



Canadian Military Mail Study Group

NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER 2020

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THE CANADIAN AIR FORCE 1920-1924--By A.D. Hanes

The Canadian Government passed an Act on 6 June 1919 establishing an Air Board to control all flying in Canada. The Air Board prepared the Air Regulations which came into law in January 1920.

The British Government, in June 1919, offered Canada a gift of not more than 100 aircraft (war surplus). The Canadian Government accepted the offer and decided the Air Board should operate the gift aircraft on such civil operations as forestry, photographic survey, and so on. Some members of the Board objected that there was no provision for military flying and it was agreed in 1920 that a training establishment be created at Camp Borden. Known as the "Canadian Air Force" (CAF), its prime purpose would be to provide a refresher training for former wartime pilots. The first flying operations of the new CAF and the Air Board began in the spring of 1920.

In January 1923 a petition was forwarded to King George V requesting that the title "Royal" be conferred on the CAF. This was approved on 15 February 1923. The new designation "Royal Canadian Air Force" was first used in March, although only officially adopted in 1924.

On 31 March 1924 all members of the "old" RCAF were discharged from the force and, on 1 April 1924, the bulk of them were re-appointed or re-engaged in the "new" RCAF; it consisted of 66 Officers and 194 Other Ranks.

A privately-issued cover to commemorate the Canadian Air Force

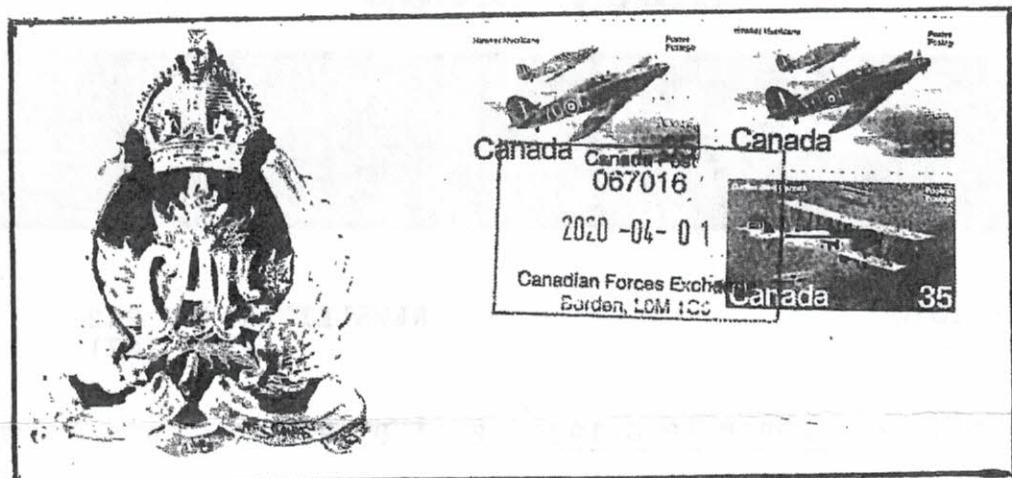
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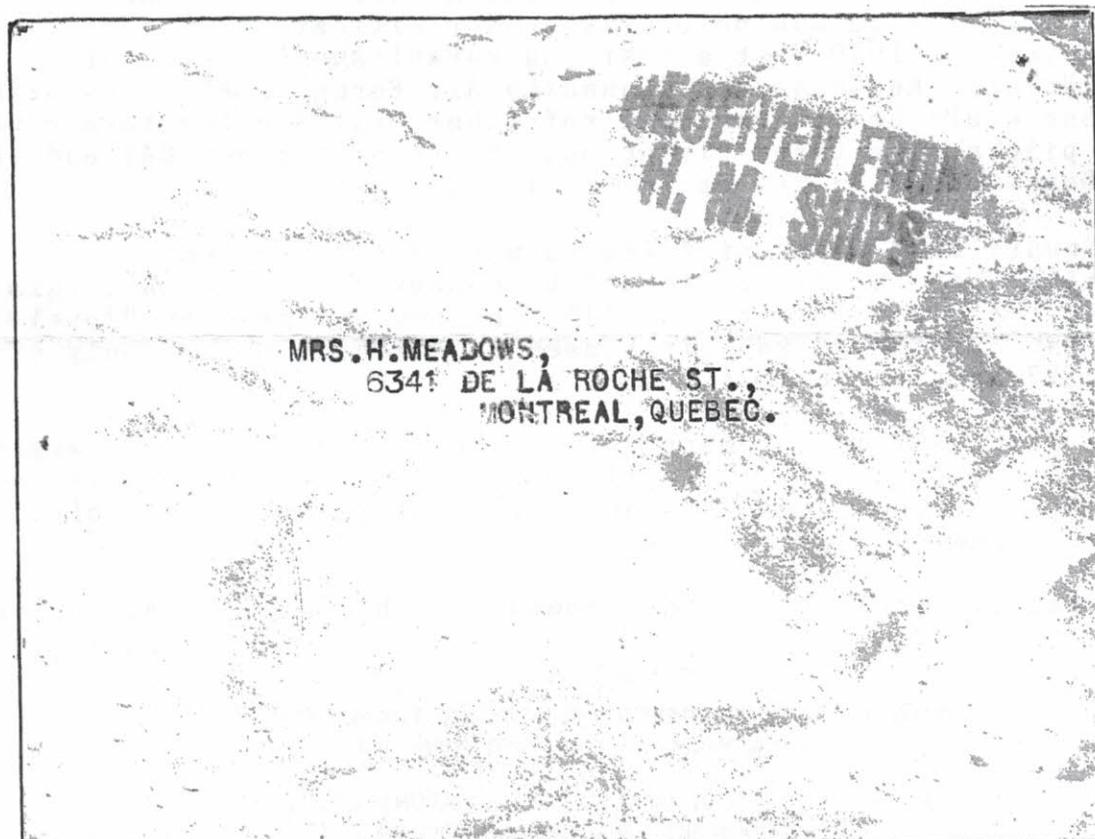
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is illustrated.



NORTH STAR/H.M.C.S. HENRY--By Jon Johnson, OTB

This cover has been in my possession for quite some time. The fact it is addressed to a person in Montreal and has a blue stamp "RECEIVED FROM/H.M. SHIPS" marking really doesn't say much, nor does the censor mark on the back say a great deal or does it?



[Cont'd.]

This pandemic we are in has, in our time of isolation, allowed us to look at our holdings a little more closely. So the question I asked myself was: why is a letter from a naval ship enclosed in a Clarke Steamship envelope? I first thought this letter may have been from a naval rating sailing as a gunner on a D.E.M.S. (Defensively Equipped Merchant Ship). I found this intriguing so I decided to look for an answer and, with COVID-19 giving extra time on my hands, came up with the following story.

In 1929 the Canadian National Steamship Company, a subsidiary of Canadian National Railway, ordered three luxury passenger ships from Cammell Laird of Birkenhead, England to service the British Columbia coastline and cities in the United States. They were named Prince Robert, Prince David, and Prince Henry after past and present presidents of the C.N.R. The ships were launched in 1930.



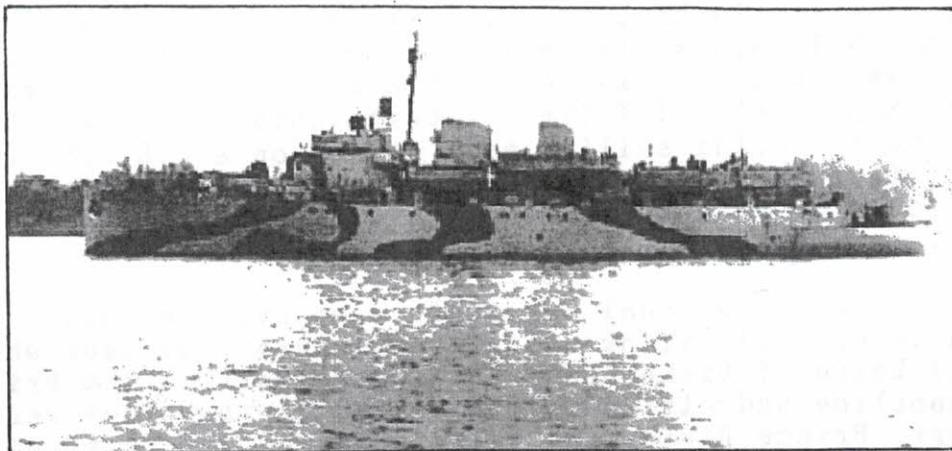
S.S. Prince Henry/North Star prior to conversion; Photograph by Walter E. Frost

In 1937 the Prince Henry was chartered to the Clarke Steamship Company of Montreal and purchased outright by that company in 1938 and renamed North Star. The Royal Canadian Navy (R.C.N.) had their eyes on these three ships and in 1939 acquired them at a cost of more than \$700,000 each for the Prince Robert and Prince David and more than \$800,000 for the North Star (Prince Henry). Upon purchase the North Star was given back its original name and became H.M.C.S. Prince Henry and immediately underwent conversion to an armed merchant cruiser. The work was done by the Vickers Shipyard of Montreal at a final cost of \$815,900. The Prince Henry was commissioned on 4 December 1940. [See the following illustration. Ed.]

And now for the cover. The North Star was the only ship requisitioned by the navy from the Clarke Steamship Company in 1939. In doing so, stationery must have been left aboard and the letter was written by a naval personnel on board as part of the supervising crew overseeing the conversion. The censor date is 23 August 1940. That indicates the ship was still in the Vickers dockyard undergoing the conversion process. All this put together leaves no doubt the cover was written

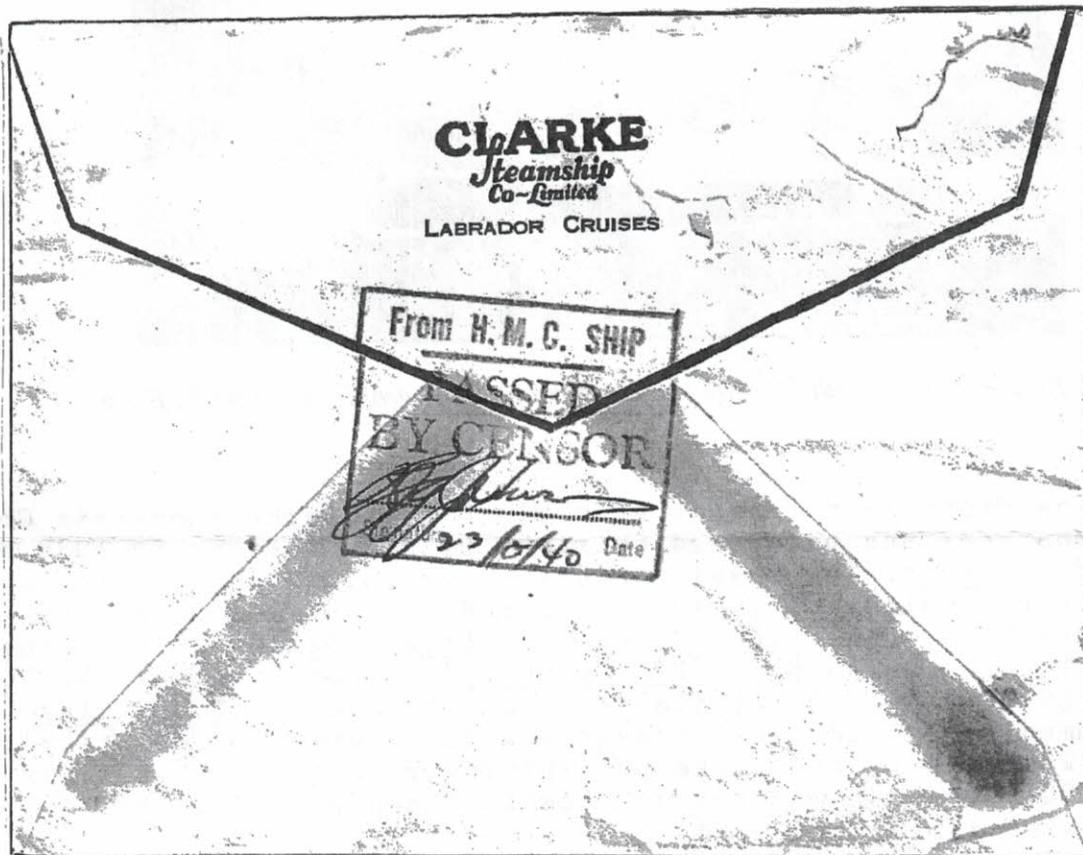
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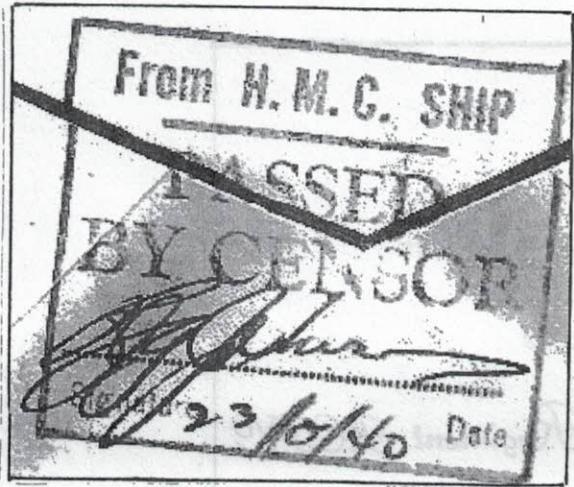
*S.S. North Star / H.M.C.S. Prince Henry after conversion
From the Royal Canadian Navy Project "For Posterity's Sake"*

aboard and came from the Prince Henry.

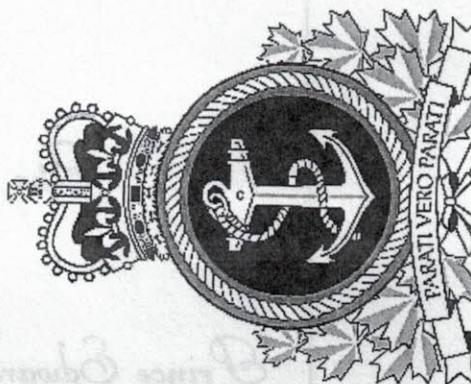


As an armed merchant cruiser the ship took part in the sinking of two German merchant ships and escorted convoys in the Aleutians campaign. The ship then returned to Canada to be converted to a landing ship for infantry and took part in the invasion of Normandy. The ship also took part in the invasion of southern France. The

[Cont'd.]



H.M.C.S.



ship finally returned to Great Britain where she was paid off by the Royal Canadian Navy and loaned to the Royal Navy. After the war the ship was taken over by the Ministry of War transport and renamed Empire Parkeston. In 1956 she landed troops in Port Said during the Suez Crisis. The Empire Parkeston was taken out of service in 1961 and sold to be broken up for scrap in 1962.

All that from a nondescript cover!

References

City of Vancouver Archives; Photo by Walter E. Frost.

Clarke Steamship Company: Fleet List--Passenger Ships.

Tucker, Gilbert Norman, Ph.D. The Naval Service of Canada: Its Official History, Volume II. Ottawa: King's Printer, 1952.

Wikipedia: H.M.C.S. Prince Henry

THE P.E.I.
REGIMENT,
R.C.A.C.
SEASONS'
GREETINGS
(Q.E.II-ERA)



THE PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND REGIMENT
RCAC

[Cont'd.]

*The Commanding Officer
and Officers
Prince Edward Island Regiment RCAC
Extend Best Wishes for
Christmas and The New Year*

Armouries,
Charlottetown, P.E.I.

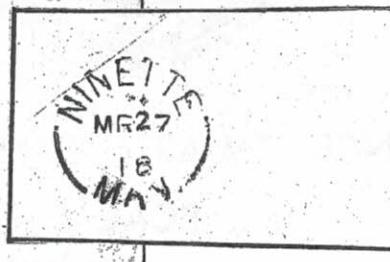
...WE WILL REMEMBER THEM 1918--Robert Henderson

On His Majesty's Service.

Mrs. J. Nicholson,
Ninette,
Manitoba,
CANADA.



[Bob sent along this interesting and timely example of the protocol endured by family members upon the passing of a Canadian in the Great War. According to E.H. Wigney's The C.E.F. Roll of Honour (1996, p.566), Private Alexander Nicholson, age 25, was killed-in-action on 26 October 1917. He is buried in the Menin Gate Memorial, Belgium. A rectangular "Director, Medical Services/CANADIAN CONTINGENT" marking is shown. Ed.]



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K

TELEPHONE:
MUSEUM 4470.

TELEGRAM & CABLE ADDRESS:
"CANESTA, OX, LONDON"

OVERSEAS MILITARY FORCES OF CANADA.

"ESTATES"

IN YOUR REPLY

YOUR REPLY SHOULD BE ADDRESSED THUS:-

PLEASE QUOTE

25-N-490.
THE FOLLOWING REFERENCE:- E. 6318.

OFFICER I/C ESTATES, CANADIANS.

PEMBROKE HOUSE, 133 OXFORD ST.,

LONDON, W. 1,

Mrs. J. Nicholson,
Ninette, Manitoba,
CANADA.

March 6th. 1918.

Madam:-

No. 859706. Pte.
Nicholson, A.,
43rd. Battalion.

Deceased.

With reference to the estate of the late soldier noted in the margin, I am directed to acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 2nd January last, and to inform you that so far no personal effects have been recovered, but it is quite possible some may turn up later. If any should be received they will be forwarded to the Officer i/c Estates, Militia Headquarters, Ottawa, Canada, who is distributing this estate, and to whom please address any further enquiries.

I add for your information that a period of six months from date of death is generally allowed to elapse before the estates of deceased soldiers are distributed.

Yours faithfully,

Allen Hutchinson
Lieut.

For. Officer i/c Estates. OMFC.

Y/ID.

CANADA POST'S 2020 WAR ARTIST/REMEMBRANCE

Many have argued for an annual issue commemorating Remembrance Day. The 2020 "Trenches on the Somme" (1919) by artist Mary Riter Hamilton (1867-1954) will hopefully be the beginning of an annual stamp issue for 11 November.

Coincidentally, I recently viewed a television programme featuring the story and artwork of the artist by the War Amps of Canada.



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1944 ARGENTINA TO RCAF F/O ASHER--By William Pekonen

I found an interesting registered cover mailed from Buenos Aires, Argentina to an RCAF Flying Officer J.J. Asher, J27656 on 19 December 1944. The rate was 1.25 pesos paid by the 25 centavos Agriculture stamp plus the 1 peso Letter and Airplane stamp. The black registration label shows the serial number in a bright red colour. Most of the registration labels from Argentina are only black in colour.

The envelope is addressed to the Royal Bank of Canada in Toronto, Ontario, and then ultimately forwarded to Victoria, British Columbia. This letter appears to be personal mail. Another letter mailed a few days later was addressed to Mr. & Mrs. J.J. Asher at a Victoria, B.C. address.

The cover was mailed in Buenos Aires on 19 December 1944, arriving in Miami, Florida on 24 December, and in Toronto 27 December, and forwarded to Ottawa on 28 December. It was then sent back to Toronto where it received the 29 December DUTY FREE stamp. The cover was redirected to Victoria, B.C. A blackout cancel was applied on 30 December.



A Bermuda censor label is attached to the cover after examination by Examiner D/B C.544 (a low number) [D/B is the Censor Station Letter Code for Canada. Ed.]. The cover was most likely flown by Panagra from Buenos Aires to Miami and Bermuda. The route to Toronto is not clear. At a guess, it was flown by Pan American Airways. The cover was probably flown by Trans-Canada Airlines to Victoria.

I am not sure about Flying Officer J.J.'s connection to the Toronto

[Cont'd.]

bank. Was the sender J.M. Asher a man or woman and why was that person in Buenos Aires at that time? There were many German immigrants living in Argentina for many years before the Second World War. Some of the Nazi war criminals also sought future refuge or fled to Argentina before the war ended. [The correspondence appears to be family-related with similar surnames. I recall a holding of correspondence owned by the late J. Don Wilson, OTB from South America to Canada which was mining-related. Can members shed light on this cover, the sender or recipient? Ed.]



Of further interest is the inside security printing on the inner surface of the envelope. This envelope is unusual for the reason that the inner surface is almost all covered by an intermingling leaf pattern except for the VIA AEREA printed in the LL corner of the envelope. That design is obscured by the violet coloured VIA AEREA rubber stamp imprint. Many different inner surface patterns are shown on air mail covers from envelopes printed in South America and in Europe.

Perhaps members can explain why this cover went to the different post offices and provide more information on F/O Asher.



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THE CANADIAN RESERVE CAVALRY REGIMENT CHRISTMAS 1917/NEW YEAR 1918

CANADIAN RESERVE CAVALRY REGIMENT.

Royal Canadian Dragoons.

Lord Strathcona's Horse (R.C.).

Fort Garry Horse.

Canadian Light Horse.

CHRISTMAS, 1917.

NEW YEAR, 1918.

With the Best of Good Wishes

for

Christmas and the New Year.

THE CANADIAN SCOTTISH REGIMENT (PRINCESS MARY'S) CHRISTMAS/NEW YEAR
GREETINGS (QEII-ERA)



The Canadian Scottish Regiment originated in 1912 as the "Victoria Fusiliers". The regimental motto, "DEAS GU GATH" translates to "READY TO STING".

Major Battle Honours include Vimy Ridge, Pursuit to Mons, France and Flanders 1915-18, Normandy Landing, The

Best Wishes for Christmas

and the New Year

from

Rhineland, N.W. Europe
 1944-45. It is head-
 quartered in Victoria,
 B.C.

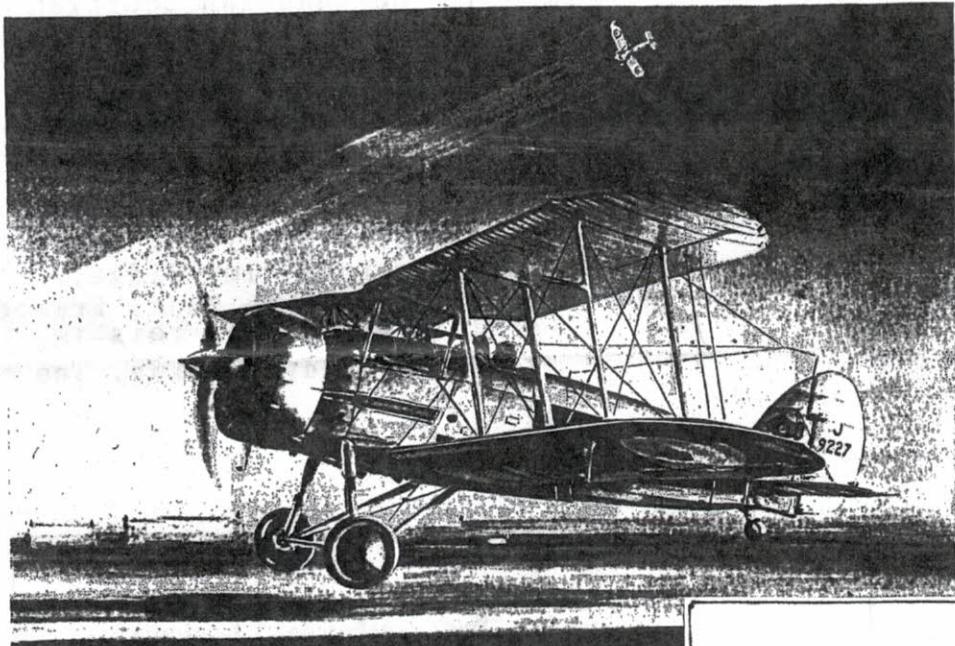
Source: Morris, David A.,
 CD. The Canadian Militia:
From 1855--An Historical
Summary. Erin, ON: The
 Boston Mills Press, 1983.

The Canadian Scottish Regiment
(Princess Mary's)
Regimental Officers' Mess
Victoria, B.C.

Dear Study Group Members: Mike and I want to wish you a very Merry Christmas and an equally Happy New Year and 2021! We all hope that the COVID-19 pandemic will be curtailed so that we can get back to some normalcy. FYI our bank balance currently sits at \$542.33 (before this issue is printed/mailed), so we will be requesting dues again in the Spring of 2021 (our last call was in 2018). Please do not send in dues prematurely as details need finalizing. On a personal note I was very surprised and honoured to receive the BNAPS "Lifetime Achievement Award" which, I presume, was partly affiliated with the editorship of the CMMG Newsletter. Thank you to all members for their support, kind remarks, and articles! The cupboard is now bare so please keep sending fillers/articles/want ads etc. for future issues. Until the new year, please stay safe, keep well, good collecting and have a wonderful upcoming holiday season! Until 2021.....

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"HAPPY LANDINGS" FOR CHRISTMAS FROM THE SECOND WORLD WAR--By Robert Henderson



HAPPY LANDINGS!

A Happy Christmas
and a Bright New Year
to follow

FROM

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: Great War covers/cards/Xmas cards etc. connected with Saskatchewan
regiments; the P.P.C.L.I.; and R.N.W.M.P. Cavalry Drafts. Contact The Editor at
blueputtees@hotmail.com (1/5)

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 (10/10)
