

# THE CANADIAN DEAD LETTER OFFICE

*The British North America  
Philatelic Society  
Dead Letter Office  
Study Group  
Newsletter*

*Sept - Dec 2010 Issue 5*

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## Memories

As noted on the BNAPS website we have lost a few notable members, especially with regards to the Dead Letter Office Study Group. Marc Eisenberg and Harry Machum have recently passed away.

Both were very passionate members for both BNAPS and Dead Letter Office material. Marc was always interested in seeing new material, exhibiting and learning more. He was very successful in getting Gold and Vermeil medals for his Dead Letter Return Envelopes. I believe many have a new vision of what that material is all about.

Cont'd pg. 2

## Chairman's Desk

This issue of the newsletter presents a first attempt to bring some order into the confusing Type 3 markings of the Vancouver Undeliverable Mail Office. I hope that readers will examine the material in their collections and report dates and strikes to either Gary or me, accompanied by dimensions and scans if possible. The appended database indicates that many of the reports are single entry, although it is clear that several of these date stamps saw extensive use.

I join with Gary in extending our condolences to the families of Harry Machum and Marc Eisenberg. We also extend our sympathy to the family of Bill Robinson. Although Bill was not a member of our group, his encouragement of postal history research was unflinching, and he was a strong supporter of my project to write a book on the Dead Letter Office in Canada.

New Dead Letter Office markings continue to be found confirming the fact that a great deal of study and research is yet to be done on this topic. Gary's presentation of a newly found Winnipeg marking is a good example. The UMO is rich with such new finds, and the incomplete sequences of clerk marks means that we must never stop searching out material in dealer's lots, on eBay or in those 'must get to them sometime' boxes in our basement or den.

As mentioned before, Gary and I would appreciate any suggestions for articles in future newsletters, or better yet, we would be delighted to receive your article for inclusion in a subsequent issue.

I wish you all the happiest of Christmas seasons, and a safe and happy 2011.

Brian



*Feature Article  
Brian C. Plain*

*The Canadian Dead  
Letter Office Study  
Group*

The Canadian Dead Letter Office Study Group comes under the sponsorship of The British North American Philatelic Society (BNAPS)

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**Editor's Comments**

The DLO Newsletter issues are starting to pile up with the latest one posted on the BNAPS website for all to enjoy. Whenever possible I try to send links to the Study Group newsletters to others that may not be aware of them.

How many people out there that you may know either collect DLO material as part of another collection already or would be very interested in it? If we don't spread the word it will be the best kept secret of BNAPS.

I have received little response from others on articles or potential ideas of interest. We are always open to suggestions. Even if you do not have anything of interest for the newsletter drop me a line to say hello.

Wishing all the best and a Happy New Year.

**Memories Cont'd**

Harry would have continued at a fast pace for the next 50 years if able to do so. Harry collected the later period of the DLO from 1946 onwards. He tried vigorously to dig into the inner Post Office treasure that few understood, the workings of how and why the PO handled a certain piece of mail or internal PO documents. I actually met Harry on Friday Nov 12<sup>th</sup> at the CSDA show with a huge smile on his face still buying covers. We had a good discussion and I was as happy to see him there. I wish more people could have taken a few moments to spend time with him and find out how much our hobby means to some.

**Posting of DLO Newsletters on BNAPS Site**

Most are probably aware that these newsletters are posted on the Horrace Harrison website under Newsletters for all to see FREE of charge as soon as they are finished. There are no annual fees unless someone wants a hard copy mailed to them.

If everyone has email the option is also available to print them off on your own computer. This way they arrive in good condition and in a timely fashion.

**Recent Auction & Sale Listings**

Items of interest will be posted in past or future auctions so please email the editor with anything you might see or hear about.

The recent auction of the Canadian Philatelic Society of Great Britain offered a few Dead Letter items. Participation in this auction is open to members of the Society, and members of the DLO Study Group might wish to consider joining. Contact Mike Street, the Canadian representative.

**UNDELIVERABLE MAIL OFFICE  
BUREAU DES REBUTS  
VANCOUVER, CANADA**

By Brian Plain

Type VAN3a series

This series of Vancouver markings is somewhat complicated. Throughout the life of the UMO in Vancouver, three series of date stamps bearing clerk numbers appear to have been issued. Items similar in arrangement and configuration to one of the six identified types but lacking a number are listed as -blank.

The table shown below provides details as to the differences between the types.

	<b>Type3a-a#</b>	<b>Type 3a-a#a</b>	<b>Type 3a-a#b</b>
<b>Wording</b>	<b>UNDELIVERABLE MAIL OFFICE / BUREAU DES REBUTS / No. * / VANCOUVER, CANADA</b>	<b>UNDELIVERABLE MAIL OFFICE / BUREAU DES REBUTS / No. * / VANCOUVER, CANADA</b>	<b>UNDELIVERABLE MAIL OFFICE / BUREAU DES REBUTS / No. * / VANCOUVER, CANADA</b>
<b>Dimensions</b>	34mm	37mm	37mm
<b>BUREAU DES REBUTS</b>	arched	straight	arched

There appears to be considerable overlap in the use of these hand stamps and assigning a specific period of use, with the known information, is not possible.

Additional Type 3 Vancouver date stamps are known, and their characteristics are outlined below.

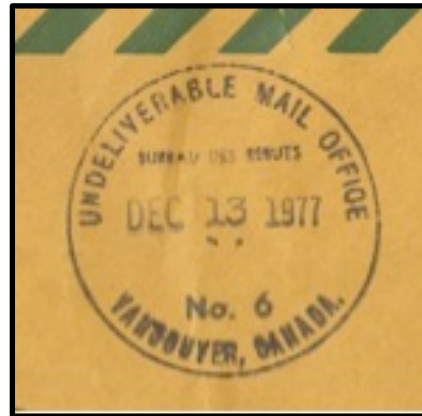
	<b>Type3a-b#</b>	<b>Type 3a-c#</b>	<b>Type 3a-c#a</b>	<b>Type 3a-d#</b>
<b>Wording</b>	<b>UNDELIVERABLE MAIL OFFICE / BUREAU DES REBUTS / No. * / VANCOUVER, B.C.</b>	<b>UNDELIVERABLE MAIL OFFICE / Bureau des Rebuts / No. * / VANCOUVER, B.C.</b>	<b>UNDELIVERABLE MAIL OFFICE / Bureau des Rebuts / No. * / VANCOUVER, CANADA</b>	<b>UNDELIVERABLE MAIL OFFICE / BUREAU DES REBUTS / No. * / VANCOUVER, B.C. V6B 1Y9</b>
<b>Dimensions</b>	38mm	37mm	37mm	38mm
<b>BUREAU DES REBUTS</b>	Straight	Arched with very small lettering	Arched	straight

The Vancouver UMO began operations in January 1954. A formal announcement of the closure of this office has not been seen, but the latest dated hand stamp is dated 9/1/1988.

Type 3a-a#: **UMO-V3a-a2**



Type 3a-a#a: **UMO-V3a-a6a**



Type 3a-a#b: **UMO-V3a-a8b**



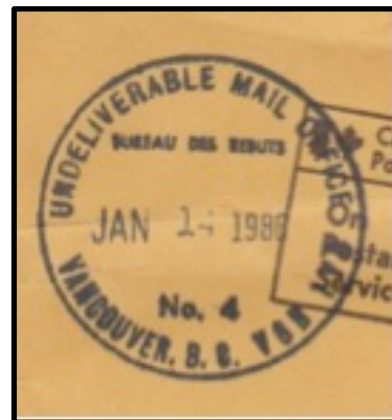
Type 3a-b#: **UMO-V3a-b7**



Type 3a-c#: **UMO-V3a-c4**



Type 3a-d#: **UMO-3a-d4**



<b>TYPE</b>	<b>WORDING</b>	<b>SIZE</b>	<b>ERD</b>	<b>LRD</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>COMMENTS</b>
UMO-V3a-a2	<b>UNDELIVERABLE MAIL OFFICE / BUREAU DES REBUTS / No. 2 / VANCOUVER, CANADA</b>	34mm	29/3/1955	8/3/1961	4	BUREAU DES REBUTS is arched. Letters 1mm
UMO-V3a-a2b	<b>UNDELIVERABLE MAIL OFFICE / BUREAU DES REBUTS / No. 2 / VANCOUVER, CANADA</b>	37mm	16/12/1960	25/7/1963	2	BUREAU DES REBUTS is arched
UMO-V3a-a3	<b>UNDELIVERABLE MAIL OFFICE / BUREAU DES REBUTS / No. 3 / VANCOUVER, CANADA</b>	34mm	17/11/1954	15/9/1959	5	BUREAU DES REBUTS is arched. Upper letters 1.5mm, lower letters 2mm
UMO-V3a-a3b	<b>UNDELIVERABLE MAIL OFFICE / BUREAU DES REBUTS / No. 3 / VANCOUVER, CANADA</b>	37mm	14/10/1959	17/8/1961	5	BUREAU DES REBUTS is arched. Upper letters 1.5mm, lower letters 2mm
UMO-V3a-a4b	<b>UNDELIVERABLE MAIL OFFICE / BUREAU DES REBUTS / No. 4 / VANCOUVER, CANADA</b>	37mm	16/12/1960		1	BUREAU DES REBUTS is arched
UMO-V3a-a5	<b>UNDELIVERABLE MAIL OFFICE / BUREAU DES REBUTS / No. 5 / VANCOUVER, CANADA</b>	34mm	9/1/1959	10/6/1959	3	BUREAU DES REBUTS is arched. Letters 1.5mm
UMO-V3a-a5b	<b>UNDELIVERABLE MAIL OFFICE / BUREAU DES REBUTS / No. 5 / VANCOUVER, CANADA</b>	37mm	19/1/1960	29/1/1964	3	BUREAU DES REBUTS is arched. Letters 2mm
UMO-V3a-a6	<b>UNDELIVERABLE MAIL OFFICE / BUREAU DES REBUTS / No. 6 / VANCOUVER, CANADA</b>	34mm	2/12/1957	19/2/1959	3	BUREAU DES REBUTS is arched. Letters 1.5mm
UMO-V3a-a6a	<b>UNDELIVERABLE MAIL OFFICE / BUREAU DES REBUTS / No. 6 / VANCOUVER, CANADA.</b>	37mm	1/11/1965	13/12/1977	3	BUREAU DES REBUTS is straight
UMO-V3a-a6b	<b>UNDELIVERABLE MAIL OFFICE / BUREAU DES REBUTS / No. 6 / VANCOUVER, CANADA.</b>	37mm	10/10/1961		1	BUREAU DES REBUTS is arched
UMO-V3a-a7	<b>UNDELIVERABLE MAIL OFFICE / BUREAU DES REBUTS / No. 7 / VANCOUVER, CANADA</b>	34mm	4/10/1954	8/7/1959	4	BUREAU DES REBUTS is arched. Letters 1.5mm
UMO-V3a-a7a	<b>UNDELIVERABLE MAIL OFFICE / BUREAU DES REBUTS / No. 7 / VANCOUVER, CANADA</b>	37mm	5/7/1985		1	BUREAU DES REBUTS is straight

UMO-V3a-a7b	<b>UNDELIVERABLE MAIL OFFICE / BUREAU DES REBUTS / No. 7 / VANCOUVER, CANADA</b>	37mm	31/8/1959	16/7/1963	2	BUREAU DES REBUTS is arched
UMO-V3a-a8	<b>UNDELIVERABLE MAIL OFFICE / BUREAU DES REBUTS / No. 8 / VANCOUVER, CANADA</b>	34mm	4/3/1958	30/8/1958	2	BUREAU DES REBUTS is arched. Letters 2mm
UMO-V3a-a8b	<b>UNDELIVERABLE MAIL OFFICE / BUREAU DES REBUTS / No. 8 / VANCOUVER, CANADA</b>	37mm	25/5/1959	27/3/1961	3	BUREAU DES REBUTS is arched. Letters 2mm
UMO-V3a-a9a	<b>UNDELIVERABLE MAIL OFFICE / BUREAU DES REBUTS / No. 9 / VANCOUVER, CANADA.</b>	37mm	5/1/1970		1	BUREAU DES REBUTS is straight
UMO-V3a-b-blank	<b>UNDELIVERABLE MAIL OFFICE / BUREAU DES REBUTS / VANCOUVER, B.C.</b>	37mm	20/1/1967	20/4/1982	12	BUREAU DES REBUTS is straight. No clerk number
UMO-V3a-b7	<b>UNDELIVERABLE MAIL OFFICE / BUREAU DES REBUTS / No. 7 / VANCOUVER, B.C.</b>	38mm	25/8/1966		1	BUREAU DES REBUTS is straight
UMO-V3a-c4	<b>UNDELIVERABLE MAIL OFFICE / Bureau des Rebuts / No. 4 / VANCOUVER, B.C.</b>	37mm	20/9/1966		1	BUREAU DES REBUTS is arched and very small
UMO-V3a-c5a	<b>UNDELIVERABLE MAIL OFFICE / Bureau des Rebuts / No. 5 / VANCOUVER, CANADA.</b>	37mm	16/5/1965		1	BUREAU DES REBUTS is arched and very small. Note CANADA not B.C.
UMO-V3a-c10	<b>UNDELIVERABLE MAIL OFFICE / Bureau des Rebuts / No. 10 / VANCOUVER, B.C.</b>	37mm	9/11/1970	17/11/1971	3	BUREAU DES REBUTS is arched and very small
UMO-V3a-d-blank	<b>UNDELIVERABLE MAIL OFFICE / BUREAU DES REBUTS / VANCOUVER, B.C. V6B 1Y9</b>	38mm	4/1/1983		1	BUREAU DES REBUTS is straight. Note addition of the postal code. No clerk number
UMO-V3a-d4	<b>UNDELIVERABLE MAIL OFFICE / BUREAU DES REBUTS / No. 4 / VANCOUVER, B.C. V6B 1Y9</b>	38mm	30/3/1984	14/1/1986	2	BUREAU DES REBUTS is straight. Note addition of the postal code
UMO-V3a-d7	<b>UNDELIVERABLE MAIL OFFICE / BUREAU DES REBUTS / No. 7 / VANCOUVER, B.C. V6B 1Y9</b>	38mm	unreadable		1	BUREAU DES REBUTS is straight. Note addition of the postal code

**D.L.O. / WINNIPEG, MAN.** New Handstamp

by Gary Steele

This is a section for new finds and previously only known from proof books. If anyone has something that meets this criteria feel free to write myself or Brian Plain and we will confirm and put a note together with any possible scans.

This particular item does not appear in the proof book and this is the first reported strike. Since many Canadian Dead Letter Office handstamps are found on foreign mail, such material becomes fertile ground for new discoveries.

This cover originated in Belgium and was sent to Moline? Canada, Amerique. It transited New York, N.Y. on May 13 1916 where a postal employee wrote Try Montreal Que. From Montreal it was directed to Moline, Man. (MY 18 1916) where it was held until JU 2 1916 when a NOT.CALLED.FOR handstamp was applied. It was then forwarded to the Winnipeg Dead Letter Office where it was received on JUN 13 1916.

The absence of further markings does not allow us to complete the story of this cover with any certainty. It is possible this item was returned on the same day to Belgium in a Dead Letter Return envelope, or alternately, it may have been forwarded to another Manitoba town, as an undecipherable Manitoba marking is noted underneath the killer portion of the Winnipeg duplex.

This DLO handstamp is so far the only known of its type. It has been given the listing identification of **WIN3a-c1a**. It is 31.5mm in diameter, and has block lettering in the upper section whereas the lower lettering shows full serifs. Note the green ink used. A total of six different inks are used for Dead Letter Office handstamps: Green, Blue, Red, Violet, Purple and Black.

Belgium to Canada  
WIN3a-c1a



## A Modern Mercury

by Gary Steele

'Mercury' an archaic definition 'a messenger or courier'. A Modern Mercury is a publication produced by the Canadian Post Office in the late 1930's. It sold for the low value of 15 cents per issue. Currently many many times more valuable in both dollars and research value. The front of the journal is shown below.

This particular issue included dozens of photographs and descriptions of the inner workings of the Canada Post Office. Included is one picture of a lady at one of the Dead Letter offices, not known where, writing a new address for re-mailing in a Dead Letter Return Envelope. Of particular interest is the handstamp device to her right. Not sure if this is a self-inking device or needs to be placed on an inkpad. The glass jars to her left may be the ink-bottles.

Also interesting to note the large inventory of books and other info at her disposal for looking up addresses, names and places.



<< As noted in picture #1 "Over 2,000,000 items reach the Dead Letter Office each year. This employee has opened a "Dead Letter" to ascertain the sender's address, and is returning the letter, in a special envelope, subject to a postage charge."



We would like very much to know if anyone out there has a similar handstamp. I believe this to be a rectangular type where the dates are adjustable. Also if any other DLO handstamp devices exist please send a picture along and any applicable information to write up about.



## Dead Letter Office Per Postmaster's Information Book 1940

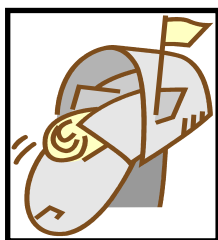
Page 75. Section 567. **Reason for Non-Delivery** – The reason for non-delivery must be stamped or written on the address side of each letter or other article before it is sent to the District Dead Letter Office.

Each item must also have the date of return stamped on the back with the office date stamp, except post cards, which must be stamped on the address side.

**RETURNED FOR POSTAGE, INSUFFICIENT POSTAGE, RETURNED FOR WAR TAX** are all handstamps placed on DLO covers by the postmasters at each individual post office. These are not DLO markings and are called **Advice Markings**. As previously mentioned there are dozens of reasons why mail is undeliverable, thus, when a handstamp does not suffice a written note is made such as '**House Torn Down**'.

According to these instructions the item should be date stamped by the individual post office when they send an item to the DLO. This was not always done as many items were date stamped upon receipt for the mails.

## Member's Mail



We would like comments, suggestions, notes on articles, and questions posted in this section. This will be a forum for trying to use the expertise of all members. There will also be a Bulletin Board that we can use in-between newsletters to hash out certain key points and then have more concrete notes for the newsletters.



## Want List and For Sale

**Wanted** – Documents related to the Dead Letter Office, Canada prior to 1900 [bcplain@shaw.ca](mailto:bcplain@shaw.ca)

**For Sale** - Canada covers, precancels, plate blocks and other postal history. If nothing showing in your area please email with your want list.

[www.canadapostalhistorycovers.com](http://www.canadapostalhistorycovers.com)

**Wanted** - DLO handstamps on cover 1954 down, Registered Ambulance/Return Letter Envelopes with Wax Seals, any DLO correspondence with handstamps and Moose Jaw Local Office. Please e-mail [gary.steele@ns.sympatico.ca](mailto:gary.steele@ns.sympatico.ca)

**Wanted** – Place your ad here

**Wanted** - Mail Service Suspended covers from the Second World War with or without DLO handstamps, please e-mail and I will advise if any particular country is still required: [gary.steele@ns.sympatico.ca](mailto:gary.steele@ns.sympatico.ca)

**For Sale** - 1 Cent Jubilee 1897 covers with and without combinations of other stamps. Please email for list or any specific needs. Also have precancels off cover and cancelled stamps [gary.steele@ns.sympatico.ca](mailto:gary.steele@ns.sympatico.ca)