



# OTTAWA DEAD LETTER OFFICE HANDSTAMPS



## Plan: Frame

- 1 - 1872 to June 30, 1898
  - Split Circle Handstamps
  - Closed Circle Handstamps
  - Closed Circle RECD
  - Number Handstamps
  - Shift Markings
  - Superintendent PO Handstamps
- 2 - After Decentralization  
July 1, 1898

### **Ottawa Branch Office:**

- 2 - Small Steel Circle
- 2 - Oval
- 2 - Large Circle & Rubber Circle
- 3 - Rectangle
- 5 - Advice Markings
- 5 - Return Letter Envelope Handstamps
- 5 - Wax Seal Handstamps

### **1868 Precursor >>**

With Confederation in 1867, a new Post Office Department was created but Dead Letter Office handstamps were not produced until the early 1870's.

At right is an only known 1868 precursor of later printed Dead Letter Return envelopes with manuscript instructions for un-paid letters.

April 29 1868 un-paid letter  
**RETURNED-FOR / POSTAGE**  
examined for name and address to return to sender.

## **Purpose:**

The exhibit shows the evolution of **Ottawa Dead Letter Office (DLO) handstamps** from 1872 up to 1950 before the use of Undeliverable Mail Office handstamps.

## **Treatment:**

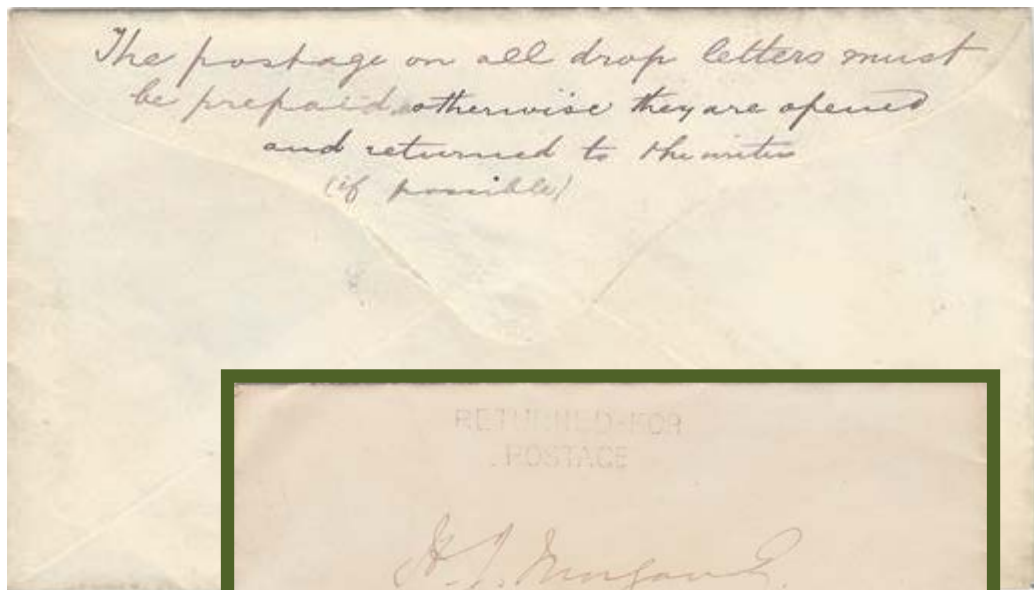
Exhibit begins in **Ottawa** when the **Canadian Dead Letter Office/Branch** was located only in **Ottawa** up to decentralization on July 1<sup>st</sup> 1898.

It continues with the **Ottawa Branch DLO Office** in 1898 onward until a major Post Office reorganization was made in the late 1940's. This resulted in the use of the words: **Dead Letter Office, D.L.O. and Bureau des Rebut**s no longer being used.

The Dead Letter Office received and treated mail matter that could not be forwarded to its final destination. This included mail addressed for delivery in Canada, mail posted outside of Canada and addressed for delivery in Canada, and Canadian mail originally addressed to foreign countries then returned because it bore insufficient forwarding information.

## **Structure:**

**Items are usually listed by type, dimensions, lettering including periods, commas and dashes.** This will result in a general chronological order, but not for every item. The listing for each item includes the lettering of the handstamp and indicia, major and subtype of handstamp, dimensions, important variations as compared to similar handstamps, if a strike proof was taken and importance such as Previously Unknown, Only Known Copy (**OKC**) or Earliest (**ERD**) and Latest (**LRD**) reported dates of use. Throughout the exhibit are numerous previously unknown, unreported, earliest and latest reported dates discovered by the exhibitor.



Significant items:



## EXHIBIT HIGHLIGHTS

1868 Precursor OKC of DLO Return envelopes, pre-handstamp era – Frame 1 Page 1

Earliest reported Shift marking – Frame 1

**Earliest reported Superintendent's Office Oval handstamp – Frame 2**

Earliest reported & latest reported Chief Superintendent Oval handstamp after decentralization, Frame 2

OKC Received Double Circle Ottawa handstamp – Frame 2

Ottawa Double oval OKC on 1920 Admiral cover to Gambia – Frame 2

1st printing of DLO return envelope after decentralization in Ottawa. - Frame 5

Earliest reported DLO Wax Seal used after Decentralization period, - Frame 5

## RESEARCH

Throughout the exhibit are numerous previously unknown, unreported, earliest and latest reported dates discovered by the exhibitor. To prepare this exhibit extensive original study, cataloguing and listing to determine variations in types, size, lettering, hyphenation and dates were used. Some hammers will be seen out of chronological order due to the fact many covers carry multiple DLO handstamps that originated in different time periods or were used over a substantial time frame.

## STRUCTURE

The listing for each item includes the lettering of the handstamp and indicia, major and subtype of handstamp, dimensions, important variations as compared to similar handstamps, if a strike proof was taken and importance such as Previously Unknown, Only Known Copy (OKC) or Earliest (ERD) and Latest (LRD) reported dates of use.

### OTTAWA DLO 1872 to 1898 Decentralization

DLO handstamps did not show having been used until the early 1870's. The five main types of handstamps for this period were:



Split Circle Handstamp



Closed Circle Handstamp  
Office and Branch



Closed Circle RECD Numbered  
Office and Branch

A small number of Split Circle Handstamps, with varieties in size and markings placed in the hammers, began to appear in the early 1870's. The first Closed Circle Handstamps appeared in 1880 with the Split Circle Handstamps continuing in use. The Closed Circle RECD (Received) Handstamps with numbers 1 through 6 were used in conjunction with the other handstamps from 1882 onward to indicate receipt of a postal item.



Shift markings - Circle and Diamond



Superintendent Oval

Two other subtypes of handstamps shown are the Shift Marking Circle used from 1878 up to the late 1880s, and the Shift Marking Diamond that appeared in the 1880s and were used until decentralization of the Ottawa DLO into separate Branch Offices across the country on July 1, 1898. Also shown is the Superintendent Oval handstamp used on undeliverable items of a fraudulent nature or of value that required inspection.

## DEAD LETTER OFFICE

AP 15

1876

— CANADA —

21mm diameter

Arcs 2.5mm wide  
without dots  
separating  
upper wording

Split Circle Handstamp

LATEST REPORTED DATE

Proof Strike



Un-paid cover as assumed (Free) when addressing  
'Clerk of the Peace' RETURNED -FOR / POSTAGE  
and sent to the Ottawa Dead Letter Office



Wingham, Huron Co. Ont. AP 1 1876 to Goderich AP 18 1876

File #1826

Triple weight cover 3 x 3 cents = 9 cents ( Large 9 ) received from sender as address  
Is recognizable on the cover, delivered on AP 18 1876 in Goderich, Ont.

Scan 60%

Two types of arcs exist: solid arcs and dotted arcs.



## DEAD • LETTER • OFFICE

MAY 5

1876

— CANADA —

21mm diameter

Arcs 2.5mm wide

with dots  
separating  
upper wording



Proof Strike

Split Circle Handstamp

EARLIEST REPORTED DATE



Cornwall, Ont. MR 15 1876 to Hamilton,, 2 ring numeral UNCLAIMED  
sent to Ottawa DLO MY 5 1876

## DEAD • LETTER • OFFICE

FE 18

1879

— CANADA —

23mm diameter

Arcs 2.5mm wide

Dots separating  
upper wording



Scan 60%



Two types of arcs exist: solid arcs and dotted arcs.

## DEAD • LETTER • OFFICE

MY 9

1887

— CANADA —

23mm diameter

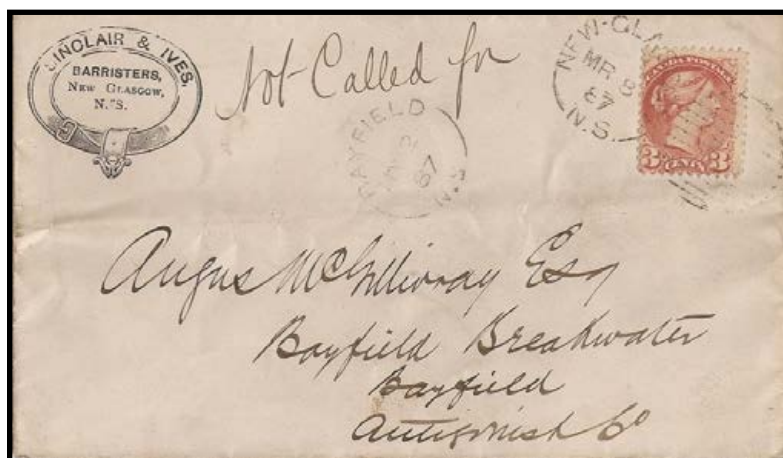
Arcs 4mm wide  
with dots  
separating  
upper wording

Scan 60%



Proof Strike

>>>



Split Circle Handstamp



New Glasgow, N.S. MR 8 87 to Bayfield, N.S. MR 9 87 'Not Called for' held till MY 2 87 then sent to Ottawa DLO as per received handstamp MY 7 87 opened and returned MY 9 87

## DEAD • LETTER • OFFICE

JU 5

1888

..... CANADA.....

EARLIEST REPORTED DATE

23mm diameter

Scan 60%

5 dotted arcs  
4mm wide  
with dots separating  
upper wording



>>>



Proofed FE 1 1883

Note circular Shift  
marking 20mm:

D L O 2 ✕



UNCLAIMED and Advertised in the U.S. charged 1 cent postage due, not collected

## DEAD • LETTER • OFFICE

MY 17

1882

— CANADA —

Split Circle Handstamp

LATEST REPORTED DATE

VV

25mm diameter

Arcs 2.5mm wide

EARLIEST REPORTED DATE  
of **REC'd '1'** 1mm wide  
handstamp  
MY 16 / 82

>>>



Distance 'CANADA'  
18mm same as:  
Proof Re-Cut  
JY 28/1880



Toronto, Canada MAY 6/82 letter NOT - CALLED - FOR sent to DLO MY 16 82  
examined and forwarded to addressee on MY 17 1882.

## DEAD • LETTER • OFFICE

JA 8

1879

— CANADA —

PREVIOUSLY UNREPORTED

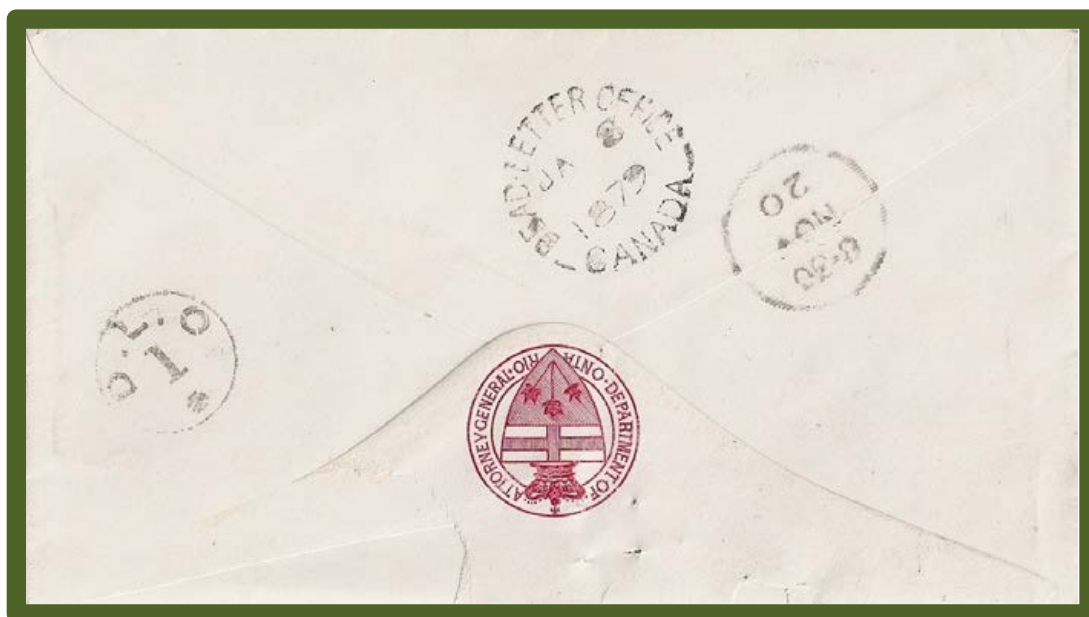
25mm diameter

Arcs 3mm wide

This handstamp could be  
confused with the previous  
one, the arcs are shorter  
and the distance between  
C-A in CANADA 17mm  
instead of 18mm

Manuscript on front:  
**'Rec'd from/Dead Letter/'**  
Office 9 May 79'

No proof known



Toronto, Ont. NO 19,79 letter NOT CALLED FOR gateway on front,  
DLO shift marking D.L.O 1 and received JA 8 1879.  
Delivered to addressee four months later.



## DEAD • LETTER • OFFICE

OC 25

1881

— CANADA —

25mm diameter

Arcs 4mm wide



Proof Strike

Scan 60%

RETURNED  
FOR  
POSTAGE

Gateway marking



EARLIEST REPORTED DATE



Quebec, Canada Oct,81 3 cent US stationery envelope to New Jersey;  
RETURNED FOR POSTAGE; to DLO (file #397) OC 25 1881 paid NO 2,81 by 3¢ Small Queen.

## DEAD • LETTER • OFFICE

MY 19

1897

— CANADA —

25mm diameter

Arcs 4mm wide

Note period of  
16 year usage

Scan 70%



“Old Stamps” “⊗”

Boxed Handstamp:

RETURNED FOR 3¢  
DEFICIENCY POSTAGE



Montreal cover with re-used stamp, “Old Stamps” marked with “⊗” to show non-payment, sent to DLO  
MY 19 1897, received and examined by DLO Superintendent MAY 20 1897 (oval)

**DEAD • LETTER • OFFICE**

**JA 15**

**1872**

**– CANADA –**

**Split Circle Handstamp**

25mm diameter

Arcs 5mm wide



No proof known

Indianapolis, Ind. to Woodstock, Ontario, RETURNED FOR / BETTER DIRECTION via Hamilton to Dead Letter Office in Ottawa JA 15 1872

**DEAD • LETTER • OFFICE**

**AP 27**

**1874**

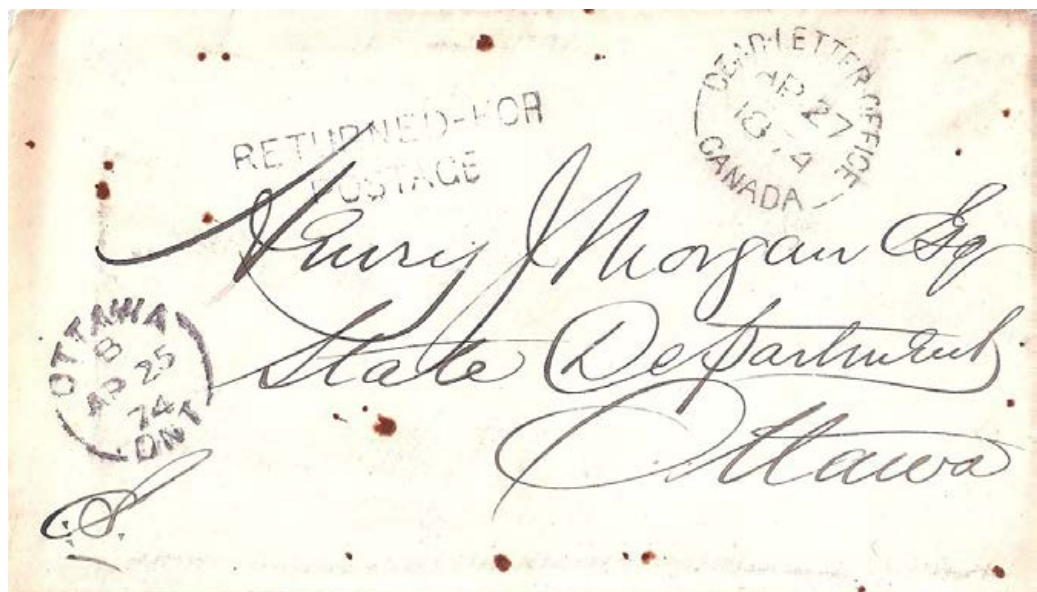
**-- CANADA --**

OKC

25mm diameter

Split arcs on  
left 6mm wide  
right 4mm wide

Most arcs are split to  
some degree even  
with proofs from  
wear



No proof known

Gateway marking:  
**RETURNED-FOR  
POSTAGE**

April 25, 74 letter sent to the State Department, Ottawa; unpaid thus sent to DLO AP 27/1874; cleared as Free Franking (Government Dep't)



## DEAD • LETTER • OFFICE

JA 27

1882

— CANADA —

26mm diameter

Arcs 3mm wide

Most DLO handstamps  
are on backside



Proof Strike

Note DLO file #4352 on left

DLO correspondence to the  
addressee asks for actual  
postage stamps for payment.



Belleville, Ont. JA 23, 1882 letter RETURNED - FOR/POSTAGE  
+ "3" (cents); sent to DLO, paid JA 27, 1882.

## DEAD • LETTER • OFFICE

DE 3

1896

— CANADA —

26mm diameter

Arcs 3mm wide



Re-cut Proof Strike



Registered Halifax, N.S. 8c Small Queen letter SEP 30, 96 to Brooklyn, N.Y.; three dated notices sent;  
Unclaimed, Forwarded to N.Y. DLO Nov 16, 96 onward to Ottawa DLO Dec 3, 96.

## DEAD • LETTER • OFFICE

MR 30  
1885  
CANADA

EARLIEST  
REPORTED  
DATE

25mm diameter

No dots or hyphens

DLO handstamps on cover  
fronts are uncommon,  
usually to cancel stamps



Very rare  
dual  
franking  
registration  
stamps  
2¢ & 5¢

Proof Strike

Closed Circle Handstamp



Registered letter Tioga, Ont. MR 9 85 to Broome Co. N.Y., RETURNED FOR / DEFICIENT POSTAGE sent to the Ottawa DLO on MR 23 85 Postage/funds received and franked with 5 cent registration stamp MR 30 85 to comply with regulations requiring registration fees to be paid with registration stamps and a 1 cent Small Queen to make up 6 cents payment for a double weight letter 3 cents 1<sup>st</sup> ounce and 3 cents 2<sup>nd</sup> ounce.

## DEAD • LETTER • OFFICE

JU 30  
1891  
CANADA

VV

LATEST REPORTED DATE

25mm diameter

No dots or hyphens  
before or after  
'CANADA'

Diamond  
Shift marking:

D L O 3 ❖



Montreal MY 12 91 3-cent letter to U.S., UNCLAIMED, returned from Boston DLO to Ottawa DLO JU 30 1891



**DEAD • LETTER • OFFICE**

NO 19

1884

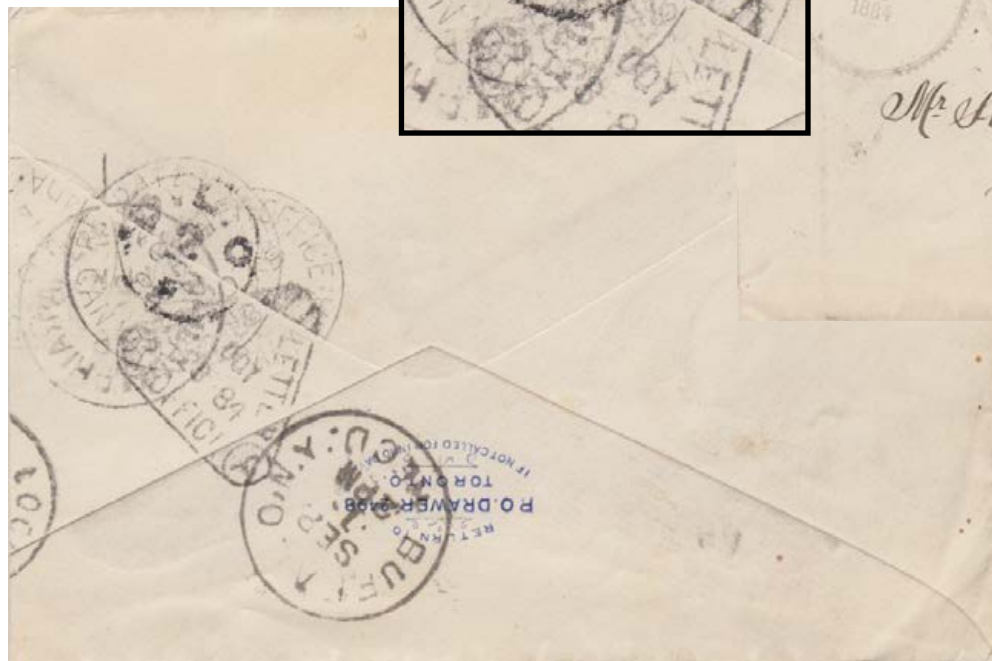
• CANADA. •

25mm diameter

D • L • O 2 ✕ >>

Closed Circle Handstamp

ENLARGEMENT 150%



Scan 60%

Large dots on each side of CANADA and period after CANADA

• CANADA . •

Toronto, AUG 30, 84 to Pennsylvania, US, ADVERTISED and UNCLAIMED, returned NO 19, 84 via Ottawa, DLO.

**DEAD • LETTER • OFFICE**

MR 17

1880

CANADA

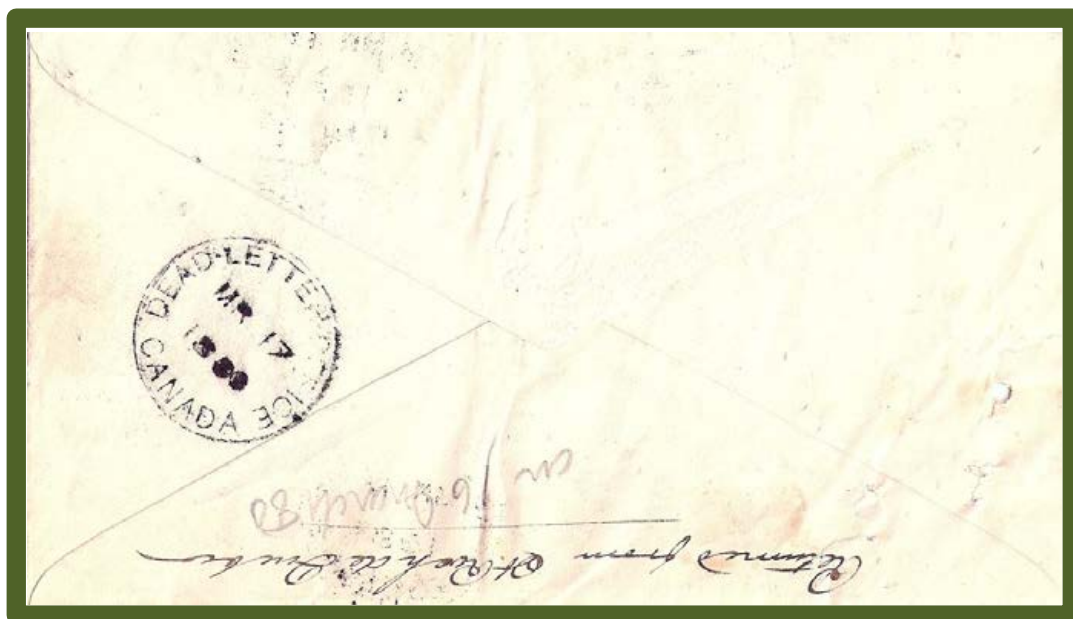
27.25mm diameter

No dots after OFFICE or CANADA

Manuscript on back:  
Returned from St. Roch...  
on 16 March 80

No proof known

EARLIEST REPORTED CLOSED CIRCLE DLO



Quebec, Que. JA 6 80 short-paid letter RETURNED FOR POSTAGE but not paid; apparently returned by DLO to sender in Return Envelope



# DEAD LETTER OFFICE

14 JY

1891

• CANADA •

Closed Circle Handstamp

EARLIEST REPORTED DATE

28mm diameter

Dots on each side:

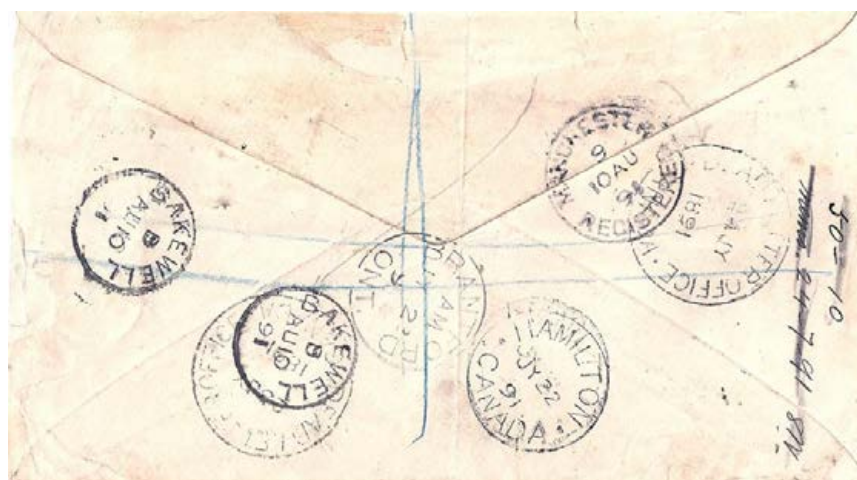
• CANADA •



Proof Strike



Brantford, Ontario JY22 1891 to Bakewell, England Aug 10 91, registered with 5 cents for up ½ ounce UPU rate and RETURNED FOR/5¢ POSTAGE via Hamilton to Ottawa JY 20 1891 then Ottawa DLO on JY 24 1891. Opened and examined for senders address to receive 5 cents in postage. 5 cents received and paid / cancelled at Ottawa DLO JY 28 1891 forwarded to addressee. Transiting via Manchester and arriving at Bakewell 10 AU 91.



Scan 75%

This closed circle handstamp is the only closed circle type with no dots or dashes between the words  
DEAD LETTER OFFICE

## DEAD LETTER OFFICE

MR 10

1894

• CANADA •

28mm diameter

Dots on each side:

• CANADA •

Closed Circle Handstamp

LATEST REPORTED DATE



Registered Stratford JA 8, 94 letter to Simcoe, Ont., NOT • CALLED • FOR;  
REC'D AT DEAD LETTER OFFICE MR 9 94 dispatched MR 10 1894

## DEAD - LETTER - OFFICE

MR 18

1893

CANADA.

28mm diameter

Hyphens between  
upper wording and  
period after  
CANADA.

EARLIEST REPORTED DATE



Proof Strike

Toronto FEB 24 93 to Montreal NOT.CALLED.FOR sent to Ottawa DLO  
MR 16 93 Examined and returned to sender MR 18 1893

DEAD LETTER OFFICE  
JU 20  
1884

Closed Circle Handstamp

ONLY KNOWN COPY

CANADA

28mm diameter

No dots or  
periods  
between  
words

No proof known



Cambridge Station, N.S. JU 16 1884 to Woodville, RETURNED – FOR / POSTAGE &  
RETURNED FOR / DEFICIENT POSTAGE large 2 due sent to Ottawa DLO JU 20 1884

DEAD - LETTER - OFFICE  
DE 15  
1890  
+ CANADA+

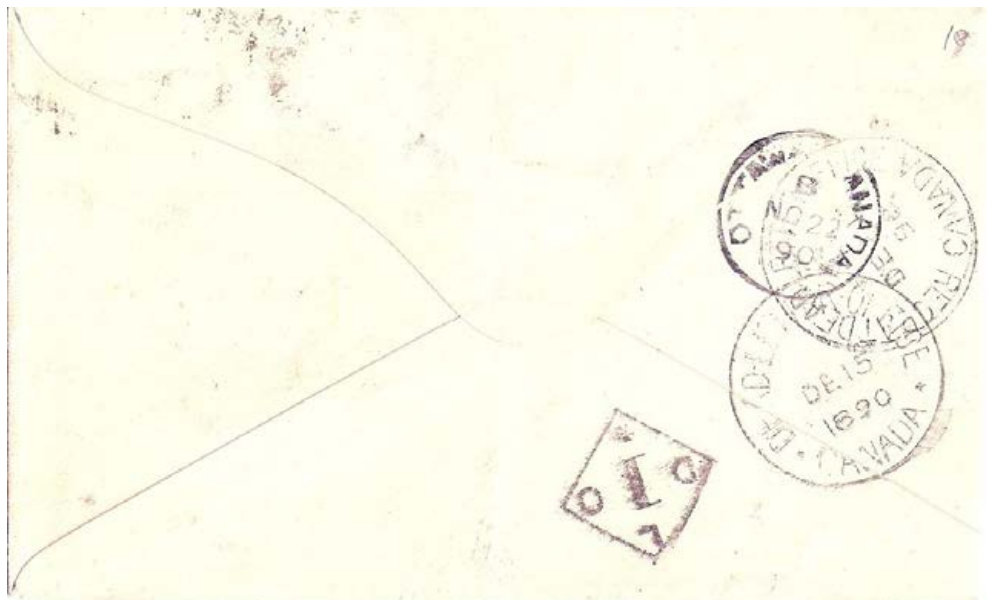
EARLIEST REPORTED DATE

28mm diameter

Hyphens:  
between upper words  
Crosses:  
+ CANADA +



(Note AM does not  
appear in handstamps)



St. Andrews East DE 22,90 to Ottawa, Ont. NOT • CALLED • FOR;  
RECD AT DEAD LETTER OFFICE 1<sup>st</sup> Shift DE 11,90 dispatched DE 15 1890



## DEAD • LETTER • BRANCH

JU 6  
95  
• CANADA. •

24mm diameter

Large dots on each side of • CANADA. • and period after CANADA.

This is the smallest of the Closed circle DLO Office and Branch handstamps.



Proof Strike



“BRANCH” Replaced “OFFICE” in early 1890'S

## DEAD • LETTER • BRANCH

AP 22  
97  
CANADA.

29mm diameter

Dots between upper words and period after CANADA.



Proofed DE 16 1893

Halifax N.S. FE 15 97 to Leamington, Ont. not called for sent to DLO AP 20 97 examined AP 22 97

RECD AT DEAD LETTER OFFICE 1 through 3  
RECD AT DEAD LETTER BRANCH 4 through 6

Closed Circle Handstamp

RECD AT DEAD LETTER OFFICE handstamps used numbers '1' through '3', with three proofs of the '1' handstamp recorded, the earliest dated JY 16 / 81. Very few of this early type of hammer are known. The '1' Rec'd ... handstamp is more common than the other two handstamps '2 & 3'.

RECD is recognized as RECEIVED  
as the word RECEIVED appears in  
this strike proof



See Frame 2 page 12

There are slight differences in the lettering of the three '1' handstamps, the main being that the first '1' at 1mm width is thinner than the second and third '1' handstamps. It is much harder to differentiate between the second and third handstamps except for changes in the letter 'C' in 'OFFICE' on close inspection. The first '1' is also a slightly larger diameter in the proof books.

Similar handstamps exist with the numbers '4' through '6' but with the word 'BRANCH' replacing 'OFFICE'. These are shown later in this exhibit.

#### Enlarged Proof Strikes

Note "C"  
in OFFICE



1mm

Rounded  
"C"



"1" 1.5mm

Pointed  
"C"



Semi-  
Pointed  
"C"

RECD AT DEAD LETTER OFFICE

1  
JA 8  
91  
CANADA.

28mm diameter

"1" is 1.5mm wide

Period after CANADA.

>>>

Proofed FE 17 1890



Shelburne, N.S. DE 9 90 to Lockeport N.S. DE 10 90 'No Such person'  
sent to Ottawa DLO JA 8 91 returned JA 9 1891

RECD AT DEAD LETTER OFFICE

2

AP 21

82

CANADA.

28mm diameter

Period after CANADA.

Toronto, Ont. FEB 21 82  
to Valentia, Ont.,  
NOT CALLED FOR,  
sent to DLO AP 21 82  
1st shift.

>>>

Proofed JY 16 1881

Closed Circle Handstamp

EARLIEST REPORTED DATE



RECD • AT • DEAD • LETTER • OFFICE

3

JY 12

97

CANADA.

29mm diameter

Dots between upper words  
& period after 'CANADA.'

Scan 75%

LATEST REPORTED DATE



Proof Strike



RECD • AT • DEAD • LETTER • BRANCH

Closed Circle Handstamp

4  
DE 21  
97  
CANADA.

28mm diameter

Dots between upper  
letters and period after  
CANADA. similar to  
#3 handstamp



Proof Strike



Strathroy, Ont. OC 13 97 to Napier, Ont. '**Not Called for**' sent to Ottawa DLO DE 21 97.

RECD AT DEAD LETTER BRANCH

5  
OC 31  
95  
CANADA.

#5 EARLIEST REPORTED DATE

29mm diameter

Period after  
CANADA.

An uncommon  
item with two  
Recd handstamps  
a #2 and a #5

Note one is '**OFFICE**'  
and one is '**BRANCH**'

Proofed  
AP 23 1893



Toronto, Canada SEP 7 95 to Pine River, Ont. manuscript '**Not called for**'  
& '**Not known**' on SP 9 95 sent to Ottawa DLO OC 23 95 forwarded to  
Lurgan, Ont OC 26 sent back to Ottawa DLO OC 31 95

REC'D AT DEAD LETTER BRANCH

6

MY 31

97

CANADA.

29mm diameter

Period after

CANADA.

No dots between

upper words

Note Closed Circle

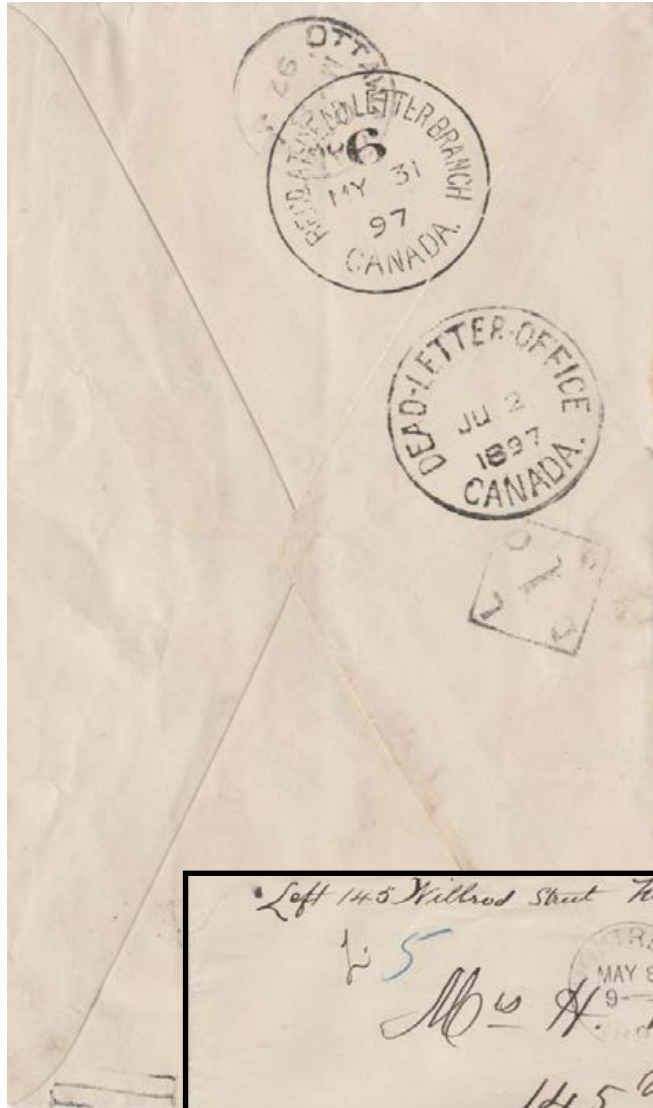
handstamp shows

'OFFICE' while the

REC'D 6 Closed Circle

indicates 'BRANCH'

Closed Circle Handstamp



Proof Strike

Scan 75%



Montreal May 8 1897 to Ottawa sent to General Delivery (GD h/s rare) 10 MY 98  
(should have been 97), NOT CALLED FOR octagonal h/s MY 22 97, sent to Ottawa DLO MY 31

D • L • O ✕

## Circle and Diamond Shift Markings

The Circular and Diamond Shift Marking handstamps used numbers 1, 2 and 3 to designate the 8-hour work shift that processed an item. No proof dates are available, as the handstamps did not have an enclosed date. The Circular Shift markings were used during the early period of the Ottawa DLO. The Diamond Shift Markings appeared later on in the early 1880's and were used until decentralization.

D • L • O

### Circle Shift Marking

1



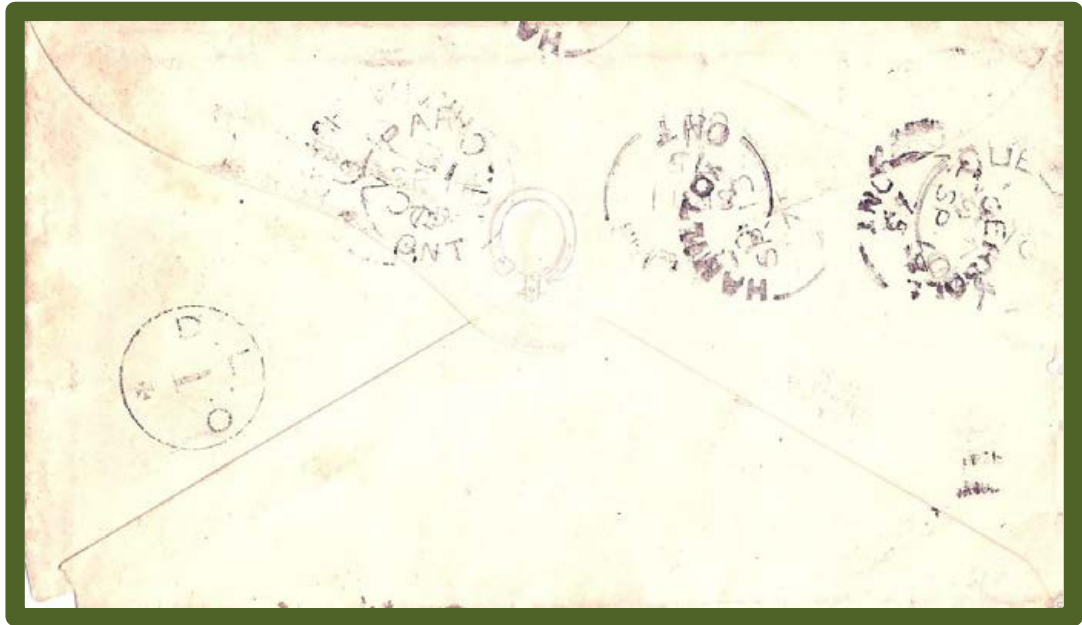
EARLIEST REPORTED USAGE of a SHIFT MARKING

19mm diameter

>>>

'1' circular shift marking used  
OC 26 1875  
per DLO split ring

No strike proof



D L O

### Diamond Shift Marking

1



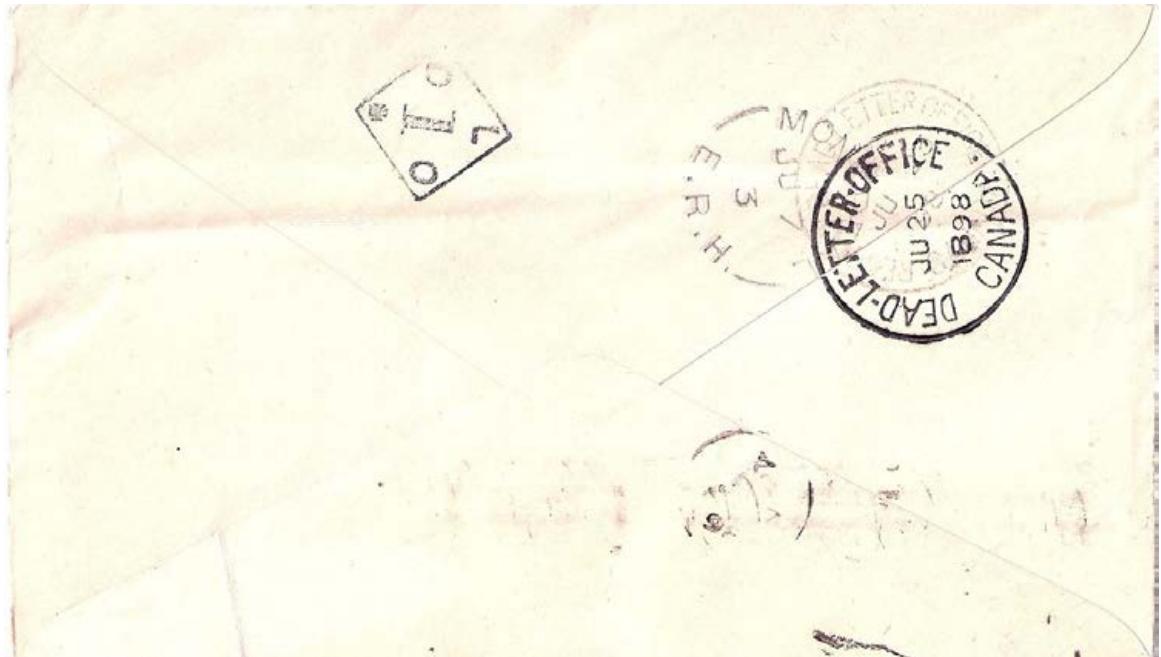
LATEST REPORTED DATE

15mm x 15mm

Used JU 23 1898  
as per RECD  
DLO Closed  
Circle LRD

Also note LRD of  
closed circle DLO  
JU 25 1898

Proofed no date.



The use of these Shift Markings and other hammers ceased just eight days later when the Dead Letter Office in Ottawa was decentralized into various DLO branches, as discussed below.



DEAD + LETTER + BRANCH

• P.O. DEPT. CANADA. •

SUPERINTENDENT

JAN

19

1892

37mm x 27mm

Note: +**s** between  
the words:

DEAD + LETTER + BRANCH



In early hammers these  
gradually wore down  
over time to dots

No proof known

Superintendent Oval

EARLIEST REPORTED EXAMPLE



Swedish post card Tidakoln Dec 14 1891 incorrectly addressed thus misdirected to the United States, sent by U.S. DLO/Inspection Division January 5, 1892 (on reverse) to the Ottawa DLO.

DEAD + LETTER + BRANCH

• P.O. DEPT. • CANADA. •

SUPERINTENDENT

FEB

8

1898

**"Stamp previously used"** sent to Superintendent's department.

(Split ring on back)



25mm wide  
Side arcs 4mm  
LRD

Known examples of  
this handstamp  
indicate that  
fraudulent mail  
normally went to  
senior staff who  
would advise  
action to be taken.

DEAD LETTER BRANCH

5 12  
CANADA.

Double Oval Parcel

41 x 27mm

Double oval  
capital letters



Proof Strike

The year date is not shown on this handstamp type, however, from a similar but different proof strike <sup>(1)</sup> 1894 is an approximate time period.

This type is similar to several parcel handstamps used in several larger cities during the Small Queen period. Although wear appears to show in the ovals, the proof strike is very similar with thin imprints.

1 – J. Paul Hughes (Editor), Proof Strikes of Canada: Miscellaneous Proof Strikes of Canada, Volume XXIII, Robert Lee Philatelists, 1993, p. 21

## DECENTRALIZATION of the OTTAWA DEAD LETTER OFFICE

To increase efficiency, the Ottawa Dead Letter Office (DLO) decentralized on July 1, 1898. The majority of DLO mail was re-directed to Branch and Local DLO offices across the country nearer their origin or destination.

The Ottawa DLO continued to handle the more important mail matter such as fraudulent, illegal/prohibited and valuables including specific counties and districts in Ontario and Quebec **until changes in the early 1950's**. However, it is known to have handled all classes and types of mail without necessarily forwarding items to other DLO offices especially during the first World War period.

### OTTAWA DEAD LETTER OFFICE & BRANCH

DEAD + LETTER + BRANCH

CHIEF SUPT

AUG / 4

1898

• P.O. DEPT CANADA •

37mm x 27mm

No dot between 'DEPT CANADA'

The position of Chief Superintendent was created after decentralization for the Ottawa DLO office of the P.O..

Initialed by Chief Supt. 'M M'

Ottawa Chief Superintendent Oval



EARLY USAGE of  
BRANCH D.L.O. HANDSTAMP  
AFTER DECENTRALIZATION  
INTO BRANCH & LOCAL OFFICES

Scan 75%

Franked with previously used stamps, initialed by the Post Master of dispatching Post Office, sent to Montreal Dead Letter Office AU 3 98 then forwarded to the Chief Superintendent Ottawa AUG 4 1898. No obvious action taken; letter possibly returned to sender in a D.L.O. Return Envelope.



DEAD + LETTER + BRANCH  
CHIEF SUPT  
NOV  
12  
1900  
• P.O. DEPT CANADA •

37mm x 27mm

Boer War cover to  
Mr. Norman F. Gray  
1st Canadian Contingent,  
Bloemfontein, South Africa  
c/o Col Otter. Mailed  
JUN 21,00 sent to DLO  
NOV 12,1900.



No reason stated for return other than maybe specific instructions for mail to this destination or the placement of the stamp up-side-down.

DEAD + LETTER + BRANCH  
CHIEF SUPT  
MAY  
17  
1901  
• P.O. DEPT CANADA •

37mm x 27mm

Note roller cancel  
on 1 cent Numeral  
then pasted on  
an envelope



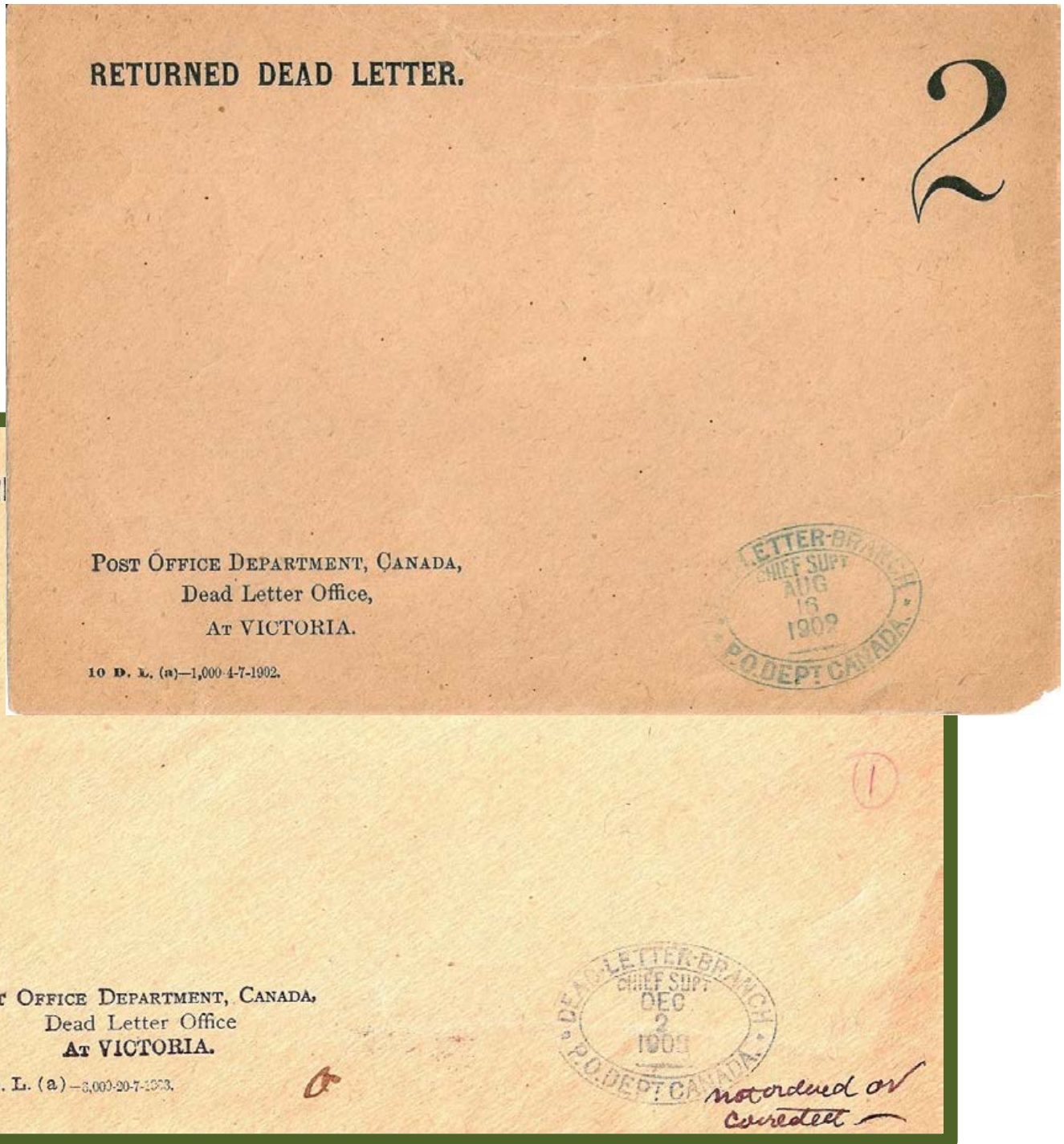
No proof known

DEAD + LETTER + BRANCH  
CHIEF SUPT  
AUG  
16  
1902  
• P.O. DEPT CANADA .•

Ottawa Chief Superintendent Oval

Official duties, ordering of RDL envelopes.

DEC  
2  
1903



10 D. L. (a) -- 1,000 4-7-1902 RETURNED DEAD LETTER At VICTORIA to order new batch  
Note low order quantity of 1000 for earlier RDL.

LATEST  
REPORTED  
DATE

10 D. L. (a) -- 6,000 20-7-1903 For review **'not ordered or/corrected.'**



## Anomalies

A few Dead Letter Office handstamps exist just after decentralization that do not fit into categories of pre 1898 handstamps or post 1898 handstamps.

### DEAD • LETTER • BRANCH

W

OC 13

04

CANADA

Violet ink

30mm

'W' in Closed Circle



Bluish paper OX2 Officially Sealed stamps

Scan 70%

### DEAD • LETTER • BRANCH

W

AU 30

01

CANADA

Purple ink

Both items  
were handled  
by the  
Halifax Branch  
DLO





## Anomalies

**DEAD • LETTER • BRANCH**

RECEIVED

JUN

30

1900

• P.O. DEPT • CANADA. •

RECEIVED Double Circle

31mm diameter outside circle

21mm diameter inside circle

Only reported copy

This is a seldom used handstamp by only the Ottawa Dead Letter Office even though the word 'Ottawa' does not appear.



Handstamped RECEIVED per double circle DLO with manuscript initials by the Chief Superintendent to indicate review of a fraudulently mailed letter per manuscript '**Soiled Stamp**'



Proof Strike

This handstamp was proofed in 1890 before decentralization took place in 1898.

It however appears to have seen use after decentralization by the Superintendent's office as evidenced by the black manuscript initials next to the date in the handstamp.

This is similar to those seen in the Superintendent's and Chief Superintendent's Oval handstamps.

## OTTAWA BRANCH DEAD LETTER OFFICE

The following Ottawa DLO handstamps with the names Office, Branch or District are included to handle all types of Dead and Undeliverable mail. Of the fifty-nine strike proof handstamps 32 have yet to be reported used.

Four major types with 76 subtypes are known used in total. A handful of subtypes are more common between 1900 and 1910. The remaining handstamps still being searched out, with as few as only one or two reported.

Steel Circle	2 Subtypes	
Oval	43 Subtypes	18 proofs only known
Rubber Circle	18 Subtypes	2 proofs only known
Rectangle	57 Subtypes	12 proofs only known

The widest variety of handstamps appear in the late 1930's up into the 1940's while the smallest variety appear in the early years but may have the highest usage rates.

D.L.O. CANADA

JU 12

06

•OTTAWA•BRANCH•

Steel Circle

LATEST REPORTED DATE

24mm diameter

Side dots and a dot between  
'A•B' with  
2.8mm high  
letters

No proof known



Scan 75%

to Bulgaria

Short-paid Edward cover T15 x 2 =  
30 centimes due returned to  
Canada to Ottawa Dead Letter Office  
5 months later

D.L.O. CANADA  
JY 3  
00  
•OTTAWA•BRANCH•

Steel Circle



24mm  
Letters further away  
from outer rim  
& shorter in height



25mm  
Letters closer  
to outer rim

EARLIEST REPORTED DATE

25mm diameter

Side dots and a  
dot between  
'A•B' with  
3.2mm high  
letters

scan 50%



No proof known

Guysborough, N.S. MY 19 00 letter to New York, N.Y. MAY 22 00 sent to DLO U.S.A. JUN 21 00 after being **advertised** on JUN 4 00 as addressee was **REMOVED/PRESENT ADDRESS UNKNOWN no address**, thus sent to the Ottawa branch DLO JY 3,00.



DEAD LETTER BRANCH  
B  
MAY 19 1919  
OTTAWA, CANADA.

Single Frame Oval

41mm x 27mm

Sans-serif and caps  
except for  
'B' seriffed

ONLY KNOWN COPY



Purple ink

Proofed SEP 10 1917

Of the 24 reported Ottawa ovals there are 45 known subtypes, very few of each have been reported with fewer than 41 examples in total of known subtypes.

DEAD LETTER OFFICE  
OCT 15 1913  
OTTAWA, ONT.

ONE of 2 REPORTED COPIES, ERD

48.5mm x 32mm

Sans-serif and caps



Proof Strike

U.S. cover to Lambeth, Ontario, marked *Unknown* and sent to the Ottawa DLO Oct 15 1913

DEAD LETTER OFFICE  
S  
JAN 23 1919  
OTTAWA, ONT.

Double Oval

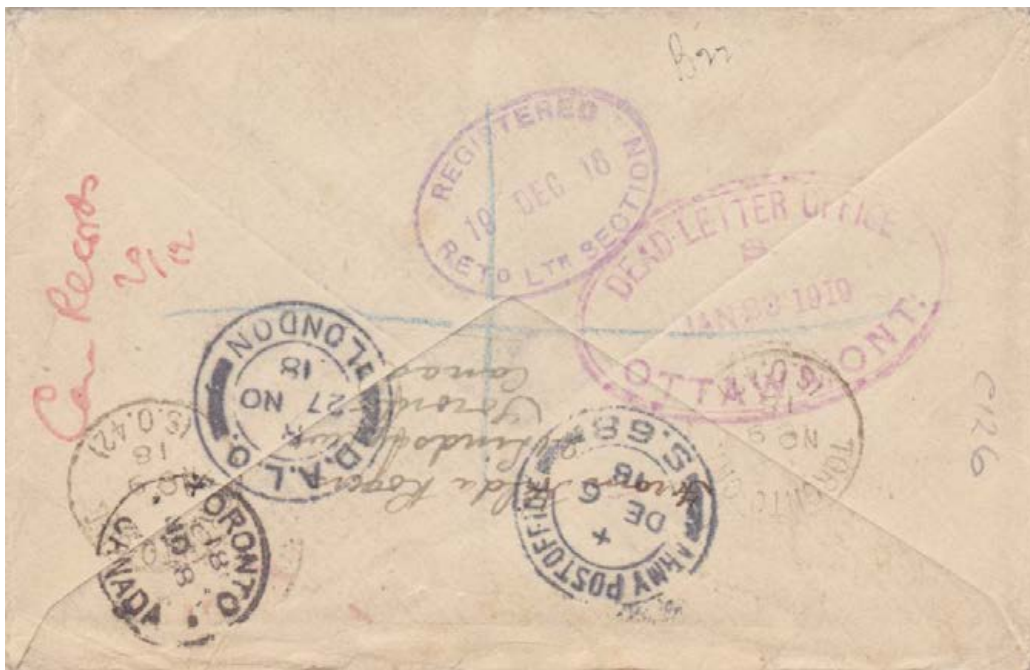
ONE of 2 REPORTED COPIES, LRD

50mm x 31mm

Upper letters sans-serif  
lower letters seriffed  
and capitalized

Purple ink

Proofed FEB 14 1916



Canadian Corps to British Expeditionary Force NOV 8 18 Toronto, Ont. S.O. 42 registered to France  
*Deceased...* London 27 NO 18 returned to Canada Ottawa DLO Jan 23 1919

DEAD LETTER OFFICE  
G  
MAR 8 1921  
OTTAWA, ONT.

to N. Rhodesia

PREVIOUSLY UNKNOWN, OKC

54.5mm x 34mm

Upper letters  
seriffed,  
all caps

Note:  
Partial Starter  
Strip of 2c coils

No proof known



Nine month journey for Jul 28 1920 commercial  
cover Vancouver to Peira, N. Rhodesia, Sep 20 1920  
forwarded to S. Rhodesia marked UNCLAIMED  
/ ADVERTISED , on Jan 11 1921 received at  
Returned Letter Branch in S. Rhodesia whereby  
forwarded to Canadian DLO Mar 8 1921

Scan 50%





DEAD LETTER OFFICE ,  
APR 15 1909 & JUN 1 1912  
OTTAWA, ONT.

Double Oval

LATEST REPORTED DATE

42mm x 28mm

Full serifs and caps.  
Comma after  
'OFFICE,'



Black ink above  
Violet ink left  
No proof known

D. L. O. CANADA,  
JAN 24 1916  
OTTAWA BRANCH

LRD of THREE KNOWN COPIES

42mm x 28mm

Sans-serif  
all caps

This example is  
the only Ottawa  
oval with the  
letters 'D.L.O.'  
to begin

No proof  
known





**DEAD LETTER OFFICE**  
**JUN 9 1920**  
**OTTAWA, ONT.**

**Double Oval**

52mm x 32.5mm

ONLY KNOWN COPY

Sans-serif, all caps



**to Gambia**

Returned via the  
 Returned Letter  
 Section London  
 Postal Service per  
 three RLS labels,  
 seven months later  
 to Ottawa DLO

Proofed NOV 17 1913

Marked **unclaimed** and **Recd in damaged / condition in ...**

**Branch Dead Letter Office**  
**JUL 14 1922**  
**OTTAWA, ONT.**

**Milled Outside Rim Double Oval**

44mm x 29mm

NEWLY REPORTED, ONLY KNOWN COPY

All letters seriffed

Upper letters mixed,  
 lower letters all caps



Blue ink

No proof known

BRANCH DEAD LETTER OFFICE  
FEB 21 1908  
OTTAWA, ONT.

Milled Outside Rim Double Oval  
1 of 2 KNOWN

44mm x 30mm

All letters seriffed  
and capitalized

INADVERTENTLY OPENED  
IN THE Div. of Dead Letters

No proof known



DEAD LETTER BRANCH  
SUPERINTENDENT  
JUL 17 1919  
P. O. DEPT., CANADA.

45mm x 30mm

All letters sans-serif  
and capitalized

BRITISH  
EXPEDITIONARY  
FORCE  
SALONIKA, GREECE

**'PRESENT ADDRESS  
NOT KNOWN' & 'UNCLAIMED'**

SPECIAL SUPERINTENDENT  
DLO P. O. DEPT. CANADA  
Handstamp

Purple ink

No proof known



LRD of 2 KNOWN

Scan 75%





DEAD LETTER OFFICE  
JUL 22 1907  
OTTAWA, CANADA.

Rubber Circle

34mm

LATEST REPORTED  
DATE of 2 KNOWN

Sans-serif  
and caps.

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY, ONTARIO  
JUL 4 1907  
"Party Dead" & "Return to"  
'NOT CALLED FOR'  
sent to Ottawa DLO  
JUL 18,07 returned on JUL 22 1907

Double Oval >>>

ERD similar to  
previous page



MAY 2 1907

EARLIEST  
REPORTED  
DATE



No proof known

Winnipeg, Can. MAR 24 1907 to England address not-known sent to  
British RETURNED LR. OFFICE AP 11 07 to Ottawa DLO May 2 1907



**DEAD LETTER OFFICE,  
MAY 18 1909  
OTTAWA, CANADA.**

**Rubber Circle**

EARLIEST REPORTED DATE

37mm

Upper  
letters 4mm  
lower 3.5mm

**,D - 'O**  
4.7mm

Sans-serif  
and caps

No proof  
known



Hamilton, Ont. SE 28,08 commercial cover  
to Newcastle, Australia NOV 8,08 **UNCLAIMED**  
returned to sender via Australian DLO MAR 10,09  
received two months later Ottawa DLO MAY 18,09.  
Scan 60%



**DEAD LETTER OFFICE,  
JUN 20 1911  
OTTAWA, CANADA.**

Variations in letter height and distance between ,D & 'O

37mm

Upper  
letters 3.5mm  
lower 3mm

**,D - 'O**  
8mm

Sans-serif  
and caps

No proof  
known



DEAD LETTER OFFICE,  
JAN 30 1911  
OTTAWA, CANADA.

Rubber Circle

35mm

Full serifs  
and caps



Proof Strike  
MAY 8 1909



Ottawa, Ont. Can 27 1911 RETURNED FOR / BETTER DIRECTION sent to DLO JAN 30 1911

District Dead Letter Office,  
1  
SEP 7 1946  
Ottawa, - Ont.

38mm

Mixed  
sans-serif  
letters

comma after  
'Office,'  
Hyphen before  
'- Ont.'



No proof known



## DIVISION DE L'INSPECTION

BUREAU DES REBUTS

FE 28 / 29

+OTTAWA - CANADA+

NEW RESEARCH

EARLIEST REPORTED DATE

Circle

28mm

Sans-serif  
and caps

French with  
'D' & 'B' in  
a straight line

and

Hyphen between  
'A - C'

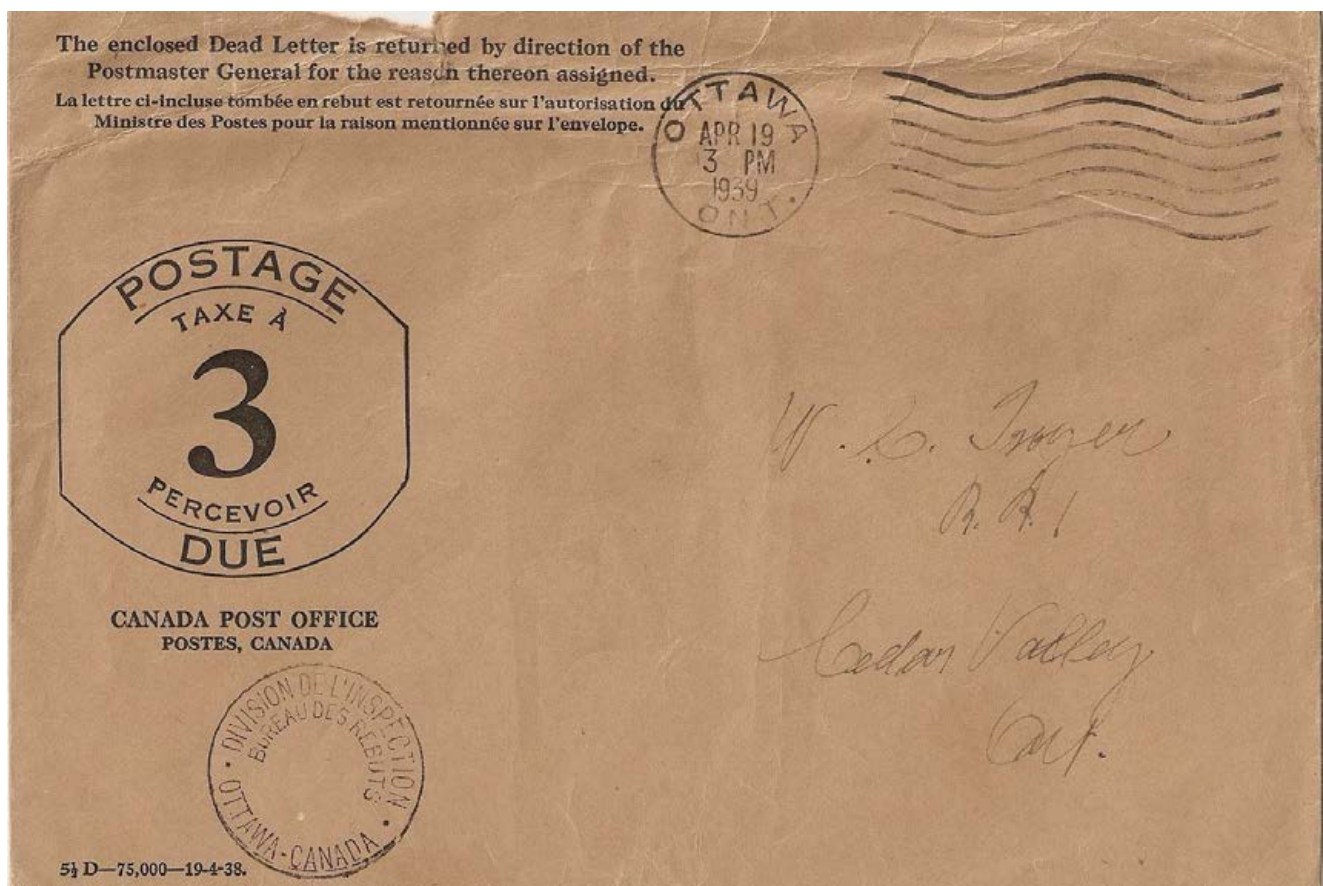
Note '+' used  
instead of '•'

No proof known

NUDE DATE

Used on APR 19 1939

Tens years later the '+' were wearing down to dots.





INSPECTION DIVISION  
DEAD LETTER OFFICE  
JAN 27  
31  
•OTTAWA - CANADA•

Circle

29mm

Sans-serif  
and caps

Right side  
of  
'E' & 'I'  
in line

• IN  
DE



scan front 75%

Powell River, B.C. NOV 3 1930 to Shanghai, China short-paid (3 cents x 5 x 2 = T30 centimes due), received in China Dec 9,30 franked with 18 cents in postage due stamps from ROC (does not appear to have received payment). Handstamped 'Adresse Incomplete/Address not complete' and sent to Ottawa DLO JAN 27 31.

\*\* it is still unknown as to whether these and the other Ottawa Circular handstamps following are Rubber or Steel. Until an actual hammer can be seen in person for each one it is still to be determined what major type they belong in.

INSPECTION DIVISION  
DEAD LETTER OFFICE  
• OTTAWA - CANADA •

Circle

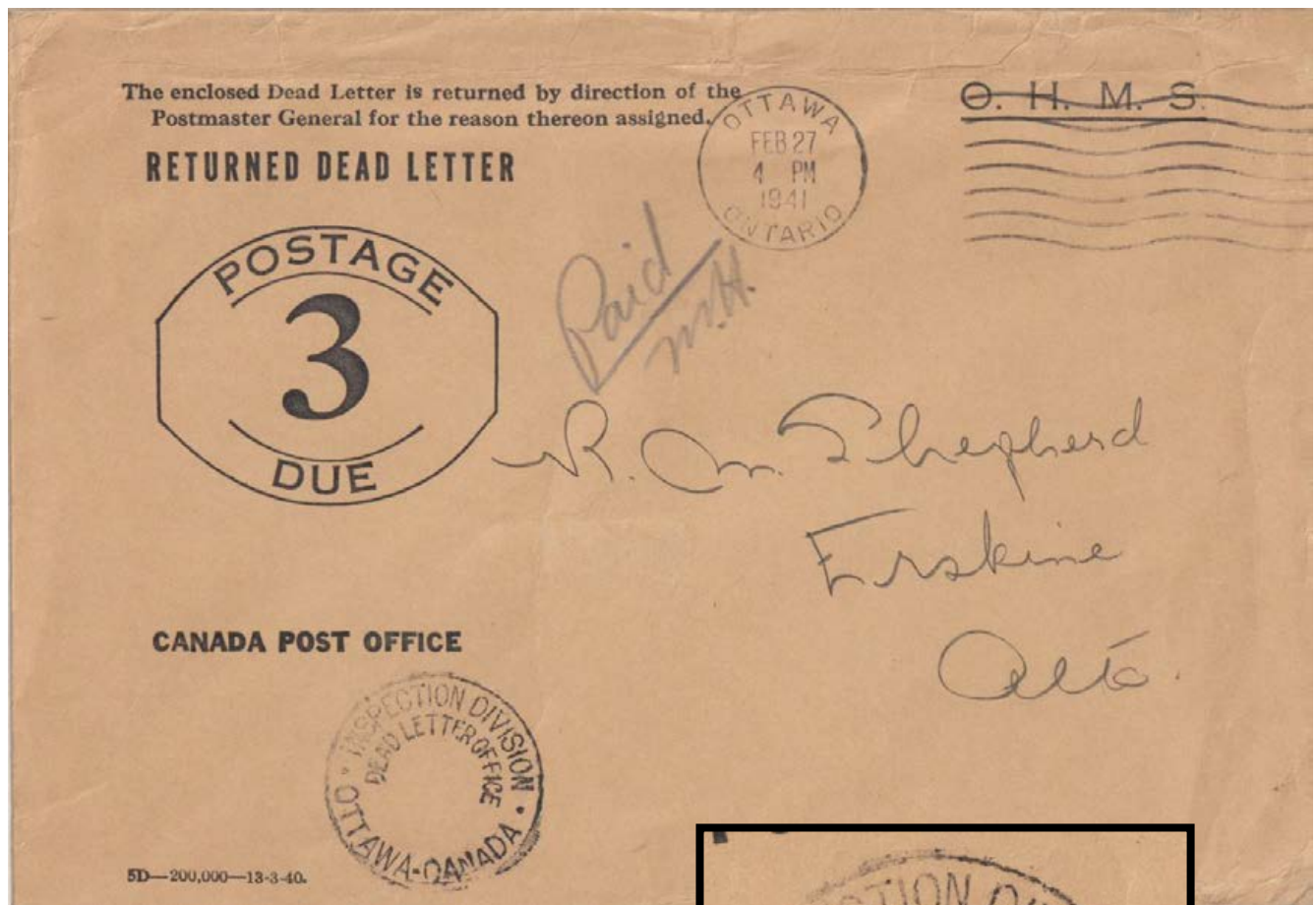
29mm

Sans-serif  
and caps

Right side of 'E' & 'I' in line

• IN  
DE

Nude dater used on RDL envelope



Month, day and year show on normal handstamps

Dots '•' on each side  
• OTTAWA - CANADA •

200%





INSPECTION DIVISION  
DEAD LETTER OFFICE  
• OTTAWA - CANADA •

Circle

Note also that 'AM' or 'PM' is not used  
as compared to the proof strike



Proof Strike

Barbados MR 16 35  
to T. Eaton Co.  
Quebec,  
re-directed to  
Montreal sent  
to DLO AP 30 35



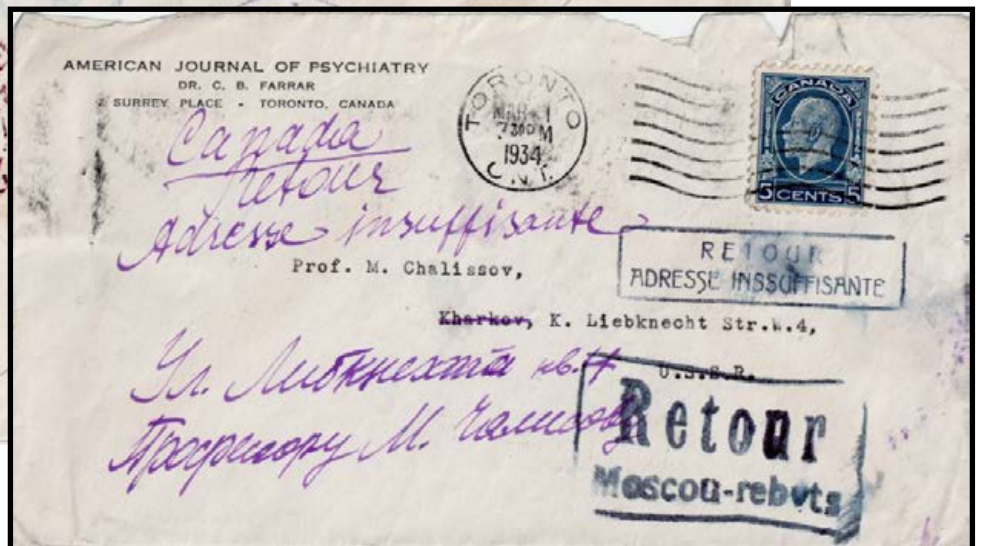
to U.S.S.R.

Usage of this handstamp is reported over a 23 year period,  
1921-1944, from the Admiral Issue up to the War Issue



Insufficient address

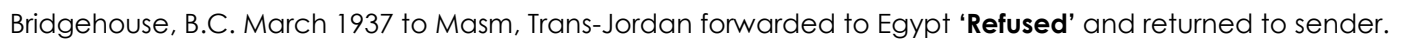
scan 75%





Proof  
Strike  
FEB 24 37

The lettering '**DEAD LETTER OFFICE**' in this handstamp is smaller in length than the previous Ottawa DLO as per placement to '**INSPECTION DIVISION**'



**Postage due calculation:** **Tax 41¢** total to pay in Canada of 19¢ x 2 + 3¢ Dead Letter Return fee  
38¢ x 5 centimes/¢ = **T/190** centimes due in Trans Jordan  
1 mil = 2 centimes total of 95 mil franking



**INSPECTION DIVISION  
DEAD LETTER OFFICE  
MR 31  
47  
• OTTAWA - CANADA •**

**Circle**

This handstamp was used over a ten year period 1937-1947

28mm

Sans-serif  
and caps

Left side  
of  
'D' & 'I'  
in line

• IN  
DE

Strike  
proof  
FEB 24 37



**Note the use of Red ink for this item, unusual for this type of DLO handstamp.**

**INSPECTION SERVICE  
DEAD LETTER OFFICE  
JUN 18  
1946  
OTTAWA CANADA**

**Steel Circle**

27mm

Sans-serif  
and caps

No punctuation.

No  
proof  
known



This handstamp is mainly known with red ink, applied by machine as all imprints are aligned with the envelope.

DEAD LETTER BRANCH  
AM  
OC 14  
14  
•OTTAWA•CANADA•

Rubber Circle Double Ring

EARLIEST REPORTED DATE

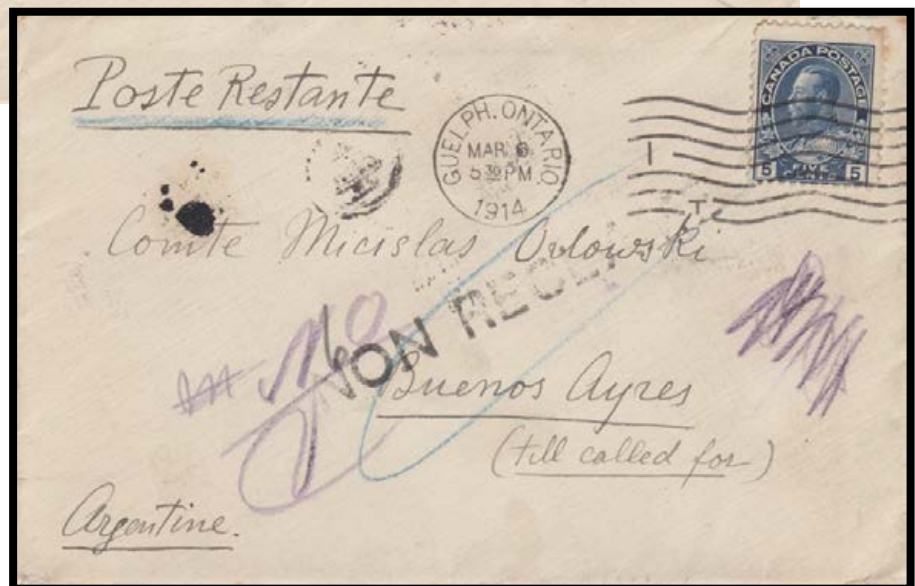
29mm + 26.5mm

Sans-serif  
and caps

Side dots  
and dot  
between  
'A • C'



Proof Strike



Scan 75%

Guelph, Ontario MAR 6 1914 to Buenos Aires, Argentina (Poste Restante)  
dated ABR 4 1914 in Buenos Aires handstamped '**NON RECLAME**' sent  
back to Canada at the Ottawa DLO OC 14/14.

Note DLO inspectors marks '**4 circle**' & '**1 boxed**' on backside.



DEAD LETTER BRANCH  
AM  
NO 15  
16  
•OTTAWA•CANADA•

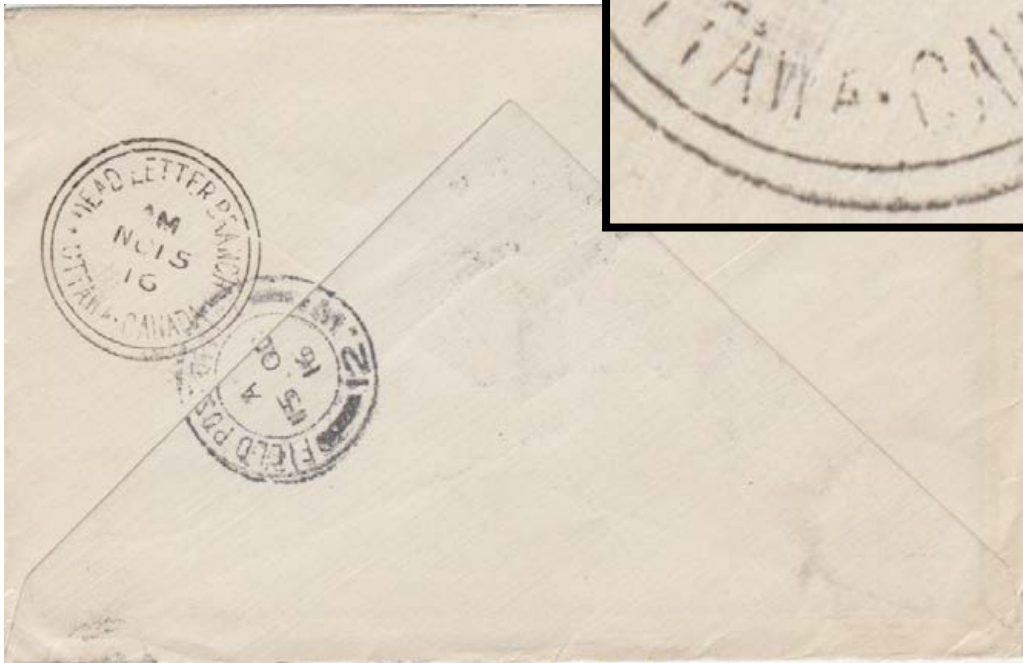
Rubber Circle Double Ring

29mm + 26.5mm

Sans-serif  
and caps

Proof  
Strike  
MR 10 13

Note dot between 'A • C'



400%

London, Blenheim & Sarnia R.P.O.  
E SP 22 16 to 58<sup>th</sup> Battalion,  
B.E.F., France, received Field  
Post Office 12.W 15<sup>th</sup> OC 16,  
sent to Canadian Record Office...  
OCT 24, 1916 'Killed 8-10-16 Capt'  
sent to Ottawa DLO NO 15, 16 to  
be examined for an address  
to be returned to sender.

Scan 75%



DEAD LETTER BRANCH  
AM  
JUL 8  
18  
•OTTAWA - CANADA•

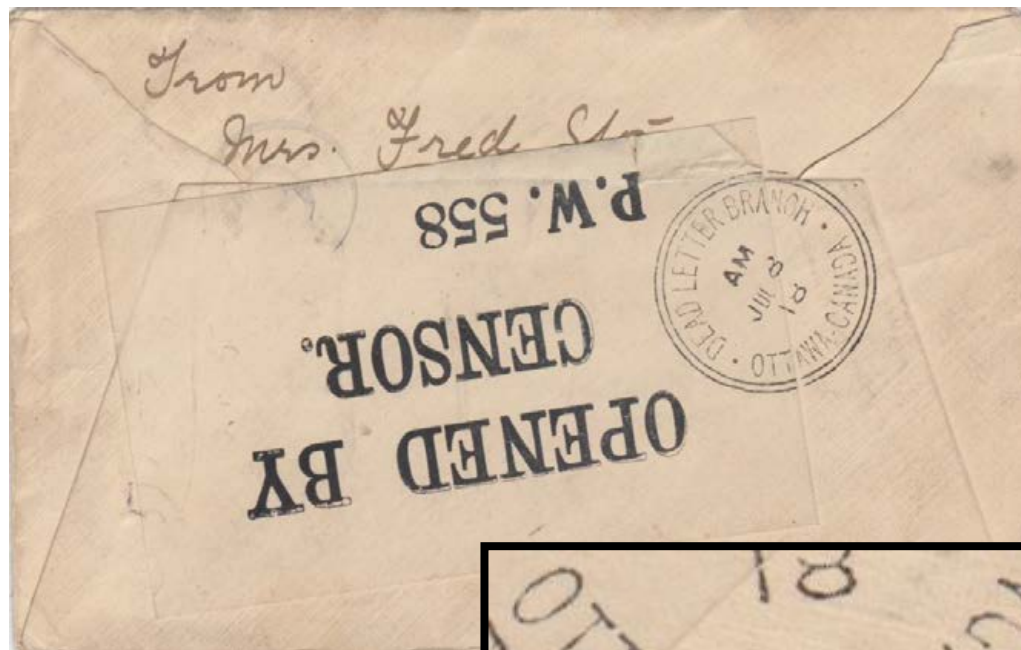
Rubber Circle Double Ring

29.4mm + 27.3mm

Sans-serif  
and caps

Side dots

No  
proof  
known



Note dash between  
'A - C' instead of  
previous handstamps  
with a dot 'A • C'

400%



Scan of  
front 75%



Topics #514 p. 49

Waterloo, Que. SP 1 17 sent to a Canadian Prisoner of War and censored by P.W. 558, a sticker was applied in German & French advising the addressee could not be found. Since the censor tape covered up the return address the cover was sent to the Ottawa DLO dated JUL 8 18.

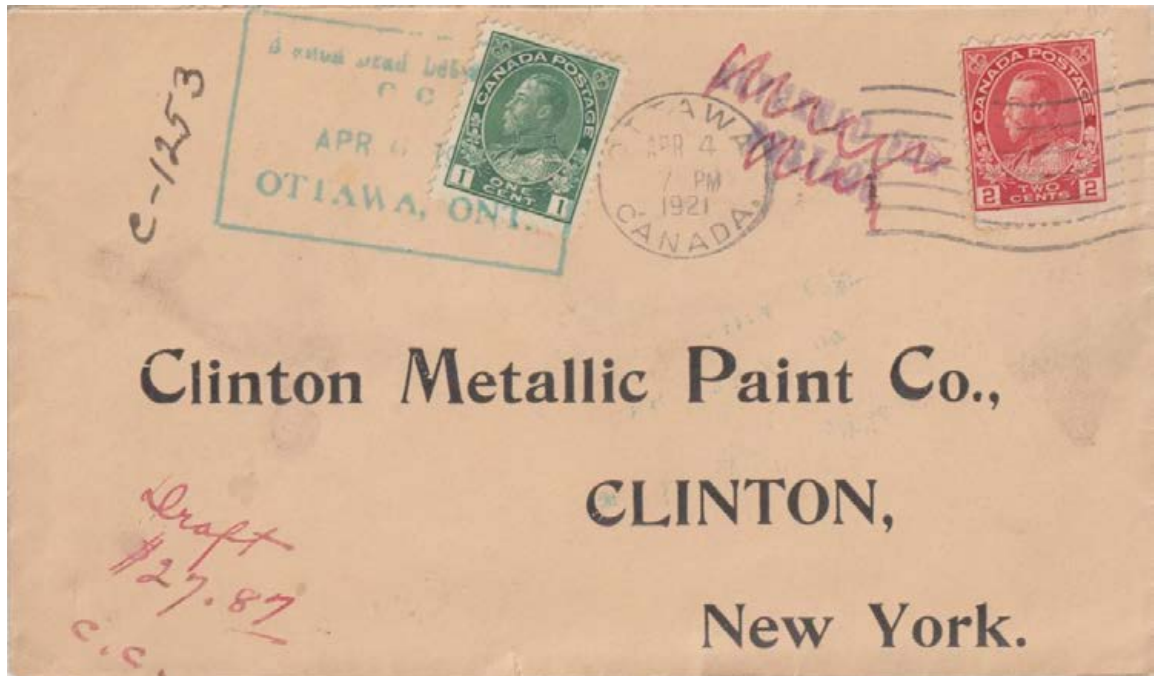
Branch Dead Letter Office  
C. C.  
APR 6 1921  
OTTAWA, ONT.

Rectangle

EARLIEST REPORTED DATE, 1 of 2

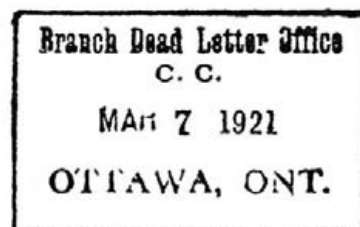
47mm x 29mm

All letters  
seriffed  
upper mixed,  
lower Caps



Ottawa, Canada APR 4 1921 to New York, RETURNED FOR / POSTAGE sent to Ottawa DLO, examined for sender's address, postage received on April 6 1921 forwarded to addressee.

DLO handstamps  
with postmaster's  
initials are very  
uncommon, most  
only exist in proof  
copies.



Proof Strike



DEAD LETTER OFFICE  
BUREAU DES REBUTS  
8 - II 1949  
No. 8  
OTTAWA, CANADA.

Rectangle

46mm x 35mm

Sans-serif and caps

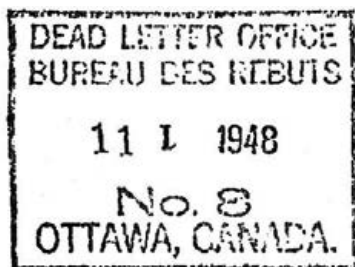
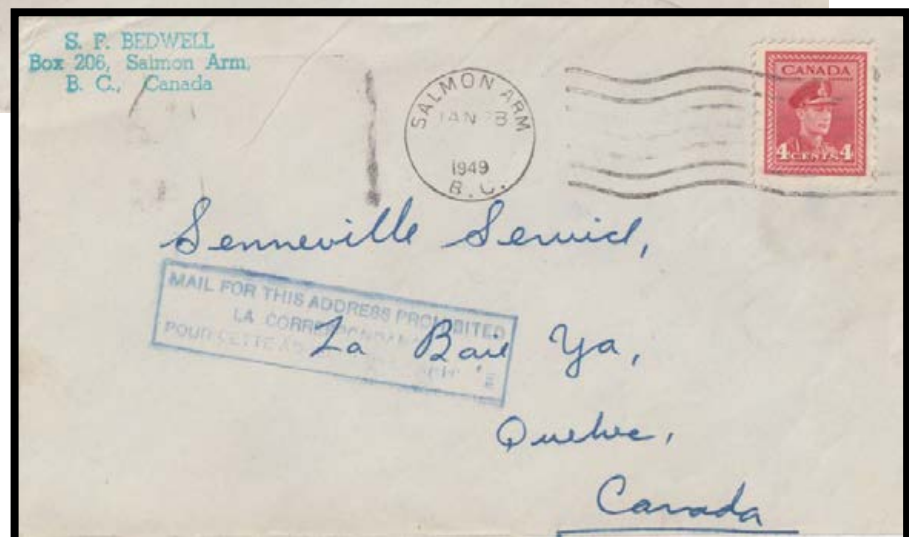
Month in Roman Numerals

Proof Strike 11 I 48

In 1948 changes were made in the Dead Letter Office where they produced several new DLO handstamps for only Ottawa, Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver (all other DLO offices were closed per P.O. Weekly Bulletin - August 21, 1948 including the Ottawa District Dead Letter Office). For Ottawa, eleven new rectangular strike proof handstamps were made between January and November 1948 with the following two items of four known sub types (7 total) so far reported.



The above and next item  
are some of the latest reported  
Ottawa DLO handstamps



Scan 75%

'MAIL FOR THIS ADDRESS PROHIBITED...'

Proof Strike

DEAD LETTER OFFICE  
BUREAU DES REBUTS  
14 VI 1950  
No. 11  
OTTAWA, CANADA.

Rectangle

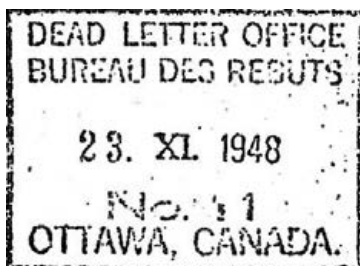
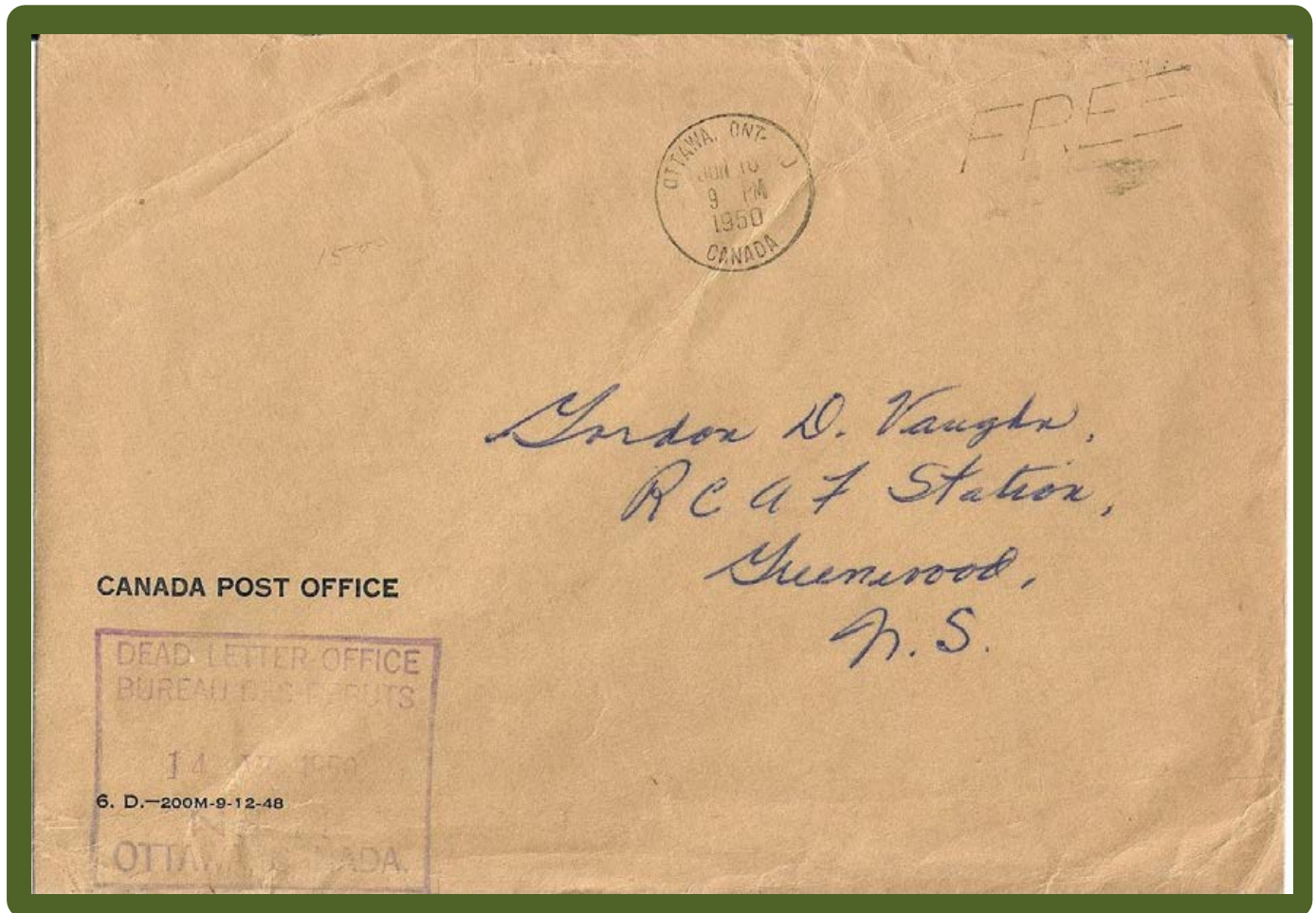
PREVIOUSLY ONLY PROOF KNOWN, OKC

46mm x 35mm

Sans-serif and caps

Month in Roman Numerals

Strike Proof 23 XI 48



Ottawa, Ont. JUN 10 9PM 1950 FREE franked CANADA POST OFFICE

Return letter envelope to Greenwood, Nova Scotia with an enclosed Dead Letter. No return letter fee appears to be stated on the outside of this envelope.

Proof Strike

DEAD LETTER OFFICE  
K  
DEC 7 1920  
OTTAWA, ONT.

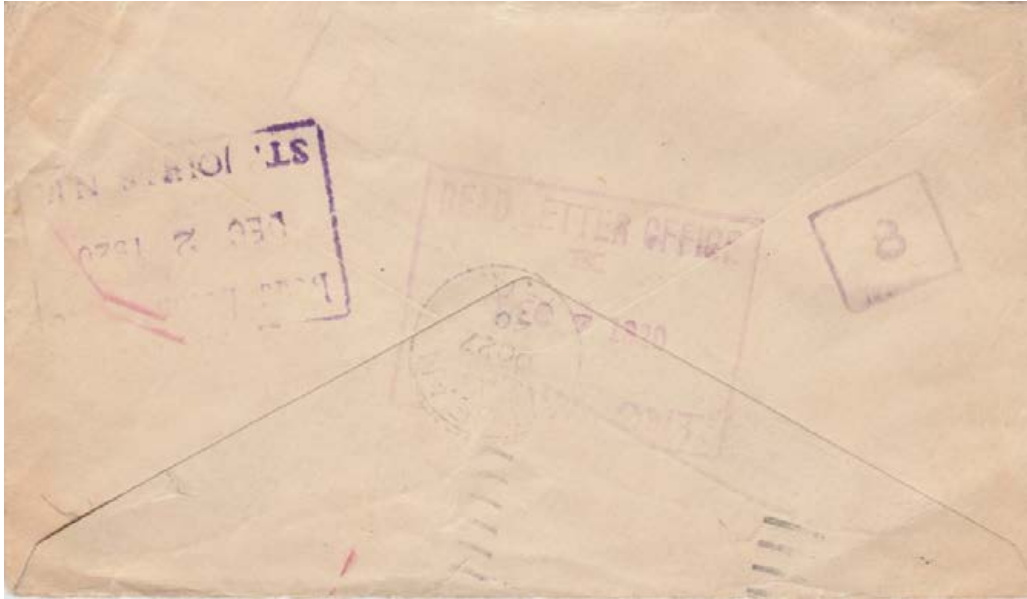
Rectangle

ONE of TWO REPORTED, ERD

44mm x 32mm

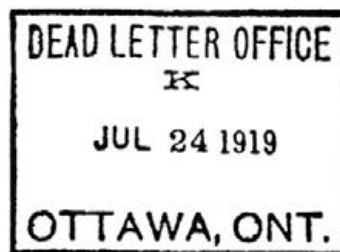
All letters  
san-serif &  
capitalized

Note  
St. John's  
NF  
DLO  
handstamp



Montreal Oct 27 1920 to St. John's Nfld underpaid sent to St. Johns N.F. Dead Letter Office on DEC 2 1920 and forwarded to the Ottawa Dead Letter Office on Dec 7 1920 to locate the sender. 3 cts stamp enclosed per manuscript note, applied and forwarded to addressee.

Proof Strike



Handstamps with letters to signify a particular clerk or usage were mainly designed in the early 1920's with many being rare. Whereas, numbered rectangle handstamps equally as rare were used from the late 1920's up to the late 1940's. Many different types for Ottawa DLO handstamps are seen on several of the following pages.



Dead Letter Office  
Inspection Service  
SEP 23 1939  
Ottawa, - Ont.

ERD & LRD

46mm x 33mm

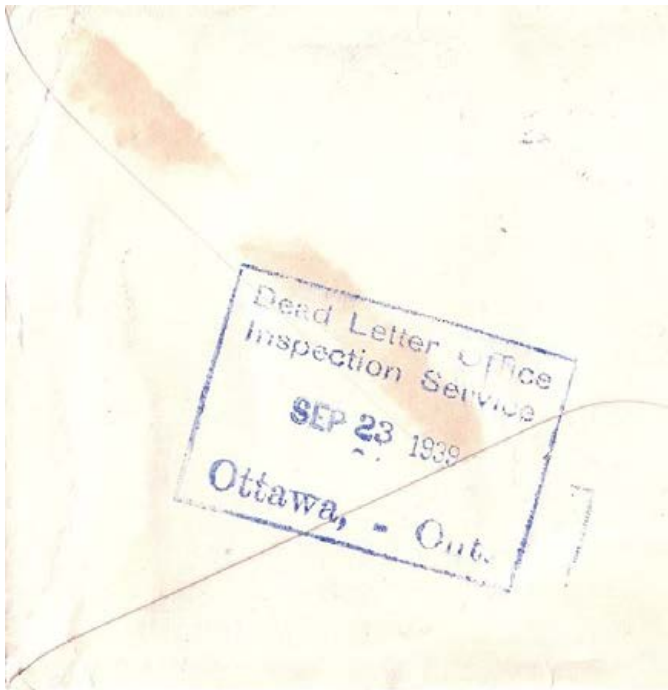
No 'No. \_\_\_'

Upper letters  
sans-serif  
Lower letters  
seriffed and  
larger

These handstamps usually  
appear on mail to foreign  
destinations being returned.

to Japan

Rectangle



Dead Letter Office  
Inspection Service  
JUN 21 1944  
Ottawa, - Ont.

to Trinidad

Early 1944 unfranked cover received  
in Port of Spain and taxed FEB 11, 1944  
5d **Rec'd open** and REFUSED sent to the  
Trinidad Returned Letter Branch 25 FEB  
44 then to the New York DLO and  
officially sealed April 3, 1944 DLO label.

Sent back to the Trinidad Returned  
Letter Branch 15 MAY 1944 then  
dispatched to Ottawa Inspection  
Division DLO JUN 16, 44 and returned  
for 11¢ due **"TAX 11¢"** JUN 21, 1944.



District Dead Letter Office

1

JAN 14 1928

OTTAWA, ONT.

Rectangle

45mm x 28mm

Upper letters

sans-serif

Lower letters

seriffed, caps



No proof known

No comma after 'Office' or dash between 'OTTAWA, ONT.'

Normal 'O's in 'OTTAWA, ONT.'

No 'No.' before inspector number.

There are seventeen sub-types of this type of rectangular DLO handstamp. The characteristics for determining the different handstamps are:

Commas after 'Office,' or not.

Lower letters sans-serif or serif

Dash '-' between 'A, - O' or not

Wide spacing in 'O T T A W A, O N T.'

Normal and large 'O's in 'OTTAWA, ONT.'

No 'No.' before the inspector number.

In addition the distance of '**District Dead Letter Office**' can be several mm's different in length and the size of the actual handstamps vary substantially.

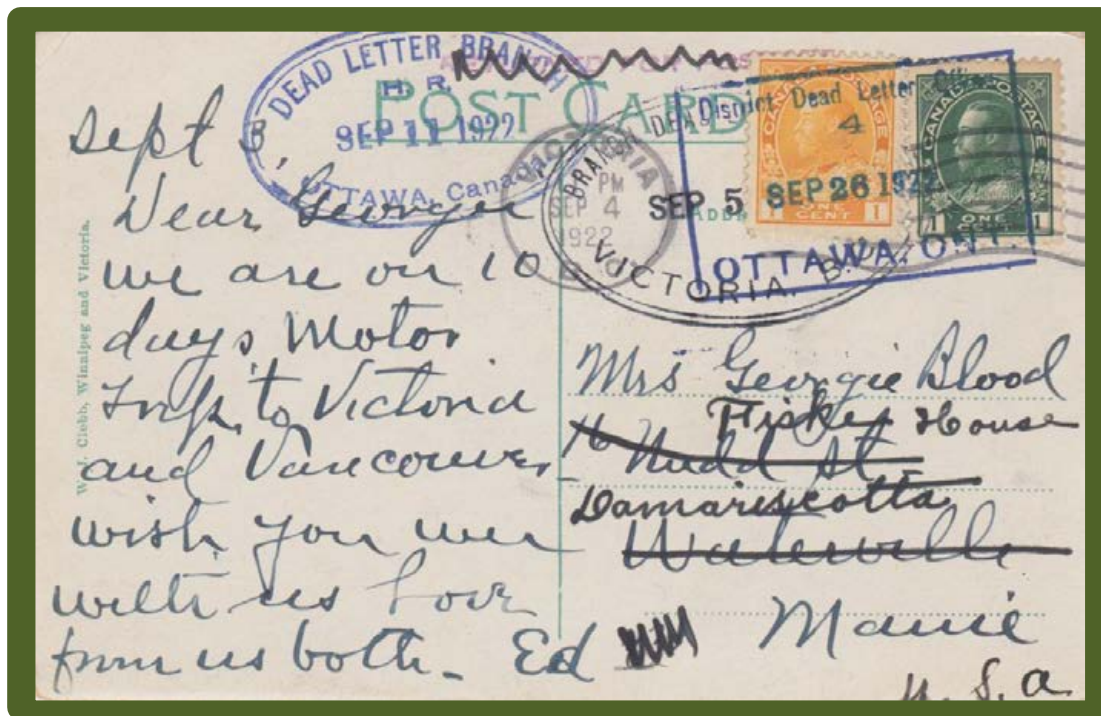
District Dead Letter Office  
4  
SEP 26 1922  
OTTAWA, ONT.

Rectangle

Previously unreported

45mm x 28mm

VVV



No proof  
known

Victoria, B.C. 1 cent paid post card RETURNED FOR POSTAGE sent to the DLO  
Victoria SEP 5 1922 forwarded to Ottawa DLO SEP 11 1922 where postage  
was received at Ottawa DLO SEP 27 1922. RETURNED FOR POSTAGE (crossed  
out) upon payment of additional 1 cent orange Admiral stamp,

Note file Clerk # cancelled out at bottom.

DEAD LETTER BRANCH  
H. R.  
SEP 11 1922  
OTTAWA, Canada.

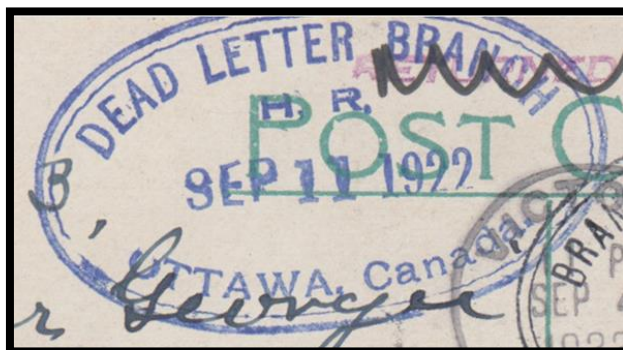
Double Oval

47mm x 27mm

Lower lettering  
seriffed

OKC

Scan 150%



Proofed NOV 12 1920

Postmaster's initials in handstamps are uncommon



District Dead Letter Office

1

NOV 18 1939

OTTAWA, ONT.

47mm x 32mm

All lettering sans-serif

ERD of 3 reported

Strike proof April 29 1939

This is the only strike proof of these sub-types reported.

District Dead Letter Office

4

NOV 20 1939

OTTAWA, ONT.

45mm x 34mm

Upper letters sans-serif

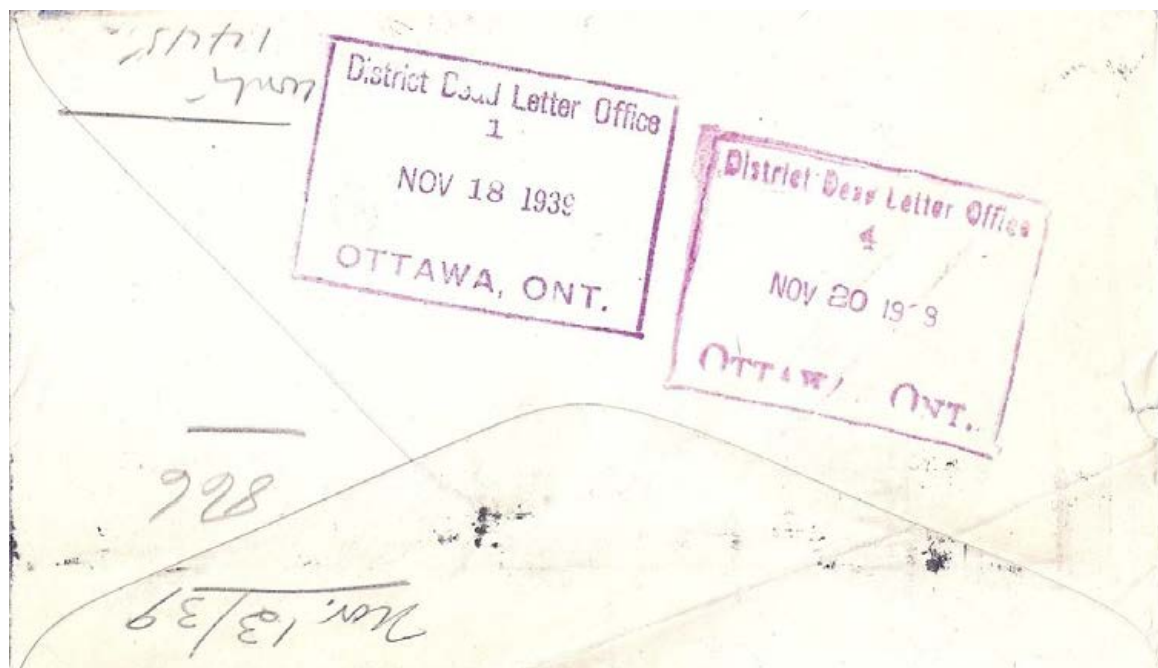
Lower letters seriffed

with large 'O's in

'OTTAWA, ONT.'

Previously unreported, OKC

No proof known



**'Removed No change..' & 'House Demolished'** manuscript on front

North Bay, Ont. NOV 14 1939 **'CITY'** drop rate letter **'RETURN TO WRITER'** forwarded to the Ottawa Dead Letter Office with receiving and dispatching handstamps.

District Dead Letter Office,  
5  
APR 12 1939  
OTTAWA, ONT.

Rectangle

LATEST REPORTED DATE of 2 KNOWN

44mm x 33mm

Upper letters sans-serif  
Lower letters seriffed

Comma after 'Office,'

No proof known

'No. 3' >>>



'5' >>>

District Dead Letter Office,  
No. 3  
APR 11 1939  
OTTAWA, ONT.

PREVIOUSLY UNREPORTED, OKC

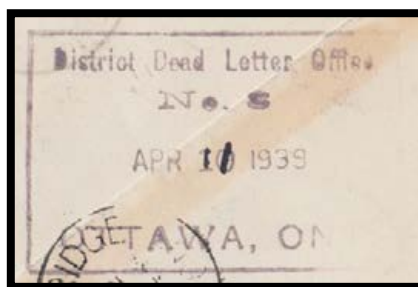
45mm x 34mm

Upper letters sans-serif

Lower letters seriffed and all caps.

'No. \_' before  
inspector #.

Scan 100%



Scan of 'No. 3' handstamp above

District Dead Letter Office

4

OCT 16 1940  
OTTAWA, ONT.

Rectangle

EARLIEST REPORTED DATE 2 KNOWN

47mm x 34mm

Seriffed lettering in  
'OTTAWA, ONT.'  
42mm wide

Large 'O' in  
'Ottawa, and Ont.'

>>>

No proof known



District Dead Letter Office,

1

NOV 3 1938  
OTTAWA, - ONT.

47mm x 30mm

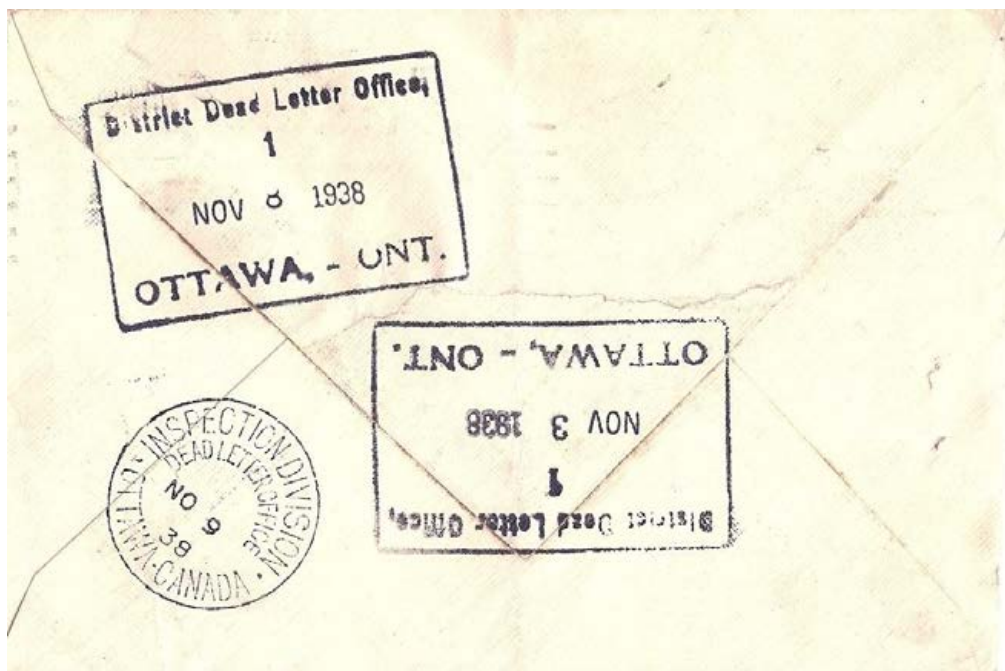
Upper letters  
sans-serif

Comma after  
'Office,'

Dash between  
'OTTAWA, - ONT.'

1 >>>

No proof known



'RETURNED FOR BETTER DIRECTION'



District Dead Letter Office,

3

NOV 24 1938

OTTAWA, - ONT.

Rectangle

Previously unreported, OKC

47mm x 32.5mm

Upper letters  
sans-serif

Comma after  
'Office,'

Dash between  
'OTTAWA, - ONT.'

3 >>>

No proof known



Inspection Division  
Dead Letter Office  
10 6 1936  
No. 3  
Ottawa, Canada.

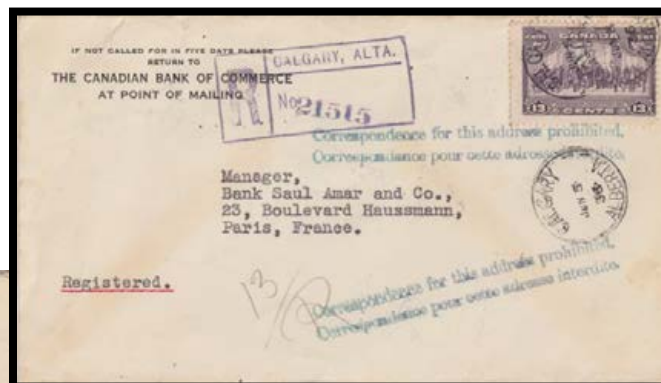
45mm x 34mm

Upper lettering  
sans-serif  
Lower lettering  
finely seriffed.

Numerals used  
for month  
instead of  
being spelled  
out.

Black ink

No proof known



Scan 50%



'Correspondence for this address prohibited.'  
'Correspondence pour cette adresse interdite.'

Inspection Division  
Dead Letter Office  
28 10 1937  
No. 3  
Ottawa, Canada.

Rectangle

Similar to previous item  
numerals used for month

Return to sender  
Delivery forbidden by  
judicial sentence.

Scan 50%

VVV

Blue ink.



Enclosed letter  
from Berwick, N.S.  
states:

'Enclosed find \$1.00  
for which...**bulbs as**  
advertised in  
"The Maritime Farmer"



Inspection Division  
Dead Letter Office  
MAY 9 1940  
No. 3  
Ottawa, Canada.

PREVIOUSLY UNREPORTED

45mm x 34mm

Upper lettering  
sans-serif  
Lower lettering  
finely serifed

Lettering  
'MAY'  
used for  
month



No proof known

MAIL SERVICE SUSPENDED to Belgium



Inspection Division  
Dead Letter Office  
JUN 12 1933  
No. 4  
Ottawa, Canada.

Rectangle

ONLY REPORTED COPY

47mm x 33mm

Sans-serif  
Lower lettering  
with 'No. 4'  
seriffed



'Ottawa, Canada.'  
38mm length

No proof known

Viceroy, Sask. MY 2 1933 to Tunis, Africa charged 20 centimes postage due. Upon arrival in Tunisia 2 x 60 cent postage due stamps were applied and tied to cover on May 22 1933. Straight-line handstamp **RETOUR A L'ENVOYEUR** and Not called for / Non - reclame added by the Tunisia post office.

Per large X with arrow and circle pointing to Viceroy, Sask. the letter was sent back to Canada, received in Montreal on June 7 1933, Eighteen days after receipt in the Ottawa DLO, the letter was forwarded to the New Zealand Dead Letter Office.

Upon receipt at the New Zealand DLO, 8 August 1933 it was sent out in a Dead Letter Return envelope with 2d to be collected from the addressee on the back flap. Note cut-outs of DLO Return envelope, as most were used internally by the NZ post office.



Inspection Division  
Dead Letter Office  
DEC 3 1941  
No. 4  
Ottawa, Canada.

Rectangle

EARLIEST REPORTED DATE

45mm x 32mm

Upper lettering  
sans-serif  
Lower lettering  
with 'No.'  
serifed

'Ottawa, Canada.'  
39mm length



No proof known

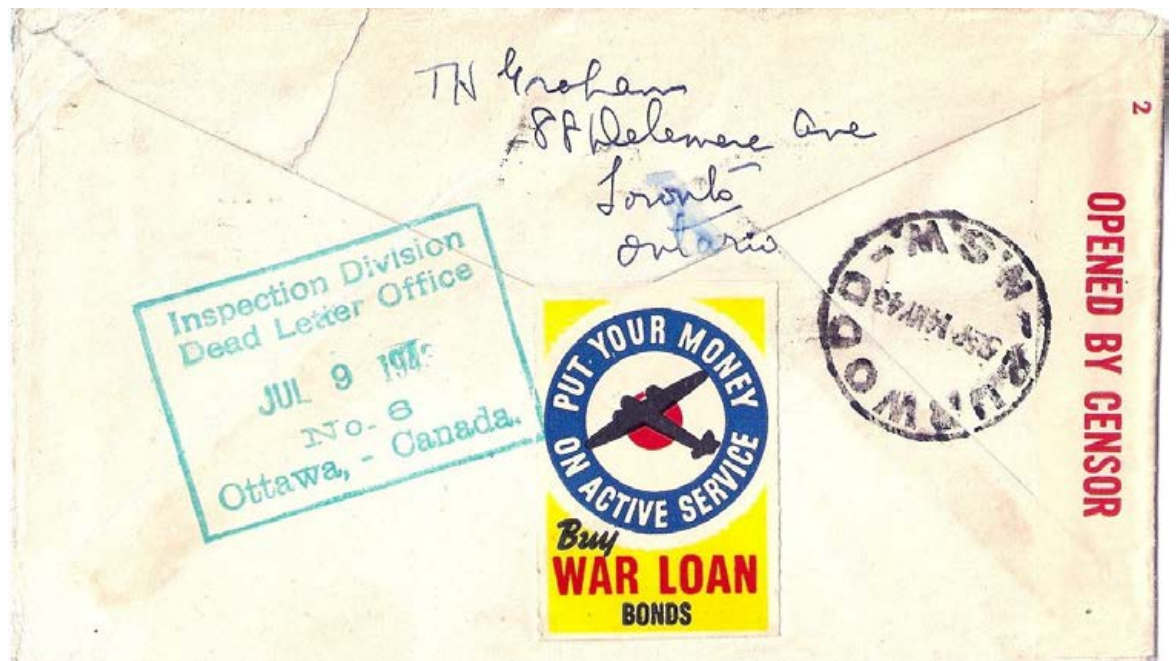
MAIL SERVICE SUSPENDED to Hungary

Inspection Division  
Dead Letter Office  
JUL 9 1943  
No- 6  
Ottawa, - Canada.

48mm x 33mm

Upper lettering  
sans-serif  
Lower lettering  
& 'No - 6'  
serif.

'Ottawa, - Canada.'  
41mm length  
with dash before  
'- Canada.'



Green ink

No proof known

Canada to Australia returned dead letter

Inspection Division ,  
Dead Letter Office.  
NOV 5 1943  
No. 7  
OTTAWA, CANADA.

Rectangle

LATEST REPORTED DATE

45mm x 32mm

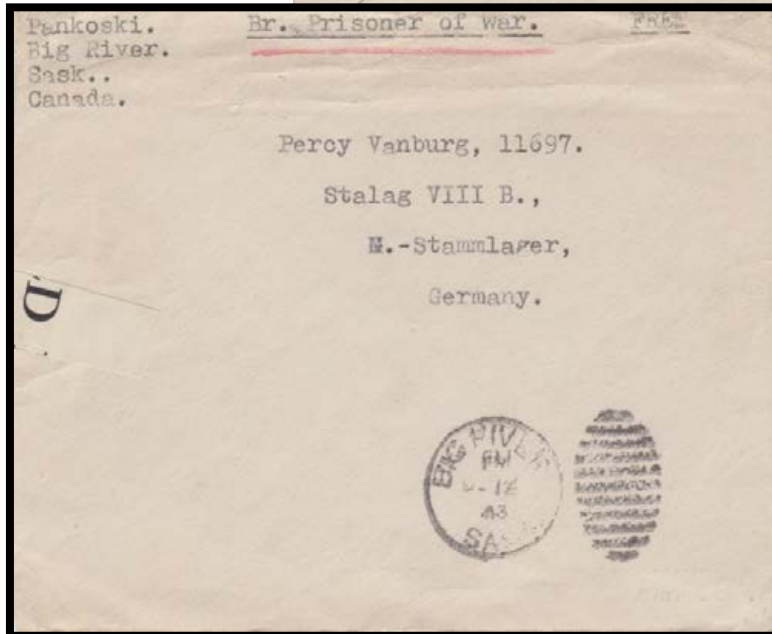
All lettering  
seriffed except  
for month.

**'OTTAWA, CANADA.'**  
capitalized

Coma after  
**'Division,'**

Period after  
**'Office.'**

Proof Strike  
Dec 14 1927



Note use of small Canadian Postal censor tape on left side.

Scan 75%

FREE franking Big River, Sask. Oct. 12, 1943 to a British Prisoner of War H. - Stammlager, Germany. Checked by Canadian Postal Censors Nov 3 1943 and sent to the Ottawa Dead Letter Office

INSPECTION DIVISION  
DEAD LETTER OFFICE  
MAR 2 1944  
No. 60  
Ottawa, Canada.

Rectangle

47mm x 34mm

All lettering  
sans-serif

LATEST REPORTED DATE



No proof known

Winnipeg, Man. Oct 21 1943 to R.C.A.F. Overseas REPORTED KILLED 25 / 12 / 43  
returned to sender via Canadian Overseas Postal Depot 19 Jan 1944 to  
Canadian Dead Letter Office Mar 2 1944



Scan 75%



INSPECTION DIVISION  
DEAD LETTER OFFICE  
MAY 16 1942  
No. 10  
OTTAWA, CANADA.

47mm x 33mm  
Upper lettering  
sans-serif

All letters  
capitalized

No proof known

Guelph, Ontario OCT 23, 41  
meter cover to Shanghai, China  
MAIL SERVICE SUSPENDED  
and Returned to Writer pointing  
finger via Ottawa DLO MAY 16, 1942.

PREVIOUSLY UNREPORTED, OKC

Rectangle

Scan 50%



Inspection Division  
Dead Letter Office  
MAY 4 1942  
No. 11  
Ottawa, Canada.

49mm x 33mm

Finely serifed  
Lettering



British Solomon  
Islands

No proof known

Welland, Ont. Oct 27, 1941 to British Solomon Islands, Australasia handstamped  
MAIL SERVICE SUSPENDED & NOT TRANSMISSIBLE / SERVICE SUSPENDED  
sent to the Ottawa Inspection Division/Dead Letter Office May 4 1942

Inspection Division  
Dead Letter Office  
JUL 21 1943  
No. 11  
Ottawa, Canada.

Rectangle

LATEST REPORTED DATE

49mm x 33mm

Finely serified  
lettering

Green ink

No proof known



Inspection Service  
Dead Letter Office  
NOV 21 1947  
No. 7  
Ottawa, Canada.

47mm x 33mm

Finely serified  
lettering

PREVIOUSLY UNKNOWN  
ONLY KNOWN COPY

No proof known





Inspection Division  
Dead Letter Office  
FEB 2 1942  
No. 8  
OTTAWA, CANADA.

Rectangle

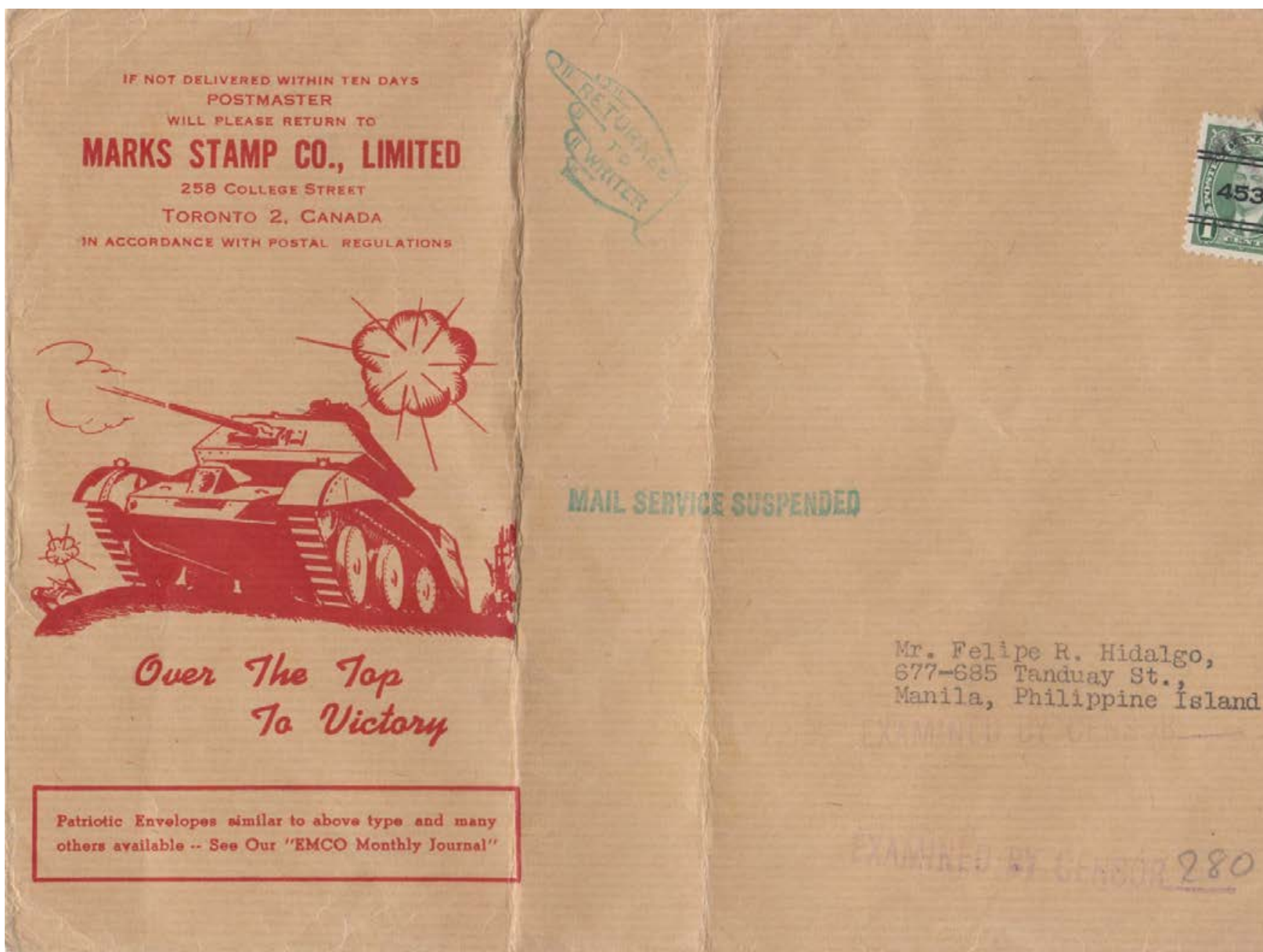
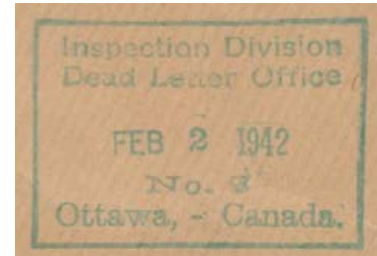
47mm x 33mm  
Upper lettering sans-serif  
Lower lettering serifed

All letters mixed

Note dash between  
'Ottawa, - Canada.'

Precancel Toronto #4530  
Mailed to Philippine Islands  
Examined by Censor 280  
RETURNED TO WRITER  
Patriotic commercial cover  
MAIL SERVICE SUSPENDED  
And sent to the DLO

Scan 100%



No proof known



Inspection Service  
Dead Letter Office  
APR 5 1945  
No. 4  
Ottawa, Canada.

Rectangle

48mm x 37mm

EARLIEST REPORTED DATE

Upper letters sans-serif  
Lower seriffed

To British Guiana

8 times 10¢ per ¼ oz.  
air mail rate for 80¢  
total, short-paid 64¢  
and charged 128¢  
postage due.

No proof known



Inspection Division  
Dead Letter Office  
MAR 27 1942  
Ottawa, - Canada.

49mm x 34mm

Finely serified letters

No 'No. \_'

Dash between

'Ottawa, - Canada.'

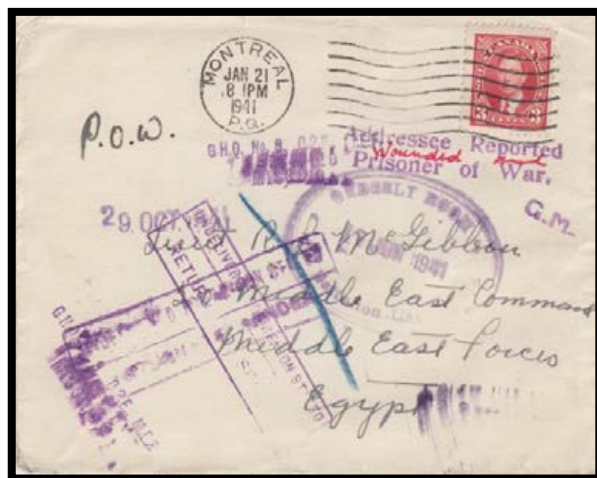
Scan 50%

'P. O. W.'

'Addressee Reported'

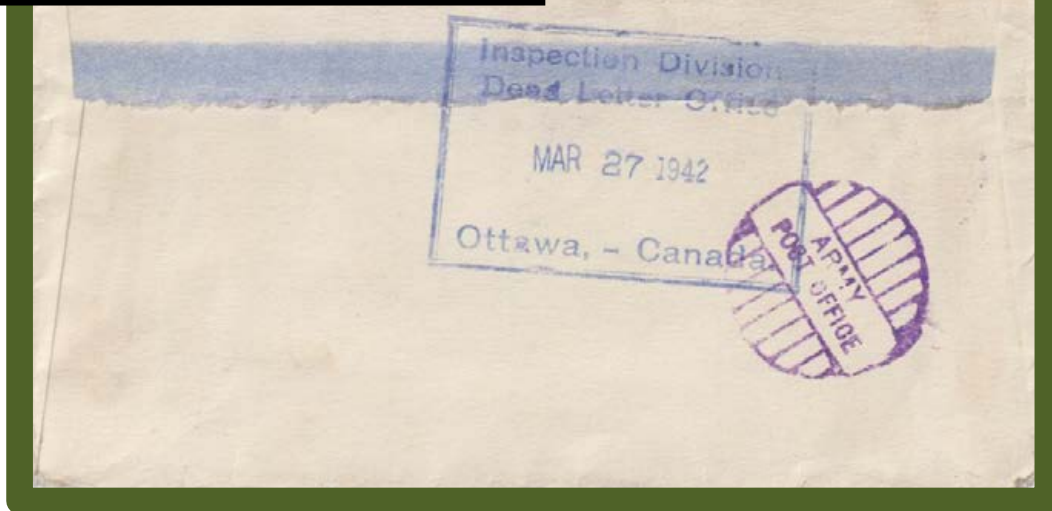
'Prisoner of War,'

'G.M.'



Rectangle Double Border

PREVIOUSLY UNKNOWN, OKC



No proof known

Prisoner of War cover Montreal JAN 21, 1941 to 'Middle East Command', Middle East Forces, Egypt Jun 17, 1941 ARMY POST OFFICE on back, sent to Ottawa DLO MAR 27, 1942.

Inspection Division  
Dead Letter Office  
DEC 28 1933  
No. 8  
Ottawa, Canada.

45mm x 33mm

Upper letters sans-serif

Lower seriffed

No dash between

'Ottawa, Canada.'



PREVIOUSLY UNKNOWN , 1 of 2 LRD

No proof known



Inspection Division  
Dead Letter Office  
APR 7 1937  
No- 8  
Ottawa, - Canada.

Rectangle Double Border

48mm x 33mm

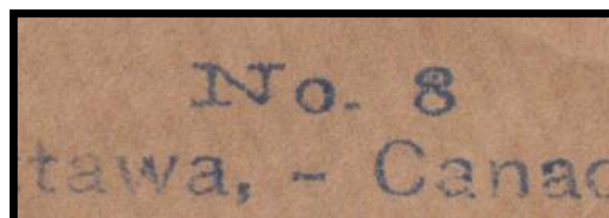
All lettering  
finely seriffed

No proof known

EARLIEST REPORTED DATE



In this No- 8 handstamp (as compared to the previous item) there is a fine dash after 'No-' instead of a period and there is a dash between 'Ottawa, - Canada.'





INSPECTION SERVICE,  
AUG 24 1939  
DEAD LETTER OFFICE  
OTTAWA. ( 14 )

Rectangle Double Border

EARLIEST REPORT DATE

50mm x 32mm

Sans-serif

Number (14)  
in brackets,

Proof Strike  
JAN 13 1930



Period of use for the bracketed (14) and (17) handstamps is 1939 to 1947. However, the (14) handstamp was proofed a full 10 years earlier than the (17) handstamp

INSPECTION SERVICE,  
APR 29 1944  
DEAD LETTER OFFICE  
OTTAWA. ( 17 )

Violet ink

49mm x 33mm

Sans-serif

Number (17)  
in brackets,

Note different  
lettering  
1<sup>st</sup> line to  
previous item

Proof Strike  
JUL 6 1940



Merritt, B.C. to Bristol England 15 March 1944, *address blacked out with label*

INSPECTION SERVICE,  
SEP 4 1942  
DEAD LETTER OFFICE  
OTTAWA. (17)

49mm x 33mm

Rectangle Double Border

Blue ink



Sans-serif

Number (17)  
in brackets,

Proof Strike  
JUL 6 1940

Scan 50%

Vancouver, B.C. Nov 24, 1941 to Alexandria, Egypt censored by Egyptian censors per censor tape and circular handstamp in addition to casket censor marking. RETURN TO SENDER imprinted sending cover back to Canada.

Return transit through the New York Dead Letter Office Aug 7, 1942 to Vancouver, B.C. Aug 15, 1942 and sent to the Ottawa DLO per Inspection Service handstamp #17.



## Returned Dead Letter Office of Origin Handstamps

Returned Dead Letter envelopes were standardized and sent out to each Branch Dead Letter Office. As a result each branch DLO had to place their City name on the lower left front corner of the envelope directly above the Form # as an Office of Origin handstamp.

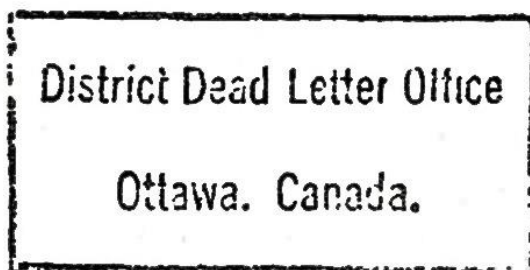
Previously shown were some Oval and Circle sub-type handstamps that appear on Return Dead Letter envelopes and other DLO mail. The following boxed handstamps for Ottawa only appear on Return Dead Letter envelopes. They include "Dead Letter or DLO" in the handstamp.

District Dead Letter Office  
Ottawa, Canada

Rectangle

38mm x 18mm

Small mixed lettering



Proof Strike Feb 37



DISTRICT DEAD LETTER  
OFFICE.  
Ottawa, = Ont.

Rectangle

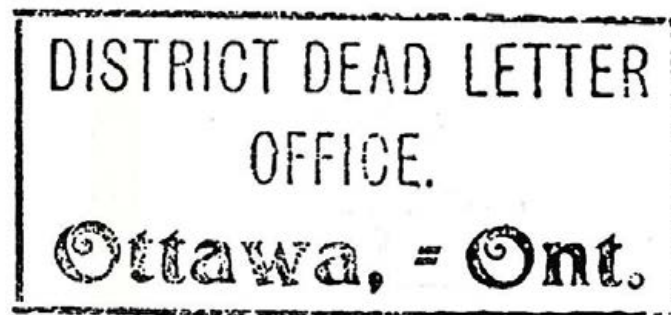
62mm x 29mm

Upper two lines capitalized

Lower large bold, seriffed, mixed lettering



On JUN 10 1936 this Returned Dead Letter envelope had another smaller envelope placed inside. The lower left was imprinted with the boxed DISTRICT DEAD LETTER/OFFICE. /Ottawa, = Ont. handstamp. Upon arrival at 350 Cumberland St. a 2 cent and 1 cent postage stamp was attached to pay the Returned Dead Letter fee.



Proof Strike April 1933

Ink colors can vary between Purple, violet, blue and black for RDL handstamps.

INSPECTION SERVICE  
DEAD LETTER OFFICE  
OTTAWA, - ONT.

Rectangle

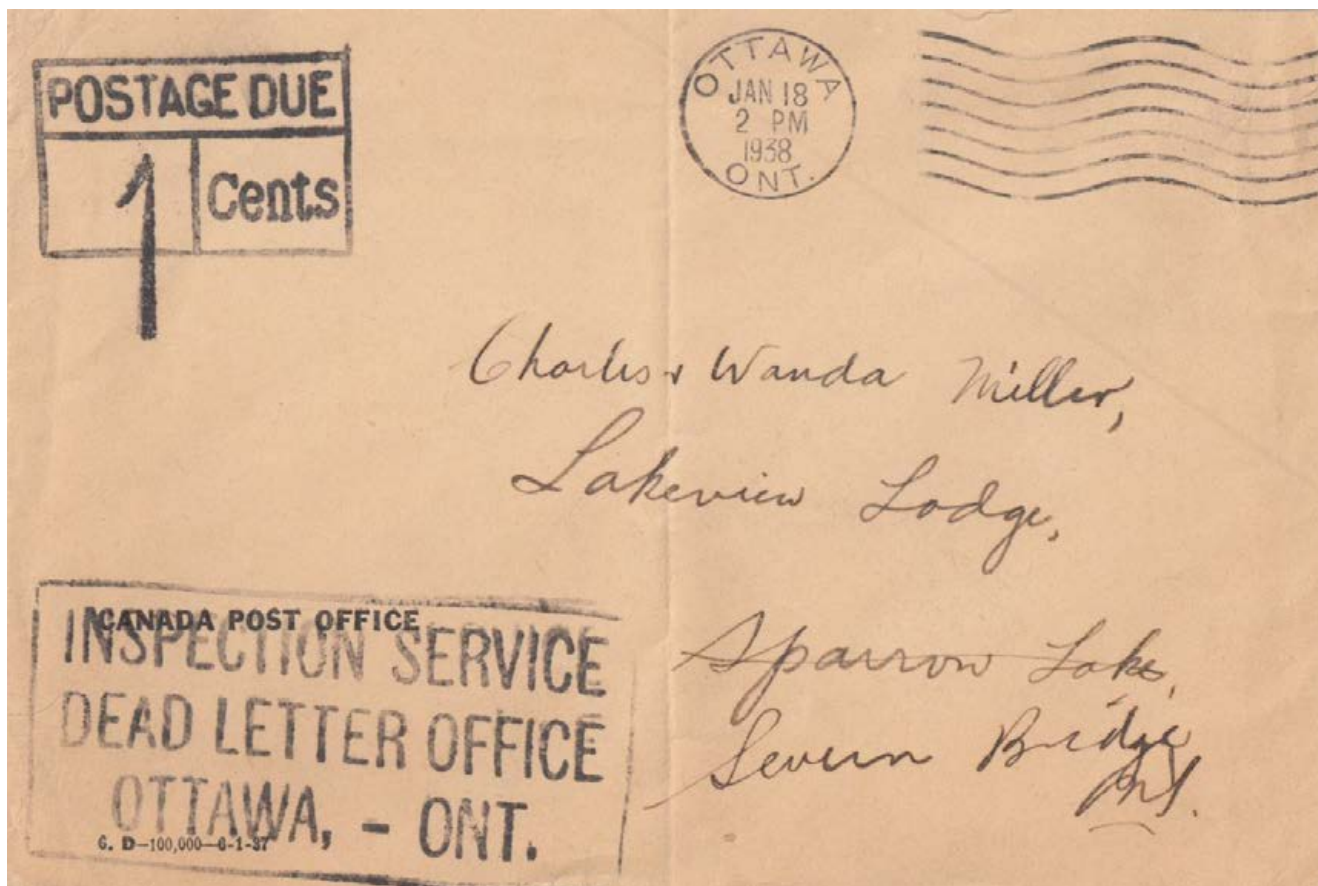
72mm x 33mm

All letters large  
6mm and  
all caps.



79 x 37mm

All letters  
7.5mm & caps  
VV



The 1940  
Postmaster's  
Information  
book states:

'Articles of  
Third Class  
Matter  
Originating in  
Canada are to  
be returned  
direct to the  
senders  
subject to a  
return charge  
equal to the  
original  
postage  
charge



INSPECTION SERVICE  
**Service de l'Inspection**  
DEAD LETTER OFFICE  
Bureau des Rebuts  
OTTAWA, ONT.

5 Line Word

Line length:  
53mm  
52mm  
54mm  
44mm  
44mm  
X 24.5mm high

All letters 3mm



No proof known

Returned Dead Letter  
East Chester, N.S. to  
Auckland, New Zealand



Mailed late Feb 1938  
received in Wellington  
dead Letter Office  
Apr 29 1938, forwarded  
to Ottawa DLO  
received May 20 1938



## ADVICE MARKINGS APPLIED AT DEAD LETTER OFFICES

'ADVICE' markings are DLO handstamps placed on covers to more easily facilitate the responsibilities and functions at and between the Dead Letter Offices. The words DLO, DEAD LETTER OFFICE or BUREAU DES REBUTS are required to differentiate them from other handstamps. Note that Advice markings are not '**GATEWAY**' markings. Gateway markings were made and used by individual Post Offices across the country, whereas Advice markings were used directly by DLO offices.

Although there are some proof records of Advice markings not all have been proofed. It is impossible to tell when they may have been made since there is no date within the handstamps, other than an occasional manuscript date applied. Advice markings are usually in '**word format**' of 1 to 4 lines, with the types and sizes varying dramatically.

Advice markings are much less common as they only applied to special situations such as '**Found Open...**' or '**Address Amended at...**' or '**Received in Damaged Condition...**' with many unreported a ratio of about 1 to every 30 regular DLO handstamps exists.

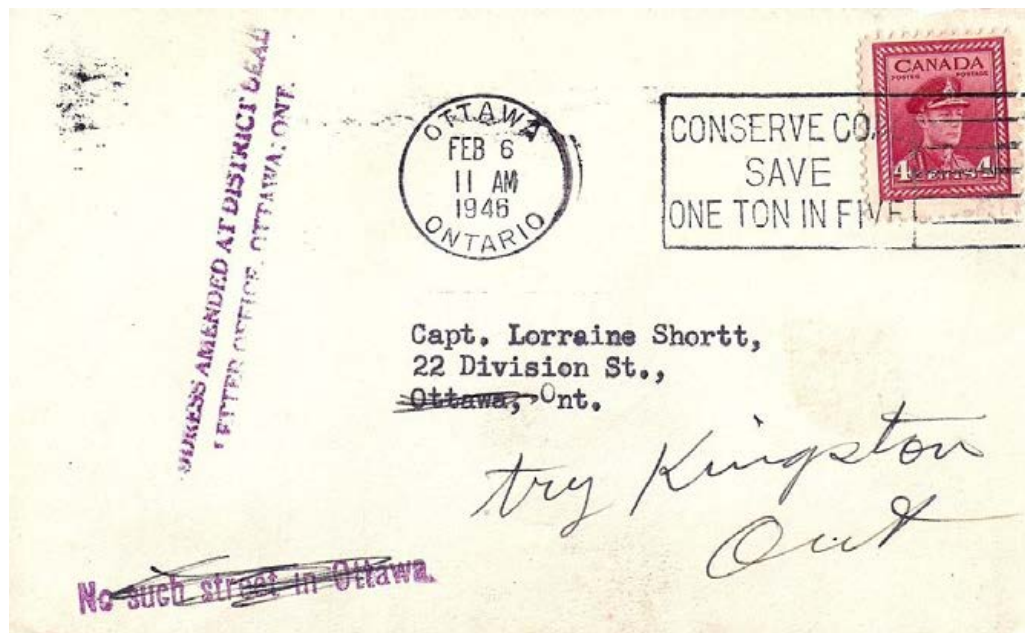
Dates of use are uncertain however most appear to be used in the 1930's to 1940's.

ADDRESS AMENDED AT DISTRICT DEAD  
LETTER OFFICE OTTAWA, ONT.

Ottawa Two Line Word

Width: 62mm, 49mm  
Height: 7mm

ONLY KNOWN COPY



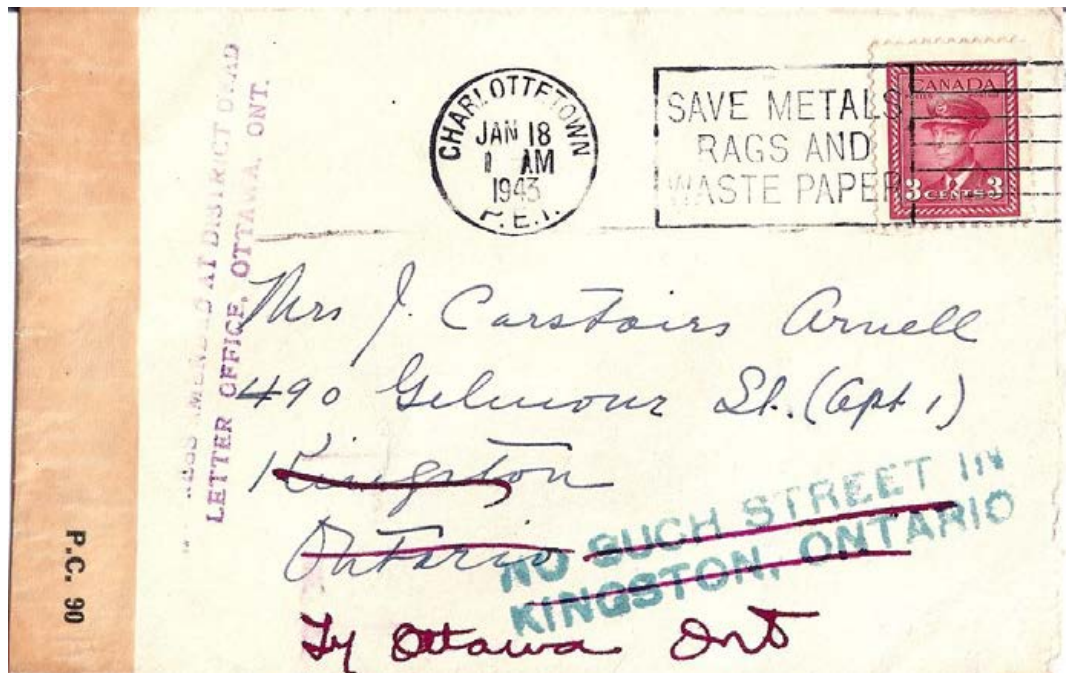
Proof Strike  
MAY 1927

ADDRESS AMENDED AT DISTRICT DEAD  
LETTER OFFICE, OTTAWA, ONT.

Ottawa Two Line Word

Width: 68mm, 58.5mm  
Height: 6.5mm

The dimensions  
of this 2 line  
handstamp  
are very  
different than  
the previous  
handstamp



No proof known

## D.L.O. WAX SEALS

'D.L.O. **Wax Seals**' are usually (but not always) found on Dead Letter Office Return Envelopes that are registered. They are included in this exhibit as they have the letters '**D.L.O.**' in the Wax handstamp.

Registered Returned Dead Letters are usually a result of the item being returned having been a registered item. Alternatively, an item of value found in an envelope may have required a need to be returned registered via post office policy (usually a value of \$1.00 or more).

Registered Return Envelopes are known without DLO wax seals being applied.



Enlargement next page 200%

## D.L.O. WAX SEALS

Pre Decentralization period:

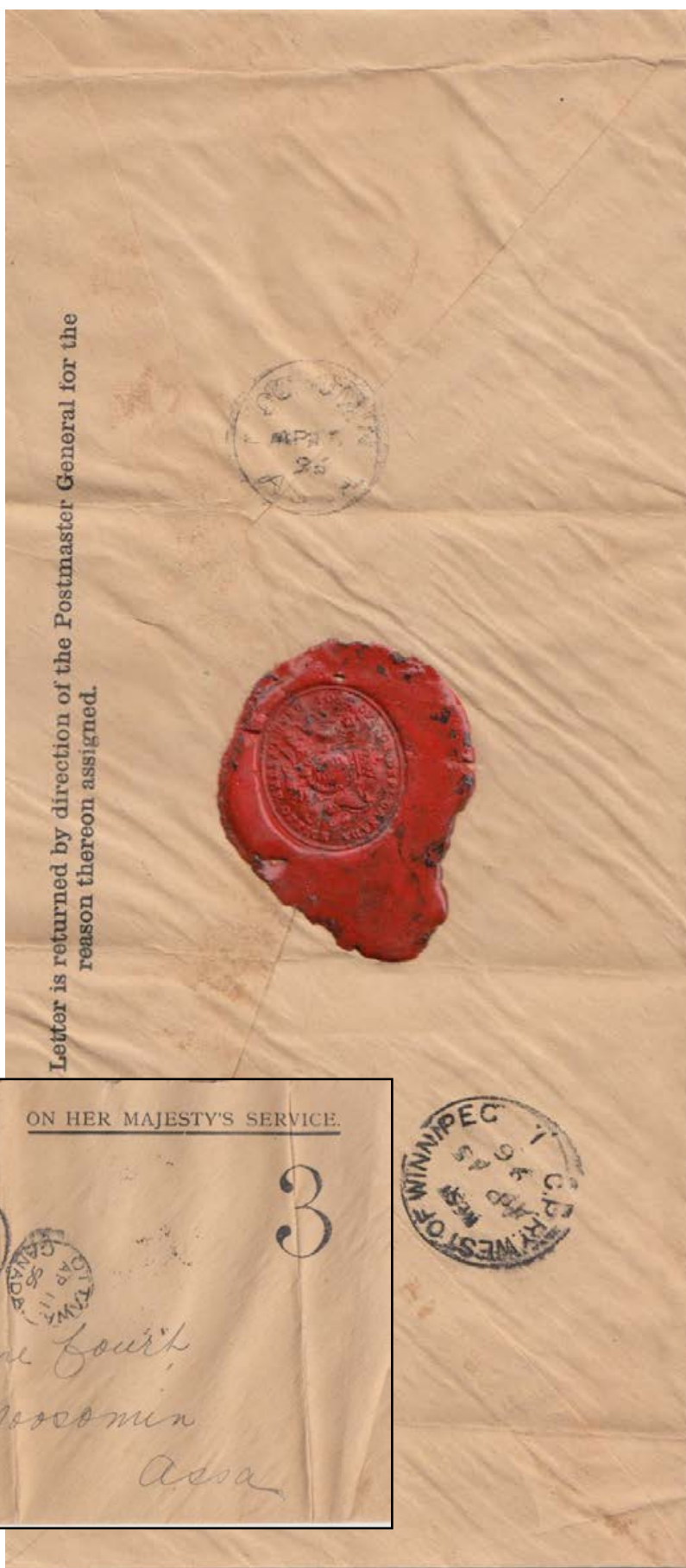
POST OFFICE DEPT CANADA      OVAL  
DEAD LETTER OFFICE

26mm x 24mm

No proof known.

RETURNED DEAD LETTER O.H.M.S.  
Dead Letter Branch 20 ½-5000-21-10-92

Sent AP 11 96 registered to Moosomin  
Assa. via C.P.RY. WEST OF WINNIPEG  
I. West AP 15/96 received in Moosomin





## Ottawa Branch D.L.O. Wax Seals

After decentralization, several Dead Letter Offices of the larger cities used Wax Seals with the letters 'D.L.O.' over a substantial period. Red wax was used to seal the back flap with the lettering:

'D.L.O. CANADA • "City inserted here" BRANCH •' with a large crown in the middle.

Although there are some proof records of Wax Seals, not all have been proofed. Since there is no date within these impressions, the envelope production date or a date stamp usually provides an adequate time frame of use. Some proofs have a manuscript date with month and year.

D.L.O. CANADA  
• OTTAWA BRANCH •

+

Ottawa Wax Seal

EARLIEST REPORTED DATE OF ANY BRANCH DLO WAX SEAL

26.5mm

NO 14 98

This envelope 5 D.L. 20,000 2 - 7 - 98 is the first printing after DLO decentralization in 1898.



No known proof of the above early Wax Seal.

Ottawa, Canada NO 14 98 registered Return Envelope to N.Y. received in Brooklyn N.Y. NOV 16 1898 address changed from Fort Hamilton 'FORWARDED' to a new destination.

Scan 50%

D.L.O. CANADA  
• OTTAWA BRANCH •

Ottawa Wax Seal

29mm diameter

New Research

Note the different Crowns in the previous page Ottawa Wax Seal and the lower Ottawa Wax Seal. The diameters are also different with this one being 2.5mm larger.



Scan 60%

Proof Strike



Ottawa, Canada FREE franking NO 22 39 on registered DLO Return Envelope  
6. D - 200,000 - 21-9-38 received in Windsor NO 23 39

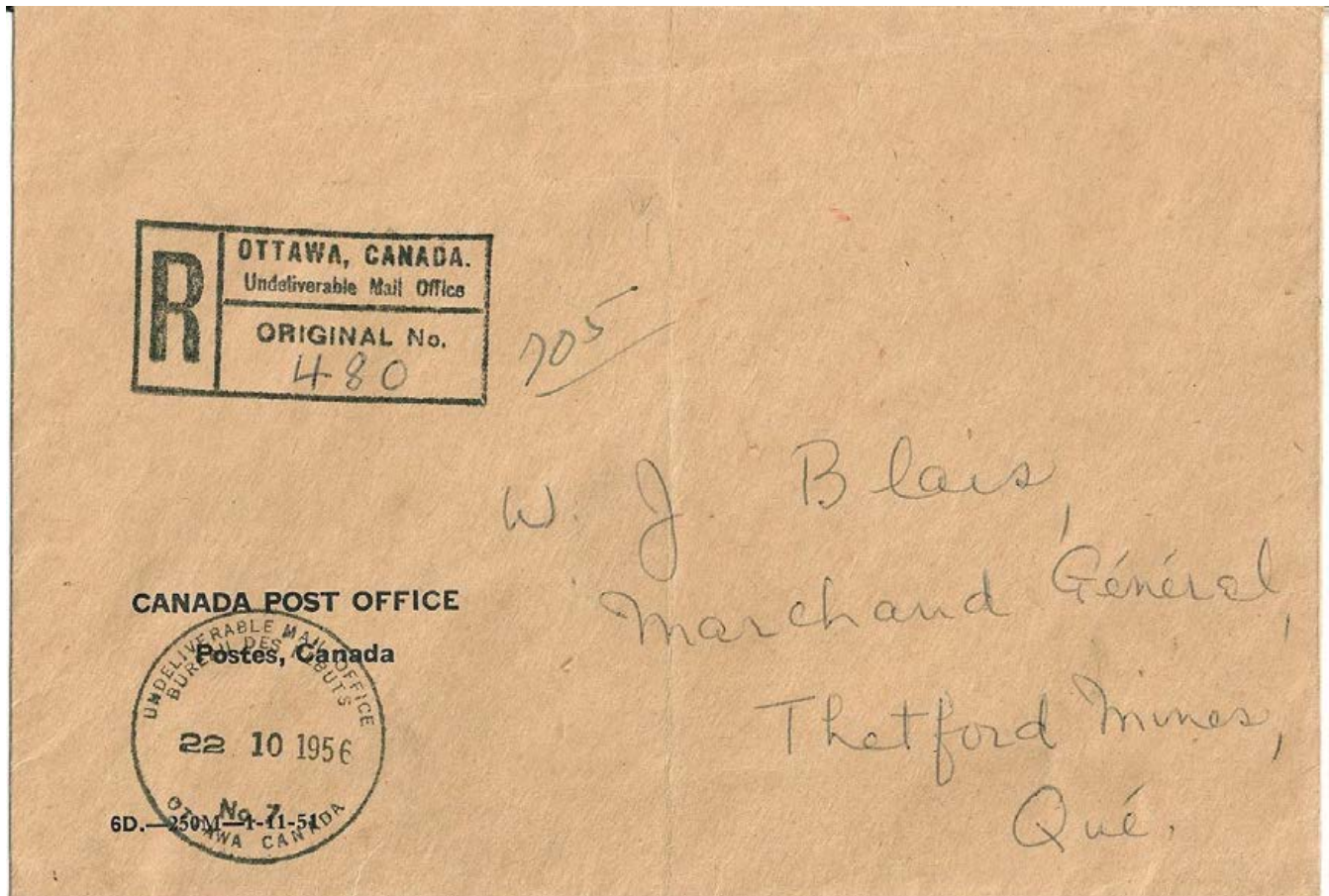
## The End of an Era

As with other Ottawa Dead Letter Office handstamps the Wax Seals used for DLO Registered Return Dead Letters gradually disappeared due to Post Office reorganizational changes starting in January 1948.

The use of Ottawa DLO handstamps was not cancelled immediately as some of the 1948 issued Rectangular Ottawa DLO dated handstamps were used as late as 1950.

### Undeliverable Mail Office

ONE OF TWO REPORTED



Latest known use of Registered UMO and No. 7 UMO circle handstamp

Undeliverable Mail Office Handstamps started to appear in 1954 phasing out the DLO handstamps. Less than a handful have been reported for the years 1954 and 1955. The earliest known Ottawa UMO is November 1955.

No explanation has been given as to why the transition was so sporadic.