2. Can Sec.

[Cont'd.]

double ring CDS [M6-1 in Bailey & Toop (B&T)]. In these articles, it was reported that '3rd Echelon' was observed in a single-line combined with various types of date-stamps and as a two-line marking in combination with 'CANADIAN SECTION G.H.Q.' as the first line. The two-line marking shown below left (scan, cleaned up) has the added word 'TRY' after the date at the end of the second line. The oval marking below right (redrawn, wording at top very faint) has only been reported on one cover.

CANADIAN SECTION G. H. Q.
3rd Echelon 4 SEP 1915 TRY



A redirected letter sent 1915-02-21 to a Canadian soldier had a marking (redrawn) which was probably applied by the CPC in Boulogne.

NOT AT BASE DETAILS BOULOGNE.

Two additional re-directional markings (redrawn) seen on covers to Canadian soldiers include the APO 2 designation.

TRANSFERRED TO ENGLAND
A.P.O. 2 (CANADIAN SECTION)

UNABLE TO TRACE
(B. A. P. O. 2.)

As with the simply redirected covers, very few of these 'wounded' covers were saved or they were destroyed when the soldiers re-entered the trenches.

- **Missing or killed in action:** We have a substantial number of covers in this category. The Canadian Army Pay Corps (CAPC) established a central office in London for proper accounting and that became the Canadian Pay & Records Office. Subsequently, separate Pay and Records offices were established. The Canadian Contingents Record Office at Westminster House received mail from the CPRS in Rouen which was *addressed to soldiers who had been reported killed or missing*, which it would then forward after review to the Dead Letter Office in Ottawa.

Markings of the Pay & Record Office on redirected soldier's mail will be included in Volume 1 of the new catalogue. Only one marking was listed in B&T, M6-12, a Received CDS which had not yet been seen postally used – has anybody seen a postally used copy of this marking? Two new mail markings have been identified (redrawn).

PAY & RECORDS
OFFICE
JUN 25 1915
CANADIAN CONTINGENTS

PAY & RECORD
OFFICE
JUL 12 1915
CANADIAN CONTINGENT

Markings of the Canadian Record Office are more common. There are 2 'postal despatched' CDS markings in B&T, M6-5 which I have seen dated in 1916 and M6-6 seen dated from 1917 to 1919. There are also 2 'received' CDS markings, M6-13 and -14, which I have never seen but have been assigned RF D in B&T.

Several variations on the rectangular 'Canadian Contingents Record Office' markings are illustrated below (all redrawn). Most examples have thick lines for the rectangular box, wavy and very irregular at times, which might be due to rubber construction and heavy use. As a group, these markings would be RF C (not common but hard to find) but the individual markings would be RF D (scarce) or RF E (rare).

The marking below left is M6-8 in B&T (seen dated 1915, 1917) – the only difference between that marking and the one below right (dated 1917 mostly, 1919) is the line over the date.

CANADIAN CONTINGENTS
SEP 18 1915
RECORD OFFICE
POSTAL.

CANADIAN CONTINGENTS
SEP 18 1915
RECORD OFFICE
POSTAL.

Six other variations (redrawn) on this marking have been seen on cover where:

- the lower text row has 'POSTAL' on the left side;
- the right side is either blank, 'RECD.' or 'DSPD.'; and
- there is no line, the line is only over the date or the line is almost full width.

CANADIAN CONTINGENTS
MAR 20 1918
RECORD OFFICE
POSTAL

CANADIAN CONTINGENTS
MAR 20 1916
RECORD OFFICE
POSTAL

CANADIAN CONTINGENTS
FEB 4
RECORD OFFICE
POSTAL DSPD.

CANADIAN CONTINGENTS
 JAN 25
 RECORD OFFICE
 POSTAL RECD.

CANADIAN CONTINGENTS
 JAN 17 1918
 RECORD OFFICE
 POSTAL RECD.

CANADIAN CONTINGENTS
 JAN 17 1918
 RECORD OFFICE
 POSTAL RECD.

When minor variations such as this are seen, there is always the concern that they are the result of light inking or a worn or damaged hammer. I have seen two or more examples of most of these markings and believe they are all different markings. An additional question is whether any of the hammers for these markings has been modified – such as removing RECD. – to create a new hammer. A detail-oriented collector could put scans of these markings on clear acetate sheets and compare them – any takers?

Two additional markings (redrawn) from the Canadian Record Office have been seen on cover. The marking below on the left has been seen on only one cover dated March 1915. The marking below on the right has been seen on one cover and mentioned in other articles.

Canadian Record Office

INSUFFICIENTLY ADDRESSED,
 RETURN TO SENDER.

NEXT-OF-KIN NOTIFIED,
 CANADIAN CONTINGENTS
 RECORD OFFICE.

I estimate there may be up to 20,000 WW I covers to or from Canadian soldiers which survived the war but probably only a few hundred which have been redirected. I have probably seen scans or examined up to 1,500 covers of which fewer than 100 have been redirected.

Please have another look at your WW I overseas covers, correct or add to the information I have published here and send me scans of anything you think will be useful in ensuring that the new catalogue is as complete and accurate as possible.

SECOND WORLD WAR MERCHANT SHIPS LOST TO GERMAN SURFACE WARSHIPS--
 By Jon Johnson

In the spring of 1941 the German Navy launched a multipronged attack on allied merchant ships. Of Canada's 37 ocean-going ships in 1939, 3 would run afoul of German surface ships.

On 21 February 1941 the freighter Canadian Cruiser, loaded with iron ore from India, was sailing for South Africa when it was stopped 600 miles east of Kenya by the German pocket battleship Admiral Scheer. The Admiral Scheer had used one of her two aircraft to locate Canadian Cruiser. Her speed of 10 knots was not sufficient to escape from Admiral Scheer's 28 knots.

[Cont'd.]

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Canadian Cruiser's crew were taken aboard the Admiral Scheer. German seamen placed explosives on Canadian Cruiser and she was sunk. Canadian Cruiser's 35 man crew were transferred to the German tanker, supply, and prison ship Ermland. The Ermland ran the Allied blockade, landing the Allied POW's at La Rochelle, France. Several days later they were transferred to the merchant navy prison camp Marlag und Milag Nord near Bremerhaven, Germany. The POW's were released on 27 April 1945 after more than four years as prisoners.

Illustrated are the front and back of a Second World War POW tobacco/hamper parcel receipt card signed [enhanced.Ed.] by Fred Betts, POW #90786, with a mute German 23.2.44.-16 postmark addressed to the Overseas League of Canada. It bears a Canadian naval censor and was mailed free. Betts was captured on the freighter Canadian Cruiser. The card also bears the MARLAG UND MILAG NORD/(MERCHANT NAVY SECTION) and boxed Marlag u. Milag Nord/5/geprüft examiner's mark.

Prisoner of War Mail
Poste aux Prisonniers de Guerre
Kriegsgefangenenpost

23.2.44-16

OVERSEAS LEAGUE CANADA.
TOBACCO & HAMPER FUND.
51 KING ST E.
TORONTO, ONT., CANADA.

POSTAGE FREE
FRANC DE PORT
GEBUHRENFREI

P. W. 2-5037-3-45

EXAMINED BY D B / 45

Name
Nom

File No.
Dossier N°

33892

PARCEL RECEIVED Date
COLIS REÇU le

22.2.44

Signature

Fred Betts 90786

Address
Adresse

MARLAG UND MILAG NORD
(MERCHANT NAVY SECTION)

Sender's name
Expéditeur

Marlag u. Milag Nord
5
geprüft

[Cont'd.]

A day after the Canadian Cruiser was sunk, on 22 February 1941, freighter A.D. Huff was returning from London, England and stopped 600 miles from Newfoundland by the German battle cruiser Gneisenau. She had found A.D. Huff with one of her aircraft. Gneisenau's 31 knots vs. A.D. Huff's 11 knots was no contest. A.D. Huff was hit by about 32 shells; killing two men in the engine room before she stopped. The remaining crew of 40 were taken on board Gneisenau before A.D. Huff was sunk by gun fire. Several days later the A.D. Huff's crew were transferred to Ermland; joining the sailors from Canadian Cruiser and several sunk British freighters.

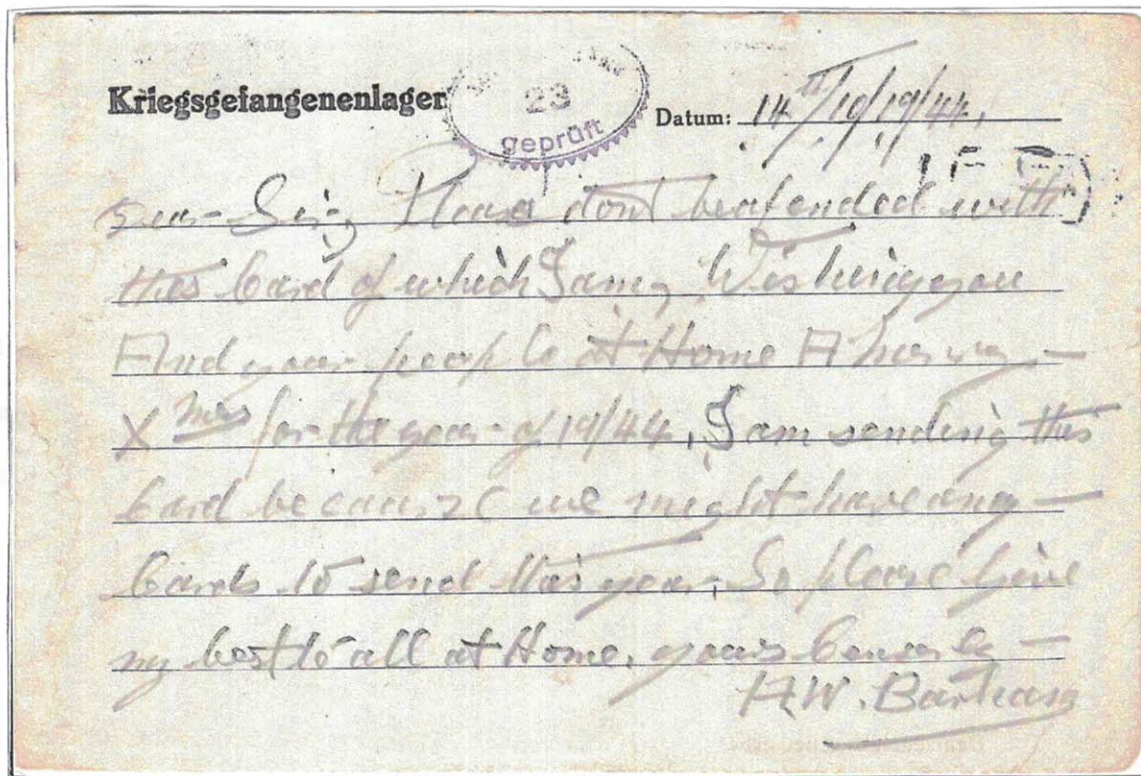
[I am grateful to Jon for providing me with the above information related to the following POW card from a member of the A.D. Huff, Albert Barham, POW #90564. Barham's noting the ship's name is very unusual and somehow missed the censor's attention. He also apologizes to the addressee for a somewhat early Christmas salutation because of the shortage of cards to send in the holiday season.Ed.]

Kriegsgefangenenpost	
Postkarte	28.11.44-10
An	
To Mr. C.C. BARNES	
Gebührenfrei	
Absenders:	
Vor- und Zuname:	Empfangsort: 1452, 1318 Hop. STREET.
FILBERT, BARHAM, S/O Huff	Straße: MONTREAL.
Gefangenennummer: 90564	Land: QUE. CANADA.
Lager-Bezeichnung:	Landsteil (Postfach No. 657)
M.N. (Section)	
Marlag und Milag Nord (Milag)	
Deutschland (Allemagne)	
EXAMINED BY D. B/ 657	

About a month later, 25 March 1941, tanker Canadolite sailing from Freetown, Sierra Leone to Aruba in ballast was stopped three days out by the merchant raider Kormoran just before dawn. Once stopped the crew took to their life boats. After inspecting Canadolite the Germans placed a prize crew on her and had the original crew re-board their ship. Nineteen days later Canadolite landed at Bordeaux, France. Her crew was transferred to Marlag und Milag Nord POW camp. Canadolite was renamed Sudetenland and survived the war.

In total 119 captured Canadian merchant sailors spent four years in German POW camps.

[Cont'd.]



Bibliography

McKee, Fraser M. Sink All The Shipping There. St. Catharines, ON: Vanwell Publishing, 2004.

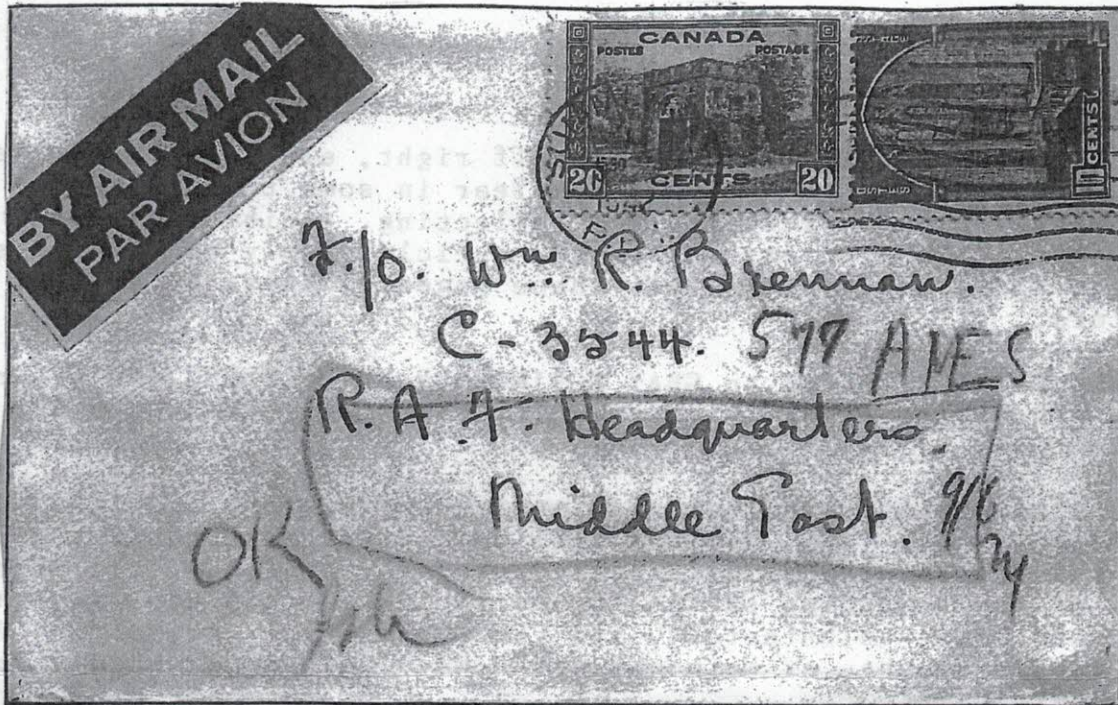
F.P.O. 131, CANADIAN OVERSEAS POSTAL DEPOT, NEW USAGE REPORT--By
John Watson

[John sent along the following items which may be of special interest. The first is a 1942 cover addressed to Flying Officer William R. Brennan, #C-3544, R.A.F. Headquarters, Middle East, from Summerside, PEI (No.1 General Reconnaissance School?). There is a reverse strike of FPO 131, John notes that it differs from the strike and comment in Doug Sayles' BNAPS Catalogue of Canadian Military Mail Markings, Vol.II (2011) on p. 206 in that (a) it is not on a registered cover and (b) it does not have the asterisk above the date. Doug had noted that the hammer was most often seen as a transit marking on registered letters and used in the "Registration Section". Curiously he does not indicate the hammer's association with SC2. Bailey and Toop's Canadian Military Posts, Vol.II (Ed. E.B. Proud, 1985, p.238) notes otherwise and provides the Manchester, U.K. location in 1942. However, hammer FPO 131 bears the asterisk. Sayles does indicate FPO 131 with SC1. Despite this confusion, there is no doubt that John's usage differs from that more commonly

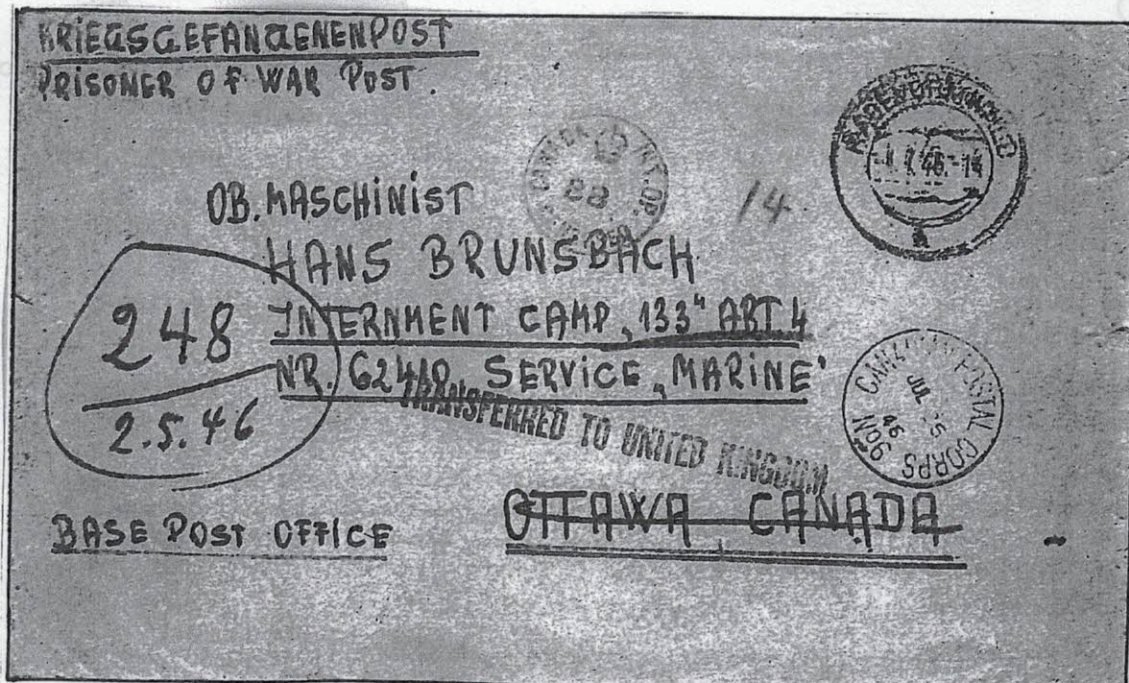


[Cont'd.]

found by Doug. John adds that there could be little doubt about the number of the FPO, but unless it is a British FPO, he can't see what other number it could be. Ed.]



1946 UNLISTED "TRANSFERRED TO UNITED KINGDOM" HANDSTAMP--By John Watson



[Cont'd.]

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The preceding cover from Germany to Internment Camp 133 is dated 1946. Not only does it have a late dated Canadian Postal Corps No.6 emergency strike, it also has an unlisted handstamp "TRANSFERRED TO UNITED KINGDOM" auxiliary marking.

Dear Study Group Members:

Mike and I hope that 2019 is starting off right, although it has been one of the coldest beginnings of a New Year in some time. Arguably great military postal history researching, collecting, exhibiting, and article-writing weather! We are very low in the article supply once again so please send along anything to fill these pages. Thanks, as always, to contributors.

A warm welcome is extended to **GRAY SCRIMGEOUR, FRPSC, FPHSC (BC)**. A note of thanks and appreciation is extended to member **ROBERT TOOMBS** for his recent donation.

Many historical military milestones, anniversaries, and commemorations will be evident this year. Members will recognize the special year related to the Canadian Siberian Expeditionary Force (CSEF), the 80th anniversary of the beginning of the Second World War (and the brave men and women who first volunteered), and the 75th anniversary of the Allied landings on the beaches of Normandy and D-Day. All great themes for exhibits and articles!

For members' information our membership is currently as follows:

- 45 Full Members (34 Canada; 5 U.S.; 6 Int'l.)
- 10 Newsletters Issued (BNAPS ex-officio; Library; Archives; Review; Exchange)

Currently our bank account balance (before this issue's printing costs are deducted) is \$910.02.

It is hoped that we can issue four or five issues this year. Until next time...

SMALL ADS

Looking for something? Have something for sale? Why not try our small ads? Buy/Sell/Trade. Still only \$1 per issue (Canadian stamps @ face ok). Copy and payment to the Editor please:

WANTED: Sewell Camp and Camp Hughes postal history on cover, postcard, money orders, what have you? Buy, sell, trade. Darcy Hickson, Brandon, MB. Call (204) 724-2028 or email: darcy@hickson.ca (2/10)

WANTED: Japanese Canadian Nisei volunteers and non-Japanese Canadians in WWII Intelligence Service Far East. Especially seeking Japanese Language School (S-20) drafts, interpreters, war crimes units etc. in South East Asia Command; Canadians associated with Nuremburg War Crimes Trials; Canadian POW's in Buchenwald/Colditz (Oflag IVC) and Stalag Luft III escapers; Canadians in Gibraltar; WWI Newfoundland. Contact the Editor at blueputtees@hotmail.com (1/5)

WANTED: WWI/WWII covers/cards/photos/ephemera related to the Canadian Military Police Corps; Dominion Police (Military Service Act); Canadian Provost Corps; Military Detention Barracks; Special Investigation Sections (including War Crimes Unit). Contact the Editor at blueputtees@hotmail.com (3/5)
