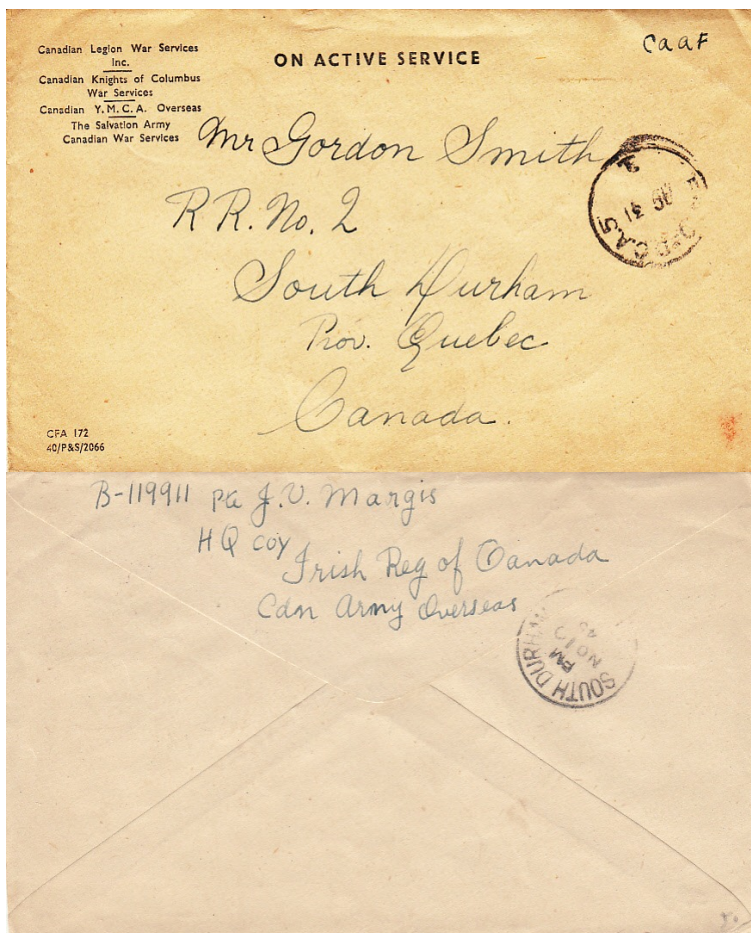


THE USE OF MILITARY MAIL SERVICES TO SEND FAMILY CORRESPONDENCE FROM HOLLAND TO CANADA IN 1945.

John Cranmer

I recently acquired the cover shown below in figs 1 and 2 from ebay. I can't even recall what attracted me to buy it but when it arrived, I discovered that the letter enclosed was a good deal more interesting than the cover itself.

The full text of the enclosed letter is shown overleaf in figs 3 and 4 and members can read it for themselves so I will not transcribe the full contents here. Suffice to say it is



Figs 1 and 2 Front and back of the cover in question.

Wijkamp

Saturday Aug 1945.

Heeren ^{veer}
FR
Holland.

Dear Mr and Mrs Smith

It is now more than 5 years ago we heard the last of you people How is every thing over there? How are you folks Mr and Mrs Henry Smith and Mr and Mrs Coote?

We are all well I am working for the Canadian Army in a beer Panteen. Greet is married Trinke goes to high school father works at the farmer. and Linse died in Germany We were both forced to work there in the air plants in Magdeburg near Berlin. we went there on 5 Oct. 1942 and he become ill and died after being there 10 months I escaped and went back home and was hidden from the Germans for 2 years. we still got the same adress

Jan Kampen
Enialaan 309
Garijp
Friesland
Holland.

But do not write this letter there you answer me for it takes a long time for civilian letter write this one to a Canadian soldier boyfriend of myn so the letter will be back in about 10-12 days

Fig 3

25 Sept 1945
Holland

his adress is

B-119911 Pte J. V. Margis
H-Q coy
Irish Reg. of Canada
C.F.N

and he will give me the letter

I should like to go back to Canada very much
but I cant make it till after 5 years they say

Or if you got a place to go and a job

I've no job and no place to go at all so
I'll have to wait 5 years but I'm coming
back some time you'll see me again Mr Smith
I don't like Holland. father would like to come
back but mother wants to stay here

I can still talk the Canadian language as
good as when I left Canada. the boys don't
even know I'm dutch

We were very glad to see the Canadians
as liberaters in this coun try the 15 Apr. 1945

Write back as soon as possible please
I would like to hear from you people
and hope to see you back in Canada some
day I'm sending a few pictures of my self. Will
you send me a few pictures of Ulverton and
you people please. Please write back soon as possible
I'd like to hear from you folks and father and mother too

Many good wishes

from William Kampen

Write to this soldiers adress he is my friend I will receive it
thank you!

Fig 4

a letter sent in late 1945 from Holland to friends in Canada from someone who had lived for a while in Canada before WW2 and then returned to Holland where they had spent the war years. Much of the content takes the form of a 'family letter' updating the Canadians on news of the Dutch family and giving some insight into life in occupied Holland during WW2. It is also clear that the writer is keen to return to Canada as soon as they are able.

What is most interesting is the method used to send the letter. The writer has passed it to a friend in the Irish Regiment of Canada, part of the Canadian Armed Forces that had helped to liberate Holland from the Germans in 1945 and were then stationed there. The friend then sent the letter on in a Canadian War Services 'On Active Service' envelope. It is clear from the text that military mail of this type crossed the Atlantic far faster than civilian mail as the writer asks, when seeking a reply to the letter that..... **'but do not write the letter there (to the home address given) for it takes a long time for civilian letters'** **Write this one to a Canadian soldier boyfriend of mine so the letter will be back in 10 – 12 days'.**

Obviously, the strict censorship of military mail had become slightly more relaxed after the war ended but I wonder how many other examples members have seen of this kind of use of military mail services for civilian purposes.

Of course, quite apart from the fact that military mail passed faster, there was also a considerable cost saving in using this method of correspondence!