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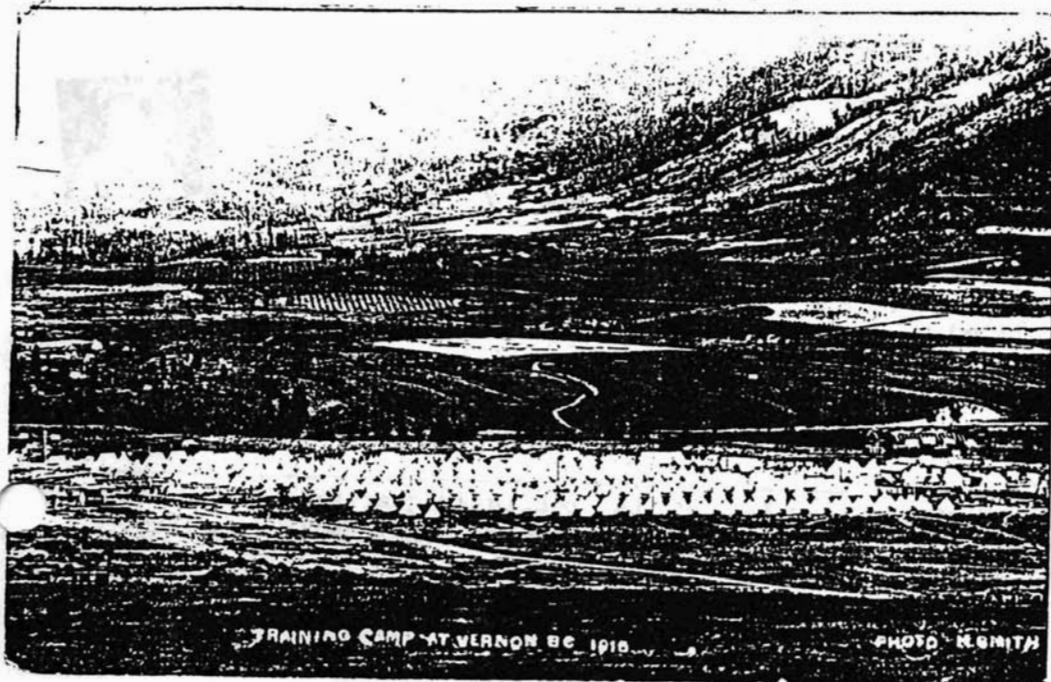
### VERNON CAMP-B.C.

Military postal history has always interested postal historians and as a result a number of excellent works have been produced by authors such as Major Bill Bailey and the late Rich Toop. Unlike most postal records the information on military post offices is far from complete. Mike Painter recently questioned the wording of the Vernon Military Camp cancellation and its period of use. The actual wording is FIELD POST OFFICE / CANADA MILITIA / VERNON CAMP-B.C. and is shown in Topping and Robinson as being used from July 3, 1915 to November 4, 1919, which are the dates listed in Bill Bailey's "Canadian Military Postmarks" (1978). Melvin shows the dates as July 1, 1915 to November 7, 1916 with the camp closing for the winter. The limited information found in the "Post Office Transactions" of the time indicate that the Melvin dates may be correct. (See Response Form)



*Miss Sadie Fleming*

*acant  
Vancouver  
B.C.*



TRAINING CAMP AT VERNON BC 1916

PHOTO KEMITH

# Post office on the move

*Canada Post will relocate to smaller space in Winfield, trim staff to three*

**BY BUD MORTENSON**

mid-August.

Rick Moore, Canada Post's retail representative for the Kelowna region, says the building just isn't needed any more: the Crown corporation is looking for new quarters for a downsized Winfield corporate office providing retail services but no mail sorting.

Right now, mail couriers sort the mail for their suburban service (the new name for old rural routes) at the Winfield post office before they make their daily deliveries to the area's community mail boxes. Starting August 19, they'll be doing the same sorting in a different place—at a Kelowna "mega-depot", currently being readied for occupancy.

Although the existing post office's doors will be closing as soon as that mega-depot is ready, Winfield isn't losing its corporate post office, Moore assures.

"We're going to relocate the post office to a storefront... with new counters, a new look, and concentrate on the retail end," says Moore.

The existing federally-owned building will be either leased out or sold off, Moore says, noting that there have been some bites from potential buyers.

A new post office location is being sought right now. If an existing wheel-chair accessible space for lease can't be found, Moore says Canada Post might consider building a suitable structure. The corporation's real estate specialists will be in the area shortly to start the search for a new post office home.

"There'll be absolutely no reduction in postal services," Moore says, promising that when it's all done, "the Winfield office will be more modern and accessible."

"It should cut down on mail delays," he suggests, adding that when planned changes have been made and the mega-depot is in operation "it could cut a day off delivery".

Long-time Winfield post office worker Marilyn Juds will become the new Winfield postmaster as of June 13. She's been acting

postmaster since former postmaster Bill Fitchot was transferred out of town in early 1995.

Two of the other four Winfield post office employees will be kept on to work in the new retail postal outlet, and two employees will be offered early retirement or positions at other post offices, says Moore.

"We're in the process of getting expressions of interest from them on what they'd like to do," he says.

The changes being made in Lake Country mail delivery will be followed by changes in other parts of the Central Okanagan. Moore explains that Westbank's mail has been delivered out of a mail processing plant in Kelowna for more than three years now, and eventually the Kelowna mega-depot will be handling mail sorting for communities stretching from Oyama in the north to Peachland in the south, and perhaps even as far south as Summerland.

**WINFIELD CALENDAR - June 5, 1996**

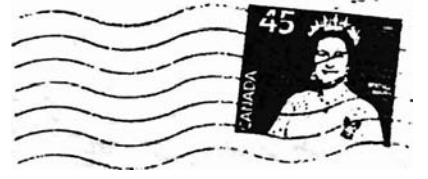
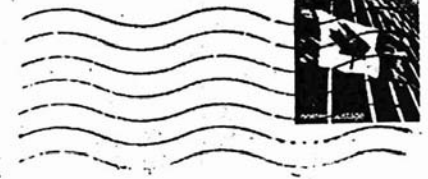
Thanks to Ken Ellison.

**MACHINE CANCELLATION INTRODUCED AT CHASE**

Chase received a rapid cancelling machine sometime in August. The earliest reported date is August 28. The machine appears to have been transferred from the Winfield Post Office which was down sized over the summer. See details above.

The new hub for the IPS table top machine differs from earlier hubs of this type in that it has the number "1" at upper left and the periods are omitted in "BC". The design is similar to the hubs used on the larger floor models of the IPS machines.

The latest date reported date of use for the Winfield machine is July 12. Any further information would be appreciated.



The British Columbia Postal History News Letter is published quarterly for the Pacific Northwest Regional Group of the British North America Philatelic Society. The annual membership fee is \$5.00 in Canadian or US funds. Bill Topping, Editor, 7430 Angus Drive, Vancouver, B.C. V6P 5K2, Canada

## THE MAGIC AND MYSTERY OF THE UPPER COLUMBIA COMPANY

by Tracy Cooper

The Upper Columbia Navigation and Tramway Company, also known as the Upper Columbia Company is famous in the annals of B.C. postal history. In the late 1890's this company issued, without the consent of the Post Office Department, a set of "locals" which have challenged and intrigued aficionados for more than 60 years. Several excellent articles have been written through the years on the Upper Columbia Locals, the best of which was written by Warren Hale in 1946 and published in BNAPS Topics Vol 3 #1.

The story begins with Francis Patrick Armstrong, hereafter referred to as Captain Armstrong, arriving in B.C. as a member of the CPR survey crew exploring the Columbia Valley from Cranbrook to Golden in 1882. An exceptional entrepreneur, the young Armstrong saw more profit in supplying the progressing CPR construction crews, than in working for wages. With an influx of Columbia Valley settlers and the revival of interest in the Wild Horse mines, Armstrong saw potential profits in a Columbia River steamboat servicing the area between the CPR, on the Upper Columbia, and the Kootenay mines. The idea soon became a reality, and between 1886 and 1888 the Captain honed his navigational skills on the tricky, shifting, Columbia River between Golden and Lake Windermere. The Captain's initial year of 1886, with the ungainly steamer *Duchess*, saw little trade or profit, but 1887 saw a revival of placer activity on Wild Horse Creek and the arrival of Major Sam Steele, in conjunction with the Indian, "uprising" in and around St. Joseph's Prairie.

It is in this setting, that the magic of the Upper Columbia Company begins for the postal historian. Captain Armstrong secured his first Post Office contract on May 1, 1888 to carry the mails the 200 miles between Cranbrook and Golden. With lumber and whiskey the two most popular cargos, the *Duchess*, or its low water companion *Marion*, ran the 113 miles between Golden and Columbia Lake, twice a week. A connecting stage then took passengers, freight and mail, to Grohman, Fort Steele and Cranbrook, with intervening connections to Wild Horse. The mail in this early period however, specified that it was only to be carried once a month. The years 1889 through 1892 again saw Captain Armstrong secure the mail contracts between Golden and Cranbrook, using his sternwheelers to complete the monthly mail service in the summer, and the Columbia Valley wagon road during times of low or frozen water.

The five mile stretch of the Columbia River between Adela Lake and Columbia Lake was characterized by rapids and sandbars and was unnavigable in all but the highest waters, frequently requiring expensive portages. It occurred to Captain Armstrong that a rail tramway might solve the problem. After negotiations with the provincial government, the Upper Columbia Navigation and Tramway Company was incorporated in 1891, commonly called the Upper Columbia Company. Two rail tramways were constructed,

one between Golden Station on the CPR and the steamboat landing some two miles away, and the other on the Adela - Columbia Lake section, totalling five kilometers in length.

The Jan. 1, 1893 P. O. Department contract, between Golden and St. Eugene Mission, was the only contract ever awarded to Captain Armstrong under the official company name of the **Upper Columbia Navigation and Tramway Company** and has been the source of much of the confusion that postal historians have encountered through the . . . years, in sorting out the Upper Columbia puzzle. The years 1894 through 1897 saw a continuation of the Golden to St. Eugene Mission postal contract, awarded not to the U.C. Co., but in accordance with past practice, awarded directly to Captain F. P. Armstrong.

The years 1893 though 1895 saw Captain Armstrong take advantage of the increasing Columbia Valley mining activity and American ore traffic, by way of steamer trade on the Upper Kootenay River. On April 23, 1896, a new sternwheeler the "Ruth" was launched, named after the Captain's daughter. This ship was a consequence of a new partnership between Captain Armstrong, Captain J. D. Miller, an almost legendary figure of Kootenay River fame, and Jim Wardner, who was constructing the new townsite of **WARDNER**, south of Fort Steele. Named the **International Transportation Company**, it was intended to take advantage of the lucrative trade on the Kootenay River from Fort Steele to Jennings, Montana.

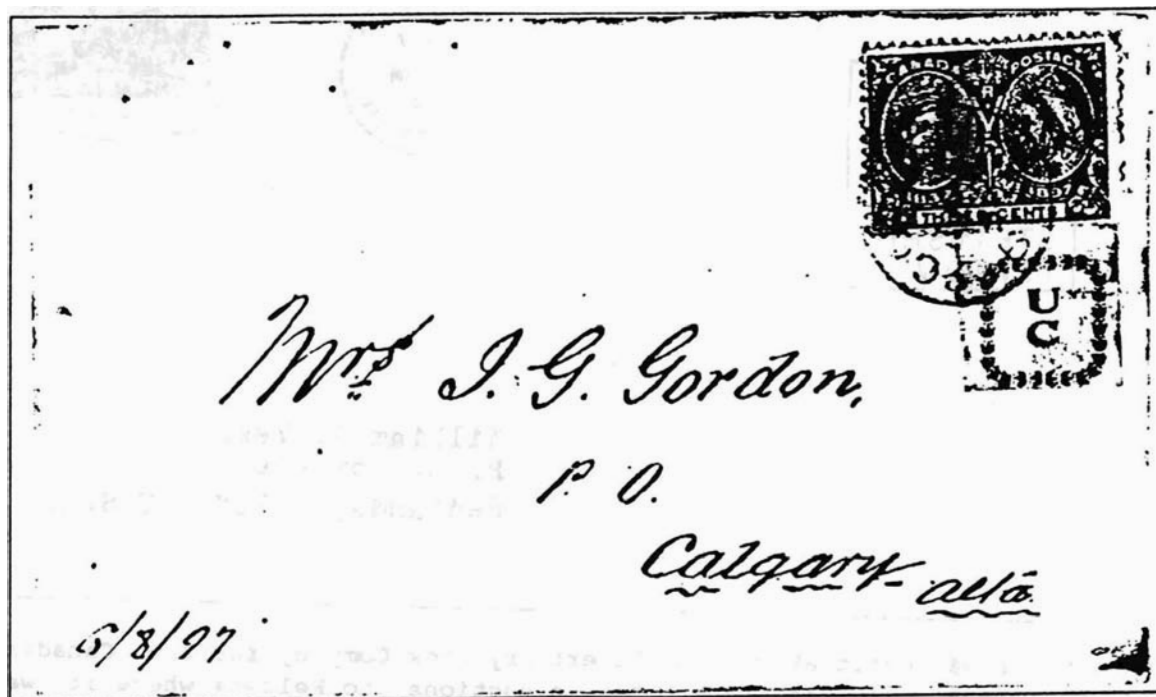
The lure of rich mining profits spurred competition from numerous sources, including rival river transport firms and encroaching railways. March 9, 1897 signalled the end of decade long mail domain of Captain Armstrong on the Upper Columbia. On this date, **Mr. A. Doyle** was awarded the Golden - St. Eugene Mission mail contract and thus signaled the beginning of the Upper Columbia Company postal mystery which has intrigued postal historians for so many years. Competition, the bust of the Fort Steele mining boom, and the arrival of the B. C. Southern Railway, brought to a conclusion the prosperous steamboat times. In February 1898, Captain Armstrong left his beloved inland empire for the lure of profits on the Stikine River and the great Klondike Gold Rush.

During the years that Captain Armstrong held the mail contract on the Upper Columbia, it was common **practice** to run the bow of the steamer on the bank, when signalled on route, to pick up mail and other goods for transport. Even after the mail contract was lost, (March 9, 1897), it was still a regular occurrence to signal the steamboat to hand over a letter for delivery. Not knowing if the signal was to pick up ore or other goods for delivery, this practice became an unprofitable nuisance for a company already smarting from the loss of its bread and butter mail contract.

The secretary of the company, C. H. Parson, sought to remedy this situation by arranging to have printed, a lot of one thousand U. C. Co. "stamps" with a designated value of 5¢ and an unknown quantity of U C "labels" without a noted value. The purpose of the stamp, as noted by its relatively high value, was not, as one may assume to compete with the post office department in lieu of the lost postal contract, but to *discourage* the use of

steamer mail without totally alienating its regular paying freight customers who had come to count on Captain Armstrong over the last 10 years or so.

Ever since this U C label was brought to the attention of the philatelic community in 1946, its use has been the subject of much speculation. Originally it was thought that the label may have been a sort of essay, imperforate or rouletted with large margins, as sort of a trial run, or possibly an early printing. With the same basic design of flowers in the border, a more plausible explanation was that these labels were printed first and used for internal use and as "favours" for their better *freight paying* customers. With money for the U.C. Company tight, it was likely that secretary Parson saw the opportunity for a little revenue also, and had the second monetized value printed a short time after. With so few examples of either of these two types reported, it is unlikely that a definitive explanation can ever be given. (The author would appreciate photo copies of any U. C. locals not reported here.) What we do know is that as early as 1897, letters bearing these labels and later stamps had passed through area post offices, although postmasters had reported not seeing that many. Warren Hale reported that an early philatelist, Mr. Basil Hamilton, had visited Golden in the summer of 1898 in pursuit of research on this subject and had noted that the stamps in question were "being at one time in use", suggesting that by as early as 1898 they were no longer being "promoted" by the Upper Columbia Company.



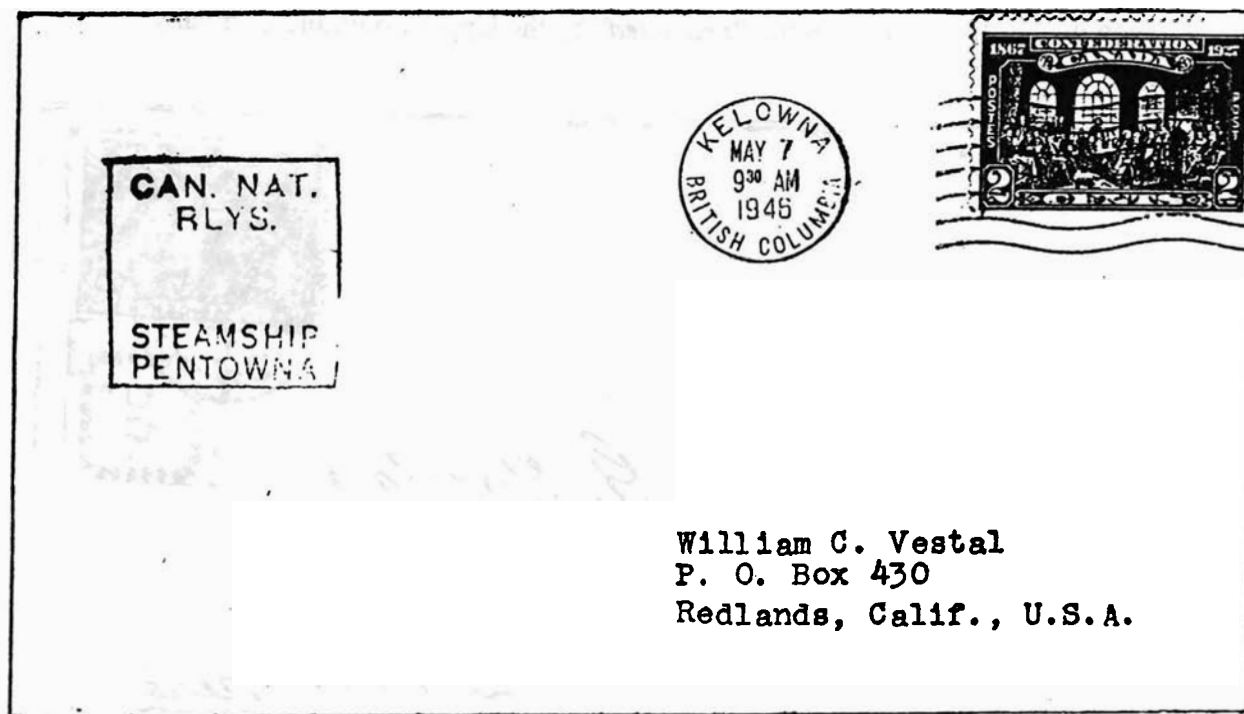
This cover was addressed to Mrs. J. G. Gordon of Calgary, Alberta and was probably mailed somewhere on the Upper Columbia River within a one day sternwheeler journey of Golden, on August 6, 1897. It was franked with a U C label and a 3¢ Jubilee paying the domestic postage rate. Both stamps are tied to cover by a GOLDEN/B.C. CDS dated AU 9/97. The cover has a partial CALGARY split ring backstamp dated AU./A.. This cover meets every test of Upper Columbia Local validity and is thus exceedingly rare.

**STEAMSHIP PENTOWNA - CANADIAN NATIONAL RAILWAYS**

The "Pentowna" cover, shown below, is one of at least a dozen serviced for the well known ship marking collector, Mr. William C. Vestal of Redlands, California. The exact number of covers served is hard to determine but all reported to date are identical and are dated at Kelowna May 7, 1946. A similar lot of "Pentowna" covers, also addressed to Mr. Vestal, are known for February 1, 1937. The two "Pentowna" markings are not listed in Ludlow for two reasons. In both cases the markings are used as corner cards rather than to cancel the stamps and secondly, the "Pentowna" was at the time a tug and did not carry mail or passengers. To date all reported covers with "Pentowna" marking are addressed to Mr. Vestal.

The reason why these corner card markings were not listed by Ludlow should be obvious but the fact they are "unlisted" has prompted a number of dealers to place a high selling price on them. In recent months at least two covers have been offered for sale at prices of \$200 to \$300 each. It is not the job of BNA news letter editors to tell collectors, or dealers what a particular item should be sold for as the final selling price is up to the owner and the purchaser. On the other hand one of the duties of a news letter editor is to educate both the collector and the dealer so that items offered for sale are represented as what they are and not what the seller would like them to be.

AFTER 10 DAYS RETN  
**C.N.R.Y.S.**  
**DIAN NATIONAL**  
 AT OFFICE OF MAIL  
**JAN 30 37**  
**STEAMSHIP**  
**PENTOWNA**



The Steamship Pentowna was built at Prince Rupert Dry Dock Company for the Canadian National Railways in 1926. It was transported in sections to Kelowna where it was assembled and went into service as a Passenger-Tug serving the newly constructed Kamloops-Kelowna branch of the C.N.R. The tug was 121 feet long with a breadth of 22 feet and was powered by two semi-diesel engines manufactured by L. Gardner and Sons. In 1937 it was rebuilt as a tug and the passenger accommodation was removed. From then until it was sold to Fintry Estates in February 1973 it was used exclusively to pull barges on Okanagan Lake and had no reason to carry mail. It was then tied up at Peachland where it remained until it was badly damaged by a wind storm in the spring of 1995. The final fate of the ship is unknown at this time.

WHAT'S NEW AT THE VANCOUVER AND VICTORIA POST OFFICES?

For those who collect the new jet-spray slogans the last few months have been a busy one. So far this year at least 6 or is it 9 different slogans have been used depending how you count spelling errors and minor changes. Look carefully at the jet-spray markings and you will see what I mean. In the last issue (page 138) the YOUTH WEEK and CAPEX sprays were reported and in this issue the LITERACY and LOTTERY sprays can be added. The POSTAL CODE spray was used to fill the gaps.

It should be noted that OCR 081 (Vancouver) was re-introduced on September 5 at which time the jet-spray on OCR 082 ceased to be used, although the basic machine continued to be used to code mail.

A complete list of the 1996 jet-spray markings for B.C. will be in the December News Letter together with early and late dates.

082 V6B 3A0 960904 07:10 |||||

Literacy/ALPhabetisation |||||

082 V6B 3A0 960904 13:36 |||||

Literacy/ALPhabetisation |||||



081 V6B 3A0 960905 08:57 |||||

Literacy/ALPhabetisation |||||

118 V8Z 4B0 960910 19:26 |||||

Literacy/ALPhabetisation |||||



081 V6B 3A0 960913 01:25 |||||

Literacy/ALPHABETISATION |||||



118 V8Z 4B0 960916 23:16 |||||

LITERACY/ALPHABETISATION |||||



081 V6B 3A0 960919 00:39 |||||

LOTTERY SLA LOTERIE |||||



118 V8Z 4B0 960918 20:35 45 |||||

POSTER 18 LOTTERY SLA LOTERIE |||||



**TWO NEW BOOKS FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION**

Over the summer two useful sources of postal history were published, one by member Cec Coutts and the other by your editor, Bill Topping.

*SLOGAN POSTMARKS OF CANADA* by Cecil C. Coutts; 8.5 x 11", spiral bound, 284 pages, ISBN 0-9680225-0-2, published by author, 34820 McLeod Avenue, Abbotsford, BC, V3G 1G9, \$38.00 CAN, \$29.50 US, 20.50 sterling.

The book needs no introduction to those familiar with the Slogan Postal Markings Of Canada by David H. Proulx, last revised in 1990. The page format is generally the same; an identity number, the slogan wording, place of usage, the period of use, and a suggested value. The new Coutts numbering system replaces the older Proulx numbers which are also included. The type of rapid cancelling machine on which the slogan was used has been added as have a total of 410 previously unrecorded slogans.

35 pages of introductory material, in both English and French, provide an excellent introduction to the collecting of slogan postmarks. Daniel G. Rosenblat, within the introduction, provides an comprehensive overview of the development of the use of slogan postmarks in Canada. The introduction concludes with a brief discussion of the new "Spray-on" (Jet spray) cancellations.

The slogan postmarks are arranged in alphabetical order, which in my view, makes it much easier to use than the four volume series put out by the Slogan Study Group in which slogans are arranged by year and city. The book is spiral bound but the spirals are much larger than those of the earlier editions making it much easier to use. Also the type size is larger making it easier to read and the spacing between entries is increased allowing spaces for new entries to be added as they are reported. Although much of the information has been previously published the general format of the book makes it considerably easier to use and as a result will be a valuable addition to any philatelic library.

My only criticism is, as a collector of "paquebot" and "way mail" markings, I would have liked to see these, as well as other "Special Service Markings", used on the rapid cancelling equipment included as they are not listed in any other source. WET

*YUKON AIRWAYS AND EXPLORATION COMPANY LIMITED* by William E. Topping; 8.5 x 11", stitch bound, 80 pages. ISBN 0-9693163-7-2, published by the author, 7430 Angus Drive, Vancouver, BC, V6P 5K2, \$25 CAN, \$20 US, 12.50 sterling.

A history of Yukon Airways and Exploration Company Limited from its incorporation in May 1927 to the crash of its last plane, the Northern Light, on November 29, 1929. All major flights are discussed in detail as well as other important events in the history of the company. The work includes a listing of all flights for which covers have been reported.

Artists sketches, approved and rejected stamp designs, cross sheet panes and printing details are illustrated. Unlisted constant plate varieties and the major re-entry are shown.

The book contains 80 pages of detail on Yukon Airways and is based on recent discoveries in the Canadian Archives, Yukon news paper reports, and the author's collection which was awarded a vermeil medal at CAPEX. WET



**VERNON MILITIA CAMP and INTERNMENT CAMP**

During the first world war Veron became the centre of much of the military activity in British Columbia with both a militia training camp and a Internment Camp being located there. One dater was supplied to the Militia Camp and two censor marks to the Internment Camp. Members are asked to provide details on covers bearing these marks.

FIELD POST OFFICE / CANADA MILITIA / VERNON CAMP

Date

Other cancellations



Passed by Internment Censor / Vernon, B. C.

Date

Other cancellations



PASSED BY / INTERNMENT CENSOR / VERNON, B. C.

Date

Other cancellations



Name .....

Address .....

.....

Forms should be sent to -  
Bill Topping  
7430 Angus Drive  
Vancouver, B.C.  
V6P 5K2 CANADA

**PRINCE GEORGE POST OFFICE - DECEMBER 1953**

The photograph, below, was taken at the opening of the "new" Prince George Post Office in December 1953 and is on display in the Post Office. As a result of the up grading of the office Mr. W.F. Mulligan was appointed postmaster and he is standing at the extreme left. The seven letter carriers, counter staff, plant workers and drivers extend across the front of the building. The post office located at 1323 5th Avenue was renamed Station "A" on October 6, 1969 at which time the MPP took the name Prince George. The office still serves as the main office in Prince George.

