



# Canadian Military Mail Study Group

## NEWSLETTER

MAY 2019

NEWSLETTER NO. 235

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FPO 2B-1ST CANADIAN DIVISION-2ND BRIGADE--By Neil Ritchie

Security Phase 1 February to 30 June 1917

My Canadian collecting centres around the Canadian Expeditionary Force, CEF 1914 to 1919. I was lucky enough to receive a Gold Medal at Spring Stampex 2018 for an exhibit detailing the CEF in France. I bid for this cover on Ebay where the seller had wondered why the registration label wasn't present, having thought that the 2d rate was the registration charge.



However this is a very rare example of mail posted by a civilian

[Cont'd.]

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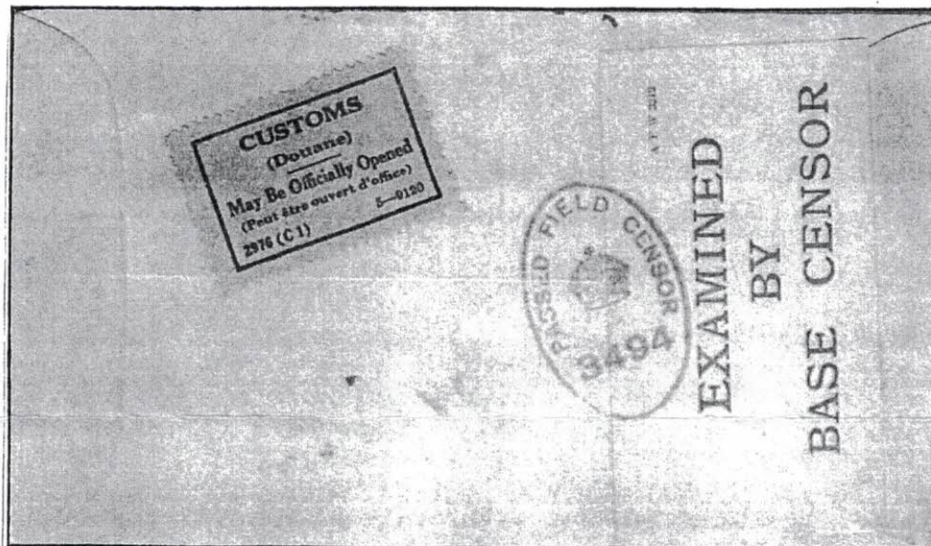
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at a Canadian Field Post Office (FPO) and the only example I have ever seen. It has been posted at the Empire rate (ie. as if it was posted from Canada to the U.K.) of 2d for a letter weighing between  $\frac{1}{2}$  and 1 oz. I have weighed the envelope plus one sheet of comparable quality writing paper and the combined weight is about  $\frac{3}{4}$  oz. which would support the postage rate used. Nobody can explain why the postal orderly would have accepted a civilian letter, but there could have been a number of non-military personnel around helping with army logistics or in support roles and maybe persuaded the orderly to take it.

But what was happening on the date that it was posted? On the 1 April 1917 the 2nd Brigade HQ was located at the village of Ecoivres 40km west of Arras. By definition FPOs operated in restricted zones of military operations and therefore were only accessible to military personnel. At this time access was particularly tight as preparations for the top secret Vimy attack were well advanced. It may well have been the case that the letter was accepted by the 2nd Brigade's Postal Clerk because of the heightened security and cancelled it with FPO 2.B.

What about the censoring? Soldiers' letters were routinely censored at unit level ie. before it was handed to the Postal Orderly but, in this case, as a civilian, that was not possible so it was opened after entering the postal system at the Canadian Postal Corps Base and signed "Base Censor".



WAR DIARY			Headquarters, 2nd Canadian Infantry
INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY			
(Erase heading not required.)			
Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information
ECOIVRES	Apr. 1st.		<p>Situation- -Normal. Weather- -Rain and sleet fall at intervals.</p> <p>The G.O.C. attended a conference at Headquarters, 1st Canadian Division this morning. During the afternoon a conference of officers Commanding Units, 2nd Canadian Infantry Brigade, was held in the Mess Room, Brigade Headquarters, Ville au Boeuf.</p> <p>Casualties, NIL.</p>

Examining the 1st Division, 2nd Infantry Brigade's war diary entry for

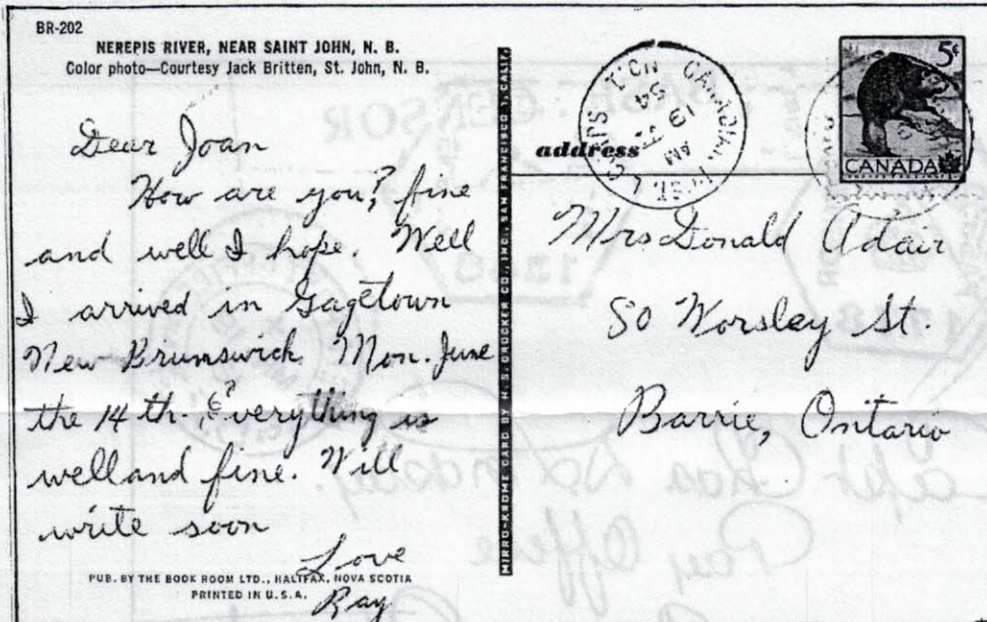
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the 1 April reveals that the only actions recorded that day was a conference for senior officers at the 1st Division HQ followed in the afternoon by another at Brigade HQ. Any military liaison officer attached to the afternoon conference would have been entitled to "On Active Service" free postage. The why and how will most likely never be known, but [if] they were, it would be an interesting story. So far I have found no information about the addressee, Mr. Henri Lust, nor have I been able to decipher the address sufficiently. [At first glance I had thought that this item may be a "concoction", but will leave any such future negative or positive comments to those more knowledgeable than myself. My sincere thanks to Bob Toombs and Wayne Schnarr for their interesting email conversations on this most interesting piece.Ed.]

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3RD INFANTRY BRIGADE TRAINING, CAMP GAGETOWN, 1954--By Jerome C. Jarnick

In 1950 the expanding peacetime army required a training facility in eastern Canada for its forces engaged in NATO and peacekeeping missions. The decision to establish a permanent base and training facility in the Gagetown, New Brunswick location was announced in 1952 and construction on the base began a year later.



C.P.C. NO.1  
 PROOF STRIKE  
 Bailey & Toop  
 No. M9-53 (Vol. I, 1996, p.171)

Camp Gagetown had its first large-scale exercise in June 1954 with the 3rd Canadian Infantry Brigade training there for six weeks. This card is postmarked with the emergency "Canadian Postal Corps No.1" hammer and dated "AM/19 VI/54". The message indicates that the sender arrived at the camp on Monday, 14 June.

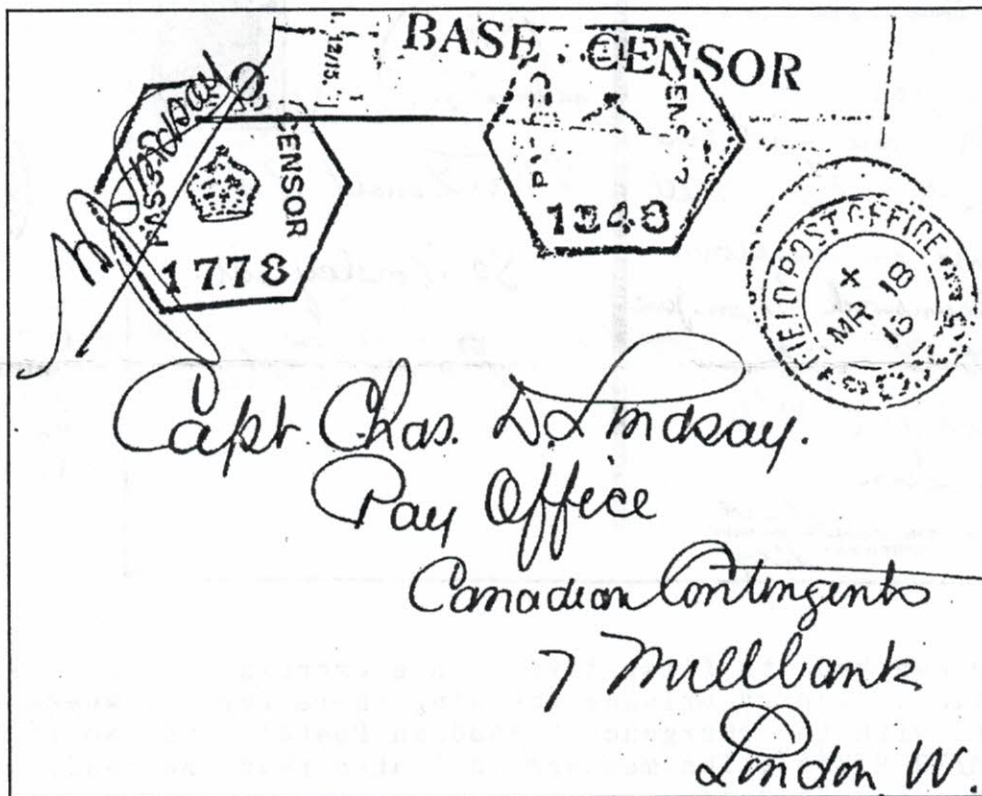
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PAY & RECORD OFFICE MARKINGS DURING THE GREAT WAR--AN UPDATE TO AN UPDATE--By Wayne Schnarr

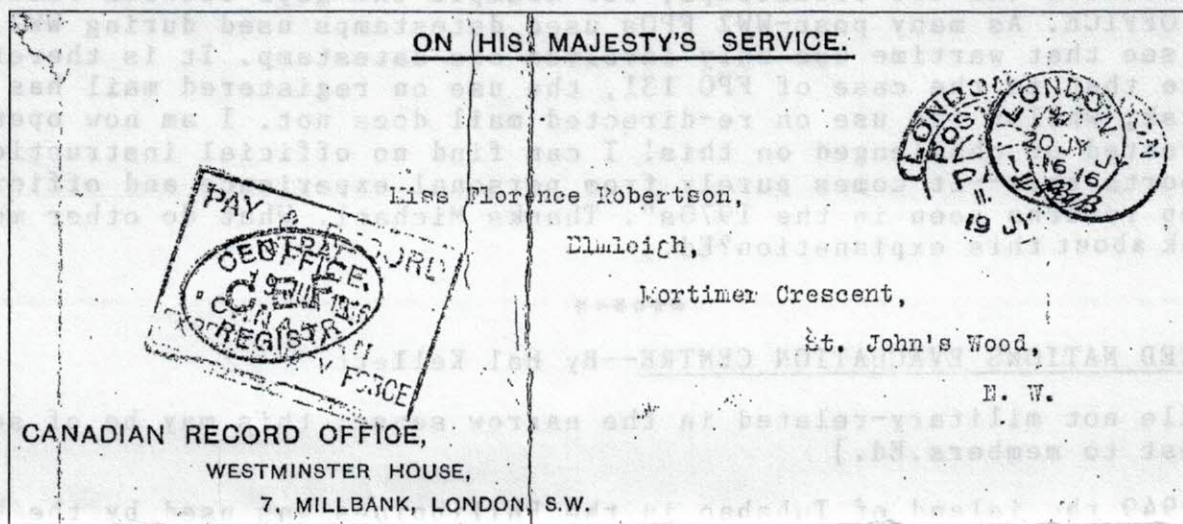
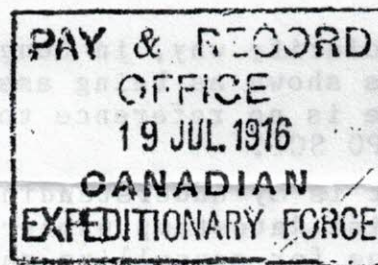
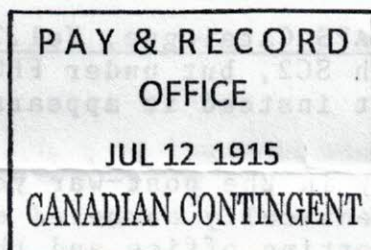
It is virtually guaranteed that as soon as an article is published (CMMSG Newsletter No. 234, p. 1582-5), new material will appear on that subject.

1. Only one marking of the Pay & Record Office was listed in B&T, M6-12, a Received CDS which had not yet been seen postally used. I recently started sorting through hundreds of cover scans done by the late John Frith (thanks to the Frith family and Mike Street for this material) and found a postally used copy of this marking on the back of a cover which was addressed to the Pay Office in London. [actual marking, B&T illustration, cover front]. This cover also illustrates the double censor marking seen on several covers – one by the unit censor (CM4 1778) and one by the base censor (CM4 1348) on top of the base censor tape.



[Cont'd.]

2. Eight variations on the rectangular 'Canadian Contingents Record Office' markings were illustrated in my previous article (see one redrawn version below left). Amongst the covers in a recently purchased lot, I found a similar marking with 'Canadian Contingent' replaced by 'Canadian Expeditionary Force'. The cover had this new marking on both the back and front and the marking on the front was overlaid by the oval 'Central Registry CEF' marking seen by itself on several other covers.



There are many more re-directional markings on my covers which need to be assessed for inclusion in the new catalogue, such as a rectangular 'Proceeded to MD1 Canada' marking.

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

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FPO 131 NEW USAGE REPORT: A COMMENT--By Michael Dobbs

[Michael kindly sent along an email related to John Watson's previous report on this hammer usage (CMMSG NL#234, Jan. 2019, pp. 1588-1589). Members will know Michael as the Hon. Secretary of our sister group, the Forces Postal History Society. He wrote:

"With reference to the above item--whilst I cannot provide a definitive answer I can provide some information which may be able to assist.

I cannot clarify why, in Doug Sayles' BNAPS Catalogue, Vol.2, at p.206, FPO 131 is shown as being associated with SC2, but under FPO SC2 on p. 186, there is no reference to it and that instead it appears shown against FPO SC1!

However it is my understanding (certainly in the post-war years), that each British datestamp number had two identically numbered datestamps--usually one for cancelling mail in the sorting office and the other for either a counter use and/or registration use; this may differ depending upon the size of the office. In some cases it is possible to differentiate between the two datestamps, for example the gaps between FIELD, POST and OFFICE. As many post-WW2 FPOs used datestamps used during WW2, I cannot see that wartime use only involved one datestamp. It is therefore possible that in the case of FPO 131, the use on registered mail has the asterisk, whilst the use on re-directed mail does not. I am now open to be corrected or challenged on this! I can find no official instruction which supports this--it comes purely from personal experience and official datestamp returns seen in the 1970s". Thanks Michael. What do other members think about this explanation?Ed.]

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UNITED NATIONS EVACUATION CENTRE--By Hal Kellett

[While not military-related in the narrow sense, this may be of some interest to members.Ed.]

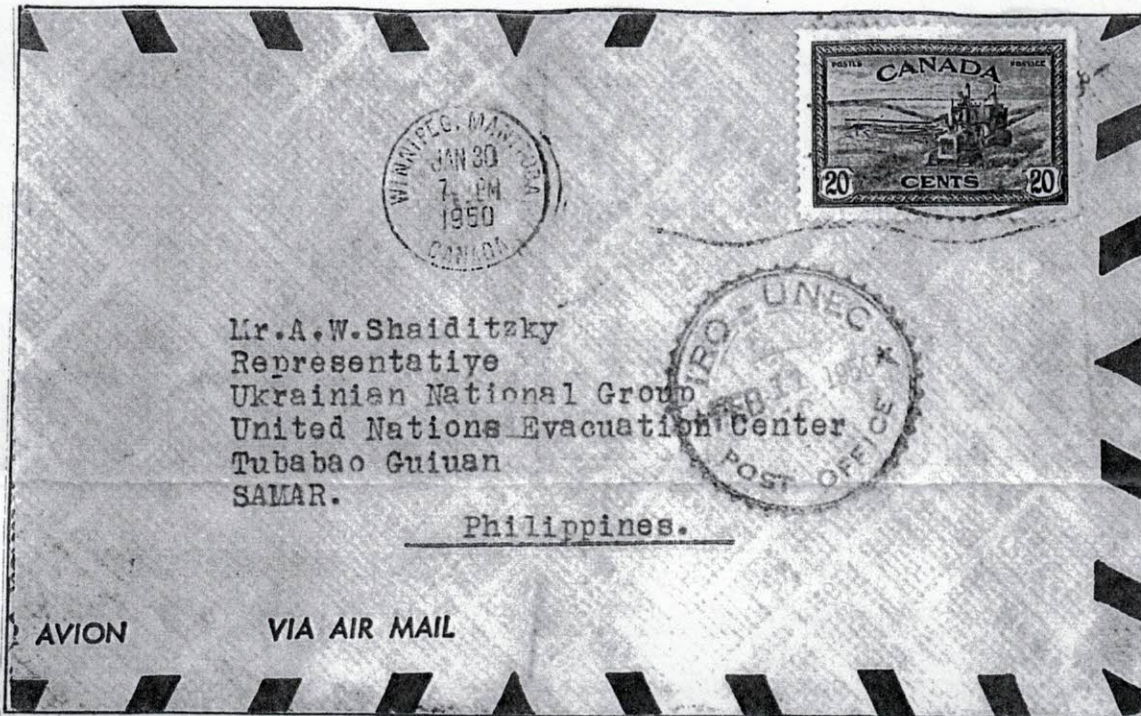
In 1949 the island of Tubabao in the Philippines was used by the U.N. International Refugee Organization (IRO) to provide a temporary refuge for 5,000 Russian refugees escaping from China.

The Russians were Tsarist survivors of the Russian Revolution of 1917 and the Russian Civil War of 1922-1924 ("White" Russians), who had settled in China.

In 1948 the Chinese Red Army forced the Russian émigrés to move to Shanghai. As the Chinese Army's goal was to take the entire country, including Shanghai, the IRO appealed to several nations to provide the Russians with temporary refuge. The Philippines provided an uninhabited section of the island of Tubabao as a temporary refuge for those fleeing China.

The following cover, from Winnipeg, Manitoba's "Ukrainian Service", is dated 30 January 1950. It was sent at the twenty-five cent rate and a five-cent stamp has fallen off. The IRO-UNEC POST OFFICE receiver is dated "FEB 11 1950".

[Cont'd.]



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MILITARY MAIL MARKINGS FOR BRAMSHOTT CAMP, UK DURING THE GREAT WAR: -AN UPDATE--By Wayne Schnarr

Bramshott Camp was a temporary army camp established on the Bramshott Common, Hampshire. Nearby Bordon and Longmoor Camps were permanent military facilities established by the British army before WW I. In October 1915, a Canadian Postal Corps (CPC) Base Post Office was established at Bramshott to handle mail from Bramshott, Bordon and Longmoor Camps. A report by Col. Ross in 1918 (see book by Webb published by the PHSC, page 106) stated that Bramshott had 11 employees of the British Post Office (civilians presumably), 19 CPC personnel attached to the Canadian field post office but there was no mention of any British Army Postal Service personnel.

Five Bramshott Camp proof strikes were found in the date stamp impression books at The Postal Museum in London, U.K. (examined in 2017). Two strikes had the camp name mis-spelled – Bramshot – and presumably these hammers were never used. Two of these proof strikes are in Bailey & Toop (B&T) – M6-35, which has never been seen postally used, and M6-36. The fifth proof strike is the double-ring ‘Petersfield’ marking shown below.

The current draft of the BNAPS Volume 1 catalogue of military mail markings has twelve different markings from Bramshott Camp. The five camp date stamp markings are shown below. The most common is the double-ring ‘Maltese cross at bottom’ marking (RF A), with the other four (single-ring, double-ring ‘Petersfield’, skeleton and machine) all tentatively RF D.

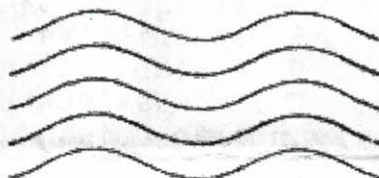
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BRAMSHOTT CAMP

7. 30 PM

5 FEB 19



Three Command Depots were established, including No. 2 at Bramshott for Aldershot-area troops. The CFPO (1-9)E markings are scarce to rare and I have not seen any definitive study on the assignment of these to specific camps. It is possible that the E was used to specify base post offices in England and differentiate them from those in France. Some study notes indicate that 2E and 4E were assigned to Aldershot and 8E was assigned to Bordon. B & T assigns RF E to the 2E (several covers or scans examined) and 8E (two seen on cover) markings and, since the marking 4E is only known as a proof strike, it will not be included in this catalogue.



One registration oval and two re-directional markings have been observed on covers.



NOT KNOWN  
C.B.P.O. 2 E

NOT KNOWN  
CF.P.O. 2 E



Two oval markings have been found on cover which include CPC and Canadian Postal Corps, respectively. The left one has been seen on 3 covers to the same address in the U.S. and the right one has only been seen on one cover.



In CAMP POSTMARKS OF THE UNITED KINGDOM by R.A. Kingston (published by the Forces Postal History Society (FPHS) in 1971), twelve Bramshott postmarks with dates of use are listed, including some which I have not seen and are currently not included in the catalogue draft.

- a. Kingston lists two types of the 'double-ring cross' marking, one of which could have been the mis-spelled hammer. If you have clear strikes of this marking, please send me a scan so I can see if two hammers can be identified.
- b. Double-ring 'Canadian Base P.O. Bramshott Camp' (1915)
- c. Single-ring 'Bramshott Camp' (1918)
- d. Rubber 'Petersfield Bramshott Camp B.O.' (no dates of use)
- e. Rectangular Parcel Post 'Petersfield. (Bramshott Camp B.O.)' (1916)

**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. [gwschnarr@rogers.com]**

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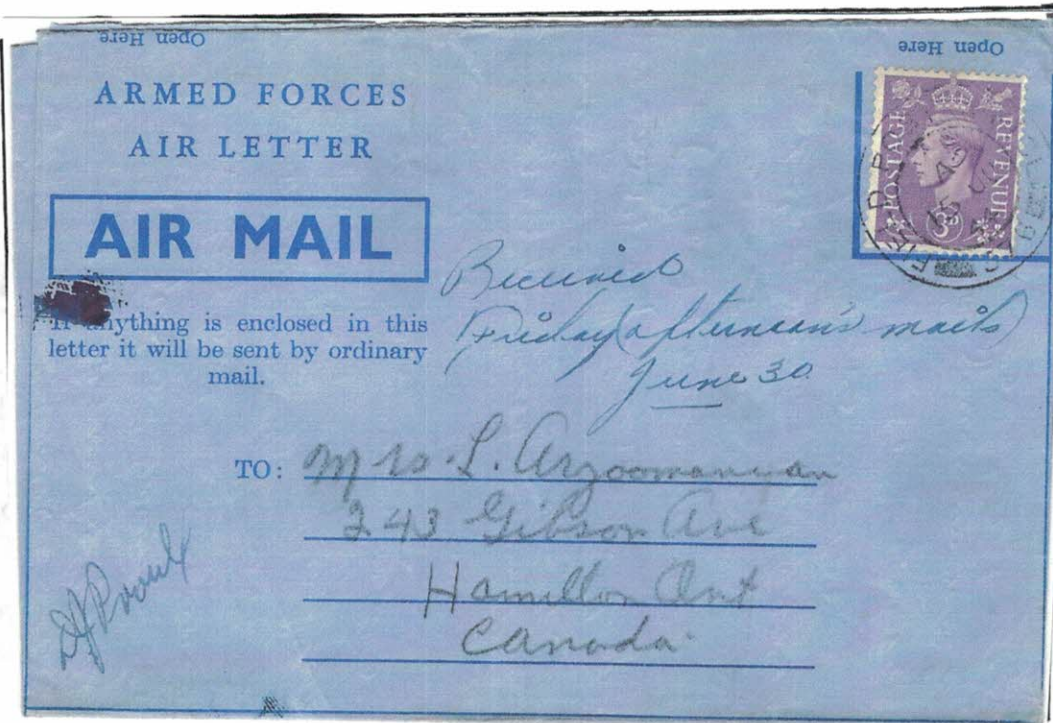
D+9: FPO 376 IN FRANCE COMMEMORATING THE NORMANDY LANDINGS' 75TH ANNIVERSARY

This year marks the 75th anniversary of D-Day as members know. There is no need to fully examine the details of Operation Overlord and Operation Neptune here, as libraries are full of excellent accounts. However to honour the thousands of brave souls in these operations, I've come across an Armed Forces Air Letter sent from a son to his mother (and a postscript to his father) who was in one of Canada's Reinforcement Groups which followed those units in the initial assault.

[Cont'd.]

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Private George Arzoomanian, B24428, was a member of No.2 Canadian Base Reinforcement Group (No.2 CBRG). The AFAL (type CFQ 11/40/P & S/1448) is undated but bears a strike of FPO 376/A/ 15 JU/44 (a Thursday) which is a British FPO and Proud attributes it to the British Liberation Army (BLA), Armoured Division (FPO AD2), known from 13 June 1944-?/1945.



The AFAL bears two signatures of the censoring officer "D.J. Proulx" (inside lower flap and front lower left). Given the manuscript front notation (from George's mother?), the AFAL was sixteen days in transit; arriving 30 June.

Invasion plans along the Normandy coastline included very high casualty figures. Although these figures were thankfully over-estimated, losses on Juno Beach were still nearly 1,000 men [340 killed or died of wounds, 574 wounded, and 47--mostly airborne--were taken prisoner, Swettenham, p. 26]. Reinforcements were vital to keep units fully manned as they began movement inland [see Gullachsen].

George wrote:

"Hello Mom

Dropping you a line from somewhere in France. It isn't like it is when we were here last. Things are pretty quiet at times but we are all happy together. People here are quiet and won't talk much. Went up to one girl and tried to make her understand that we wanted some wine to drink, boy what a time we had, she offered us everything but wine, gave us milk, water and some cider. Things are pretty expensive, butter we are told by them to be worth 1,200 Francs. The boys and I have so much money but we can't spend it where we are at the present, hope to see some big towns where we can get a good meal. Right now we are cooking our own meals in

[Cont'd.]

the open fields and tell Winnie I'm becoming a good cook if I keep it up. Didn't shave for a few days and you should have seen my beard. My hair is really cut short again, boy what I wouldn't give for a good bath and a hot square meal. We have to walk some distances for water and we always have to keep them full. When we left England on the way to the boats we passed through a main street and saw a large store with the words Armenia foods, the name Mourian was on it, sure liked to have stopped in but at that time it was impossible. Well dear please don't worry about me because I'm still in good health and intend to stay that way. Far as hearing from me regularly from hear [sic] please don't depend too much on it, but will honestly write when possible. Well honey how is everything at home no trouble I hope. When this thing is all over I'm going to get you a souvenir. Say hello to pop and kiss Ann and Winnie for me. Say hello to Mrs. Eloian [?] and tell Roum [?] to answer my letter. Give Alidee my regards and to Janet and Isabel. Well dear I guess I better sign off for now and please don't worry.

P.S. Hello pop, make a million so you and I can get good and drunk when this is all over. Love

Geo.

No.2. CBRG  
Canadian Army Overseas"

Private George Arzoomanian, possibly a first-generation Armenian-Canadian, was one of the thousands of replacement troops which assisted in the advance of the Canadian Army inland. Despite the initial carnage on Juno Beach, and several German counter-attacks (especially from Rommel's 12th S.S. Panzer Division), the combined Allied troops eventually succeeded in the liberation of France, and ultimately Europe.

#### REFERENCES

Gullachsen, Arthur Willoughby. An Army of Never-Ending Strength: The Reinforcement of the Canadian Army, 1944-1945. Electronic Graduate Thesis, Doctorate of Philosophy. Western Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies, University of Western Ontario. Electronic Thesis and Dissertation Repository, 3841, July 2016. <https://ir.lib.uwo.ca/etd/3841>.

Proud, Edward B., and Robert W. Gould, MBE. History of British Army Postal Service, Vol.III, 1927-1963. Heathfield, E. Sussex: Proud-Bailey Co., Ltd., 1982, p. 383.

Swettenham, John. D-Day. Ottawa: The National Museums of Canada (Canadian War Museum), 1971, p. 26.

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Dear Study Group Members:

Another issue at hand and again, sincere thanks to our various contributors. There are a few articles on deck but many more are needed for next time. The 75th anniversary commemorating the landings on the beaches of Normandy and D-Day will soon be upon us. At the time of printing, there is still no official indication of a postage stamp from Canada Post commemorating this important event in Canadian history!

Congratulations are extended to HAL KELLETT for his Gold at Victopical 2019. His exhibit was entitled "What to do in London in WWII". ORAPEX has just concluded and if Canadian military exhibits were featured, I will report next time.

Those in the London, Ontario area this fall are reminded of the following:

October 19 – 20, 2019      London, Ontario  
**CANPEX 2019 National Philatelic Exhibition**  
 (N)  
 The Hellenic Centre,  
 133 Southdale Road West,  
 London, Ontario  
 Show hours; Saturday 10 AM – 5 PM  
 Sunday 10 AM – 4 PM  
 Free admission, Free parking, Lunch counter  
 Information; [info@canpex.ca](mailto:info@canpex.ca)  
 Web site; [www.canpex.ca](http://www.canpex.ca)

Several new reports were indicated in the last sale from Ron Leith Philatelic Auctions, Vancouver, BC (No. 51, 16-17 March). Many were Second World War-era roller and MOTO cancellations. I believe Wayne Schnarr had documented them for future updates. I was lucky to have obtained one and I'll include it next time. There are still finds to be made! Until next time.

SMALL ADS

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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](mailto:darcy@hickson.ca) (3/10)

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](mailto:blueputtees@hotmail.com) (2/5)

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](mailto:blueputtees@hotmail.com) (4/5)

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