



# Canadian Military Mail Study Group

## NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 2018

NEWSLETTER NO. 230  
Page 1535

### CANADIAN BASE AND FIELD POST OFFICES IN ENGLAND IN THE GREAT WAR--By Wayne Schnarr

The sharing of APO and FPO postal hammers in France and Belgium during the First World War by the British, Canadian, ANZAC, and American forces has been well studied and documented [1,2]. Canadian troops also sent mail from numerous camps, depots, and hospitals in England. Some of these facilities were used exclusively by Canadian troops during certain periods while others were shared. While doing research for Volume I of the BNAPS Catalogue of Canadian Military Mail Markings, I did not find any comprehensive documentation on Canadian postal operations in England.

The key questions for each location is whether there were periods when the hammer for a specific camp was exclusively used by Canadian mail clerks [author's italics.Ed.]

The table outlines information from various sources on the opening and closing of the CPC base and field post offices at camps in England. The CPC units with the Canadian troops on Salisbury Plain in 1914/1915 used the large COEF hammers but mail to Canada during this period was often sent through local civilian or near-by British military camp post offices. The use of specific camp hammers by the CPC started in March 1915 with the establishment of the first base post office at Shorncliffe and ended when the last repatriation camp closed in 1919.

However, the Canadian postal operations in England were much larger as one reference states that "...the CPC also operated the mail detachments of nineteen Regimental Depots, three Command Depots, one Discharge Depot and six Discharging Hospitals". I have not found a list of these additional 29 mail detachments.

[Cont'd.]

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Year	Date	Activity
1914	Fall	Canadian troops were bivouacked on Salisbury Plain, primarily at Bustard Camp, West Down South Camp, West Down North Camp, Pond Farm Camp and Sling Camp
1915	March/April	Canadian units comprising the First Division moved from Salisbury Plain to Shorncliffe
	15 March	The first Canadian Base Post Office was operational at Shorncliffe
	May/June	Three Field Post Offices (FPOs) were established at Dibgate, Otterpool and West Sandling (an East Sandling Camp is mentioned but only Sandling markings are seen)
	October	A second Base Post Office was established at Bramshott to handle mail from Bramshott, Bordon and Longmoor camps
	November	Dibgate FPO closed and moved to St. Martins Plain
1916		A Canadian camp was established at Coombe Down, Bath (no mention of an FPO in CPC documents)
	13 / 15 November	Large FPO established at Witley Camp
	November	FPO opened again at Dibgate Camp
1917	14 January	New FPOs opened at Seaford and Crowborough
	31 July	Crowborough FPO closed; this action left BPOs at Shorncliffe, Witley, Bramshott and Seaford, and FPOs at Dibgate, St. Martins Plain, West Sandling and Otterpool
1919		Concentration camps were designated or established to handle repatriation of Canadian troops, including Bramshott, Witley, Seaford, Ripon (cavalry), Shorncliffe, Purfleet, Sunningdale and Kinmel Park (Rhyl, Wales; miscellaneous groups).

A search of the War Diaries revealed the following **Regimental Depots** in England. The number of records and the periods covered by the War Diaries varies widely but nearly all end in 1919 with demobilization and repatriation. The only camp from this list which did not have a base or field post office is Shoreham. The individual depots would often have orderly room handstamps but very few of these had specific mail or postal wording.

- Canadian Artillery (Witley, then Ripon)
- Canadian Cavalry (Kinmel Park)
- Canadian Engineers (Seaford, Witley)
- Canadian Railway Troop
- Nova Scotia (Bramshott, Ripon)
- New Brunswick (Shoreham, Bramshott, Witley, Ripon)
- 1st Quebec (Shoreham, Bramshott, Ripon)
- 2nd Quebec (Shoreham, Witley)
- Eastern Ontario (Seaford, Witley)

[Cont'd.]



- 1st Central Ontario (West Sandling, Shorncliffe, Witley, Ripon)
- 2nd Central Ontario (East Sandling, Shorncliffe, Witley, Ripon)
- Western Ontario (Bramshott, Witley, Ripon)
- Manitoba (Dibgate, Shorncliffe, Seaford)
- Saskatchewan (Bramshott)
- Alberta (Bramshott, Ripon)
- British Columbia (Seaford)

The three **Command Depots** were intended for physical and military skills training to prepare soldiers for further service. Each depot could handle up to 5,000 soldiers.

- No.1 - at Hastings for Shorncliffe-area troops
- No.2 - at Bramshott for Aldershot-area troops
- No.3 - at Seaford for troops in other parts of England

**No.1 Canadian Discharge Depot (CDD)** was at Buxton, which was also the location of Granville Canadian Special Hospital, Canadian Red Cross Special Hospital and Canadian Nurses Convalescent Hospital. The CDD was a hospital and started to receive Canadian soldiers in December 1916 who were to be sent back to Canada (soldiers returning to France went to Epsom in Surrey). In January 1919, the mandate of the depot changed to handle only married men and dependents going to Canada. There were post office staff at the CDD.

An extensive literature search has not turned up any reference to Canadian **Discharging Hospitals**. The Canadian hospitals were categorized as Stationary, General, Special, or Convalescent. The Stationary Hospitals were regularly moving, usually into active battle areas. General Hospitals No.1 through No.8 were also quite mobile and No.9 through No.16 were not formed until September or October 1917. The Special Hospitals were generally smaller and do not fit the "Discharging" description. The only six hospitals which fit the "Discharging" description are the Convalescent Hospitals (excluding the two Red Cross Convalescent Hospitals, King's and Princess Patricia's):

- Woodcote Park Convalescent Hospital (Epsom; Sep.5, 1915 to Jun.30, 1919)
- Bear Wood Convalescent Hospital (Wokingham; Sep.20, 1915 to Jul.24, 1919)
- Bromley Convalescent Hospital (Bromley; Apr.20, 1915 to Aug.31, 1918)
- Hillingdon House, Canadian Convalescent Hospital (Uxbridge; Sep.20, 1915 to Dec.12, 1917)
- Monks Horton Convalescent Hospital (Monks Horton; May 1, 1915 to Aug.28, 1918--closed for five months in 1916)
- Officers' Convalescent Hospital (Matlock, Bath; Mar.5, 1918 to Sep.12, 1919)



Page 1538

In addition to providing this summary of CPC operations in England during the Great War (excluding the London/Record Office), I am also looking for additional information and postal markings from these camps, depots, and hospitals. There are some U.K. publications which I have not been able to access [3,4,5].

Thanks to CMMSG members and other readers in advance for your assistance.

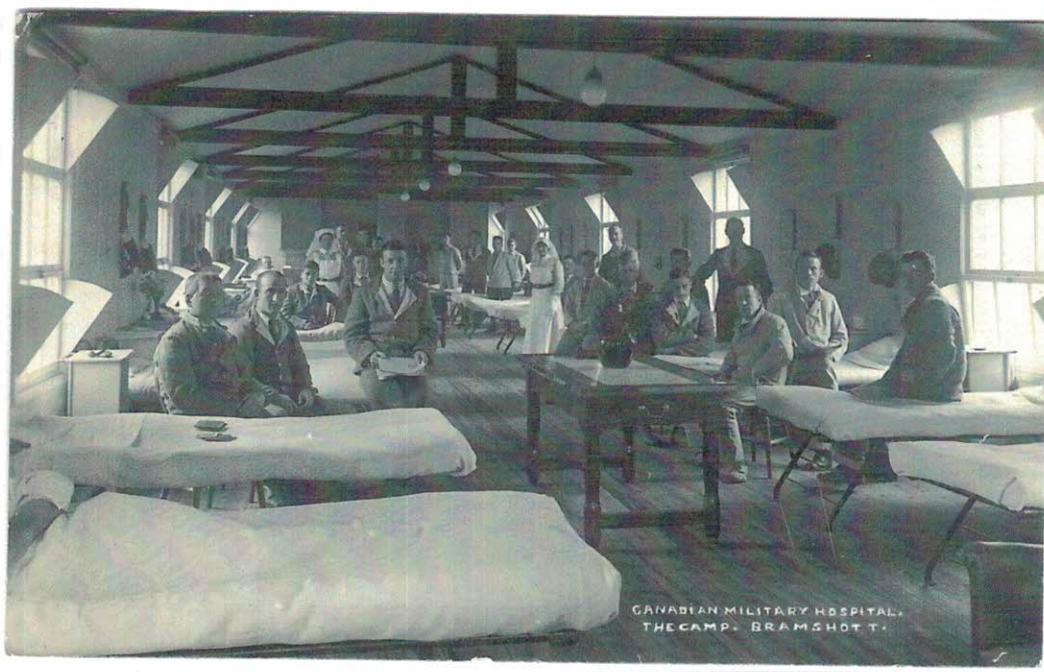
#### REFERENCES

1. Kennedy & Crabb. The Postal History of the British Army in World War I--Before and After; 1903-1929 (1977).
2. Bailey & Toop. Canadian Military Mail Markings, Vol.I. Chapter 6 (1996).
3. Raynor, P.E. List Of British Army Postmarks Used in the Great War 1914 to 1919.
4. \_\_\_\_\_. List Of Camps, Hospitals etc. in Great Britain and Ireland (1969).
5. Kingston, R.A. Camp Postmarks of the United Kingdom--An Illustrated Reference Book of Postmarks From Military and Naval Establishments. U.K.: Forces Postal History Society.

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#### NO.12 CANADIAN GENERAL HOSPITAL, BRAMSHOTT, APRIL 1918

According to Bailey & Toop's Canadian Military Postal Markings, Vol.II



CANADIAN MILITARY HOSPITAL,  
THE CAMP, BRAMSHOTT.

(1996, p.802, 804), the Bramshott Military Hospital was staffed by Can-

[Cont'd.]



adian personnel of No.9 Stationary Hospital. At the time of this real

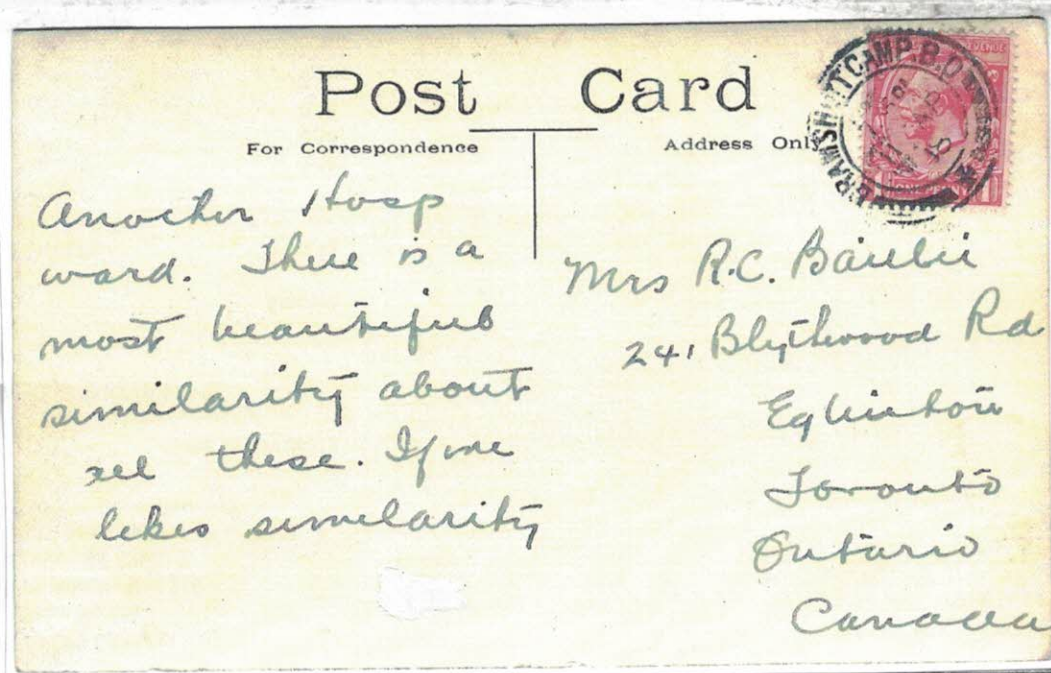


photo postcard, April 11, 1918, No.12 Canadian General Hospital personnel took over duties when it was organized on October 12, 1917. This term extended to September 23, 1919. The BRAMSHOTT CAMP.B.O/+ was a Branch Office used from 1914-1918.

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MEMORIAL CARD, LT. L.L. DAVIDSON, PASSCHENDAELE, 1917--By C. Ron McGuire



[Cont'd.]



Page 1540

[Ron sent along this extremely well-done memorial card for Lt. Lawrence Lavell (E.H. Wigney's C.E.F. Roll of Honour, 1996 indicates "Lowell") Davidson who was gassed at Passchendaele on November 11, 1917 and sadly died in No.14 General Hospital on November 25, 1917. He was 21 and had served with the 5th Canadian Infantry Battalion (Western Cavalry). He was buried in the Wimereux Communal Cemetery, France.Ed.]



In Memory of  
Lieutenant  
**Lawrence Lavell Davidson**  
5th Battalion, C.E.F.

Eldest son of Mr. and Mrs. J. J. Davidson

Wounded at Passchendaele, Nov. 11th  
Died in No. 14 Gen. Hospital, France

November 25th, 1917

Age 21 years

Beginn, 1917.

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### CONGRATULATIONS TO MEMBER MIKE POWELL AND THE CPSGB FOUNDERS TROPHY!

[Mike Street has informed us that Mike Powell was awarded the Canadian Philatelic Society of Great Britain Founders Trophy. At the recent convention in October 2017 it was announced that the Fellows of the Society, along with the President and immediate Past President, had chosen Mike as the recipient. The trophy is awarded for the best subject of original or intensive research in any branch of BNA philately, and is the most prestigious of the awards made at the convention banquet. It was awarded for Mike's two volumes on Great War Internment Camps and Prisoners of War: Canadian Prisoners of War and Civilian Internees in Europe During The Great War (2017), and Notes Through Barbed Wire (2011). Both volumes were published by BNAPS. Mike has received a certificate and his name will be added to the trophy. Congratulations Mike! Ed.]

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CMMSG AT ORAPEX 2018 MAY 5, 1400-1500

Members are invited to attend the special meeting noted above. Mike's presentation is entitled "Correspondence Home From An Ancaster Doctor in Belgium and France During The Great War".

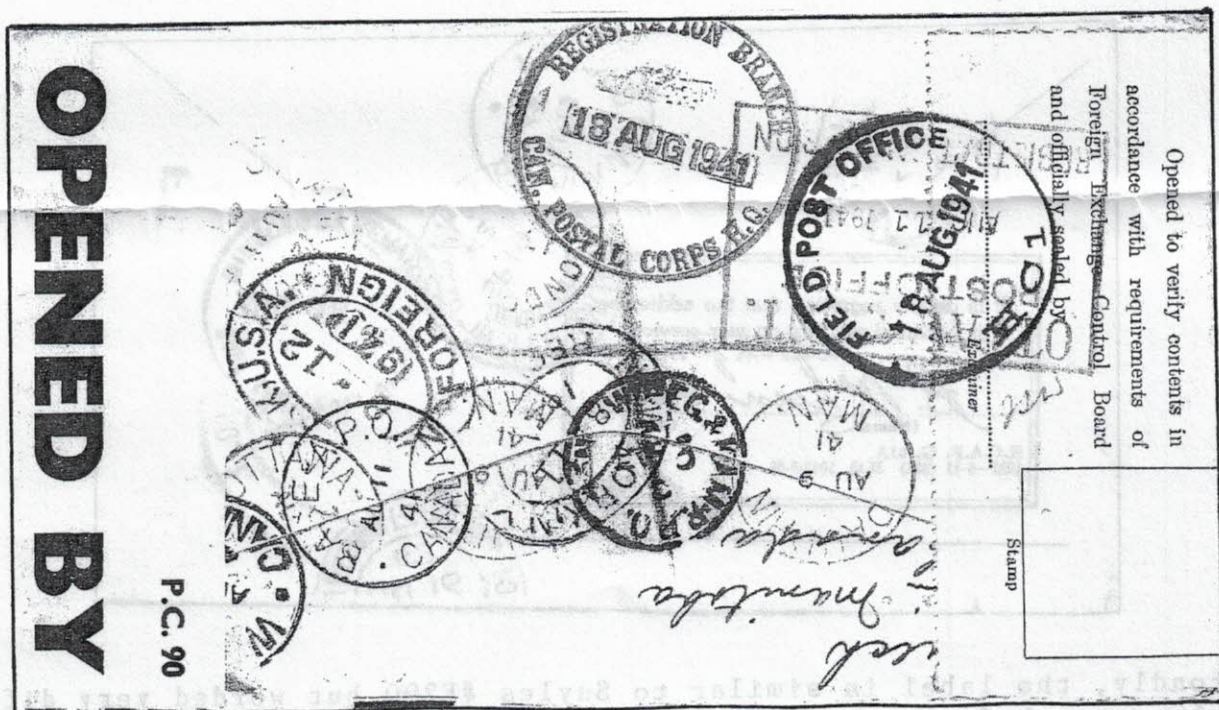
**Canadian Military Mail Study Group meeting to be held at ORAPEX 2018:** ORAPEX, the annual national-level exhibition and bourse held each spring in Ottawa, is managed by volunteers drawn from the RA Stamp Club, the Amicale des philatélistes de l'Outaouais, the Ottawa Philatelic Society and related philatelic societies and organizations. The show is held at the RA Centre, the recreation and activity centre located at 2451 Riverside Drive in central Ottawa operated by the Recreation Association of the Public Service of Canada.

ORAPEX 2018, being held May 5 - 6, will mark the 57th edition of the show. The 2018 show theme is Canadian Military Mail, and the Canadian Military Mail Study Group (CMMSG) has been invited to hold a seminar during the show. The speaker will be Mike Street OTB, Chairman of the CMMSG, who will present postcards and letters to his family in Ancaster, Ontario from a World War I Canadian Doctor who commanded the 5<sup>th</sup> Canadian Field Ambulance in Belgium, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Canadian Stationary Hospital in France and the 5<sup>th</sup> Canadian General Hospital in England. All interested collectors are invited to attend.

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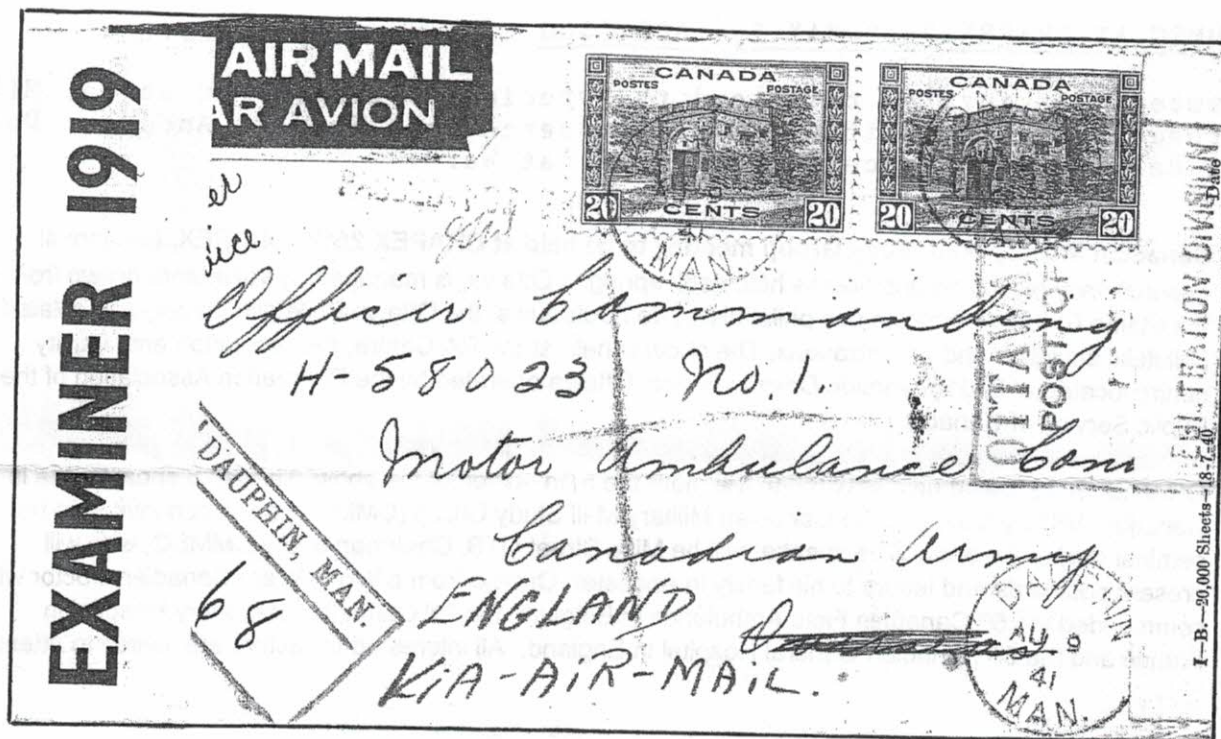
NEW REPORTS, SECOND WORLD WAR--By John Watson

[John has sent along some new or unlisted reports. "FIELD POST OFFICE" is printed in full rather than just "FPO" in the HC1 device. John notes that this is a nice FECB registered usage as well.

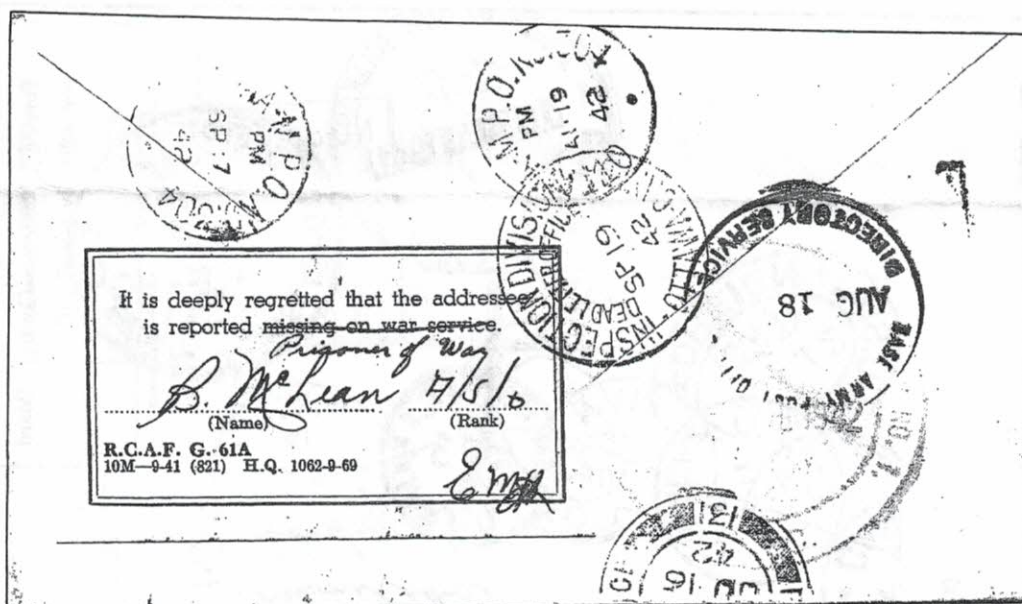


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The following shows the back of a cover which has two unreported items. Firstly the circular BASE ARMY POST OFFICE/DIRECTORY SERVICE, which is identical wording to Sayles #F28, but measures 30mm instead of 33mm. In addition the internal lettering is smaller than #F28 (2mm instead of 3mm). I presume that this would be regarded as a second hammer for #F28.

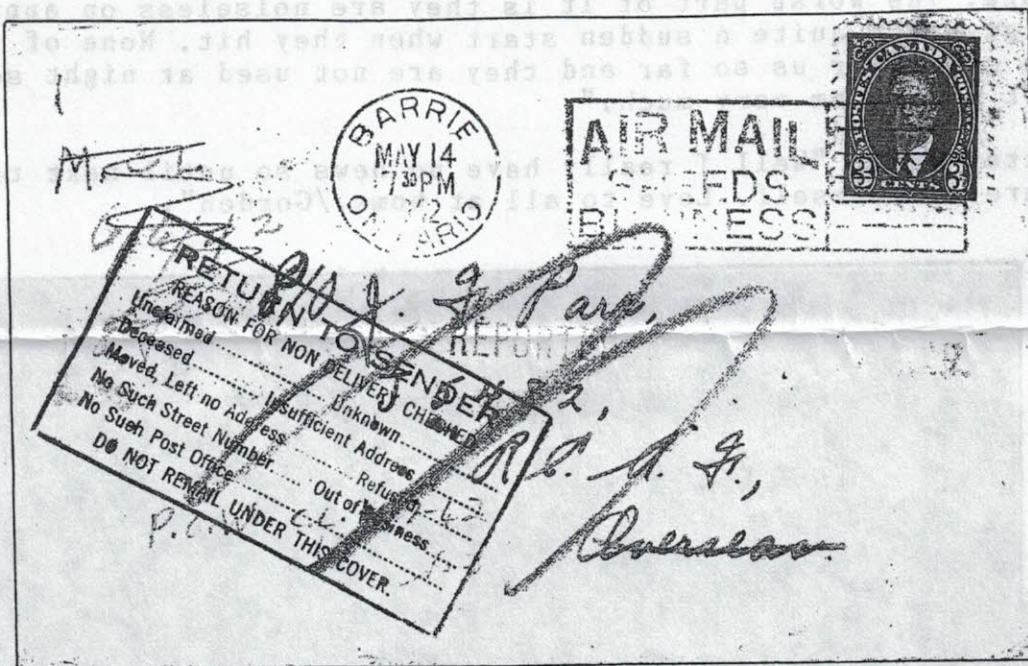


Secondly, the label is similar to Sayles #F290 but worded very differently, even before the manuscript modification.

The front of the cover, which is fairly unremarkable, does have Sayles [Cont'd.]



#F318 REPORTED PRISONER OF WAR.]. [The addressee is listed as "POW #555, F/L J.F. Parr, J5487, from Toronto, Ontario" in Les Allison and Harry Hayward's They Shall Not Grow Old: A Book of Remembrance. (Brandon: Commonwealth Air Training Plan Museum, 1996).Ed.]



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OCTOBER 1944 "SOMEWHERE IN BELGIUM" POSTAL NEWS--By Mike Street

On October 17, 1944 Corporal Gordon D. Frankum used a piece of Canadian Legion War Services stationery and envelope to write to his mother in the Notre Dame de Grace neighbourhood of Montreal from "Somewhere in Belgium". Most of the letter concerned mail delivery to the front. It was endorsed "CAO" (Canadian Army Overseas). There is no Field Post Office mark, but a 36mm diameter circular \*RELEASED BY\*/BASE CENSOR mark was added in blue ink on the front.

"Dear Mother,

I am working this afternoon but as we are not very busy I am doing a little letter writing in between times. Have not received your parcel as yet but the Post Office has been moving its location and that naturally causes some delay and confusion which will take a while to straighten out. The Post Office, on the whole, have done an excellent job so far, and I imagine things will improve steadily. I am receiving your letters in from 4 to 8 days. Regular mail seems to be as fast as air mail but I can't tell for sure as sometimes our mail is held up for several days between the post office and us and we get a lot at once instead of a little each day. It means longer to wait but is necessary as we can't send DR's [abbreviation uncertain but likely 'Dispatch Riders'] out to everyone every day. Considering the tremendous undertaking the handling of mail is, we really do OK".

The letter goes on to describe the new artillery shells the Germans

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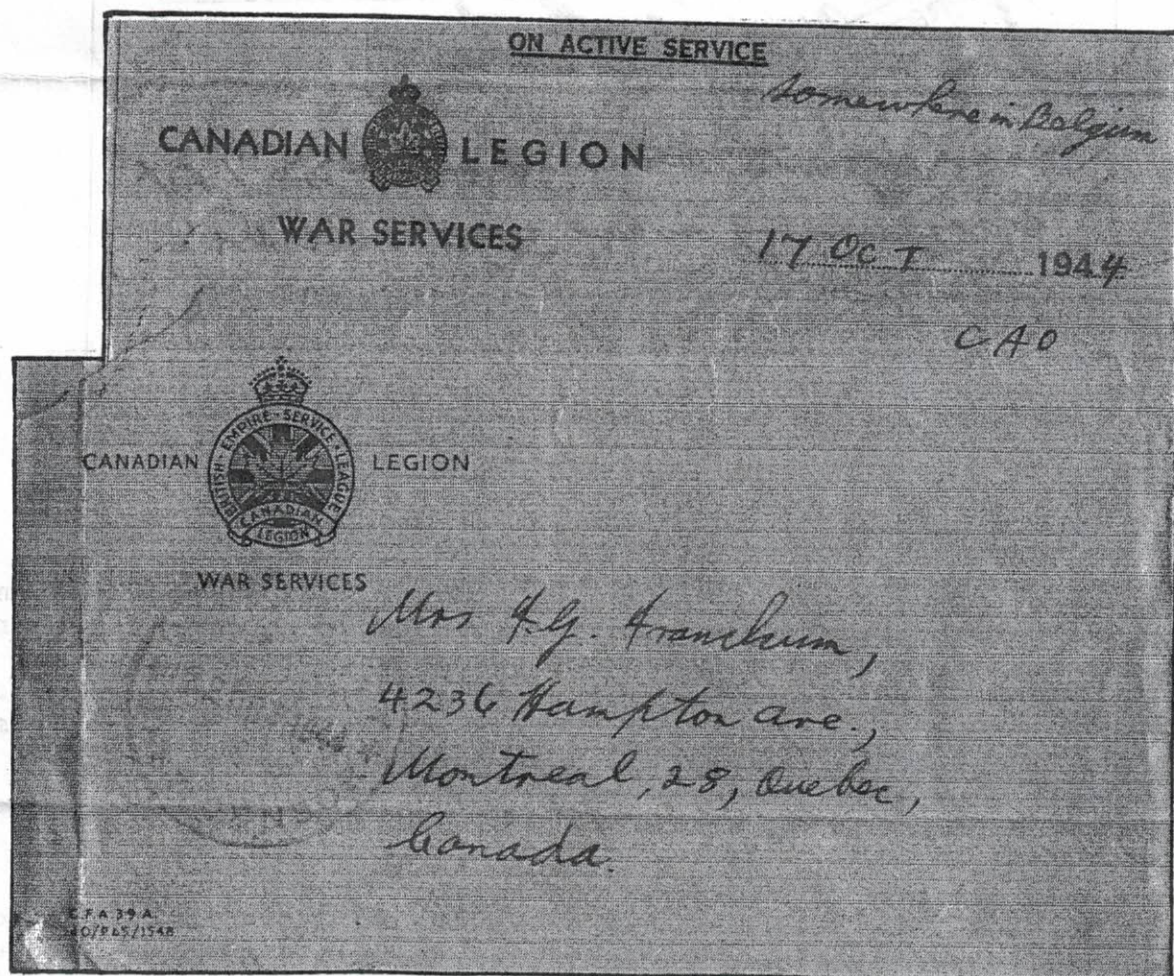


Page 1544

were using:

"[The shells] make a very big bang but don't appear to do much damage. The worst part of it is they are noiseless on approach and give you quite a sudden start when they hit. None of them have come near us so far and they are not used at night so we don't mind them very much."

The letter ends, "Well I really have no news so until next time take care of yourself. Love to all at home./Gordon".



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# CAPO 5050 LAST DAY--By Cec Coutts (Non-member)

[Cec kindly sent along the following February 11, 1965 "last day" cover from CAPO 5050, Werl, Germany. Members will refer back to Robert Toombs' "CAPO/CFPO Postmark Designation" article (NL#136, August 1998, pp. 364-365) where he noted that the re-designation of postal hammers from CAPO to CFPO occurred on January 1, 1965. Bob noted that the new devices were not made available until mid-February 1965. I cannot immediately recall if there was an update for CAPO 5050 (which Bob didn't note), so here is an example from Cec to report it or confirm the date.Ed.]

[Cont'd.]



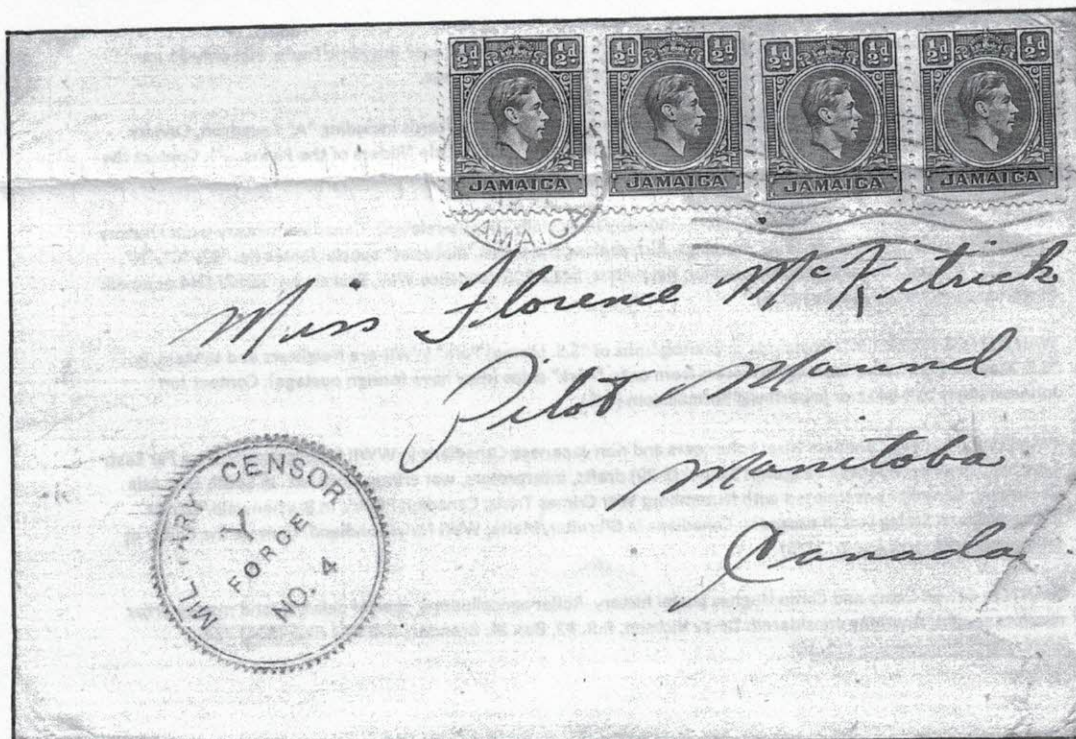


Sgt R.E. Donov n  
1 Canadian Overseas Postal Depot  
CAPO 5057

LAST DAY ISSUE

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"Y FORCE" JAMAICA, WINNIPEG GRENADIERS 1941



[Cont'd.]



Page 1546

#H6262, Corporal R.A. Currie, Headquarters Company, Y Force, sent this cover paying the 2d rate to Pilot Mound, Manitoba. It received a Pilot Mound, Manitoba backstamp with an unclear March or May 17, 1941 date. The Grenadiers arrived on June 20, 1940 and left Jamaica on September 13, 1941. The MILITARY CENSOR/Y/FORCE/NO.4 "serrated" censor mark is in carmine. [Apologies if this is a repeat.Ed.]

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Dear Study Group Members: Mike and I extend our very best New Year greetings for a happy, healthy, prosperous, and wonderful military mail collecting 2018! Our group received a wonderful and kind donation through Mike from the late Kim Dodwell (Kim's second) and we appreciate and remember his dedication and promotion of Canadian military mail.

Members will note, although a bit tardy, that we are back to our 12-page format! Thanks to our many contributors (the Editor has only a few space-fillers) who make these pages possible. Please keep the articles flowing so that we can continue to fill future newsletters.

Members are once again reminded of ORAPEX and BNAPEX which will showcase military mail themes and are encouraged to exhibit or attend.

Members may have learned that the Royal Canadian Navy is working on providing members updated Wi-Fi when ships are in port. Technology is endangering modern military mail/postal history so it is increasingly important that we document all examples for the future. Until next time, good collecting!

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## 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- related Royal North-West Mounted Police covers/cards including "A" Squadron, Cavalry Draft and "B" Squadron, Siberia (see Steve Luciuk's Anthology (1991) article "Riders of the Plains...."). Contact the Editor at [blueputtees@hotmail.com](mailto:blueputtees@hotmail.com) (4/4)

WANTED: WWII Canadian P.O.W. mail from Germany (especially Dieppe-related); Canadian military postal history WWI/WWII with "missing" or "KIA" markings. Also seeking the WWII "alphabet" special forces (ie. "B", "C", "N", "W", "Y", "Z" etc.). Scans or photocopies to: Hal Kellett, #412-106 Armistice Way, Saskatoon, SK S7J 2H4 or email: [hkstampsandcovers@shaw.ca](mailto:hkstampsandcovers@shaw.ca) (4/6)

WANTED FOR AN EXHIBIT: Postcards or photographs of "S.S. (name) Park" WWII-era freighters and tankers, ie. "S.S. Mayfair Park". Also looking for covers from or to "Park" ships (may have foreign postage). Contact Jon Johnson (403) 253-8411 or [jcjperfins@hotmail.com](mailto:jcjperfins@hotmail.com) (4/5)

WANTED: Japanese Canadian Nisei volunteers and non-Japanese Canadians in WWII Intelligence Service Far East. Especially seeking Japanese Language School (S-20) drafts, interpreters, war crimes units etc. in South East Asia Command; Canadians associated with Nuremburg War Crimes Trials; Canadian POW's in Buchenwald/Colditz (Oflag IVC) and Stalag Luft III escapers; Canadians in Gibraltar/Malta; WWI Newfoundland. Contact the Editor at [blueputtees@hotmail.com](mailto:blueputtees@hotmail.com) (2/5)

WANTED: Sewell Camp and Camp Hughes postal history. Roller cancellations, special delivery, and money order receipts sought. Anything considered. Darcy Hickson, R.R. #2, Box 24, Brandon, MB R7A 5Y2; (204) 724-2028; [Darcy@hickson.ca](mailto:Darcy@hickson.ca) (10/10)

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