

Canadian Military Mail Study Group

NEWSLETTER

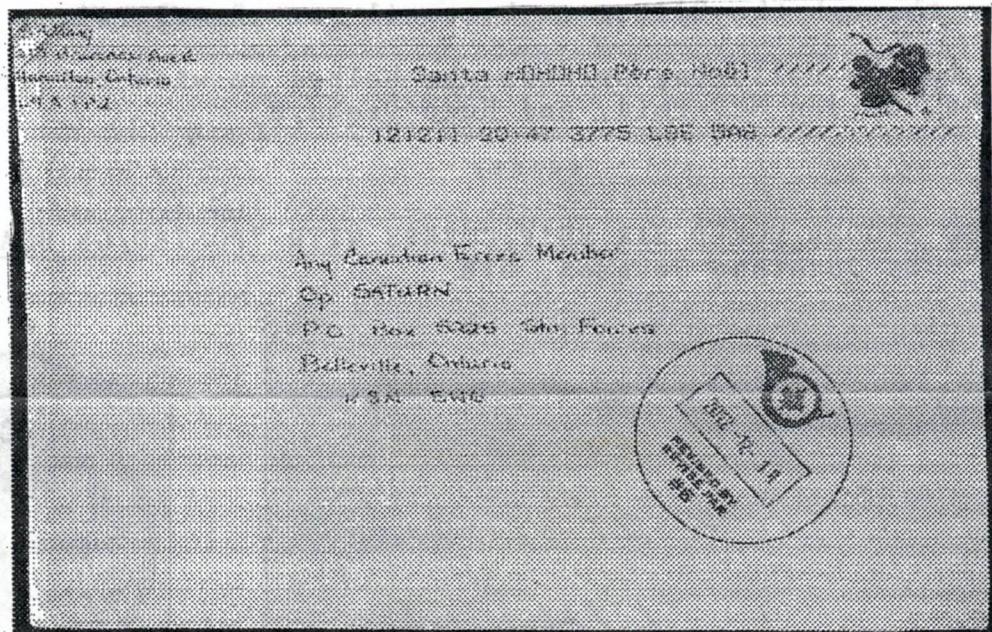
JULY 2020

NEWSLETTER NO. 241

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NEW MODERN POSTMARK FROM THE CANADIAN FORCES POSTAL UNIT (CFPU) -- By R.F. (Reg) Côte

While going through a box of mixed material at a stamp show in Quebec City in 2018 I found an interesting modern cover. It was addressed to "Any Canadian Forces Member", a programme that allows members of the Canadian public to send Christmas wishes to soldiers overseas during the holiday season.



[Cont'd.]

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I contacted colleagues and friends with better knowledge than me in the field of modern military postal history to inquire about the postmark. One suggestion was that perhaps the postmark was some kind of local initiative developed at the CFPU in order to do some kind of quality control of the mail sorting at Belleville.

I decided to raise the matter up a level and in May 2019 wrote directly to the CFPU to get the full story about this postmark. One month later I received an answer from the Commanding Officer of the CFPU, Major P.N. Hancock.

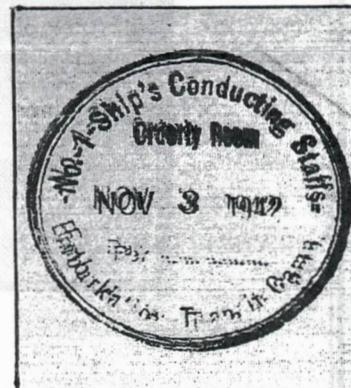
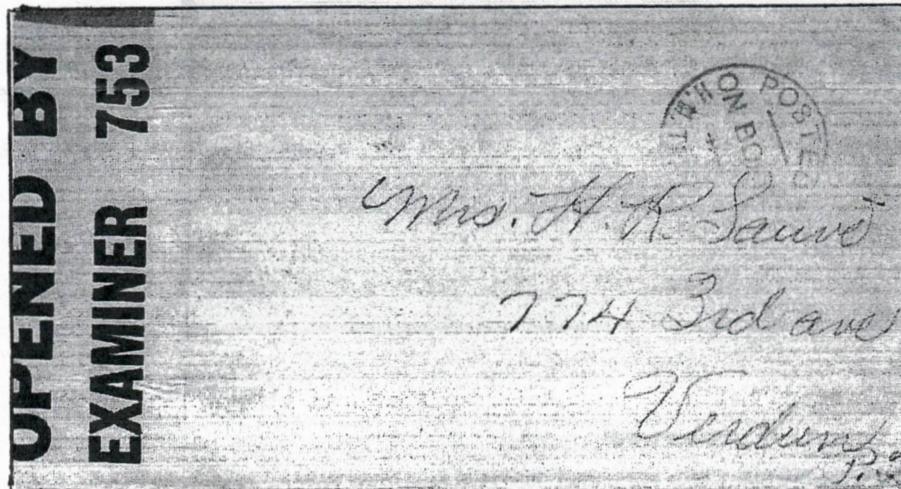
Major Hancock confirmed that the postmark was locally produced. The aim was to pinpoint the responsibility of each postal clerk during mail sorting. Each postmark had a unique number assigned to a postal clerk in order to implement necessary corrective measures if a problem was detected. A total of ten (10) postmarks were produced.

The ten postmarks were used during a rather short period of time in 2012 only. It corresponded with the arrival of a new supervisor at the Mail Distribution section for the Canadian Forces missions overseas. That supervisor left the CFPU in the summer of 2014.

I have only seen the postmark for clerk #6 and would like to hear from any reader who has seen this or any others of the ten issued. Please contact me through the Editor or by email at: rfcote@gmail.com

My thanks to the following persons who helped me with this research: Mike Street, Gordon McDermid, and Hugo Deshaye

IDENTIFYING SECOND WORLD WAR SHIP COVERS WITH "POSTED/ON BOARD/H.M. TRANSPORT"--By Jonathan Johnson, OTB



One of the difficulties I have had researching Second World War naval material is digging through the security of the day. A case in point: "POSTED/ON BOARD/H.M. TRANSPORT" above. There is no date or location.

[Cont'd.]

One can assume H.M. Transport is a troopship but that is not a given. If it was a troopship, the location is probably Halifax, Nova Scotia. The "OPENED BY/EXAMINER 753" postal censor label was applied at Ottawa. What to do next?

Fortunately on the back of this cover is an orderly room cachet "No.-1-Ship's Conducting Staffs-/Embarkation Transit Unit". This unit was based at Halifax Ocean Terminals so now we at least know which port the ship was in. The orderly room date of "NOV 3 1942" also gives us a starting point for detailed research. I think I have heard that before being put in the mail, steam mail posted on a ship about to leave Halifax was held for three or seven days after departure of the convoy, or until the ship arrived at its destination. A while ago I bumped into:

<http://www.convoyweb.org.uk/hague/index.html?search3.php~haguemain> online and thought I would experiment. I clicked Convoy Web, then Arrivals/Departures, then Search (upper right) arriving at:

Port Arrivals/ Departures

Port **January** **01** **1939** **This day** **Submit**

So I filled in "Halifax, November 3, 1942" then clicked Submit arriving at:

Arrivals

Tue Nov 3, 1942	<u>BOTLEA</u>	SH.58
..	<u>ONEIDA</u>	SH.58
..	<u>PANCHITO</u>	SH.58
..	<u>PETER HEUMS</u>	SH.58
..	<u>SANTA MARTA</u>	SH.58
..	<u>WATUKA</u>	SH.58

Departures

No Departures noted

click on ship to show movements

Data supplied by Don Kindell, extracted from the late Arnold Hague's papers by kind permission of Mrs. Gill Hague.

This was not very productive so I went back one step, moved the date back one day then Submitted again. I kept going back until 30 October

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1942 produced:

Arrivals

Fri Oct 30, 1942

EMPIRE CLIVE

FH.11

EMPIRE EVE

FH.11

EVELYN B

FH.11

HARTBRIDGE

FH.11

BAYANO

ON.139

CAIRNVALONA

ON.139

IDEFJORD

ON.139

CONNECTOR

SH.57

COVALT

SH.57

TEAKWOOD

SH.57

Departures

Fri Oct 30, 1942

QUEEN ELIZABETH

AT.28

..

EVELYN B

HS.64

At last a troopship, Queen Elizabeth, sailed Friday, 30 October 1942. Now I clicked Queen Elizabeth which gave me her sailing dates for the entire war. Her convoy number, AT.28, was also provided.

NEW YORK, OCT 5, 1942	AT.25 (NYC-CLYDE)	CLYDE, OCT 11, 1942
CLYDE, OCT 17, 1942	TA.25 (CLYDE-NYC)	HALIFAX, OCT 22, 1942
*HALIFAX, OCT 30, 1942	AT.28 (NYC-CLYDE)	CLYDE, NOV 3, 1942
CLYDE, NOV 8, 1942	TA.28 (CLYDE-NYC)	NEW YORK, NOV 13, 1942
NEW YORK, NOV 24, 1942	AT.29 (NYC-CLYDE)	CLYDE, NOV 29, 1942

Noteworthy is that Queen Elizabeth arrived at Clyde, Scotland (near Glasgow) 3 November 1942, the same day as the orderly room strike on the back of the cover. Out of curiosity I went to the Convoy database and looked up Convoy AT.28 and discovered that it comprised a single merchant ship, Queen Elizabeth, no escorts, and she had 11,000 troops on board.

Convoy AT.28

Depart Halifax on 30 October 1942.

Arrive Clyde on 3 November 1942.

Hague's records contain 1 merchants and 0 escorts

Vessel	Pdt.	Tons	Built	Cargo	Notes
QUEEN ELIZABETH (Br)		85,673	1940		11000 TROOPS

Data supplied by Don Kindell, extracted from the late Arnold Hague's papers with the kind permission of Mrs. Gill Hague.

For those of you who are still reading this...a bonus: If you have a record of this ship sailing from Halifax to Clyde, you may still

[Cont'd.]

paquebot or consignee cover during the war years without identification of the ship, these databases should provide a manageable list of ships that your cover could have been carried on.

Reference: <http://www.convoyweb.org.uk/hague/index.html?search3.php~haguemain>

NEW MODERN POSTMARK FROM THE CFPU ADDENDUM--By R.F. (Reg) Côte

[In transcribing Reg's text I missed the following with apologies. Ed.]

I was in the Canadian Army for over 27 years and on missions a few times. I recall the postal clerk receiving bags full of mail in early December on a couple missions in particular. We were receiving hundreds of letters from Canadians sending wishes for Christmas and the New Year. I personally helped answer many letters when time permitted. Even with that experience, I had never seen such a postmark before.

APO S.5-12 OCTOBER 1918

According to E.B. Proud's History of British Army Postal Service, 1903-



1927 (Vol.II), Stationary Office APO S.5 was located in Paris, France from 22 January 1915 until 2 December 1919 (p.136). Hammer D (temporary double-ring date stamp) usage (p. 135) was 8 September 1918 until 9 October 1918 so this example extends Proud by three days.

Presumably the cover was sent to Vancouver, B.C. by a Canadian; "Master [Cont'd.]

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Earle Dundas" a son or younger brother? John Frith's "Allocation of Field Censor Handstamps-WWI," in A Canadian Military Postal History Anthology (1991) does not indicate a unit connected with Censor CM6/5596. It will take some time to search the Canadian Archives records as there is no indication of the sender. Do members have similar material or information to add to the story?

SECOND WORLD WAR PARCEL RATES AND TAGS: SELDOM-SEEN & STUDIED

Parcel mail bag tags, while commonly used to send gifts and essentials from loved ones on the home front to service men and women overseas, are scarce "survivors" and should deserve more study in the context of military mail collecting. I'm sure that several members study and collect these from Canada's various conflicts and they are an interesting area to pursue.

CAPO #2 of "W" Force, Gander, Newfoundland was in operation from 1 September 1941 to 27 June 1945 (Sayles, p.170; Bailey & Toop/1996 note 7 September, p. 217). Private James Perry was a member of "D" Company, Pictou Highlanders who was the recipient of the parcel which accompanied this mail tag. The Pictou Highlanders were in Newfoundland from 2 March 1943 until 10 September 1943 (Sayles, p.178; B&T, p. 824).

The .84¢ paid the .12¢ per pound (ie. 7 pounds) rate for parcels to CASF personnel serving in Newfoundland and overseas (Bailey, pp. 42-43).



Sapper E.R. Perry, Royal Canadian Engineers (and perhaps brother of James above?), received these two separate parcels through Canadian Military Headquarters, London, England. One is dated 9 August 1943 and bears the Minto, New Brunswick duplex. That parcel weighed 10 pounds and cost \$1.20 (ie. .12¢ per pound).

The other, using the same address, paid the parcel rate of \$1.32 which was the maximum allowable of 11 pounds (ie. .12¢ per pound).

Parcel mail bag tags are often colourful and should be included as important peripheral ephemera in military studies. Although rates were usually static, there were several rate changes which may present a challenge for the collector. Most were initially discarded or the stamps cut off so intact examples are not easily found. Members studying

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these are invited to send examples to the Editor.

\$1.20 Paying The
10 Pound Parcel
Rate

I. G51060

Sgt. E. R. Perry R.C.E.

C.M.H.2.

C.C.O.

C.A.O.



\$1.32 Pay-
ing The
Maximum Al-
lowable
11 Pound
Parcel Rate



References:

Bailey, W.J. "Military Postal Rates", BNA Topics, Vol.54, No.3, Whole No.472 (Third Quarter/Jul.-Sept.), 1997.

Bailey, W.J. & E.R. Toop. Canadian Military Postal Markings. Vol.I. Waterford, MI: C.G. Firby Publications, 1996.

Sayles, C.D. The BNAPS Catalogue of Canadian Military Mail Markings. Vol.II., BNAPS, 2011.

GREAT WAR CASUALTY MAIL-KILLED IN ACTION-FPO 184--By Gordon McDermid*

Private Thomas Roderick McCuaig survived the Battle of Vimy in April 1917 only to be "killed in action" a few weeks later "in the field" on 1 May 1917. A soldier originally from Van Kleek Hill, Ontario, he enlisted at his place of work in 1916 with the 184th Battalion Winnipeg, was sent overseas and eventually into France where he was assigned to the 6th Canadian Infantry Brigade, 27th (City of Winnipeg) Battalion (Ref 1).

After his death, Pte McCuaig's mother and father in Van Kleek Hill saved a large bundle of envelopes from the many letters and notes of condolences received from friends and family far and wide in Canada and the USA in 1917. Recently a friend who had the McCuaig covers passed them to me. The collection includes 62 condolences and two KILLED IN ACTION covers.

Among the many interesting postal aspects of all of the envelopes there were two that might be considered rare - KILLED IN ACTION covers with a number of uncommon military postmarks. Certainly, in my research I have not seen similar covers with the same postal marks.



Figure 1. First KILLED IN ACTION cover returned to the McCuaig family.



Figure 2. FPO 184 cancel

Both of the KILLED IN ACTION (KIA) covers were from Pte McCuaig's parents and had been returned to them in the course of time. The first cover, mailed at Van Kleek Hill, was postmarked 20 April 1917 (Figure 1). On being delivered to its destination at the Field Post Office serving the 27th Battalion in the European Theatre, the cover was back stamped with the rare double ring FIELD POST OFFICE 184 MY 13 17 (Figure 2) cancellation.

[Cont'd.]

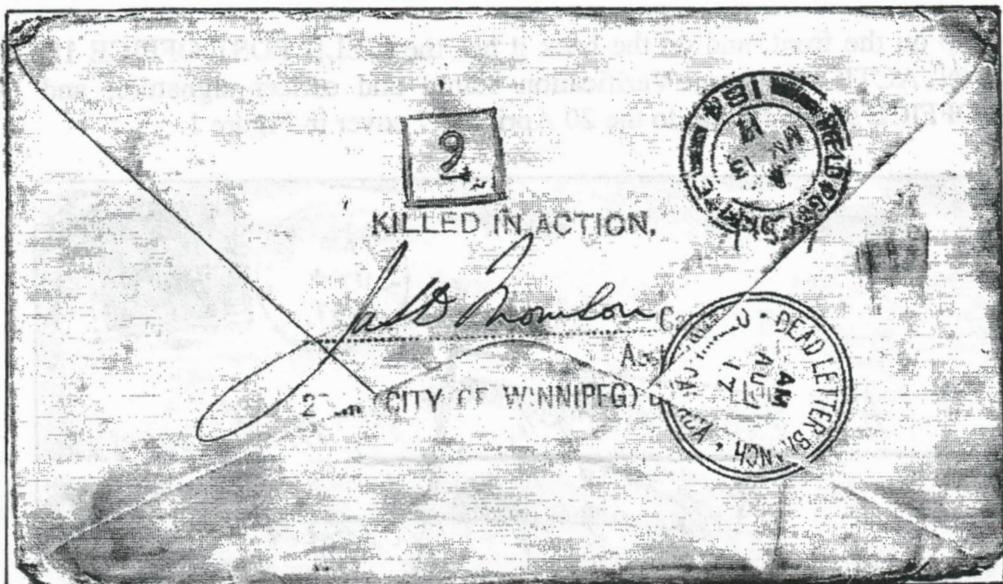


Figure 3. Back of first KILLED IN ACTION cover.

The

front of the cover has the 27th Battalion address pencilled over and manuscript P.T.D. (Postal Tracing Depot) added, along with what appears to be a circled number "31" and a small empty black ink box handstamp. The front was further annotated in manuscript red ink "Killed in action". On the cover back (Figure 3) the death in action was then verified by the clerk small purple ink stamp boxed number 9 and stamped and signed "KILLED IN ACTION (signed JasD Thomson) Capt, Asst Adjutant 27th (CITY OF WINNIPEG) BATTALION".

The letter was then sent back through the army mails to London, England where it was stamped on the front with the rare rectangle 'CANADIAN CONTINGENTS JUN 28 1917 RECORD OFFICE / POSTAL RECD' (Figure 4.). From the London Postal Record Office, the cover was returned to Canada and back stamped with the double ring "DEAD LETTER BRANCH. OTTAWA CANADA AU 1 17". Finally, it was sent back to Pte McCuaig's parents in Van Kleek Hill. The envelope had no return address, so it seems reasonable that the Ottawa Dead Letter Branch ultimately opened the envelope and determined it was from the soldier's home.



Figure 4. London Record office transit mark.

The second Pte McCuaig "KILLED IN ACTION" cover (Figure 5), postmarked Van Kleek Hill May 4 1917, has similar military postal markings to the first cover. Note that the CANADIAN CONTINGENTS RECORD OFFICE / POSTAL RECD. front stamp is in the same format as that shown as M6-9 in the Bailey and Toop *Canadian Military Postal Markings* (Ref 2), whereas the CANADIAN CONTINGENTS RECORD OFFICE / POSTAL RECD. stamp in Figures 1 and 4 has an added fancy line under the word CANADIAN CONTINGENTS and is not recorded by Bailey and Toop. The Figure 5 cover has the initial postal clerk manuscript markings and CANADIAN CONTINGENTS

boxed stamp on the front, and on the back it has the FIELD POST OFFICE 184 stamp; KILLED IN ACTION stamp; Verification stamp and officer signature; and DEAD LETTER OFFICE stamp similar to the 20 April 1917 cover in Figure 1.

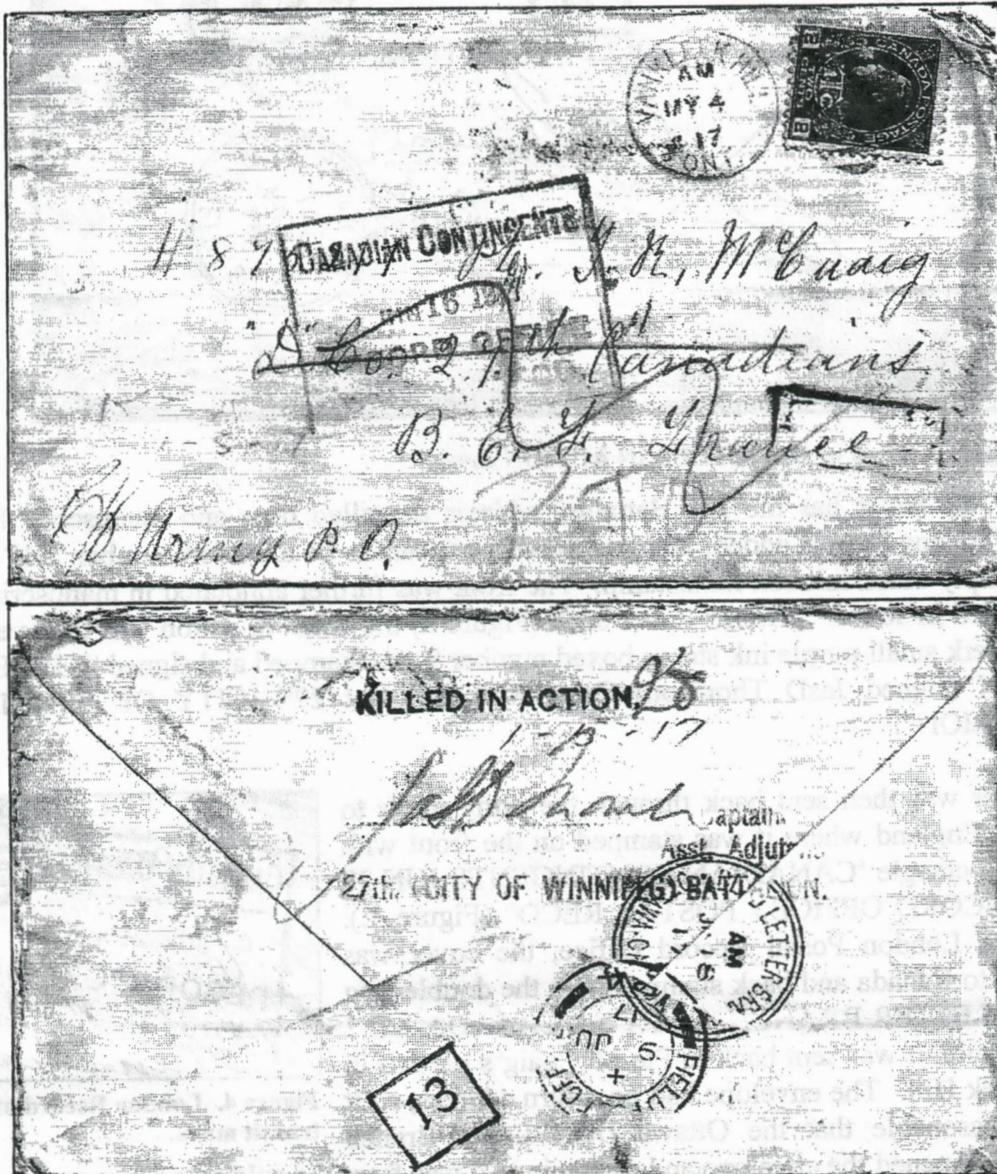


Figure 5, Second KILLED IN ACTION cover returned to the McCuaig family.

The movement and handling of casualty mail like Pte McCuaig's has been described in considerable detail in the *Historical Memorandum of the Canadian Postal Service with the Armies in France, Belgium and Germany 1914-1919*, an official post war document discovered by Lloyd W. Sharpe and published in *BNA TOPICS* from May 1964 thru Dec 1965 (Ref 3). As noted in the Memorandum, postal tracing and redirecting of casualty and killed soldiers mail changed over the course of the war, all with the aim of providing the fastest postal service without unnecessary duplication of handling and with the least

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number of manpower, and in full consideration of the next of kin being notified officially of their loved ones death before mail was returned to them from the field.

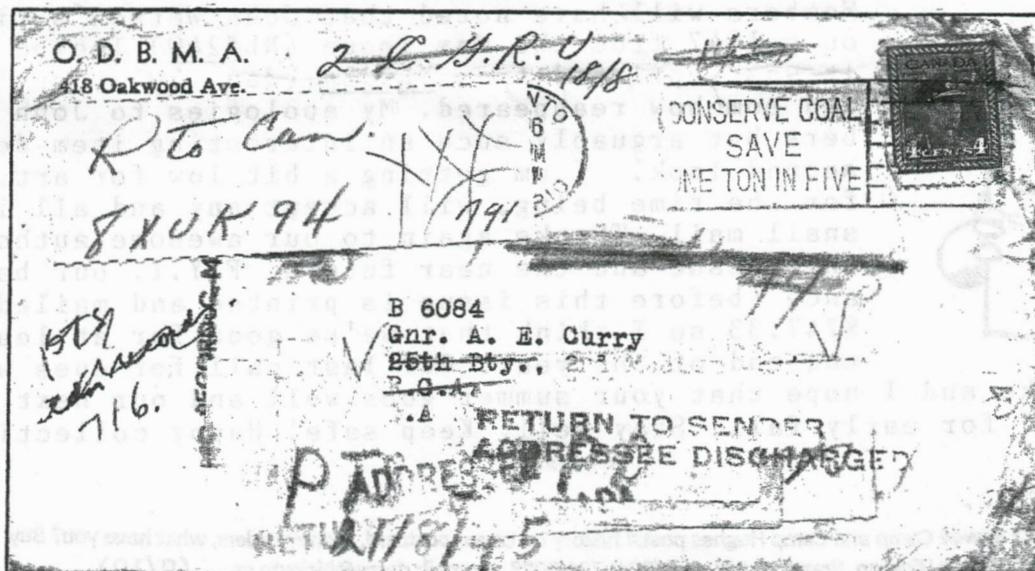
The rarity of FPO 184 cancellations and CANADIAN CONTIGENTS RECORD OFFICE POSTAL RECD. stamps from WW1 is detailed by Bailey and Toop in the publication *Canadian Military Postal Markings*. FPO 184 was operational for a very short period from 1 Feb 1917 to 30 Jun 1917 (Ref 2). Both postal marks are listed as rare, defined by Bailey and Toop as usually less than 10 strikes known. I am not aware if the rating is still valid, but in any event I found these two KILLED IN ACTION covers with the considerable number of Canadian military postal markings which provide a distinct actual narrative of the casualty mail handling during the war to be of special interest in the coverage of postal history.

References

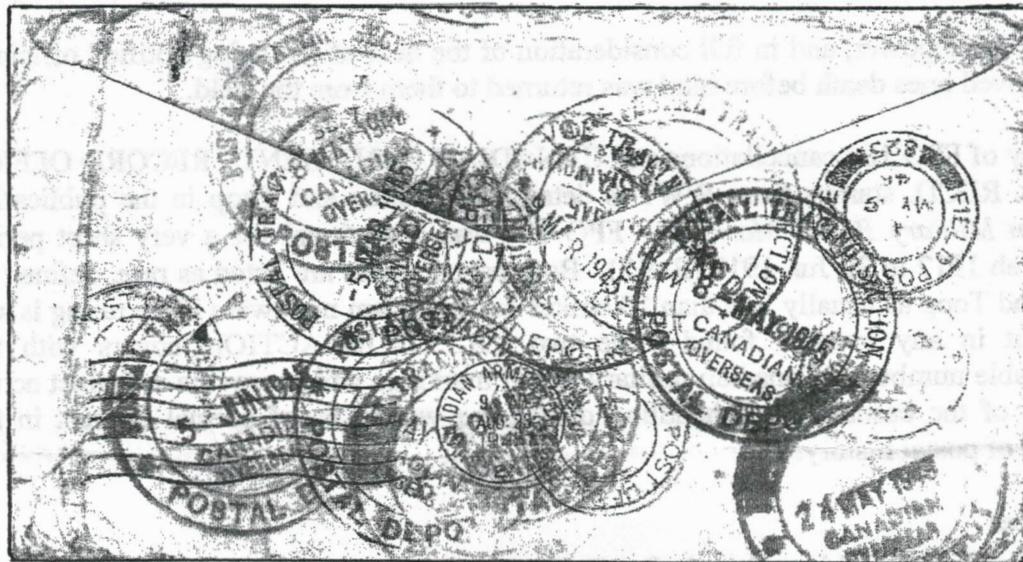
- (1) Library and Archives Canada (LAC) Personnel Records of the First World War
- (2) Bailey and Toop, *Canadian Military Postal Markings, Volume 1* (Firby 1996), pg 73, 74 and 105
- (3) *BNA TOPICS* - Historical Memorandum of the Canadian Postal Service with the Armies in France, Belgium and Germany 1914- 1919, May 1964 thru Dec 1965, contributed by Lloyd W. Sharpe.

[*Guest contributor. 875217, Pte. T.R. McCuaig, 27 Bn., Age 26, is commemorated on the Memorial Register-Vimy Memorial, France (E.H. Wigney, The C.E.F. Roll of Honour. Ottawa: E. Ursual, 1996, p.487). Ed.]

1945 ADDRESSEE RETURNED TO CANADA--By John Watson



[Cont'd.]



This rather tatty cover illustrates a couple of fairly scarce or rare markings: Sayles No.272 "ADDRESSEE/RETURNED TO CANADA" and Sayles No. 335 "RETURN TO SENDER/ADDRESSEE DISCHARGED". There is also a straight-line handstamp "HQ RECORDS C.M..." partially covered by a label. I don't know whether this is a postal marking or not. The reason for the tatty nature of the cover is shown on the reverse, which has a few more scarce markings and an FPO 825 with the No.1 Canadian Neurological Hospital, No.11 Canadian Repat. Depot, Basingstoke, U.K.

* * * * *

Dear Study Group Members: Mike and I hope that all are well and coping with the Corona/COVID-19 pandemic which still continues to plague Canada and the world. Some have said that this may be a time with a silver lining for our hobby with collectors spending "quality time" studying, researching, writing, and finding different ways to collect online.

Members will have noted that John Watson's title item on p.1647 from the May issue (NL#240) looked familiar. It was reprinted from NL#234 (Jan. 2019, pp.1589-1590) and somehow reappeared. My apologies to John and members but arguably such an interesting item deserved a second look! I am getting a bit low for articles and, for the time being, will accept any and all items via snail mail. Thanks again to our awesome authors in this issue and the near future. F.Y.I. our bank balance (before this issue is printed and mailed) is \$747.33 so I think that we're good for at least until the end of the year. Our last call for dues was in hope that your summer goes well and our next issue is early fall. Stay well! Keep safe! Happy collecting!

the end of the year. Our last call for dues was in 2018. Mike and I hope that your summer goes well and our next issue is scheduled for early fall. Stay well! Keep safe! Happy collecting!

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 (9/10)
