

Synopsis

In Defence of the Border – Canadian Military Mails 1667-1885

Purpose: This postal history exhibit examines the military use of the posts in the evolution of Canada from 1667 until 1885. The wars waged over this time period by the French and British militaries and militias influenced the development of Canada's postal system. The covers tell both the military and postal history of Canada's development as a nation, through rates, routes, content and context.

Organization: The exhibit is presented chronologically in four significant categories, with each category noted on the upper left of each page and sub-category at the upper right.

1667-1760	Battle for a Continent	(French Colonial)
1761-1815	Struggle for Existence	(Early British Colonial)
1816-1865	British Garrisons/Canadian Militias	(Late British Colonial)
1866-1885	Towards a Permanent Force	(Canadian)

Challenge Factor Research & Personal Study: This exhibit is the culmination of the exhibitor's lifelong interest in Canadian military and postal history. Its formation developed from the slow acquisition of covers from the late 1980s until sufficient material was acquired to tell this story. - In Defence of the Border - 1667-1885, the evolution of Canada's military from inception to permanent force.

The exhibitor has undertaken extensive research of military postal history in important collections including noted philatelists Allan L. Steinhart, Floyd Risvold, Sam C. Nickle, Dr. John L. Robertson, Dr. Dorothy Sanderson, Edith M. Faulstich and Hugh Wood. The relevant covers were acquired from these and other collections, with so little material available that no two exhibitors could reproduce this collection at the same time – there is simply not enough material.

The importance of many of the items in this exhibit is further enhanced by the exhibitor's specific research and understanding of military history. The exhibit has the combined difficulty of presenting both military history and postal history.

Original research by the exhibitor has contributed substantially to the rather narrow pool of military and postal understanding of these covers and the mode by which they were carried. The Point aux Fere Revolutionary War letter from occupied Canada was only properly understood when the incorrect spelling of Point aux Fer (Iron Point) was correctly identified.

This exhibitor's original research in the War of 1812 Prisoner of War Log for Quebec located at Library and Archives Canada confirmed the Boston April 21st letter to Sergeant Benjamin W. Stevens was a letter addressed TO a prisoner of war.

The exhibitor has made significant philatelic discoveries associated with the War of 1812 material shown. Comparing exhibited rated covers and notational markings with period published postal rates, has identified new information to varied periods carriage of both public and military mails within the Canadas. This research has also identified a period of a Military Post Office – a post office derived for the benefit and under the control of the military for providing means of accountancy and means of payment between a local General Post Office and officers and enlisted men in the field. Examples include mails being forwarded

from Great Britain to men in the field with the military collecting and paying postage between the GPO and Canadian post office. Although not exhibited, the supposition that post office locations west of Québec were closed at the onset of the war (based primarily on complete lack of known covers), was substantiated when a Petition of Officers of the Right Division in Stoney Creek (LAC RG8 C284 p 284) was discovered addressed to Sir George Prevost, Commander in Chief of British forces in the Canadas requesting provision be made to enable their access to postal service. The exhibitor has conversed with several contemporary historians on both sides of the border regarding this topic who have confirmed that this exhibit shares new research not shown elsewhere.

This exhibitor's original research into the War of 1812 mail dispatch system has identified the physical remains of one of the communication posts used by dispatch riders in the carriage of the mails during the conflict. This information was shared with the relevant archaeological authorities in Halton County for further research. This is an example of postal history advancing the archaeological history of Canada.

Another important result of the exhibit is that it presents a continual representation of the early military history of Canada, often only viewed in context of the major conflicts. This exhibit shows covers from very rare or little-known conflicts, presenting the true representation of Canada's military postal history and the evolution towards Canada's Permanent Force. The covers from little known conflicts have spurred research and shared knowledge within the wider context of Canada's history.

Material Highlights: While previous notable philatelists have exhibited small portions of the materials represented within, this exhibit comprises the largest and most complete Canadian Military exhibit of the period ever shown. The exhibit contains many items of philatelic importance and many never before seen in philatelic circles.

In searching for material, the exhibitor has not confined himself to strictly philatelic channels, many of the exhibited items being secured from other sources, often in direct competition with Canadian institutions. Many important items have been introduced to philately in this exhibit –

- the 1667 Marsolet cover (earliest in private hands),
- the only two privately owned Edward Cornwallis founding of Halifax covers,
- King Georges War capture of Louisbourg,
- Seven Years War covers as French 1757 Fort Carillion (now Ticonderoga),
- two second capture of Louisbourg, including a French report on the capture,
- two French 1757 Reg't de la Saare Camp at St. Jean letters.
- Canadian Revolutionary War covers as –
 - the 1776 Point aux Fer Edward Antill letter,
 - two letters of the notorious American Brigadier General Benidict Arnold in occupied Montréal,
 - the fifteen-letter correspondence of Lieutenant Edward Down from HMS Blonde in Halifax to his wife in Ilfracombe, Devon
 - pair of 1759 British officers' pair of letters mailed under a single cover from Sorel/Camp St. Jean.

The War of 1812 period is exceptionally strong with the largest exhibition ever of Canadian related material, including

- all four known prisoner of war letters, three of which are also the only examples of censored mail of the war,
- the 1812 firsthand privateer capture account,
- several covers from US occupied Fort George
- the September 1813 American Major General James Wilkinson's letter from occupied Fort George
- one of the two reported Flag of Truce letters and
- several letters bearing franking explaining the relationships between the General Post Office and the military carriage of mails, dispatches and express'.
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Post War of 1812, this exhibit shows for the first time,

- the 1870 North West Rebellion Amyot correspondence,
- the 1885 Riel Rebellion, Lord Melgund and
- the 1885 Baird correspondences.

Items added to the exhibit since it was last shown, include

- Seven Years War as June 14th, 1755 Louisbourg Admiral Pierre de Suffren cover,
- the May 14th, 1757 Carillion cover,
- the pair of 1757 Regiment de la Sarre Camp at St. Jean covers,
- the 1758 transatlantic French report on the loss of Fort Louisbourg.
- Revolutionary War Period pair of letters from Sorel and St. Jean, mailed under one cover
- the Lieutenant Down of HMS Blonde correspondence of fifteen letters written from Halifax to his wife in Ilracombe, Devon.
- the earliest concessionary rate cover (Soldier's Letter), dated 1799.
- the 1858 franked pence period soldiers' letter, the only entire of Canada's Pence issue

Provenance: To minimize the risk of exhibiting material of questionable title exhibitor has corresponded with public sources during the acquisition and research of the exhibited materials to ascertain clear title and has collected throughout equipped with the lists of items unlawfully removed from major Canadian public institutions.

Exhibition Record:

This exhibit has the unique distinction of being the only Canadian postal history exhibit shown by a Canadian to have won a Large Gold Internationally, not only once, but TWICE

BNAPLEX 2025 – Court of Honour – In Defence of the Border – Canadian Military Mails 1667-1885

BNAPLEX 2024 – Grand Award

CAPEX 2022 - Grand Prix National, Large Gold, Special Prize – “Canadian Mails and Dispatches of the War of 1812” (Single frame, a portion of this exhibit)

CANPEX 2022 - Court of Honour - In Defence of the Border – Canadian Military Mails 1667-1885

London 2020 International Stamp Exhibition – FIP Large Gold – In Defence of the Border – Canadian Military Mails 1667-1885

ORAPEX 2018 - Court of Honour – In Defence of the Border – Canadian Military Mails 1667-1885

PHSC Symposium 2017 - Court of Honour - In Defence of the Border – Canadian Military Mails 1667-1885

ROYAL 2016 ROYALE - Court of Honour - In Defence of the Border – Canadian Military Mails 1667-1885

APS Stamp Show 2016 World Series of Philately - Prix d'Honneur - In Defence of the Border – Canadian Military Mails 1667-1885

World Stamp Show New York 2016 – FIP Large Gold - In Defence of the Border – Canadian Military Mails 1667-1885

BNAPEX 2015 - Gold, Sam Nickle Award - In Defence of the Border – Canadian Military Mails 1667-1885

FILEX 2015 Boucherville – Gold, Grand Award, SHPQ Prix Guy des Rivières, BNAPS Best BNA Award, - In Defence of the Border – Canadian Military Mails 1667-1885

ORAPEX 2013 - Court of Honour - In Defence of the Border – Canadian Military Mails 1667-1885

London 2010 International Stamp Exhibition - Gold - In Defence of the Border – Canadian Military Mails 1667-1885 (five frames)

ORAPEX 2009 – Grand Award, Gold Medal - In Defence of the Border – Canadian Military Mails 1667-1885 (five frames)

BNAPEX 2008 – Gold, Allan Steinhart Reserve Grand Award, Sam Nickle Award, PHSC Award - In Defence of the Border – Canadian Military Mails 1667-1885 (five frames)

ROYAL 2008 ROYALE – Gold Grand Award, BNAPS Best BNA Award - In Defence of the Border – Canadian Military Mails 1667-1885 (five frames)

ORAPEX 2008 – Gold – In Defence of the Border Canadian Military Mails 1711 – 1885 (five frames)

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Grodzinski, Major John R. G1628, The Vigilant Superintendence of the Whole District: The War of 1812 on the Upper St. Lawrence, Masters Thesis, Royal Military College of Canada

Montgomery, Malcolm B., The Postage Rates of The North Atlantic Mails (1635-1950)

Stanley, George F. G., Canada's Soldiers 1604-1954, The Military History of an Unmilitary People

Steinhart, Allan L., Postal History Military Reference 1685 – 1865 Prestamp and Stampless

In Defence of the Border - Canadian Military Mails 1667-1885

Exhibit Scope: This postal history exhibit examines the evolution of military mail in Canada from 1667 to 1885. France, Great Britain, and the United States influenced both the borders, and hence the postal system of Canada. The military mails were handled by favour, military courier and through an emerging official postal system. Canada's development was largely influenced by military actions and the important events chronicled in this exhibit demonstrate both the evolution of the postal system and the development of Canada as a nation.

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Exhibit Highlights: This exhibit is the largest and most comprehensive exhibit of Canadian military mails extant, including colonial French, British, American, Canadian militia and Canadian government mail and also includes several contemporaneous accounts of actions and events, with highlights including:

- Nicolas Marsolet 1667, earliest reported Canadian cover in private hands
- Only reported Queen Anne's war cover
- Covers from King George's War
- Covers from both captures of Louisbourg including
- Only reported Halifax Cornwallis' letters
- Seven Years War covers including 1757 St. Jean Regiment de la Saare, Fort Carillion, Camp St. Jean, Battle of Sorel
- Latest reported French regime cover
- Multiple Revolutionary war covers including; two letters of Benedict Arnold occupied Montréal, Pont aux Fer, Holland's House
- Rev. War Frigate HMS Blonde corr. Of 15 letters Halifax to Ilfracombe, UK
- Two earliest Canadian Soldiers letters, 1799 and 1800
- All four War of 1812 P.O.W. covers
- Both reported War of 1812 Flag of Truce
- 1813 U.S. General Wilkinson's recruiting letter from occupied Fort George
- US occupied cross border letters from Fort Erie, Fort George, Chippewa, and Sandwich
- British occupied Fort Niagara and Castine
- Only reported Pence period franked Soldiers letter entire
- Fenian Raids – 2c Large Queen soldier rate
- 1870 Red River, Amyot correspondence, Dennison letter
- 1885 North West Rebellion, soldier's letters, firsthand accounts

Areas of personal investigation include researching into primary and other sources including Marsolet, Cornwallis letters, Revolutionary War, express & dispatch, War of 1812 POW, post War of 1812 Canadian Militia and, inter alia, Red River and North West Rebellion troop movements.

Philatelic references are few but information has been gleaned from Steinhart Military Mails, Frajola – War of 1812 and Library and Archives Canada Record Group 3 "C" Series. General Military references include Cruikshank Documentary History of the War of 1812, Grodzinski – Vigilant Superintendence of the Whole District, and primary sources such as Library and Archives Canada Record Group 8 and the National Archives in Washington D.C.