

Censorship in Gander – WW2

(by Robert G Pelley, 2017/05/10)

During the 2nd World War, Gander was a war zone. In fact, for Canadians living on “the Mainland” or for Americans, Nfld, not then a part of Canada, was considered to be “overseas”.

This was the reason for the Hurricane fighters, the anti-aircraft emplacements and the infantry regiments in Gander and small radar units around the coast.

These same security considerations led to control of the postal system, exactly the same as in any other war zone.

In June of 1940, the 1st Battalion, Black Watch, arrived in Nfld to protect the area. All early mail was censored by them and sent through ordinary civilian post offices. This changed when the Canadian Army Postal Corps started to operate in Newfoundland around the end of August 1941.

Before mail went to the Post Office it had to be censored by designated officers in each of the infantry units, anti-aircraft batteries, aircraft squadrons, etc. Officers were permitted to “self-censor”.

The following document would be typical of the orders given in a unit on how this censorship was to be carried out. This order is from the 7th Anti-Aircraft battery, a “heavy” unit using 3 inch and later 3.7 inch guns.

(Use your zoom if necessary.)

AFTER ORDER.

CENSORSHIP OF LETTERS

In order to minimize the work caused by censoring of letters the following procedure will be adopted forthwith:

Every N.C.O. and man will mark on the bottom left hand corner of his envelope the section to which he belongs, thus:

Name, etc.
Miss Billy Coe, Lovers Arms Lane, Timbuctoo.
Hdqrs. Sec.

Mail will be collected by the Orderly Sergeant of the day by 0900 hours and 1800 hours to reach Battery Hdqrs. by not later than 0945 hours and 1845 hours daily. The mail will be sorted out at battery headquarters, by the Orderly Sergeant taking the mail, into the appropriate sections in the mail box. H.Q. Sec. will be placed with No. 1 Section.

The days on which mail leaves Gander are published for information. All concerned must note these times as no mail will be consored after 1700 hours on the day of departure of the train, hence all mail to catch these trains should be in for the 0900 hrs. collection.

Mail will be consored by the following officers for the following sections:

Lieut. J.W. Campbell,	H.Q. Section.
Lieut. R.D. Gardner,	No. 1 Section.
Lieut. G.C. Corston,	No. 2 Section.

Lieut. W.H. Livingstone will assist either of these officers when they are duty officer. Mail will be consored daily and not be allowed to accumulate.

The Orderly Sgt. will pass on the key of both mail boxes to the next for duty. Forgetfulness will not be entertained as an excuse.

Trains leave Gander for Canada:

0300 hrs. Tuesday and Fridays.

Trains leave Gander for Saint John's:

1200 hrs. Tuesday and Fridays.

F. Chue

.....Major
O.C. 7th. A.A. Bty. R.C.A.