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Canada Post delivers an Olympic surprise

CHARLES J.G. VERGE

n July 11, 2003 — just nine days after Canada was chosen as the host country for the XXI Olympic Winter Games — Canada Post issued a stamp to celebrate this significant event in Canadian history.

The Olympic Winter Games of 2010 will be held in Vancouver, British Columbia, in Canada's southwest corner, and at the world famous Whistler ski resort situated about 70 miles or so to the north. To ensure that its new stamp would be available in a timely fashion, Canada Post overprinted "Vancouver 2010" in red on its current 48¢ definitive Flag stamp, Scott 1931. Both the original issue of the definitive stamp and the overprinted version are available in booklet format only.

Normally, overprinted stamps are previously printed stamps that are sent through a printing press a second time to receive the overprint. In this case, the timing was perfect, as Canada Post was ordering a new printing of the self-adhesive booklet of 30 stamps for current use.

Instead of the normal overprinting process — which was tried but proved unsuccessful — the red inscription "Vancouver 2010" was added directly onto the printing plate and applied during production of the new stamps.

Purists, therefore, might debate the validity of the term "overprint" for this stamp. However, if one looks at the stamp carefully, it certainly looks like an overprint, as no part of the design was removed to fit in the wording. In fact, the original design can be seen through the red overprinted text.

In addition, the same red overprinted text has been added three times to the 30-stamp booklet cover (Figure 1). The 30-stamp booklet, Scott 1931b, is scored vertically and can be separated into three booklets of 10 stamps for counter sales (Scott 1931a), so each 10-stamp booklet shows the overprint once on its cover.

As these are definitive stamps (although with a commemorative bent), they could be reprinted should stocks of the Flag booklets not suffice before another Flag stamp is issued for the

Continued on page 24

Figure 1. Canada's new overprinted definitive stamp celebrates the selection of Vancouver as the site for the XXI Olympic Winter Games. The complete booklet cover from the unsevered booklet of 30 stamps shows

CANADA 48

the "Vancouver 2010" overprint three times. When the larger booklet is separated into three booklets of 10 stamps, the overprint appears





U.S. USED FINE

ı	All stamps are s	ound with Fine	Scott #	Price	Scott #	Price	Scott #	Price .60
1	(perfs clearing the	e design) or bet-	422 Ave	8.25	604	.10	759 764	1.50
I	ter centering afte and Average to F	r the year 1890,	425	.10	PR	.30	765	1.65
ı			426 427	.25	605 LPR	.30	766a	.40
ı	Scott # Price	Scott # Price 233 2.50	428	.30	606	.10	767a	.40
ı	2590.00 PR1400.00	234 3.00	429	.80	LPR	.45	772-7	.60
ı	7	236 4.00	430	2.00	610	.10	778	1.50
ı	9 66.00	237 3.00	431	.90	611	2.00	778a-d	1.30
ı	PR140.00	238 24.00	434	3.75	PR	4.40	782-4	.15
ı	10 45.00	239 40.00	435	2.00	612	1.10	785-94 794	.05
	12450.00	240 80.00	438	2.70	614	1.50	795	.05
	PR1400.00	242350.00	440	3.50	616		796	.20
	14110.00 PR269.00	243600.00 245900.00	444	1.10	617	1.75	797	.40
	15115.00	246 2.25	446	42.00	618	2.50	798	.05
	17115.00	24780	PR	240.00	619		799-02	.20
	24 20.00	249 1.20	STR-4	480.00	620	2.25	803-15	1.00
ı	25 45.00	250	447 PR		621	9.00	816 817	.05
	26 2.25	251 1.80	LPR	2 50	623	.20	818	.10
	26a 30.00	252 3.00 253 4.00	454		627	.30	819	.10
	27390.00 30420.00	253 4.00 254 1.80	455	.60	628	2.20	820	.05
	30A149.00	255 2.70	456	45.00	629	.90	821	.35
	33110.00	256 12.00	PR	300.00	631	1.00	824	.40
	35 32.00	258 7.00	457 STR-3		632 633	.10	825 826	.10
	36 75.00	259 25.00	STR-5 458 PR	42 50	634	.10	827	.50
	38190.00	260 69.00 26410	460		634A		828	.15
	63 16.00 64109.00	264	462		635	.10	829	.05
	64b 40.00	267	463	.10	636	.10	830	.05
	6590	268	464	6.00	637	.10	831	.05
	67400.00	269	465		638	.10	832 832c	.15
	68 22.00	270	466		639 640	.10	833	4.50
	68a 22.00	272	468		641	.10	834	
100	69 40.00	272a350.00	477		642	.10	803-34	10.00
	70 55.00	27380 274 5.00	479	30.00	643	.60	835-8	
	70a 70.00 70b360.00	275 11.50	480		644	1.50	839	.10
	70c590.00	276 39.00	481		645	.30	LPR	.30
	71 50.00	278325.00	482		647	2.95 8.75	840 LPR	
	72175.00	279	PR		649	.50	841	.10
	73 20.00	279Be275.00	PR		650		LPR	.20
1	75180.00	279Bf20 28050	488	. 1.10	651	.40	842	.10
	76 44.00 76a 44.00	280	489	75	653		PR	20
	77 70.00	280b	490	10	654	.40	LPR	30
	78 49.00	281	491		656	1.00	PR	
	78a 45.00	282 1.35	493				845	35
	78b 45.00	283	494		658	1.40	LPR	. 2.50
	83350.00	284 3.25 285 2.50	496	50	660	40	846	10
	85325.00 86175.00	286	PR	. 1.25		4.00	847	50
	87 50.00	287 9.00	LPR	4.50		38.00	LPR	. 2.00
	88 11.25	288 9.00	497 PR	7.50		. 1.85		
	89120.00	289 17.00	498	10	671	35	LPR	50
	90140.00	290 8.00	499	10			849	30
	91250.00	291 65.00 294 1.65	500 Ave.	. 50.00	678	. 19.00	PR	60
	9275.00 9318.00	294 1.65 29545	501		679	. 16.00	LPR	90
	94 3.75	296 9.00	503	10		40	851 PR	50
	95175.00	297 8.75			681			70
	96 70.00	298 29.00	507		683			
	97 90.00	299 14.00	508				863	. 1.20
	98120.00	300	509	1.10	685	10	867	20
	99425.00	301 1.30	510	10	686	20	868	1.50
	100280.00 101450.00	302 1.30 30350	511	1.70	PR	40		
	112 65.00	304	012	20		50		
	113 30.00	305 1.20		3 20		20		20

Continued from page 22

new 49¢ domestic rate that is to take effect in January 2004. This would not be a first, since Canada Post reprinted the 48¢ Oueen Elizabeth II Golden Jubilee definitive-commemorative stamp of 2002 (Scott 1932) when it was required, and committed to do the same with this year's 48¢ Coronation definitivecommemorative (Scott 1987).

However, such a reprint for the Vancouver overprint is unlikely for two reasons. The first reason comes in the form of a Canada Post memorandum that accompanied the booklets when they were shipped to post offices. It is addressed to "all post offices in British Columbia and selected major post offices across the country."

The memo reads, "Your outlet has been selected to receive an

outgoing-rate stamps.

Canada Post has a bar-code identifier on each booklet of 10 and uses point-of-sale scanning to calculate the number of items sold, even when the illustration on the cover of the 30-stamp booklet spreads over the three booklets of 10. This is why the distribution throughout the country is calculated in booklets of 10.

Sixty percent (180,000 booklets) of the printing of 300,000 "Vancouver 2010" 10-stamp booklets was distributed to British Columbia post offices, while 113,000 were sent to major post offices throughout the rest of Canada. The remaining 7,000 booklets of 10 have been made available to collectors through Canada Post's National Philatelic Centre at 75 St. Ninian St., Antigonish, NS, B2G 2R8, Canada. Collectors can obtain more information by calling toll free: 1-800-565-4362.

Canada Post reports that the 7,000 booklets set aside are more than is needed to supply their account holders' requests for booklets.

The quantity of 3 million "Vancouver 2010" stamps issued is comparable to many other commemoratives Canadian released over the last three years. The 47¢ Summit of the Americas stamp of 2001 (Scott 1902); the 47¢ Armenian Church (Scott 1905); the 47¢ Royal Canadian Legion (Scott 1926); the 48¢ International Teacher's Day stamp of 2002 (Scott 1961); the 48¢ Toronto Stock Exchange (Scott 1962); and the eight different University stamps issued in 2002 and 2003 all had print runs of 3 million stamps.

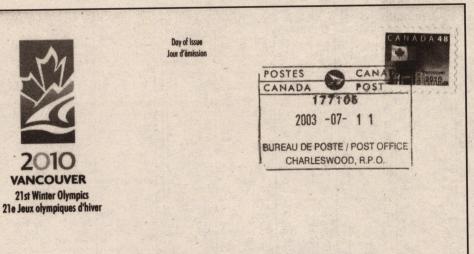
No official Canada Post firstday cover was prepared on July

11, but I am aware of some 100 privately prepared FDCs, including the example shown in Figure 2. Canada Post has also said that the overprinted stamp would not be part of its annual Souvenir Collection that will be issued in November 2003.

There are common traits shared by the regular definitive stamp and booklets and the "Vancouver 2010" overprinted stamp and booklets, but there are also differences. Common to both issues is the bar code identifier (0-63491-02025-4) printed on the back of each booklet of 10. The copyright notice (©

Figure 2. A privately prepared first-day cover for the Vancouver overprint stamp. Canada Post did not create a first-day cover for this issue. automatic allocation of the definitive flag stamps, available in a booklet of 10 or 30 stamps. The stamps and booklet cover are over-printed with 'Vancouver 2010.' This product is not available for reorder, as they are a limited quantity intended to commemorate the communities of Vancouver and Whistler being selected to host the 2010 Winter Olympics and Paralympic Games."

The second reason is that in the summer, and during the phase-out period of a postage rate, Canada Post personnel substitute stamps and booklets they have in stock when orders are received, so as to diminish as far as possible the stock of the



Continued on page 26

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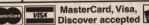
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Figure 3. Die-cut differences between the original definitive issue at left and the overprinted definitive at right are explained in the text.

Continued from page 24

2001) is the same for both and appears in the lower right corner of each stamp.

The colors of the stamp and booklet are the same except for normal variations in the intensity of inks that is often found in different

printings of the same stamp. For example, the black of the "Vancouver 2010" overprinted stamp and booklet seems cover more grayblack than solid black.

Both stamps are printed on the same coated-paper stock. The rate information, plate markings and all other printing on the booklet covers is the same.

However,

along with the overprint, there are some interesting differences.

First, the glue that keeps the "Vancouver 2010" overprint booklet closed is peelable and doesn't tear the booklet when a customer opens it. This is a major improvement.

Second, there is no philatelic stock of the overprinted issue, only counter stock. The difference is in the way the booklets are closed. The counter stock or field stock is glued shut, while the philatelic stock uses the tongue-andgroove tab at the upper part of the booklet to close it.

Third, there is also a slight difference in the wavy-line die-cut edges of the stamps, particularly visible in the cuts at the bottom two corners. The tips of the corner die cuts are more pointed on the overprinted stamp than the same die cuts on the nonoverprinted stamp, as the comparison photo in Figure 3 shows.

There is also a constant variety on the overprinted issue. A red dot, somewhat like a guide dot of yore, is found in the right side margin,

next to the overprint. It is in the first row, stamp 3, of the booklet of 30 stamps, which is stamp 1 in the righthand side booklet of 10. It occurs in every second booklet of 30, or every sixth booklet of 10 (Figure 4).

Post offices around the world create material for their operating needs that is not philatelic but which, because

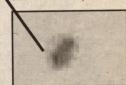


Figure 4. A constant red-dot variety is found in the right margin on one stamp in every second booklet of 30 stamps.

of its nature, fits well into a collection or display-class exhibit. One such item is the packing slip shown in Figure 5.

The "Vancouver 2010" overprinted booklets of 30 are shrink-wrapped in packages of 25 booklets of 30. Each package has a packing slip. The six-digit number (111154) on line 1 of the slip is the product number. The product number for the

4500010640

Figure 5. The packing slip accompanying the overprinted stamp booklets includes code numbers (which are explained in the article), packaging and printing information.

regular Flag definitive is 411154. Line 2 reads 4500010640, which is Canada Post's purchase-order tracking number with the stamp printer, Ashton-Potter. Line 3 identifies the issue as the "Olympic Special." It also confirms that Canada Post calculates production in booklets of 10, as the number 75 following the name represents the number of 10-stamp booklets in the package. Finally, line 4 gives the date the printing was completed: 07-09-03.

Some criticism of this stamp may be expected, including complaints about its targeted distribution, or the fact that the overprint is on a stamp that doesn't show either Vancouver or Whistler, or even that Canada Post is out to reap financial benefits and is jumping on the bandwagon too quickly.

As for jumping on the bandwagon, I should hope so. It's about time Canadians stopped being staid people who don't celebrate anything for fear they might offend someone.

And so what if the stamp pictures the Canada Post headquarters in Ottawa? It shouldn't matter. The stamp is the current definitive, after all, and Canada Post was a strong supporter of the country's Olympic Winter Games bid. What matters is that Canada Post did something, did it in a timely manner, and did it in a way that was financially responsible.

I don't think there is any validity to the suggestion that the

issue is some kind of financial grab for Canada Post. The 3 million stamps would have been printed anyway to fulfill the postal need for more definitives. Canada Post is producing no first-day covers and no collateral philatelic products, so that means no extra profit from this issue. And in addition, the stamp will not appear in the annual Souvenir Collection, the coffee table book that Canada Post issues every November, which includes Canada's stamps of the past year.

By issuing the stamp, Canada Post shows the world that it and Canada are proud that Vancouver and Whistler were chosen to host the XXI Olympic Winter Games. Canada Post is Canada's fourth largest employer, and with a \$6 billion bottom line it is one of Canada's major corporate citizens. As such, it has a social responsibility to participate in the life and promote the achievements of Canada and Canadians.

Canada Post was an early supporter of the Vancouver bid, and, I am told, will continue to be there for the long haul to 2010. Collectors can watch for more Vancouver stamps, but these will probably not appear until after the 2006 XX Olympic Winter Games take place in Turin, Italy. An unwritten rule prevents the issue of stamps by host countries until after the close of the previous Games.

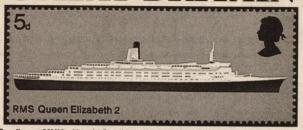
In case you were wondering, it has been 39 years since Canada last issued an overprinted stamp. That provisional stamp, Scott 430 (Figure 6), was created in 1964 when Canada's airmail rate increased from 7¢ to 8¢. Two scarce vari-



Figure 6. It has been 39 years since Canada's last overprinted stamp. The 8¢ on 7¢ blue Jet at Ottawa Airport stamp, Scott 430, was issued in 1964.

eties of this overprinted stamp exist: a pair that includes one stamp without the surcharge (Scott 430a), and an inverted surcharge on the gum side of the stamp (Scott 430b). Only one example of each of these varieties is recorded.

I am indebted to Robin Harris of Winnipeg, Manitoba, webmaster to the Royal Philatelic Society of Canada (RPSC), and one of Canada's expert philatelists on the definitive stamps of the Elizabethan era, for letting me know about the die-cut differences on the new stamp. Thanks also to Rick Penko of Winnipeg, vice president of the RPSC, an eclectic collector. and a member of Canada's Stamp Advisory Committee, for making me aware of the red-dot variety. SSM



Sc. #	MNH	Used	Sc. # 259a-62a	MNH		Sc.#	MNH	Used
112		.05			11.00	374	7.50	1.50
113	17.50	1.75	264-5 266		.15	375-6	2.75	2.30
114	15.00	3.00	267-8		.75	377-9	5.75	4.00
115	26.00	.50	269-70		27.50	379-80	1.90	1.75
116	27.50	2.00	271-4		.80	382-4	.50	.40
117	6.00	5.75	275		10.00	365-6	2.00	2.00
118	25.00	1.25	276-9	1.25	1.00	387-9	2.00	1.60
118A	25.00	10.00	280-89		11.50	387p-9p	24.00	22.50
119	26.00	2.25	281a-4a		2.10	390-1 390p-1p	2.25 23.00	2.00
120	45.00	25.00	290-91		.35	292-3	7.25	13.00
121	110.00	8.00	292-08		11.00	393-4	.35	
122		10.00	284d-96b	5.50	.60	393p-4p	2.75	.30 2.75
124		180.00	309-12		11.25	395-7	3.10	3.00
125	1.50	.10	313-6	9.25	6.00	395p-7p	42.00	31.00
126	-	20.00	317	.10	.05	398-00	5.25	3.75
127		.05	317c	.25	.15	398p-0p	71.00	4000
128		.10	317p	4.00	4.00	401	2.50	2.00
129	25.00	1.00	318	.20	.05	401p	17.50	12.00
130	25.00	2.25	318d	.45	.20	402-5	3.25	1.50
131	15.00	.25	318p	11.50	8.25	492p-5p	12.00	12.00
132	45.00	.50	319		.05	406	1.50	.75
133	30.00	2.00	319c	.15	.25	410-13	4.00	3.25
134	25.00	1.50	319d	1.25	1.00	410p-13p	26.00	18.00
135		2.00	319p	4.00	4.00	414-17	4.00	4.00
135a	25.00	3.00	320		.10	414p-17p	25.00	22.50
135b	30.00	3.00	320a		.25	418-9	.50	.50
135c	30.00	3.00	320c	1.60	.75	418p-19p	4.75	4.75
136	60.00	10.00	320cp		80.00	42-21	.35	.30
137		9.00	321		.10	420p-21p		3.10
138	65.00	4.00	321b	1.50	.75	100	.25	.15
139		17.50	321c	6.50	4.00	422p	.50	.45
140	_	25.00	321d	.20	.20	423	1.00	1.00
141	10 -	85.00	322	.15	.05	424-5	1.00	1.00
143	2.75	.05	322c		6.75	424p-5p	3.00	3.00
144	17.50	2.00	322s	.90.	.15	426-7	1.10	.95
145	6.00	2.50	323	1.25	.15	426-27p	3.00	2.85
146	35.00	15.00	324	6.00	2.00	428-29	1.70	1.50
147	20.00	3.25	325	5.00	.25	428p-9p	3.00	2.50
148	30.00	2.00	326	50.00	3.75	430-35	2.50	2.50
149	30.00	2.00	327	7.50	.35	436-7	5.00	4.25
150	30.00	2.00	328	20.00	.90	430P-35p	5.00	5.00
151	7.00	.25	329	22.50	1.00	436P-7p	8.00	5.50
152	7.00	.20	330	.65	.50	438-9	.45	.35
153	7.00	.15	331	20.00	.15	438p-9p	.50	.50
154	4.50	.10	332	25.00	.25	440-41	.80	.80
155	45.00	12.75	333	17.50	.60	440p-1p	3.50	3.00
156	25.00	6.00	334-6	5.50	4.75	442-3	1.00	1.00
157	7.00	.20	337	.75	.75	442p	5.50	5.50
158	5.25	.20	338-40	2.00		444-45	.60	.55
		150	252	10	05	444n-5n	1 75	1.50