



Canadian Military Mail Study Group

NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 2021

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THE LIST OF NAVAL CENSORS--By Paul Binney

Just a little further insight to the listing of Naval Censors in the last Newsletter [NL#245, June 2021, pp.1714-1718.Ed.]. I have the original file that John gave me. We discussed this listing on one of my many visits with John in the final two years of his life.

The initial assignment of censor numbers was compiled by Wilf Whitehouse. This was subsequently added to with contributions by Barlow, Campbell, Frith, Pomfret, and Robinson. The listing had a column with stars to denote how many covers were associated with each censor mark. Naval censorship was very strict so out of the tens of thousands of covers sent, not many allowed a solid identification of the ship or shore station that they were associated with. One common "work around" was for the correspondent to put their return address on the inside flap of the envelope. An example is shown [following page.Ed.] for censor 524 from a sailor at NPO 12, c/o F.M.O. Avalon.

In this case it is not really known if NPO 12 was a drop box to retain mail until a ship once again returned to Avalon, or if this was a sub post office within the naval base. I have similar covers with names and addresses written on the inside of the envelope.

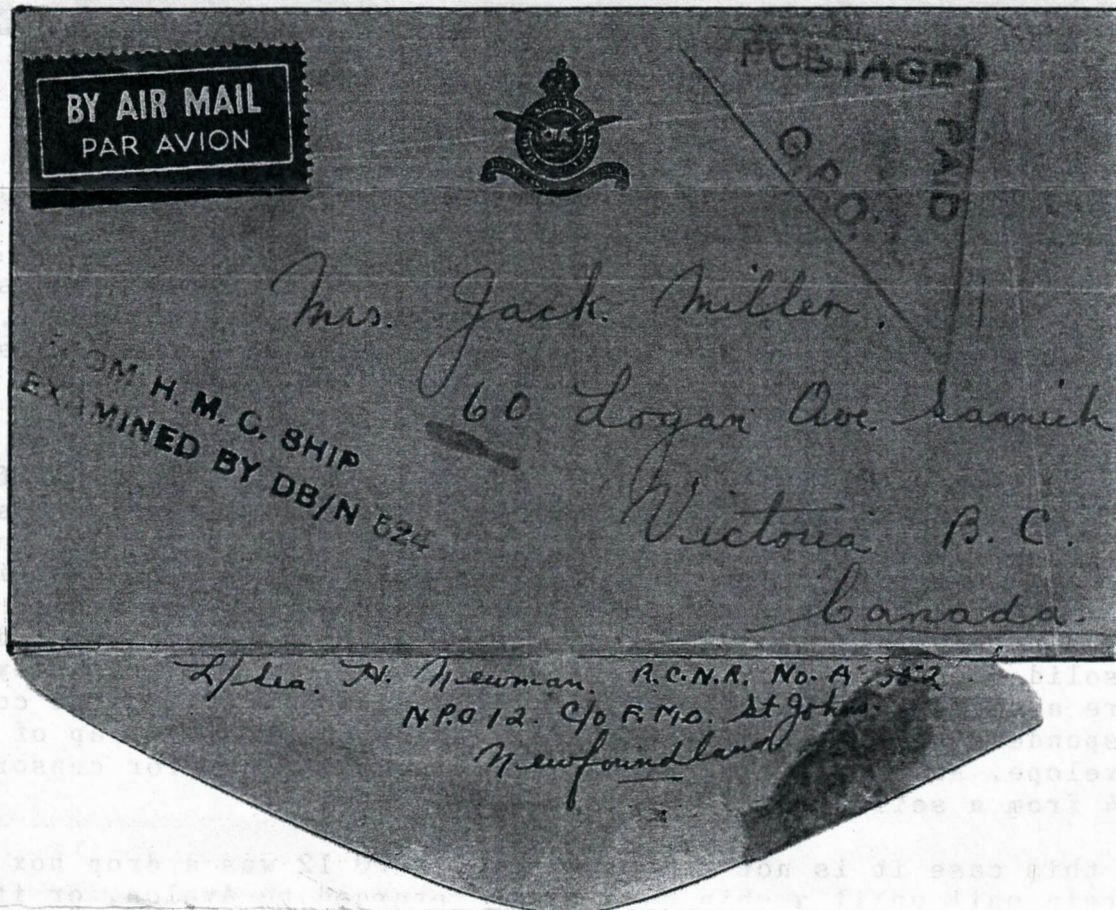
Wilf Whitehouse had served in the R.C.N. during the Second World War and obviously still had contacts within the navy. John showed me examples where Wilf had written to Ottawa enquiring about the service records and posting of particular personnel. Once he knew what ship they were on at a particular date, then

[Cont'd.]

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he could tie the censorship number to that ship; especially if there was a letter enclosed or the cover had registration or receiver dated handstamps. In some instances, the ship would be on a fast turnaround and mail was just off-loaded and censored at Avalon. Hence the use of multiple covers to try and confirm the censor numbers and their association with a particular ship or shore station.



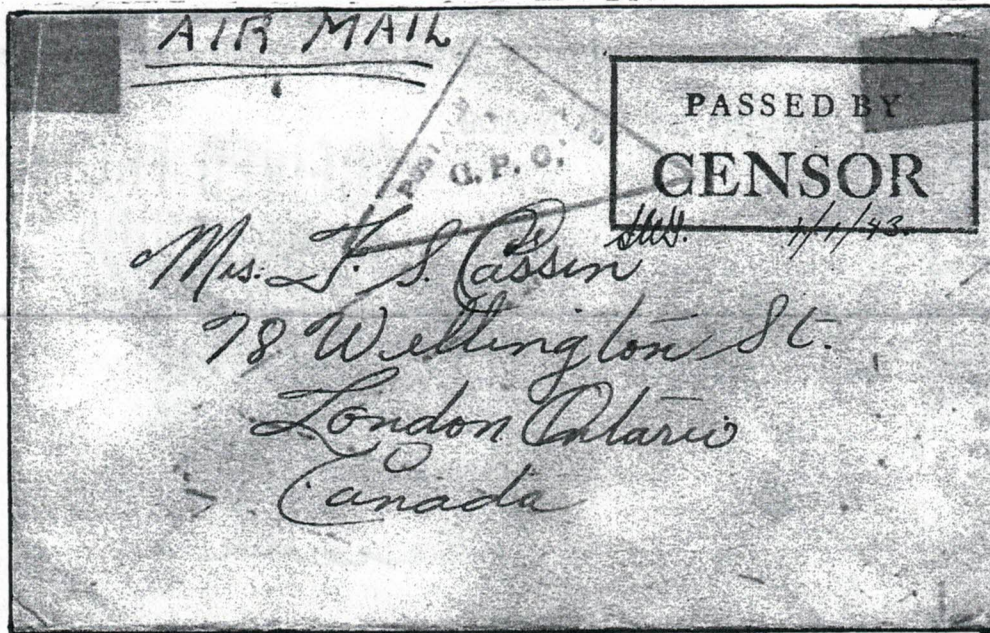
In a few covers the collector can find a neatly typed note to explain the provenance of the item. [The following illustration.Ed.]...is not one of the numbered censor markings but does show the self-censoring of the cover by Lt. Garlick and the identification of the [Fairmile Motor Launch #058.Ed.] that he was serving on at the time of mailing.

If the correspondence remains with the envelope, then identification of the censor markings is made much easier as the writer usually indicated what ship they were serving on and through what shore station they received their mail. An example (at 75% enlargement) is shown from HMCS Rimouski, although in this case the censorship was not with a numbered marking. The added bonus of having correspondence is the presence of a date.

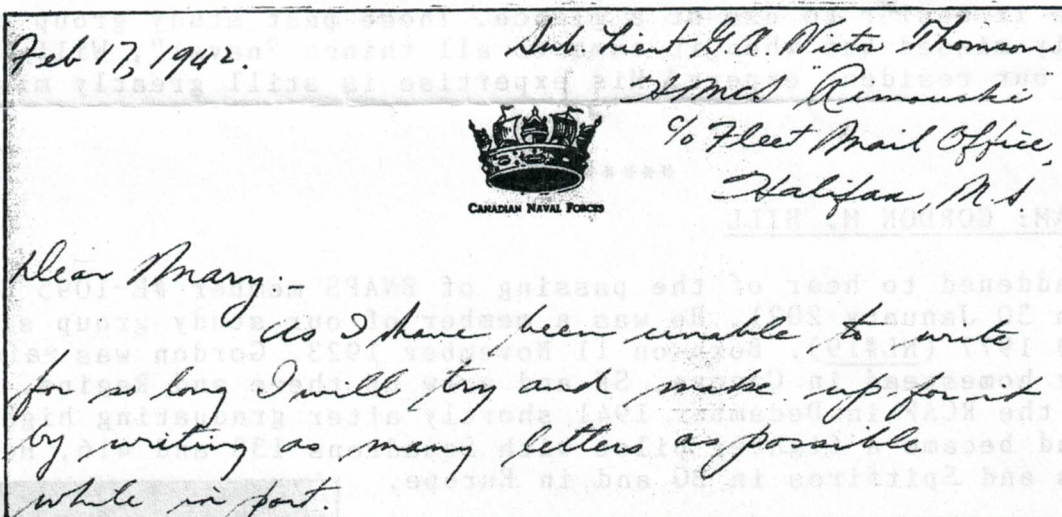
The easiest markings of all to identify were from those people that

[Cont'd.]

placed a return address on the envelope. Most of these covers appear to be from shore stations so of little help in identifying ships.



Late use of Censor stamp from N.F.L.D.
 posted at Botwood by Lt. SEC Garlick
 with the Fairmile M.L.058 ,4/1/43

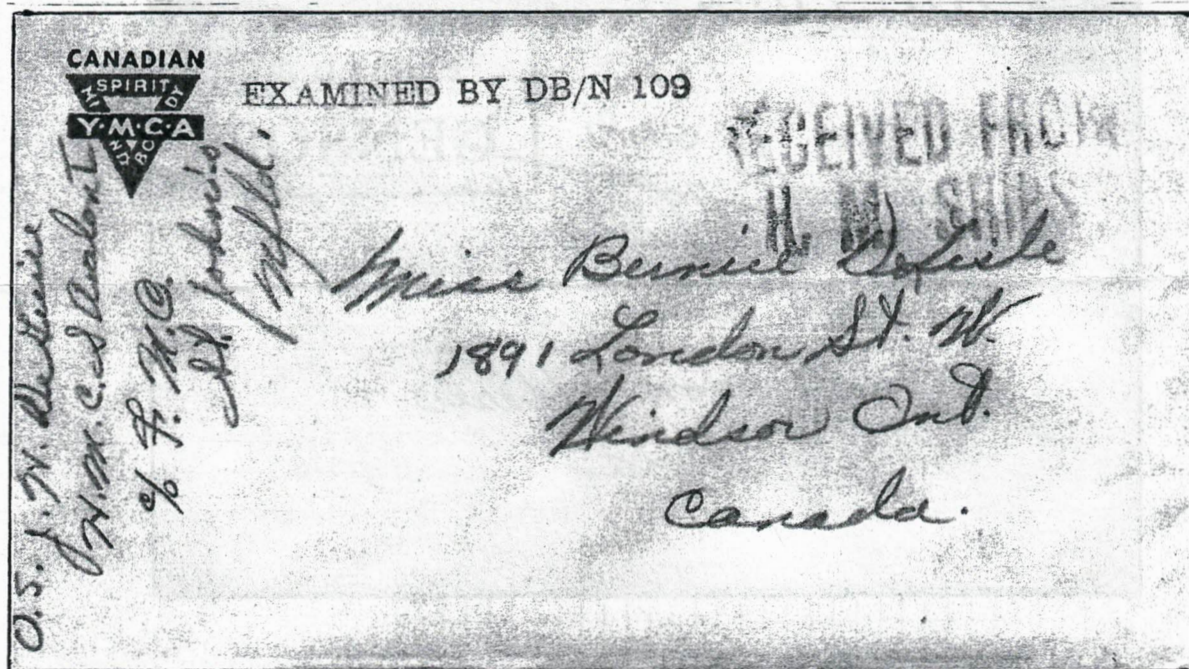


A very simplified overview of the challenges of linking censor numbers to individual naval vessels. The number of linked identifications is

[Cont'd.]

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much larger for shore stations with thousands of personnel than for the much smaller ships' complements.



[I too have a few copies of the "working listings" from Wilf directly with the additional information from those noted. An explanation of the published listing noting the various "co-authors" should have been added. However, the original list was very confusing and would not have been beneficial to reprint in that format. Mike formalized the listing which made it easier to use at a glance. Those past study group members are greatly missed but when it came to all things "naval", Wilf Whitehouse was our resident expert. His expertise is still greatly missed. Ed.]

IN MEMORIAM: GORDON M. HILL

We were saddened to hear of the passing of BNAPS member #E-1095 Gordon M. Hill on 30 January 2021. He was a member of our study group since (at least) 1977 (NL#19). Born on 11 November 1923, Gordon was raised on the family homestead in Canora, SK and grew up there and Regina. He enlisted in the RCAF in December 1941 shortly after graduating high school, and became a fighter pilot with Squadrons 133 and 416. He flew Hurricanes and Spitfires in BG and in Europe.

I had the pleasure of meeting him at a show in Calgary many years ago. He will be greatly missed and our condolences are extended to his family and friends.

<https://www.remembering.ca/obituary/gordon-hill-1081571598>



GREAT WAR MILITARY KILLER CANCEL--By Jon Johnson, OTB

[Jon writes: "A question for the CMMMSG Newsletter:

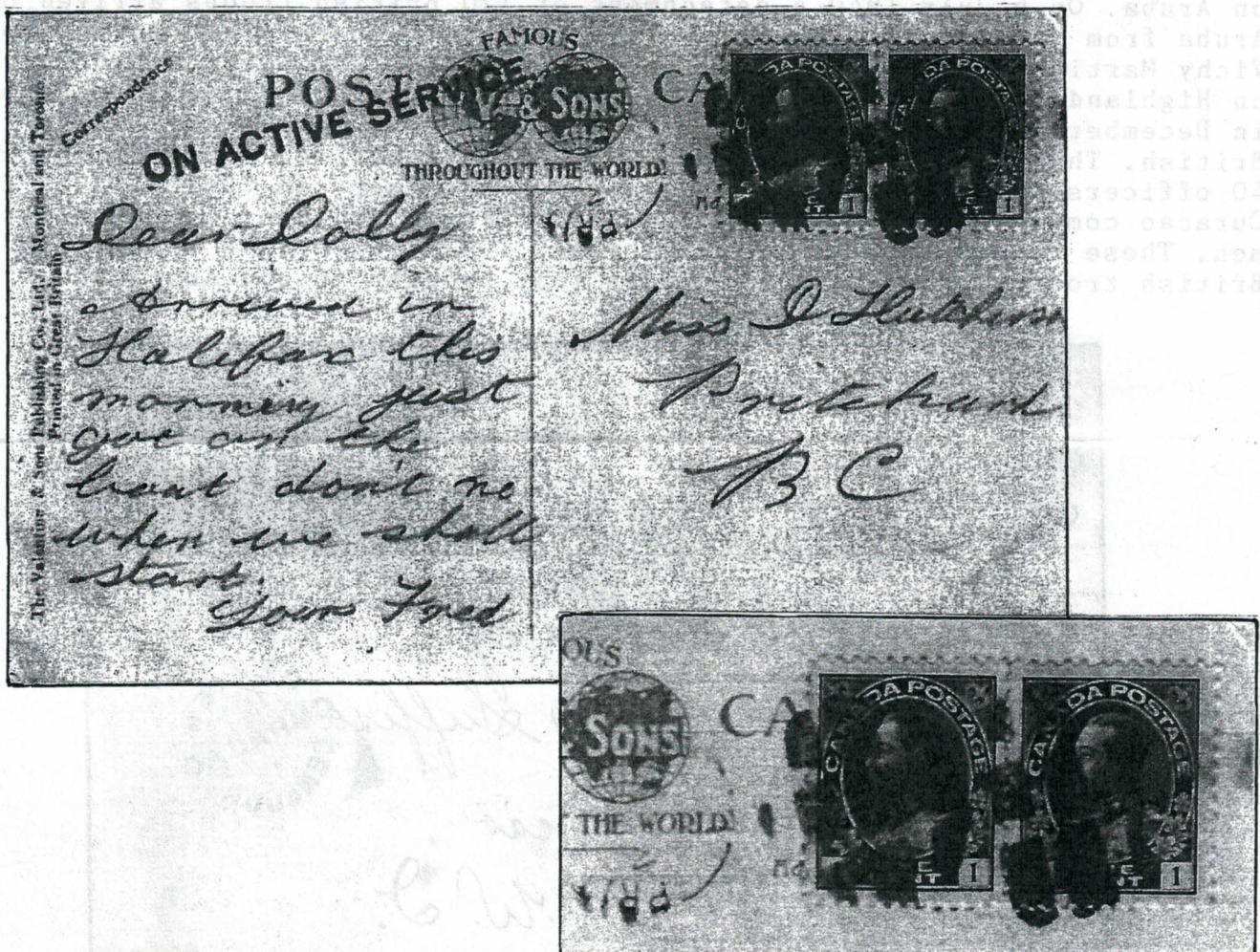
Here is a photo postcard of Dominion Square, Montreal with the text:

'Dear Dolly, arrived in Halifax this morning just got on the boat, don't know when we shall start. Yours, Fred'.

Note that the Pritchard, BC receiver is faint with only the 'Prit/M' and it is otherwise undated. Questions:

- A. Where was 'On Active Service' applied--before boarding the ship or on board?
- B. Does anyone have a similar military killer cancel?
- C. Was the killer cancel applied on shore in Halifax?"

Great questions Jon. The late Colin Pomfret illustrated a few of these "military" cork cancels in his "Canadian Great War 'Security Cancels'" article in NL#148 (Jan.2001), pp.532-533. None of these were similar to Jon's cork killers and the examples did not have the "ON ACTIVE SERVICE" auxiliary marking. Can members add more information?Ed.]



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CANADIAN TROOPS ON GUARD AT THE SHELL REFINERY IN CURACAO DURING THE SECOND WORLD WAR--By Robert Toombs

The islands of Aruba and Curacao lie just off Venezuela's north coast on the southern perimeter of the Caribbean. Both islands had major refineries in the Second World War. Crude oil was transported from Lake Maracaibo, Venezuela in shallow vessels to these two islands. On Aruba there were two oil refineries: the Lago Refinery (Standard Oil of New Jersey) at Saint Nicolas; producing 271,000 barrels a day in 1940 with a storage tank farm capacity of 13,500,000 barrels of crude and refined petroleum; and Shell's Arend Refinery at Oranjestad with similar capacity. On Curacao was a slightly smaller facility run by Shell at Willemstad. This facility had a production capacity of 140,000 barrels a day and a storage tank farm capacity of 18,000,000 barrels of crude and refined petroleum. Security of these energy facilities was of very high importance to the Allied war effort. During the war, from 1942, there were attacks by German submarines on several occasions, firing torpedoes at docked oil tankers and their deck guns at the refineries.

Earlier in the war the facilities were guarded solely by Dutch forces. On 10 May 1940 a detachment of 180 French troops from Martinique arrived on Aruba. On 6 July 1940 a detachment of 120 British troops arrived on Aruba from Jamaica and the French troops were then returned to the now-Vichy Martinique. On 3 September 1940 520 men of The Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders arrived on Aruba. With the entry of the U.S. into the war in December 1941, arrangements were made for U.S. forces to replace the British. The American "Force 1280" for Aruba comprised initially of some 40 officers and over 800 enlisted men and the American "Force 1291" for Curacao comprised initially of some 66 officers and over 1,400 enlisted men. These forces arrived on 11 February 1942. Three days later, the British troops departed on the ships that brought in the Americans.



FIG.1

[Cont'd.]

These three covers shown are to/from Dutch Canadian troops/Canadian Netherland Legation at Camp Suffisant, Willemstad on Curacao. No mention to date has been found in literature sources regarding Canadian troops or the Canadian Netherlands Legation in Curacao/Aruba during the Second World War. Any information in this regard, including background notes or scans of other covers would be most welcome.

Reference

Gaines, William C. The United States Coast Artillery Command on Aruba and Curacao in World War II, Vol.11, Issue 2, The Coast Defence Study Group Journal.

FIG.1/1a [cover backs have been cropped.Ed.]: 6¢ Canada, 30 September 1941 from Edam, Saskatchewan to a civilian (?) with the "Can. Ned. Leg.", Camp Suffisant, Curacao; received at Willemstad on 21 October 1941.

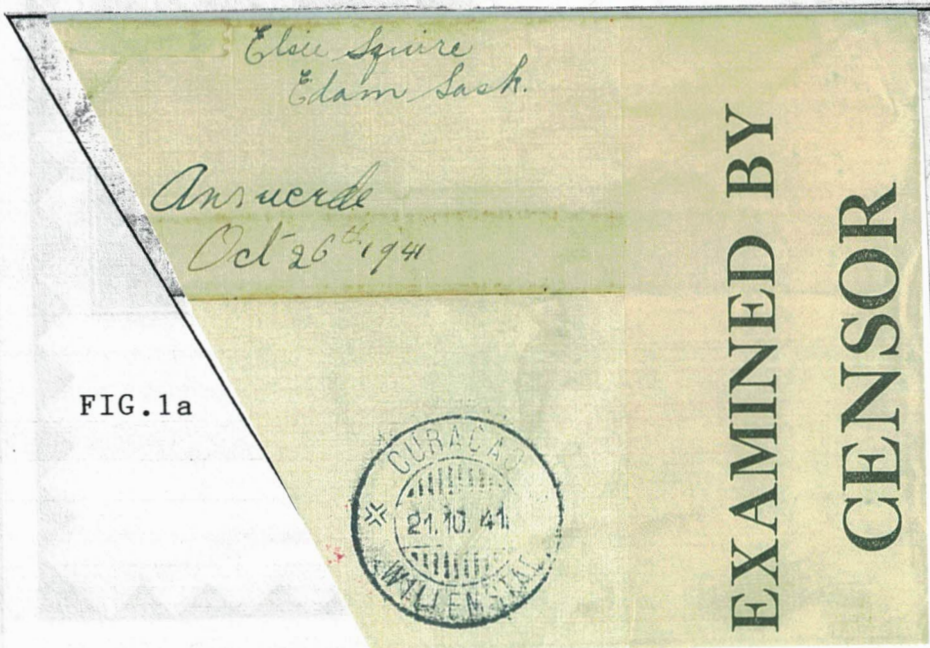


FIG.1a

FIG.2/2a: 3¢ Canada, 29 December 1941 from Stratford, Ontario to "Canadian Dutch Troops", Suffisant, Curacao; received at Willemstad on 27 January 1942.

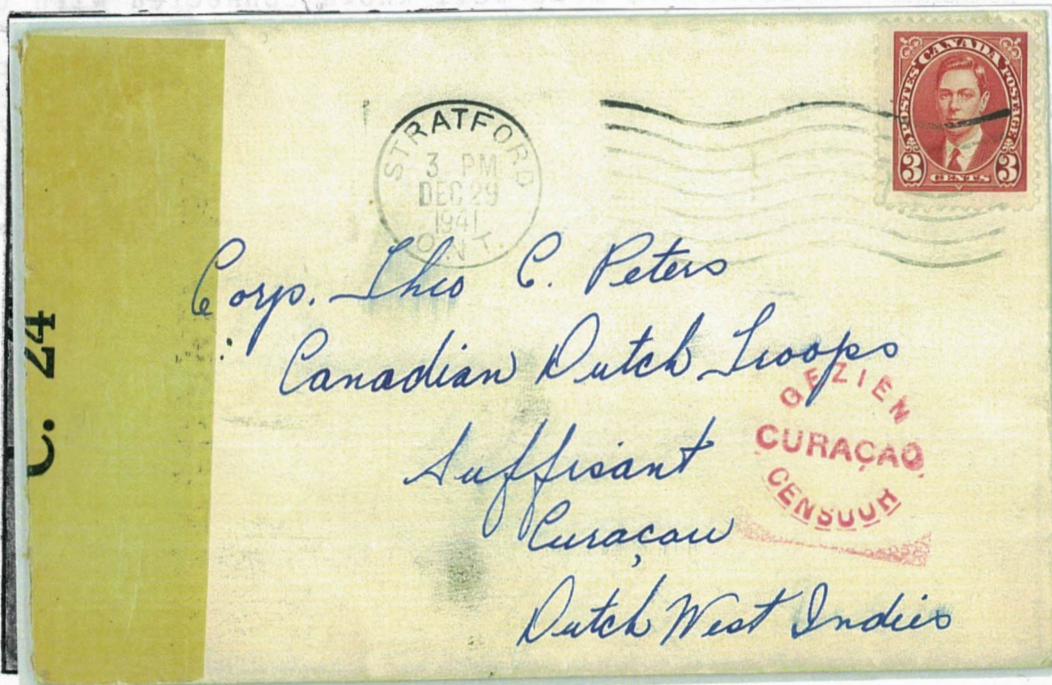


FIG.2

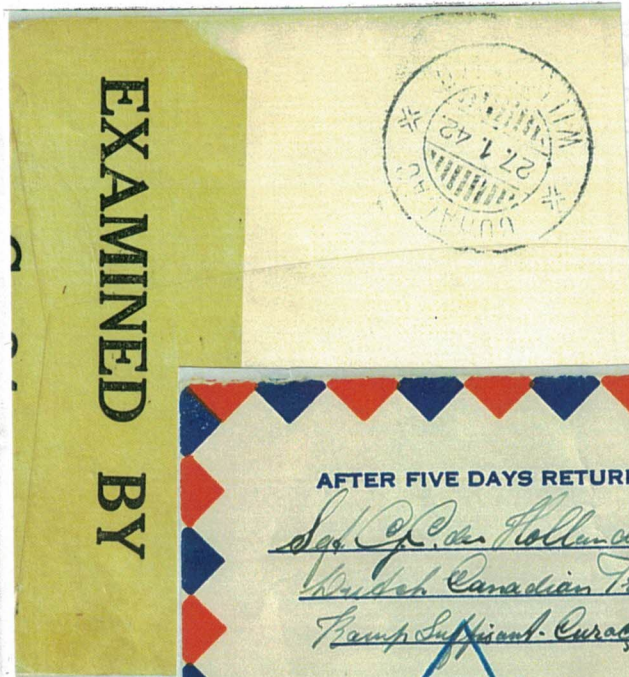


FIG.2a

FIG.3 35¢ Curacao, 13 January 1942 to Kentville, Nova Scotia from "Dutch Canadian Troops", Kamp Suffisant, Curacao, D.W.I.". There is no receiving mark for arrival in Canada.



[Canadian military activity is more well-known connected with the Royal Canadian Navy's vital protection role for the convoys of fast tankers in the Halifax-Trinidad-Aruba/Curacao route. The connection between Edam, Saskatchewan and Dutch-Canadian service personnel is partially attributed to the early settlement of Edam by Dutch pioneers. FIG.1a is a cover from Elsie Squire to her brother Johan, who had emigrated with his mother (and brother Arie, also a veteran) from Rotterdam, Holland in November 1919 (Their Hopes--Our Heritage, Edam Historical Society, 1992, p.716).Ed.]

WHERE WAS APO (RCAF/RAF) #4330--FOLLOW-UP--By Michael Dobbs

[Michael wrote: "APO 4330-North Africa (exact location not known) [NL #245, June 2021, pp.1712-1713]. Covers recorded by me:

--London 9 Nov. 1942 to RAF APO 4330. sent airmail but annotated 'no airmail service available' (handwritten report to me)

[Cont'd.]

- BAPO 5 dated JA 30 43 with circular RAF censor 49 and return address RAF APO 4330 (handwritten report to me)
- Airmail letter from UK postmarked BIRMINGHAM 8 DEC 1942 addressed 'c/o No.9 Beach Group, APO 4330' (JAD)
- 1943 French military postcard from FPO 386 dated 3 JA 43 addressed to a Private RAOC at 'HQ Co, S.O.D. (No.1 B.O.D.), APO 4330' (Barton List 65/101)
- Letter postmarked PRESTWICK, AYRSHERE 12 JAN 1943 addressed '15 MC Group RE, APO 4330' (JAD)
- Cover addressed to '118705 Capt. H. Poulter, No.2 Claims & Hirings, APO 4330, 3 B.S.A.' and postmarked m/c MANCHESTER K of 20 JAN 1943 (Dobbs)

APO No. ceased in favour of BRITISH NORTH AFRICAN FORCE (BNAF) under the Post Office Circular, 3 March 1943.

The P.O.C. read:

'...Correspondence and parcels for H.M. Army and Royal Air Force serving in North Africa, which hitherto have had to be addressed to an A.P.O. number, should in future be addressed with the usual full particulars of the individual and his unit, followed by the designation 'British North African Force (abbreviated B.N.A.F.)....'

The Circular went on to state that members of the public who had been using temporary addresses APOs 4310, 4330, and 4520 were to be advised of the new address. Surface correspondence and parcels were subject to the same postage rates and general conditions as those applicable to correspondence and parcels for Middle East Force etc., and were to be circulated to or as for APO Nottingham! [JAD=John A. Daynes.Ed.]

Dear Study Group Members: Mike and I trust that all is well and members have been enjoying their summer despite the lingering pandemic challenges. A warm welcome is extended to Alan Spencer who is interested in the C.E.F. and First Contingent in the Great War. Thanks are extended to Bob Toombs for his kind donation, along with thanks to the anonymous donor who supplied a quantity of pre-stamped stationery. The virtual BNAPEX programming is near completion and members are invited to join our **Study Group virtual meeting at 12:00 to 14:00 on Friday, 3 September 2021.** Chairman Mike Street will host and our thanks are extended to Peter McCarthy for his presentation of "HMCS Prince Henry and Canadian Small Ships in World War II". You may also see his exhibit pages on the BNAPEX website (along with other military presentations). Be sure to check the final meeting time/date for potential changes. Mike also sent in our first ever Zoom virtual meeting report which is included in this issue. Details about our exciting future Study Group project are also included on the last page! We are very pleased to announce plans for a second CMMMSG Anthology. Members will have the first volume on their book shelf and now is the time to think about contributing to the second. We hope that members will seriously think about an article or two or? Please let Mike or I know your thoughts. It will be an amazing book when complete but we require your literary support. Thank you. We have learned that a few members are under the weather and we wish them a full and speedy recovery. Sad news to report about our longtime member Gordon M. Hill's passing and those members who are also militaria collectors will have heard about the passing of Wayne Cline on 11 June 2021. Until next time....

CMMSG Zoom Meetings 2021

The Canadian Military Mail Study Group held it's first ever Zoom meeting on Saturday, June 12, 2021. Close to 40 members and interested others saw Guest Speaker Wayne Schnarr give his presentation entitled "NEWLY DISCOVERED - AND SOME REDISCOVERED AND MISSING - WW 1 MILITARY MAIL MARKINGS".

Several years ago, Wayne undertook to prepare Volume 1 of *The BNAPS Catalogue of Canadian Military Mail Markings*, which was just partly finished when the author, Doug Sayles, passed away in 2012. Wayne has been diligently researching World War I Canadian Military Mail Postmarks ever since, and has found many new examples. Among his sources are members of the CMMSG and the Forces Postal History Society of the UK, philatelic books, exhibits, auction and online sales lists and, of course, eBay.

In his talk Wayne showed examples of postmarks from Military Districts, the Canadian Expeditionary Force (CEF) in England, and the CEF in France, Belgium & Germany. Included in the CEF in England were Canadian Postal Corps (CPC) Letter and Parcel offices in London, the Canadian Record Office in London, Canadian Camp Post Offices and other CPC Mail Markings. The CEF In France, Belgium & Germany section included Field Post Office (FPO) and Army Post Office (APO) marks including the rare "Horseshoe Hammers".

As part of Volume 1 Wayne is also preparing a major update of the list of WWI Censor Numbers. This work involves examining a cover and identifying, wherever possible, the unit to which a particular censor handstamp was assigned. This is a significant task because, for security reasons, during WWI the design of the censor mark supplied to Canadian units was changed six times.

The CMMSG's second Zoom meeting will be held at Noon EDT on Friday, 3 September 2021 as part of the BNAPEX 2021 Virtual convention, being held online due to Covid 19 restrictions. This meeting's Speaker, Peter McCarthy, will show his presentation "HMCS", which tells the stories of HMCS Prince Henry, and the Motor Torpedo Boats, Fairmile Motor Launches and Landing Craft of the WWII Royal Canadian Navy.

The recorded meeting will be available online at a later date through the CMMSG web page to BNAPS members who are logged into <https://BNAPS.org> (Click on "Member Login" tab). It will also be available during BNAPEX 2021 Virtual to Convention Registrants.

CMMSG Members should note that Peter's one-frame exhibit, *The Small Boats*, which includes many of the covers in the Zoom presentation, is online now and can be viewed by anyone who is registered for BNAPEX 2021 Virtual.

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 northcote1885@yahoo.com (5/5)

WANTED: Seeking WWII covers/cards from/to Bermuda "B" Force and Bahamas "N" Force. Particulars/scans/photocopies/price to the Editor at northcote1885@yahoo.com (3/5)

THE NETHERLANDS ARMY, STRATFORD, ONTARIO--By Dean Mario

I believe that I have shown this cover previously in these pages but



given Bob Toombs' article on the refineries in Curacao, it is a reminder of the Dutch in Stratford, Ontario. The cover is dated MR 22/41 and was sent to a member of the Military Police with the Royal Dutch Army in Cheshire, England. Stratford was the recruiting centre and main collection point for the Netherlands Army and Dutch volunteers. The patriotic recruitment label in the Netherlands' national flag colours of red/white/blue is effective and particularly poignant to a member of the Dutch Army serving overseas.

* Dear CMMSG Member:

Most of you are familiar with the excellent *A Canadian Military Postal History Anthology*, published in 1991 to commemorate the Canadian Military Mail Study Group's first 100 Newsletters. Prepared by the late Ken V. Ellison (Editor) and the late E.R. "Ritch" Toop (Chairman), it was a stellar effort and publication which, in many ways, remains a vital and important resource for collectors and researchers to this day.

Some three decades later, CMMSG Chairman Mike Street has floated the idea that it may be time for another similar publication. The CMMSG Newsletter Editor couldn't agree more!

What we need now, in these early planning stages, is an indication from members who might be willing to prepare one or more articles, short or long, to *CMPH Anthology II*. The articles need not be your *magnum opus*. It is hoped that each submission will be an original work, or research which expands or updates previously published works/studies. Two such studies currently in the works that will be included are completely updated and annotated lists of World War I Censor numbers used by Canadian forces in France and Belgium, and World War II DB/N Naval Censor numbers used worldwide.

Members know that so much in the realm of Canadian military postal history still needs examination, so it is hoped that any and all areas of the genre will be explored. Consideration will be given only to military-related topics - Civil Censorship or Foreign Exchange Board (FECB), while important subjects in their own right, would not be included - at least in the first instance. *CMPH Anthology II* just might be one of the best compilations of Canadian military mail articles EVER! But we need your help.

Interested members are asked to contact Dean or Mike with their ideas and potential submissions. Members are encouraged to suggest the first, second, and even third area/topic which they are willing to provide. Do you have a topic/theme which can be treated as a one- or two-page article, or perhaps something a bit (or a lot) longer? Great. What we need now is an indication (and hopefully a firm commitment) from members to ensure a resounding success. The projected time frame for publication is the fall of 2022 or spring of 2023.

Please think about the above proposal. Your participation is vital and if we can all contribute, it will make *CMPH Anthology II* a great success like the first one!

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-PLEASE NOTE THE NEW EMAIL ADDRESS FOR EDITOR-
