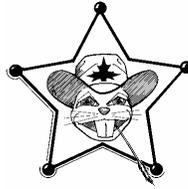


BEAVER**CHATTER**

The Newsletter of the Prairie Beaver Regional Group of the British North America Philatelic Society, Ltd.

Chairman: **George Dresser** Treasurer: **John Furlong** Editor: **Vic Willson**

Volume 31, No. 4

Whole Number 122

December 2006

Happy Holidays

This holiday newsletter is sent to you by the Willsons. We hope your celebrations are happy and meaningful over this season. Feliz Navidad, Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukah.



DEC 24 CANCELS

Going through some of my material, I found two items cancelled Dec. 24. One is a postcard from Dawson 1908 to Petersburg, North Dakota. Written in Swedish (which I have not yet translated- my Swedish is not just rusty but basically nonexistent; my great-grandfather on my father's side was Swedish from Stockholm with the name Glencelius and I learned a bit from my great aunts, but not enough).

The other item is a cover from Oak Bay, BC, 1926, to Cape Town, South Africa.



XMAS GREETINGS FROM THE FRONT

On the next page are scans of a soldier's Xmas letter with card from "the Front" to a young lady in NB. The card shows the battles of the New Brunswick Battalion, the unit slogan "Semper Paratus" (always prepared), the unit insignia, a maple leaf with 26 overlaid, and "ON ACTIVE SERVICE". Sgt. H. L. Wright sent the card, and I found no evidence that he was killed during the war from the Book of Remembrance. The 26th Infantry Battalion served in the 5th Infantry Brigade of the 2nd Canadian Division. Its initial strength was 1,108 men.

The exploits of the 26th are mentioned in Nicholson's text in the "Battles of the Somme" during the period of July to November 1916 (Chapter VI pages 170, 179, 182) and again in the "Battle of Passchendaele" in October - November 1917 (Chapter X page 324). During the "Canada's Hundred Days" Livesay reports (page 49) on the 26th significant losses (primarily officers) at Snipe Copse, south of Marcelcave on or about August 8th, 1918. The battalion survived when Lt. Col. A. E. G. McKenzie rallied the troops (including the cooks and batmen) and led them into battle. There are a number of other references to the 26th New Brunswick in the later pages of that text,

many detailing heroic exploits of the men at all levels, even the Chaplain. It accumulated 21 battle honours, winning 266 decorations and awards (taken from the website <http://www.saintjohn.nbcc.nb.ca/jervisbay/26batmon2.htm> .

The cover was sent on DEC 22, 1916, received at St. John on JAN 8, a 3c stamp affixed (the silliness of not letting soldier's letters come home free did not get resolved until July 1917- I have written about this earlier in TOPICS). The unit cancel is partly obscured by the stamp and badly struck, but is 5W, the designation for the 5th Bd during the period October 1916 – January 1917.



Christmas, 1916.



YULETIDE GREETINGS.

and Best Wishes.

From The Front Line, in France
Sgt. H.R. Wright.

For those of you who spent a Christmas in a war zone, you will know the feelings of Sgt. Wright in letting folks back home know you are still there but completely unable to communicate the life you live. So, "Best Wishes" has to do. I have thought that WWI was worse than any other in its unremitting slaughter, life in trenches, and grim outcome for those who had come first. Very few of the 1st CEF made it all the way through if they were in combat units. The lucky ones made it out with wounds, some terrible, but they made it. Something like that is going on now in Iraq, as men are on their third tours- the ratio of wounded to dead is 7-1, where it was 3-1 in Vietnam. They are coming back, hurt in body and spirit. Pray for them. And tell your congressmen to support the VA the way it should be, not the gross underfunding at present.



XMAS GREETINGS At left is a card sent to Constantinople to the Belgian Delegation from the House of Commons (on reverse) Dec. 8, 1900, and franked with a 2c Map stamp from Ottawa. A British Post Office receiver JA 3 is on the back. The card was first sent without stamp, handstamped with an Ottawa Type I squared circle, "RETURNED", and then franked with the 2c stamp. What lies beneath is sometimes interesting.