

Sergeant Gander - First Day Cover (FDC)

(by Robert G Pelley, 2015/04/23)

Sergeant Gander, a Newfoundland dog, was first known as Pal and belonged to Ron Hayden, the first manager of Shell Oil in Gander. An introduction to Pal can be seen in the article on Shell at this address:

<http://bobsganderhistory.com/shellv2.pdf>

Sergeant Gander won the Dickin Medal during a ceremony at Earnscliffe, the British High Commissioner's official residence in Ottawa, on Oct. 27, 2000. The citation says:

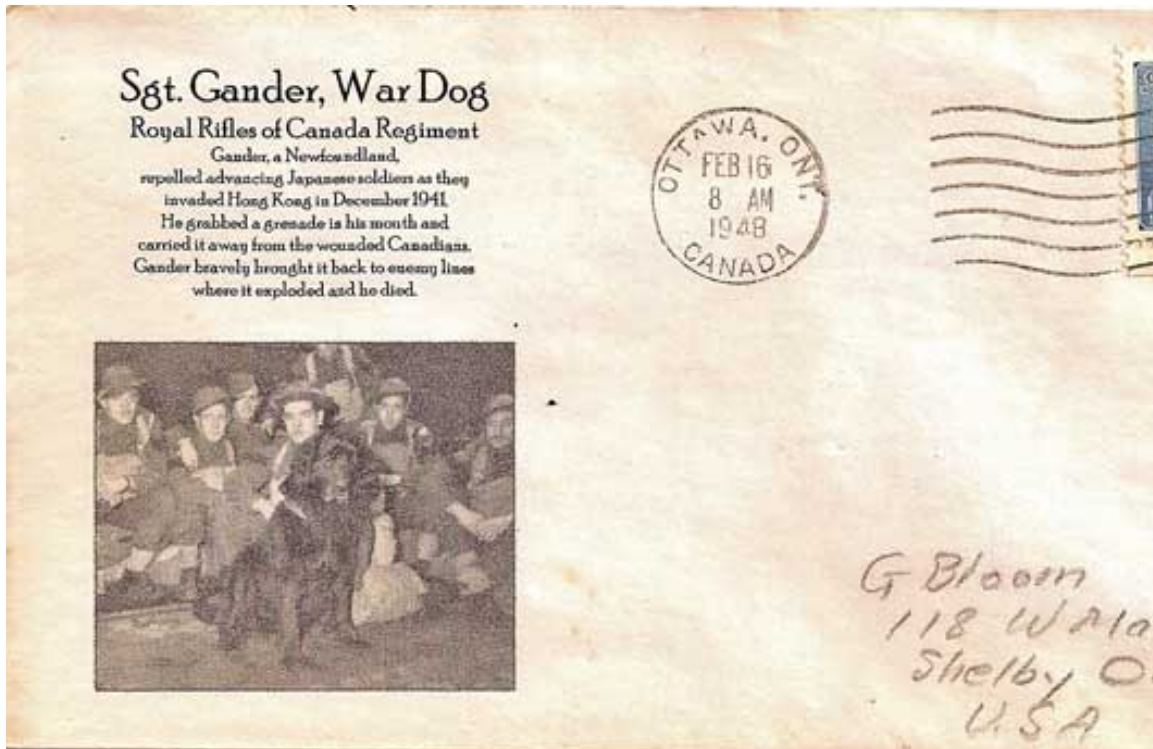
“For saving the lives of Canadian infantrymen during the Battle of Lye Mun on Hong Kong Island in December 1941. On three documented occasions, Gander, the Newfoundland mascot of the Royal Rifles of Canada, engaged the enemy as his regiment joined the Winnipeg Grenadiers, members of Battalion Headquarters “C” Force and other Commonwealth troops in their courageous defence of the island.

“Twice Gander's attacks halted the enemy's advance and protected groups of wounded soldiers. In a final act of bravery, the war dog was killed in action gathering a grenade. Without Gander's intervention, many more lives would have been lost in the assault.”

The **Dickin Medal** was instituted in 1943 in the United Kingdom by Maria Dickin to honour the work of animals in war. Sergeant Gander is the first dog in fifty-five years to be awarded the Dickin Medal, and the only dog from Canada to receive the award.

The complete story can be found here:

<http://www.ncanewfs.org/history/pages/gander.html> - .VPOA4ChXt-I



The **first day of issue** is the day on which a postage stamp, postal card or stamped envelope is put on sale, within the country or territory of the stamp-issuing authority. The postmark is always carefully placed so that it can be clearly read. A **first day cover** (FDC) is an envelope whereupon postage stamps have been cancelled on their first day of issue.

There are special catalogues for FDCs and usually if one does not have the appropriate one, there is usually some info online about a given FDC. However in this case, even after considerable hours of research, I have found nothing except for one specialist who thought it was issued in a very limited quantity and in two different versions.

Sergeant Gander however has not been forgotten. A group in Gander is presently (2015) constructing a memorial park in his honour:

<http://gslproject.blogspot.ca/2012/03/gander-heritage-memorial-park-art.html>