

Chapter 7

The Canadian Expeditionary Force in Northwest Europe 1915–1919

The saga of the Canadian Expeditionary Force in Northwest Europe began on 9 February 1915, when the 1st Division sailed from Avonmouth near Bristol. It thus became the first Canadian military formation to serve abroad under its own HQ and with its own supporting arms and administrative services. Two days later, the leading troops disembarked at St. Nazaire and immediately entrained onto waiting railway trucks, which were labelled “8 Chevaux – 40 Hommes”. In this manner, the Division travelled for 43 hours across northern France to a billeting area just east of Hazebrouck. After a few days in the nearby villages and farms, the Division took over a small portion of the British front line in a relatively quiet sector about Armentieres (Figure 7.1), and there Canadian soldiers learned something of the art of trench warfare. In mid-April, the Division was transferred to the vicinity of Ypres where, on St. George’s Day, the Germans launched their first major attack in which poison gas was used. For the Canadians, the War then started in earnest.



Figure 7.1. Postcard sent to Ste. Antoine, Saskatchewan postmarked Field Post Office 2.X (18 March 1915). From the 1st Division, Second Brigade at Armentieres. Free military post from Europe; franked with 1¢ added in transit at Winnipeg. *Toombs Collection.*

After the ordeal at Ypres, the Division returned to Armentieres where, in mid-September 1915, it was joined by the 2nd Division (Figure 7.2). In accordance with Government policy, the Canadian Corps came into existence with its HQ located at Bailleul. From then onwards, the Corps grew both in size and in importance. For a while, it included the Canadian Cavalry Brigade, whose members had volunteered to serve as foot soldiers. On 23 November 1915, the “Princess Pats”—the PPCLI—were repatriated into the Corps after a year of action with the British forces. During the next few weeks, more units arrived from England, and by December 1915 there were enough of them to permit formation of the 3rd Division. At the same time, numerous Canadian ancillary units came to make up the group known collectively as “Corps Troops”. These were assembled to form the 4th Division, which followed to France in August 1916. Thus, the Canadian Corps became one of the largest and one of the most formidable fighting formations on the Western Front.



Figure 7.2. Cover to Youngstown, Alberta from a soldier in the 2nd Division, Railhead, in the Givenchy area of France. Postmarked ARMY POST OFFICE / R.X.2 on 24 November 1915. Admiral stamps (totalling 3¢) were applied in Winnipeg by the Post Office Department on 10 December 1915. *Dowsley Collection.*

Outside the Corps, there were some 50,000 Canadians in miscellaneous units such as hospitals, railway construction, and operating companies, field bakeries, pioneer battalions, reinforcement units, etc. Some of these units had been located in and around the base area at Le Havre but in May 1917 they were moved to Etaples, where the Canadian Base Depot had been organized so that it would be closer to the Corps and to the Channel ports of Boulogne and Calais. Further inland, Canadian training schools were established at Lillers and Aubin St. Vaast. Away to the south and west of Paris, companies of the Forestry Corps were employed on the wooded slopes of the Vosges and Jura mountains and in the Gironde district cutting timber for the Allies. At Rouen, a Canadian Records Office was attached to GHQ 3rd Echelon.

After wintering in the Armentieres sector, the Corps returned to the terribly scarred area of the Ypres salient early in 1916. Later that year, it moved south to join in the conflict along the River Somme. In 1917, it was engaged at Vimy Ridge in April and even later that year at Ypres, Passchendaele, and Poperinghe.

In December 1917, the trenches about Lens (Figure 7.3) were called 'home'. Conditions during 1918 were fairly static until the end of July, when



Figure 7.3. Registered cover (3 July 1917) from Canadian Corps Headquarters, near Lens, France sent to Ontario by Lance Corporal A.R. MacNabb. Dated by the FIELD POST OFFICE / H.X double circle. The sender paid 2d for registration but no postage fee. *Dowsley Collection.*

the Corps made some highly secret moves designed to deceive the enemy preparatory to a great offensive that was to commence on 8 August 1918 (Germany's "Black Friday"). The last of those moves placed the Corps before Amiens, where a major assault was made on the German positions. Amiens was recaptured and the Corps was transferred to the Arras sector. During the next several weeks, it was actively engaged in a number of battles that pushed the enemy steadily back through Cambrai to Valenciennes, and finally to Mons, which the 3rd Division entered on the morning of 11 November 1918. The War was over.

Then followed a pause to allow for reconstruction of the lines of communication across a region devastated by four years of bitter fighting. By the end of that month, the advance eastwards again got under way; on 11/12 December 1918, Corps HQ and 1st and 2nd Divisions crossed the Rhine at Bonn and Cologne and went into winter quarters in Germany, where they performed garrison duties for a period of about six weeks. The 3rd and 4th Divisions remained in Belgium in the vicinity of Tournai and Namur, respectively, while Corps Troops billeted about St. Vith and Stavelot.

The long journey back to Canada started in the last few days of January 1919 as the 3rd Division entrained for the Channel ports and thence to Bramshott and Witley camps in England. It was followed successively by the 1st, 2nd, and 4th Divisions and subsequently by Corps HQ and Corps Troops in the latter part of April 1919. A number of small administrative units and other groups proceeded to Etaples for disbandment at the Base Depot. In due course, units and individuals returned home for demobilization and the Canadian Corps and the Canadian Expeditionary Force disappeared into the annals of Canada's military postal history.

Postal Services

Night after night, the mail trains pulled out of London laden with letters, newspapers, and parcels in bags that the staff of the Home Depot had labeled for delivery to units of the Australian, British, Canadian, Indian, and New Zealand forces in Northwest Europe. At Folkestone and Southampton, the bags were transferred to Channel packets and carried to the base POs situated on the docks at Calais, Boulogne, and Le Havre.

At the BPOs, the bags in each despatch were sorted into the following categories:

1. Express bags – containing official letters and daily newspapers for delivery by road transport to each army, corps, division, and brigade Headquarters;

2. Bags – containing letters, newspapers, and parcels for conveyance in sealed railway vans of the supply trains to the railhead APOs;
3. Bags – for delivery by road transport to intermediate APOs along the lines of communication;
4. Bags – for delivery to APOs in the base areas.

Later on, when motor vehicles became more numerous, a great network of mail routes was developed to connect all the principal HQs and POs in the British zone, and then most letter and newspaper mail was conveyed by truck or lorry. Letters posted in one part of the zone could be received in any other part within 24 hours, and usually London newspapers were read in the trenches on the same date as they were published.

The railhead APO was an innovation in the army postal service and it came about largely by reason of the very wide front held by the Empire's forces. Though the distance between the Front line and the Channel ports was not so great, the supply trains took anywhere from one to three days to reach their destinations. Since in that period a brigade, a division, or even a corps could be shifted many miles to another sector of the Front, regulating POs were required at each divisional and corps troops railhead, or terminus. At the same time, cross postal routes were introduced between those POs to enable the transfer of mail to other lines of communication without having to send it all the way back to the base area. The regulating POs, or railhead APOs as they were designated, therefore became responsible for the following duties:

1. Distribution of incoming despatches to the appropriate supply columns or "trains", and to units in the immediate area;
2. Receipt and sortation of outgoing mail and the preparation of despatches;
3. Safeguarding the mail between its arrival at the railhead and its subsequent distribution;
4. Transfer of mail between APOs at the same or adjacent railheads; and
5. The diversion of mail intended for formations that had moved to other sectors of the Front.

From every railhead, supply columns set out once each day with their trucks or wagons loaded with rations, stores, and mail on routes that took them to prearranged delivery points. As a rule, those points were reasonably safe from enemy observation and shell-fire but when otherwise, the columns would arrive during the hours of darkness. Awaiting them would be the

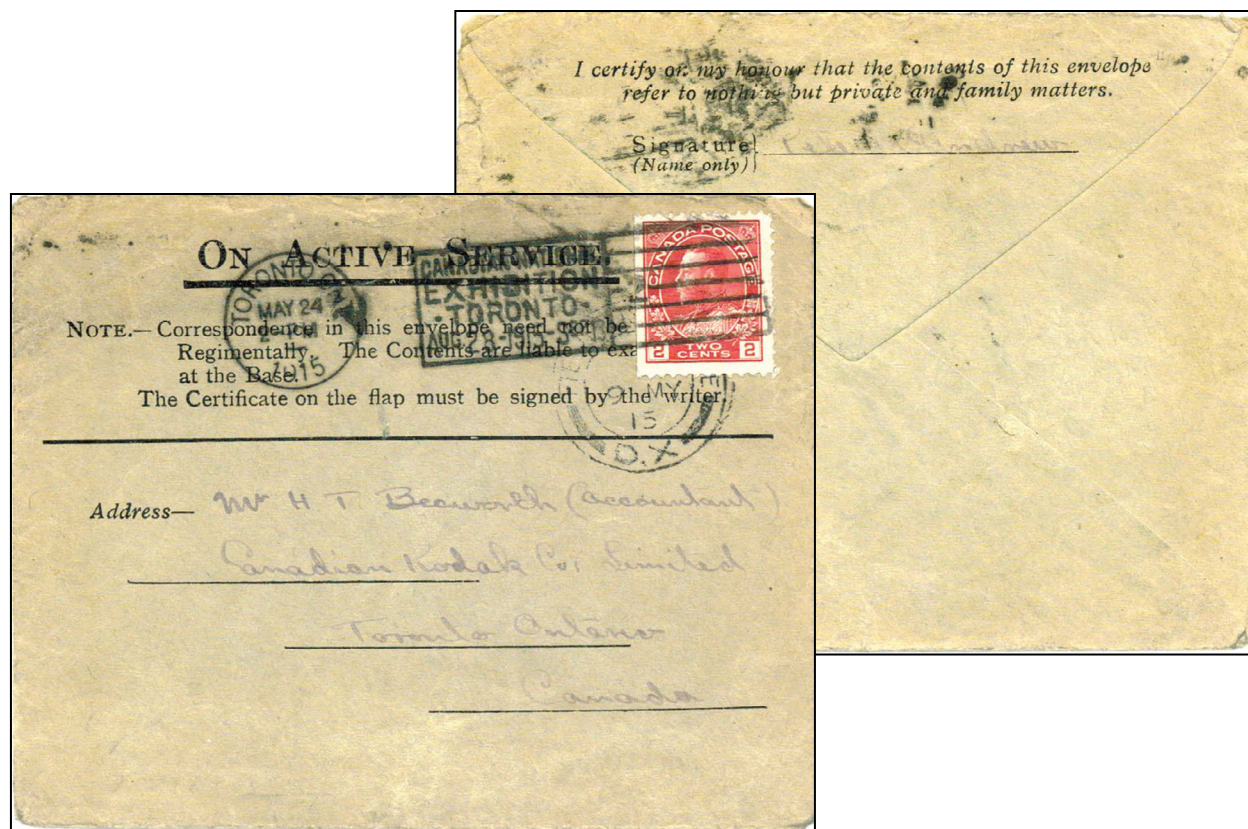


Figure 7.5. A Green (Honour) Envelope from FPO D.X, 1st Canadian Division Headquarters, dated 9 May, 1915. Self-censored by the soldier. Contents were censored at the regiment level or at the base. *Toombs Collection.*

Before leaving the FPO, each unit mail orderly recorded all incoming registered letters in his book, separated all undeliverable items—endorsing them with such detail as he possessed—and returned them to the FPO. The balance was then divided into company, etc. bundles and taken to the unit area. In some cases, registered letters were held at the FPO for safe-keeping until the addressees came out of the trenches for rest, delousing, and general cleanup. The mail orderly of an infantry battalion usually had an assistant and the two worked together as a team. One performed the duties just outlined; the other would collect outgoing mail after it had been censored by unit officers (see Chapter 23), obtain cash for the purchase of postage stamps and money orders, and then proceed to the FPO, where he would receive the next delivery of incoming mail. Naturally, the orderlies had to be reliable and trustworthy soldiers and they most certainly were.

Postal services for units in the base areas and along the lines of communication were provided by stationary APOs , or “S” offices as they were called, situated at convenient points between the ports and railheads.

Unlike the FPOs, "S" offices seldom changed their location. Thus, their operations compared favourably with civilian POs. Unit mail orderlies were still responsible, however, for collecting their incoming mail from and delivering their outgoing mail to those APOs. The static nature of these offices, of course, did not necessarily apply to the units they served. On the contrary, many of them moved from one army or corps area to another but since such moves were not as sudden or as frequent as those of divisional and brigade units, it was comparatively simple for the base APOs to divert their despatches without disrupting normal deliveries.

The general postal distribution system prevailing in the British zone in early 1915 is outlined in Figure 7.6. Variations occurred from time to time as required by special conditions. This system formed the basis for the postal service organized and developed by the CPC for the Canadian Expeditionary Force in Northwest Europe, as the following paragraphs will show.

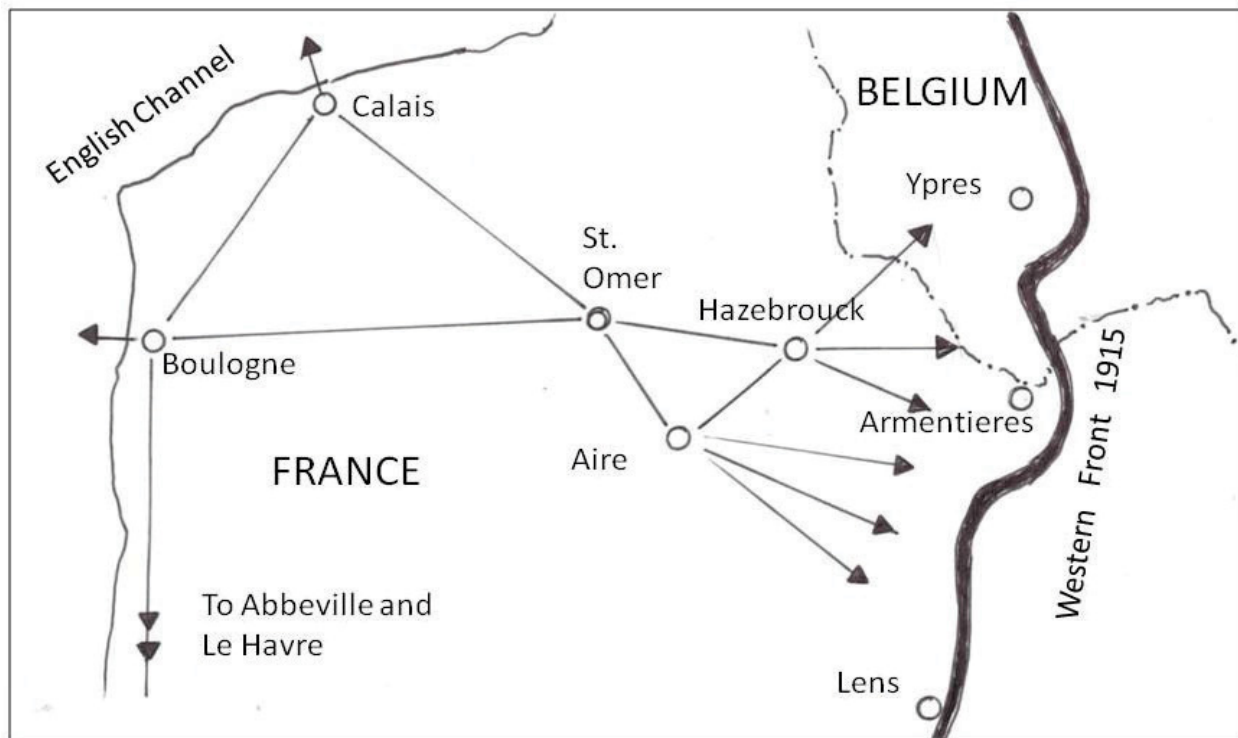


Figure 7.6. The 1st Division arrived at Armentieres in early 1915. Mails entered and exited France via Calais, Boulogne, and Le Havre. Field Post Offices, railheads, and corps lay between Hazebrouck–Aire and the Front. Other Allied forces along the Front north and south of St. Omer are not shown.
Map by R. Toombs.

The expectations of the 1st Divisional Postal Unit suffered a slight setback when it detrained at Hazebrouck on or about 15 February 1915. No provision had been made for a railhead APO to serve the Division. The Unit under the command of Lt. (later, Lt. Colonel) K.A. Murray was sufficient to staff only the FPOs at Divisional HQ, the Divisional "Train" (Supply Column), and the three Brigades plus a small detachment at the Base APO at Le Havre and later at Boulogne. An arrangement therefore was made with British postal authorities for a loan of some personnel to operate the 1st Division Railhead APO when it opened at Caestre [*a few miles northeast of Hazebrouck*] about 15 February 1915. Here, members of the CPC were instructed in the procedures, postal rates, etc. that would be used for the next four years. In turn, they had to teach the nine new men who joined the Unit in April as well as those of the 2nd Divisional Postal Unit, who reached France in September 1915. No more CPC units or personnel came from Canada, so the staff of all POs and detachments subsequently authorized had to be found locally and trained by the aforementioned units. Fortunately, a good supply of former PO Department employees seemed to be present within the Canadian Corps, so there was little difficulty in acquiring volunteers and arranging their transfer to the CPC—a situation possibly anticipated by authorities in Ottawa.

Wherever the Corps, the divisions, or the brigades went in the battlefield area, so went their POs. Operations were carried on in all imaginable types of accommodation and under all sorts of weather and warfare, in daylight and darkness. It is not practical to name the places where each PO conducted its business, so it must suffice to state simply that all of them were located in France and Flanders until the autumn of 1918, when the tide of war took them into Belgium. Subsequently, those of the 1st and 2nd Divisions and Corps HQ went on to Germany, where they operated in the vicinity of Cologne and Bonn for part of December 1918 and during most of January 1919.

In addition to the railhead APOs and FPOs, the CPC maintained several other postal facilities including three stationary APOs, otherwise known as "S" offices. One of these served the Canadian Base Depot at Harfleur and later at Etaples. A second served the Canadian Training camps at Lillers and Aubin St. Vaast, while the third dealt with the mails of Corps Troops. From 16 May 1915, a Canadian Section was employed in the British base APO at Rouen (APO 2). Sometimes referred to as the "Postal Branch, Canadian Section, GHQ 3rd Echelon" or as the "Canadian Postal Record Office", this section carried out the redirection of undelivered mail [*See the addendum in Appendix B*]. During the winter of 1917/18, a total of 28 postal clerks

were required for that task, and the necessity for such a large staff can be appreciated when it is realized that in the year 1917 more than 2,000,000 pieces had to be checked against the personnel records and then forwarded. Finally, CPC postal clerks accompanied the supply columns to supervise and safeguard the mails while they were in transit between the railhead APOs and the delivery points.

Responsible for the coordination of all these Canadian postal facilities and services with their British counterparts was Lt. K.A. Murray, first as OC 1st Divisional Postal Unit, then as Assistant Director of Postal Services (ADPS) at Corps HQ, and after 17 February 1917, as ADPS, Canadian Forces BEF at HQ of the British Postal Directorate (his replacement at Corps HQ became Deputy ADPS).

As a result of this coordination, all CPC facilities in Northwest Europe used British type “grab handle” daters, British postage stamps, money orders, registration labels, and other paraphernalia required in the conduct of postal business. The GPO supplied the initial set of equipment in accordance with a scale of issue but subsequent replenishment or exchange was arranged and controlled by the BEF (British Expeditionary Force) Postal Directorate.

Postmarks produced by the datestamps contained no geographic place names. Instead, each was identified by a letter, a number, or a combination of both, as illustrated at Plate 7, and according to a code, the key to which is shown in Table 7.1.

Table 7.1
Postmark Codes

Post Office	British Datestamp or Postmark	Canadian Datestamp or Postmark
Army HQ FPO	A1, A2, etc.	---
Corps HQ FPO	H1, H2, etc.	HX
Divisional HQ FPO	D1, D2, etc.	DX*, DX2, etc.
Divisional Train FPO	T1, T2, etc.	TX*, TX2, etc.
Infantry Brigade FPO	1, 2, 3, etc	1X, 2X, 3X, etc.
Cavalry Brigade FPO	C1, C2, etc.	CX1
Divisional Railhead APO	R1, R2, etc.	RX*, RX2, etc.
Stationary APOs	S1, S2, etc.	S22, S52, S84
Base APOs	APO 1, APO 2	APO 2 Can Sec

* Absence of the numeral 1 on the DX, TX, and RX datestamps suggests they were manufactured before there was any indication that Canada would supply more than one division.

Code designations, of course, were used in connection with the routing of sealed bags of mail and occasionally a specific designation gave rise to some errors. For instance, bags labeled for delivery to FPO HX were routed from time to time to FPO H10, and undoubtedly a few bags destined for other “X” offices found their way to Salonica, the location of BAPO X. Anyway, early in 1917, the Home Depot replaced the “X” datestamps with those of the “P” series. Not long after this step had been taken, the BEF Postal Directorate decided that as a matter of policy datestamps would be exchanged on a monthly basis throughout the BEF in order to deceive enemy agents, not to mention philatelists of the future. Regulations prohibited any return addresses, cachets, or other markings that might identify a letter with a particular unit or location. Accordingly, it is now almost impossible to relate a cover postmarked after mid-1917 with a specific Canadian FPO.

The same regulations prevent identification of covers from the many thousands of Canadian who served outside the Corps. Letters from members of the Forestry companies in southern France were transmitted in sealed bags through the French civil posts to Le Havre or Rouen, where they received the postmarks of APO 1 or APO 2. Even so, only the actual contents of an entire letter might provide a clue to its source. On the contrary, covers from members of the Royal Flying Corps, the Royal Air Force, and the Royal Naval Air Service can usually be distinguished by their special censor marks, but to be certain a cover came from a Canadian would involve considerable research.

Outgoing mail received its first sorting from unit mail orderlies, who prepared and faceslipped bundles according to the following areas:

1. Canada, 2. Great Britain, 3. Other countries (e.g., Fig. 7.7), 4. The Forces in Northwest Europe, 5. Civilians in France and Belgium.

On arrival at the FPOs and APOs, those bundles were resorted to meet standard or special routing instructions. Thus, mail for Canada was divided into bags—which were then sealed and tagged—for transmission to the following exchange offices in Canada:

Halifax	Toronto	Calgary &
Saint John, N.B.	Toronto Forward	Vancouver RPO
Quebec	Hamilton	Revelstoke
Montreal	London	New Westminster
Montreal Forward	Winnipeg	Vancouver
Ottawa	Winnipeg Forward	Victoria
Kingston	Medicine Hat & Nelson RPO	



Figure 7.7 Military mail to other countries. Canadian mail from FPO T.X (HQ, 1st Canadian Division) in Flanders, dated 12 September 1915 addressed to the USA. Since the USA was still neutral, British postage of 1d was required.

Toombs Collection.

From the FPOs and APOs, the bags travelled by supply column vehicles, mail routes, or train to the Channel ports and thence to the Home Depot in London, where they were made up into bulk despatches for onward shipment to Canada. Registered letters and those requiring redirection were handled in accordance with separate instructions.

At the exchange offices in Canada as noted above, the bags were opened, and once again their contents were sorted, according to final destination. Then, for a period of nearly three years, the staff of those offices affixed and cancelled Canadian postage stamps on several million ordinary letters that Canadian POs in France and Flanders had franked for free transmission. In some instances, possibly as a means of speeding up delivery, the stamps were affixed and cancelled at destination POs. An explanation for this extraordinary practice, which ceased on or shortly after 28 July 1917, is in Appendix A. An example of this type of mail is shown in Figure 7.8.

The normal transit time for a letter to Canada and a reply to reach France was about a month. In that period, the exigencies of war could cause many changes among the personnel in a unit. Consequently, when incoming bags were first opened, there were always many letters that had to be redirected (such as the post card in Figure 7.9). In some cases, the mail orderly might



Figure 7.8. Envelope of the 16th Battalion, The Canadian Scottish, First Canadian Expedition Force, mailed free to Canada, with 2¢ added at Winnipeg by the Post Office, at its expense. *Toombs Collection.*



Figure 7.9. Post card from Canada to a soldier in the CFA (Canadian Field Artillery), c/o Army Post Office, London, England. Redirected by endorsement on 26 February 1917 to Ward 2, Bramshott Military Hospital, in the UK. *Toombs Collection.*

have sufficiently reliable information to permit readdressing a particular letter to another unit, but more often than not he had to return undelivered items to the FPO or APO with one of the following endorsements added:

Struck off Strength or S O S	Hospital
Wounded	Missing
Prisoner of War	Deceased
Died of Wounds or D of W	Killed in Action or K in A

The endorsement “Killed in Action” normally required the signature of an officer of the unit.

A letter or parcel for redirection went during the early months to the CPC detachment at Base APO in Boulogne, but after mid-1915 to the Postal Branch, Canadian Records Office at Rouen. If the addressee was still in the theatre, the letter would be forwarded to his correct unit. Otherwise, it was sent on to the Canadian Contingent Record Office in London for further directory service. If still undeliverable for any reason, it went back to the Dead Letter Office in Ottawa for disposal. Besides the above endorsements, redirected letters received one or more of the transit markings illustrated in Plate 7.

The possibility that aircraft might be used to carry official mail between London and the BEF in France was considered as early as July 1917 but nothing was done about it until the War ended. Then—to quote from the *Historical Memorandum of the Canadian Postal Service with the Armies in France, Belgium and Germany 1914–1919*:

In November 1918 a conference was held between the Army Postal Service and the Royal Air Force to consider the question of establishing regular air services to carry express mails from the coast to the forward areas and the troops on the Rhine. In spite of the weather conditions obtaining in France at this period of the year—snow, rain, and fog—the services attained a high degree of efficiency in the short time since they were established and mails for the Canadian Corps were carried regularly while Canadian troops were stationed on the banks of the Rhine.

This statement leaves some doubt as to what happened regarding outgoing mail but presumably it too was transported by air. Unfortunately, the postal authorities made no provision for special cachets or markings, so now it is impossible to identify a cover as having positively been carried by that very early official air mail service. On the contrary, it is likely that covers from members of the CEF stationed in Germany from about 12 December 1918 to the end of January 1919 were carried by air.

As the Canadian Corps prepared to leave the Namur–Tournai area, and the base units departed from Etaples, the CPC began to reduce its operations in France and Belgium. One by one, the FPOs and APOs closed their doors, turned over their datestamps and location lists to DADPS for transfer to British postal authorities, and sent their black iron boxes back to the BAPO at Boulogne. Then as the postal service came to an end in mid-April 1919, the Corps Commander, Lt. General Sir Arthur Currie, wrote the following letter.

Before the Canadian Corps finally breaks up, I would like to place on record my appreciation of the most efficient work done by the Canadian Postal Services during all the weary months of War.

In doing this, I feel that I am correctly voicing the sentiments of all soldiers who have served overseas. There have been times, of course, when we thought the mail bags were put in the bottom holds of cargo steamers, but most likely this was not the case. At any rate, our mail has come promptly, and has been distributed with the greatest regularity. During the long periods of trench warfare the difficulties were nothing as great as they were during the latter stages when troops were constantly on the move, yet all these many difficulties were surmounted by the splendid organization under Lieut. Colonel Murray and his assistants...

(signed) A.W. Currie

Table 7.2 lists the Canadian postal facilities that operated in Northwest Europe between 1915 and 1919. The table includes the approximate dates of operation of each office. Plate 7 presents the postal and related markings from these offices.

Table 7.2
Canadian Postal Facilities in Northwest Europe 1915–1919

Postal Facility	Post Type (Plate 7)	marks Code Designation	Approx. Opened	Dates Closed
Field Post Offices Canadian Corps HQ	7.01	HX HP	13 Sep 15	Apr 19
1 st Division: HQ	7.02 7.02	DE DP1	20 Feb 15	Mar 19
Train	7.03 7.03	TX TP 1	20 Feb 15	Mar 19
1 st Brigade	7.04 7.04	1 X 1 P	20 Feb 15	Mar 19
2 nd Brigade	7.04 7.04	2 X 2 P	20 Feb 15	Mar 19
3 rd Brigade	7.04 7.04	3 X 3 P	20 Feb 15	Mar 19
2 nd Division: HQ	7.02 7.02	DX 2 DP 2	Sep 15	Mar 19
Train	7.03 7.03	TX 2 TP 2	Sep 15	Mar 19
4 th Brigade	7.04 7.04	4 X 4 P	Sep 15	Mar 19
5 th Brigade	7.04 7.04	5 X 5 P	Sep 15	Mar 19
6 th Brigade	7.04 7.04	6 X 6 P	Sep 15	Mar 19
3 rd Division: HQ	7.02 7.02	DX 3 DP 2	13 Jan 16	Jan 19

Table 7.2 (continued)

Postal Facility	Post Type (Plate 7)	marks Code Designation	Approx. Opened	Dates Closed
3 rd Division (continued) Train	7.03 7.03	TX 3 TP 3	Jan 16	Jan 19
7 th Brigade	7.04 7.04	7 X 7 P	7 Jan 16	Jan 19
8 th Brigade	7.04 7.04	8 X 8 P	8 Jan 16	Jan 19
9 th Brigade	7.04 7.04	9 X 9 P	6 Jan 16	Jan 19
4 th Division: HQ	7.02 7.02	DX 4 DP 4	22 Aug 16	Apr 19
Train	7.03 7.03	TX 4 TP 4	22 Aug 16	Apr 19
10 th Brigade	7.04 7.04	10 X 10 P	22 Aug 16	Apr 19
11 th Brigade	7.04 7.04	11 X 11 P	22 Aug 16	Apr 19
12 th Brigade	7.04 7.04	12 X 12 P	22 Aug 16	Apr 19
5 th Division: Train	7.03	TP 5	5 Jul 17	Apr 19
Canadian Cavalry Brigade	7.05 7.05	CX 1 CP 1	26 Jan 16	Jan 19
Army Post Offices 1 st Division Railhead	7.06 7.06	RX 1 RP 1	21 Jul 15	Mar 19

Table 7.2 (continued)

Postal Facility	Post Type (Plate 7)	marks Code Designation	Approx. Opened	Dates Closed
2 nd Division Railhead	7.06 7.06	RX 2 RP 2	26 Nov 15	Mar 19
3 rd Division Railhead	7.06 7.06	RX 3 RP 3	6 Jan 16	Jan 19
4 th Division Railhead	7.06 7.06	RX 4 RP 4	22 Jul 16	Apr 19
Canadian Base Depot: Harfleur Etaples	7.07	S 22	1 Aug 16 19 May 17	18 May 19 Dec 18
Canadian Reinforcement Camp and Canadian Training Camp Lillers Aubin St. Vaast	7.07	S 84	5 Dec 17 8 May 18	7 May 18 Dec 18
Canadian Corps Troops	7.07 7.07	S 47 S 52	Oct 16	Apr 19
Miscellaneous Offices CPC Detachments: Postal Branch, Canadian Records Office - Rouen	7.08 7.08	2 CAN SEC 11 CAN SEC	Jun 15	Apr 19
Base APO 3 - Boulogne	—	—	Feb 15	Jun 15
Assistant Director Postal Services, Canadian Corps ADPS	—	—		
Deputy Assistant Director, Postal Services, Canadian Corps DADPS	—	—		
Assistant Director, Postal Services, Canadian Forces, B.E.F. France ADPS	—	—		

Notes:

1. Postmarks of the X and P series of datestamps are listed in this table because the stamps were actually issued by the Home Postal Depot to the CPC for use by the POs as shown.
2. It is not practical, however, to list postmarks of the datestamps used by those same POs after the policy of exchanging datestamps on a monthly basis was adopted throughout the BEF.
3. A CPC detachment was placed in the Base APO at Boulogne to assist in the redirection of mail for Canadian casualties. Subsequently, the detachment was transferred to Rouen, where it became the Postal Branch, Canadian Records Office—otherwise known as the Canadian Section at Base APO 2. Type 7.08 markings were used only on outgoing mail originating at the Records Office.

Plate 7
Postal and Related Markings of the Canadian
Expeditionary Force in Northwest Europe 1915–1919

“Grab Handle” datestamps



7.01



7.02



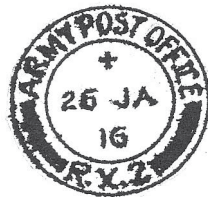
7.03



7.04



7.05



7.06

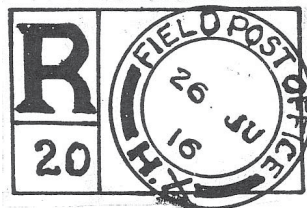


7.07



7.08

Registration stamps and labels



7.50(1)

Plate 7 (continued)

Directory service stamps

CANADIAN SECTION G.H.Q.
3rd Echelon 19 AOUT 1915 TRY

7.60(1)



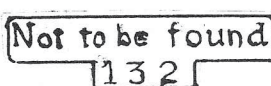
7.60(2)



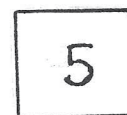
7.60(3)



7.60(4)

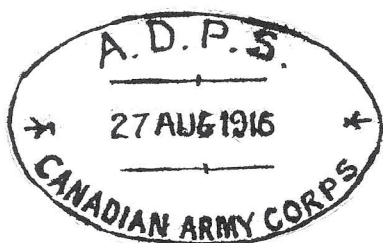


7.60(5)

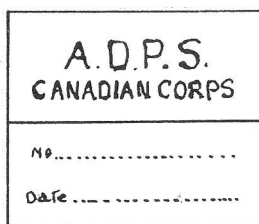


7.60(6)

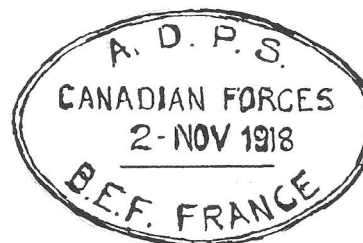
Miscellaneous stamps



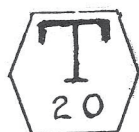
7.90(1)



7.90(2)



7.90(3)



Notes:

1. Datestamps, registration labels (books of 100), postal stationery, and other items required for the conduct of postal business were of British origin.
2. A single-ring marking of APO RX has been reported with the date reading 18 February 1915.
3. Two or more grab handle datestamps were issued to each PO, and their individual markings may be distinguished one from another by the number of

periods in the code designation, e.g., “3.X” or “3.X.” ; differences in the length and breadth of separating bars; and minor variations in the position and size of the lettering.

4. The Time space may be blank or it may show one of the following indicia: x, +, A, B, or R.
5. Type 7.50(1) is a registration label (#20)—blue printing on white paper. Such labels were affixed to both ordinary envelopes and special REGISTERED LETTER envelopes.
6. Directory service markings were applied by postal tracing clerks at the Canadian Records Office, Rouen. Note the French “AOUT” for August in 7.60(1); the name of the specific unit was added in manuscript below this marking. Types 7.60(3) and (4) were probably made by stamps issued to each postal clerk for purposes of identification.
7. Types 7.90(1), (2), and (3) appear on official registered covers. Type 7.90(4) is a tax marking on a stampless cover addressed to the USA.

Suggested Reading

1. *History of the Great War based on official documents by direction of the Historical Section of the Committee of Imperial Defence. Military Operations*. This is a 29-volume series of books detailing the official British history of World War I. It is often referred to as the *British Official History*. The individual volumes are listed online at:
<http://www.1914-1918.net/official.html> . The full text of the first volume of the series—*Military Operations, France and Belgium, 1914* —is online at:
<https://archive.org/stream/militaryoperatio01edmouoft#page/n3/mode/2up>
2. J.C. Hopkins and R.J. Renison, *Canada at War, 1914-1918. A Record of Heroism and Achievement*, George H. Doran Co., New York (1919). Available online at: <https://archive.org/stream/canadaatwararec00renigoog#page/n10/mode/2up>
3. E.R. Toop, “Overseas Post Offices 1914–1919, British FPOs—CEF Use”, *Canadian Military Mail Study Group Newsletter*, No. 96 (October 1990) p. 712–714.
4. W.G. Robinson, “WWI-France, Senior Medical Officer, No. 12 District, Canadian Forestry Corps”, *Canadian Military Mail Study Group Newsletter*, No. 88 (May 1989) p. 630.
5. S.E. Shaw, *Canadians at War, A Guide to the Battlefields of World War I*, Goose Lane Editions, Fredericton, New Brunswick (2011).