



Canadian Military Mail Study Group

NEWSLETTER

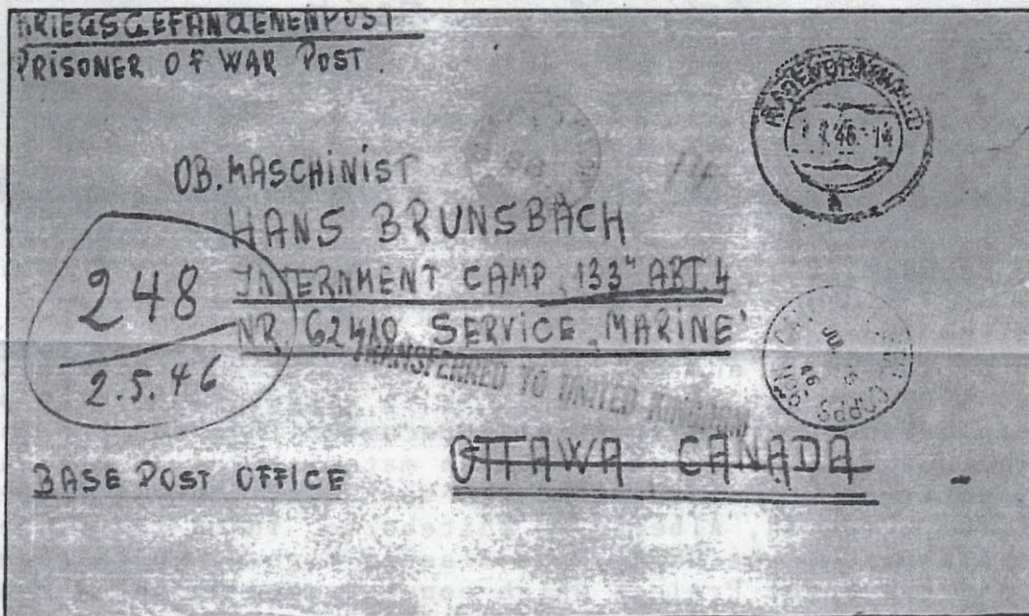
MAY 2020

NEWSLETTER NO. 240

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1946 P.O.W. CANADIAN POSTAL CORPS NO.6/TRANSFERRED TO U.K.--By
John Watson

The item below shows a letter sent from Germany to a P.O.W. in Camp 133, Lethbridge, Alberta. It was handled by the Canadian Postal Corps and has a strike of its emergency hammer No.6 [Sayles 2011 No.F155/B & T No.M9-62.Ed.]. It also has a nice "TRANSFERRED TO UNITED KINGDOM" straight-line handstamp.[Both Sayles and Bailey & Toop note that Camp 133 closed 30 June 1946 so by the time this piece arrived at the Base Post Office in July, many of the camp's prisoners would have been sent to camps still open or back to the U.K.Ed.]



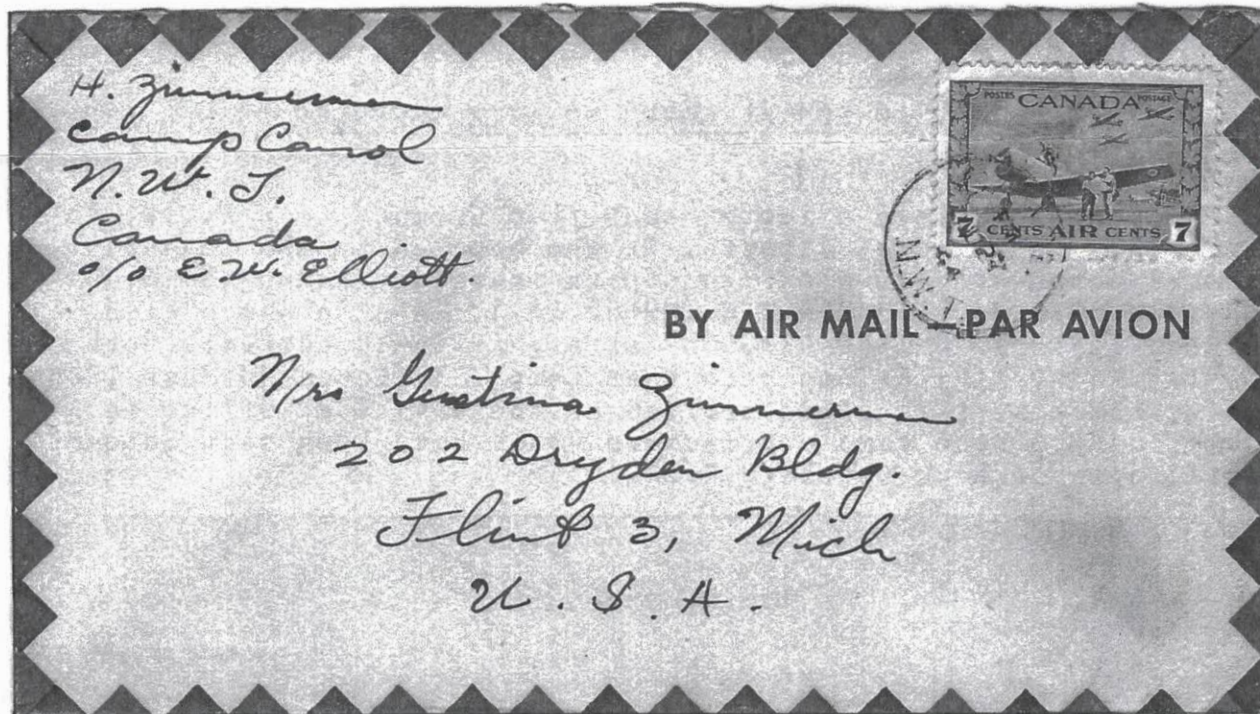
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CANOL PROJECT 1944--By Hal Kellett

[Hal provided this cover from Camp Canol, N.W.T. dated 27 (?) July 1944. The Canol Project was a joint effort of the United States and Canada during the Second World War and the name was derived from an abbreviation of "Canadian Oil" (1). The Canol post office opened 23 November 1942 with W. Boland as postmaster and closed 3 January 1945. The Canol Project was among the "...least known episodes of the war



years in Canada". (2).

Prior to the American entry into the Second World War, U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt and Canadian Prime Minister Mackenzie King met in August 1940 at Ogdensburg, New York to formulate a joint plan for a northern defence strategy. After 7 December 1941 and the entry of the United States in the war, the plan materialized into greater U.S. military activity and established the Northwest Staging Route of aerodromes (from Edmonton, Alberta to Whitehorse, Yukon for planes en route to Alaska and the USSR), the Alaskan Highway to Fairbanks, Alaska, and the Canol Project which concentrated on the Norman Wells oil field as the intended source of fuel for aircraft and vehicles. The Project facilitated efforts with New Jersey's Standard Oil Company (the parent of Imperial Oil Ltd.) for new wells, oil and gasoline pipelines and pumping stations, storage facilities, and greater production and refining facilities.

Task Force 2600 was activated from Camp Claiborne, Louisiana and arrived in June 1942 at Waterways, Alberta; consisting of several engineer battalions, signal, service, and medical units. It was with-

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drawn by the summer of 1943 when the U.S. War Department contracted the civilian Marine Operators from Edmonton, Alberta to complete personnel movement, supplies, and process equipment. Other civilian companies were contracted to drill wells, construct pipelines, and operate refineries (the bases and airstrips were still in the control of the U.S. Army). Some 52,900 civilians were employed on the Canol Project (3).

The Americans had organized their own Army Post Office facilities to serve military and civilian personnel. The Americans were encouraged to use these U.S. APO's but many Americans utilized the Canadian alternative which was believed to offer quicker delivery. A civilian contractor, the E.W. Elliot Company carried the mails daily in March 1944, twice weekly in early April, then once a week by late April when construction was winding down (4). The sender of this cover to Flint, Michigan chose this routing method as indicated by "c/o E.W. Elliott [sic]" in the return address.

- (1) See the excellent Thompson, Rae and O'Reilly, K. "Postal History of the Canol Project," PHSC Journal 46, 30 June 1986, pp. 10-15.
- (2) Barry, P.S. "The Canol Project, 1942-45," Arctic, Vol.45 (4), December 1992, p. 401.
- (3) Thompson and O'Reilly, p. 14.
- (4) Ibid., p. 15.]

BILLY BISHOP'S WWII ARMED FORCES AIR LETTER--By Jennifer Denman

I have been busy re-reading old issues of BNA Topics and Gordon McDermid's excellent article in the 2012 Q2 issue (Vol.69, No.2) caught my eye.

ARMED FORCES AIR LETTER		
195 BY AIR MAIL		
IF ANYTHING IS ENCLOSED, THIS LETTER WILL BE SENT BY ORDINARY MAIL.		
Number, Rank and Name	P/O G. STEWART BROWN, CAN. J9387	
Unit (Company, Squadron, Battery, etc.)	ROYAL AIR FORCE--STATION	
Regiment or Branch	ABU SUEIR	
Service	EGYPT	
OVERSEAS.		

In his article Gordon explains the history behind Billy Bishop's WWII AFALs to Egypt. These letters used the newly-introduced AFALs, for which the postage rate had been set at 10¢. They were cancelled at Montreal on 15 June 1942, which happened to be the first day that members of the public were allowed to mail the new AFALs.

In addition to describing the route these particular air letters would have taken to get to their destination, Gordon makes note of a large

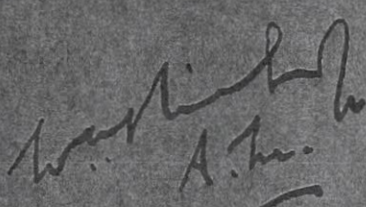

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number "6" stamped in the upper left corner of the AFAL in his collection. His guess, based on his having seen other Bishop AFALs all with different numbers, was that Bishop had prepared 150 of these air letters.

I have looked for a follow-up article, or letters to the Editor regarding these items, but haven't come across any. The Bishop AFAL in my collection is stamped "149" and has a nice margin copy of Scott #241. Given the existence of this number "149", I was all set to agree with Gordon's guess as to the number of pieces produced.

Then what should appear in Longley Auction #25 held 18 January 2020 [lot 270.Ed.] but another AFAL, this one bearing the number "195" (image used by kind permission from Bill Longley). Has anyone seen a number greater than "195"? [Several of these have crossed my path and I currently own #115. Jennifer has noted that she has recently seen #49 sold. Were 200 made? Or? Members are encouraged to report any number higher than "195". I had often wondered if an autopen was used for Bishop's signature. I put that question to Jennifer in a recent telephone conversation as well. While I am not an autograph expert, upon examining several of these air letters I have come to a conclusion that he did, in fact, sign them individually as they all have signs of uniqueness. How many he signed is another question.Ed.]

ARMED FORCES AIR LETTER		CANADA 10 CENTS	
149 BY AIR MAIL			
IF ANYTHING IS ENCLOSED, THIS LETTER WILL BE SENT BY ORDINARY MAIL.			
Number, Rank and Name	P/O G. STEWART	FROM (Sender's full name and address)	
Unit (Company, Squadron, Battery, etc.)	ROYAL AIR FORCE	RETURN TO M. AIR MARSHAL W. A. BISHOP V.C., D.S.O., M.C., D.F.C.	
Regiment or Branch		ROYAL CANADIAN AIR FORCE	
Service		JACKSON BUILDING	
		OTTAWA, CANADA.	
		 	

REMOVAL/LIFTING OF POSTAGE STAMPS ON MILITARY MAIL

[Members will recall the age-old question raised by members Jennifer Denman and Wayne Schnarr regarding stamps affixed over important postmarks/censor identification etc. (NL#239, March 2020, p. 1646). C. Ron McGuire and Bob Toombs have advised the following for members:

Ron wrote: "Please use the following in response to the request on p. 1646--After considerable testing I found using the following method to remove postage stamps from envelopes successfully for decades.

Use good quality white blotter paper (Staples Inc., carry it in various sizes), cut a piece slightly larger than the stamp, emerge the blotter in clean cold water, dampen the stamp then leave the blotter over it. Cover the wet blotter with dry silicone paper and place a light weight on top. If a cover is worked on, place another piece of dry blotter paper inside the cover to absorb any residual moisture which may soak through. Check the stamp periodically and when loose, carefully and slowly lift it with tongs. If the gum is thick you can help it along by using an artist's brush to add more water as required. Soak the stamp to remove the gum, letting it dry face down on another blotter.

After the stamp and damp area of the envelope have dried and you have made a note of the postmark details, replace the stamp with a good quality peelable hinge [I have also placed the stamp inside a glassine envelope inside the cover to prevent loss.Ed.]. This method also works well on the thin postcard stock like the card illustrated in Jennifer's article on p. 1637. This method will even work on the thicker picture postcard stock but takes a little more effort.

I always accumulate several items requiring this treatment rather than doing one at a time. As a bonus I have also found that stamps with staining around the perforations will often have this discolouration disappear, including any staining that was on the envelope or postcard.

There is one problem: writing in certain inks may run, so be careful to keep from wetting that portion of the envelope or card."

Bob Toombs telephoned: "Re. the question of removing stamps over information. I use a wet (but not dripping) facial tissue and place it over the stamp/censor label etc. and let it remain for a few minutes. I very gently use tongs to pry/lift the corner of the stamp which is over the postmark or information I wish to identify. I don't usually need to remove the entire stamp. I then leave the tongs between the cover or card and the raised stamp to allow the stamp to dry. This usually takes one half to one hour. One should be patient and keep checking to see that the stamp is loosening. A blotter inside a cover is a good idea. Be sure to try any method on an inexpensive item in the first instance, or several times to gain confidence and perfect whichever method is best."

Many thanks Ron and Bob! Some great helpful information from two experienced and long-time military postal historians. One caveat: neither can be held responsible for attempts that may go awry!

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The best advice is to be patient, try several methods which are best suited to your purpose, and practice makes perfect. Some of the preceding was paraphrased so future updates may be included if any member feels I may have missed something. Good luck and happy soaking! Ed.]

WHAT HAPPENED TO OUR WOUNDED IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR--By H.M. (Mike) Street

[Mike sent along this information which was sent to his grandparents after his father was wounded in Normandy. Lt. H.M. (Howard) Street was seriously wounded near Caen in late July 1944. He was with the 7th Canadian Recce. Regiment. See NL#154, March 2002, pp. 616-617 and NL#228, July 2017, pp. 1522-1523 as a preview to the following. Ed.]

WHAT HAPPENS TO OUR WOUNDED?

No soldier in the armed forces of the United- Nations is better protected or cared for than the Canadian soldier. When a recruit enlists, he is vaccinated against small-pox, and inoculated against typhoid fever and tetanus or lockjaw. In a warm climate, such as Italy, he is also inoculated against typhoid fever and receives anti-malarial treatment and dusting powder against lice and fleas. Wherever he goes he gets plenty of filtered chlorinated water to drink and a well-balanced diet with plenty of vitamins

In modern warfare, once a wounded man is in the hands of the medical service he can be removed rapidly from the battlefield to a place where the best surgical care and nursing facilities are available, but until the stretcher bearers arrive a wounded man must depend upon what he can do for himself and what can be done for him by his comrades. So important is this first treatment that every Canadian soldier undergoes exhaustive training in "battle first aid" in which he is taught and repeatedly practiced in how to treat wounds and battle injuries with the resources available in his truck, tank or fox-hole and, above all, how to avoid doing irreparable damage by faulty treatment.

A wounded man whose injuries prevent his remaining with his troop will receive appropriate first-aid treatment, be made as comfortable as possible and left in a sheltered place. As soon as the stretcher-bearers can reach the casualty, he will be taken to the Regimental Aid Post where the regimental medical officer can adjust the dressings, give morphia if required and make the patient comfortable. Cases which involve severe shock, extensive burns or serious haemorrhage are rushed to special resuscitation centres where blood plasma and other special facilities for resuscitation are available. All cases not on the danger list are cleared in the ordinary way.

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From the R.A.P., cases able to walk are directed to a collecting centre whence they are taken in empty vehicles to the nearest Casualty Clearing Station. Stretcher cases are taken by bearer relays and/or ambulance to Advanced Dressing Stations where dressings are again adjusted. From the A.D.S. patients are sent to the Main Dressing Station where emergency treatment may be carried out if required. From the M.D.S. patients are taken by a motor ambulance convoy to the C.C.S. for evacuation.

At the C.C.S., cases which can return to their units after treatment and brief rest are separated from cases requiring prolonged hospitalization. These cases are further subdivided into those which can be evacuated without further treatment and those which require emergency operations before being moved further. As soon as possible all cases not returning to units are evacuated by rail, ship and transport aircraft to hospitals on the lines of communication, at the base or overseas to North Africa or England. Many cases of a serious nature are evacuated by air to a hospital where they can receive elaborate care from the outset, thus relieving the pressure of the operating teams at the C.C.S.s.

This system of clearing the battle field of casualties may sound complicated, but actually it is a well-tested, efficient method for shifting wounded swiftly out of the battle, sorting out those in urgent need of attention and giving them priority of treatment and making those whose needs are less urgent as comfortable as possible until they, in their turn, can also receive attention. The period of waiting is accompanied by less distress than might be expected. Nature has endowed man with a protective mechanism in which battle excitement shuts off much discomfort, and shock deadens and numbs the messages which outraged nerves would otherwise clamour into the victim's brain. Coupled with the new wonder drugs for controlling pain, the probability is that a wounded man will have been removed to hospital, operated upon and be on the high road to recovery before distress catches up with him.

Cases likely to see further service in the same theatre of operations are usually hospitalized on the lines of communication or at the base. Cases likely to be protracted or whose outcome is less certain are evacuated to hospitals in England. Cases unlikely to be fit for service for a long time or destined for return to civilian life are returned to Canada. Wherever they are hospitalized, in the field, in England or in Canada, Canadian soldiers are assured of the finest surgical, medical and nursing care.

From the moment a patient enters a general hospital in the field, in England or in Canada, steps are taken to hasten his return to active duty in the field or to full activity in civilian life. Joints, muscles and nerves impaired by injury or disuse are re-educated and strengthened by massage and special exercises administered by trained physiotherapists. Later, the newly won ground is consolidated by occupational therapy which provides purposeful movements of a nature beneficial to the case in question. On discharge from hospital soldiers are sent to re-training centres where they are made fit for military life once more or are prepared to resume their place in civilian life. Vocational training is made available to convalescents in the form of correspondence courses conducted by the Canadian Legion War Services so that men may keep up their morale by improving their minds while their bodies are cured.

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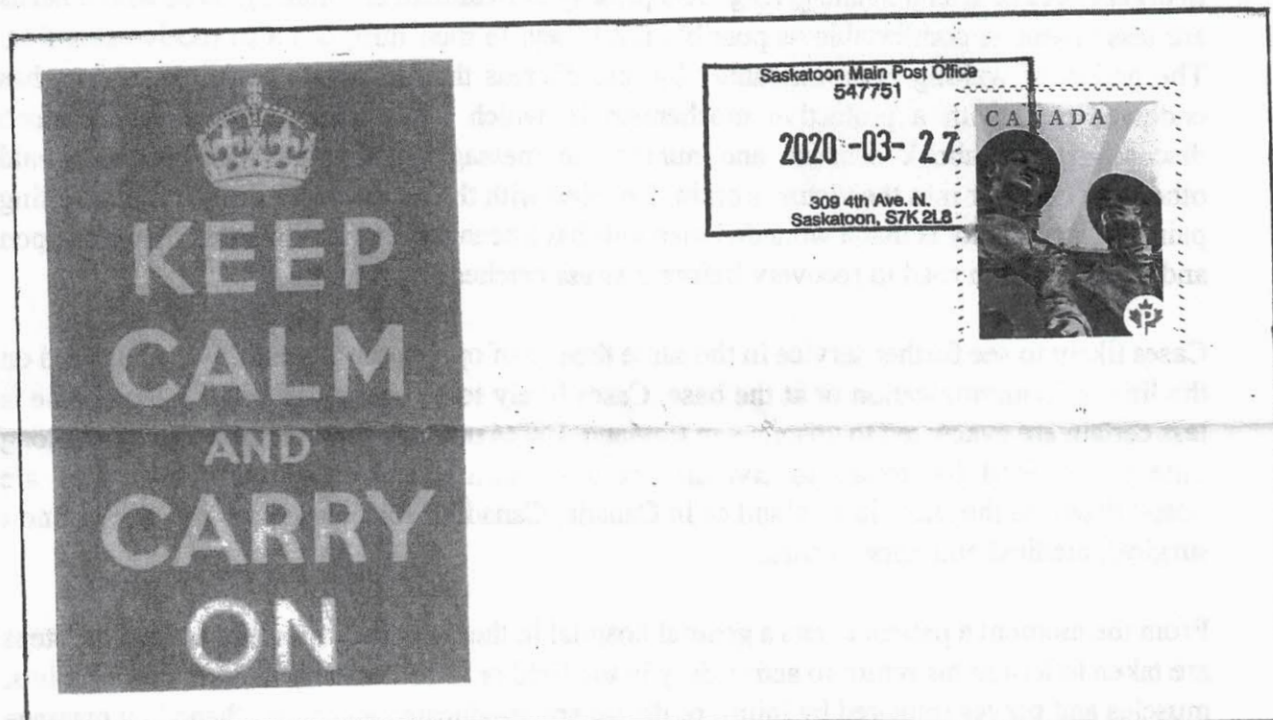
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One more word. In the last war attention was focused on cases of mental disorders which were lumped together as "shell shock". In this war every effort is made to keep persons of low emotional stability, whose nervous system will not stand strain, as far from the front line as possible. Normal individuals will, it is true, exhibit symptoms of nervous distress after prolonged strain and fatigue. This condition is known as "battle exhaustion" and is now simply and effectively treated by a few days of quiet, plenty of food and lots of sleep, followed up by re-training in a "school" near the front, since training amid battle surroundings is an essential part of the cure for battle exhaustion and frayed nerves.

It may be a little while before you hear from a casualty, but you may rest assured that he is in good hands, is receiving the best of care and will write to you as soon as he feels fit enough to write and tell you how well he is being treated and is getting on.

CORONA/COVID-19 PANDEMIC

In light of the current situation the world faces, I thought it appropriate (like collectors before me--Morgan, Guertin, Jagger, Wilsdon,



Daynes, and Malott--admittedly not in their "league") to help to lighten a rather sombre and serious situation we all face with a military/home front message from the Second World War.

Members are no doubt aware of this poster design from Great Britain's Ministry of Information and His Majesty's Stationery Office. The con-

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troversial series of four inspirational posters was created by a team of designers between June and July 1939. Some 2.5 million posters were printed between 23 August and 3 September 1939 in several different sizes but the supplies were not sanctioned for immediate public display. The MOI campaign, rather than being accepted as a morale boost for the general public facing an inevitable national crisis, was viewed more as a dismal failure due to the negative reception of the other posters and the series became tarnished as showing the insidious class divide.

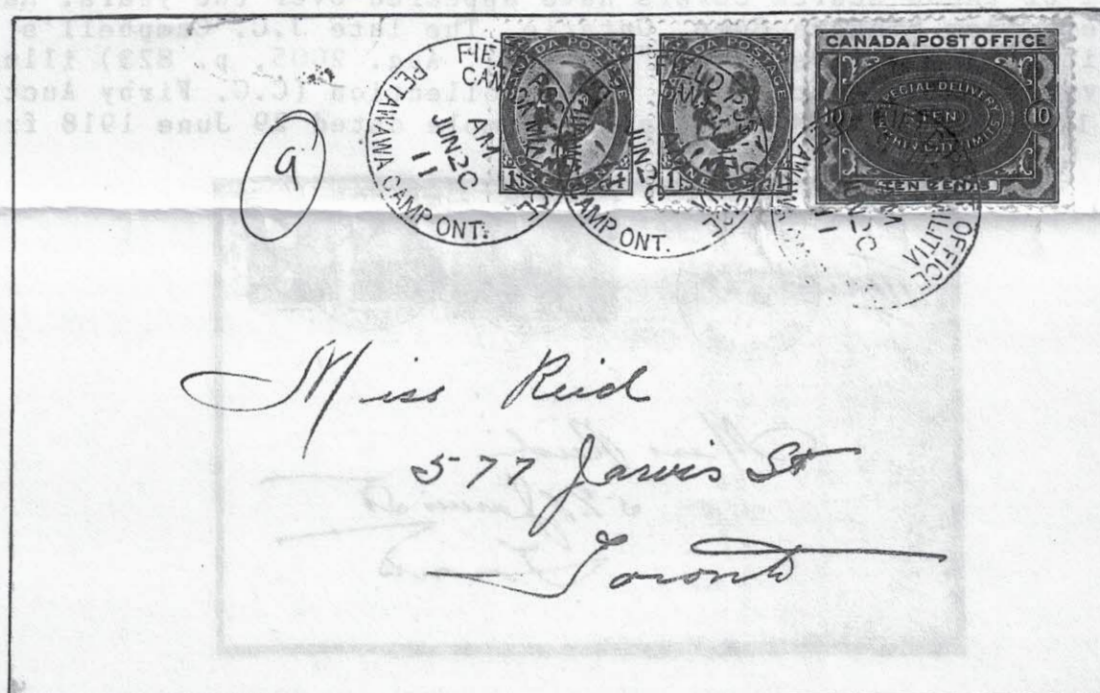
While a few of the posters "escaped" and were publicly displayed, most remained in storage until April 1940 when the vast horde was pulped as part of Britain's massive Paper Salvage campaign. Several long-forgotten stocks surfaced in Scotland in the early 2000's and original posters are very desirable by collectors. Many of the poster themes have been adapted and interpreted with different variations from the 1960's to today. This is 1/4 examples created.

Source

Bonhams, New York. World War II: The 70th Anniversary Sale Catalogue, 29 April 2015.

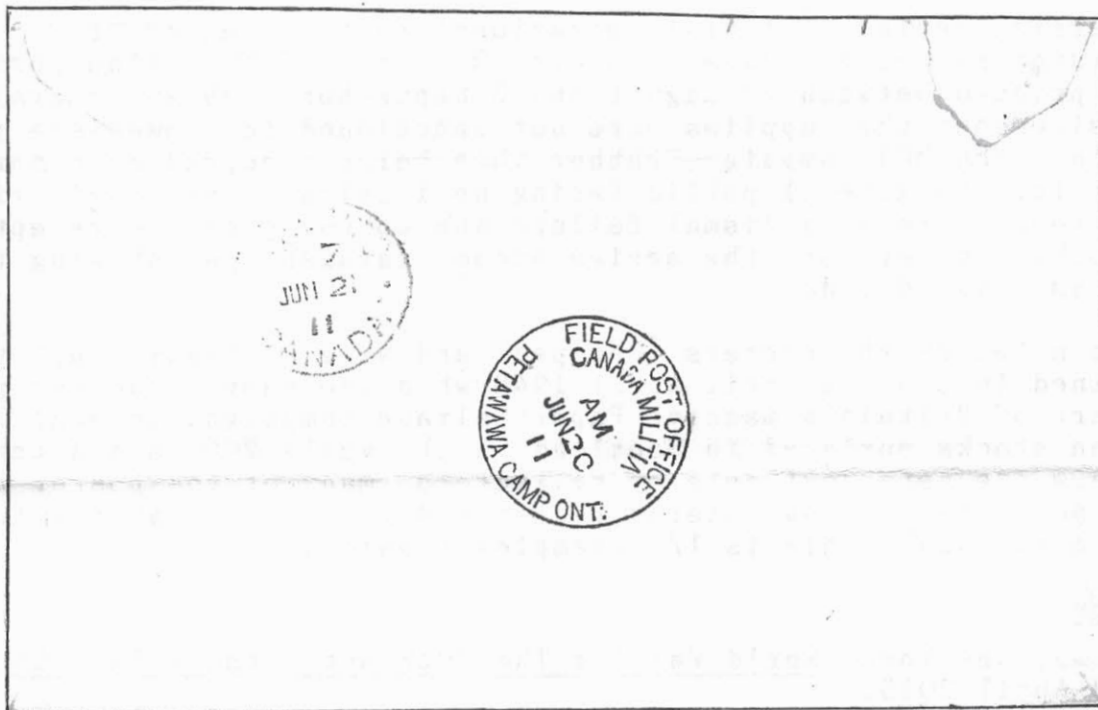
1911 SPECIAL DELIVERY, PETAWAWA CAMP

Special Delivery usage from any of the early Canadian militia camps is scarce. A cursory study appears to find that most (if not all?) of the examples were addressed to "Miss Reid, 577 Jarvis St., Toronto".



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This example was sent from Petawawa Camp, Ontario on 20 June 1911 (a "sister" cover in the same sale was dated 16 June 1911 but with a 2¢ Carmine King Edward VII stamp which a member may have in his/her collection). The cover was backstamped with a Toronto/Canada CDS dated 21 June 1911.

Several of these scarce covers have appeared over the years. Many of them were from Niagara Camp, Ontario. The late J.C. Campbell's "Canada Militia--Special Delivery," (NL#171, Aug. 2005, p. 823) illustrated the cover below from the G.H. Davis Collection (C.G. Firby Auctions, November 16, '92) along with a cropped example dated 29 June 1918 from the London Camp, Ontario.



1659 ☒ #E1,89(2). 10c Blue Green (F) + #89 1c(2) tied by "FIELD POST OFFICE NO.1 CANADA MILITIA JUN 8 11 NIAGARA CAMP ONT" cds to XF cover to Toronto JUN 8 bs. Although Spec Del service was available only in selected cities, Spec Del letters could be sent to any Post Office. A Choice Military cover. P \$150.00

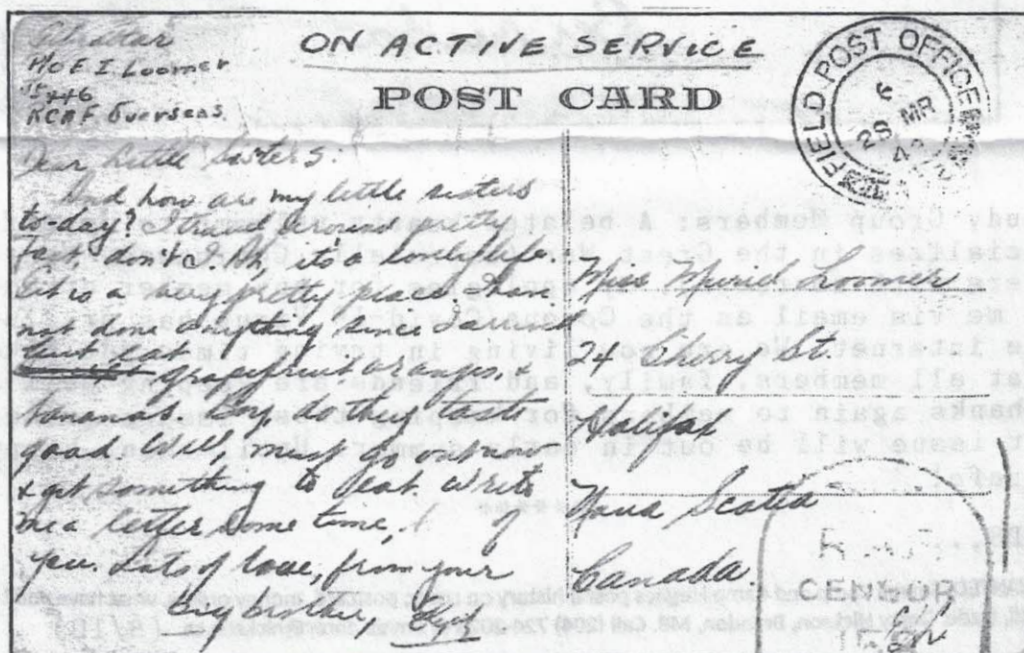
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Another appeared in The Major E.R. Toop Collection of Canadian Military Postal History, Vol. I (Eds. C.R. McGuire and R.F. Narbonne, 1996, p.46) from Niagara Camp, Ontario dated 6 June 1911 (the same cover was illustrated in Bailey & Toop, Vol. I, 1996, p. 33 but with an incorrect caption of "16 June 1911").

Have any of our members done a detailed study on these covers and this unusual usage? Why did the sender send these "suspicious" covers from several camps using this unusual and somewhat expensive method? Presumably the sender or Miss Reid were collectors (the strikes are well done). Did a member of the Canadian Postal Corps send them along? Do members have other camps similarly used other than those from Petawawa and Niagara Camps? Do any of the covers exist with sender's details or enclosures? Please contact the Editor for future attention.

RCAF/RAF GIBRALTAR 1942--By John Watson

Here is a postcard from an RCAF member in Gibraltar in 1942. Presumably he was serving with the RAF. The interesting thing is that this card had free franking (as well as RAF censorship), unlike the Canadian soldiers who were out there. Unfortunately the FPO number is unreadable but I suppose it is a British FPO. [According to Doug Sayles' BNAPS Catalogue of Canadian Military Mail Markings, Vol. II, 2011, pp. 272-273, the RCAF briefly operated a post office (FPO 805) to serve logistical flights to Italy and North Africa but from August 1944-1945. He noted RCAF mail is "rare". Surface mail was very slow so most Canadians paid their mail with stamps for air mail service. Pilot Officer E.I. Loomer's service number with the "J" prefix indicated that he was a trained graduate (1940-1946) of the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan as a commissioned officer. The RAF tombstone censor #158 is associated with Gibraltar.Ed.]



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AIR OBSERVER SCHOOL, MALTON, ONTARIO 1940--By John Watson

Here is a cover from the Air Observer School in Malton, Ontario. This BCATP establishment did not receive its MPO number (#214) until July 1944 so this cover received a Toronto civil post office cancel. To me the interesting thing about this item is that it was sent to the sender's wife or mother [or aunt?Ed.] in Bermuda, so is it reasonable to expect that he is a Bermudan himself, even though he gives his address as "RCAF"? [The service number prefix "R" denotes an airman enlisted as a member of the RCAF Special Reserve from 1939-1946. Any member thoughts?Ed.]



Dear Study Group Members: A belated hearty welcome to Jennifer Denman who specializes in the Great War (especially Christmas, Montreal Bns., and covers with contents). My apologies for any member attempting to contact me via email as the Corona/Covid-19 Virus has precluded me from the internet. We are now living in trying times but Mike and I do hope that all members, family, and friends are keeping well and staying safe. Thanks again to members for keeping these issues going. I suspect our next issue will be out in early summer. Until then, happy collecting and be safe!

SMALL ADS...

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 (8/10)
