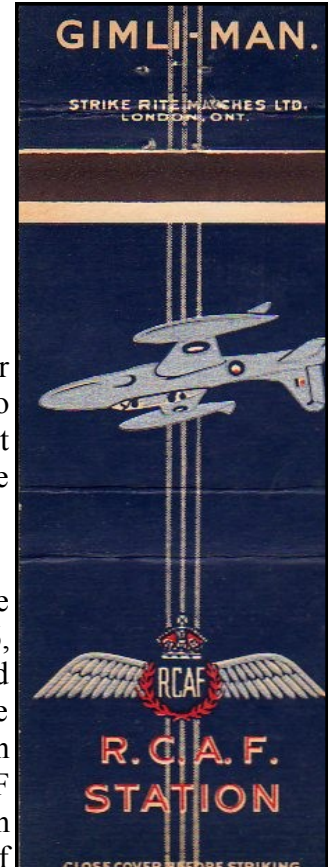


## Canadian Air Force



Here's a Canadian category that's deserving of your attention, and you don't have to be into Military to appreciate it. Many are quite colorful; the older ones sport the ever-popular Canadian tax stamps; and, they're available.

A little background: The first Canadian Air Force, the Canadian Aviation Corps, was formed on September 16, 1914. The corps consisted of two officers and one ground crewman. The first airplane was the Burgess-Dunne hydroplane. On May 29, 1918, in conference with Canadian Officials the Secretary of State for the RAF agreed to the formation of a nucleus of Canadian Squadrons within the RAF. King George V approved of the Canadian Air Force being designated the "Royal

Canadian Air Force" on February 15, 1923. The RCAF adopted the RAF pattern uniform, badges, and ensign. The motto "Per Ardua ad Astra" replaced "Sic Itur ad Astra"

Reorganization of the Force, started in 1922, was completed on April 1, 1924, the birthday of the RCAF, which was now placed on a permanent basis as a component of Canada's defence forces. There were six "units" - Vancouver, High River, Winnipeg, Camp Borden, Rockcliffe, and Dartmouth Air Stations. As with the US military, the RCAF grew rapidly with World War II and then was greatly reduced in size in early 1946. The Royal Canadian Air Force, Royal Canadian Navy, and the Canadian Army ceased to exist in 1968. Gone were the Blue uniforms of the air force, White dress of the Navy all to be replaced with a standard green dress. All three branches were amalgamated into the *Canadian Armed Forces*. At this juncture Canada ceased to have an independent air force. Slowly a more unified Air Force structure was to emerge with a unified *Air Command* having a group breakdown along air force lines.

In 1986, the government returned the 3 distinct uniforms back to the services and once again we had feeling of an air force. In 1997, the *Air Command* structure with its distinct groups ceased to exist and was replaced with 1 Canadian Air Division / Canadian NORAD Region. (1 CAD/CANR). It is with this unified command structure that the Canadian Air Force will enter the 21st Century.

As you might expect, as the RCAF has had its ups and downs [*no pun intended!*], so, too, have RCAF matchcovers. Compared to yesteryear, it's practically impossible to find any recent issues...but, that's OK, because there were enough covers produced over previous years to keep collectors today happy...and always searching. Most are 20-strikes, of course. I have my RCAF covers housed within my Canadian Military collection, and I can see about 150. How about some Canadian collector letting us know what a BIG collection numbers? I'm sure there must be more.