

U.S. ARMY POST OFFICES IN BRITISH COLUMBIA DURING WW II

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It's not generally known, but the United States Army maintained post offices in British Columbia and Alberta during WW II. I'll deal with the British Columbia connection, their development, and their fate at the end of hostilities, with this article.

With the opening of hostilities, in the Pacific, for the USA in December 1941 the United States and Canadian authorities realized that to defend Alaska (and therefore Canada's west coast) and eventually strike back at Japan, from that location, tremendous quantities of goods and equipment would be required. The route normally used was via sea, but with the increased Japanese submarine activity that route was threatened.

The "Permanent Joint Board of Defense" had agreed, in late 1940, that Canada should build air fields at Grand Prairie, Fort St. John, Fort Nelson, Watson Lake, and Whitehorse. Over this route short range fighter aircraft could move quickly from the USA to Alaska (some forward thinking we don't see much of today). This project was known as the Northwest Staging Route.

Immediately following the attack on Pearl Harbor, the US proposed a military highway following roughly the line of the Northwest Staging Route; this route came to be known as the "ALCAN" Highway later known as the Alaska Highway. This project created 9 of the 11 US Army post offices that were in British Columbia.

In January 1942 a U.S. Ship the "David W. Branch" ran aground near Prince Rupert, British Columbia. The subsequent off loading of this ship brought the city to the attention of the U.S. military authorities. There they found one of the world's largest natural harbors and it had a rail link to the USA south through British Columbia, to Seattle, Washington. This proved to be an ideal location for a supply depot.

The U.S. Army built just such a depot at port Edward, 10 miles south of Prince Rupert. This location provided us with the other two U.S. Post offices in British Columbia.

Shown below is a description of the cancellers and a complete list of the post offices, their identification and their length of service.

No.	U.S. APO	Commenced operation	Ceased operation
476	Fort Nelson B.C. Muska B.C. Fort Nelson B.C.	Jan. 19, 1943 Apr-43 Feb. 1, 1944	To Muskiwa To Fort Nelson Closed Feb. 15, 1946
478	Fort St. John B. C.	May 5, 1943	Closed Mar. 21, 1944
479	Fort Nelson B.C. Muncho Lake B.C. Fort Nelson B.C.	May 5, 1943 Aug. 8, 1943 Feb. 1, 1944	To Muncho Lake To Fort Nelson Closed Mar. 9, 1944
701	Fort St. John B. C. Dawson Creek B.C.	Jul. 18, 1942 Dec. 31, 1944	To Dawson Creek Closed Jan. 7, 1946
701 (U-1) 701 (U-B)		unknown unknown	unknown unknown
724	Dawson Creek B.C. Fort St. John B.C.	Nov. 9, 1942 Dec. 15, 1944	To Fort St. John Closed Oct. 2, 1945
728	Port Edward B.C.	June 1, 1943	Closed Oct. 6, 1945
918	Muska B.C. Watson Lake Yukon	Mar. 9, 1942	To Watson Lake
934	Lower Post B.C. Morris Lake Yukon	Apr. 1, 1942 May 7, 1942	To Morris Lake
996	Dawson Creek B.C. Fort St. John B.C. Watson Lake Yukon	Apr. 14, 1942 Nov. 7, 1942 Mar. 7, 1943	To Fort St. John To Watson Lake
997	Prince Rupert B.C.	May 7, 1942	Closed Nov. 24, 1945
998	Dawson Creek B.C. Muska B.C.	June 7, 1942 Nov. 5, 1942	To Muska Closed Apr. 23, 1943

