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Despatched at Saint John on March 26, 1862, to Pitlochry, Scotland, this is the earliest use of the 17c black to pay the single rate to Continental Europe and to the UK via an American port. (Courtesy of Matthew Bennett International.) See Spencer Sealy's article on page 5

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THEY CAME HOME VIA THE PHILIPPINES

Conclusion – Continued from PHSC Journal 174

The Way Home” (continued)

When it was time to begin the journey home, either the LPOW or the government would notify the family that their soldier was on their way. Fig. 67 shows a telegram sent to Rifleman Wilmont’s wife, dated October 11, 1945, which reads:

Official information has been received that B40839 Rifleman Percy Hoarce Wilmot embarked Manila aboard HMS Glory ninth October expected time of arrival Vancouver twentyseventh October.

USS Ozark – September 8

The first American ship carrying British LPOWs to leave Manila and arrive in the U.S. was the *USS Ozark*, which left Manila on September 8 and arrived at San Francisco on October 2. She carried 950 American, British and Canadian ex-internees (244 were members of the Winnipeg Grenadiers and the Royal Rifles of Canada).²⁷ Fig. 68 shows a newspaper article about the *Ozark* arriving at San Francisco, listing the names of the members of “C” Force from British Columbia. Fig. 69 is a Canadian Army Photo of the *USS Ozark* and LPOWs.

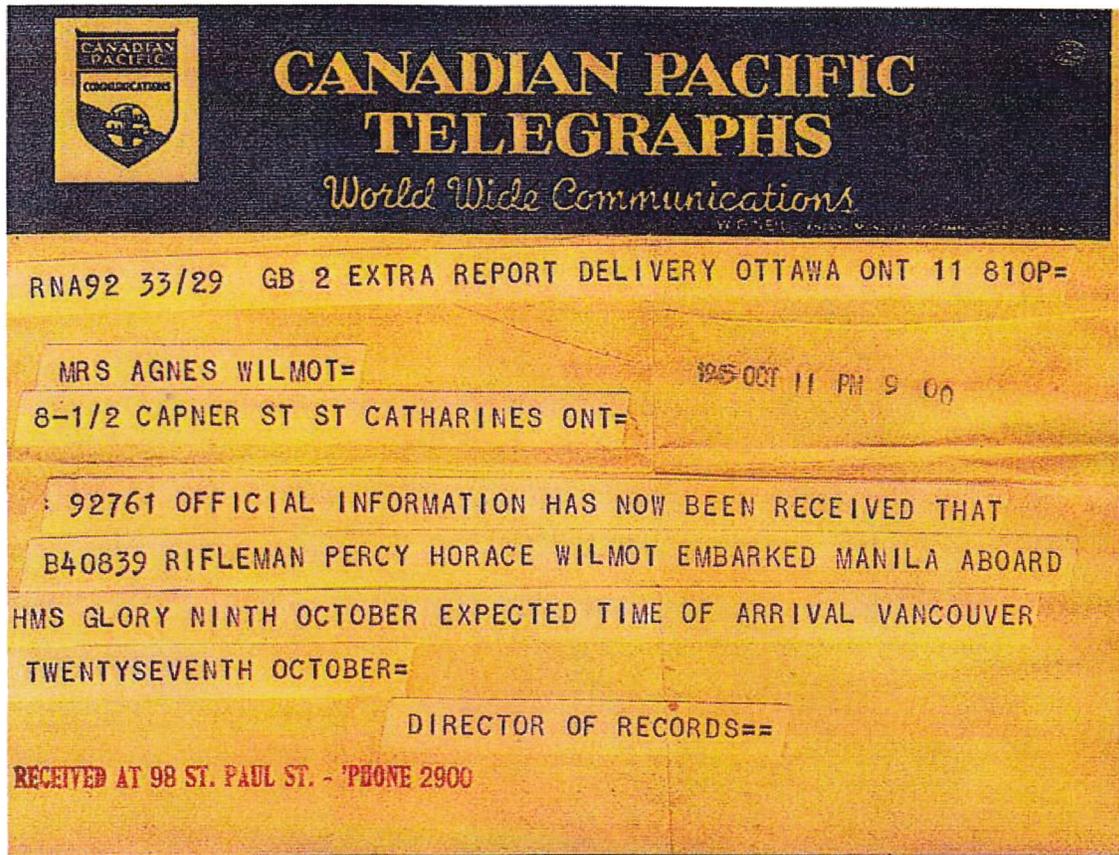


Figure 67. Telegram from Ottawa to Mrs. Wilmot advising that her husband was on his way home. – CWM 20070117-076 George Metcalf Archival Collection, Canada War Museum.

Repats With Kin in B.C. Reach Frisco

Eighteen repats recently liberated from Jap prison camps and whose next-of-kin live in British Columbia were among Canadians arriving by sea at San Francisco Tuesday and today.

All are to be sent to Victoria for dispersal, presumably by coastal boat.

On the USS Ozark, which docked at San Francisco Tuesday, the men with British Columbia next-of-kin were:

Cpl. E. A. Dayton, son of Albert P. Dayton, RR 2, Chilliwack.
 L-Cpl. J. M. Falcon, brother of Mrs. Myrtle McNab, Dawson Creek.
 Pte. J. S. Goodey, son of William R. Goodey, 2152 Cornwall.
 Cpl. C. M. Keyworth, son of Rev. Thomas Keyworth, Grand Forks.
 Pte. H. E. Mayberry, whose wife lives at 1654 West Sixth.
 Sgmn. L. E. Naylor, son of John E. Naylor, Victoria.
 Sgmn. J. Rose, son of Benjamin Rose, 2356 West Fourteenth.
 Pte. C. S. Shupe, son of Robert B. Shupe, RR 2, Silverdale.
 Pte. C. E. Septe, whose wife lives in Prince Rupert.
 L-Cpl. D. C. Speller, son of Mrs. Melville O. Speller, Victoria.
 S-Sgt. E. M. West, whose wife's address is 1976 Grant.
 Sgt. C. O. Woodhead, son of John H. Woodhead, Victoria.

On board the vessel Admiral Hugh Rodman, arriving at San Francisco today, were:

Hon. Capt. Uriah Laite, Chaplain Service, whose wife's address is 3650 West Nineteenth.
 Cpl. Robert D. Adams, whose wife lives at 30 East Twelfth.
 Pte. Eric Anderson, brother of H. Anderson, Rose Prairie.
 L-Sgt. Chester Budd, whose wife lives at 1360 Jervis.
 Pte. Floyd B. Conkey, whose wife's address is 2242 East Twenty-fourth.
 Pte. Edward Toews, whose wife lives at Koksilah, V.I.

(See descriptive story of arrivals on Page 14.)

Figure 68. Newspaper article about the USS Ozark arriving at San Francisco, listing the names of the BC soldiers of "C" Force. It also lists the Canadians from BC who were on the USS Admiral Rodman, which was to arrive at San Francisco. – Vancouver Sun, October 3, 1945.

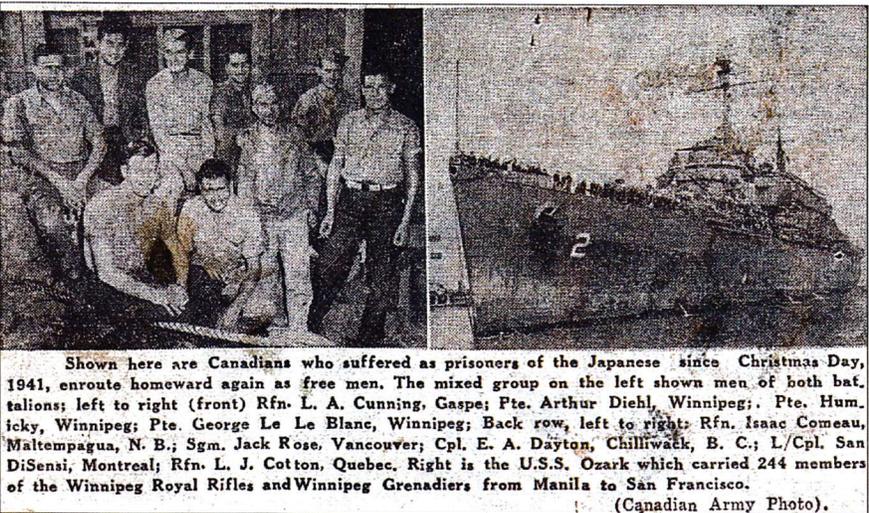


Figure 69. Canadian Army Photo of the USS Ozark and LPOWs.²⁷

USAT General Langfitt – September 15

The first American ship to leave Manila for Canada was the *USAT General Langfitt*, which left September 15 and arrived at Esquimalt on October 3. She carried 289 British, 10 Canadians and 2,252 Americans. The British and Canadians disembarked at Esquimalt and the *Langfitt* then proceeded to Seattle. Fig. 70 shows a newspaper article written while the *General Langfitt* was at sea. Fig. 71 shows a photo of two free LPOWs waving from the *Langfitt* as she enters Esquimalt.

USS Admiral Rodman – September 18

The *USS Admiral Rodman* left Manila on September 18 and arrived at San Francisco on October 3, 1945. Fig. 68 lists the men from British Columbia on this ship.

The September 18, 1945 issue of the *Hamilton Spectator*,⁵ carries this story:

CANADIAN DRAFT LEAVES MANILA IN HIGH SPIRITS

Members of Hong Kong Garrison Start Home. Horror Stories Told.

William Stewart, Canadian Press War Correspondent

Manila, Sept. 18. A reduced draft of 25 Canadian officers and 80 other ranks, members of the Hong Kong garrison, who were liberated after nearly four years in Japanese hands, moved out of a reception depot here to-day, to board a ship for their homeward trip, possible via San Francisco.

Earlier 100 other prisoners were warned to stand by for air passage home.

The prisoners, most of them wearing United States uniforms, some draped in waterproof ponchos boarded trucks at the depot which took them some 18 miles to Manila docks, where they were due to board the American ship Admiral Rodman.

All were in good spirits over their good fortune, although the rainy day meant postponement of the departure of those due to fly home.

USS Gosper – September 21

The USS Gosper was scheduled to leave Manila on September 21 and to arrive in the United States, but, due to a lack of docking space available in San Francisco at its scheduled time



Figure 71. Newspaper article from the General Langfitt at sea and approaching BC. – Vancouver Sun, October 4, 1945.

Ship Nears B.C. With 2524 Repats

By Sun Staff Reporter

ABOARD SS GENERAL LONG-FITT, steaming toward Esquimalt Harbor, Oct. 3.—A chill, thin rain hitting down at this 1900-ton transport—first repat ship from the Orient to reach British Columbia—was the immediate reception of 2551 prisoners of war from Manila.

But rain or shine, it couldn't undo the emotions of these men already 17 days aboard ship. They were on the steel decks, eagerly waiting to set foot on North American soil.

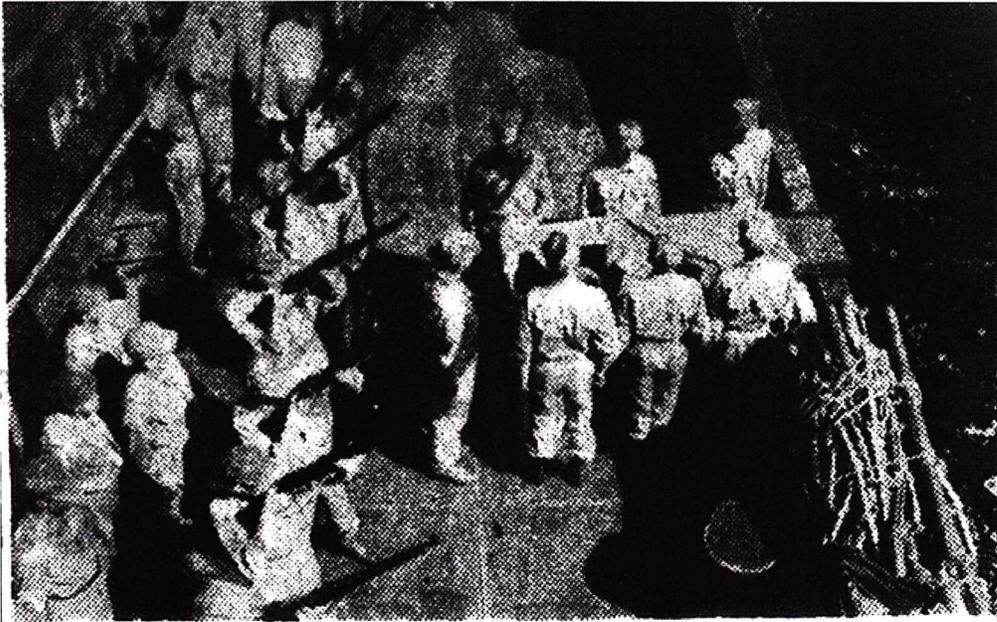
Men stood all about the rail watching the ship plow through choppy seas and the emotion mounted, like a symphony coming to an end.

Aboard were 2252 Americans, 289 Britishers and 10 Canadians.

Impatience was the keynote, though, as you couldn't tell one group from the other.

Please Turn to Page Two See "Esquimalt"

Figure 70. Newspaper article listing the names of the Canadians aboard the Langfitt. – Vancouver Sun, October 4, 1945.



A funeral aboard the United States transport ship *Gosper*, which docked at Esquimalt, Thursday night, with Canadian soldiers from the Far East aboard, is pictured above. The ceremony was for Cpl. K. R. Jackson, Winnipeg Grenadier, of Valparaiso, Sask., who formerly worked at Flin Flon and who died on the ship while en route to Canada. Cpl. Jackson was buried at sea, Sept. 29, in a funeral accompanied by full military honors and attended by the entire ship's company. A firing party, consisting of three Grenadiers and three Royal Rifles, fire a salute.

Figure 72. Photo of a burial at sea of a Grenadier. – *Winnipeg Free Press*, October 13, 1945.

of arrival it was ordered to proceed to Seattle, where the captain then decided to proceed to Victoria and disembarked the British and Canadian LPOWs on October 11. The *Gosper* then proceeded to Seattle to disembark the American LPOWs. The *Gosper* repatriated 1,936 American, British and Canadians. The British who came aboard the *Gosper* traveled across Canada by train to Halifax and boarded the *Isle de France* for their trip to Great Britain. The *Isle de France* arrived at Southampton on October 30. Fig. 72 shows a sad scene of a burial at sea of a Grenadier who died aboard ship.

***USS Admiral C. F. Hughes* – September 24**

The *USS Admiral C. F. Hughes* left Manila on September 24, 1945 and arrived at Victoria on October 9. Amongst her LPOWs were 465 Americans, 1,263 British, 141 Canadians and 12 British and 18 U.S. army nurses who were confined to Japanese prison camps. Fig. 73 shows three members of the Winnipeg Grenadiers who sailed from Manila on the *USS Admiral C.F. Hughes*.



Figure 73. Photo of three members of the Winnipeg Grenadiers who sailed from Manila on September 24, 1945 aboard the USS Admiral C. F. Hughes, arriving at Victoria on October 9. Left to right: Captain D. A. Golden, Lieut. T. A. Blackwood and civilian Y.M.C.A. Supervisor George Porteous. – Regina, *The Leader Post*, October 10, 1945



Figure 74. Photo of three Canadians who arrived at Vancouver aboard the *Implacable*. These three Canadians served in the RAF. Left to right, Sgt. Don Rice of Montreal, AC1 John Ford of Newfoundland and Corporal William Yeardye of Hamilton, Ontario. – Canadian Army Photo, *Vancouver Sun*, October 11, 1945.

HMS Implacable – September 25

Two British aircraft carriers came to Canada with LPOWs. The first British ship to leave Manila for Canada with British LPOWs was the aircraft carrier *HMS Implacable*, which left September 25, 1945 and arrived at Vancouver, British Columbia on October 11, with 2,127 British LPOWs and 5 Canadians who had served in the British military

No members of “C” Force were on aboard the *Implacable*. Many Canadians served in the British military, mainly in the Royal Air Force (RAF); when the *Implacable* arrived at Vancouver from Manila, on board were three Canadians who were members of the RAF (see Fig. 74). Even though they were Canadians, they had to go back to the United Kingdom for discharge.

USS Joseph T. Dickman – September 25

A research document entitled *History of The USS Joseph T. Dickman (APA-13) / 10 June, 1941 - 1 October, 1945*²⁸ states:

On 24 September, 1945, the U.S.S. JOSEPH T. DICKMAN, APA-13, had the most pleasant duty assigned to it since being commissioned. Under orders from CINCPAC the Army Port Command at Manila embarked 5 U.S. Naval Officers as passengers: 108 U.S. Army Officers, 54 British Officers and 12 Canadian Officers plus 511 British, 32 Canadian enlisted personnel and 159 U.S. civilians, all ex-allied prisoners of war for transportation to the west coast via Pearl Harbor. These officers and men had endured untold tortures and suffering while under the Japanese and were among the first to be returned home. Among them were four British enlisted army personnel who, after three and one half years as war prisoners, started their trip home on the U.S.S. JOSEPH T. DICKMAN, the very same vessel which, in 1941,

carried them from Halifax to Bombay, India, on the beginning of their war mission.

The *USS Joseph T. Dickman* left Manila on September 25 and arrived in San Francisco on October 16, 1945 with her contingent of LPOWs.

HMCS Prince Robert – October 2

The *Prince Robert* left Manila on October 2 and arrived at Esquimalt on October 20 with 27 Canadians, 17 British, 1 RCAF officer and 15 Roman Catholic Missionaries, all from the far east.²⁹ Fig. 75 shows Canadian army officers aboard the *Prince Robert*. Fig. 76 shows a photograph of *HMCS Prince Robert* arriving in Esquimalt.

HMCS Glory – October 9

The last British ship to come to Canada with British and Canadian LPOWs was *HMS Glory*. She left Manila on October 9 and arrived at Esquimalt on October 26 with 1,304 British and 154 Canadians of which 37 were hospital cases (117 were deemed fit). Fig. 77 shows a photo of “Embarkation of British and Canada ex prisoners of war on the aircraft carrier *HMS Glory* bound for Canada and the United Kingdom. Australian Sisters at the gangway of the landing craft infantry (LCI) to farewell the ex-prisoners of war.”

Fig. 78 shows the embarkation of British and Canadian ex prisoners of war on the aircraft carrier *HMS Glory*, bound for Canada. An Australian sister farewells one of her British patients at the gangway of the landing craft infantry (LCI). She is Lieutenant M. MacQueen of the 2/5th Australian General Hospital attached to 248 United States General Hospital from the 3rd Australian Prisoner of War Reception Group.

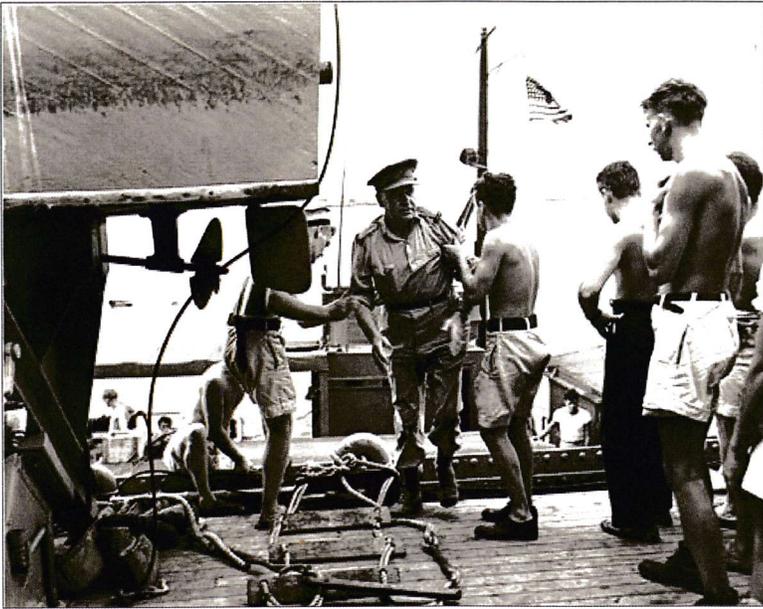


Figure 75. Photo of a Canadian officer being helped aboard the Prince Robert at Manila. – Courtesy of LCMSDS18

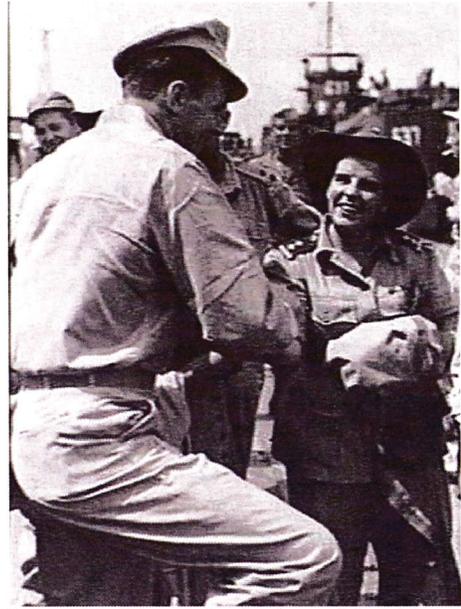


Figure 78. The embarkation of British and Canadian ex prisoners of war on the aircraft carrier HMS Glory, bound for Canada. – Courtesy Australian War Memorial – Photo 119148.



Figure 77. Photo of Australian Sisters bidding farewell to ex British and Canadian POWs boarding a landing craft to take them to the Glory. – Australian War Memorial, Photo 119149

Figure 76. Photo of HMCS Prince Robert arriving at Esquimalt, B.C. – Courtesy of LCMSDS18



An article in the *Hamilton Spectator* on October 8, 1945⁵ stated the following:

**Last Canadians In Manila to Sail On
Plane Carrier**
By William Stewart

Manila, Oct. 7 (CP). All the Canadian prisoners of war remaining in Manila, including the 38 in hospital, are due to leave tomorrow for home aboard the Royal Navy aircraft carrier *Glory*.

With their departure the bulk of the liberated Canadian prisoners in the Pacific area will be en route home or within a few days of sailing.

Of the original Canadian contingent which took part in the siege of Hong Kong in December, 1941, 1,344 other ranks,

including a few Canadians serving with the British forces and 69 officers have been recovered. The deaths of one officer and 42 other ranks, which previously were not known, have been established.

(Previously Manila dispatches gave the size of the Canadian Hong Kong force as 1,972 men and two nursing sisters, since repatriated. The Canadian Defense Department has said the contingent numbered 1,985 officers and men. The department reported 1,689 were taken prisoners in the fall of the garrison. A number died in captivity.)

The Canadian group for repatriation of war prisoners also recovered 21 RCAF personnel and five merchant seamen. But it has been unable to obtain data about four soldiers, five members of the RCAF, 15

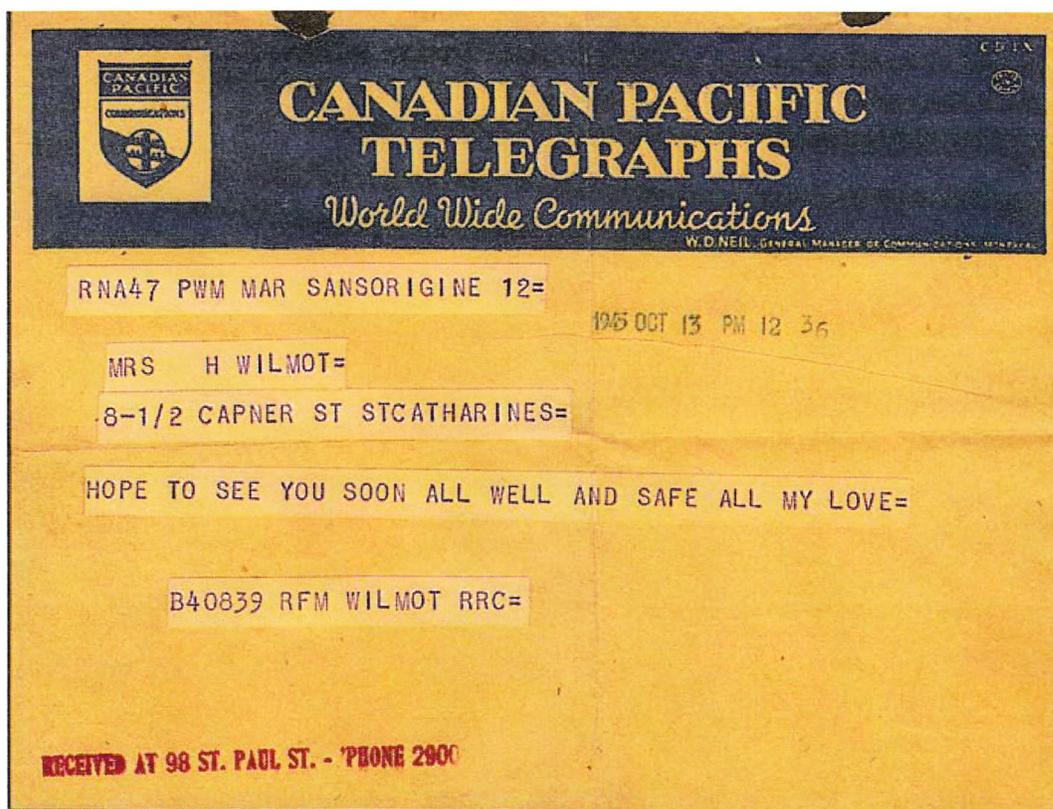


Figure 79. Telegram from Percy Wilmot aboard HMS *Glory* to his wife. – CWM 20070117-076 George Metcalf Archival Collection, Canada War Museum.

merchant seamen and two members of the Royal Canadian Navy, some of whom may have been recovered by forces operating from the Allied Southeast Asia Command.

About 130 Canadian civilians, most missionaries, have been located, but there is no information here about a considerably larger number who also may be recovered on the Asiatic mainland.

Fig. 79 shows a telegram from Percy Wilmot aboard *HMS Glory* to his wife at St. Catharines, received October 13. Here is its message: "Hope to see you soon all well all my love B40839 RFM Wilmot RRC". Note at the top left of the telegram "RNA47 - RN (Royal Navy) PWM mar Sansoriginee". Having PWM insured that Mrs. Wilmot did not have to pay fees to receive this telegram.

A newspaper article from the *Globe and Mail*, October 27, 1945,⁵ states:

Glory Lands 1,400 British Repats, Some Canadians. Esquimalt, B.C.

Oct. 26 (CP). The 18,000-ton British light aircraft carrier *Glory* docked here today with nearly 1,400 repats aboard, including 121 military personnel and several civilians.

There were 140 hospital cases included 25 stretcher cases. The Canadians, except for one member of the RCAF, were members of the Royal Rifles of Canada, or the Winnipeg Grenadiers, and nearly all were in the same prison camp of Kasawabe, Kyushu, Japan for 22 months. They were the last Canadians to leave Manila (Oct. 9) and stopped one day at Honolulu.

Fig. 80 is a photo of the British aircraft carrier *Glory* arriving at Esquimalt on October 27. The *Glory* transported 1,460 liberated POWs, of which there were 37 Canadians who were ill and 119 who were fit.

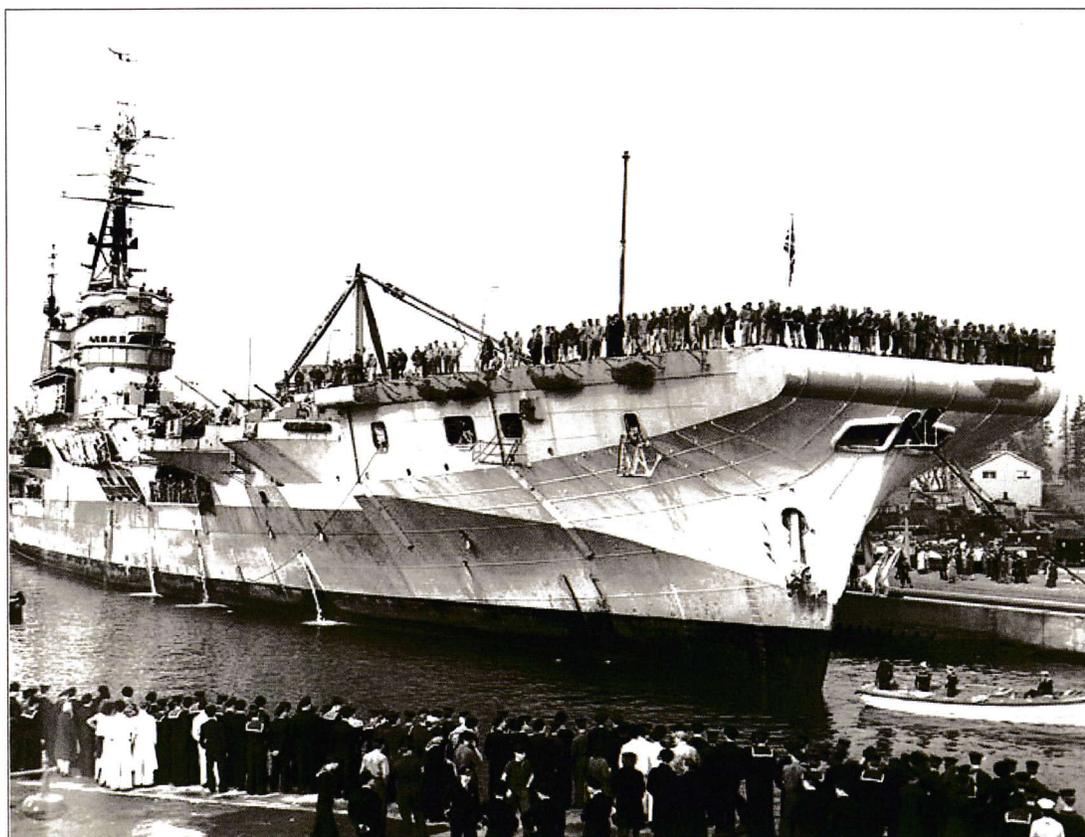


Figure 80.
Photo of the British aircraft carrier *Glory* arriving at Esquimalt, B.C. – Courtesy of LC-MSDS18

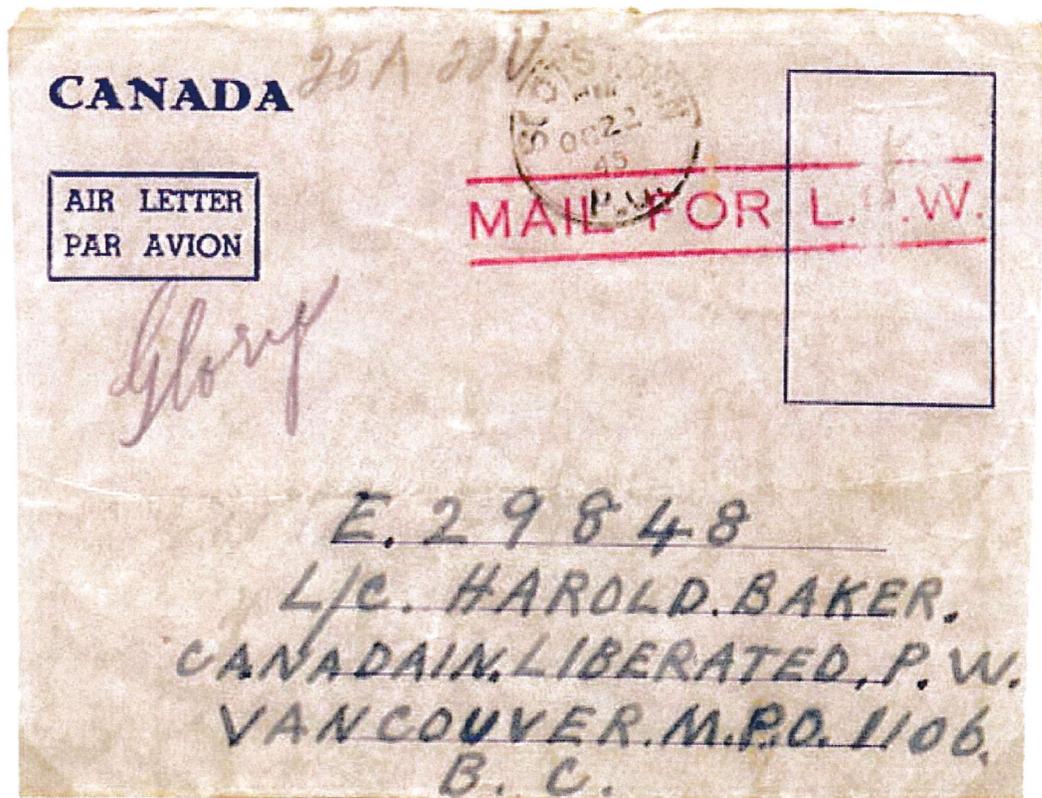


Figure 81. Canadian air letter sent to an arriving Canadian aboard the *Glory*. – Courtesy of the Ken Ellison Collection.²⁰

Upon their arrival at Esquimalt, mail was awaiting the Canadians. Family members in Canada were given a set of air letters having the black “Liberated Prisoner of War Mail Postage Free” deleted as LPOWs were not considered POWs any longer. These air letters just had the MAIL FOR L.P.W. hand stamped in red with two bars; this enabled free postage, as shown in Fig. 44.

Fig. 81 shows a Canadian air letter that was sent to Vancouver addressed “L/C Harold Baker / Canadian Liberated, P.W. / Vancouver, M.P.O. 1106 / B.C.” It was pencilled “*Glory*”. The air letter was written at Quebec on October 22 and sent in care of M.P.O. 1106 (Vancouver). This cover arrived after the *Glory* had docked and its passengers gone to the Macaulay Point reception centre; from Vancouver it was forwarded to Victoria, B.C.

and delivered to L/C Harold Baker at Macaulay Point.

HMCHS *Letitia* – November 12

The last Canadian ship to return from Manila was the Royal Canadian Navy Hospital Ship *HMCHS Letitia*, which left Manila on November 12 and arrived at Vancouver on December 6.

The *Letitia* brought the Canadian and British repatriation teams back to Canada as well as the last member of “C” Force, Private Earl Mossman of Lunenburg, Nova Scotia. Private Mossman was liberated from the Japanese POW camp at Kyushu and taken to Manila. Due to his medical condition, the doctors would not let him leave earlier. Also aboard the *Letitia* were 23 British LPOWs, a Norwegian merchant marine, and 8 French

Nova Scotian Is Last To Return

VANCOUVER, Dec. 6—(CP)—The Letitia, last Canadian hospital ship from the Far East, docked at Vancouver today with one Canadian soldier liberated in the Pacific and a crew of 20 repatriation officers.

Private Earl Mossman of Lunenburg, N. S., last Canadian serviceman to reach Canada after liberation from Japanese prison camps, was aboard.

Figure 82. Newspaper article referring to Private Mossman coming home. Halifax Herald, December 6, 1945.

and Irish priests. Fig. 82 shows a newspaper clipping with the notice that Private Mossman was on his way home.

On October 3, 1945, the *Ottawa Evening Citizen* had this story:

All of the 30,805 known Allied war prisoners and civilian internees from Japan and Korea have been evacuated... The list of those evacuated includes 10,099 Americans, 957 Canadians, 9,370 from the British Isles, 2,108 Australians, and 581 from Holland.

This total does not include the liberated prisoners from China, Manchuria, Formosa and Hong Kong.

Welcome Cards

Two "Welcome" cards were printed and given to the LPOWs on their arrival in BC.

One card was printed by the Government of the Province of British Columbia and the other by the City of Victoria. Fig. 83 shows the welcome card presented by the Mayor and Council of Greater Victoria, printed brown on white card.

A second Welcome card was given to the British and Canadian LPOWs upon arrival. The card in fig. 84 was printed in blue and presented by the Government of the Province of British Columbia.

Figures 83 and 84 were presented to the freed POWs upon arrival in Canada. As they trav-

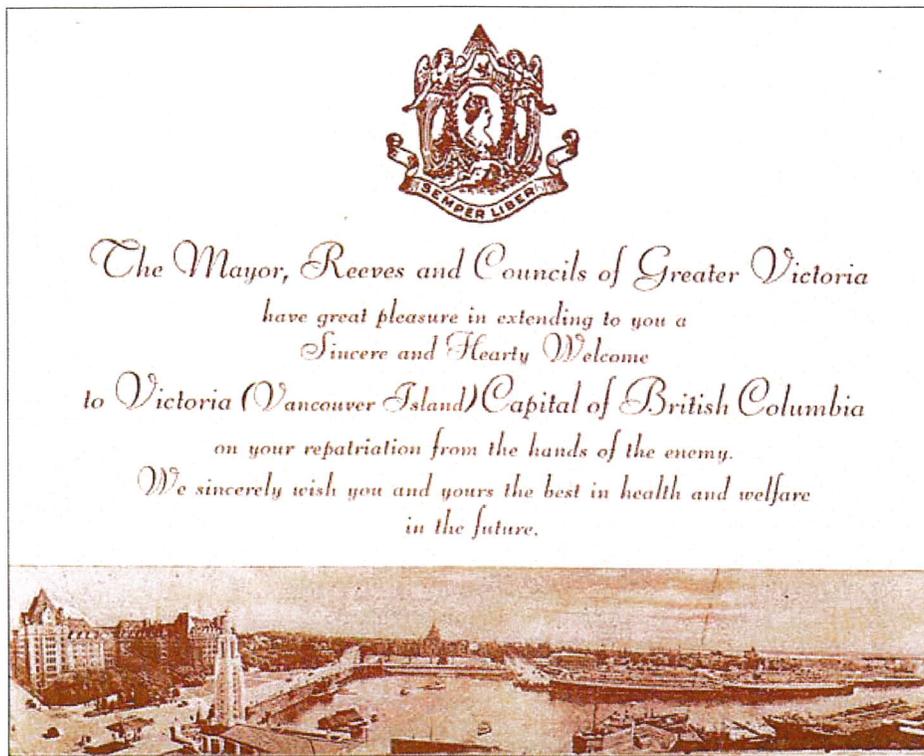


Figure 83. Welcome card given to each British and Canadian LPOW arriving at Esquimalt or Victoria, BC. – CWM 20120037-022.2 George Metcalf Archival Collection, Canada War Museum.

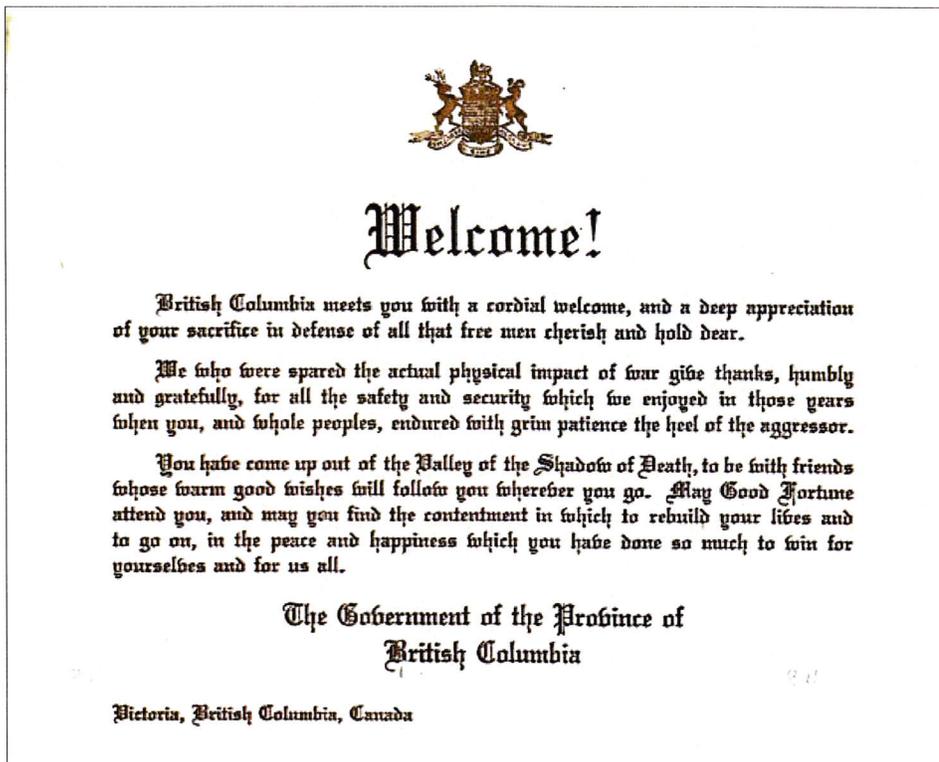


Figure 84. Welcome card given to British and Canadian LPOWs arriving in Canada.

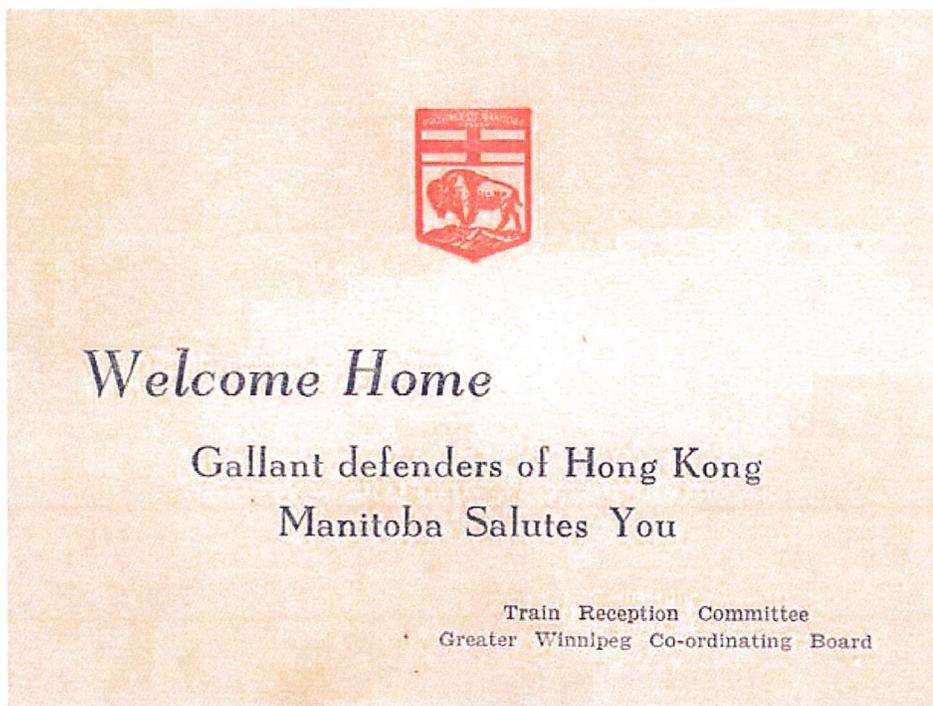


Figure 85. Welcome card presented to Canadian LPOWs as they arrived or traveled through Winnipeg. – Larry Dowling Correspondence, Collection of Sam Chui.

eled across Canada, the cities of Calgary and Winnipeg also issued Welcome cards. Fig. 85 shows a card presented to Canadian LPOWs at Winnipeg (Winnipeg of course was the home of the Winnipeg Grenadiers).

Conclusions

This article describes in detail the arrangements made for returning liberated POWs from Asia to Canada after the end of World War II. It also discusses the procedures used to expedite and deliver their mail. No other single source lists all the ships used for transporting these LPOWs. Quotes from contemporary newspapers should strengthen the readers' understanding of this major undertaking.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Gray Scrimgeour for his encouragement in this project and for editing the manuscript, as well as for the use of some of the material from his collection. Thank you to Sam Chiu for the use of material from his collection and to the late Ken Ellison

and the British North America Philatelic Society for use of material from Ken's publication *The Canadian Army's Hong Kong Story 1941-1945*. I thank Robert Toombs for his assistance with the transportation of the mails from the Far East to Canada, and the Hong Kong Veterans Commemorative Association for their encouragement. Kathy Hartley, Librarian at the V.G. Greene Philatelic Foundation Library was so nice and understanding. I acknowledge the assistance of many museums: the Canada War Museum, Niagara Military Museum, St. Catharines Museum and Archives, Imperial War Museum, and the Australian War Memorial. Newspaper archives contain much valuable contemporary information. The newspaper files I used were the *St. Catharines Standard* at the St. Catharines Public Library; the *Niagara Falls Evening Review* at the Niagara Falls Public Library; and the *Hamilton Spectator*, *Winnipeg Free Press*, *Ottawa Evening Citizen*, *Montreal Star*, *Toronto Globe and Mail*, *Toronto Daily Star*, *Regina Leader Post*, and *Winnipeg Evening Tribune* available on microfilm at the Toronto Reference Library, and the *Victoria Times* and *Daily Colonist* and the *Vancouver Sun* from the Library of the University of Victoria. The City of Kawartha Lakes Library has relevant newspaper clippings digitized and available at <http://vitacollections.ca/ckl-digital-collection/search>. The Canada War Museum has several correspondences and diaries of Canadian POWs who were captured at Hong Kong and repatriated through Manila and Guam. Newspaper clippings of the *Hamilton Spectator*, the *Toronto Globe and Mail* and some other Canadian papers are freely available on the internet on the Canada War Museum web site: www.warmuseum.ca/cwm/exhibitions/newspapers/canadawar/canadawar_e.shtml. Australian newspapers have been digitized by the National Library of Australia, and are available for use, free

on the internet through the National Library of Australia.

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