



Front page of the August 15, 1945 issue of the Winnipeg Free Press.  
See Part 1 of *They Came Home via The Philippines* by Gene M. Labiuk beginning on page 5.

*The only national journal dedicated to Canadian postal history*



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# They Came Home via The Philippines<sup>1</sup>

By Gene M. Labiuk

On the day after the second atomic bomb was dropped at Nagasaki, Japan on August 9, 1945, Japan agreed to the Potsdam Conference terms of unconditional surrender. On August 15, the Japanese Emperor Hirohito broadcast to the Japanese people the news of Japan's surrender, with the end of hostilities and formal surrender ceremonies to take place on September 2 in Tokyo Bay aboard the American battleship *USS Missouri*. Many Canadians were prisoners of war (POWs) in Japanese camps when the war ended. There is no full report of how they were rescued and returned to Canada. Nor is there a com-

prehensive description of the mail services to and from these liberated prisoners of war (LPOWs). This article chronologically tells the story of liberation of the Canadian POWs in Asia and the role of Manila, Philippine Islands in this process.

The front page of the August 15, 1945 issue of the *Winnipeg Free Press* says it all (Fig. 1). Winnipeg was the home of the Winnipeg Grenadiers, whose survivors were taken Prisoner of War at Hong Kong. Note the Winnipeg Grenadiers crest on the top left of the newspaper page. On page 11 of this issue, the *Free Press* published the following:



Figure 1. Front page of the August 15, 1945 issue of the *Winnipeg Free Press*.

## Canadian Prisoners May Go to Manila

*Manila, Aug. 15 (CP Cable) - There is a chance that many and possibly all the surviving Canadian prisoners of war in Japanese hands—captives since the fall of Hong Kong on Christmas Day 1941—will be brought to Manila upon their liberation...*

With the conditions of the surrender accepted, American war planes began flying over Japanese and former Japanese territories looking for POW camps. When these camps were sighted, locations were noted and food, clothing and medicines were parachuted to the POWs. A leaflet (Fig. 2) was dropped from the war planes. It informed the former allied POWs that the war was over and that arrangements for their freedom were being prepared. The leaflet was printed on two sides, one in English and the other in Japanese. The leaflet illustrated was dropped on the Sham Shui Po POW camp in Hong Kong and was retained by Signalman Larry Dowling, Royal Canadian Corps of Signals, who was imprisoned there. Note the date and time: Aug. 18, 1945 (4.00 PM).

On August 16, 1945 the Canadian High Commissioner in Canberra, Australia sent a coded message to Ottawa informing them of the sailing on August 15 for Hong Kong of *HMCS Prince Robert*, with supplies for the Canadian prisoners. Fig. 3 shows a copy of the decoded message.

Fig. 4 is a photo taken on board the *Prince Robert* showing extra rum rations being given out during Victory-over-Japan celebrations, on August 16, 1945, while on the way to Hong Kong.

With the surrender of Japan on August 15, the priorities were freeing and tending to the needs of the former POWs such as for

medical and health issues, communicating with their families, clothing and feeding, and ultimately the process of bringing them home. Of those Canadians who surrendered at Hong Kong on December 25, 1941, approximately 900 were kept in Hong Kong camps while the balance of about 750 were taken to work camps in Japan. The liberated Canadians in Japan came home via three different routes depending on each individual's circumstances: 1) those with lung trouble, seriously ill and unable to fly were taken by hospital ships to the hospitals on Guam and then sailed to San Francisco, where they were placed on special medical rail cars to be transported to British Columbia; 2) those requiring a few weeks of special feeding and care prior to travelling were sent to hospitals in Guam and then either flown or sailed to San Francisco and then travelled by train to British Columbia; 3) all others were transported by ship or air to the main reception camp at Manila for processing. There, they underwent medical check ups and travelled by ship either to Canada, or to San Francisco and then by rail to British Columbia. All the liberated Canadians in Hong Kong were sent to the reception camp at Manila.

On August 30, 1945, the British Pacific Fleet, comprised of British, Canadian and Australian ships sailed into Hong Kong Harbour. The *HMCS Prince Robert* was the fifth of the 12 ships to enter Hong Kong.<sup>2</sup> The "Robert" was the escort ship of the convoy that took the Canadians to Hong Kong and was easily recognized by the freed Canadians, who began running to the dock to the newly tied up ship. There they were allowed on board and could remain all day. They were fed, received clothing and medical care, and enjoyed the thrill of being free. At night they had to return to the camp

**全日本軍指揮官、官吏及び  
一般日本人居留民ニ告ク**

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戰ニ關スル詳細ナル規定ハ現在日本政府ト聯合國各政府  
間ニテ協議中ナルモ決定次第諸子ニ通告ス

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シ全聯合軍俘虜及ヒ非戰鬥員收容者トシ聯絡ヲナシム  
二 諸子ハ降伏條件及ヒ聯合軍最高司令部ノ命令ニ從ヒ有  
ラニル努力ヲ以テ此ノ人道的役割ヲ援助スヘシ

三 諸子ノ地域ニ於ケル全聯合軍俘虜及ヒ非戰鬥員收容者  
ニ對スル食料衣服ノ供給及ヒ治療手當ノ履行且ツ一般ノ  
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聯合軍駐屯兵カ諸子ノ地域ニ到達シテ日本軍ノ降伏手續  
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諸子ハ治安維持ノ責任アルコトヲ心得ルヘシ

在華軍總司令官  
陸軍中將 A. C. WEDEMEYER (署名)  
A. C. WEDEMEYER

**NOTICE TO ALLIED PRISONERS OF WAR AND CIVILIAN INTERNEES**



The Japanese Government has accepted the Allied peace terms set forth in the Potsdam Declaration. Final negotiations are being concluded.

An official representative is on his way for humanitarian purposes and liaison with this headquarters. He will be an initial, pre-Allied occupation representative in the interest of welfare needs and general conditions in the area or camp to which he is sent.

He will coordinate with the Red Cross and Japanese Military and Government, all plans to assure the security of the personnel concerned, to take emergency action to properly house, feed, clothe and furnish medical assistance to such personnel, and to assist in maintaining order in camps awaiting occupational forces.

He will not have authority to act for the Allied Forces in the rendering of any decisions, military, civil or otherwise. Until such time as allied occupational forces arrive to accept the surrender of Japanese military forces, those military forces are responsible for all such control and decisions in conformity with the terms of surrender and the dictates of the Supreme Allied Command.

(Signed) **A. C. WEDEMEYER**  
Lieutenant General, U. S. A.  
Commanding

VJ-102  
*Aug. 18, 1945 15 (4-5 PM)*

Figure 2. Leaflet informing allied POWs about the Japanese surrender and that representatives were being dispatched as quickly as possible to the camp sites. – Larry Dowling correspondence, courtesy of Sam Chiu.

TO: THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS, OTTAWA

IMMEDIATE

CYPHER - O.T.P.

NO. 400

CANBERRA, August 16th, 1945.

No. 400. August 16th. Reference your telegram No. 374 of August 16th. Following for Davis from Pick, Begins:

Canadian prisoners of war in Hong Kong. National Defence Headquarters, Ottawa, advised by British Pacific Fleet Headquarters, Sydney, this afternoon that "Prince Robert" has already sailed for Hong Kong with all available supplies. Ship left Sydney early morning of August 15th, local time.

Sending you further telegram tomorrow morning.

Ends.

ACTING HIGH COMMISSIONER

Figure 3. Decoded Canadian transmission regarding the sailing of HMCS Prince Robert to Hong Kong. - Library and Archives Canada, RG12, Vol. 1086, File 11-12-41.



*Caption Figure 4. [Show photo] Photo of Ordinary Seaman Ernest Weir receiving an extra rum ration during Victory-over-Japan celebrations aboard the Prince Robert. – Photo credit, PO Jack Hawes, Canada Department of National Defence – Library and Archives Canada, PA-166428*

site, but were allowed to return to the ship the following day. Figures 5, 6 and 7 show photos of the liberated Canadian prisoners at Hong Kong.

The following is an account of a press conference held by Prime Minister Mackenzie King on August 15, 1945, as reported by *The Ottawa Evening Citizen*:

### **Hong Kong Boys Coming Home**

The Hong Kong boys are coming home first. That's the news from Prime Minister Mackenzie King himself.

*"They're free now" he exclaimed.*

*Talking to a hastily summoned press conference last night, Mr. King said:*

*"The thoughts of all of us turn toward the boys of Hong Kong.*

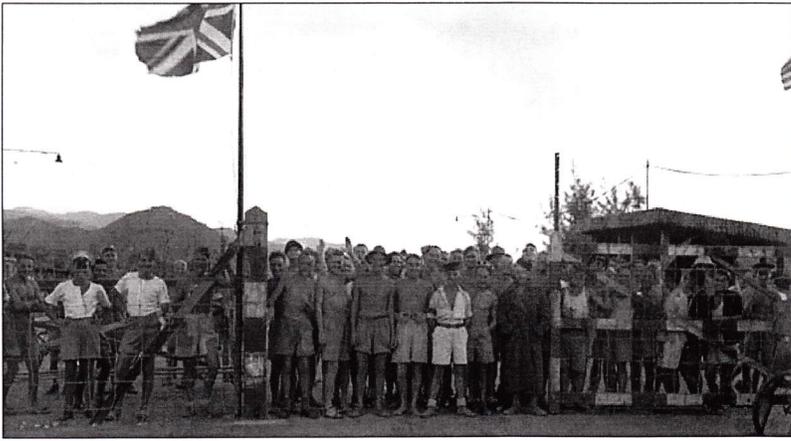
*"Every effort will be made to bring them home at the earliest possible moment.*

*"They're all free now; it is just a matter of getting them home."*

*Asked how he knew they were free, Mr. King answered:*

*"It is part of the Potsdam Declaration; the Japanese have agreed to it, and we'll have them back just as quickly as we can."*

The surrender terms provided for the immediate freeing of Canadians who were held prisoner by the Japanese. These men, the bulk of them troops captured by the enemy at Hong Kong, would be brought home as "quickly as possible."



*Figure 5. Canadian and British POWs awaiting liberation by the landing party from the Prince Robert, ca. August 30, 1945. – Photo credit, PO Jack Hawes, Canada Department of National Defence – Library and Archives Canada, PA-1148121*

*Figure 6. Naval personnel from the Prince Robert, visiting liberated Canadian POWs at Sham Shui Po Camp, Hong Kong, September 1945. – Photo credit, PO Jack Hawes, Canada Department of National Defence – Library and Archives Canada, PA-116808*



*Figure 7. Commander Peter MacRitchie of the Prince Robert, meeting with liberated Canadian POWs at Sham Shui Po Camp, Hong Kong, September, 1945. – Photo credit, PO Jack Hawes, Canada Department of National Defence – Library and Archives Canada, PA-193015*

Hong Kong was officially handed over by the Japanese Imperial Army to the Royal Navy on August 30, 1945 with the final surrender taking place on September 16, 1945.

One of the many priorities for the freed LPOWs was to establish a postal communication network for these ex-prisoners to communicate with their families. Fig. 8 shows the front and back of a September 3,

1945 cover written to his son in St. Catharines, Ontario by Rifleman Percy Wilmot of the Royal Rifles of Canada, while he was at Sham Shui Po Camp.

Since there were no general postal services, the postmark on the cover is a home made rectangular chamfered corner postmark that reads: "HONG KONG / 1945 / POSTAGE PAID", as shown in Fig. 9.

Figure 8. Cover from Rifleman Percy Wilmot from Hong Kong to St. Catharines, Ontario, in which the return address states "c/o Australian Army Post Office, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia". - CWM 20070117-074.13 George Metcalf Archival Collection, Canada War Museum

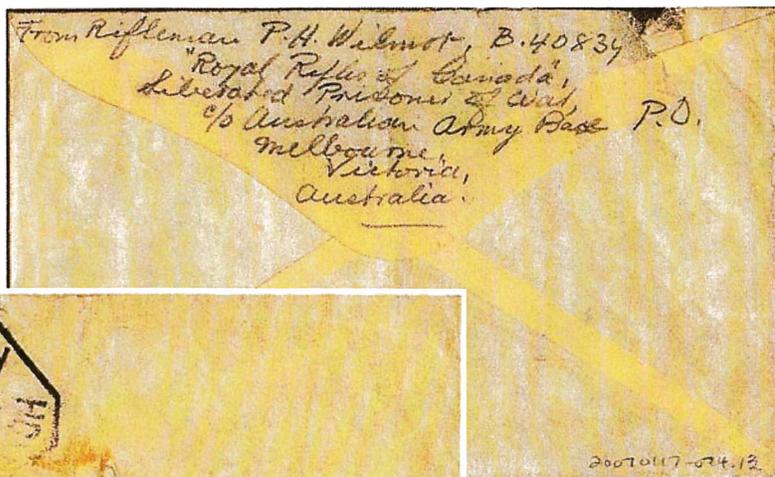


Figure 9. Example of the home made postmark used on LPOW mail from Hong Kong.

The contents of the letter enclosed in the envelope read as follows:

3/9/45

Dear Stanley:

*Well Son here I am a free man again. It is still very hard to realize as yet. It gives one quite a shock to see the husky sailors and soldiers in camp again after looking at skin and bones walking or staggering around for three years and nine months. I am still in hospital but don't worry about me as I will soon be O.K. when I get some of "Mothers" good cooking into me, tell her I can eat anything now. I have eaten Shark, whale, octopus, seaweed, buffalo and weeds of all kinds, but of course we only got the above mentioned luxuries very, very rarely. Our diet mostly consisted of Rice and Greens, mostly water and sugar. I have lots to tell you when I see you.*

*Now how have you and "Mother" been Keepin. I do hope and pray you are both well, tell her to look after herself and also look after yourself as well. I have written "Mother" two letters since we were made free, I hope she gets them. Tell "Ede" Auntie Maude, Aunt Lisse and "Florence", I received their letters and am writing to [unreadable] to Uncle Ernie. The relieving force consisted of "British" "Canadian" and "Australian" forces. One of the ships was the "Canadian" ship "Robert" which was our escort ship when we came out here. We are hoping to leave today on the "Empress of Australia", we do not know where we are going but we hope it is back to dear old "Canada". But some say it is Australia. Anyway our forwarding address is, name Number Regt: Liberated Prisoner of War, c/o Australian Army Post Office, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia...*

The back of the cover has the same return address as stated in the letter and at this

time the LPOWs were unaware that their new home for the next few weeks would be Manila, Philippines. The Canadian repatriation team had not arrived as yet in the Far East, so the mail services were handled by the Australians until the Canadians arrived. [Ed note: this address was also used by British families to send their mail and telegrams to the British LPOWs in Manila.]

The first flight to leave Hong Kong with LPOW mail was on September 4, 1945.<sup>3</sup> The mail was carried by the RAFTC (Royal Air Force Transport Command). These flights went to Manila, then to Melbourne and Sydney, Australia and then on to Montreal (Dorval) via Hawaii, see Fig. 11. Fig. 8 would have been in the first flight of the RAFTC from Hong Kong. On September 8, postage stamps were made available and civilian mail had to be stamped; LPOW mail could go postage-free as long as it was properly endorsed. All these flights were performed by the RAFTC.

On August 26, 1945, Mackenzie King made public a message that was sent to General MacArthur in Manila to be relayed to the liberated Canadians. The message was as follows:

*On behalf of the government and of all the people of Canada I extend to every one of you our deeply heartfelt greetings upon your regaining your freedom. We are rejoicing with you that the day is so near at hand when we shall welcome you home. Your friends and loved ones are counting the hours till your safe return.*

*Our hearts are filled with unbounded admiration and gratitude for the part you have all played in the defence of the world's liberties. All of you, members of Canada's armed forces, and civilians alike, have suffered greatly in the service of your country*

*and the cause of freedom. You have been forced to endure untold hardships, indignities, and in some cases barbarous cruelties. We have known of your sufferings and in thought have shared them with you. The knowledge of what you were being called upon to endure increased our determination to spare no effort which might contribute, at the earliest hour possible, to final victory.*

*It has been a long and terrible ordeal for you all. But the end has come. Your long period of distress is over at least. All Canada now impatiently awaits your safe return to your homeland. Every possible measure is being taken to ensure your early repatriation and the restoration in fullest measure of your health, strength and peace of heart and mind. You cannot return too soon.*

Canadian LPOWs began arriving in Manila from Japan on board British and American war ships and US military air flights. Those coming from Hong Kong arrived in British war ships as well as in the Canadian war ship *HMCS Prince Robert* and the troop transport *HMAT Empress of Australia*. All Canadian LPOWs from Hong Kong were brought to Manila as were many from the Japanese POW camps.

Fig. 10 shows a photo of *HMAT Empress of Australia* in Hong Kong Harbour with LPOWs and recently released civilian internees from Hong Kong and China as she was preparing to leave for Manila.

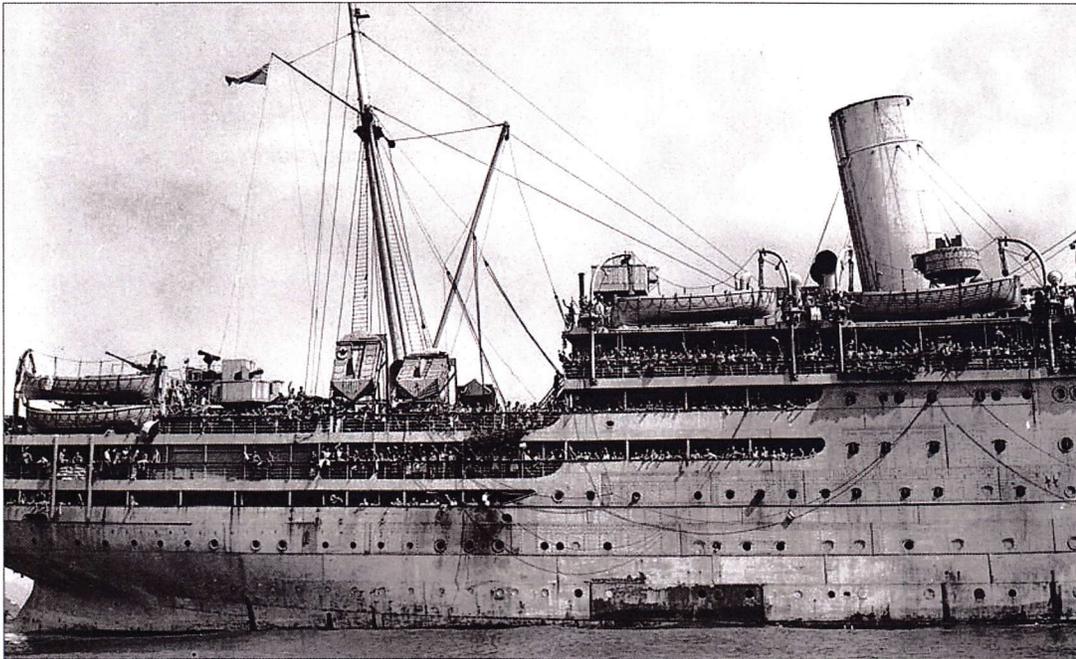


Figure 10. Photo of *HMAT Empress of Australia* in Hong Kong Harbour with LPOWs and recently released civilian internees on board as she is preparing to leave for Manila. – CWM 19770323-007 George Metcalf Archival Collection, Canada War Museum.

### 3rd Australian Reception Group

With the surrender of Japan, the Australian military began asking for volunteers (*Operation Blacklist*)<sup>4</sup> to assist in the repatriation of the British and British Commonwealth LPOWs. Those who volunteered were assigned to one of the three reception centres where the LPOWs were taken. These assignments were the 1<sup>st</sup> Australian Reception Group to Morotai Island, Indonesia, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Australian Reception Group to Singapore and the 3<sup>rd</sup> Australian Reception Group to Manila. The administration at Manila was made up mainly of the Australian Army with a small contingent of 250 soldiers from the British Army and 32 soldiers from the Indian Army. The Australian military was responsible for operating the camps as well as looking after the repatriation documentation and logistics for the British and Commonwealth personnel.

A newspaper article in *The Hamilton Spectator*, August 21, 1945<sup>5</sup> reads as follows:

#### **PLAN TO HANDLE WAR PRISONERS**

*To Provide Supplies for 1,000 Canadians*

*Manila, Aug. 21. - (CP Cable) - Thomas Tehan assistant commissioner of the Australian Red Cross, and Lieut.-Col. H. Hern, Australian Comforts Fund commissioner, are organizing a reception group to care for recovered British, Australian, Indian and Canadian prisoners of war.*

*They expect to provide for some 8,000 Australians, 14,000 Britons and 1,000 Canadians.*

*Necessary supplies have been ordered and are expected here by air within ten days. Emergency supplies will be rushed where required...*

The Australian Army provided postal services for the Australian, British and British Commonwealth LPOWs. When the Canadian military repatriation team arrived, they handled postal services for their LPOWs.

The movement of mail from the Far East POW camps to their destination followed several routes, depending on the origin. The British route was operated by the RAFTC Group No. 300 from Dorval to Sydney, Australia, and then to Manila, with extensions to Hong Kong and back from Manila.<sup>6</sup> Fig. 11 is a map showing the route between Manila and Montreal.

The American routes were made up of the Naval Air Transport Service (NATS) Command and the Air Transport Command (ATC)<sup>7</sup>. Both these services operated from San Francisco across the Pacific to Hawaii, Australia, and eventually Manila, Japan and Hong Kong as shown in Fig 12.

The British and British Commonwealth LPOW mail from Hong Kong that originally was carried by the RAFTC was referred to as "Liberation, resumption of air service". When the British and British Commonwealth LPOWs began arriving in Manila, their mail to Australia was carried by the RAFTC. Early mails from the Canadians and the British were also carried on this route and continued on to Canada and the United Kingdom. Canadian covers that bear a date stamp of No. 2 Aust. Base P.O. / F traveled this route. Also early mail from Canada to a LPOW in Manila traveled this route if addressed "c/o Australian Army Base P.O. Melbourne". When things started to get more organized, mail to Canada was also carried by the NATS or the ATC. Routing was determined by scheduling. Some incoming mail to the LPOWs at Manila was carried by the American military routes.



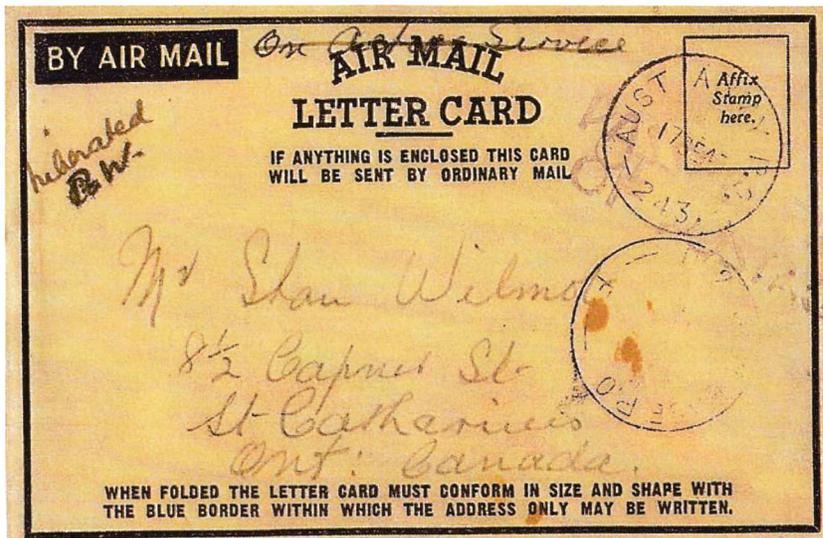
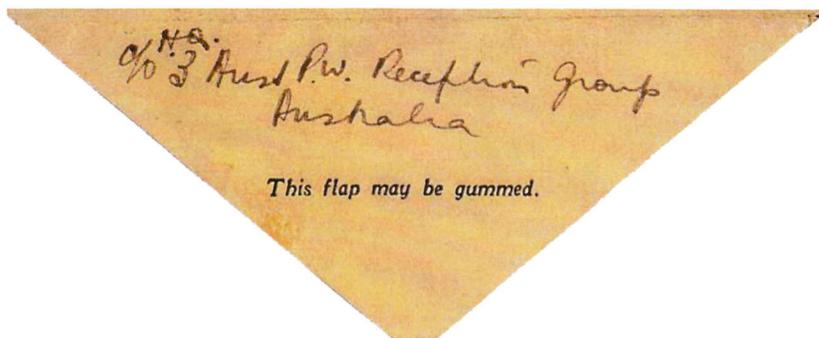


Figure 13. Australian air letter from Manila to Canada. – CWM 20070117-074/14  
George Metcalf Archival Collection, Canada War Museum.

The Australian military provided air mail letter cards on board ships as well as at the camp of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Australian Reception Group. These cards were first issued at Manila on September 12, 1945.<sup>9</sup> Fig. 13 shows an Australian air letter card written by Rifleman Percy Wilmot from Manila to Canada with the manuscript "Liberated P.W.", "On Active Service" crossed out, and postmarked "Aust. Army P.O. / 243 / 17 SE 45, PASSED FREE / OF POSTAGE" and "No. 2 Aust. Base P.O. / F" date stamp, indicating that the RAFTC

carried this letter to Canada. The return address on the back is c/o H.Q. 3 Aust P.W. Reception Group Australia.

The contents of the letter are:

313 General Hospital A.P.O. 75  
Manilla P.I. Post Office  
15/9/45  
Dear Stan,

At last I am writing you again as a free man. We have left "Hong Kong" and are now in the "American Army Hospital" in the "Philippines" about 20 miles from

*Manilla we arrived here last Thursday morning on the "Empress of Australia" & laid out in "Manilla Bay" till evening when we docked and were brought here by "Ambulances".*

*I will never forget the sight of the ships in the harbour, there were hundreds of them, from aircraft carriers & battleships to transports & large boats.*

*Well old son I hope you and "Mother" are well take care of yourself and look after her.*

*I hope to be home soon we may be flown home from here as we get fit to travel.*

*Do not worry about me as I am getting well looked after here the "Americans" are very good to us here. They simply can't do enough for us & I shall never forget their kindness. Well old chap I think this is all I can say now. Write if you can "air Mail" hoping to see you soon Love to Mother."*

The Australian Army used two postmarks on Commonwealth mail handled by the 3<sup>rd</sup> Australian Reception Group in Manila, as are shown with the cover in Fig. 14 which bears examples of both the AUST. ARMY P.O. 241 and 243 date stamps.

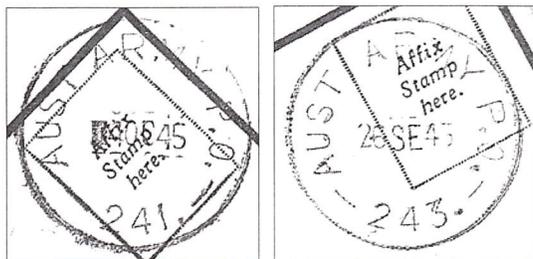


Figure 14. Examples of both the AUST. ARMY P.O. / 241 and 243 postal date stamps.

The *History of the Australian Military Postal Services 1814-1950* by Edward B. Proud<sup>9</sup> has no usage dates for 241 in the Philippines. There are sufficient examples on Australian

and British covers with 241 post marks to determine that it was used solely by the 3<sup>rd</sup> Australian Reception Group in Manila. AUST. ARMY P.O. / 243 was listed as used from September 1, 1945 to October 20, 1945. Proud also lists post marks 244 and 245 as being sent to Manila on August 19, 1945 and questioned their use. [Ed note: I assume 244 and 245 were not used or returned because no examples are known.]

Commonwealth mail from the LPOWs in the Philippines was allowed free of postage as long as it was endorsed "Liberated POW" or "POW" and was on Commonwealth stationery. LPOW mail that was posted using American stationery required prepayment with 6¢ U.S. postage (supplied at no cost to the LPOWs).

After September 9, LPOWs were reaching Manila in large numbers, and by October 17 their recovery was nearly completed; 14,796 LPOWs or internees passed through or were held by the 3<sup>rd</sup> Australian Reception Group: 11,500 British, 2,650 Australians, 27 New Zealanders, 160 Indians, 123 Burmese, 131 Malays, 48 Chinese, over 1,000 Canadians and 8 Portuguese.

On October 19 the British Repatriation Team took over responsibilities for the administration of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Australian Reception Group. The Australians were preparing to close their section of the camp and proceed home to Australia.<sup>10</sup> On October 24, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Australian Reception Group had completed its work at Manila and embarked home to Australia, leaving the British in charge.

### **Canadian Repatriation Liaison Group (CRLG)**

As early as August 17, 1945, preparations were made to form a Canadian repatriation team to go to the Far East for the repatriation of the Canadian LPOWs. E. H. Norman, formerly the language officer of the Cana-

dian legation in Tokyo, headed the official repatriation team. Norman himself was repatriated to Canada in August 1942 with other Canadian diplomats.

On August 17, 1945 at Canberra, Australia, The Acting High Commissioner for Canada in Australia, sent a coded transmission to The Secretary of State for External Affairs, Ottawa, figure 15. This transmission reads:

...5. No doubt consideration has been given in Ottawa to sending of Canadian repatriation officers to Hong Kong and elsewhere regardless of whether they go on Canadian ships. Noble says that Royal Navy is arranging to send group of about 50 men of various services by plane to Hong Kong via Manila leaving Sydney August 18th or 19th to look after mainly prisoners of war. A Canadian would be able to go with this group."

With the end of hostilities, some members of the Canadian Radar Detachment which had been serving in Darwin, Australia along with members of the Canadian Intelligence Corps Personnel (No. 1 Special Wireless Group, Royal Canadian Corps of Signals (RCCS)), were used by the Canadian Military Attaché (Col. Cosgrave) for POW repatriation duties until the arrival in Manila from Canada of the Canadian Repatriation Liaison Group (CRLG) under the command of Lt. Col. M. W. McANulty.<sup>11</sup>

On August 22, 1945, the *St. Catharines Standard* carried this story:

**Canadian Officials to Manila**  
CANBERRA, Aug 22 (CP) – Col. L. M. Cosgrave, military attaché of the Canadian high commissioner's office, left today for Manila to head a Canadian military party charged with locating and repatriating Canadian prisoners of war in Japanese-held territory.

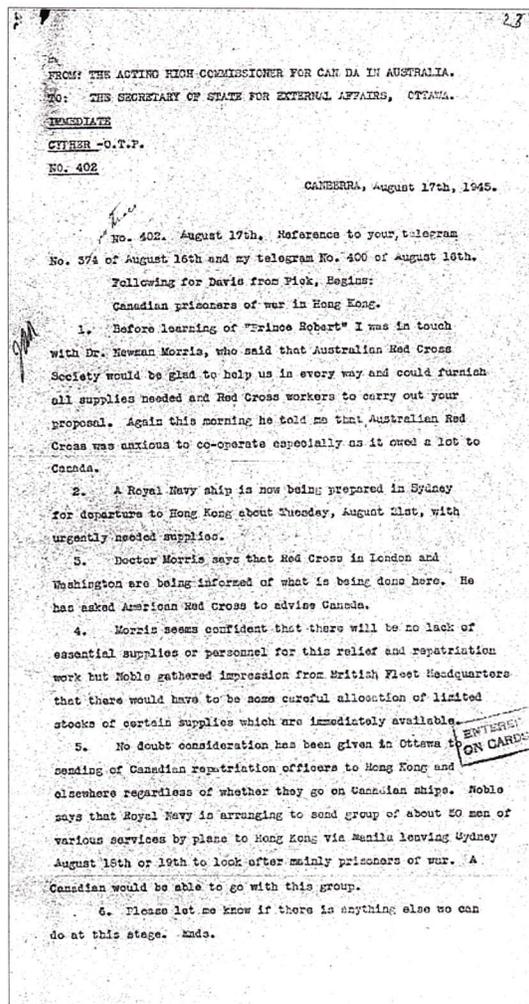


Figure 15. Decoded Canadian transmission regarding sending Canadian repatriation officers to Hong Kong and elsewhere. – Library and Archives Canada, RG12, Vol. 1086, File 11-12-41

Cosgrave will be assisted by officers and men from Australia as well as Canada. The commissioner's office said Canadian relief supplies already are en route to the far east.

Fig. 16 shows a newspaper article from *The Toronto Star*, August 23, 1945, "MANILA PREPARES WELCOME FOR 1,000 CANUCK

PRISONERS"; this article gives information and details of the 5<sup>th</sup> Replacement Depot. A Replacement Depot is an area set up by the military in which weapons, supplies and equipment are stored and when needed at the front, they are dispatched from here. There were several Replacement Depots in the Philippines with the 5<sup>th</sup> being the largest.

On August 22, Lt.-Col. M. W. McNulty and Major Angus Barwick left Ottawa for the west coast, where they caught a flight to the Philippines. The newly formed CRLG team

was made up of 15 officers and 15 NCOs, with other members to be arriving shortly. Fig. 17 shows a photo from the *St. Catharines Standard*, August 25, 1945<sup>12</sup> issue, *Canadians Fly to Manila*, with the following caption: *Lieut.-Col. M. W. McNulty of Sherbrooke, Que., commanding officer, and Major Angus Barwick of Montreal, second in command of a party of 30 officers and men who are flying to Manila as the Canadian repatriation liaison group in connection with the return of Canadian prisoners of war. They are seen boarding their plane at Ottawa.*

## MANILA PREPARES WELCOME FOR 1,000 CANUCK PRISONERS

Manila, Aug. 23—(CP)—Approximately 1,000 Canadians will be among the 32,000 Allied prisoners of war evacuated from Japanese camps to the Philippines.

The evacuation of both prisoners and internees will be carried out as quickly as possible by the American recovered personnel division replacement command, the American Red Cross and occupation forces entering Japan.

The initial case of Canadians who eventually will come to the 5th American replacement depot near Manila, will be in the hands of the Australian section at general headquarters.

Canadian groups are enroute from Canada to relieve the Australians. In the meantime, Col. Richard Malone, Canadian public relations officer, is maintaining liaison with the Australians in connection with arrangements for evacuated prisoners and Col. Moore Cosgrave, Canadian military attache at Canberra, Australia, is due in a day or two to handle the work of preparing for the prisoners' arrivals until Canadian teams headed by Lt.-Col. M. W. MacNulty, of Sherbrooke, Que., arrive.

It is not yet known if the 300-odd Canadians in the Hong Kong area will also be evacuated to Manila. However, arrangements for them will be supervised by Brig. Kay, Canadian military attache at Chungking.

Recovered personnel units which will accompany occupation forces will make lists of liberated prisoners before their evacuation and cable them to the war department at Washington. It is presumed this service will apply to Canadians.

Messages to next of kin will be accepted immediately.

Once prisoners have been evacuated to the Philippines by air and water transport they will find specially converted replacement depots specially equipped with every convenience. There will be 24 hour Red Cross service, registration under a central filing system, message centre service, information counters, canteens and recreation centres. Messages from relatives will be delivered.

During the trip to the Philippines the prisoners will have medical supplies, food and clothing available, which will be taken to Japan by the occupation forces.

Figure 16. Article from the *Toronto Star* giving details of the Canadian repatriation teams proceeding to the 5<sup>th</sup> Replacement Depot at Manila. *Toronto Star*, August 23, 1945.

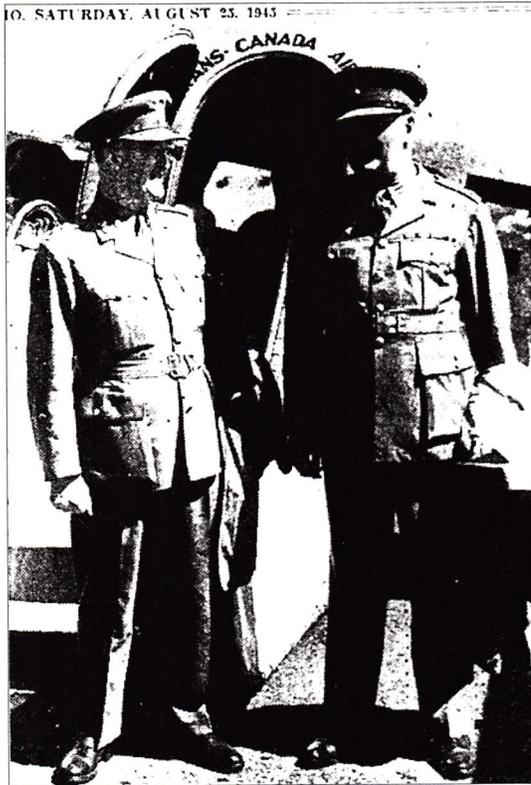


Figure 17. Photo of Lieut.-Col. M. W. McA'Nulty and Major Angus Barwick who are in command of the Canadian repatriation team, as they are boarding a plane for their trip to Manila. — *St. Catharines Standard*, August 25, 1945

When the CRLG team left Ottawa to assist members of the Canadian Radar Detachment and No. 1 Wireless Group, the *Hamilton Spectator* of August 29, 1945<sup>4</sup> had the following news story about the group:

***Officer Leaves For Manila  
Major Brown, This City, to Help  
With Prisoners' Return***

*A Hamilton officer — Major T. J. Brown — it has been announced by Defence Headquarters, Ottawa, is one of a party of four officers and six non-commissioned officers of the Canadian Army who have left by air for*

*Manila to assist in the repatriation of Canadian prisoners of war released from Japanese detention with the end of the war...*

*Others in the party flying to Manila, according to the Ottawa announcement, include Major John M. Howlett, Winnipeg; Major A. I. Matgeson, Toronto; Major E. L. Williams, of the Intelligence Corps, Ottawa; R.S.M. D. J. Davies, Carleton Place; Q.M.S. D. Ryan, Ottawa; Q.M.S. W. B. Searle, Nortwood Hills, England; Acting Q.M.S. W. G. Hipson, Kingston, and Acting Q.M.S. F. C. Lowington, Corwhin.*

*On arrival at Manila they will join Lieut.-Col. W. M. McA'Nulty and Major Angus Barwick, who left Ottawa some days ago for the Pacific theatre.*

Fig. 18 is from the August 29, 1945 *Winnipeg Free Press* which shows a photo of this first group departing from Uplands airport in Ottawa prior to leaving for Manila.

Fig. 19 shows a photo of the CRLG prior to their leaving for Manila. There were 30 members of the CRLG of which 26 are shown here. Lt-Col. M. W. McA'Nulty of Sherbrooke, Quebec and Major Angus Barwick of Montreal, had left a few days earlier. Absent from this picture are Major W. G. D. Stanley of Quebec and QMS C. Porter of Ottawa.

[Note: Captain Terry McConvey, was a Canadian POW who was taken prisoner by the Germans near Caen in the opening days of the Normandy invasion. Sergeant Stephen Medwed of the Canadian Medical Corps was part of the original Canadian repatriation for the Canadians coming home from Europe and quickly volunteered for the Pacific job. Also, a Canadian civilian, Bob Faife, who was deemed a Japanese specialist, joined the team. Faife was interned in Shanghai as a civilian internee from Novem-

Yokosuka naval base in Tokyo bay, at 6.15 a.m. tomorrow (5.15 p.m. today, CD



The first Canadian repatriation group of four officers and six non-commissioned officers who are proceeding to Manila, Philippine Islands to aid in the repatriation of Canadian prisoners of war is shown just prior to their departure from Uplands airport Ottawa, Tuesday afternoon, on the first leg of their journey. From left to right, Q.M.S. W. G. Hipson, Kingston, Ont.; Q.M.S. F. C. Lewington, London, Ont.; Major John M. Howlett, Winnipeg; Major A. I. Matheson, Toronto; Major T. J. Brown, of Hamilton, who was captured after the Dieppe raid of 1942 and spent two and a half years in a German prison camp until released by the Americans; Major E. L. Williams, Ottawa; R.S.M. D. G. Davies, Carleton Place, Ont.; Q.M.S. W. B. Searle, Prince Albert; Q.M.S. E. C. Graham, London, Ont.; and Q.M.S. D. Ryan, Ottawa.

Figure 18 Photo of the four officers and six non-commissioned officers who will be heading to Manila. – Winnipeg Free Press, August 29, 1945

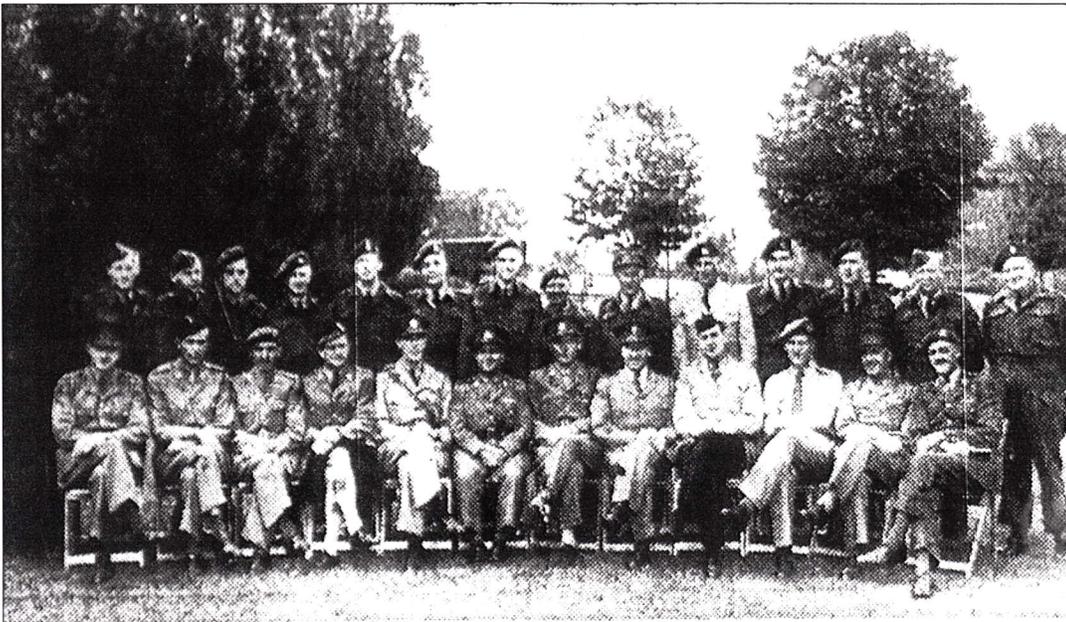
ber 1942 to December 1943: he came home aboard the *Gripsholm*.<sup>13]</sup>

On August 30, 1945, Lt. Col. M. W. McA'Nulty along with Maj. A. C. Barwick arrived at Manila by air and then proceeded to the 5<sup>th</sup> Replacement Depot to report to Brig. Winter of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Australian P.O.W. Reception Group. The balance of the CRLG were unable to obtain transport across the Pacific and proceeded eastward across Europe to Ceylon by air.<sup>11</sup> On August 31, personnel of the Canadian Intelligence Corps arrived at the 5<sup>th</sup> Replacement Depot to join the CRLG.<sup>11</sup>

Fig. 20 is a photo of Major A. I. Matheson receiving his ticket to the Philippines. Matheson was in charge of the first Canadi-

an repatriation liaison group of four officers and six non-commissioned.

On September 3, another group of the CRLG arrived at Manila from Ottawa taking the eastward journey via Scotland, Palestine, Karachi and Ceylon.<sup>11</sup> On September 6, personnel of the Department of External Affairs (Canada) arrived in Manila by air from Canada. Dr. E. H. Norman, Peter Campbell and George Powers joined the CRLG in the recovery of Canadian internees in Japanese hands.<sup>11</sup> On September 9, a further 16 members of the CRLG arrived from Ottawa via England, Karachi and Ceylon.<sup>11</sup> The last group of the CRLG arrived on September 18 from Ottawa via the U.K., Calcutta, Australia and Morotai.<sup>11</sup>



**SPEEDING RETURN OF CANADIAN POW's**  
 —To speed up the return to Canada of Canadian prisoners-of-war held by the Japanese, thirty officers and men known as the Canadian Repatriation Liaison Group, are flying to Manila. From there they will proceed in small groups to the various camps. Twenty-six of them are shown here in Ottawa, prior to their departure. The officer commanding, Lt. Col. M. W. McA'Nulty of Sherbrooke, Que., and Maj. Angus Barwick of Montreal, have proceeded ahead of the group.

Front row, left to right: Capt. M. H. Sargeant, Saint John, NB; Capt. P. T. McConvey, Winnipeg; Capt. Guy Robitaille, Lauson, Que.; Major W. B. Armstrong, Penetanguishene, Ont.; Major A. I. Matheson, Toronto; Major Paul Hart, Montreal; Major T. J. Brown, Hamilton, Ont.; Major John

M. Howlett, Winnipeg; Capt. W. H. Broom, Woodroffe, Ont.; Lt. S. E. Stansfield, Montreal; Major E. L. Williams, Ottawa; Capt. G. R. Gauvreau, Quebec city, Que.

Back row, left to right: Sgt. H. J. Brophy, Montreal; Sgt. S. Medwed, Toronto; QMS F. A. Garland, Vancouver; CSM M. J. Morel, Ottawa; QMS F. C. Lewington, London, Ont.; QMS S. C. Graham, London, Ont.; QMS W. G. Hipson, Kingston, Ont.; QMS W. B. Searle, Prince Albert, Sask.; RSM D. C. Davies, Carleton Place, Ont.; SSM S. G. Fisher, Sault Ste. Marie, Ont.; Sgt. L. H. Borlet, Kitchener, Ont.; Sgt. H. Bell, Ottawa; Sgt. G. Nordling, Dawson City, Yukon; QMS D. Ryan, Ottawa. Two members are missing from the picture: Maj. W. G. D. Stanley of Quebec and QMS C. Porter of Ottawa.—(Canadian Army Photo.)

Figure 19. SPEEDING RETURN OF CANADIAN POW's

Fig. 21 is a photo of members of a four-man recovery team in Manila who attended to the Canadian prisoners of war in Asia.

Fig. 22 shows a cover to Ottawa, Canada from Major W. B. Armstrong of the CRLG dated October 23, 1945 in Manila. Note the use of the U.S. 6¢ air mail envelope post-marked with APO 711 date stamp. APO 711 was assigned to Manila at this time.

Fig. 23 illustrates a second cover to Ottawa from Major W. B. Armstrong, dated APO 711 (November 18) in Manila. Its U.S. 6¢ air mail stamp was canceled by US Navy PO 10499, at Guam. It was mailed on the group's way home. This cover was from a member of the Canadian Repatriation Team on their way home from Manila on board the Canadian hospital ship *HMCHS Letitia*, which left Manila on November 12, 1945.

## His Ticket to Manila



Figure 20. Photo of Major A. I. Matheson, receiving his ticket to the Philippines. – Canadian Army Photo, London Free Press, August 30, 1945.

With arrangements being made for the Canadian LPOWs by the CRLG *The Hamilton Spectator*, August 29, 1945<sup>5</sup> had the following news story:

### **Canucks Caged In Prison Camps Move Home Soon...**

Manila, Sept. 1. - (BUP) - About 1,500 Canadians, liberated from Japanese prison camps in China, should be in Manila or on the way home by the end of September, Lieut.-Col. M. W. McAnulty, commanding the Canadian repatriation group here, told the British United Press to-day...

Each liberated man is to receive \$100 on arrival at the camp here and a gift bag containing cigarettes and tobacco, toilet articles, candy, writing equipment and other needed articles. Complete new uniform kits will be issued.

On November 12, the Canadian Repatriation Team along with the members of No. 1 Special Wireless Group, Royal Canadian Corps of Signals (RCCS) left Manila aboard the Royal Canadian Navy hospital ship *HMCHS Letitia*.<sup>15</sup> They arrived at Vancouver on December 6. Fig. 24 is a photo of *HMCHS Letitia* arriving at Vancouver.



Figure 21. Photo of Major A. I. Matheson (left) and Major T. J. Brown (right). Members of a four-man recovery team talk with Lt. Col. W. J. Home, commanding officer of the interned Canadians and his battalion commander, Maj. G. Trist of the Winnipeg Grenadiers.<sup>14</sup>

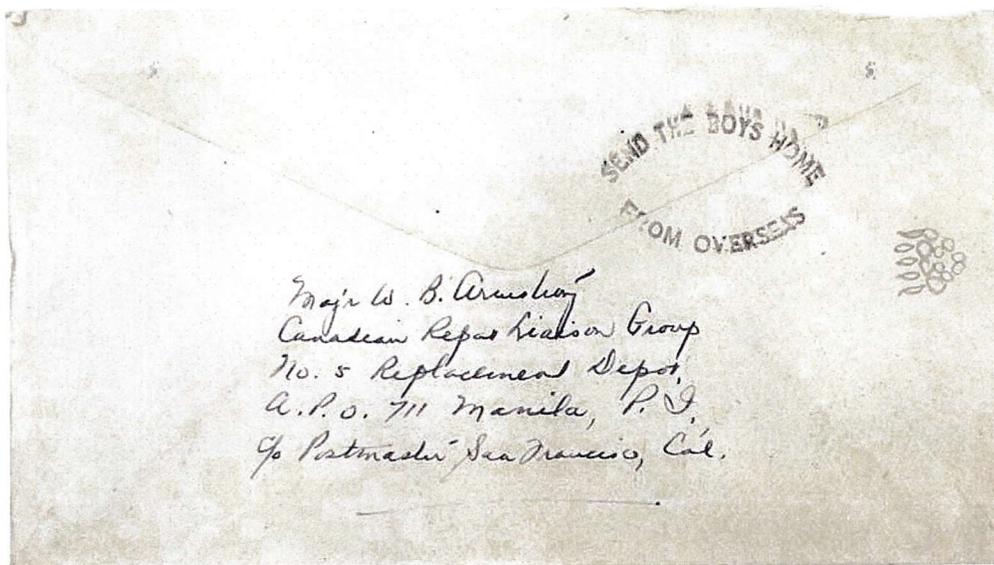
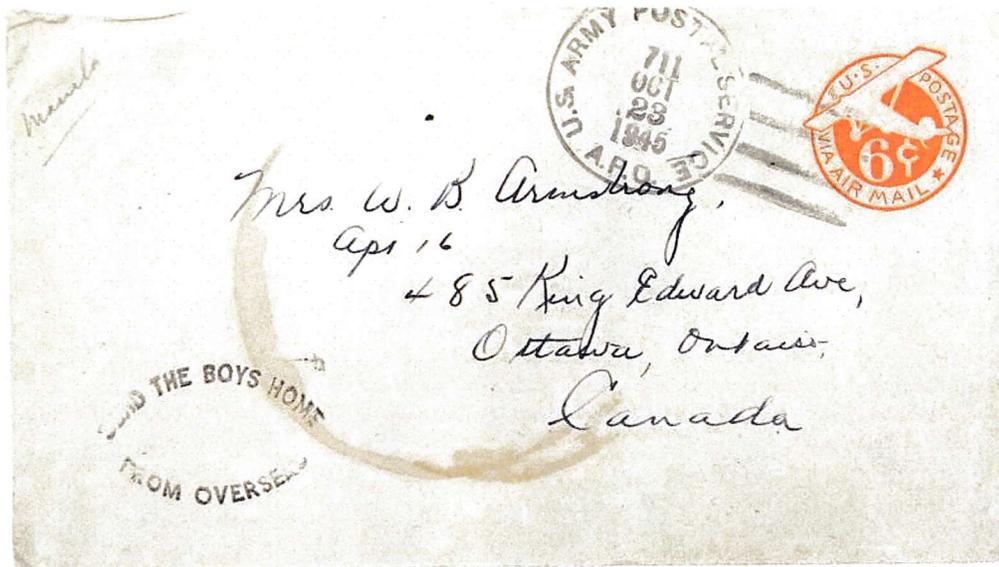


Figure 22. Cover to Ottawa from Major W. B. Armstrong of the CRLG in Manila, dated October 23, 1945. The U.S. 6 cents air mail envelope is cancelled with the APO 711 date stamp. – Photo supplied by Robert Toombs



Figure 23. [Show front of cover] November 18, 1945 cover to Ottawa from Major Armstrong of the CRLG. – Photo supplied by Robert Toombs

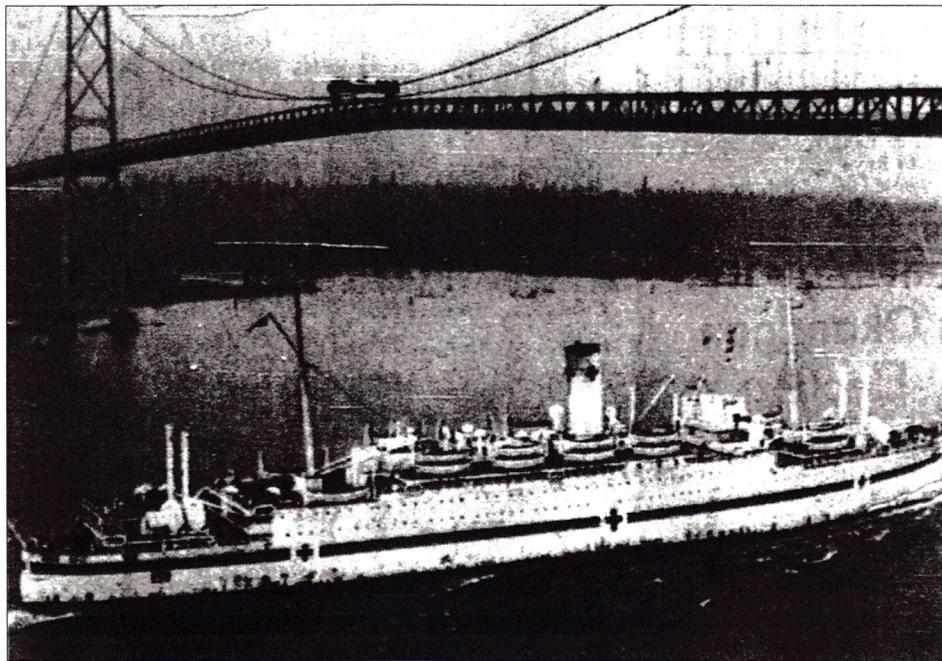


Figure 24. [Show photo, crop picture from newspaper page] Newspaper photo of the HMCHS Letitia arriving at Vancouver. – Vancouver Sun, December 6, 1945.

## 5<sup>th</sup> Replacement Depot

Before the Japanese accepted the Potsdam Declaration, the United States Army began preparations for Replacement Camps to be set up for processing Liberated POWs and civilian internees who had been held by the Japanese. Replacement Command operated under the command of Lt. General W. D. Styer (Commanding General, United States Army Forces Western Pacific). On August 12, Styer assigned Major General F. E. Uhl, (Commanding General, Replacement Command) to oversee the Recovered Personnel Program. On August 21, Uhl, issued a letter to Commanding Officers, Officers, and Enlisted Personnel of the 5<sup>th</sup> Replacement Depot, 29<sup>th</sup> Replacement Depot and Women's Replacement and Disposition Centre (see Fig. 25).

The following article from the August 15, 1945 *Melbourne Argus*<sup>16</sup> briefly describes how liberated internees would be evacuated from Japan:

***Release of Internees and POW's,  
Distress Relief Organised  
by James O'Connor, Manila***

*Full preparations are in hand to alleviate distress among the Allied civilian internees and POW's upon their liberation from the Japanese home islands following the Japanese surrender.*

*It is estimated there are some 40,000 persons more than half being British subjects including, Australians, Canadians, New Zealanders, and Indians as well as some 16,000 Americans...*

Initially, evacuation plans called for over 70 Allied recovery personnel units to move in along with the occupation forces throughout the liberated territories. The first plane with evacuees should be on its way to Manila within two or three days after the first landings of the occupying forces. At Manila,

the evacuees would be sent to replacement depots and hospitals. One of the first jobs of the personnel units would be to notify families of the prisoners about their status, location and health. The hope was that at the replacement depots the liberated prisoners would be placed on planes or ships for their journey home within five days after their arrival at Manila. Due to the large volume of LPOWs arriving in a short time span, this process took between two and three weeks. It is estimated that 30% of the prisoners would need hospital care at Manila. The prisoner recovery units would include American, Australian, British, Canadian, New Zealand, Indian and Dutch repatriation teams.

On August 30, 1945, the British aircraft carrier *HMS Speaker* entered Tokyo Bay for the surrender ceremonies. The following day, the last of her aircraft and all of her air maintenance personnel were transported to the British carrier *HMS Ruler*. With the hangar deck vacant of aircraft and air crews, workers erected living quarters, dining, entertainment and medical facilities on the deck. That evening, within five minutes of dropping anchor, landing craft from the *USS Gosselin* arrived alongside *Speaker* carrying LPOWs from the Tokyo area who were deemed fit enough to travel. This process was repeated throughout the night. These LPOWs were mostly British servicemen from all three fighting services and the merchant marine. There also were British Commonwealth servicemen including Africans and Indians. By noon on September 1, 54 officers and 423 other ranks had been accommodated.<sup>17</sup>

At 1300 on September 3, *Speaker* was the first allied ship to depart Tokyo Bay and set a course for Manila with her cargo of LPOWs. Figures 26 and 27 shows *HMS Speaker* sailing out of Tokyo Bay. Here is the

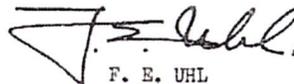
RESTRICTED

HEADQUARTERS  
REPLACEMENT COMMAND  
UNITED STATES ARMY FORCES WESTERN PACIFIC  
OFFICE OF THE COMMANDING GENERAL

APC 295  
21 August 1945

To: Commanding Officer, Officers, and Enlisted Personnel of the  
5th Replacement Depot, 29th Replacement Depot, and Women's  
Replacement and Disposition Center.

1. In a few days, you will all be hosts to honored guests — men, women and children who have suffered greatly at the hands of the Japanese.
2. It is our privilege to welcome them back to a world at peace, and to serve them cheerfully and hospitably in all they desire. They may be of many races, nationalities and religions. Respect their customs as though they were your own.
3. Most of these guests of ours have been overseas a long time — some were on Corregidor or in Singapore; others fought on Java, Borneo, New Guinea and in the Far East. Now they are on their way home. I know that each one of us desires to speed their return to the homes and families they left so long ago.
4. By the way you do things, as much as what you do, you can fill their hours with comfort and content. I know that each of you will give full measure of courtesy, kindness and cheerfulness. I know that you will take thought to doing the little things and that you will perform even humble tasks willingly.
5. I know that I can count on the whole-hearted cooperation of all of you in being good American hosts to our honored guests.



F. E. UHL  
Major General, U. S. Army  
Commanding

Figure 25. Copy of letter from Major General Uhl to the personnel of the Replacement Depots where the Liberated POWs and civilian internees were to be processed on their way home.<sup>14</sup>