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Editor's Post:

¶ Our membership is down by one more with the advice from one of our email recipients that he is no longer active in perfin collecting.

The Study Group has two extra expenses to ¶ report. One is \$55.00 to purchase the 2022 Edition of the Unitrade Specialized Canadian Stamp Catalogue to share between the co-Editors of the 6th edition of the Canadian Stamps with Perforated Initials to share. The Unitrade listings for OH/MS perforated stamps now reflects the work done by Gary Tomasson and Jon Johnson and they should have ready access to its contents. The second expense relates to the CAPEX Exhibition in Toronto in mid-June. Our perfin Handbook has been accepted for inclusion in the Canadian Literature Exhibit in Class B-Digital Philatelic Books & Research Papers (Published on/after Jan 1, 2017). The cost was \$105CDN (\$80USD). These purchases were previously paid for by Jon Johnson and Gary Tomasson who will be reimbursed from ¶ Study Group funds.

¶ A quick shout out to Bob Szymanski who took up the challenge I put out in February's Perforator and passed along a little something different for our newsletter. And, a gentle nudge to everyone else to share a little something; a cover, a story about "why I collect perfins", or just a question.

¶ In Canadian dollars the printing costs for this issue were \$14.04 and the postage costs would be \$14.92; 7@\$1.30, 1@\$1.94 and 1@\$3.88. However, between last issue and this I have soaked off some \$5.98 in un-cancelled postage from my incoming mail, so the mailing costs will be somewhat subsidized by the less than diligent Canada Post machinery—\$8.94.



¶ ORAPEX is just a month away, opening in Ottawa on April 23rd. There is a change in venue since my last ORAPEX visit; no longer at the RA Centre it is in the Napean Sportsplex. I plan to be there both Saturday and Sunday. Everyone on the Study Group newsletter distribution list has my email address so if you are planning to attend, drop me a line and perhaps we can meet up for a chat and a cup of coffee.

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A Perfin Diversion

Bob Szymanski

Years ago, one of my friends who lived on the same street as I, was born on Feb 29th, 1944. As Ripley would have said - 'believe it or not'! I remember his birthday cake on Feb, 29th, 1960. The top of the cake had a candle in the shape of the number 4. I thought it was funny as did he. He always smiled, a good natured guy and why not? He knew he could smoke and drink at the age of 5!.....and, none of us could! Yes, Feb 29th will always be a special day.

When I asked those on my auction email list about perfins showing a cancellation date of Feb 29th, any year, I was surprised with the results! It would have been apropos to mail you the answers received on February 29th but that would have meant the next Feb 29th which will be in 2024! That just seemed too long to make you wait.

How difficult could this have been for any of you to find one of these elusive perfins? I figured that the math could tell us. Every four years we have (3) years with 365 days and (1) with 366. This makes for a total of 1461 days. (For all who would point out to me that 1900 did not have a Feb 29th, I know but I am trying to keep the calculations as simple as possible.)

I have looked for full dates on perfins for over 20 years and estimate that 1 in 50 world-

wide perfins is cancelled with a full day, month and year visible.

If my estimation is valid, then you would have to examine $1461 \times 50 =$ about 73,050 perfins to find a single Feb 29th cancelled perfin. (Note: I am certain that somewhere a postal clerk on Feb 28th turned the date on his cancelling devise to Feb 29th in a non-leap year by mistake or on purpose. In a leap year, that same postal clerk could have used a March 1st date in error! I know as I have worked for the USPS!

Certain countries' perfins have a greater number of cancels with complete dates - Denmark and the United Kingdom being the two that come to mind immediately. Other countries can be difficult to find with complete dates - the United States is the one with which I am most familiar. Therefore, expect the frequency to change with the perfins of any single country. But let me not get too technical!

If you have never seen a Feb 29th cancel, do not despair just look at the scans provided. The "piece de resistance" is a British perfinned stationary card from 1888 which resides in the United Kingdom. (Figures 1 & 2) A purist might say it is not a perfinned stamp! I would love to have this exquisite item any day! So, for me it counts!

UNION POSTALE UNIVERSELLE POST CARD-GREAT PRITAIN & IRELAND HE ADDRESS Met Dizarro & Lilva 14 Lains do Gelon

Figs 1, 2 &3: Queen Victoria postal card 1888-02-29 London to Lisbon Portugal Castell Brothers Ltd, Wholesale & Export Stationers, Pepys Works, Clerkenwell Road, London EC. 1905-930

Figure 3 is a Newfoundland perfin and although the date (2-29-320 is really a fiscal use, still seeing one from such a small area (Newfies think it is a big island) proves that you may find one from anywhere!

The Figure 4 shows the Feb 29th cancels in my (1880 - 1980) perfin calendar collection. Left to right and top to bottom they are 1896, 1904, 1908, 1912, 1916, 1924, 1928, 1932, 1936, 1940, 1952, 1956, 1960, (2) 1964 & 1976. As you can see I do not possess one from 1880, 1884, 1888 or 1892.

There was none in 1900, except by mistake, as there was no Feb 29th that year! Also, I have none for 1920 which is very difficult to find as it falls on a Sunday! ...none for 1944 as it was in the midst of WWII. ...none for 1948 which again falls on a Sunday. ...none for 1968 nor 1972 as perfin usage was much less prevalent than previous years. However, I will end on a bright note and consider the last shown, dated 1976, as my favorite because from this time on that very few companies or governments were using perfins but most of all because this one even falls on a Sunday! Serendipity!





Figure 4 & 5: Fiscal date cancel Ayre & Sons Ltd St. Johns, Newfoundland 1925-1948



Figure 4: Leap Year cancels (see endnotes)

Endnotes: Some patterns in Bob's Leap Year calendar in Figure 4 can be identified. In order they are:

1. A. Runge and Company London 1890-1930



2. Cook &Sons Clothing Mftrs London 1903-1922

3. Barclay's Bank Foreign Department Londonn 1903-1918



4. Bank in Winterthur in Winterthur, Switzerland 1910-1930

5. Aluminium - Industrie AG in Neuhausen, Switzerland 1895-1928

6. Chemosan Union Handels AG - Wein, Austria Monogram

7. Worms & Son - 1922-1933 (or) C. Wossidlo Co. 1928-1930 Hamburg, Germany

8. Canadian Pacific Railway Vancouver 1913-1968



9. Canadian Pacific Railway Southampton 1925-1968



10. American Steel & Wire Co. Pittsburg, PA 1909-1951

11. American Mutual Liability Insurance -Milwaukee, WI - 1932-1964 (close match and probable another die variety, not a listed city—Author)

12. Republic Steel Corporation Cleveland, Ohio 1932-1956

13. A/S Korn-og Foderstof Kompagniet Odense, Denmark 1936-1976

14. Landmandsbanken - Copenhagen, Denmark - 1941 1969

15. State of Michigan - many cities -Cadillac, MI - LKU copy 1963-1964

16. St Bartholomew's Hospital London 1956-2000



What Causes Perfin Positions? Part I

Exploring Perfin Position Frequency versus Frequency of Usage of Stamp Issues in the B15 – Bell Telephones Company of Canada

Russell D. Sampson and Jim Graham

As perfin collectors we are always on the lookout for rare positions. But how are rare positions produced? What could cause the operator of the perforating machine to spin and/ or flip the stamps around to give us those collectable odd and even position numbers? To explore this, a simple experimental survey was conducted of a common perfin – the B15 – the first pattern of the Bell Telephones Company of Canada. Although not yet proven, evidence provided by members of the BNAPS Perfin Study Group has strongly suggested that a 10die machine produced this perfin pattern.

The authors combined their two collections with the objective of asking; *"What puzzles could these multitudes help solve?"*

Putting oneself into the work-a-day shoes of the operator of these long-ago perforating machines, one wonders what rules, or lack there of, could result in the variety, or lack there of, of what the collector finds in their perfins?

The Hypothesis

Like any experiment one must first start with a hypothesis.

It would be expected that those stamp issues used most often by the company (e.g. the 1, 2 and 3-cent Admirals) would be perforated in larger batches and therefore would require the greatest time and effort. One would also expect that the company would want their perforated postage to appear uniform as it may be seen as a reflection of their corporate ethos. Sloppy perforations may imply a sloppy company work ethic. So perfin position 1 should be the most desirable by the company and therefore the most common in our collections.

The anticipated extra labor, coupled with the above mentioned demands of the company, should therefore encourage the perforating machine operator to seek the most efficient and effective methods of mass perfin production for these most commonly used stamp issues. This would likely produce a systematic assembly line. As Henry Ford demonstrated, the rewards of systemization can be an increase in production and a decrease in errors. Therefore, in this rather small-scale example, this systemization should also produce the least number of perfin positions.

On the other hand, those stamp issues used less frequently by the company would more likely be perforated sporadically and on an "as needed" basis. Rarely used stamps (e.g. the 50-cent Admiral) may even require the operator to perforate less than a whole sheet at a time. Without the systemization of an assembly line, this sporadic and irregular production could lead to more frequent operator error and thus more variation in the perfin positions.

Therefore, one should expect to see more consistency in the more frequently used denominations. In other words, the most commonly used stamp issues should be mostly position 1 and the least commonly used should have a higher proportion of positions 2 through 8.

The Experiment

First, if a statistical test is to be of any value its sample size must be large enough to confidently capture the behavior of a whole population.

The necessary sample size is calculated according to three variables. The first is the desired margin of error. Here most surveys aim for a 5% margin of error. The second variable is the desired confidence level. Here a confidence level of 95% is a typical target. These two variables mean that for given sample size, the survey should expect a plus or minus 5% accuracy for every 95 out of 100 surveys.

The final variable is the desired standard deviation. This is the expected variance of the results and most surveys strive for a standard deviation of 0.5. This is not revealed until after the survey is complete and therefore is an anticipated goal.

Putting all these variables into the formula for the sample size gives a result of about 385 stamps (Smith, 2021). So, according to the formula, this survey needs 385 B15 perfinned stamps. If one reduced the confidence level to 90% - still a very good target – then the necessary sample size would be reduced to 270 stamps.

As in all experiments, it is also important that the number of experimental variables be kept to a minimum. One important perfin variable is the format of the stamp. One would expect the confusion of the perforating machine operator to increase with non-standard formatted stamps like the Scott 158 (50-cent Bluenose) or the huge Scott 202 (5-cent UPU Meeting). Therefore, the sample used only the standard formatted stamps (e.g. KG V Admirals, KG VI Mufti and KG VI War Issue) since these are the format that the perforating machines were originally designed for.

The selected number of B15 perfins from the two collections that fit these criteria produced a total of 3,192 perfins, of which 2,173 were on Admirals, 671 on Mufti, and 348 on War Issue. As one can see, the total number of perfins in the sample exceeds the necessary sample size from the formula. The stamp issues were then divided into "commonly used issues" and "less commonly used issues". For this the following were designated as "commonly used issues": Scott 104 (106 perfins), Scott 106 (396), Scott 107 (242) Scott 108 (230), Scott 109 (288), Scott MR4 (561), Scott 232 (238), Scott 233, (248), Scott 252 (81), and Scott 254 (88).

It could be argued that this survey is actually counting two different populations, the commonly used issues and the less commonly used issues, and therefore each population needs a minimum of 385 perfins. The total number of common issues in the survey is 2,532 and the total of the less commonly used issues is 660, thus exceeding the necessary minimum sample size.

A simple count of the different positions was then performed and a percentage comparison between the commonly and less commonly used issues examined.

The Results.

The results were quite remarkable. Out of a total of 1,877 commonly used Admirals 97.3% were of position 1. That meant that 51 perfins (2.8%) were a different position. There was only one Scott 106 on a different position – a position 7 (See Figure 2). From the 196 less commonly used Admirals 254 (85.8%) were of position 1 and 42 (14.2%) were of other positions. This is a 5-fold difference in percentages between the common and less commonly used issues. This result provides substantial evidence in support of the hypothesis. To see an illustration of the most dramatic Admiral issue from the Sampson collection, refer to Figure 1.

Figure 2: Out of 396 specimens of B15 on Scott 106 this position 7 found in the Sampson collection, is the sole example that is not a position 1.



Figure 1: The total number of B15 perfins on Scott 114 from the Sampson collection clearly showing a wider diversity of positions than the more commonly used issues of the era such as the Scott 106 or MR4 (See Table 1).

Out of a total of 486 commonly used Muftis, 482 common knowledge than many perfin collectors (99.2%) were position 1, while only four perfine seek out unusual perfine positions. (0.8%) had a different position (all position 3). From the 185 less commonly used issues, 176 (95.1%) were position 1 and nine perfins (4.9%) had other positions (all position 3). This shows a nearly 6-fold difference in percentages and is a similar result to the Admirals. Once we reach the Second World War the percentages change but the fundamental difference remains the same.

Issues 140 (82.8%) were of position 1, while 29 other collections (i.e., the two used in this survey) (17.2%) were of a different position (all position and thus the sample used in the study may have 3). From the 179 less commonly used War Issue become biased. perfins, 110 (61.5%) of these were of position 1 and 69 (38.5%) were other positions (all position 3). Thus the trend remains; the less commonly used War Issues show a higher chance of having positions 2 through 8.

Tables 1 to 4.

The Conclusion and Discussion

There are certainly other human and technical factors that could affect the position of a perfin. One only has to collect a few dozen of the C15 (Canadian General Electric Company) from the late 1940's to realize that something unusual must Further Work have been going on in the mailroom of that company. Nonetheless, the results of this experiment - especially for the Admiral and Mufti issues clearly suggest that one factor that affects the position of a perfin, is how often the company uses a particular stamp issue.

This conclusion comes with a very important stamps. caveat - one that haunts many surveys. There is always the possibility of selection bias or in the case of perfins a more apt phrase may be "collection bias". Collectors by their very nature

In the Mufti issue a similar result occurred. are always on the hunt for the unusual and it is

Therefore, it is not out of the question that less common positions will be selected then sold or traded away from larger collections. And as a result, those less common positions may then become concentrated in the hands of a few collectors and depleted in others. So, somewhere there may be an unknown hoard of the less common positions and because of this, the number of these less Out of a total of 169 of the commonly use War common positions may be artificially reduced in

However, the position survey results published in the 6th Edition of the Perfin Handbook appear to show no evidence for selection bias. The positions from the two collections used in this survey match very nicely with those reported in the Handbook. To see a complete tally of these results refer to Therefore the results in the Handbook appear to support the notion that this sample of perfins is representative of the population of B15 perfins.

> The authors would appreciate hearing from other collectors if they have the same results in their collections - or even better - if they find something contradictory.

The logical next step in this investigation is to examine the effects that stamp formatting has on perfin positions. As mentioned it is hypothesized that non-standard formats may confuse the perforating machine operators since the machine was not designed for these non-standard format

The challenge here will be to find a large enough and consistent enough sample, since these odd format stamps are less commonly used.

References:

Smith, Scott M. Ph. D. (University of North Carolina Wilmington)

https://uncw.edu/irp/ie/resources/documents/gualtrics/determining-sample-size-2.pdf (accessed October 31, 2021)

		ole1 A	rals		Table 2 Muftis														
	Number of Stamps Per Position									Number of Stamps Per Position									
Scott No.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Scott No.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8		
104	160					-		-	231	102		2		2-20	ł				
105	33		7						232	234		4			ł				
106	395						1		233	248									
107	213		29						235	74		7		5					
108	230								Totals	658		13				-			
109	267		19		2				Common	482		4							
110	6								Com. %	99.2%		0.8%							
111	41								Less Com.	176		9							
112	27		10			-			Less Com. %	95.1%		4.9%							
113	5									lable 3 War Issues									
114	3		8				1			Number of Stamps Per Position									
115		- 223	1		-				Scott No.	1	2	3	4	5	6	/	ð		
116	13						-		249	27		11			-				
117	9		2						250	38		11			-				
118	9		7					-	251	10		23							
119	21		5						252	69		12							
120	3								254	71		1/							
MR1	7								Z55	250		24							
MR2	15								Common	250		20							
MR3	62		1						Com %	240 82 8%		17.2%							
MR4	561									110	_	69							
Totals	2080		89		2		2		Less Com. %	61.5%		38.5%							
Common	1826		48		2		1			Table 4 Totals									
Com. %	97.3%		2.6%		0.1%		0.1%			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8		
Less Com.	254		41				1		Common	2448		81		2		1			
Less Com. %	85.8%		13.9%				0.3%		Com. %	96.7%		3.2%		0.08%		0.04%			
									Less Com.	540		119				1			

Tables 1, 2, 3, and 4: These tables contain the numerical results of the survey. Each column under the gray-filled cell headings represents the tally for each perfin position. Colour-filled cells indicate the commonly used issues, while the red outlined cells are those positions reported in the 6th Edition of the Perfin Handbook. The black-filled cells give the fundamental results of the survey. Table 4 gives a more general comparison between the commonly used issues and the less commonly used issues. About 3.3% of the total commonly used issues had positions other than position 1, while about 18.1% of the less commonly used issues had perfin positions of 3, 5 or 7. This is more than a five-fold increase in the chances of a perfin on a less commonly used issue having a position other than position 1 and clearly supports the hypothesis.

Less Com. % 81.8% -- 18.0%

0.15%

A Canadian Treasure The Steel Company of Canada

Joe Colbourne



Figure 1: Steel Company of Canada mailed from Montreal May 26th, 1914 franked with a 2¢ carmen Admiral perfin with MR/MC (pattern M23) paying the Empire surface rate to Glasgow Scotland.

This grubby looking cover (Figure 1)with a quite common perfin from Canada may look like it should be tossed in the waste bin, but it has quite a tale to tell. This cover has a faint line just above the address in green that was stamped on the face of this cover by the Ottawa Dead Letter Office. It reads, "Recovered by divers from wreck of S.S. Empress of Ireland". This cover went down with the ship, on 29 May 1914, marking the single-most deadly maritime disaster in Canadian history.

Of the approximately 20,000 letters originally aboard the EMPRESS of IRELAND, most were never recovered. Those letters that were salvaged from the wreck were forwarded to the

Ottawa Dead Letter Office for further processing.

By mid-October 2014, all mail considered salvageable had been received at Ottawa and the difficult task of sorting it out began. Eventually only 2116 letters, roughly 10 percent of the original shipment, were able to be either forwarded or returned to sender. On the reverse of this cover (Figure 2.) are two oval handstamps applied at the Ottawa Dead Letter Office. The one in green, under the one in black, indicates the letter's arrival on 20 October 1914 and the black marking reflects the completion of processing on 6 December 1914.



Figures 2 & 3: Reverse of the cover with 2 DLO stamps, the first in green October 20 1914 (difficult to read from the scan) and the second in black Dec 6, 1914

The story of the Empress of Ireland is well known as Canada commemorated the 100th anniversary of the event with stamps, a booklet and a souvenir sheet (Figure 4).

I quote from Canada Post's website "It has been our policy not to mark tragedies", says Jim Phillips Director of Canada Post's Stamp Services, "but in 2012 with the 100th anniversary of the Titanic's sinking, we wanted to recognize the huge role Halifax played in the aftermath. With the RMS Empress of Ireland, here was a devastating event that happened in Canadian waters, on the St. Lawrence. It had an impact on the people of Rimouski and Pointe-au-Père; it's a big part of their history. Prior to its sinking, the ship had brought countless new Canadians to this country; it quite literally populated the Prairies. But so few people knew about it because breaking news of the First World War chased the Empress story off the front page. It was a story we had to tell and an anniversary we had to mark."

The perfin pattern is M23 (Figure 6.), a common pattern by any standard. The user was the Steel Company of Canada Limited, Montreal as evidenced by the return address on the cover. It is punched into Scott #106. The Steel Company of Canada (now known as Stelco) was given life in the 1910 via the merger of Montreal Rolling Mills,



Figure 4: souvenir sheet (reduced) issued by Canada Post to commemorate the event.

the Hamilton Steel and Iron Company and a handful of secondary companies located from Gananoque to Brantford. This explains the catalog entry for pattern M23 noting the user as the Montreal Rolling Mills.¹





I would draw the reader's attention to the perfin stamp itself. I have seen covers with stamps reattached to their covers, a real tribute to the efforts of the Ottawa Dead Letter Office. The Ottawa Dead Letter Offie performed the same service here but made a simple mistake, that of reattaching the stamp upside-down. Note the wavy lines, do not quite match, but if the stamp were to be flipped upside down, the alignment would be perfect. Most stamps washed away, and I believe the perfin enabled the postal authorities to identify the correct cover for the stamp (see endnote 2).

For those of us who may not know the story of the Empress of Ireland, I have a quick overview that follows. There is a lot of information on the web including wiki pages.

The Empress of Ireland was the pride of the Canadian Pacific Steamship Company. Built in Glasgow, Scotland, the Empress of Ireland made its maiden voyage from Liverpool, England, to Quebec in June of 1906. For the next eight years, it would safely carry tens of thousands of passengers across the Atlantic between Canada and the United Kingdom

the class of the Titanic, Olympia, or Britannic, but 1906. at 551 feet long it was respectable in size and accommodations. The Empress was operated by a relatively small crew of 373 and could accommodate 1542 passengers in four class sections on sevluxury of a small first class section.

At 4:27pm on the afternoon of May 28th, 1914, the Empress disembarked Quebec City for a previous afternoon with 1,477 passengers and six-day voyage to Liverpool, England, the first two crew on board. It was bound for Liverpool, Engdays of which were to be on the St. Lawrence River. A seasoned ship at this point, it was setting out season. The ship had just made a mail stop in on its 96th voyage. It was a pleasant spring day on the river as Capt. Henry Kendall gave orders to release the lines. This was a day Capt. Kendall worked his whole life to achieve. Having risen through the ranks, this was to be his first voyage as master of his own ship, although the vessel had



Figure 7 : Captain Henry Kendall. The photo caption reads:

The Captain of the ill-fated liner who went down with his ship, but was saved and taken aboard the colliding vessel the "Storstad" -

The Empress was not a grand luxury liner in been making the trip regularly since its launch in

In the dark early hours of May 29, 1914, an impenetrable fog and misunderstood ship signals spelled disaster for the passengers and crew of the en decks. The Empress was built to serve working RMS Empress of Ireland. The ocean liner's sudden class families, with a fortunate few in the relative sinking in the frigid St. Lawrence River is still Canada's most deadly maritime disaster in peacetime.

> The Empress had cast off from Québec the land, on a routine sailing - the first of the 1914 Rimouski Quebec, dispatched its navigator and was nearing Pointe-au-Pere when fog engulfed it. The gloom also descended on the SS Storstad (Figure), a heavy Norwegian collier, which was closer than anyone realized. When each ship's crew could see the other ship's lights, it was too late: they were on a collision course.



Figure 8: The Norwegian collier SS Storstad after its collision with the Empress of Ireland

The coal ship ripped open the hull of the Empress and frigid water poured in. Soon the Empress was over on its side, and then it slipped beneath the surface, taking all of 14 minutes to sink. More than 1,000 people lost their lives.

In the Province of Quebec, shipwrecks are not afforded explicit protection. However, in 1999, the wreck was declared a site of historical and archaeological importance and thus became protected under the Cultural Property Act and was listed in the register of Historic Sites of Canada. This was the first time that an underwater site had received this status in Quebec. This protection was important because, unlike Titanic, Empress of Ire-

Land rests at the relatively shallow depth of 40m (130 ft). While accessible to highly skilled scuba divers, the site is dangerous due to the cold water, strong currents, and restricted visibility. As of 2009 six people had lost their lives making the dive to the wreckage.

Endnotes

1. The Steel Company of Canada was also a perfin user. The 6th Edition of the Handbook gives the S10 pattern an EKU of 1911/06/07 and LKU of 1957/10/6. and reports issues up to 1971.



2. Cancel alignment if the stamp had been placed upside down on the cover.



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