

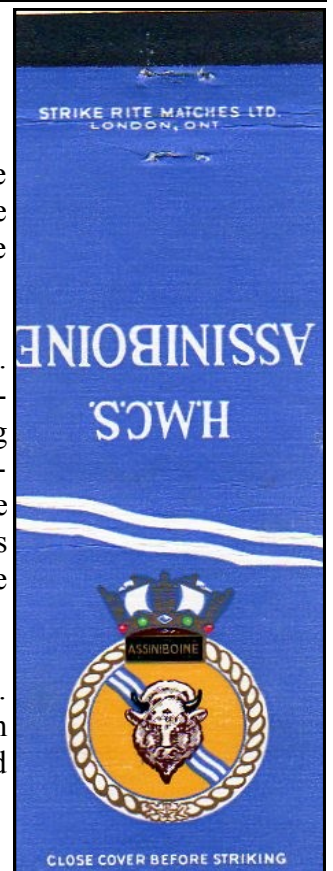
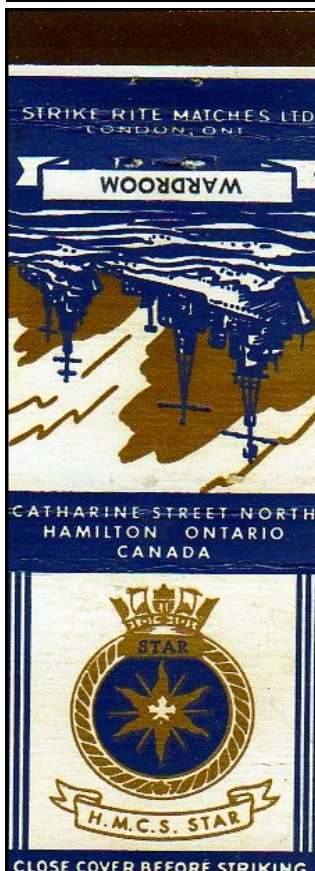
Canadian Navy Ships

by
Mike Prero

Now I say this about most of the categories, but this one *really* is fascinating! Canadian Navy Ship covers are attractive, they go back as far as World War II, they're nostalgic, and they're still available.

"H.M.C.S." covers first appeared during World War II. These were of a stock design with no ship name, due to war-time security precautions (American ships did the same during the war). These were issued aboard ship and through shore-based canteens. After the war, ship names appeared on the covers. On April 1, 1949, the excise tax paid stamp was finally omitted from the covers (which is one way to date these covers).

Most of the ship covers sport very attractive logos, alá U.S. Navy Ship covers, but these logos have a distinctly British look to them (or at least what I interpret as a British look), and often tend to be more complex than the U.S. logos.



A complete listing, as of December 1961, was made by Pat Griffiths, CAN, and revised in 1964, listing 400 covers. A number of covers have been issued since then, and Pat was talking about updating the list back in the early 1990s, but I never heard if it was. Be that as it may, the Griffiths listing is to Canadian Navy Ship covers what the COMBINE listing is to U.S. Navy Ships. The Griffiths listing includes both ship and shore station covers. Some may see the latter as a “related category” rather than being in the actual ship category, but an argument can easily be made for including them with the actual ship covers.

As you would expect, the great majority of covers here are 20-strikes, but, as you can see on the following page, there are some 30-strikes, as well. Indeed, there’s an especially nice photo-color set by Grant-Mann in 30-strike size that runs six covers, I believe. Not all of the covers bear the Ship designation and number, so I’ve always found it most convenient to house them alphabetically by ship name. Although there are some red covers in this category, along with a small assortment of ‘non-stock’ colors, the general rule is that the older covers have their logos, flags, text, etc. on a dark blue background, and the newer covers have the same on a white background.

And, speaking of the logos, one sees lots of Indians, animals, ships, and anchors. I always like the “coat-of-arms” look that the Canadian Navy Ship logos have, because almost all use a similar design—a crown sitting on a circular or oval crest (on at least one of the H.M.C.S. Naden covers, the crown sits over a diamond shape.) There are also a number of conjunctives, other than what has already been pointed out. Player’s cigarettes, as a case in point, appears on at least seven of the ship covers.

The best part of this category may just be that they’re still relatively available. You actually can get them in trade if you ask your traders, and they pop up as auction lots frequently enough. In general, the tougher ones will be the ones with the tax stamps on them. Pat Griffiths, CAN, had 413 covers (ships and shore stations) as of 1987; I currently have 186



(ships only, just to give you an idea for the ship covers).

Although, generally, Canadian covers are not popular with US collectors, the more exotic categories can be much sought after, such as Canadian Tax Stamps; RCMP, etc. Certainly Canadian Navy Ships belongs in the later category.

I don't know for certain, but I'm fairly sure that the influx of new Canadian Ship covers has dried up, as it has with ship covers here.

It would be an easier goal to get every known Canadian Ship cover than every US ship cover. The former category is much smaller. Also, I've never heard of the Canadian Navy Ship covers being divided into Pre and Post-War collections.

