

Extracts from a Wartime Diary

1939 - 1945

September 1939 — Germany invades Poland, as a consequence Britain and France declared war on Germany. But with the fall of France in 1940, Britain stood alone, until the United States and the Soviet Union joined her as allies in 1941.

It was a time when families were separated, sometimes coping with the loss of a loved one. Cities were being bombed and housewives had to find new and ingenious ways to keep their homes together. This Diary is a remarkable account of a family living through the Second World War and gives an insight into the lives of British civilians who found themselves, for the first time, to be in the front line of a total war.

What follows is not the whole story, it is not even half the story, but it is perhaps one of the best ways of telling a part of the story.

Britain prepares for War

With the threat of war hanging over the country, the Government began to take measures to protect Britain from air attacks. ARP (Air Raid Precautions) encouraged local authorities to develop plans to protect their towns and citizens. By early 1939 there were 1.5 million men and women enlisted in the emergency service.



January 1939: Universal Multi-Value meter machine mark figures 0/0½ licensed to Blackpool local authority; printed matter rate ½d

Note: Editorial notes have been added to guide the reader through the Diary, and set the story in the context of what was happening during the six years of the War.

The main text is in Bold; the supporting text in regular. *Philatelic text is in Italics.* The diary is set in 'Century Gothic'.

1. 1939 — Private Battles: ordinary people face extraordinary situations as...

- 1.1 Britain goes to war — Sunday September 3rd 1939, but...
- 1.2 ... at least the children will be safe — evacuation of the vulnerable; some enjoy the adventure.
- 1.3 News from Somewhere in France — the British Expeditionary Force is mobilised, as we...
- 1.4 ... 'Dig for Victory' — the Home Front is mobilised.
- 1.5 The Phoney War — blackout, gas masks & censorship are intensely disliked as we approach...
- 1.6 ...Christmas — There is plenty now, but what about next year? — the war of nerves goes on.

2. 1940 — A Desperate Year: the British people experience the first impact of war ...

- 2.1 Now we are on Rations — saving waste & economies in the kitchen as we face...
- 2.2 ... Capitulation, Costs, and Churchill — Churchill Prime Minister as Europe stumbles, but...
- 2.3 ... We Shall Fight On — as Churchill rallies the nation, we remember...
- 2.4 ... we are not alone — Britain stands shoulder to shoulder with her Empire and declares...
- 2.5 ... We Can Take It! — the Battle of Britain, and the Blitz, rage as we approach...
- 2.6 ... our First Christmas Under Fire — but rationing affects the celebrations.

3. 1941 — Total War: the world is engulfed in conflict, America is attacked and...

- 3.1 The Channel Islands are occupied — they are cut off from their mainland relatives, who...
- 3.2 ...in the Interest of National Security — find all their mail is now opened and 'Examined'.
- 3.3 "Give us the tools" — Churchill seeks aid from America, and we reveal ...
- 3.4 ... The Spirit of Wartime — surviving the bombs, saving, & sustaining morale.
- 3.5 The world has gone mad — the Japanese attack Pearl Harbour just before...
- 3.6 ... Christmas '41 — for many a time of loneliness and monotony.

4. 1942 — We Are Warriors All: social mobilization of industrial and human resources...

- 4.1 A Woman's Place — women take up wartime work to release the men, but...
- 4.2 ... the shortages continue — petrol rationing, reduced medical & food supplies mean that...
- 4.3 ... Christmas '42 — is a gloomy time as there is so little left in the shops.

5. 1943 — We Still Have a Long Way to Go: before the dream of freedom is a reality...

- 5.1 The Merchant ships — continue to be the life-blood of the nation, but...
- 5.2 ... we have 'no more bananas' — the Government announce no fresh fruit to be imported.
- 5.3 We send comforts and aid for the Allies — nursing & knitting brings some relief, and...
- 5.4 ... there's good and bad news — the Greetings Telegram service is suspended.
- 5.5 A Message from Enemy Territory — the Red Cross & Thomas Cook schemes are a help but...
- 5.6 ... by Christmas '43 — there are still so many restrictions in place.

6. 1944 — Out of the Darkness: a beacon of hope as the Allies go forward, but...

- 6.1 The Conscientious Objectors — receive a rough reception, whilst...
- 6.2 ...the Salvage Drive continues to encourage us to Save! Save! Save! — but at last!...
- 6.3 ... the Invasion of France — D-Day and Operation Overlord begins as ...
- 6.4 ...the Blackout is lifted — but the V1 & V2 'Baby Blitz' begin another nightmare.
- 6.5 It's Christmas '44 and we have come so far — hopes are high and yet the war drags on.

7. 1945 — The Road to Victory: the way back to joy and normality as...

- 7.1 ... Gifts parcels bring relief — welcome supplements to the meagre rations, but...
- 7.2 Britain struggles on — with Victory in Europe in sight as...
- 7.3 ... the Allies advance through Europe — and the horror camps are revealed.
- 7.4 The Beginning of the End — Britain celebrates victory in Europe, but...
- 7.5 ... there's Still Japan — Japan holds fast, but at last it's all over.
- 7.6 Christmas 1945 — the first Christmas of peace.... and we look forward to the future.

1: 1939 — Private Battles

1.1 Britain goes to war

Sunday September 3rd 1939 — “Today we listened to Chamberlain's grim words on the wireless. It was horrible when he said we were at war, I felt cold and frightened. The King spoke to us all at 6 o'clock, he was so brave, what with his stammer and all; he made me feel a bit brighter”



Adolf Hitler - Chancellor and leader of Nazi Germany



His Majesty King George VI, of Great Britain, Ireland and the British Dominions

British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain's declaration of war:

*“I am speaking to you from the Cabinet Room of 10 Downing Street. This morning the British Ambassador in Berlin handed the German government a final note, stating that unless we heard from them - by 11 o'clock - that they were prepared at once to withdraw their troops from Poland, a state of war would exist between us. I have to tell you now that no such undertaking has been received and that, consequently, **this country is at war with Germany**”.*



The newspapers report the Prime Minister's declaration of war

1.2 At least the children will be safe

Evacuation of the vulnerable


Monday September 4th 1939 — “Billy & Rosie [son & daughter] left with the rest of the school today for a safe place in the country. I cried when I went to the station to see them off, I wish I knew where they will be going. This is the first time we have been apart since they were born.”

The Government had foreseen that in the event of war, large areas of UK would be subject to aerial bombing. The evacuation of some 3½ million vulnerable people from those areas started in August.



All available buses and trains were choked to capacity in the attempt to move the great armada of children out of London. Many of the journeys were long and arduous.





EVACUATION

THE GOVERNMENT HAVE DECIDED THAT IF THERE ARE AIR RAIDS YOU WILL HAVE ANOTHER CHANCE OF SENDING YOUR CHILDREN AWAY.

THIS TIME THE CHILDREN WILL NOT GO UNTIL AIR RAIDS MAKE IT NECESSARY.

THE NEW SCHEME WILL BE FOR SCHOOL CHILDREN WHO WERE AT SCHOOL LAST JULY, OR WHO HAVE REACHED THE AGE OF FIVE SINCE. IT APPLIES TO NO OTHERS.


NOW IS YOUR OPPORTUNITY TO REGISTER YOUR CHILDREN FOR EVACUATION. FILL UP THIS PAPER AND RETURN IT AT ONCE.

You are free to make up your mind, but you must MAKE UP YOUR MIND NOW. It is your duty to do so for the sake of your children. The authorities cannot make their plans at all if they do not know how many they have got to provide for.

If you want any help or there to the nearest school, where you will be told where you can.

ON HIS MAJESTY'S SERVICE.

The Clerk to the Authority,


HERE

Official Reply Paid postal stationery evacuation application form .

Reduced scan of front

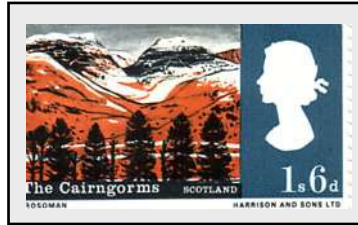


The children prepare to leave their homes.

1.2 At least the children will be safe

A Time of Adventure?

Wednesday September 6th 1939 — "I miss the children but it's for the best, they must be spared if Hitler is going to bomb us like he did Poland. I had a card from Rosie today; she and Billy are billeted together thank goodness. They seem to be settling in with their new family."



120,000 left Glasgow for the safety of Scottish countryside. Young children were also evacuated from other large cities.



The evacuation was code-named 'Operation Pied Piper,' evacuees did not know their destination until arrival.



Most settled happily into their new surroundings.



All wanted to let their relatives back home know they were safe...

P 1105 L Duplicate

GENERAL POST OFFICE

BILLETING OF CIVILIAN POPULATION

RECEIVED from the Postmaster-General the sum of £ 17 Pounds 0 Shillings 0 Pence being "Billeting" payments for 1 weeks { 2 Adults. 2 Children.

Signature of Payee Webb
Address of Billet Laurencetown

Stamp of Paying Office
KINCARDINESHIRE
LAURENCETOWN
4 SEP 1939

NOTE.—Duplicate receipt forms must be detached and forwarded daily to the Local Billeting Officer.

The new Foster parents received 8/6 (43p) a week per child billeting payment, as shown in this *receipt* from PO in Kincardineshire, Scotland. 4/9/39

EVACUATION

OFFICIAL PAID

Enter name and address correctly in **BLOCK** letters and if possible in ink.

... and so they were given *Official reply paid post cards* to write to their families, giving the address of their new homes.

1.3 News from "Somewhere in France"

The B.E.F. mobilised

Saturday 23rd September 1939 — " I Had a letter from Ted [husband] today, he couldn't write about where he is or what he is doing (he said the censors would only delete it) but he did say he was 'Somewhere in France' with the B.E.F., and he would tell us more when he gets home."



In September 1939, the British Expeditionary Force [B.E.F] was sent to the Franco-Belgian border. The Force included 9,392 R.A.F. support personnel & 12 squadrons of aircraft.

To provide the BEF with air support, RAF squadrons forming the air component of the BEF were based in Calais. The HQ of the AASF (Advanced Air Striking Force) was based in Reims.

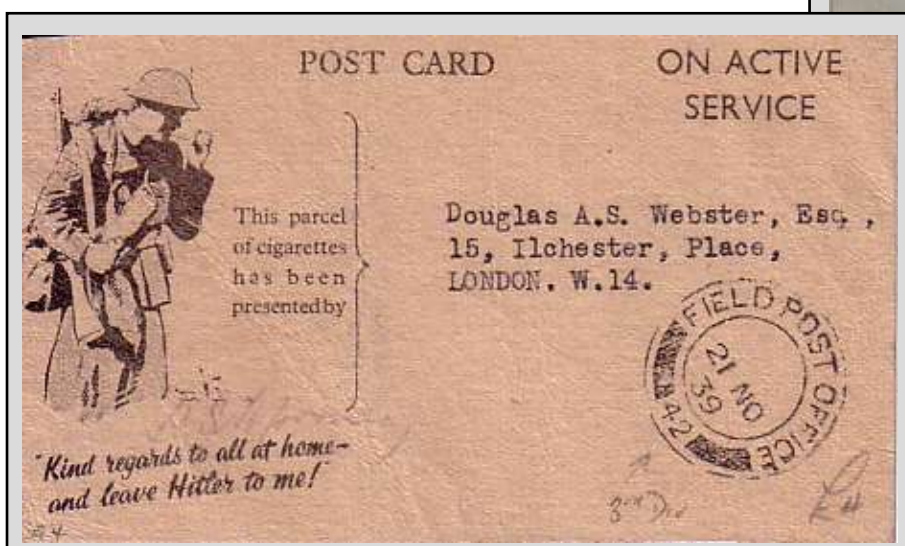


No. 1 Air Formation Official Service Air Mail.

Early letter from the BEF in France to GB. Written on 20/9/39. RAF Censor mark 121; red m/c stamped London EC Official Paid 22/9/39

Pictorial envelope printed in France for sale to British troops.

The 1st printing bore the imprint '26147. Imp. Plouvier. Caruin' below the word Force (deleted by censor). Later printing bore no imprint. (Field Post Office 58 handstamp, used here 4 Jan 1940, was lost at Dunkirk.)



21 November 1939: "Leave Hitler to Me" OAS postal card acknowledging receipt of a parcel of cigarettes send to a member of the BEF.3rd Div.

1.4 'Digging for Victory'

The Home Front Mobilised

Sunday 26th November 1939 — "Today, Dad and me worked all day in the garden sowing vegetables. It was hard work but it will be worth it when we have fresh vegetables next Spring. At least we are doing our bit for the war, plus it helps take my mind off Ted and the children being away."

At the outbreak of War the Government launched one of the most memorable slogans of the whole conflict — 'Dig for Victory'

Lawns and flower-beds were turned into vegetable gardens...

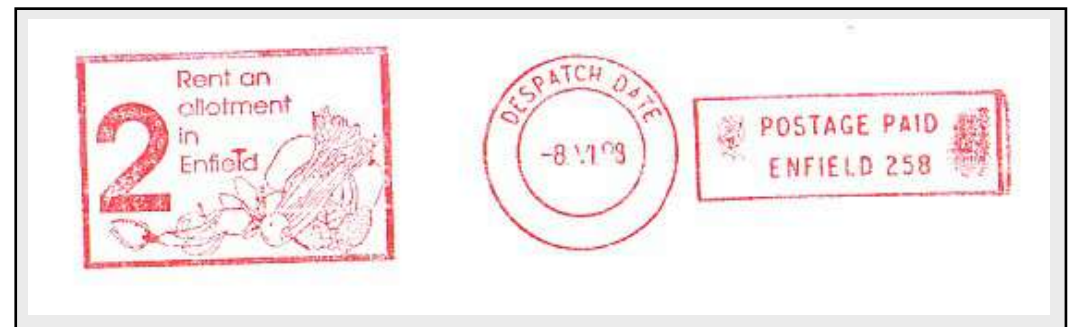
...this would not only provide much needed vegetables...



...but also help the war effort by freeing up valuable space for war materials on the merchant ships



Slogan in use — 20 November - 29 December 1939



People were encouraged to rent ground or small allotments to substitute the shortage of food. The propaganda campaign was successful.



It was estimated that over 1,400,000 people had allotments.

1.5 They are calling it the 'Phoney' War

Blackout & Gas Masks

Wednesday 6th December 1939 — "What a strange war! It's so quiet the people are calling it the 'Phoney War' because nothing is happening. I am fed up with the blackout and carrying my gas mask everywhere."

Ministry of Information sources found that the three most disliked wartime regulations was the compulsory 'black-out'; carrying a gas mask, and Censorship.

Private cachet in blue



During the Munich Crisis of September 1938, 38 million gas masks were distributed to the civil population. Germany had signed the 1925 Geneva Protocol promising that it would not employ poison gas, but most people expected that Hitler to use it.



Warnings were given to the public not to test their masks in gas ovens or by car exhaust pipes.



Tops of post boxes painted with gas reacting paint, to detect a gas attack.

From the onset of war gas masks were distributed to every man, woman & child. These had to be carried at all times.

To avoid directing enemy bombers to their targets, all buildings had to have their windows darkened so that no light could be seen from outside.



GB FEB 42 exploded booklet



Special material could be purchased for this purpose.

1.5 They are calling it the 'Phoney' War

Censorship

Thursday 7th December 1939 — "Those sneaking censors! Haven't they got anything better to do than reading ordinary folks letters? Makes me right fed up to think they've been reading what me and my Ted write to each other. That should be private between a man and his wife."

All mail leaving the country and some internal mail was subject to censorship, for security and statistical purposes. At the start of the war, the censors were based in Liverpool under the control of the War Office.

6 Dec 1939 Liverpool to 'M/V Athelchief.'
early boxed Liverpool censor mark

"IDLE GOSSIP
SINKS SHIPS"
was the message
of the day.



On 24 May 1941, the battlecruiser Hood was destroyed. Of the 1,418 crew, only three men survived.



M/V *ATHELCHIEF*: Built 1939 as the *KONGSTEN* by Barclay Curle & Co, Glasgow.
1939 Sold to United Molasses Co and renamed *ATHELCHIEF*.
(October 30, 1943 *ATHELCHIEF* collided in convoy with the British ship
CHANCELLOR (Crown Line fleet). *CHANCELLOR* was taken in tow but sank with no casualties.)



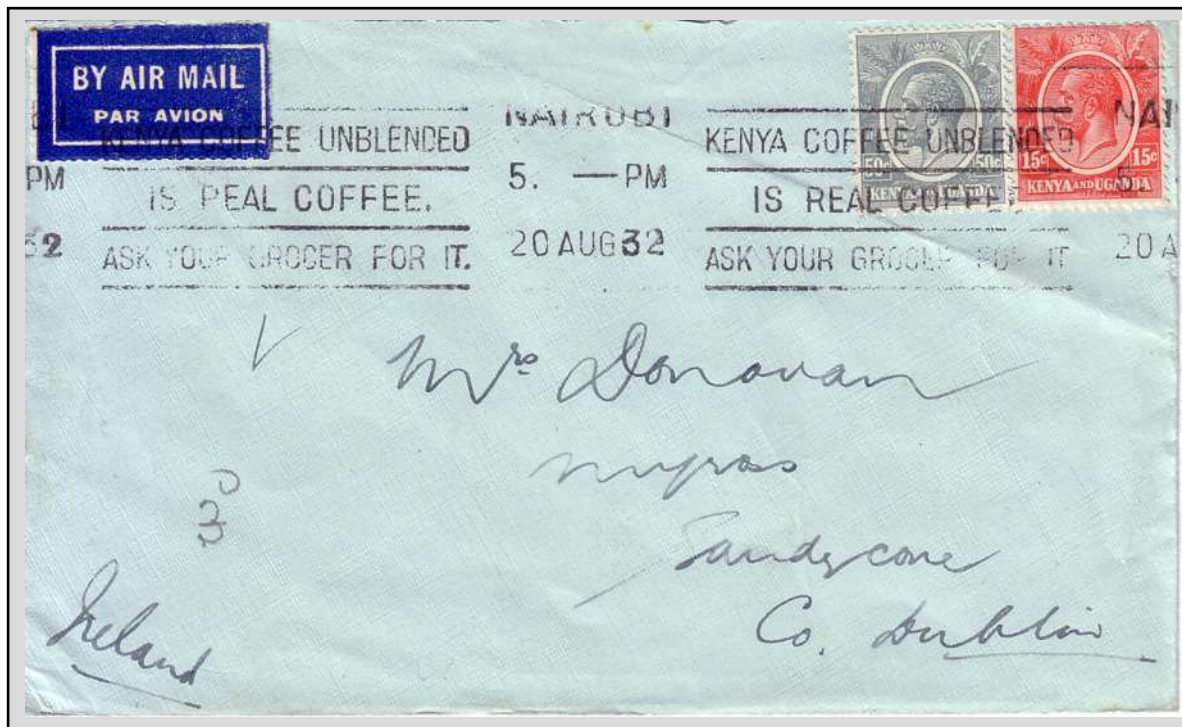
Unsealed mail received a *RELEASED BY CENSOR* cachet (above)

Sealed mail was opened and then resealed with an *OPENED BY CENSOR* label. (right)

2: 1940 — A Desperate Year

2.1 We are on Rations

Monday 8 January 1940 — "Rationing began today, 4oz Bacon; 4oz Butter; & 12oz Sugar - all we are allowed for the whole week! The children will have to be more careful with the butter now it's on ration, no plastering it on the bread like they usually do. I will have to watch them carefully..."



Pre-war vast quantities of coffee was imported from Kenya and South America

Before the War, Britain imported about 55 million tons of food a year from other countries. This had to be reduced as German submarines were attacking the supply ships, which could eventually lead to a shortage of food in the shops.



Various goods had traditionally been imported from abroad.



NZ Anniversary of lamb export trade

White flaw above first 8 of '1882' R8/11

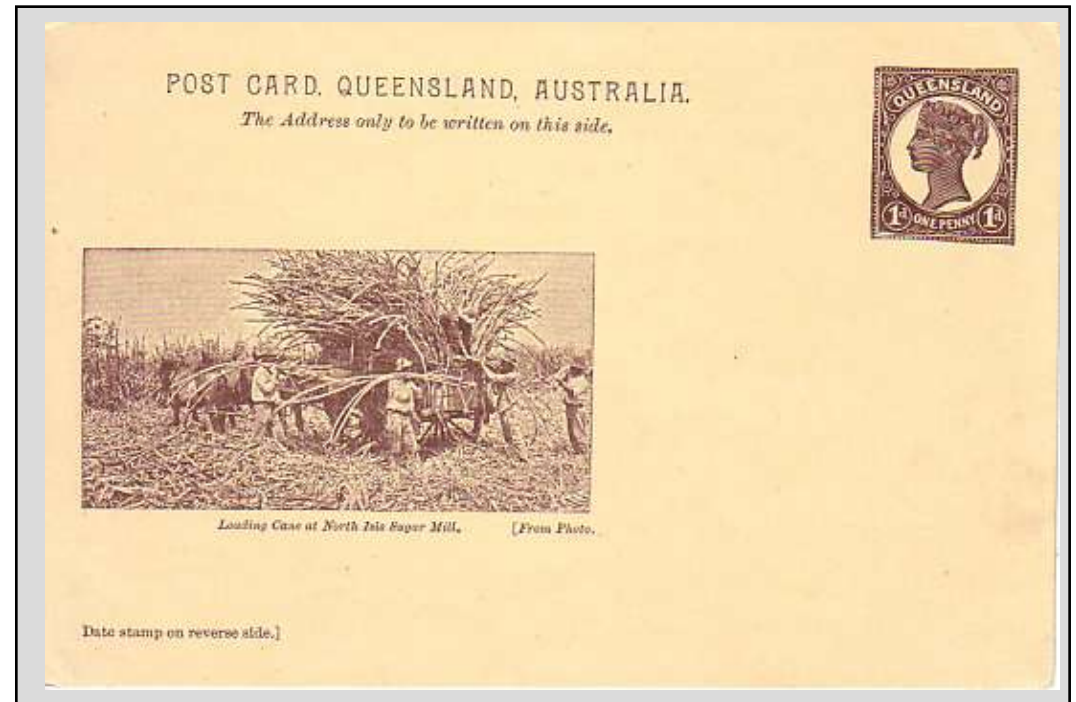
Orange flaw on bow of lower ship R9/12

2.1 We are on Rations

Sugar Restrictions

"...and I don't know how Dad is going to manage as he usually has so much sugar in his tea.

Sugar, butter, and bacon became rationed in January, in a bid to ensure 'Fair Shares for All'. 73% of Britain's pre-war sugar consumption was imported.



The British Government purchased the entire 1939/40 sugar crop in Br. West Indies & Br. Guiana; to help supply Britain, sugar was rationed in Australia throughout the war years.



1898 Queensland postal stationery card depicting sugar cultivation



British production of beet was increased during the war to compensate for the reduction in sugar cane imports.



The root of the beet has a sugar content of around 17%



Increased sugar-beet production brought 350,000 acres under cultivation in the UK. The beet pulp also provided valuable foodstuff for cattle.

Russian 1931 postal card promoting sugar beet farming. Posted from Jalta/Yalta near the Caspian Sea addressed to Olga in Moscow centre. The postmark on the left is the Moscow postal department.

2.1 We are on Rations

The Nation's favourite drink to be rationed

Thursday 14 March 1940 - "Dad was really down in the dumps this morning, first sugar now tea is to be rationed. I told him he'll have to get used to something else like that beef tea they keep advertising. That didn't please him, made him even more grumpy, he'll miss his cuppa."



When the nation's favourite 'cuppa', went on ration, other beverages filled the gap, with often amazing advertising claims.



Ceylon's pre-war tea production amounted to 218 million lbs annually.



A good 'cuppa' tea

10.4.1940 Neopost ½d EVIIR die prefix no. N6, registered to A. Wander Ltd :
After Edward VIII abdication in 1936, the Post Office did not invalidate either the adhesive stamps nor the meter franks, allowing them to continue to be used until the machine dies needed replacing.



Ovaltine is the trade name for a preparation of malt extract, milk, eggs, cocoa, and soya fortified with thiamin, vitamin D, and niacin, to make a beverage when added to milk, invented in 1863 by Swiss scientist George Wander, and originally called Ovomaltine.

"GIVES YOU STRENGTH"



A mug of beef tea was the favoured way to fend off the chill of winter.

5.4.1940: Universal Postal Franking machine with ½d GVI die (Prefix U264)



Bovril added to hot water became a 'healthy' drink (of an acquired taste!)

2.1 We are on Rations

Economies in the Kitchen

Friday 15 March 1940 - "Rationing is becoming harsher, with tea and better cuts of meat becoming difficult to buy, it is getting harder to make a tasty meal every day. On the brighter side, with things being so quiet I have kept the children home with me since Christmas."



3 July 1940: letter from a member of the Royal Warwickshire Regiment stationed at Sheffield. Probably an evacuee from Dunkirk (note B.E.F. Manuscript). Mail from Forces personnel 'On Active Service' travelled FREE

To make sure everyone pulled together to help fight the War on the Home Front, meat, tea and margarine were rationed in July. Women were urged to 'Help to Win on the Kitchen Front'.



Housewives were encouraged to buy British produce



Those who kept chickens in their garden or backyard could rely on a fresh egg, now and again, and maybe even send a few to friends or relatives.

GPO P.P.43 label



Women were advised how to make tasty meals from cheaper cuts of meat.



People were encouraged to keep chickens to supplement their egg rations.



Keeping pigs was especially popular, as they could be fed on kitchen waste.

2.1 We are on Rations

Britain urged to 'Save Waste Paper'

Wednesday 16 March 1940 - "Paper is on ration now, whatever next! If this carries on I won't even be able to write this diary down. I suppose it's the same for everyone but it does seem to be a bit harsh, especially on the children. What are they supposed to use for writing paper?"

The British people were constantly being urged to save paper. War Economy labels were produced to save importing paper by re-using old envelopes. It was also realised that the labels could be used for propaganda and/or to raise money for National Savings and various charities.

'SAVE WASTE PAPER
METALS BONES RAGS'
slogan in use
18 July - 17 Aug



Cover originally addressed to London, W1; then reused locally in Southampton before starting on its final journey to "Mrs. Brown" at the American Embassy in Grosvenor Square. By the time the letter arrived, Mrs. Brown had moved on, and the letter was re-addressed 'c/o Department of State, Washington'. On arrival the cover was endorsed 'Hong Kong' in red manuscript and stamped 'AIR AND COURIER UNIT' in purple before being forwarded to Hong Kong.



The 'Save Waste Paper' campaign was to last throughout the War (the above appears to have been retrieved from the scrap basket just in time!)



Official Paid War Economy Label advertising the National Savings Campaign
"FOR BRITAIN KEEP ON SAVING"

2.2 Capitulation, Costs, and Churchill

Denmark & Norway overrun

Tuesday 9 April 1940 – “Denmark and Norway! Both gone! Dad says that he'll (Hitler) be after Holland and Belgium next. I said he wouldn't dare, France and us would have something to say about that. Everyone is calling for Mr. Churchill to take over as Prime Minister, I wish he would.”



28 March 1940, Letter written in English St. Albans to Denmark.
Censor label PC66 OPENED BY CENSOR.

Violet two-line handstamp: *POSTAL SERVICE SUSPENDED/ RETURN TO SENDER.*
(Denmark was invaded 9 April 1940)

The winter passed nervously, but spring brought no respite. In early April Hitler invaded Denmark and Norway and within a month British troops had to be withdrawn as both countries were overrun.



On the same day Germany over-ran Denmark, a sea and airborne invasion was also successfully mounted against Norway.



The Germans invade Denmark & Norway

An Allied force of some 24,000, the North West Expeditionary Force, was sent to Norway to defend Narvik, in an attempt to deny the Germans access to the most northerly ice-free port for shipping iron ore from Sweden to Germany.

The Force sailed from Scotland late March. Mail posted on board was censored on the ship and returned to the UK., where it received the London Official Paid machine mark.

[Note: Other letters in the author's collection from the same correspondent proves this censor mark to be from the 'Narvik' Campaign]



Narvik Campaign: **PASSED BY CENSOR NO. 1590 (previously unrecorded)**
Machine cancel GT. BRITAIN/ LONDON EC/ OFFICIAL PAID 22 / April 1940

2.2. Capitulation, Costs, and Churchill

Postal charges increase

Wednesday April 24 1940 — “What a budget! A man in the Post Office was saying the cost of food has risen by 14% since the beginning of the war. He said the rise in postage is ridiculous, 2d would have been sufficient. I agree with him, where are we supposed to get the extra money from?”

To help pay for the rising cost of War, significant increases in taxation were announced in the Government's April budget statement, including overall postal increases.



1940 unapproved War Tax essay

There was a proposal to issue 'War Tax' stamps, but in the end the GPO merely increased the basic printed paper, postcard and letter rates by one penny.



1st May: Minimum inland letter rate increased from 1½d to 2½d



Postcard rate increased from 1d to 2d

1940 Average cost for food for a family of 4 for one week £1.4.0 (£1.20)

- 1 loaf of bread cost 4d a loaf (2p)
- 1 pint of milk cost 2d a pint (1p)
- Bar of soap cost on average of 4d
- Dozen large eggs 1/6 (7.5p)
- Petrol cost on average 1/6 a gallon (7.5p) (coupons were also needed to buy petrol)

½d postal stationery envelope with added ½d adhesive to meet the new Printed paper rate of 1d

2.2. Capitulation, Costs, and Churchill

A rare chance to Celebrate

Monday May 6 1940 — “Dad has said he is going to a stamp show today... Whatever next! The country is at war... poor Denmark and Norway over-run, the cost of everything is going up and up, and he's going to a stamp show! Doesn't he know there's a War on!”

GPO PRESS NOTICE 1st MAY 1940

“A special series of stamps of the ½d., 1d., 1½d., 2d., 2½d and 3d. Denomination will be issued on May 6th to commemorate the introduction, 100 years ago, of the first adhesive postage stamp and will remain on sale for a period of about two months.”



C E plate 1B
Ray flaw 10 & 7
Trace of 10 o'clock Ray

“The design displays, on the left, a representation of the line engraved portrait of Queen Victoria's head as it appeared on the first adhesive stamps, and for the sake of accuracy a pull was taken from the original die which is in the archives of the General Post Office and on the right, Mr Edmund Dulac's portrait, in tone, of the head of George VI as it appears on the current stamps.”



Despite the world going mad, philatelist were determined to celebrate the phenomenal success of the introduction of Uniform Penny Postage (and the 'penny black')...

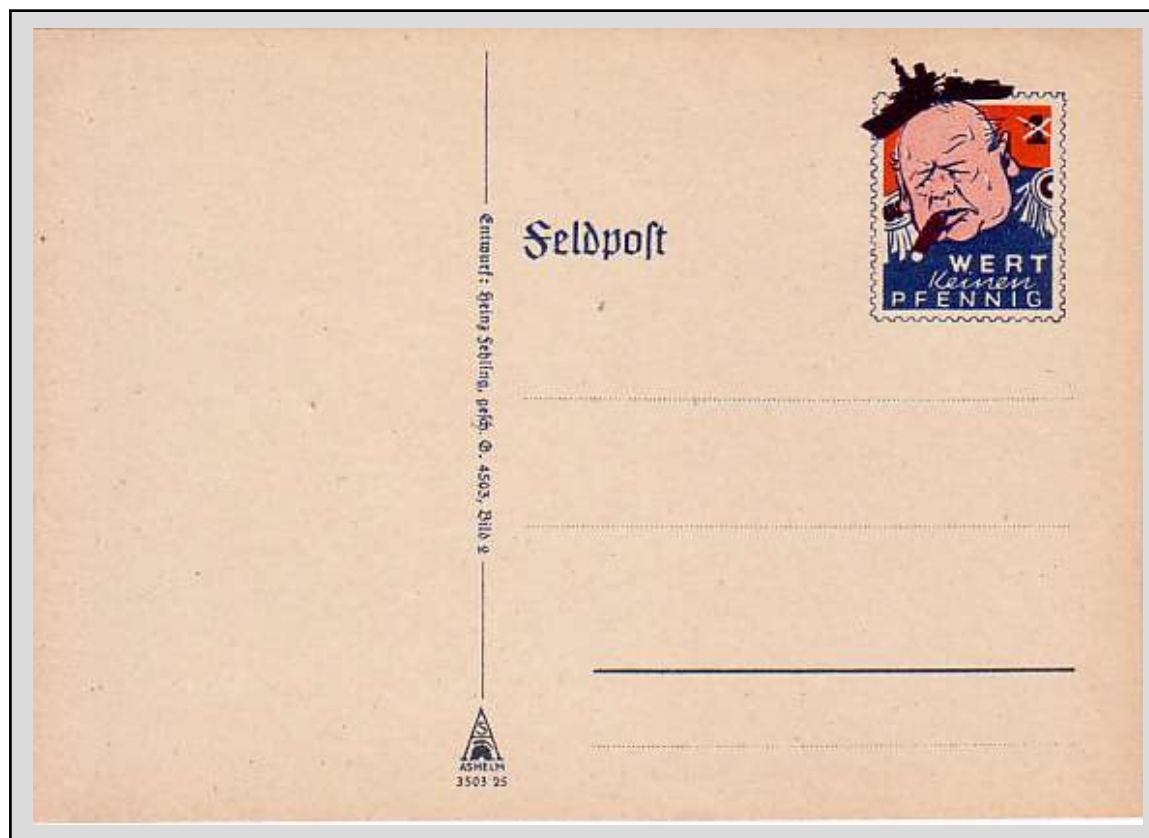


The Royal Philatelic Society Stamp Centenary Exhibition in aid of the Lord Mayor's Red Cross & St. John Fund
Special illustrated registered cover franked with the 1940 Centenary set of six stamps, and cancelled with special red Exhibition handstamp.

2.2 Capitulation, Costs, and Churchill

Churchill Prime Minister as Europe stumbles

Monday May 13 1940 — “Winston, Prime Minister. ‘His Blood, sweat & tears’ speech gave me goose bumps. The Nazis don’t seem to think too much of him, that’s because he scares them! Jolly Good, he’ll stand up to Hitler! Other news not good... Luxembourg, Holland and Belgium gone, are we next?”



(1st philatelic item issued depicting Churchill)

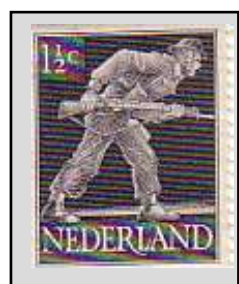
The day that Churchill took office Hitler invaded Holland, Luxembourg and Belgium; on the 14th Holland surrendered, and the German army broke through French defences.

May 13— Churchill told the House of Commons he had “Nothing to offer but Blood, toil, tears, & sweat...”



...You ask what is our policy? I will say: It is to wage war by sea, land and air with all our might and with all the strength that God can give us: to wage war against a monstrous tyranny, ... That is our policy. You ask, What is our aim? ...Victory — victory at all costs, victory in spite of all terror, victory however long and hard the road may be; for without victory there is no survival.”

1940 — German Field Postal Card ridiculing Winston Churchill.
The inscription ‘WERT KEINEN PFENNIG’ translates as ‘NOT WORTH A FARTHING’



Despite valiant effort, the Low Countries were unable to resist the might of the German army



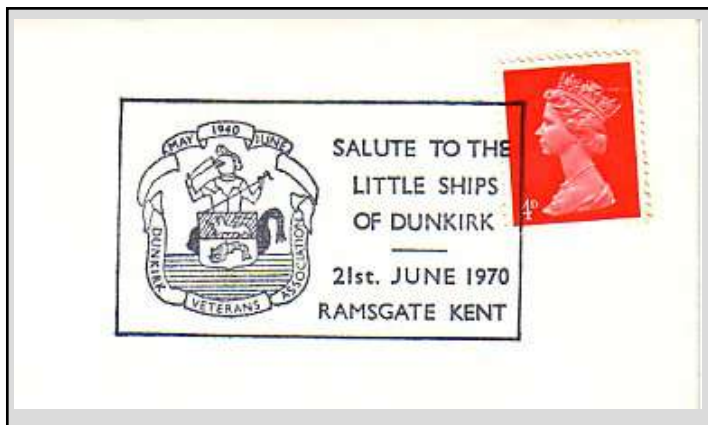
NO SERVICE/ RETURN TO SENDER cachet: Letter Dundee to Belgium 15 May 1940
Brussels fell to the German 6th Army on 17 May.

2.2.1 The Troops are evacuated from Dunkirk

Saturday May 25 1940 — “The news from France is terrible... the BEF are trapped, thousands could be killed, how could Churchill let this happen?”

On the 26th May 1940, British forces in France, began to fall back on Dunkirk.

Operation Dynamo was put into effect and a flotilla of large & small ships put to sea to rescue troops from the beaches. Despite incessant German attacks 338,226 men were recovered.



The ‘Little Ships of Dunkirk’ were 700 private boats that sailed from Ramsgate in England to Dunkirk in France between May 26 and June 4, 1940 as part of Operation Dynamo,



Mail from FPO 37 was among the last recorded despatch from Dunkirk. 55 bags of mail arrived at Dover on 29 May, carried on T.S. ‘Canterbury’.



Dunkirk lies in ruins

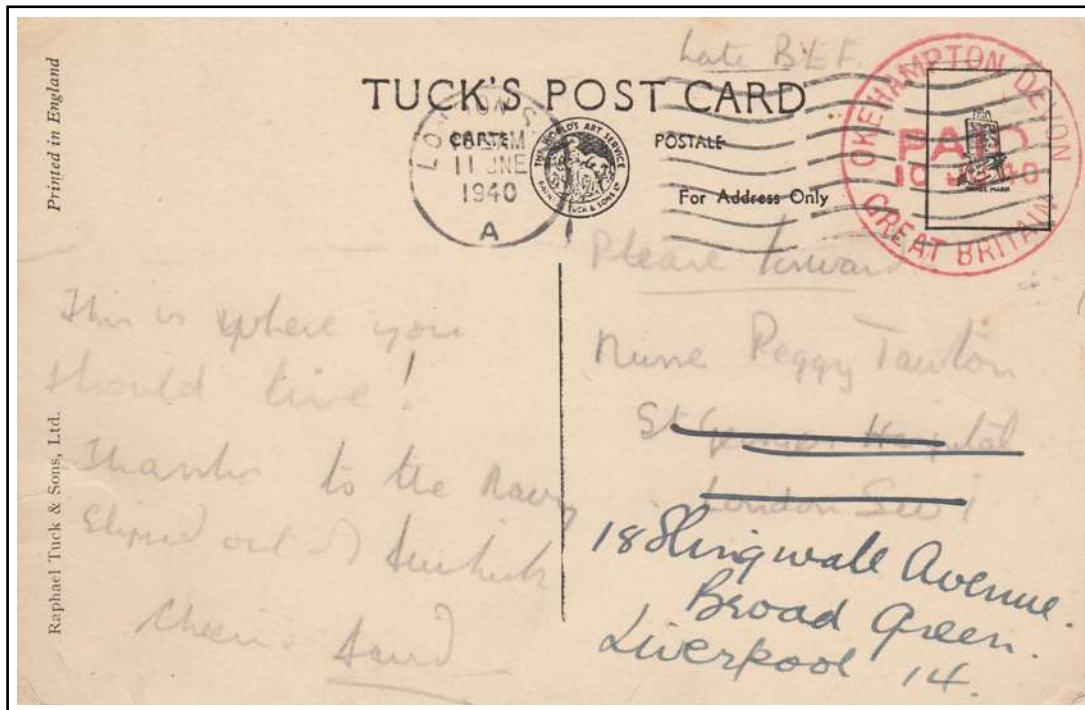
On the first day, only 7,011 men were evacuated, but by the ninth day, a total of 338,226 soldiers (198,229 British and 139,997 French) had been rescued by the hastily assembled fleet of little boats.



MV Sundowner was requisitioned by the Admiralty on 30 May. The little ship transported 130 soldiers back to Ramsgate, almost capsizing when they reached the shore.

2.2.2 Back from the Jaws of Hell

Sunday May 26 1940 — "I went down to the docks to try and support our poor boys back from France; what a sight, boats of every size imaginable were emptying their human cargoes straight from the jaws of hell. I kept thinking they were somebody's fathers and sons and that I must try to help."



Many of the troops rescued at Dunkirk had only the clothes they were wearing, little or no equipment, and probably no cash with them. They were evacuated as quickly as possible from Dover and other ports. Some would not have had the opportunity to advise their relatives of their whereabouts until they reached Base Camp.

Card with red circular
OKEHAMPTON DEVON
PAID 10 JU 40
GREAT BRITAIN

Message reads:
**'Thanks to the Navy
slipped out of Dunkirk'**



Once home, special Hospital
trains took the injured to
safety

Violet circular
hooded

'CONFIRMATION
SOUTHAMPTON
1 JNE 40
DOCKS'

Post Office mark
on a
Telegram
bringing news
of a survivor
successfully
landed at
Southampton.

Charges to pay _____ s. _____ d.
RECEIVED

POST OFFICE TELEGRAM

No. _____ OFFICE STAMP 378

Prefix. Time handed in. Office of Origin and Service Instructions. Words. 4.44P m

From 2 402 3.0 BULFORD BARRACKS 11 To 207

CONFIRMATION SOUTHAMPTON 1 JNE 40 DOCKS

LAST LYMINGTON =

= SLIGHTLY DENTED VERY WELL MAY SEE YOU SUNDAY LAST +

For free repetition of doubtful words telephone "TELEGRAMS ENQUIRY" or call, with this form at office of delivery. Other enquiries should be accompanied by this form and, if possible, the envelope. B or C

2.3 — “We Shall Fight”

Churchill rallies the nation

Tuesday June 4 1940 – “We listened to Churchill on the wireless.... made my hair stand on end. Surely he is the man to lead us after the disaster of Dunkirk. Ted [husband] is home on leave, he got out safe from France, he says the whole world will hear Churchill and know we mean business.”

The BBC was an authoritative source of news throughout the Free and the Occupied world — it aimed to undermine the enemy and to raise the morale of people suffering under Nazi rule. Churchill made full use of the radio as a publicity vehicle and for his rousing patriotic rhetoric.



Churchill at the BBC



The wireless set [radio] was a central feature in most British homes. More than 8.5 million wireless licences were issued in 1938. By 1940, out of a population of 48 million, probably as many as 40 million were regularly listening to the News bulletins from the ‘BBC Home Service’.



Television, previously enjoyed by the privileged few, was closed down in 1939.



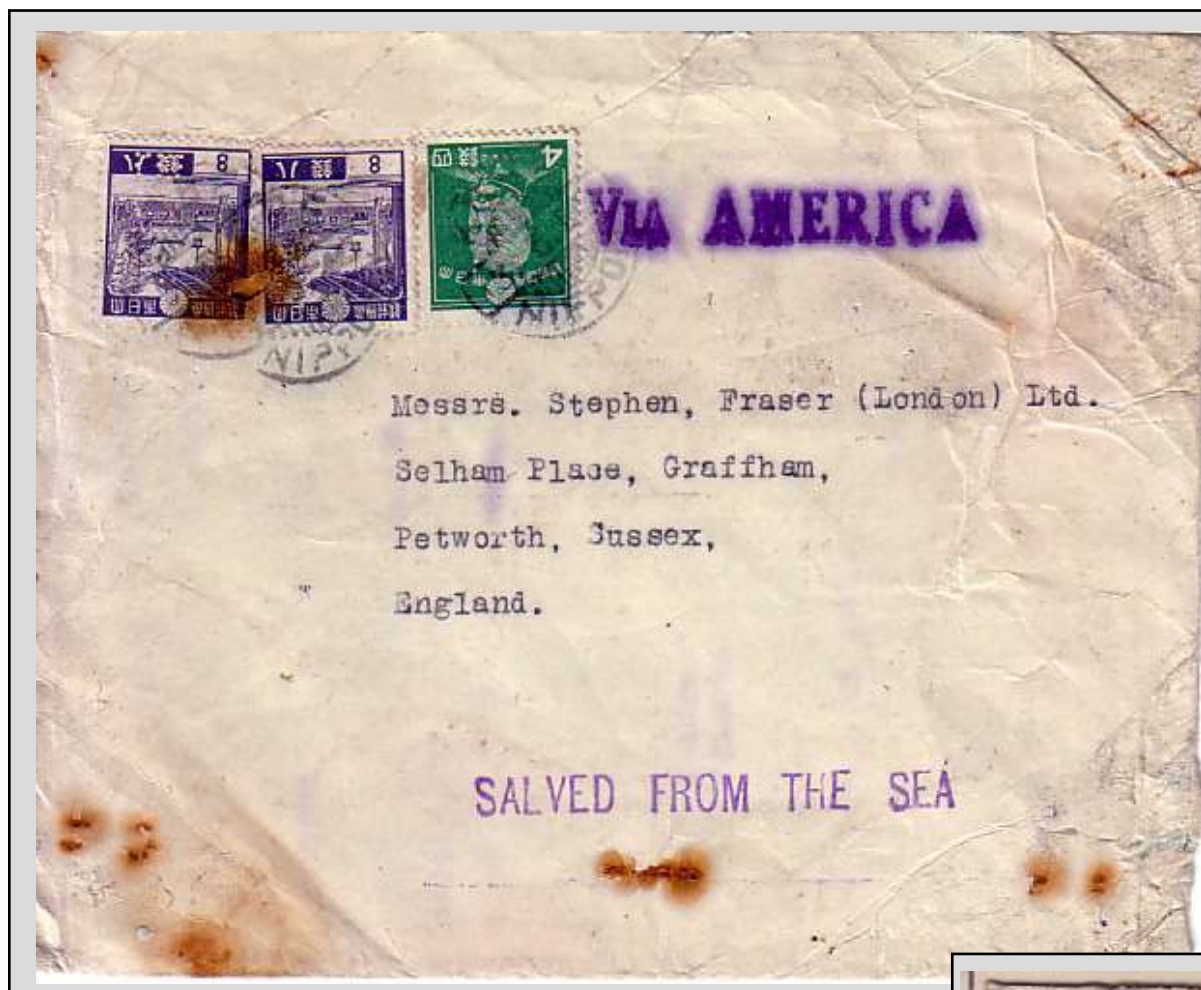
A radio was considered essential to most households during the war.

1936 Illustrated French Cheque Postale envelope

2.3.1 Battle in the Atlantic

Britain's supplies threatened

Friday June 7 1940 — "...we must all make more effort to save what we can; we must try not to use up all our stocks of things that come from abroad, like food and materials that are needed for the war effort. It upsets me so much when I think of ships going down, and those poor sailors."



Kobe, Japan to Sussex via America.
purple cachet: 'SALVED FROM THE SEA' applied in Belfast

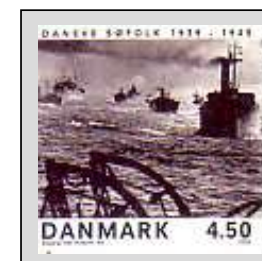
On June 7, 1940 the British turbo-electric powered ship 'Eros' was severely damaged by a torpedo fired from a German submarine U-48, under the command of Captain Rösling. This act of war occurred not far from Donegal coast of Ireland and the crew of 62 managed to beach the Eros on the Irish coast without loss of life. The Eros was eight days out of Montreal bound for Liverpool with a cargo of copper, ferrochrome, small arms, and general cargo, including several hundred bags of mail. This mail, addressed mostly to Britain had been mailed in Canada between May 21-29. In addition, bags of mail from Japan bound for Britain, that had come through Canada, were also on board. The ship was refloated and taken to Belfast under tow. Most of the mail was recovered, opened, dried and handstruck with the marking "SALVED FROM THE SEA". Many of the surviving covers are water stained with the stamps floated off.

May 28 1940 Ottawa to Sussex . purple cachet:
'SALVED FROM THE SEA'

By the summer of 1940 heavy shipping losses in the 'Battle of the Atlantic' were threatening Britain's supply lifeline.



By the end of the Battle of the Atlantic, the Allies had lost 2,763 merchant ships, totalling over 13½million tons.



Allied ships in convoy



2.4 We are not Alone!

Shoulder to shoulder with her Empire

Friday June 14 1940 — “Hitler is in Paris, and now Mussolini has joined in. Dad said it was no surprise, he says Mussolini always did look a nasty piece of work. We do not stand-alone — we have our Empire with us, but I feel so sad for the poor people of France, what will become of them?”

‘Britain Stands Alone’ A common slogan but untrue.... her Empire including Australia; Canada, South Africa, and India , alongside her European allies, were all at war with Germany from the onset of hostilities.



Blue



Bluish-green



Lavender



Hitler & Mussolini

“...then our Empire beyond the seas, armed and guarded by the British Fleet, would carry on the struggle,...”

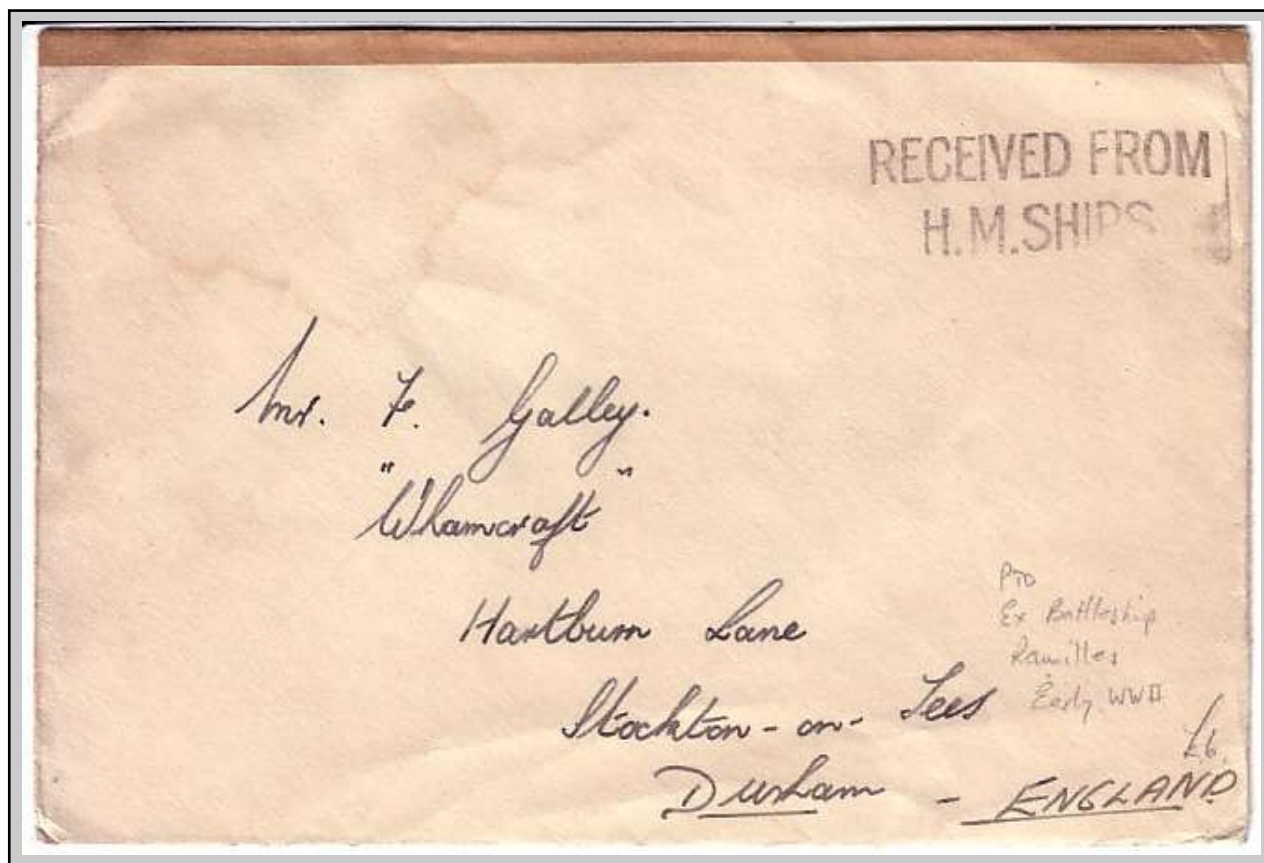
Winston Churchill,
HOUSE OF COMMONS,
4 JUNE 1940



“The Empire is still one people” — Canadian Premier



Australian Imperial Forces



Cover from the battleship *RAMILLES* which escorted *RMS ORFORD* (manuscript identification on reverse)

Jan 10 1940 *RMS Orford* left Sydney with 1263 Australian & NZ soldiers on board. It sailed with 11 other ships in Convoy for Suez arriving 10 Feb 1940.



‘*RMS Orford*’ beneath Sydney Harbour Bridge:
Plate 1

For the 3d printing, a total of four plates were constructed, all as a quad plate recess printing set, single pane 8 x 10

2.4 We are not Alone!

“Winston’s Specials”

Friday June 21 1940 — “The newspapers say that thousands of Australians have volunteered since the outbreak of war. How wonderful that even from all those miles away, they still feel such warmth and allegiance to their Mother Country. Watch out Hitler!”

RMS Orford, shown here during the 1932 celebrations of the opening of the Sydney Harbour Bridge, belonged to the Orient Line sailing regularly between the UK and Australia. Converted to troopship in 1939, the ship was used as troop carrier arriving in Palestine Jan 1940. It was then loaned to the French for troop carrying and was bombed and beached at Marseilles, June 1940 while evacuating troops from France.



Recess

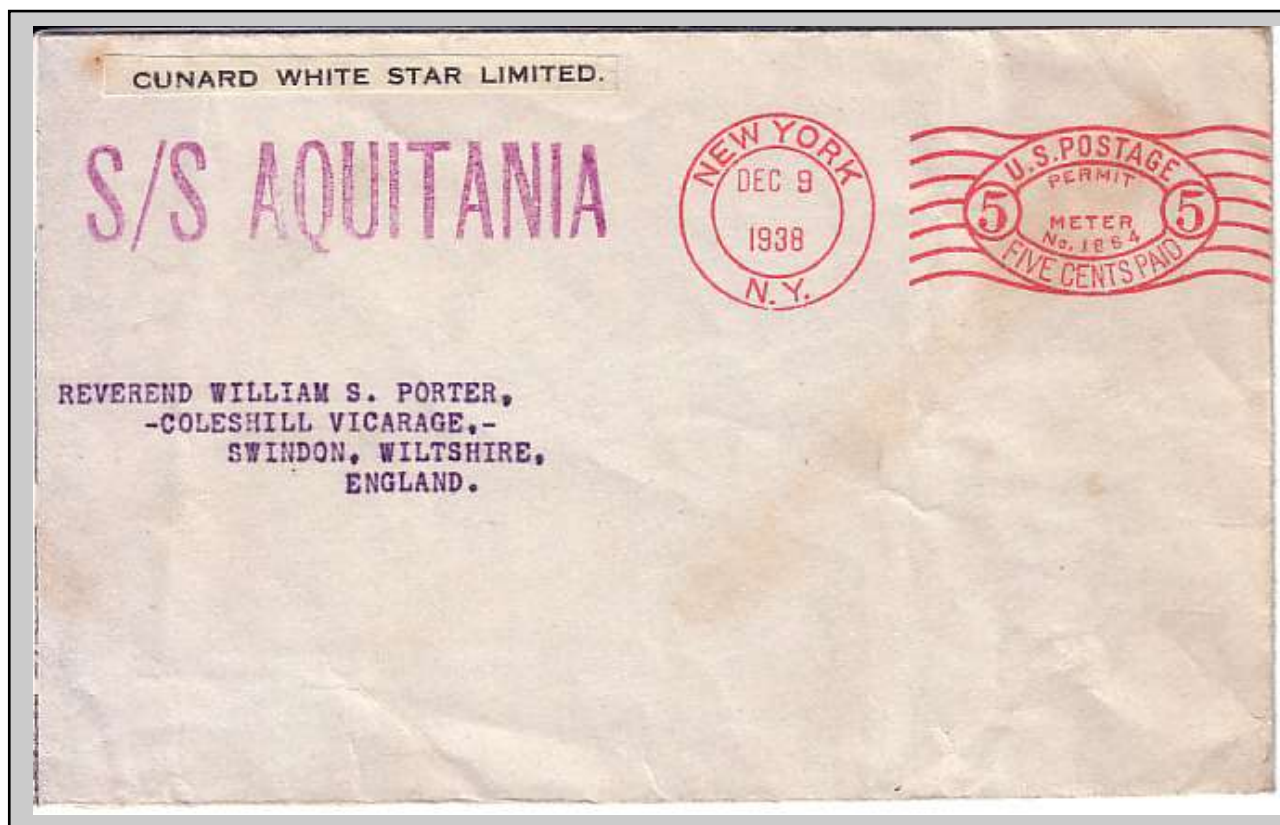


5/- Recess printed stamps with JOHN ASH imprint



Typo

The 1932 design shows the Sydney Harbour Bridge from the south eastern pylon, with Royal Mail Ship "Orford" drawn in the foreground to show perspective. Issued contemporaneously with the 2d recess printed stamp, the surface printed (typo) stamp was printed in much larger numbers. Being surface printed, the overall appearance of the stamp is flatter and shinier and is readily distinguishable. The 5/- denomination was an extraordinary high value to issue.



"In the Australians of 1940 the valour of their fathers lives again. The thrilling exploits of your sailors in the Mediterranean and of your airmen round these shores give a foretaste of what the enemy may expect when all arms of the Australian Forces get the chance they are so eagerly awaiting. With the aid of such men we shall go on unflinchingly until the final victory is won."

Message sent from Churchill to Australian Prime Minister Menzies at the the first anniversary of the outbreak of the War

S/S AQUITANIA

Requisitioned by the Admiralty for use as a troopship Dec 1940 - 43 (capacity 7,000+)
Used to transport troops from Australia to England (Convoy US12B: Sydney to UK via Suez) and returning with wounded soldiers and Axis POW's. (These convoys known as 'Winston's Specials')

2.4 We are not Alone!

European Allied Forces in UK

Monday 1 July 1940 — “ Mrs Long's girl was in London yesterday and she said all you could hear was foreign languages...”

Even in the darkest months of 1940 and 1941, the United Kingdom did not fight alone. The resisting European Governments found sanctuary in Britain.



Based upon his position as a member of the last legitimate French government, the British recognized de Gaulle as leader of the "Free French" assisting his plan for resistance to the pro-German "Vichy" government in France.



The Free French, led by General De Gaulle, set up offices in the centre of London.



Cover bearing the cachet of The Free French Navy, “BUREAU DE VAGUEMESTRE” addressed to the French Institute, London SW7

2.4 We are not Alone!

European Allied Forces in UK

“... She said that some of the foreigners were a bit forward, but probably they're just lonely, being so far away from home...”



The British also recognized governments-in-exile for other countries occupied overrun by the Germans, e.g., the Free Polish, Free Czechs, Free Norwegians, etc.

The London offices of the Belgian Air Attaché and the Belgian Information Bureau were situated in Eaton Square, SW London. Letters for Belgians residing in the UK could be addressed c/o these offices. Once received the letters could then be re-directed to the correct address, thus concealing the addressee's true location.

Registered cover from a Belgian soldier's relative in Lima Peru, addressed c/o the Belgian Air Attaché in London



The bulk of the Polish Army in Great Britain during the war was located in Scotland

Offices of shipping lines were often used as undercover forwarding addresses.

Mail from Denmark for the Danish Merchant Navy was sent via Messrs Garland, Laidley & Co., 10 Traessa do Corpo Santo, Lisbon, Portugal. In Lisbon, the letters were re-addressed to the United Baltic Corporation, 158 Fenchurch Street, London. From this address, the letters were finally sent on direct to the addressee.



Posted Denmark 13 April 1942 (Censored Munich) - arrived Lisbon 21 April 42. Posted Lisbon 22 April Censored in London and then posted London 17 July 1942; arrived Newcastle -on-Tyne 18 July 1942.

2.4 We are not Alone!

European Allied Forces in UK

"...Poor things I bet they find it difficult being over here and worrying about their own families back home. Made me think of my Ted being so far away, I hope he's not worrying too much about us. We're OK"



Many of the men had relatives still living in occupied countries. To allow them to communicate without betraying the location of the Allied bases in UK. They were allocated Post Office Box numbers.



PO Box 237, London, EC1, written on the reverse of this cover as a return address, was allocated to the **Free Fighting Dutch**. Opened by both the British and German censors. (German re-sealing tape on reverse) The postmark has been obliterated, by the British censor, for security reasons.



FREE CZECHOSLOVAK FORCES

The Czechoslovak Field Post Offices cancelled all out-going mail with their own handstamp, and also used the same stamp as receiving marks on incoming mail. The result being these handstamps can be found clear of the adhesive stamps.



NOVEMBER 1941: Airmail St. Moritz to **PO BOX 226, LONDON**. (PO BOX 226 was an undercover address in London for the Czech army.)
Posted 19.11.41 St. Moritz, Switzerland. British censor PC90 label. Czech FPO arrival stamp 12.DEC 1941. — 23 days in transit
Mail from Switzerland to UK was collected at Geneva 1 post office, then by rail/truck travelling across unoccupied France to the Spanish border then either air or rail from Madrid to Lisbon. Then on by air to UK. Rate 60c up to 30g

2.4 We are not Alone!

European Allied Forces in UK

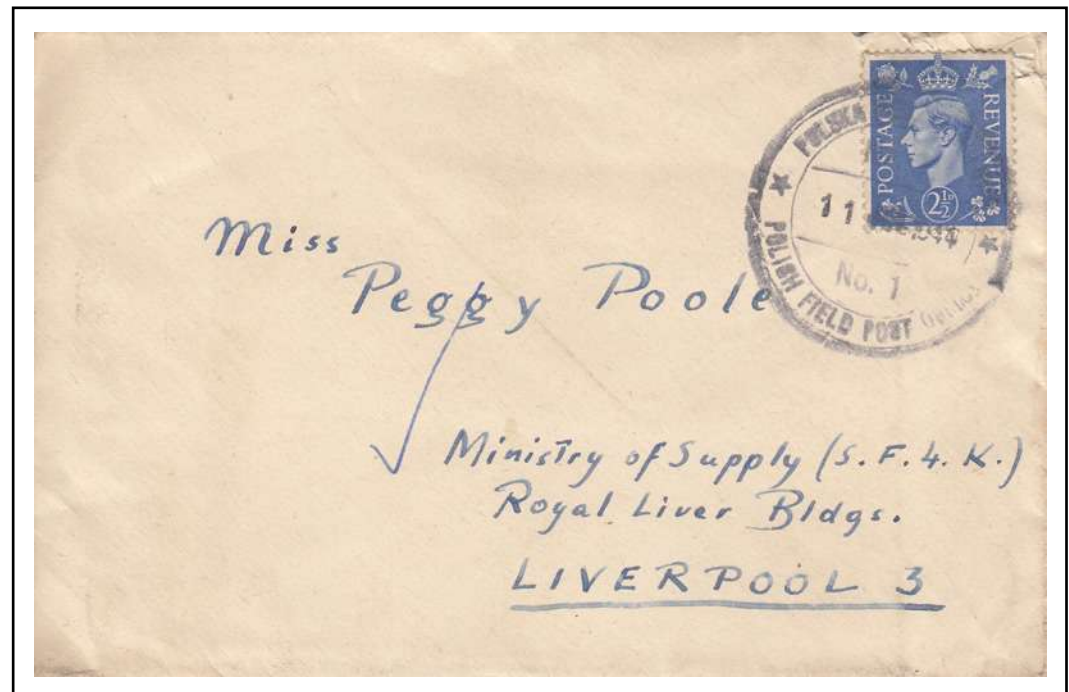
"... Mrs Bates daughter is even walking out with one of them Polish chaps, he does seem quite nice, but he is always so sad. She says he misses his home and family. I bet he does... Oh... drat this war! and blast Hitler!"

With their country smashed and defiled, Polish exiles went on to become involved in many European theatres of war, forming Air, Land & Sea Forces.



An actual incident in which a Wellington bomber, with a Polish aircrew attached to Coastal Command, attacked and sank a German U-Boat in the Battle of the Atlantic.

The Government-in-Exile produced several values depicting the Polish resistance in occupied Poland & the work being done by its troops attached to the British forces. Printed by Bradbury, Wilkinson & Co. all stamps bear the words POCZTA POLSKA. All eight stamps in this series were designed by Flight Lieutenant Artur Horowicz, a Polish artist serving with the Polish Air Force in Great Britain.



From Lt. Z. Bossowska, Argyllshire — Ministry of Supply, Liverpool — Polish Field Post Office No. 1 (This postmark was adapted from a previously proposed but unadopted commemorative post-mark)



Polish warships were supplied with special date stamps for cancelling the mail. Within this outer frame are contained the outline of a ship sailing towards the left hand frame line with the words AGENCJA/POCZTOWA (Postal Agency) in two lines at the bottom right hand corner. The date is enclosed in a framed box and after the date is the number of the Agency.

2.5 We Can Take It!

The Battle of Britain

Wednesday July 14 1940 — " There was a lot on the news tonight about the air attacks. As we were listening Dad said that he thought this was it, if Jerry break through now we are in trouble, this really is the Battle of Britain. But there is a spirit and a feeling that tells us that he won't ".

The Battle of Britain began - as the German and British Air Forces fought for control of the skies. German bombing raids began in earnest in September 1940. During the weekend of 7 and 8 August, nearly 1,000 people were killed in London.



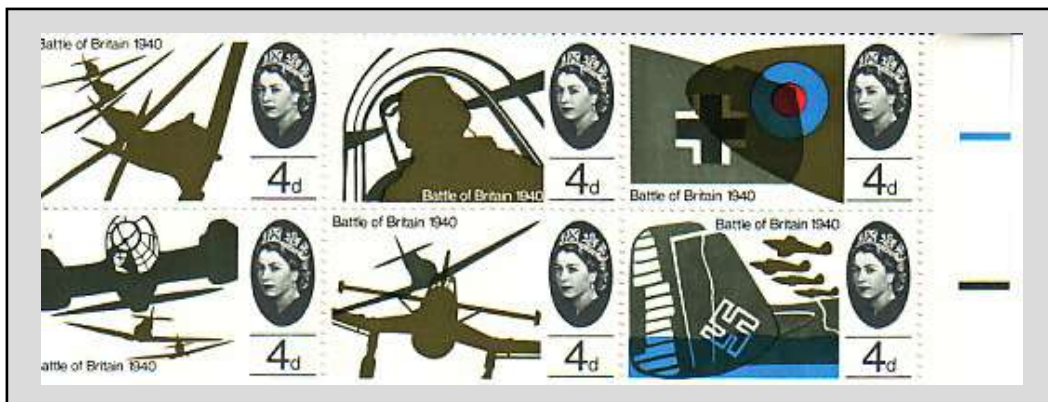
Around Britain's coast were the RDF (Radio Direction Finding) stations, forming the 'Chain Home' Radar system devised by R. Watson-Watt.

Hugh Dowding brought the mono-planes Hurricane & Spitfire into the battle and was closely involved with Watson-Watt's Radar.



Original artwork of an un-adopted design

The Battle of Britain is officially regarded as having commenced on the 10th July 1940. The Luftwaffe having moved its forward units to the coast of occupied Europe, had an operational strength of 1,000 Messerschmitt fighters and 1,250 bombers.



To challenge this formidable array R.A.F. Fighter Command under Air Chief Marshal Sir Hugh Dowding, had 700 fighters, of which 600 were Hurricanes and Spitfires.

Winston Churchill delivered another of his famous speeches, his message was a tribute to the R.A.F. fighter pilots: 'Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few'. The victory was not achieved without loss; 375 R.A.F. pilots were killed & 358 wounded.



R.J. Mitchell, designer of the Spitfire.

2.5 We Can Take It!

The London Blitz

Sunday September 8 1940 — "I would never have believed I would be witness to the terrible things I have heard today. They say last night the whole city of London looked as if it was on fire. Apparently the docks caught it worst, the German planes used the Thames as a guide for their bombers."

The sustained nightly bombing of London in the Autumn of 1940 was unprecedented in history, and represented the fiercest exposure of any section of the UK population to armed conflict in centuries.



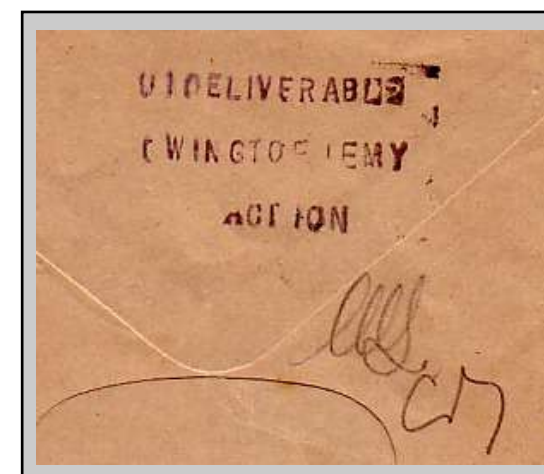
Beginning 7 Sep 1940, London was bombed on 92 consecutive nights. By the end of 1940 the death toll from bombing in London was 13,600 and over 250,000 Londoners had lost their homes.



By the end of the War in 1945, 1027 UK firemen and over 24 firewomen had lost their lives in the line of duty



Cover sent within London on 23 Sep., but by the time it had arrived the addressee had been bombed out. The cover was returned to sender with explanatory cachet on reverse.



Reduced scan of reverse showing:
UNDELIVERABLE/OWING TO ENEMY /ACTION
Cachet signed by postal authorities

As the envelope contained 'Printed Matter' 1d postage due has been charged for its return

2.5 We Can Take It!

St Paul's Cathedral bombed

Thursday September 13 1940 — "St Paul's Cathedral bombed last night! How much more can London take? In fact how much more can any of us take? Morale is low, and sleep deprivation is taking its toll, how can anyone get a good night sleep whilst all this bombing and destruction is going on."

Throughout the bombing raids the fate of St Paul's was a perpetual concern. On the night of 12 September an 800lb bomb, 5.5 feet long and powerful enough to destroy the whole facade of the cathedral, landed in front of the steps, penetrated deep into the earth, but failed to explode.



1969 St Paul's Cathedral essay. Hand painted roughs Ex. Farrar-Bell archive

Serene Survivor: Floating above fiery chaos, the dome of St. Paul's Cathedral inspired belief that evil Nazi ambitions could never defeat order, beauty and eternal values.



Original drawing of un-adopted design

It took a Bomb Disposal team three days to remove the monster bomb.



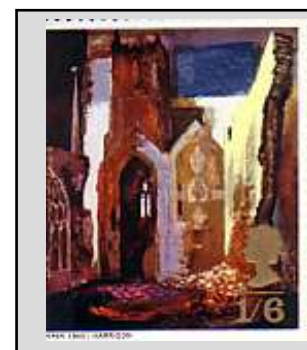
The men who saved St. Paul's were the first recipients of the new honour — the George Cross — invented to reward civilians who performed acts of conspicuous bravery.

2.5 We Can Take It!

Bombs damage the mail

Sunday December 1 1940 — “Southampton was bombed last night. We spent the night in the shelter because the surrounding buildings were burning so badly it wasn't safe indoors. Still, it's not as bad as November's bombing of Coventry, the Cathedral was totally destroyed.”

Coventry Cathedral was totally destroyed and the City devastated by 400 tons of bombs. Over the next few months other cities, including Birmingham, Southampton, Liverpool, Bristol, Cardiff, Hull, also suffered major bombing.



“Ruins of St. Mary le Port” - Bristol
by John Piper

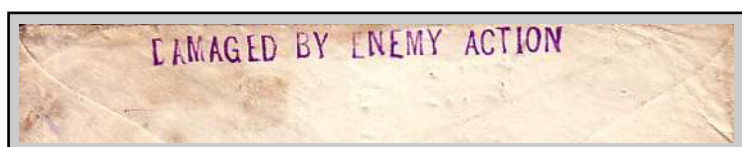


Volunteers attend to the casualties



Reduced scan of E.R. resealing label on reverse of cover [left].
“Damaged by enemy action” violet manuscript on front

During the bombing the mail was at times delayed as a result of the raids. Steps were often taken to acquaint the addressee with the cause of the delay. There are many examples of manuscript or even ‘home-made’ hand stamps for this period. These were usually applied by the individual postmen as the need arose.



Reduced scan of Post Office emergency handstamp on reverse



Temporary Office No.2 (Battersea, London) was established to help deal with mail casualties during the blitz.



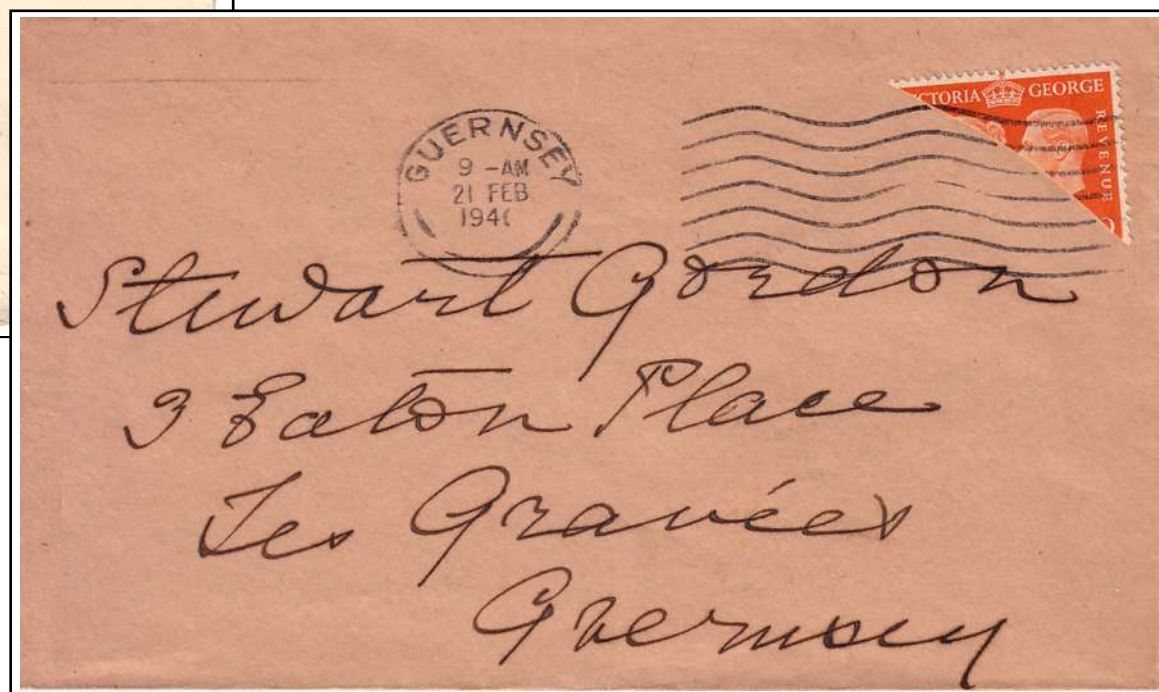
3: 1941 — Total War

3.1 The Channel Islands Occupied

Saturday January 11 1941 — " I do feel sorry for Mrs Waite, she still hasn't heard any new from her aunt and family in Jersey, not even a card at Christmas, poor thing she is so worried about them. I said I'd pop round and see her later"



The Germans occupied Guernsey on July 1st 1940 and from this date no further supplies of British stamps were available. By December supplies of the 1d stamp were exhausted so the German authorities suggested that the 2d stamps should be bisected diagonally; the Bisects were in use from December 27th — February 22nd 1941.



The GPO in Guernsey used a machine cancellation. As contact with Britain had been broken in 1940, at the end of the year the Post Office was faced with the need to improvise a '1941' year plug. The "0" of 1940 was filed in half to make it look something like a "1". →

The first Channel Islands stamp to be issued was the 1d value of Guernsey, issued 18 February 1941. Printed in typography by the local Guernsey Press Co. Ltd., and designed by E.W.Vaudin, this historic issued shows the arms of the island on a scarlet background, and is simply inscribed 'GUERNSEY POSTAGE'



Issued 18 Feb 1941



Issued 7 Apr 1941



1/2d issued 11.3.42 1d issued 9.4.42

Printed on French banknote paper which turned bluish when the gum was applied.



Guernsey 2 1/2d issued 12 April 1944 These stamps were strictly limited to 10 stamps per purchaser on any one occasion

3.2 In the interest of National Security

Postal Censorship

Monday 13 January 1941 — “Dad read in the newspaper they are now calling the Censors ‘Ministry of Information Examiners’. Just another fancy name for them if you ask me... Cooper’s Snoopers is what they should be called!”



The outbreak of hostilities between Nations disrupts postal communications in many ways. Emergency regulations were passed to legalise the opening and censorship of private mail.

30 April 1940: very early pre type **P.C.90 Interim Sealing Label** with manuscript 586 examiner's number.

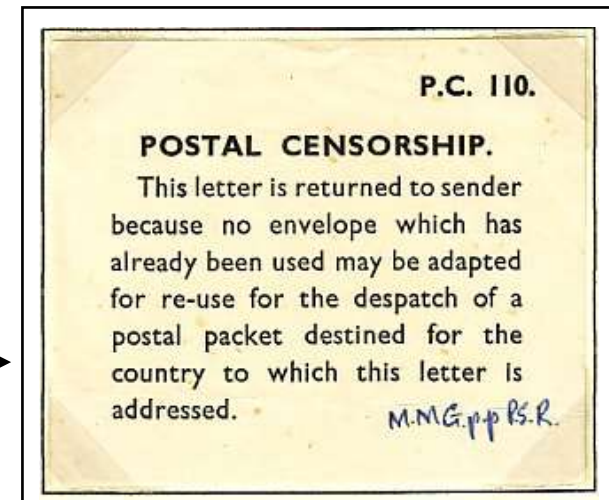
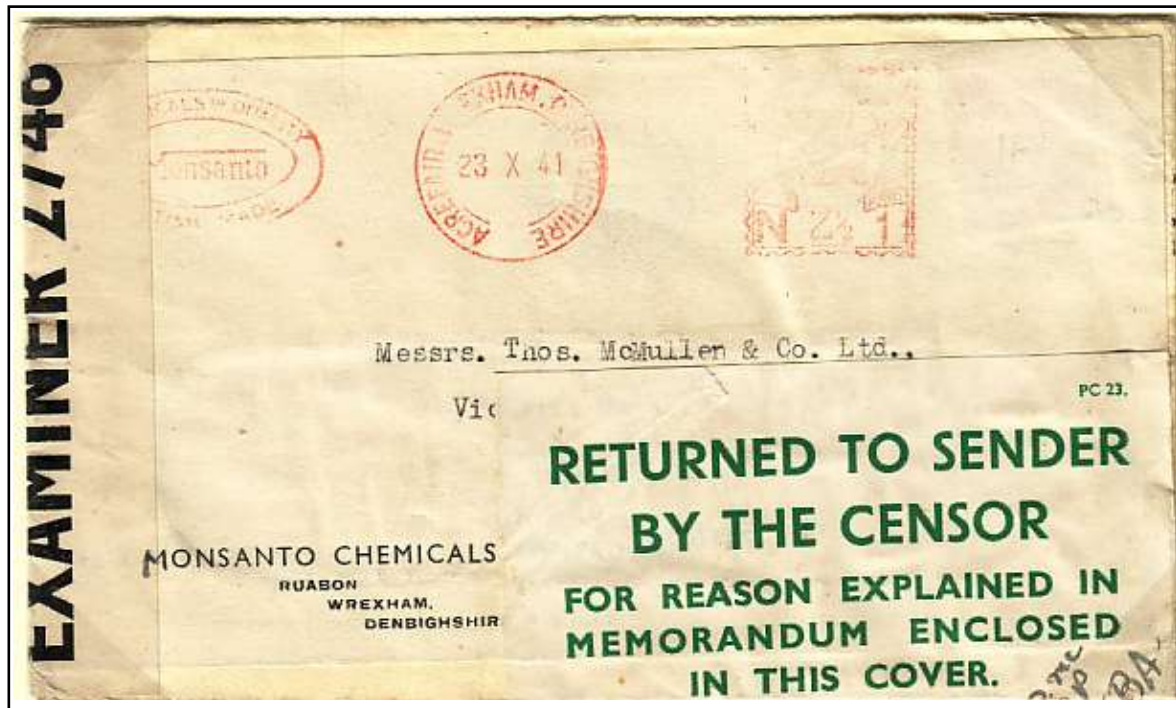
On 24 April 1940 the responsibility for censorship was transferred from the War Office to the Ministry of Information, under the leadership of **Alfred 'Duff' Cooper**. At the same time the re-sealing labels were changed from the earlier P.C.66 'OPENED BY CENSOR' type to P.C.90 'OPENED BY EXAMINER'



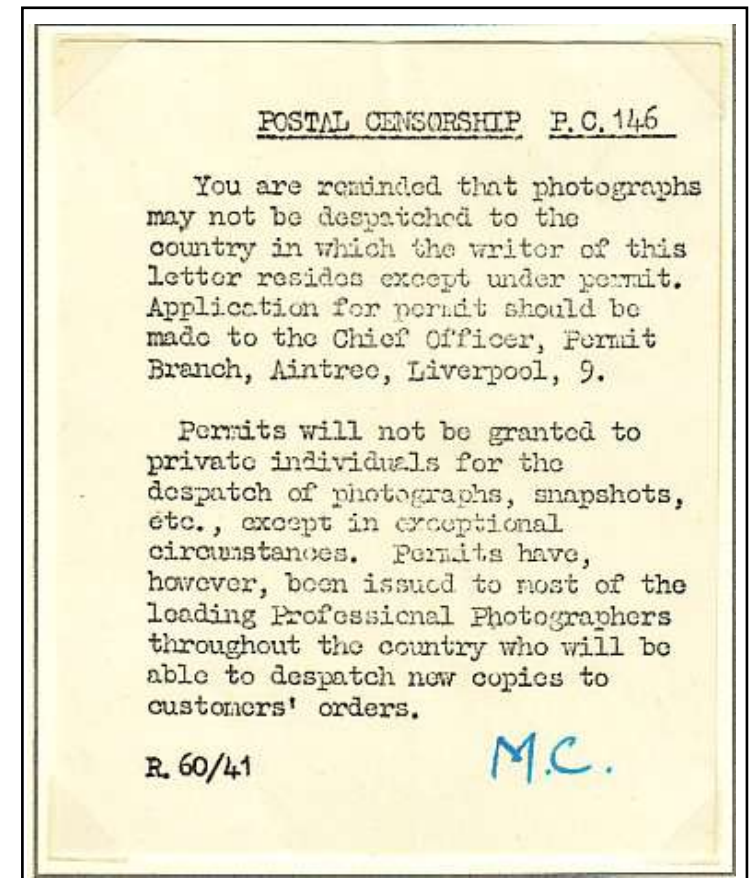
6 Dec 1941: Reykjavik - London
'OPENED BY EXAMINER 6977'
P.C.90 re-sealing label

"...I don't know why they want to go reading other people's letters., we know not to say anything to help that Hitler..."

Non-compliant outgoing mail was always returned with a censor memorandum explaining reasons for return...



..Non-compliant incoming mail (below) was never returned but a censor memorandum was enclosed explaining the infringement.



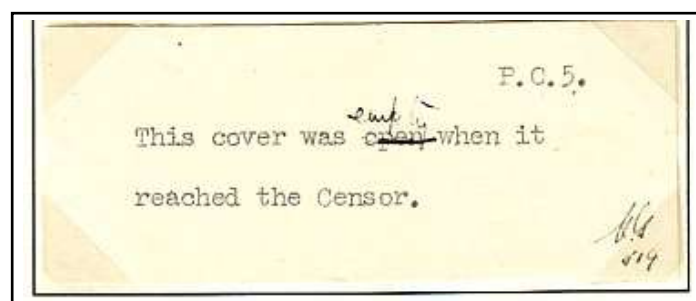
3.2 In the interest of National Security

Postal Censorship

"... Old Mr. Tomkins was moaning this morning that the censors had returned one of his letters he wrote to his daughter. I told him he'd have to be more careful in future, he could get into serious trouble if they catch him giving vital information away."

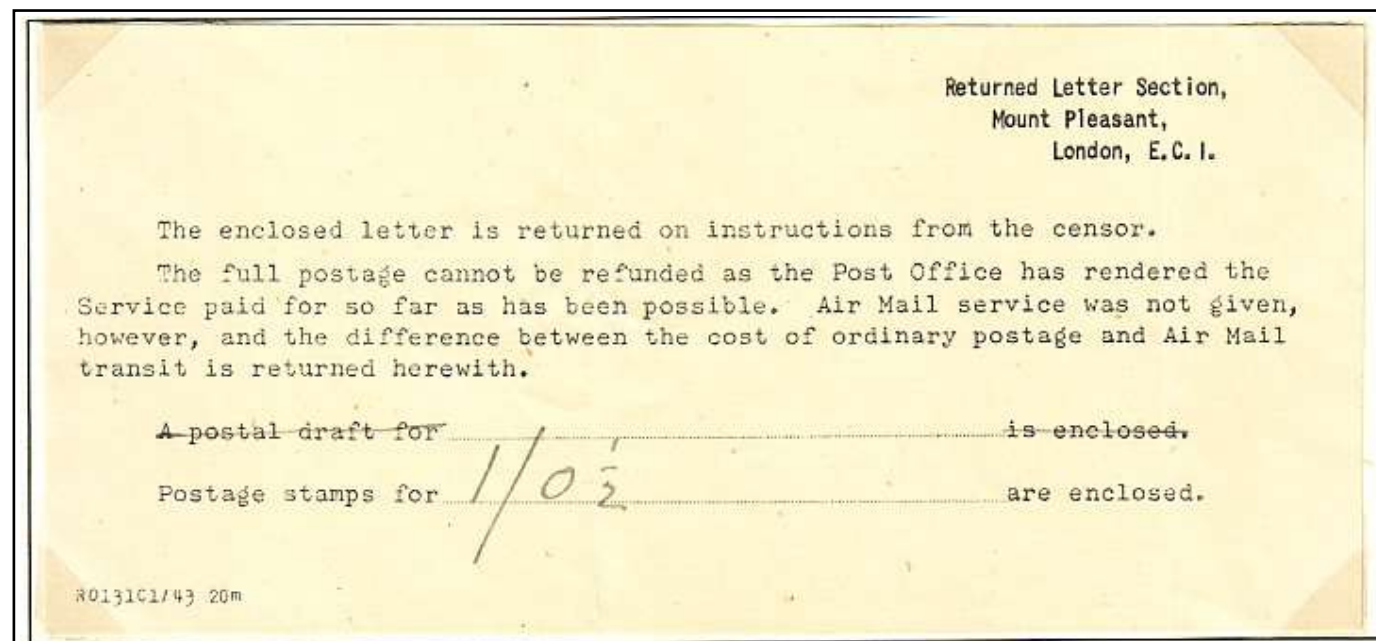
In time of war it is imperative to control information that may undermine the official message, such as publicity produced by the enemy, unwelcome news, military sensitive information, and potentially unsettling opinion.

To do this effectively requires Censorship at the point at which information is gathered, censorship of private correspondence being the most well known (and resented) examples of this.



2nd July 1943: A Czech philatelist on active service appears to have posted this empty souvenir cover to himself, via 'Post Restante', Brazzaville in Central Africa, only to have it returned by the censor!

Red Czech Field Post Office cancel; Boxed POSTAGE REFUNDED, and enclosed slip. Plus scarce P.C.5 slip 'This cover was empty...'



If for any reason the Post Office was unable to deliver, or as in this case the Censors refused transit, of a letter, it was returned to the sender with a refund (usually in postage stamps) for the portion of any service not provided, e.g., Air Mail service. as above.

3.3 “Give us the Tools”

Churchill appeals to the USA

Tuesday February 11 1941 — “Dad says Mr Roosevelt wants to help us but he can't because his country does not want to get involved with the war. So America is going to lend us vital tools, ships, tanks, etc. and we will pay for them when we've won the war.”

“Give Us the Tools” an extract from a BBC radio broadcast given by Churchill on 9 February 1941, Aimed at President Roosevelt. The speech implied that the British had already proved that they had the will and courage to conduct war against fascism, and all that was needed was the tools, which Churchill hoped the Americans would supply.



Roosevelt's Lend-Lease Act gave him the power to give Britain almost limitless aid. Not only tools, but huge shipments of food — dried eggs, bacon, beans, tinned meat — the ‘Sinews of War’ — poured into the country.

After the first few months, people's diet became the poorest it had been throughout the war - largely because of Germany's successful U-boat campaign. After March 1941 - with the American Lend Lease Act - large supplies of food came from the US.



British shipbuilders faced difficulties keeping up with replacing the lost ships.



Convoys had to be escorted.

1941 'RECEIVED FROM H.M. SHIPS' cancel with pink AIRMAIL cachet (in use for 6 weeks only)

3.4 The Spirit of Wartime

Thursday March 27 1941 "Went to the W.I. [Women's Institute] this evening with Florrie and Elsie, we learnt how to make the weekly rations last and even how to get extra sugar rations for making blackberry and strawberry jam, now we won't be able to get our Hartley's anymore."



1943 UPF Midget postal frank with small crown and prefix M3 used by the 'MINISTRY OF FOOD'

"FOOD IS A MUNITION OF WAR — DON'T WASTE IT"

The people were constantly reminded not to waste food; if they did, prosecution could follow. Courses were run to teach the women how to cope with the problems of rationing.



Jam was rationed (Mar 1941) but extra sugar could be obtained to make home-made jams during the fruit season.

During one bumper crop year 1,300 tons of fruit was turned into jam.



1939 UPF Midget postal frank with large crown and prefix M4 used by preserve and jam manufacturer 'HARTLEY'S'

Soup was another popular meal, often made from 'leftovers' when tinned brands became scarce

With many familiar foods becoming increasingly unavailable, Women's Institutes throughout the country held cookery classes, bottling talks and food preserving demonstrations, in order to help the housewife cope with the demands of rationing.



1935 Universal Stamping Machine Co. Meter frank prefix number 14. The GPO stipulated that the name and address of the renter of the postal franking machine must be printed on the envelope. (the black diamond mark denotes the cover has passed through a PO accounting census procedure)



Swedish booklet issued 8 September 1977, depicting typical food preservation containers, including alternative household measures e.g. 1 teacup = 210 grams.

3.4 The Spirit of Wartime

The 'Blitzkrieg'

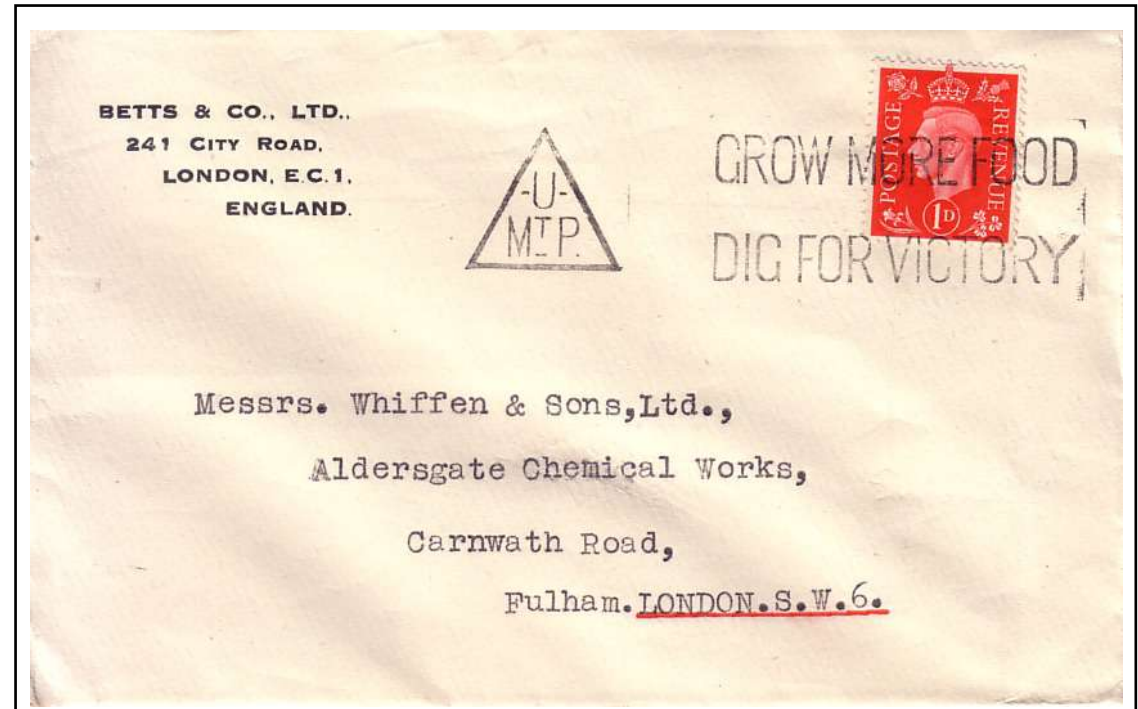
Saturday 17 May 1941: "One grows so tired of all the destruction and disruption... That Hitler is just a flippin' madman, bombing all us women and children... How much longer can it go on..."

The 'Blitz': During early 1941, waves of German bombers rained thousands of incendiary and high explosive bombs on London. The raids caused massive destruction with hundreds of people killed or injured.

*MTP - Mount Pleasant [London] triangular postmark used for bulk postings.
The 'U' denotes under 5,000 items deposited.
The 'GROW MORE FOOD DIG FOR VICTORY' slogan was only in use until mid 1941*

The size, location and function of Mount Pleasant sorting office made it a likely target for German bombers, and it was struck numerous times. On 16 September 1940 Mount Pleasant was hit for the first time by incendiary bombs. The Parcel Office received further direct raids from incendiaries and high explosives in October and November 1940, and again during 1941.

[In June 1943 - the Parcels Section at Mount Pleasant was totally destroyed along with 77,000 parcels. Two members of staff were killed and 34 injured.]



Although local Post Offices were among the many victims of bomb damage. 24,000 kept open for business throughout the war.

However, when one was put out of action a Mobile Post Office could be set up, in just twenty minutes.



The first emergency Mobile Post Office, provided on an experimental basis, was set up in Aldersgate, City of London. 6 Aug 1941

A portable Post Office could be assembled in 20 minutes.

3.4 The Spirit of Wartime

Delayed by Enemy Action

Sunday 18 May 1941 — "The damage to London is heartbreaking, and it's affecting the letters. Still, it's extraordinary how we are adapting to the bombing, none of us are foolhardy and sometimes we are frightened, but we've got the feel of these raids — Exhaustion and lack of sleep is the biggest threat."



During the Blitz, De La Rue's printing works was virtually destroyed by enemy action. Consequently in February 1941, 10,000 sheets of the 2d were sent to Harrison where they were line perforated 14 x 15; 50,000 sheets went to Waterlow to be line perforated 12½; De La Rue did manage to perforate 25,000 sheets, these were line perforated 14 x 13½. A further 50,000 sheets were perforated 12½ by Waterlow in July.



De La Rue p14x13½ Waterlow p12½ Harrison p14x15

1941 NZ 2d 'Blitz Perfs'

Rubber stamp 'DELAYED THROUGH ENEMY ACTION' was issued 1 March - . Subsequent instruction on 21 May stated that the stamp should only be used after 48 hours and only as a consequence of damage caused by bombing, and not through delays such as those on rail or road. On 17 July, a new 'Flying Bomb' rubber stamps issued and further instructions that they must not be used on mail going abroad, (including Eire).

Hitler recognised Manchester's importance to the British war economy as a port and industrial centre. Manchester had never before experienced devastation on such a scale. The city's civil defence services were overstretched. Central areas of the city, as well as Salford and Sale, were badly damaged, with many fires burning into the next day – Of the famous buildings in the centre of Manchester, the following were severely damaged: Free Trade Hall; Victoria Buildings; Rates Office; Cross Street Chapel; the cathedral; Chetham's Hospital; Masonic Temple; Corn Exchange; St. Anne's Church; City Hall; Smithfield Market and the Gaiety Theatre.



'DELAYED THROUGH ENEMY ACTION'. Flying bomb cachet

3.4 The Spirit of Wartime

London Blitz

Monday 19 May 1941 — " A young chap was moaning in the shop this morning that he didn't like his job. I told him he was lucky to have a job at all, some of those poor blighters up in London have lost everything including their place of work..."

De La Rue's London factories at Bunhill Row were destroyed in the Blitz in December 1940, and the old ways of commercial printing were finished forever. This made it difficult for De La Rue to fulfil all their contracts and they required help from other printers both to print and perforate stamps.



Censored cover bearing 5m & 10m printed by De la Rue on chalk surfaced paper.
Postmark 31.5.1940

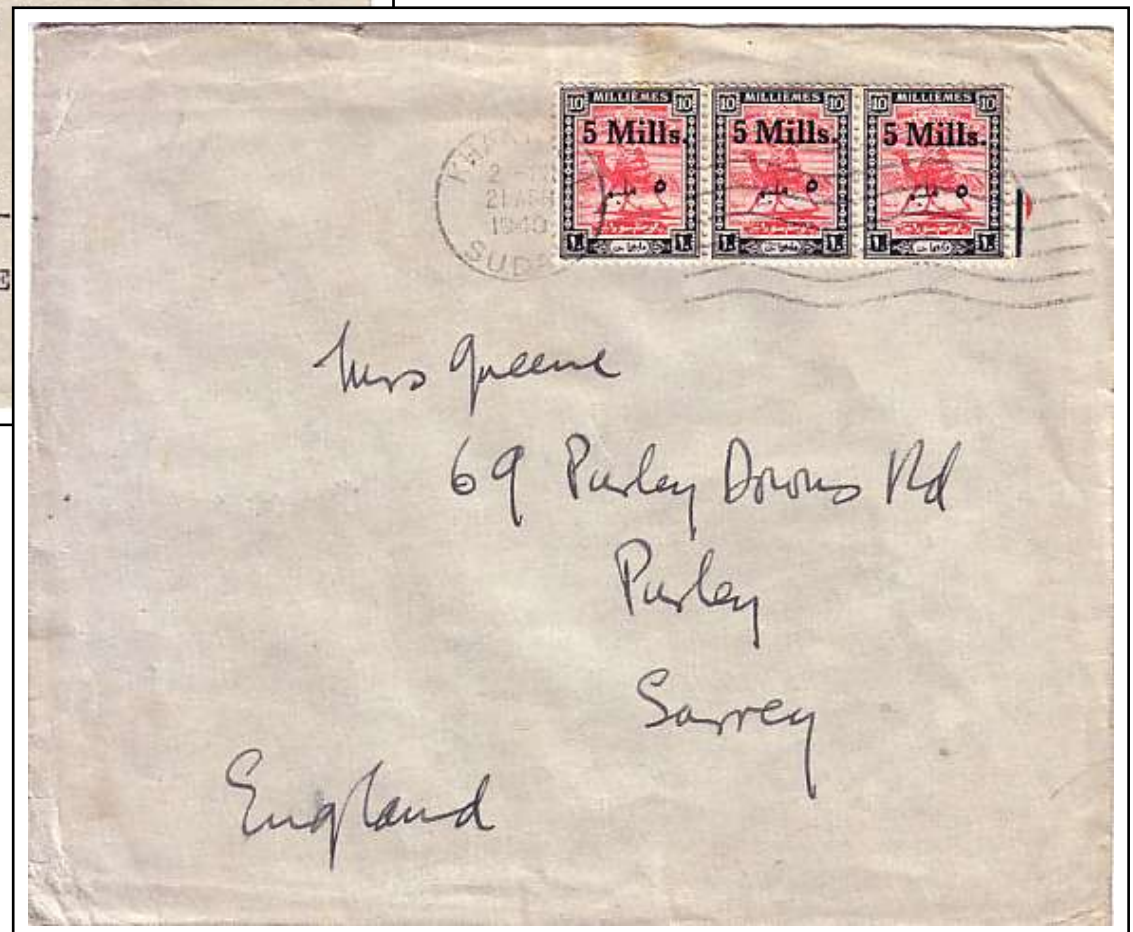


In 1940 the need for a 4½pt to meet the rate for Forces letters to UK., required 119,760 copies of the 8pt to be surcharged in English & Arabic at Khartoum. This was insufficient to meet demand and a further 60,000 4½pt on 5m were printed in English.



1927 3m printed by De la Rue on chalk surfaced and ordinary paper

In January 1940 there was a shortage of 5m stamps when the printers De la Rue & Co. were unable to supply a new printing. To overcome this 240,000 copies of the 10m were surcharged '5 Mills' in English and Arabic by McCorquodale (Sudan) Ltd at Khartoum.



"Sudan 5m on 10m cover" - strip of 3 of 5m on 10m on cover to England dated 21 April 1940.

3.4 The Spirit of Wartime

London Blitz

" ... there's many a chap out fighting the nazis who would give anything to be at home with a cushy job to go to. Many probably won't have homes let alone jobs when they do eventually get back. My Ted should be OK, he's in the print, there'll be plenty of work to be done when this lot's over."

Eventually, problems supplying the 'Camel Postman' stamps led De la Rue to approach Government Security Printers Nasik of Bombay, India to produce an emergency temporary issue. The new 'Palm Tree' definitive series was first printed in March 1941 and lasted until the reintroduction of the Camel Postman issue in 1948.

Emergency 'Palm Tree' issues



3 values issued 25.3.41

12 values issued 10.8.41



issued 10.8.41

The design, Palm Trees, with Tuti Island in background, on the Nile near Khartoum, was by Miss H.M. Hebbet, sister of the Director of Posts & Telegraphs. Printed in litho by the Indian Security Press at Nasik. Note the similarity in colours to the 'Camel Postman' series.



23.1.43 - 15m & 3pt 'Palm Trees' on double censored cover (Sudan & India)

3.4 The Spirit of Wartime

'V' for Victory

Monday 9 June 1941 — "We listened to the news earlier. It's wonderful to hear the positive messages being sent to all the people of Europe. Churchill's Victory sign must really give them hope. I think the BBC is quite clever using Beethoven's music, what a laugh!"

One of the 'V's most potent results was to hearten the people of the occupied countries. News was strictly controlled by the Germans as part of their own propaganda machine. The BBC's radio service was beamed across Europe to give the allies version of events.



Douglas Ritchie of the BBC European Service, suggested an audible V using the Morse code rhythm — three dots and a dash and the opening bars of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony — should be used as the call-sign by the BBC in its foreign language programmes to occupied Europe for the rest of the war. The irony was that the music was composed by a German.



The 'V' calling sign became a source of hope to countless numbers of people. The dot, dot, dot, dash of the Morse Code signalling the 'V', gave exactly the impression of an army preparing for liberation and victory.



Un-adopted 'Victory' essay



3.4 The Spirit of Wartime

National Economies & Savings

Monday August 25 1941 — "Went to the Post Office today, the girl gave me a stamp all pale and washed out. When I queried it she said they were the new issue and that the government was saving ink! What will they have us believe next! I bought a Savings stamp, at least they are still the same."

The ½d - 3d stamps were issued in pale colours as a wartime economy measure, designed to save both wear on the cylinders and printing ink, for those values in most demand.



Economy booklet issued June 1940 with plain pale green cover, no printing on cover and blank interleave to save ink. Booklet was only available from a slot machine inside GPO building, London.



Arrow indicating a convenient point for folding or dividing a sheet.

Cylinder 27 variety:

*Incorrect arrow below 7&8 crossed out.
Arrow re-engraved below rows 6&7,*

The Government appealed to the ordinary people at home to lend money for the war effort. This regular and on-going National Savings campaign proved to be phenomenal. There were savings groups in every street, office, factory and school, and such was the importance attached to national Savings that the BBC reported details of each week's savings contributions over the radio.



GB booklet issued February 1941



The real economic importance of the Savings Campaigns lay in the anti-inflationary effect of diverting private spending.

3.4 The Spirit of Wartime

Sustaining morale

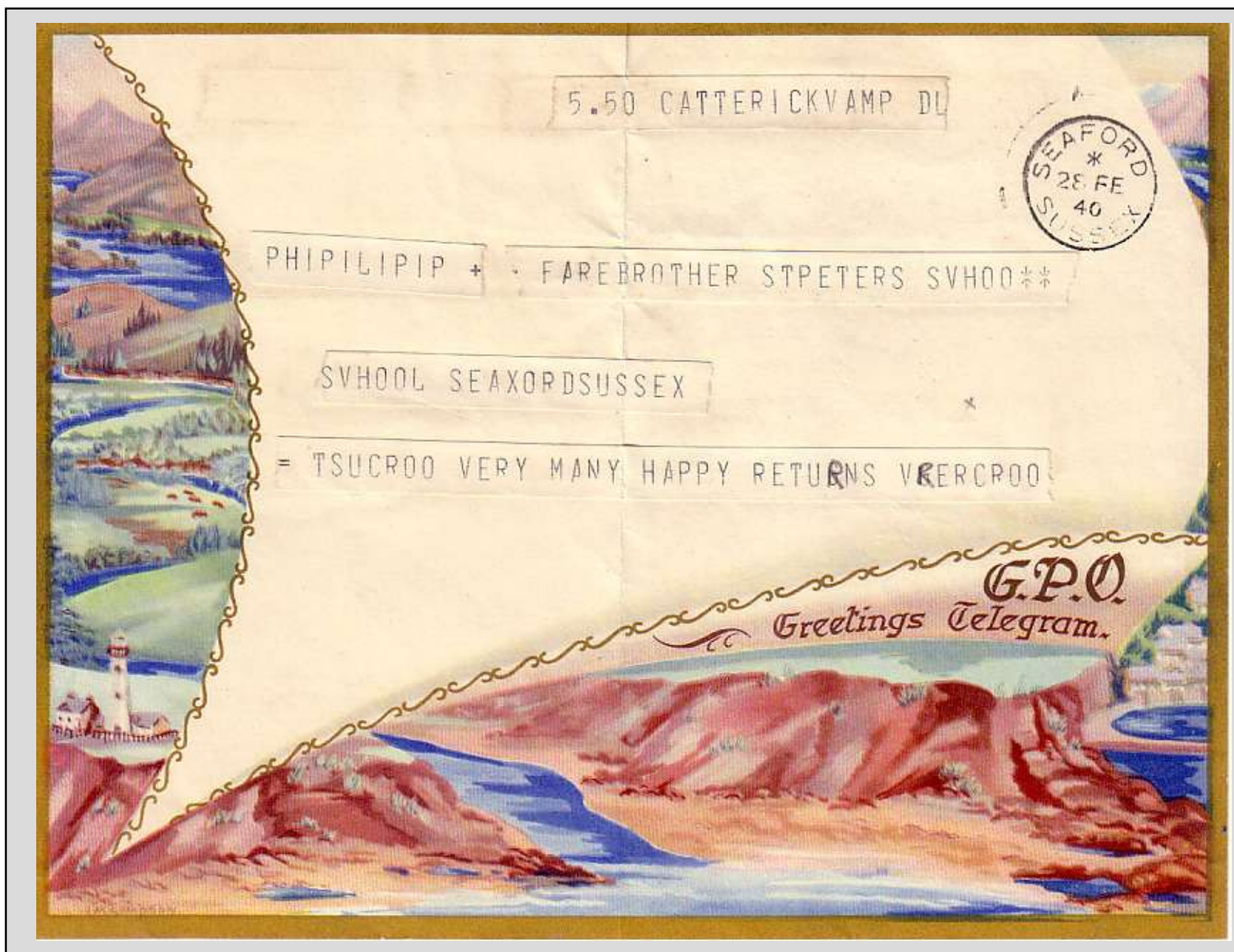
Saturday September 13 1941 — “Listened to the radio today — heard new singer Vera Lynn with a song that nearly broke my heart. They say she (Vera) is going over to entertain the troops, I do hope my Ted hears her sing, he would love it — people are going to find that song very special!”

The “White Cliffs of Dover”:
The lyrics subtly captured many aspects of the war — the bravery of the fighter pilots, the unsettling effects of evacuation, the defiant spirit of wartime Britain. But most of all the song dealt with the fervent belief in the day when war would be won and people could live normal lives again.



“The White Cliffs of Dover” - a popular song...

... sung by Vera Lynn ‘The Forces Sweetheart’.



14th Greetings Telegram to be issued. Artist Alan Sorrell

Late use of GPO Greeting Telegram issued on 1 May 1939 featuring the tranquil scenery Britain was fighting to defend

3.5 The world has gone mad

Japanese attack Pearl Harbour

Monday December 8 1941 — "The whole world has gone mad! Yesterday the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbour in Hawaii, destroying many US ships and planes, over 2,000 Americans have been killed. President Roosevelt has declared War on Japan. At least now they are in with us!"



On 7 December, simultaneously with their assault on Pearl Harbour, the Japanese attacked Malaya, Singapore and other Territories.



The bombing of Pearl Harbour brought the USA into the war alongside UK & USSR

The Japanese aggression led to the immediate suspension of the Pan American - Trans-Pacific Air routes.

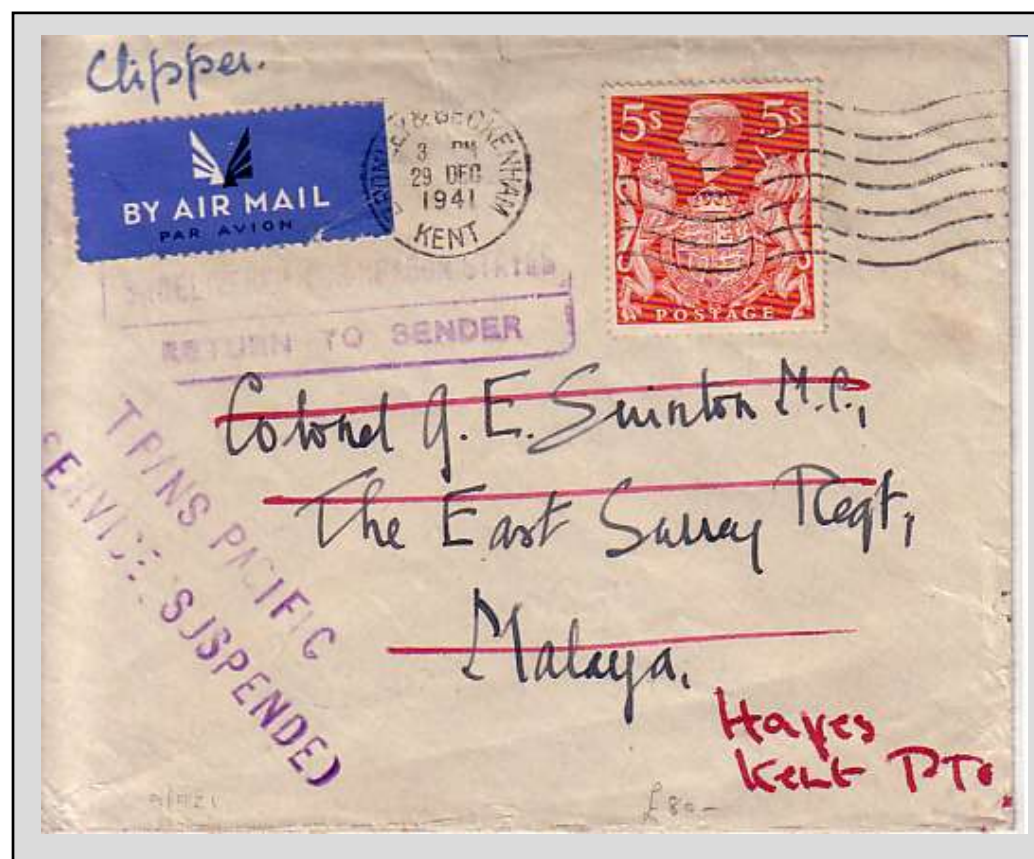
18 Nov 1941 UK to Chinese Protectorate Singapore (a Malayan Civil Service department which looked after Chinese affairs in Singapore) Rre-routed VIA NORTH ATLANTIC / TRANS PACIFIC AIR SERVICE. Returned to sender with the **'IT IS REGRETTED THAT THIS ITEM COULD NOT BE DELIVERED AT THE ADDRESS STATED'**

Air Mail fee **3s 9d** refunded.

29 Dec 1941 UK - Malaya
Handstamped
'UNDELIVERED FOR REASONS STATED/
RETURN TO SENDER' and
'TRANSPACIFIC / SERVICE SUSPENDED'

The East Surrey Regiment were moved to North Malaya in 1940, consequently when the Japanese invaded they were enmeshed in the fighting from the start. Eventually the men were involved in the defence of Singapore and were taken prisoner by the Japanese when the island was surrendered on 15th Feb 1942. For the next six months many prisoners were taken to Thailand to work on the Burma/Siam railway.

During that time Lieutenant Colonel Morrison remained in command of the constantly diminishing British Battalion, helped by Lieutenant Colonel **G.E. Swinton M.C.** [right]

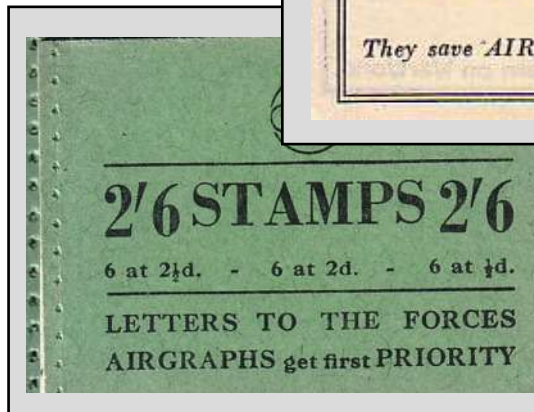


3.6 1941 — Christmas

Loneliness, and monotony

Wednesday 24 December 1941. Christmas Eve — “This Christmas is the worst so far... I am feeling very lonely and missing Ted. But at least I am getting news from him these days. I had one of those new Airgraph letters today, although it's not very private at least I know he's OK.”

In the aftermath of the collapse of France and with the blitz raging in Britain, it was felt that the mail services to the British Forces in the Middle East was too slow and that this was having an adverse effect on the morale of the troops and their families, who were anxious to hear news of each other. In May 1941 the Airgraph service was started, the lightweight film saved aircraft space allowing more letters to be carried at one time.

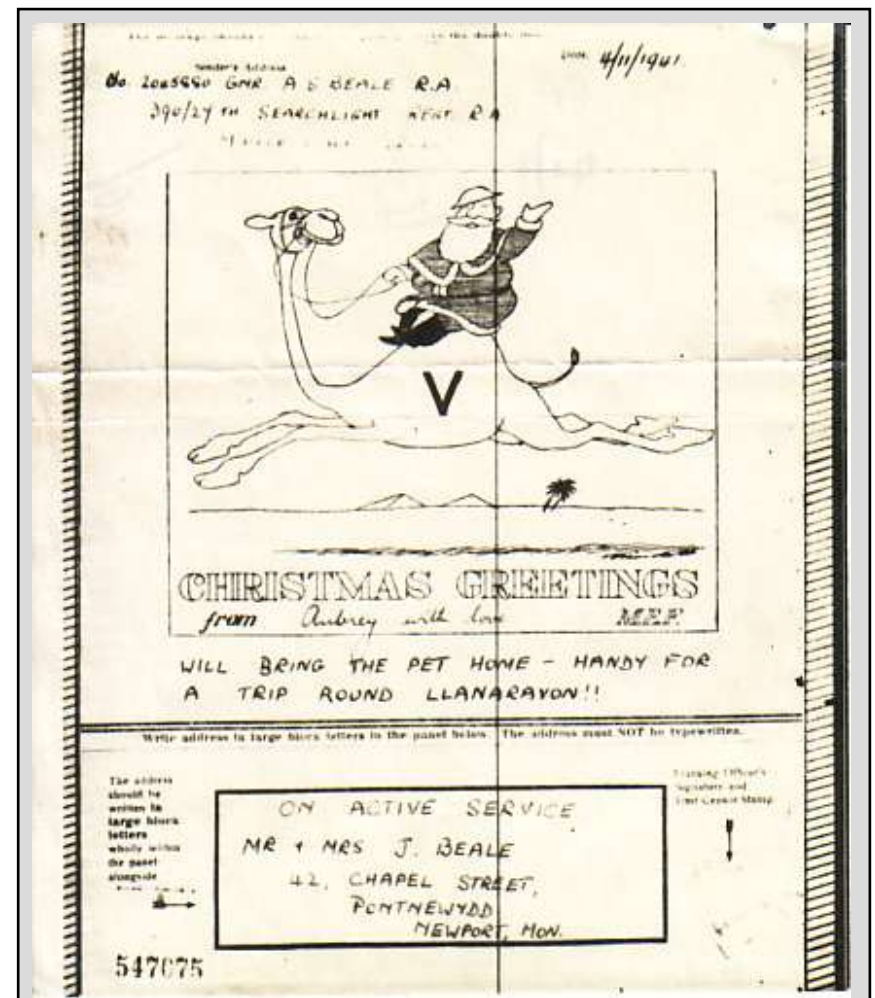
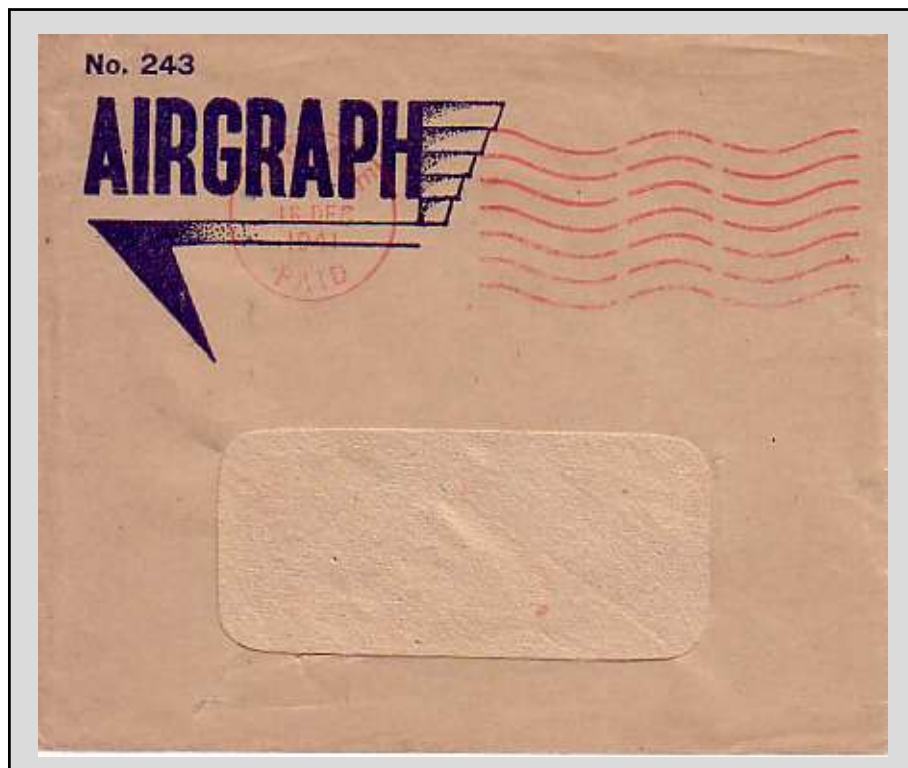


Advertising interleaf from
GB stamp booklet

An 'Airgraph' is three things: a large 8½ x 11 in form (a later version is shown on page 48) on which the sender writes the message. It then is filmed and becomes a ½ x ¾ inch negative. The roll of negatives is flown to its destination where it is processed, with the resulting photographed message delivered in the normal manner.



Film strip of seven airgraph negatives ready for processing



The 4 x 5½ in photographed message is folded and placed in a special envelope to be delivered by normal post.

4: 1942 — We Are Warriors All

4.1 A Woman's Place

Sunday Jan 11 1942 — "Hooray! I've got a job at the local engineering works. Just a couple of hours a day whilst the children are at school. I start tomorrow, the pay is not very good but it will be the first money of my own. I am even hoping to make some new friends."



In the 1930s, social roles were clearly defined — A woman's place was in the home. Before the Second World War, women were expected to be housewives or perhaps to do certain women's jobs', such as nursing or a domestic service.



timbres-publicité



The war changed the world of women for ever. When men went to fight, women were called upon to fill their jobs, and this included many jobs that were previously thought of unsuitable for women.



NSW 1897 First ever Charity Stamp to be issued. Paying postage of 2½d but sold for 2/6d these stamps caused an outrage at the time.

Before the war, nursing was considered one of the few suitable occupations for women...

...by the end of 1942 40% of employees in the Aircraft industry; 35% in engineering, & 52% in factories making explosives and chemicals, were women.



Publibel advertising card with a new design of stamp the 'Lion avec banderole' in brown, introduced in Dec, 1977. 1st Feb 1980 a postage rate increase resulted in an additional 50c adhesive being required.

Wartime work freed many women from the drudgery of housework.

4.1 A Woman's Place

Hitler's Noble Women

"Monday January 12 1942 — I really feel I'm doing something toward helping the war-effort, unlike the German women who think work is beneath them... They'll think different when we've shown them what we British women can do."

Women were idealized by Nazi ideology and work was not felt to be appropriate for them.

Hitler's male-dominated Third Reich had a clear idea of how the German woman should be viewed and behave. The male was the worker, provider and defender.



WHW (Winterhilfe) or Winter Aid was an enormous Nazi charity organisation designed to help poorer Germans and assist mothers to raise their children.

"The woman has her own battlefield... With every child she brings into the world she fights a battle for the nation".

Adolf Hitler



(Winterhilfe) or Winter Aid issues depicting the Mother as the 'Noble' woman, whereas in fact they were seen as nothing more than child-bearing machines, to be used in the service of the Master Race.



Women were given high rewards financially and socially for "bearing a child for the Fuhrer".

The more children they bore the greater their reward.



6 + 19 pf postal card

4.2 The shortages continue

Petrol rationing cuts

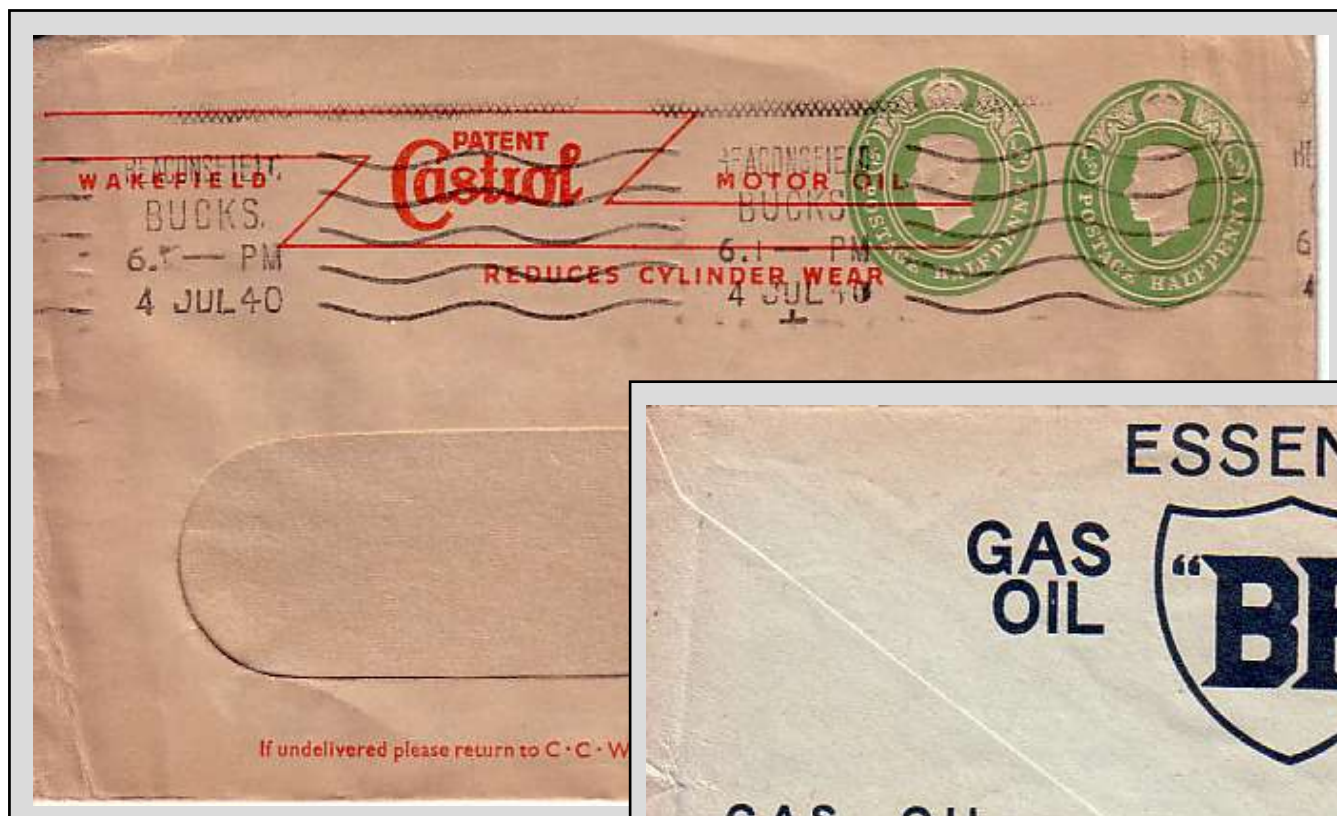
Tuesday March 24 1942 — "It is impossible to lead a normal life in war, I must admit it'd getting hard to keep our spirits up day after day. We're not allowed any petrol so we can't even go for a day out somewhere. Dad has locked the car away in the garage, he says for the 'duration'".

The Japanese Army occupation of Malaya, and the success of the U-boat attacks on the Atlantic convoys, meant that oil supplies to Britain were cut considerably. Petrol was severely rationed for the private motorist and was generally only available to licensed users whose essential needs were given priority.

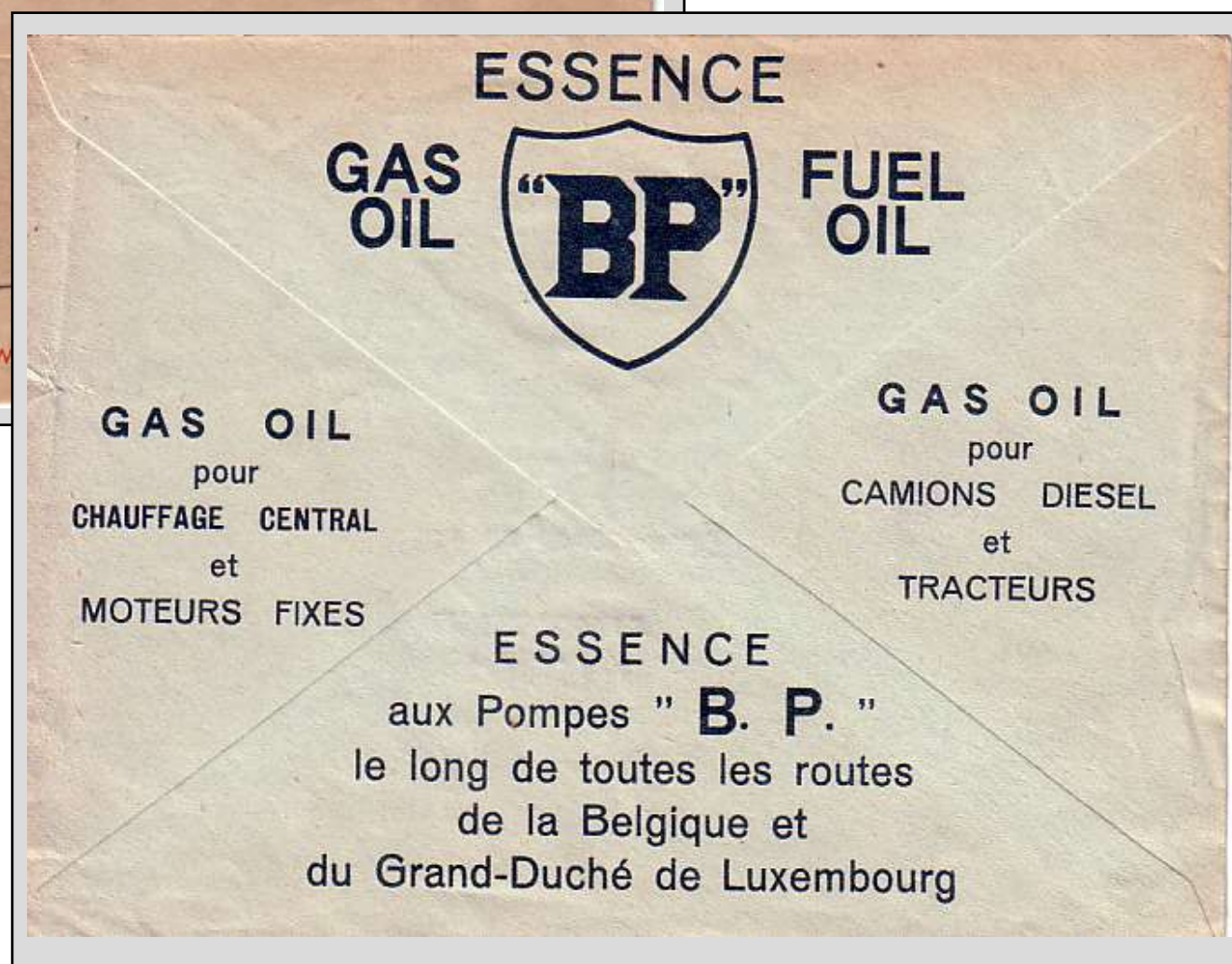


The Petroleum Board controlled all supply & distribution of petrol.

Petrol cost on average 2/2d a gallon. (coupons were also needed to buy petrol) Many private luxury cars lay unused throughout the war.



Updated postal stationery envelope to meet the 1940 increased rate for printed matter



Official letter from the Belgian Giro organisation sent post free, the advertising paid for the postage.



British Petroleum, the largest supplier in the UK, still advertised its brand even though all fuel was mixed to form a 'Pool' brand.

4.2 The shortages continue

Save the Ships

Thursday April 16 1942 — “Lord Woolton [Britain's wartime Minister of Food] says we all have to pull together and dig in to save the ships. I think we should all try and do our bit, if we all pull together we can beat Hitler, but we must do it together. We must think of the ‘peril of our sailors’ and cut back.”

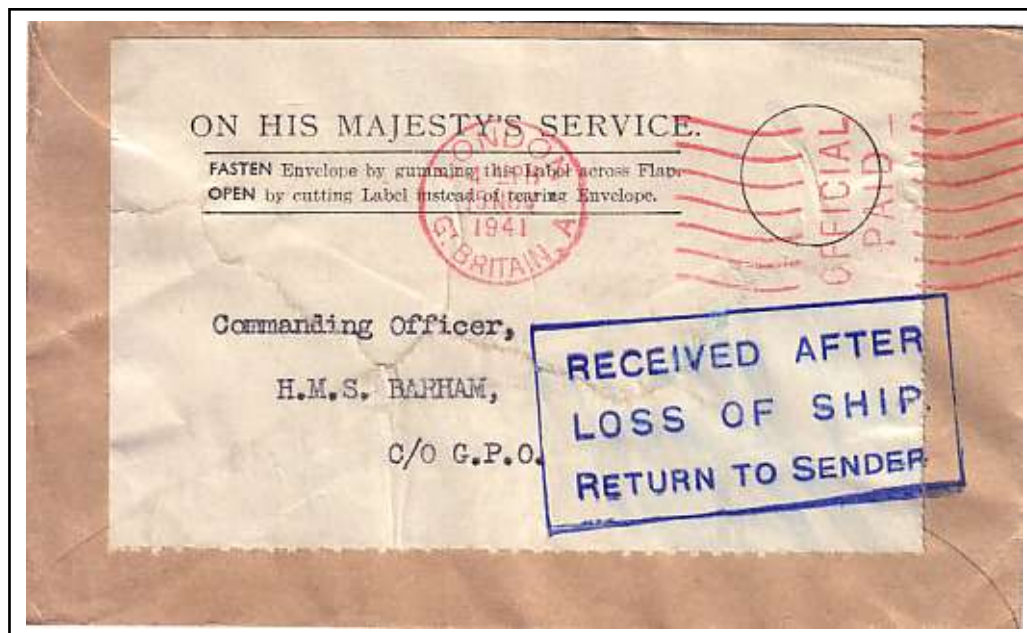
A Ministry of Agriculture slogan ‘Dig for Victory’ was a campaign that ran throughout much of the war. Earlier campaigns had seen many gardens turned into allotments. In 1942, the campaign was directed almost entirely to greater efficiency in home grown food production. People were urged to ‘dig the soil’ wherever they could and save shipping.



The benefits of growing one's own food to save on imports continued to be stressed throughout the war years.



The task of maintaining the sea routes fell to the Royal Navy with the support of various elements from the Allied Powers. To counter the Royal Navy's Mediterranean Fleet the German command ordered 10 additional U-boats to the area. These achieved quick and spectacular results.



German U-boats wreaked havoc



'Lady Nelson' torpedoed at dockside by German U-boat March 1942



The 'Lady Hawkins', seen here loading bananas, was sunk Jan 19 1942

Nov. 1941: A detachment from the Med. Fleet, known as Force 'B' were patrolling some 60 miles north of Sollum in the Ionian Sea. U-331, commanded by Lt. Commander von Tiesenhausen sighted the fleet, penetrated the destroyer screen and hit 'Barham' with three torpedoes. The ship was destroyed with all 868 of its crew lost.

"Saturday April 18 1942 ... Nellie's daughter Victoria has been called up. Nellie says she has gone into the Land Army as she loves gardening. I told Nellie her Vicky's in for a shock, I think they will expect more than a bit of gardening from the Girls."

To increase the amount of food grown within Britain, more help was needed on the farms, but with the country at war there was a shortage of male labour. To overcome the shortage the government established the 'Women's Land Army'.



DIG FOR VICTORY and PLANT FOR PEACE
1942 GvR Neopost No.1 meter issued to Waltham Cross Borough Council



"Plant food not flowers"

Many types of women volunteered for the WLA. Although they were of different age groups, came from different areas and often from quite different social backgrounds, they soon became adept at ploughing, sowing, and harvesting.



ploughing



sowing



Cameo Sowers and lined Sowers were issued in profusion during the inter war years, at various times, and in different formats as sheets, booklets and coils. They appeared in an astonishing variety of colours, types and values, and were often overprinted, until the Vichy government ordered their replacement in 1941.



1912



1934

harvesting



Potato harvesting — Pane from prestige booklet:

Friday May 22 1942 — "I saw Nellie again today, she's had a letter from her Vicky and I was right, the work is hard and the hours are very long. Nellie was a bit worried because Vicky said that there are Italian POWs also working on the farm. I said she'll be OK, our boys will keep an eye on them."



Letter from Italy to London, via Lisbon, opened by British & Italian censors (VERIFICATO PER CENSURA tape on reverse) — POW Camp 33 was at Shepherds Bush, London W12.

Delays in communication was a problem for both sides, and so by 1941 a reciprocal agreement was reached whereby each side carried its own prisoners' mail by air to Lisbon, where it was exchanged for prisoners' mail going in the opposite direction.

The first batch of Italian Prisoners of War arrived in Britain in Aug 1941, many were put to work on the farms and in the fields alongside the Land Girls.



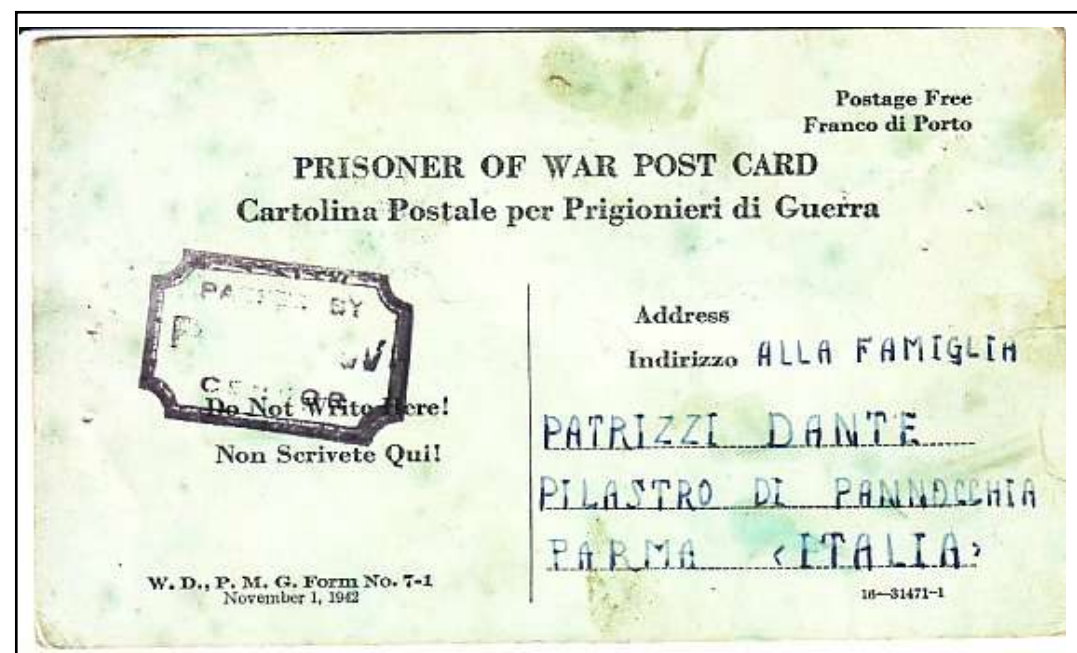
Guarded by British soldiers, the POWs helped with the work around the farms.



The Italians were often good and competent farmers and a welcome addition to the workforce.



With petrol for the tractors scarce, horses were brought back to work on the farms.



5 June 1943 card sent from Camp 127, High Green Sheffield, Yorkshire to Parma, Italy

4.2 The shortages continue

Harvesting the Hedgerows

Friday July 10 1942 — "I have Been feeling a bit down lately, so I went with the children for a cycle ride into the country. We picked loads of wild flowers for the pharmacy (they are asking people to collect them as there is a shortage of medicine.) "

Many things that were in short supply people could do without. The one thing that was a necessity rather than a luxury was medicine But drugs were in short supply.

Committees were set up around the country - known as 'Herb Committees' and women would go out into the country with their children to gather the much needed recourses for the chemists. Items such as nettles, Hawthorn, Colts-foot, Deadly nightshade and other herbs , known for centuries for their medicinal properties, were gathered and dried.

By 1943 medicinal imports were reduced by half.



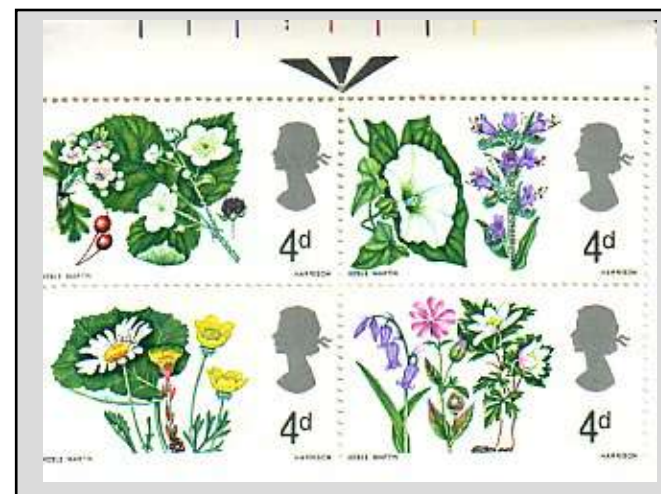
The Dog Violet: a powerful cathartic and emetic. At one time a medicine made from it was used in curing skin diseases.



1807 POSTA DI MEDICINA: The origins of its name (in Italian it means "medicine") are quite uncertain. Legend tells that the Emperor Frederick Barbarossa, passing through Medicina from Milan fell ill and miraculously recovered from this illness because of a snake that accidentally came into the pot of his soup.



In May 1946 postal charges were reduced and all stocks of stamps were overprinted -10% at the local post offices. A very small number of 'publibel' cards received the overprint.



Bramble: The bark of the root and the leaves contain tannin, a capital astringent and tonic, and a valuable remedy for dysentery and diarrhoea.

Hawthorn: Cardiac, diuretic, astringent, tonic. Cardiac tonic in organic and functional heart troubles.

Coltsfoot: Demulcent, expectorant and tonic. One of the most popular of cough remedies.

Ox-Eye Daisy: successfully employed in whooping-cough, asthma and nervous excitability.

Wood anemone: application of various parts of the plant for headaches, and rheumatic gout.

4.2 The shortages continue

The Post Office runs out of ink

Monday 30 November 1942 — “ They are changing the colour of the stamps. Not that it will bother me, I can't think why anyone should need a 10/- stamp anyway, it's almost quarter of my wages. My, I am getting grumpy ! I think all these changes and shortages are getting to me, I must try and cheer up.”

As was the case for the low values in 1941 the colour of two of the high value stamps was changed in 1942.



Due to the shortage of suitable coloured ink, the 2/6 brown was changed to yellow-green, and the 10/- dark blue to ultramarine



15.10.42 UK — Mexico Airmail Rate
2/- per ½oz. Quadruple rate 8/-



Dark Blue



Ultramarine

London —
Argentina
airmail rate
(rate 3/6 per
½oz.)
10/6d Triple
rate cover
Undated Lon-
don cancel
Orange Press
Censor Label

4.3 — 1942 Christmas - A Gloomy Time

Little to buy in the shops

Monday 21 December 1942 — “With the extra money I am bringing home from working I thought I would be able to buy nice things for the home and the children this Christmas, but there is very little in the shops. How strange it seems having money in my purse and nothing to buy. I bought some wine.”

Traditional household goods such as cutlery, pianos, and radios had become almost unobtainable. For the children, there were very few toys in the shops and the rations of food, clothes and even fuel were meagre.



Luxury items such as ribbons and silk were very scarce.



July 1942 sweets and chocolate rationed

Above- Dual language Publibel card with stamp imprint “lion écusson” (1935-51)

First issued in 1933, the internal “Publibel” series of Belgian postcards were printed by l'Agence Belge de Publicite Postale with the objective of raising funds for various charities. The design of the card includes an advertisement in the bottom left hand corner. The advertisement, which may be sponsored by government or commercial enterprises, appears in single language variants, French, Flemish or German and multiple language variants depending on the area in which the sponsor required the cards to be distributed. The series reflects the changes in internal postcard rates seen in ordinary postcards, but is unique in employing only definitive stamps with the lion design current at the time of issue. The issue of ‘Publibel’ cards ended in 1984.

French language card shown on right with stamp imprint “chiffre sur lion avec banderole” in use 1977-84

Wines and spirits were plentiful, but French goods were scarce.



5: 1943 — We Still Have a Long Way to Go

5.1 Ships the life-blood of the Nation.

Monday 11 January 1943: "Mavis told me her George had been posted abroad. She got a letter this morning. He was supposed to get leave at the end of the month; she was very upset, especially as the baby is due soon."

Britain's food imports - particularly from Europe and the Empire - were seriously impeded by German u-boats.
By 1943, food imports were half their pre-war level.

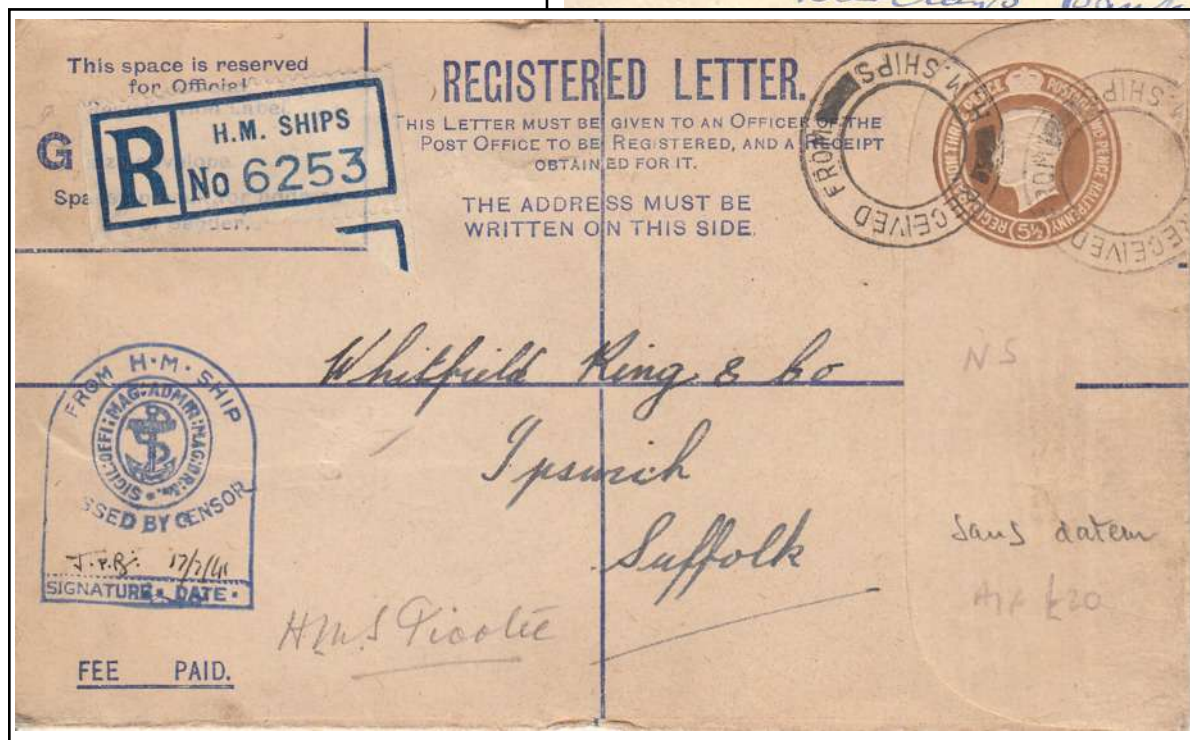


RECEIVED FROM HM SHIPS used in conjunction with town die indicating port of entry, and date, used from 1939 - March 1940.

RECEIVED FROM HM SHIPS with town die removed for security reasons, used from March 1940.



RECEIVED FROM HM SHIPS undated single ring. Naval 'tombstone' censor mark signed & dated 30.9.42



Registered cover with RECEIVED FROM HM SHIPS undated double ring.

Reg. Label: H.M.SHIPS

M/s HMS Picotee

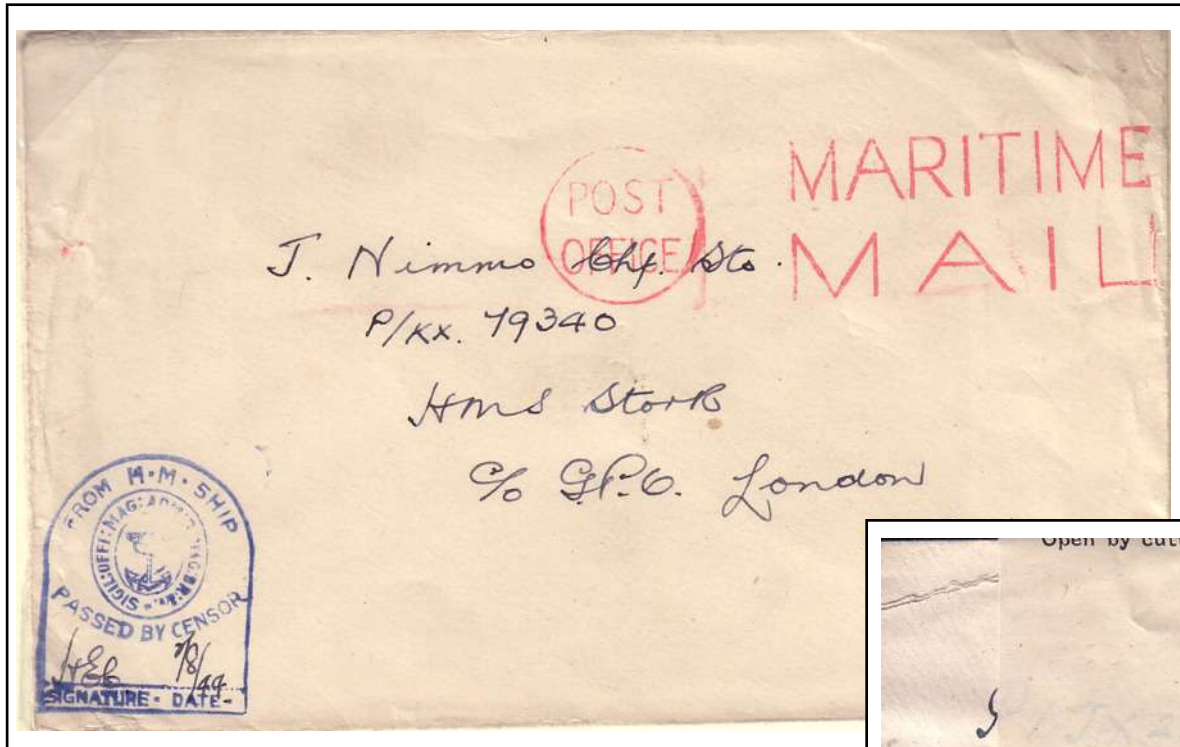


British freighter 'Umtata'
Torpedoed July 1942

5.1 Ships the life-blood of the Nation.

Ships of the Allied Nations

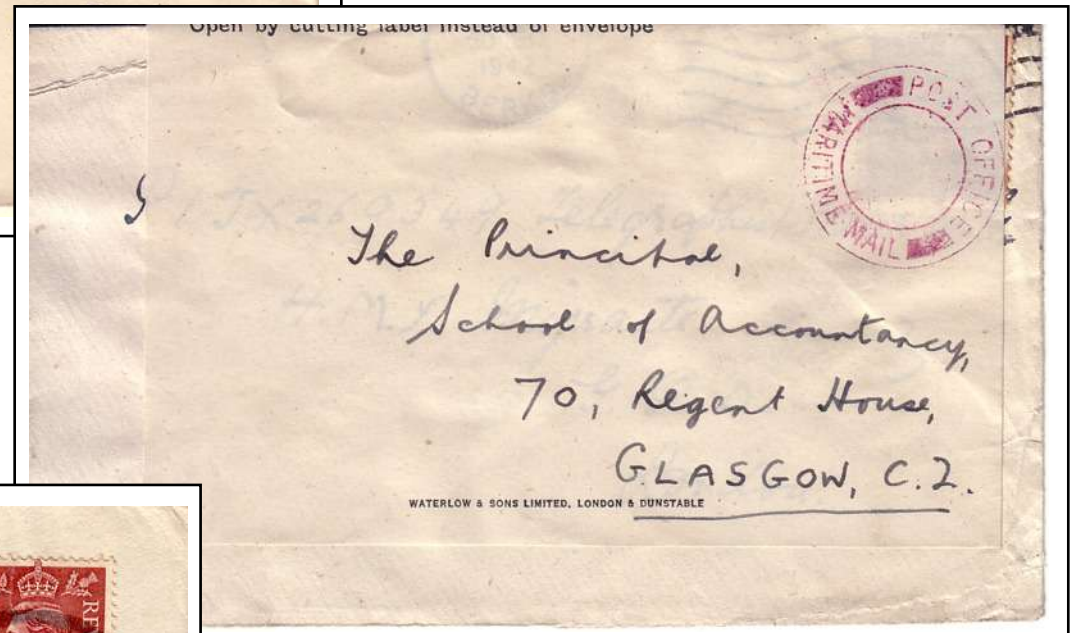
Monday 18 January 1943: "I kept thinking about Mavis and her George all day yesterday. It must be hard for these young boys and their friends, going away to who knows where, and not even knowing when or if they will be coming back. Oh how tiresome this war is for everyone."



Blue Naval 'Tombstone' censor mark signed and dated 7/8/44. During this period HMS Stork was deployed on convoy defence and based at Gibraltar.

By the end of 1942, British ports were serving more and more ships of the Allied nations, in particular the USA. It was decided that the use the 'RECEIVED FROM HM SHIPS' mark should be discontinued. On 1st Jan 1943 it was replaced by MARITIME MAIL with a circular POST OFFICE die.

Red POST OFFICE
MARITIME MAIL
machine mark used on
mail free of postage.



Red double circle POST OFFICE
MARITIME MAIL handstamp
used on mail free of postage.



Black single circle POST
OFFICE MARITIME MAIL
rubber handstamp used
to cancel postage stamp.

Reverse has return address
HMS Challenger c/o GPO
London. Challenger served as
a government Survey ship
until 1942.



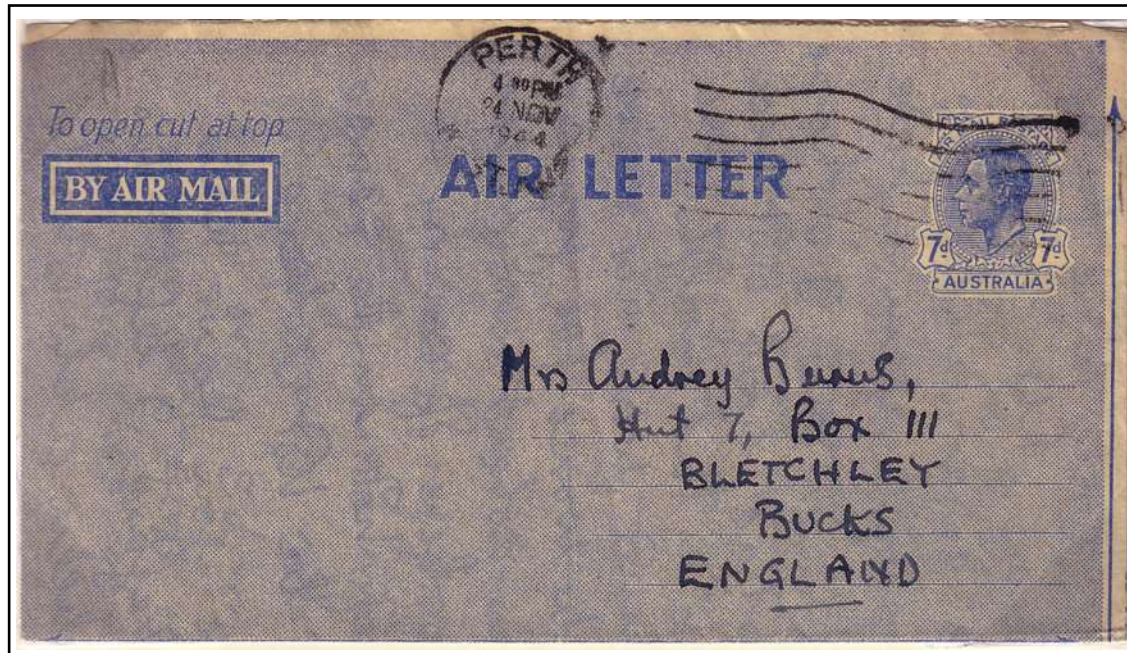
'Awatea' became a troop carrier; sunk in the Mediterranean, 1942

5.1 Ships the life-blood of the Nation.

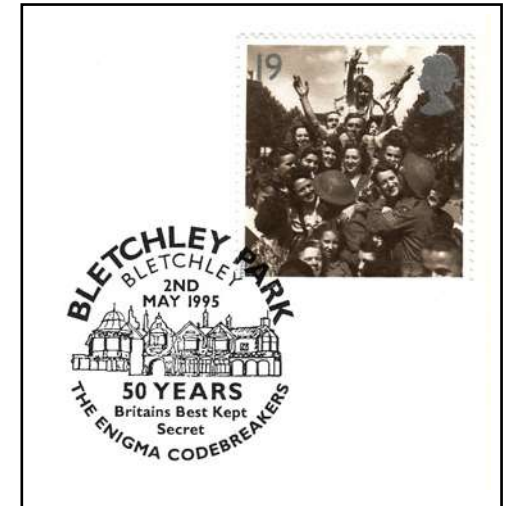
The Battle of the Atlantic

Saturday 23 January: Sheila's lad is a strange one... he's home on leave but he won't talk about his 'work'. Even Sheila doesn't know what he does... top secret is all he will say. Seems funny to me, fancy not telling your Mum what you do and where you're living. I think she's quite worried. Anyway... Good News at last! were winning the battle in the Atlantic; our lads are getting the better of them U-Boats ... And about time too!

Top secret and unbeknown to the public for nearly 50 years, the 'Battle of the Atlantic' was not actually won on the High-Seas but in a small Buckinghamshire village called Bletchley, home of the Government Code & Cipher School.

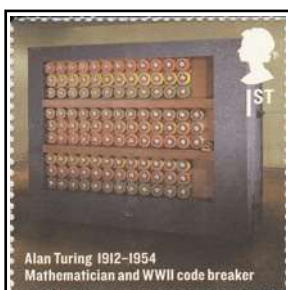
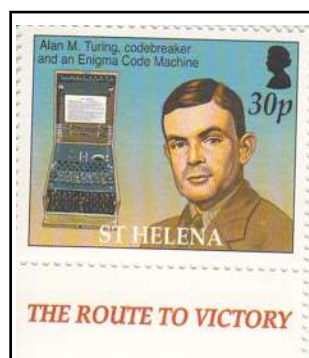


November 1944 PO Box 111 — The undercover address of the GCCS.
Hut 7 was part of the Naval Section handling the coded messages index.

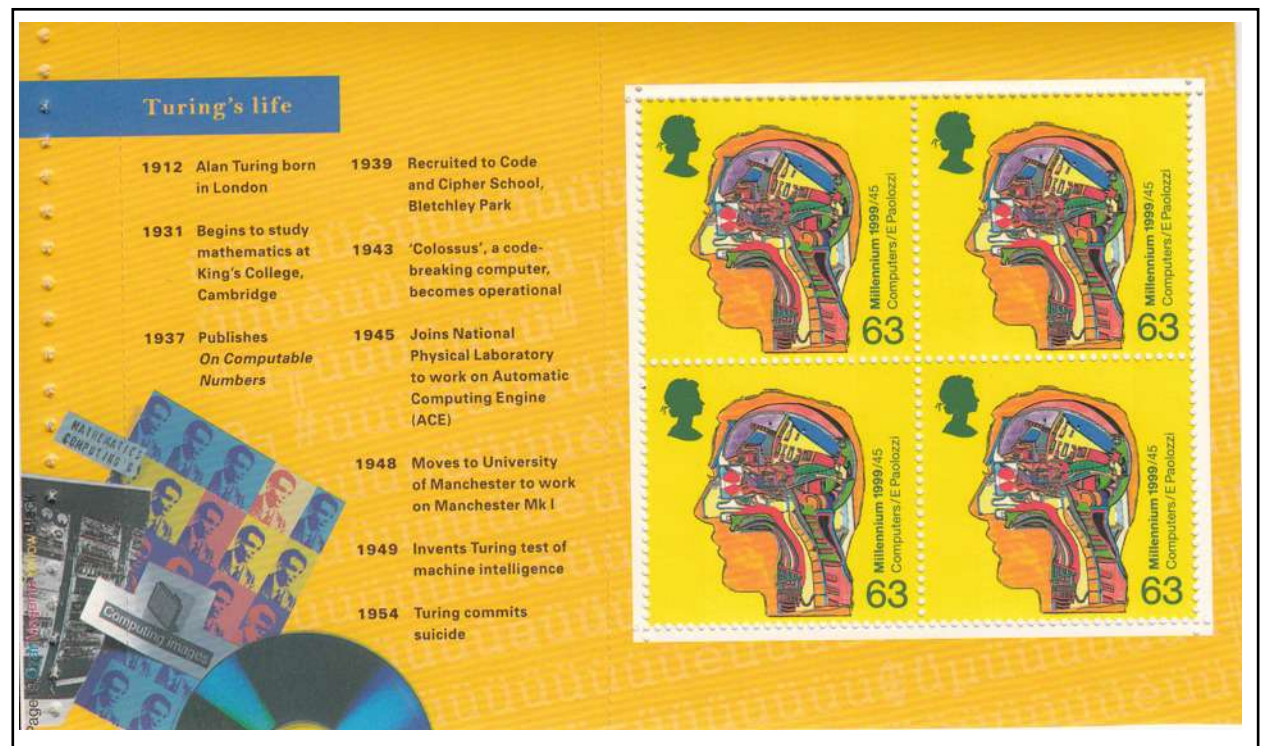


Enigma was the machine used by the Germans to encipher their most secret messages. **Ultra** was the intelligence the British derived from breaking the ciphers; and **Bletchley Park** was where the breaking of German & Japanese codes took place.

The brilliant mathematician Alan Turing's leading role in breaking the German Enigma ciphers during World War II was critical to Allied victory in the Atlantic.



To speed up the code breaking process, Turing developed the **Bombe**, an electro-mechanical machine that greatly reduced the odds, and thereby the time required, to break the daily-changing Enigma keys.



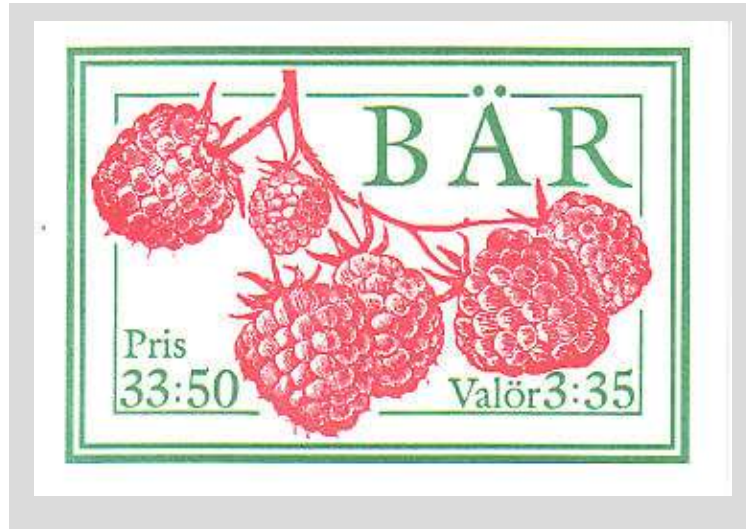
Pane from 1999 GB booklet 'World Changers'

5.2 No More Bananas!

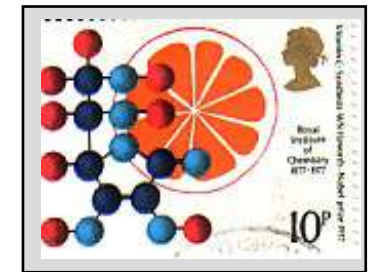
Berries & fruits to be gathered

Friday February 5 1943 — “Now we are told we are not going to receive any more fresh fruit, what am I to give the children? at least we have the blackberries and raspberries we picked and bottled last year; and we can go out and pick some rose-hips later, last autumn they paid 3d a pound.”

Although ‘exotic’ fruits had been banned from the shops, there were still some fruits obtainable from the allotments and hedgerows.



Foraging in hedgerows and fields was a significant way of supplementing wartime rations. Wild berries and fruits were made into preserves, blackberries and crab apples were bottled and added to pies in the winter, and rose-hips were converted into health-giving syrups



Youth squads picked 500 tons of rose-hips, enough to supply the juvenile population with rose-hip syrup throughout the war.



1996, *Winterberries*: (face value 35kr) shows rose-hips on booklet cover and has a “spine print”. The stamps inside show Juniper berries and rose-hips.

The black rectangular marking over the cover folding is called “Spine print” and is printed on every 50th booklet. It is made for easier counting of the booklets which often came to the Post Offices in a “100-bundle”.



1995, *Berries*: (face values 33.5kr) The “2” (to the left of the stamps) is a marking on the printing cylinder. 24 booklet panes after each other made up a whole lap of the printing cylinder. So it was at the cylinder “1” on the first half and “2” on the second half.

When there are two printing markings on the same booklet it is called a “double”. The one from 1995 shown here are a “double” with a “spine print” and (cyls) “2”.

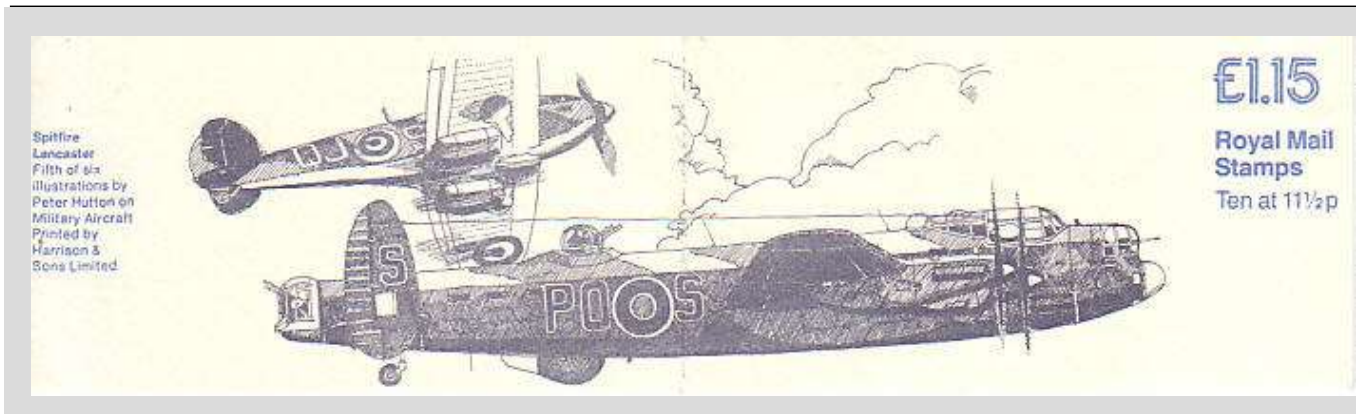
1995 Booklet: The cover is printed on two different machines, letterpress or offset. The one I show here is from the letterpress.

5.3 Comforts & Aid for the Allies

Nursing brings some relief

Sunday April 4 1943 — "I have just heard Mrs Hudson's boy is in hospital, he was shot down couple of months ago and is in a bad way. They have transferred him to a hospital where they are doing new treatment. She was very upset this morning, her boy is the apple of her eye."

Allied bombing began to bring devastation to German cities with the specific aim of breaking civilian morale, but at a cost. The high casualty rate suffered by RAF Bomber Command crews alone amounted to 55,573 dead, 4,000 wounded and 9,784 prisoners.



Allied Airman

The Avro Lancaster flew 156,000 sorties over Europe and dropped 600,000 tons of bombs. 7,377 were built, although thousands were lost in action.



"The Nazis entered this war under the rather childish delusion that they were going to bomb everyone else, and nobody was going to bomb them. At Rotterdam, London, Warsaw, and half a hundred other places, they put their rather naive theory into operation. They sowed the wind, and now they are going to reap the whirlwind." Sir Arthur 'Bomber' Harris, London 1942.



Archibald McIndoe achieved international fame during the war, for his pioneering work with plastic surgery on Battle of Britain fighter pilots.

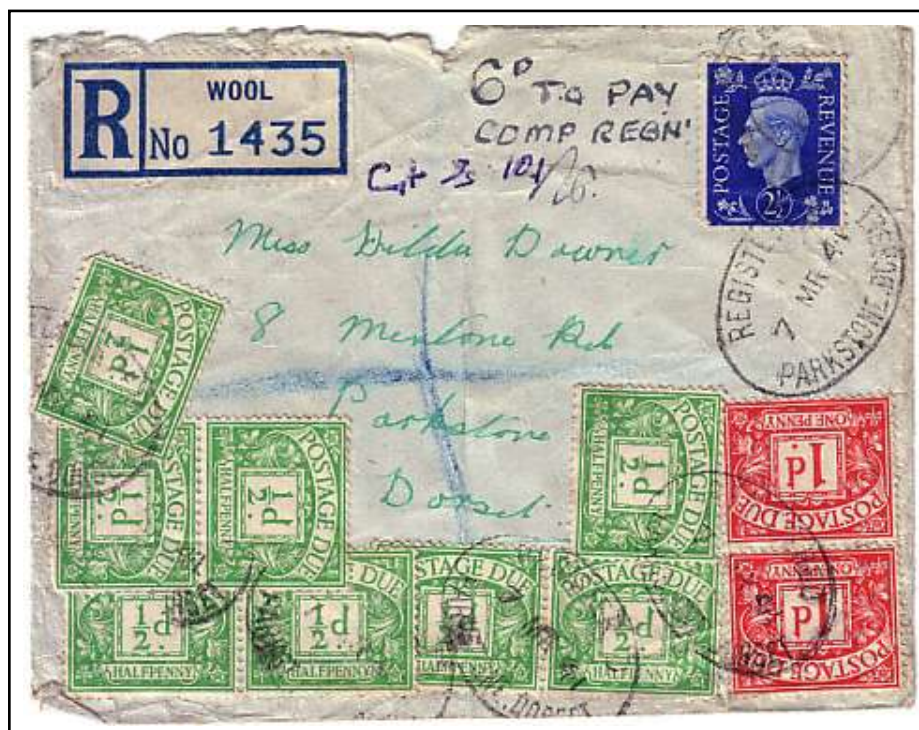
The skills developed by McIndoe and his team set standards used on burns victims throughout the rest of the war and in years after.

5.3 Comforts & Aid for the Allies

Knitting brings some comfort

Monday April 5 1943 — "I sent Mrs Hudson's boy a scarf I had knitted, he's such a lovely boy I hope it will bring him some comfort."

Women across the country took up their knitting needles in accordance with instructions from the Admiralty, who reported an unending supply of 'comforts' were needed.



Reduced scan of POST OFFICE label on back explaining reason for the charge. Tied with a 'WOOL' postmark.

This cover was compulsorily registered at WOOL, Dorset and charged 6d because it contained 3/10d in coins.



The world's finest wool is from the Australian Marino sheep, but with hostilities restricting imports the fibre had to be obtained closer to home.

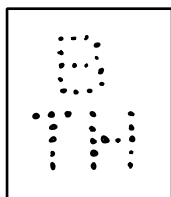
Long hours spent in air raid shelters gave women plenty of time to knit clothing for the soldiers, sailors, and airmen; also for the sick, wounded and POW.

5.4 There's Good and Bad News

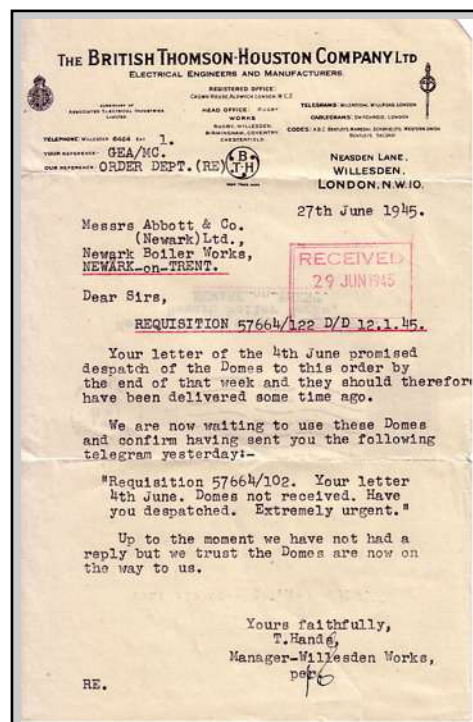
Britain continues to save paper

Saturday 17 April 1943 - "I don't know how we are supposed to write and send letters these days. Mrs Childs said at the W.I. last night that we should make our own envelopes... I am not sure I can, I'm not very good at those handcraft type things."

Paper economy and salvage schemes were to last throughout the war, causing some people to go to extraordinary lengths and ingenuity to overcome the shortages.



The British Thomson-Houston Co. Ltd. (see BTH perfin on stamp) resorted to not using envelopes and simply folding their correspondence, addressing and attaching a stamp.



Reduced scan

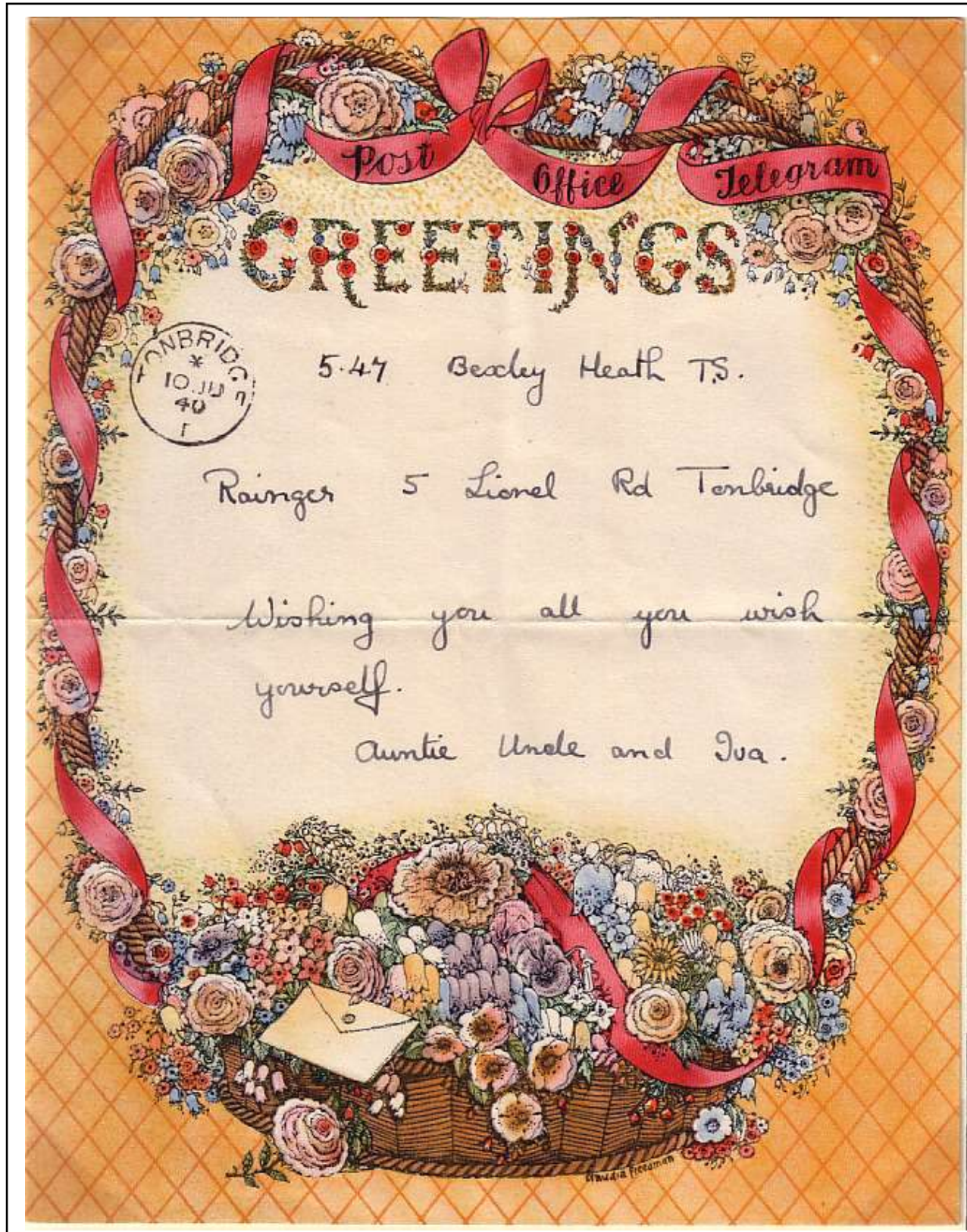


11 Dec 1941: Basingstoke, Hampshire to MALPAS, Cheshire : home-made envelope from an old gardening magazine

5.4 There's Good and Bad News

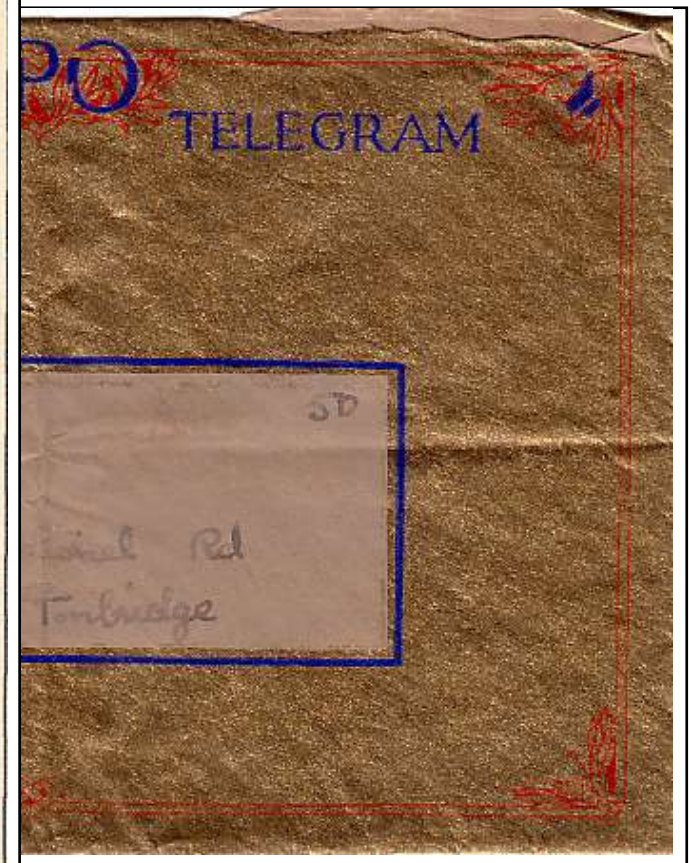
Greetings Telegrams bring cheer

Thursday April 8 1943: "Oh such joy, I received a telegram today from Ted's Mum wishing me a happy birthday; quite brought the tears to my eyes it was so kind of her. Made my heart jump though when I saw the telegram boy coming up the street..."



First introduced in 1935, the British Greetings Telegram forms were thought to be a way to revive the then flagging telegram service.

During the early years of the war, the Greetings telegram, delivered in a specially designed gold coloured envelope brought a little well-needed colour and joy into many lives.



Artist Claudia Guericco
On sale 11 March — 4 December 1940

5.4 There's Good and Bad News

Greetings Telegrams bring cheer

"...such a kind thought to send a greetings telegram in times as these. Dad says it's frivolous, but I think it's lovely. I told him not to be such a misery - we need a little bit of cheering up these days."



The first wartime economy form appeared on 5th December 1940.

This was an adaptation of Macdonald Gill's 1937 Coronation form, in smaller format.

The forms were kept going for as long as possible although obtaining the colourful inks was becoming more and more difficult.

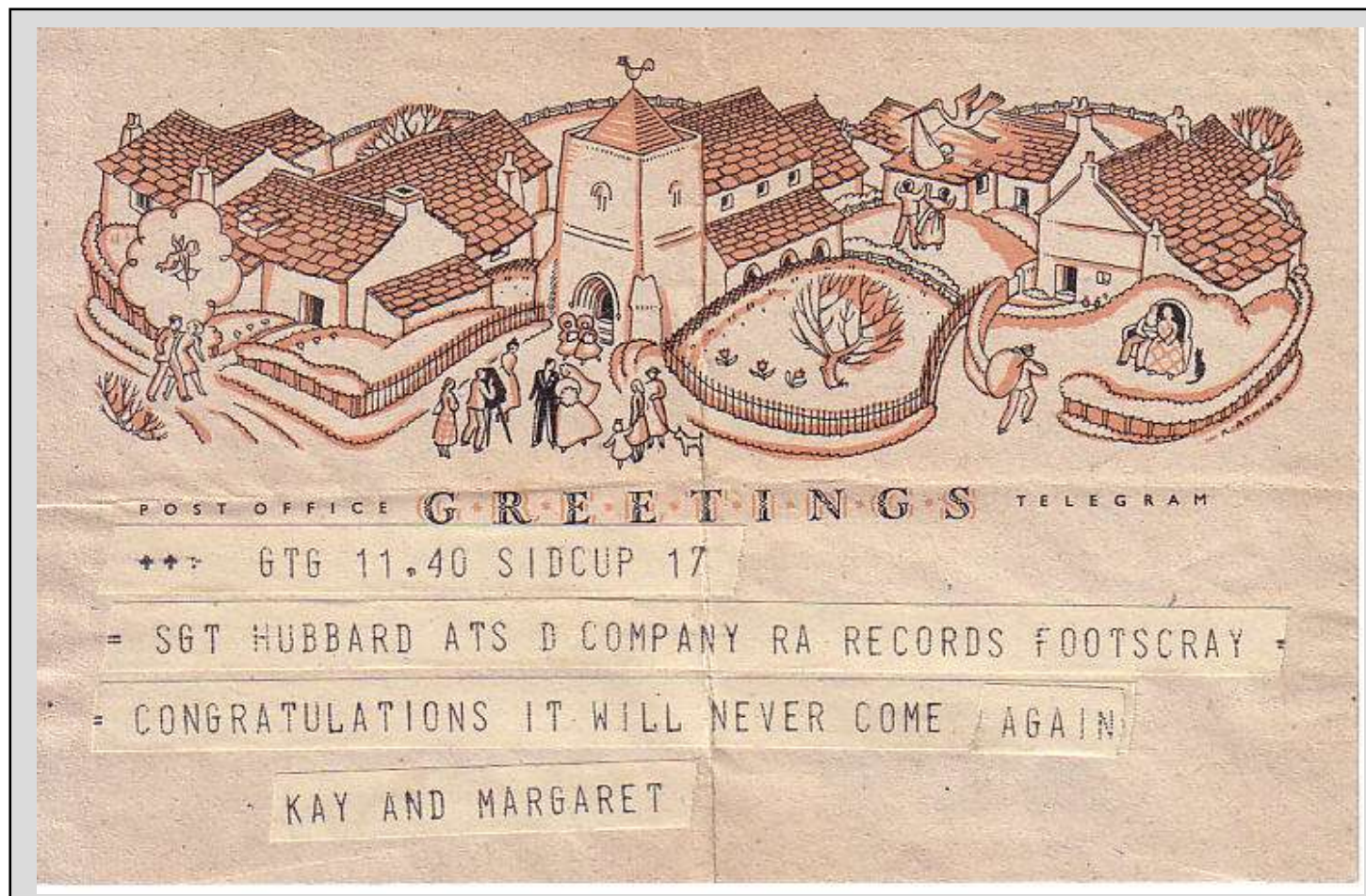
The form was accompanied by a small economy envelope, just big enough to take the form when folded in four.



5.4 There's Good and Bad News

Greetings Telegram Service suspended

Friday May 1 1943 — "The Bad news — the Greetings Telegram service was suspended yesterday, that does seem to be mean — for some it may have been the only good news they'd get."



Austerity Britain meant that once familiar things often became reduced in quality, or even discontinued.

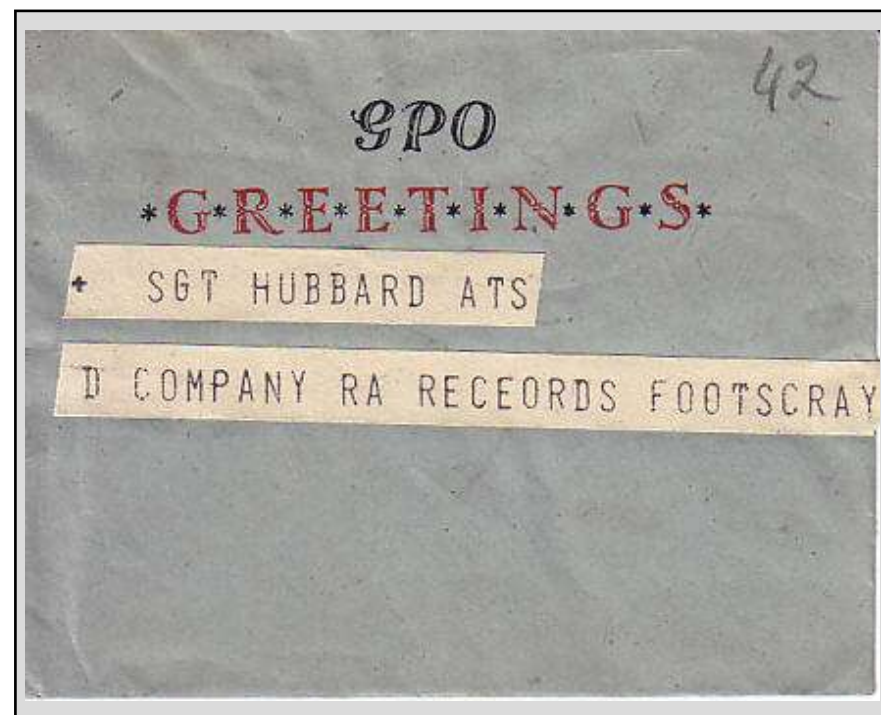
The Greetings Telegram Service remained in operation in the early part of the war, with the last new design being introduced in June 1942.

Both form and envelope were reduced in size and were of an inferior quality. The original gay colours and designs were no more, being replaced by a simple design in sepia and cream. The colour of the envelope changing from gold to blue.

Finally, the service was suspended on 30 April 1943.



GB 2/6 booklet interleave advising the suspension of the Greetings Telegram service



5.5 A Message from Enemy Territory

The Red Cross act as intermediary

Thursday September 9 1943 — "I bumped into Mrs Wilson at the shops and asked how her boy was coping. Her face clouded and she said she hadn't heard from him. I could tell she was worried; she is such a kind hearted an good woman, it's a pity to see her so upset."

When Singapore fell on 15 February 1942. 52,000 British and Australian servicemen and 4,000 civilians found themselves prisoners of the Japanese.

Under Article 36 of the 1929 Geneva Convention,

"...prisoners of war are to be allowed to send cards home. Within a period of not more than one week after his arrival at the camp and likewise in the case of sickness, every prisoner shall be enabled to write to his family a postal card informing it of his capture and of the state of his health. The said postal cards shall be forwarded as rapidly as possible and may not be delayed in any manner".

While the convention was not followed in strict detail, the Japanese did allow cards to be sent by the prisoners and mail to be received by them **on a very limited basis**.



scanned copy of reverse showing Japanese camp arrival mark

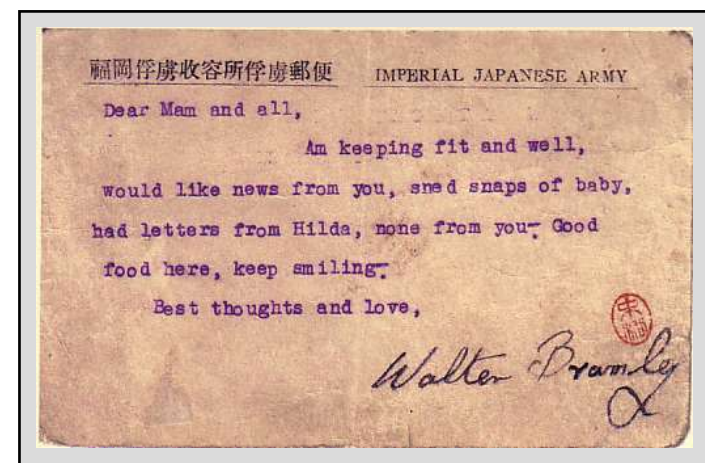


12 July 1943: Glasgow to P.O.W. c/o Japanese Red Cross.

The address H.M.S. Sultan was the name used from 1.1.40 to 16.2.41 for the Royal Navy Depot at Singapore. The letter has been endorsed 'Pal' in pencil, which refers to prison camp Palembang, Sumatra.



Occasionally a postcard, limited to 25 words only, was received from a prisoner in Japanese hands.



Reduced scan of reverse

On this occasion the message consists of more than the permitted 25 words, and it is obvious that 'Good food here, keep smiling' has been added by the guard who typed the card.

5.5 A Message from Enemy Territory

The Red Cross act as intermediary

Friday September 10 1943 — “ Mrs Waite popped in for a cup of tea this morning. She was so excited, she had received a letter telling her that she could be hearing from her Aunt in Jersey soon. What a difference from poor Mrs Wilson yesterday. ”

Following the declaration of War, the International Committee of the Red Cross obtained specific agreement from the British, French and German Governments for short messages to be exchanged between members of the same family living in occupied or belligerent countries, as un-interned civilians. Such messages were only to be exchanged via the offices of the International Red Cross Committee in Geneva.

RESERVE NO RED CROSS
£5.00

G 7542

Deutsches Rotes Kreuz
Präsidium / Auslandsdienst
Berlin SW 61, Blücherplatz 2

ANTRAG
an die *Agence Centrale des Prisonniers de Guerre, Genève*
— Internationales Komitee vom Roten Kreuz
auf Nachrichtenvermittlung

REQUÊTE
de la *Croix-Rouge Allemande, Présidence, Service Étranger*
à l'*Agence Centrale des Prisonniers de Guerre, Genève*
— *Comité International de la Croix-Rouge* —
concernant la correspondance

1. Absender / Expéditeur: Mr. & Mrs. P. Galitch, Plaisance, Ryburn Avenue, Jersey, Channel Islands.

bittet, an
prie de bien vouloir faire parvenir à

2. Empfänger / Destinataire: Mr. & Mrs. Jack Cornish, 120, Archery Grove, Woolston, SOUTHAMPTON, England.

folgendes zu übermitteln / ce qui suit :
(Höchstzahl 25 Worte !)
(25 mots au plus !)

Dear Molly, Jack. Hope all well. Thinking you all Christmas. Hope will be last. Hope you all have good time. God bless. Love.
Ena, Pierre, Natacha.

(Datum / Date) 18-12-43.

3. Empfänger antwortet umseitig / Destinataire répond au verso

On behalf of the Bailiff of Jersey's Enquiry and News Service
P.72
News Service
8 MARS 1944

Deutsches Rotes Kreuz Briefstempel
Beauftragte in Frankreich

It was a strict requirement of the International Red Cross that all messages had to be sent via the National Red Cross Societies and under no circumstances were private individuals permitted to send civilian messages direct to the I.C.R.C.

Many forms display diagonal blue brush wash marks of a copper-sulphate solution, applied by the Germans as a test for secret writing.

Red German Red X (Paris) DEUTSCHES ROTES KREUZ / BRIEFSTEMPEL / DER BEAUFTRAGTE IN FRANKREICH

Mrs Mrs P Galitch

4. Antwort der Empfänger: PLAISANCE
Réponse du destinataire: RYBURN AVENUE
(Höchstzahl 25 Worte !)
(25 mots au plus !)

JERSEY C.I.

DEAR ENA PIERRE NATACHA
HOPE SOON ALL TOGETHER
AGAIN VALERIE MOLLIE
STILL WITH ME
THANK GOD CHINS UP
KEEP SWILING AND PRAYING
LOVE JOHN
(Datum / Date) 12/4/44 (Unterschrift / Signature)

PASSED P.233

COMITE INTERNATIONAL DE LA CROIX ROUGE GENEVE
SECRET

78 MAI 1945

GENEVA red double circle COMITE INTERNATIONAL DE LA CROIX ROUGE GENEVE

Green boxed 'On behalf of the Bailiff of Jersey's Enquiry and News Service'

Crown over PASSED P.72 & P233 — UK blue censor marks

Reduced scan of reverse

5.5 A Message from Enemy Territory

An alternative arrangement could be made

Tuesday September 14 1943 — "I saw Mrs Waite again today - She was much happier. It appears she had received a Red Cross Message from her Aunt, and although it didn't say much [only 25 words permitted] at least Mrs Waite knows she is alive and well. I suppose that's something to be thankful

Letters could be sent to friends in enemy-occupied territory via the Red Cross Postal Message scheme (see previous page).



Communications with the enemy or friends in enemy-occupied territory required a special procedure involving the official exchange of mails via a neutral territory. This operation could take as long as six months to complete.



*Nottingham to Switzerland for onward transmission.
Manuscript 'RED CROSS POSTAL MESSAGE SCHEME'
Examined by British & German censors*

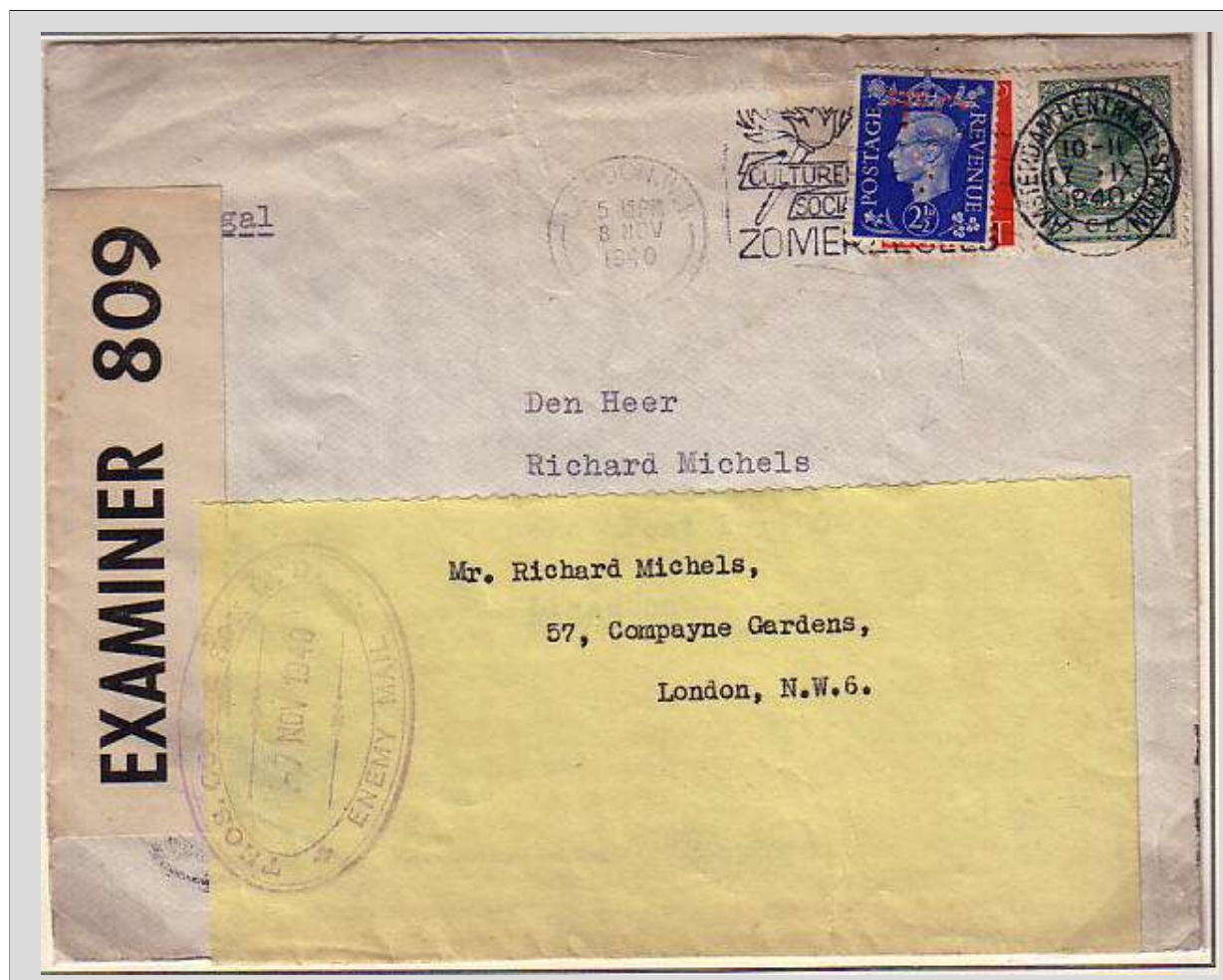
*Alternative arrangements could be made via
Thomas Cook & Son, London.*

Along with the I.C.R.C., authority to act as intermediary was also granted to Thomas Cook & Son, London. This mail was routed through Portugal..

Letter from occupied Netherlands to London, posted 17 September 1940. Received in London 8 November. This was much faster than the Red Cross Scheme, which could take six months or more. Plus there was no restrictions on the number of words allowed.

In the case of incoming re-addressed mail, a British stamp was applied (these usually had a perfin 'TCS' i.e., Thomas Cook Service) over the original stamp(s), the cover was re-addressed and placed in the post. London W1 8 Nov 1940 postmark.

British censor resealing label, yellow TC readdressing label with 'ENEMY MAIL' violet handstamp applied.



5.6 Christmas 1943

Many Restrictions still in Place

Tuesday December 14 1943 —“Saw the children in the school Nativity play. It was sad to hear them singing about Peace on earth and Goodwill to men when we are still suffering the bombs and killing; and there are still so many restrictions in place, you can't even send a card abroad without permission.”

Despite the restrictions, most families tried to make the best of things and celebrate Christmas 1943 as normal.



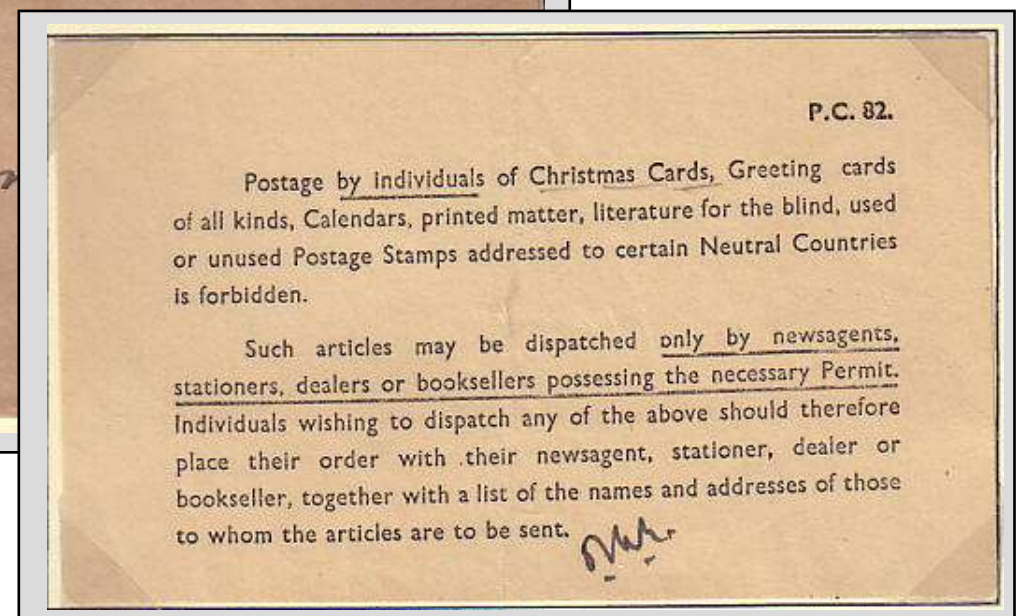
Many traditional Christmas celebrations took place, including the school Nativity play.



Restrictions were placed on sending Christmas cards.

From the onset of War, Christmas cards to some countries were among the items forbidden to be sent by individuals.

Such items were returned by the Censor with a memorandum reminding the sender of the regulations.

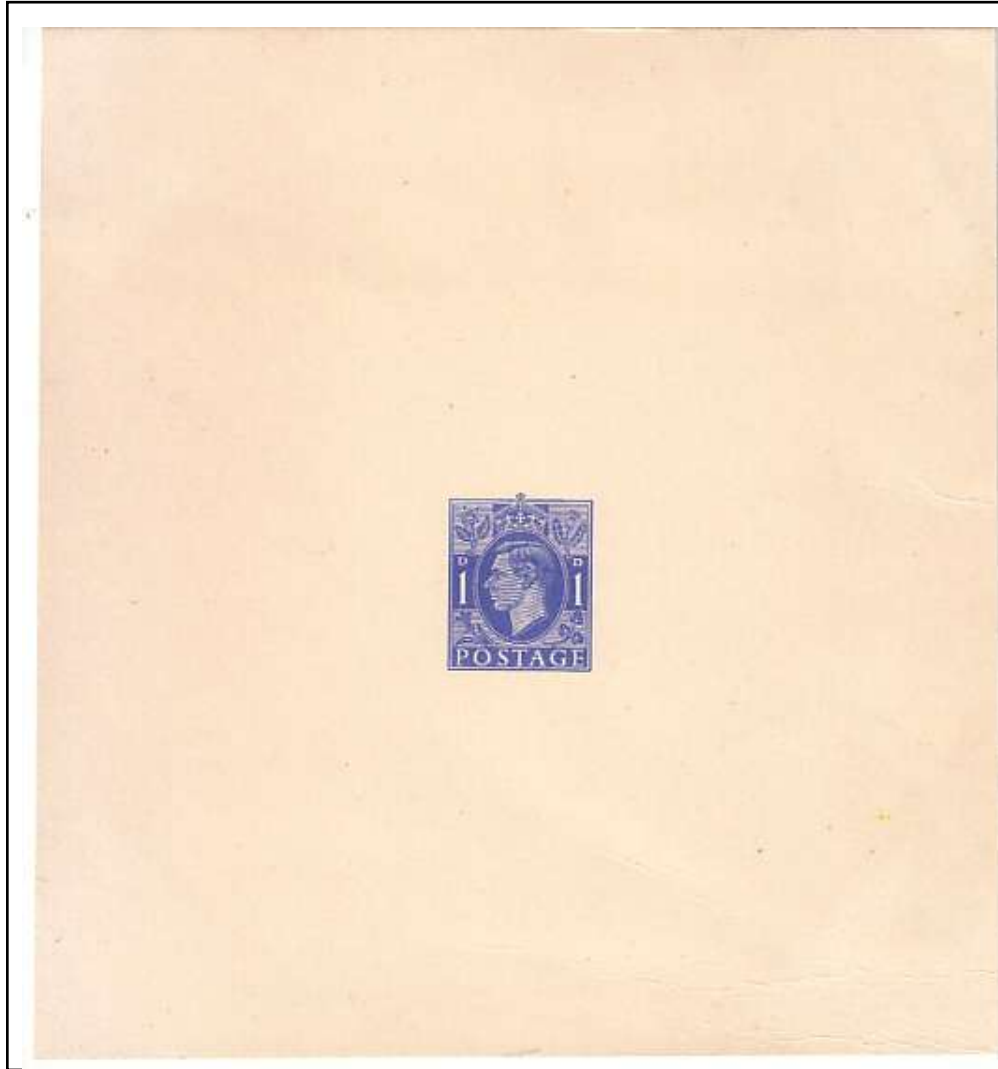


6: 1944 — Out of the Darkness

6.1 Conscientious objectors

Monday 30 Jan 1944 — “ Mrs Shore has taken in a lodger. Rumour has it he's a 'Conchie', I hope not - we don't want any of them in our street. Dad has met him and he said he seems quite nice... I dunno... they're all a lot of queers and cowards if you ask me, why won't they fight like our men have to!”

Conscientious objectors (Conchies) were men who, for moral or religious reasons felt unable to take part in the war. They were resented and reviled and were often treated quite badly by the people at home.



Peace News, the official paper of the Peace Pledge Union peaked during the so-called Phoney War between September 1939 and May 1940. In the face of demands in parliament for the banning of the paper, the printer and distributors stopped working with Peace News. However, with help from the typographer **Eric Gill**, and others, Peace News continued to be published and distributed around the UK.

In 1937, Gill designed the background of the first George VI definitive stamp series for the Post Office.



Miscut 1/2d from a malfunctioning stamp dispensing machine

(Gill's stamp design emblems were later adapted for WW2 postal stationery cards. How ironic that the staunch pacifist should have his design used on war correspondence. He died in November 1940 and so never knew the fate of his designs.)

Arnold Machin's work for 'Voluntary Service for Peace in London' led to his imprisonment in Wormwood Scrubs for twelve months (he served nine) as a conscientious objector. He went on to design one of the world's most famous and longest running stamps, the 'Machin' — first issued in June 1967 and still in use over 40 years later.

MACHIN FORTIETH ANNIVERSARY

Arnold Machin is remembered as the creator of the iconic image of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth that has, since 1967, appeared on more than 175 billion Royal Mail stamps. He was also a skilful sculptor, illustrator and ceramics designer.

Discover more about Royal Mail Special Stamps at royalmail.com/stamps



6.1 Conscientious objectors

Japanese Wartime Postal cards

"...Instead of thinking of themselves and their silly ideals all the time, those Conchies should be thinking about our boys held in POW camps in Japan and doing their bit to help end this terrible war; then we can get them home. Makes my blood boil the way they carry on."

Peace Pledge Union activist Eric Gill's stamp design emblems were adapted for use on the WW2 postal stationery airmail cards.

俘虜郵便
PRISONER OF WAR POST
SERVICE DES PRISONNIERS DE GUERRE
BY AIR MAIL
PAR AVION

FROM: Name Address

TO:—
Service No. & Rank
Name
BRITISH PRISONER OF WAR
Camp
(including No., if any)
Country

GPO NOTICE — AIR MAIL POSTCARDS

A special air mail postcard for writing to prisoners of war in Japan and Japanese-occupied territories is now on sale at principal Post Offices, price 3d (inclusive of postage).

The card will be conveyed by air as far as British air services are available and will be forwarded thence by the normal route for surface correspondence. The air mail service will give some acceleration over the ordinary service, but the total time of transmission will still be lengthy. The postcard as printed is in the form for writing to a prisoner of war whose camp address is known. It may, however, be used for writing to all prisoners in the Far East who are entitled to receive correspondence by the prisoners of war post (see section 1 of Post Office leaflet P.2327B); but the printed words in the address "To" panel should be amended to conform with the instructions for addressing correspondence given in Section 4 of leaflet P.2327B.

IMPORTANT.

The prisoner of war air letter-card used for writing to prisoners of war in Europe must NOT be used for writing to the Far East. Communications written on private stationery will not be forwarded by air mail. FE/PO/3/44.

Postcards, rather than airletters, were produced because of Japanese regulations, which only allowed a prisoner an occasional postcard on which the message must not exceed 25 words. This is thought to be mainly for the convenience of the Japanese censors.

俘虜郵便
PRISONER OF WAR POST
SERVICE DES PRISONNIERS DE GUERRE
BY AIR MAIL
PAR AVION

RECEIVED DECEMBER 21ST 1944

FROM: Name Mrs. Trezise, Address 12, Scotts Terrace, Burnley, Lancs., England.

TO:—
Service No. & Rank 1076937. Gnr.
Name Clifford TREZISE.
BRITISH PRISONER OF WAR
R.A.
Camp MALAYA CAMP.
(including No., if any)
Country MALAYA.

NOTE: The particulars inserted on the address side and the message in the space below, must be TYPED or written clearly in BLOCK LETTERS. MESSAGES MUST NOT BE LONGER THAN 25 WORDS.

5. 6. 44.

Dear Son,
Waiting to hear from you. Everyone and everything alright at home. Hope you are well. Longing to see you soon.
Love. MAM & DAD.

Reduced scan of reverse

They were not delivered very speedily either, this card having taken over six months to reach the addressee.

6.2 The Salvage Drives continue

Saving & Salvage

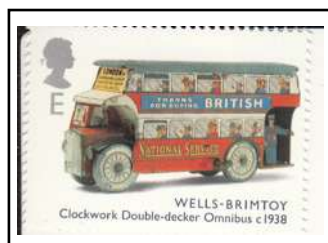
Tuesday February 8 1944 — "Save! Save! Save! That's all you hear these days. I am just about sick of it. I ask you what can they possibly want with old meat bones & my old girdle! What do they do with it all..."

Without doubt the nation's wartime obsession was saving paper, rags, glass, jam jars, old saucepans, bones, books, bottles, aluminium and tins, old rubber raincoats, garden hose, rubber shoes, bathing caps, rubber gloves, etc.



Bones were salvaged for manufacturing nitro-glycerine, glue, fertilizers and animal foodstuffs. Crushed bones added to chicken feed strengthen the eggshell.

Clothes were recycled to save wool, cotton, machinery and manpower



Tins and Metal...

Rubber
for tyres.



...for tanks ...



...& weapons

AVON INDIA
RUBBER
Co. Ltd

DUNLOP
RUBBER
Co Ltd

6.2 The Salvage Drives continue

Rubber supplies interrupted

"...I am beginning to think this salvage business is just government propaganda to keep us going."



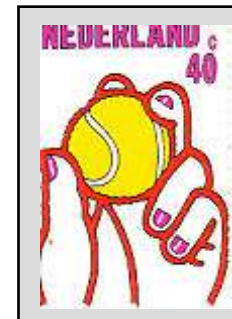
Tapping the rubber

World War II shortages weren't just home-front propaganda. Japanese conquests in Malaya and the Dutch East Indies cut off all Allied access to natural rubber supplies. The Government of Ceylon issued special Export Controls for Dry Rubber to stop the black market in the product.



Tapping rubber

Everything was needed for the war effort so ships concentrated on carrying oil, steel, rubber and other essential products from the Commonwealth.



Salvage helped fill the gap, housewives ransacked their houses for hot water bottles, bathing caps, tennis & golf balls, and even their old girdles. Although the rubber recycling industry produced a fair amount of material throughout the war, the rubber scrap drive didn't significantly boost its output.

Bradbury Wilkinson took over the printing of the 2c from De La Rue when the works of the latter were bombed during the 1941 raids

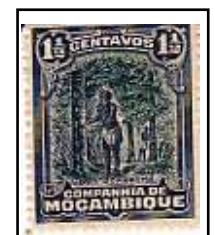


(Bradbury Wilkinson)



1933 South African booklet advertising pane

The Rubber Reserve Company (RRC), was formed in 1940 to stockpile natural rubber and regulate synthetic rubber production. **Firestone**, B.P. Goodrich, Goodyear, and U.S. Rubber agree to work together to solve the nation's wartime rubber needs.



6.3 The invasion of France

Britain prepares for the invasion

Saturday May 20 1944 — " Mrs Wentworth [neighbour] has been staying with friends near Gravesend; she says the roads down south are full of army traffic from all sections of the Allied forces. Dad recons that the invasion is not far off now, just a matter of getting the troops in place and ready to go."

In the build-up to D-Day, over 5 million Allied personnel...



16 May 1944 : New Zealand Air Force letter to USA. Anonymous postmark to hide unit location



Inland letter sent from US APO 387 to US APO 472
Both Bases were used for Canadian regiments during the D-Day preparations.
(401st Glider Infantry Regiment part of 101st Airborne Division)

GB 2d postal card
used by USA Army Postal Service
APO 403 used by 3rd Army

...the world's largest force, congregated in the UK.



Australian Army PO 214



Canadian Military HQ — FPO 245



6.3 The Invasion of France

Operation Overlord

Wednesday June 7 1944 — “ We listened to the King at nine o'clock last night — Just the news we've been waiting for. Dad was so pleased, I have not seen him so happy for ages. Mrs Wentworth came in and invited us to a party on Friday night to celebrate the good news. At last we are on our way.”

Operation Overlord — The greatest armada and sea borne invasion in history took place at daybreak on 6th June 1944. Armed forces from Britain, the Dominions, United States of America, with the Free Forces of Europe carried out the most dramatic attack of WWII on the heavily fortified Normandy coast of France.



Jersey - Miniature sheet issued 6th June 2004;
Shown around the perimeter are the badges and military insignia of the major units of the Allied Forces that participated in Operation Overlord.



3½ million Allied Forces personnel passed through the port of Southampton in the liberation of Europe



F.P.O. CA 2 — the 2nd Canadian Armoured Brigade landed on Juno Beach.; during the course of Summer 1944 over 5,000 Canadian were killed in Normandy.



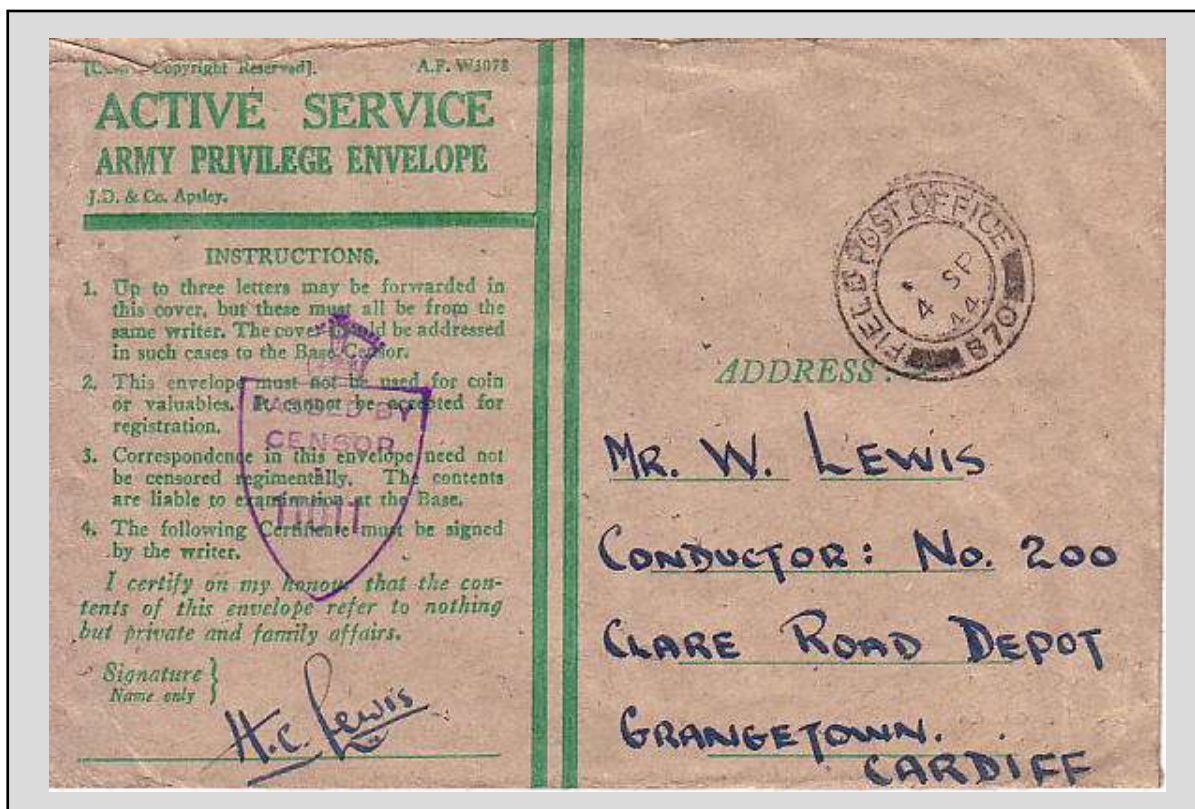
After a fierce and bloody battle the Allies broke through the defences securing a foothold that would ultimately turn the tide of the war.



6.3 The Invasion of France

Paris is Free

Friday September 1 1944 — "I spent a couple of hours with Mrs Head this morning. She was saying how strange it was to think of the battles raging in France just now. She has an Aunt in Paris, and used to visit her when she was a child. I told her she will soon be able to visit again now De Gaulle is back there."



4 September 1944: FPO 870 used by British Liberation Army



General De Gaulle makes a triumphant return to Paris



The Allied push through France



Paris was liberated on 25 August



1st Czechoslovak Armoured Brigade (Censor 11695 = Anti Tank Battery) lay siege to Dunkirk Sep 15 1944 - May 1945

6.4 The Blackout has been lifted

The V1 & V2 'baby blitz'

Friday 8 September 1944 — "We are being bombed again! This time by pilot-less planes called 'Doodle -Bugs', What a silly name for such a destructive beastly weapon. The only good thing is the blackout has been lifted. Hurrah! I am going to start taking those horrid blinds down this evening."

V-Is were used by the Germans between June 1944 and March 1945. They were pilot-less planes that carried a one-ton bomb. 'Doodle-bugs' were a continual threatening presence throughout this period.



Despite the failing German machine, Hitler still refused to capitulate. He authorized the deployment of the V1, and later V2, bombers in large numbers.



Despite the horror of the rockets, the threat from conventional aircraft was virtually past; and with it the need for the blackout.



Car headlight masks, previously used to dim the lights during the blackout, were abolished. Torches and flashlights were able to be freely used.



A survey found one in five had an accident in the blackout. Deaths in road accidents exceeded 2,000 in first 4 months of war. 1,7000 more than the same period in peacetime. Most of the casualties were pedestrians.



At Christmas the churches were allowed to light their stained-glass windows for the first time for four years.

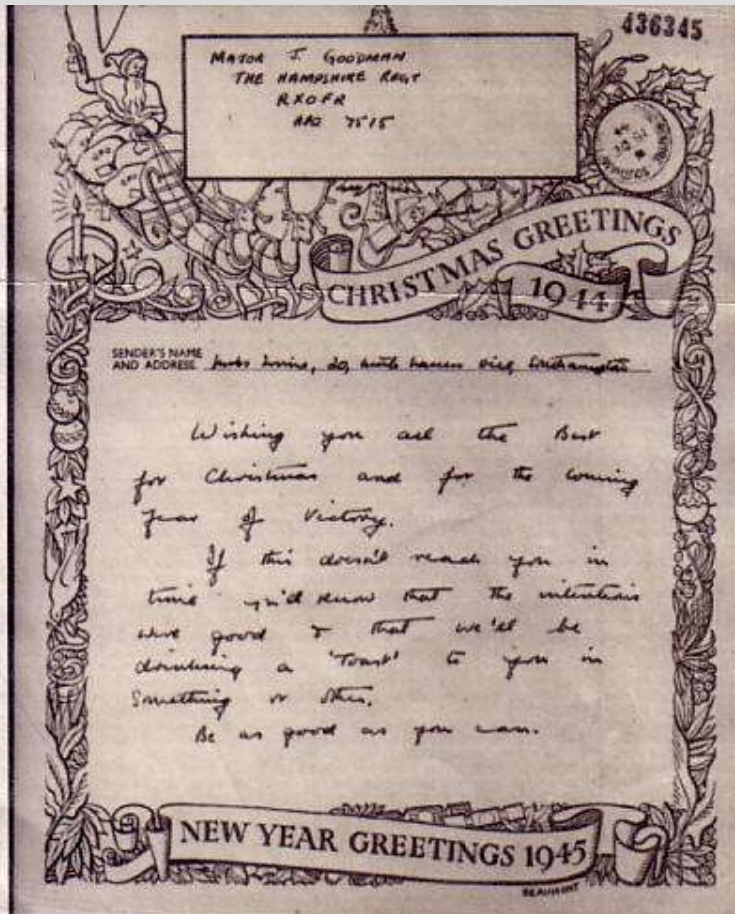
Monday December 24 1944 — "Another Christmas under fire! We have come so far and yet still the war drags on! ..."

Many had desperately hoped the war would be over by Xmas. Unfortunately despite high hopes and brave faces, it was still to drag on into the New Year.

airgraph service

- The destinations to which the airgraph service is available may be ascertained at any Post Office.
 - Nothing should be written on this side of the paper.
 - The whole of the message should be written on the other side below the sender's name and address.
 - The name and address to which the message is to be sent should be written in large BLOCK letters wholly within the panel provided. The address should be the same as for an ordinary letter except in the case of airgraphs for personnel of Merchant Navy ships, which should be addressed to the addressee and ship (by name) followed by "c/o G.P.O., London, E.C.1."
 - A miniature photographic negative of the message and address will be made and sent by air mail. At the destination end a photographic print, measuring about 5 inches by 4 inches, will be made and delivered to the addressee. It is therefore important that the message should be written very plainly and that the address should be written as large as possible in block letters. Wherever possible, *black ink* should be used. Very small writing is not suitable.
 - The completed form may be handed in at any Post Office, or if preferred, may be forwarded to London in an envelope addressed to: "Airgraphs"
Foreign Section
London
- In that case it is desirable that a large envelope should be used and that the form should be folded as few times as possible, preferably in the same direction as the writing. As an exception to the general rule that postage is payable on letters addressed to Government Departments, Postmasters, etc., postage is not payable on covers containing completed Airgraph forms addressed to "Airgraphs," Foreign Section, London.
- If it is desired to send more than one sheet, a separate form must be completed, and the name and address of the sender and of the addressee must be inserted on each form in the usual way.
 - The original will be retained by the Post Office and eventually destroyed.

please complete your message and post without delay



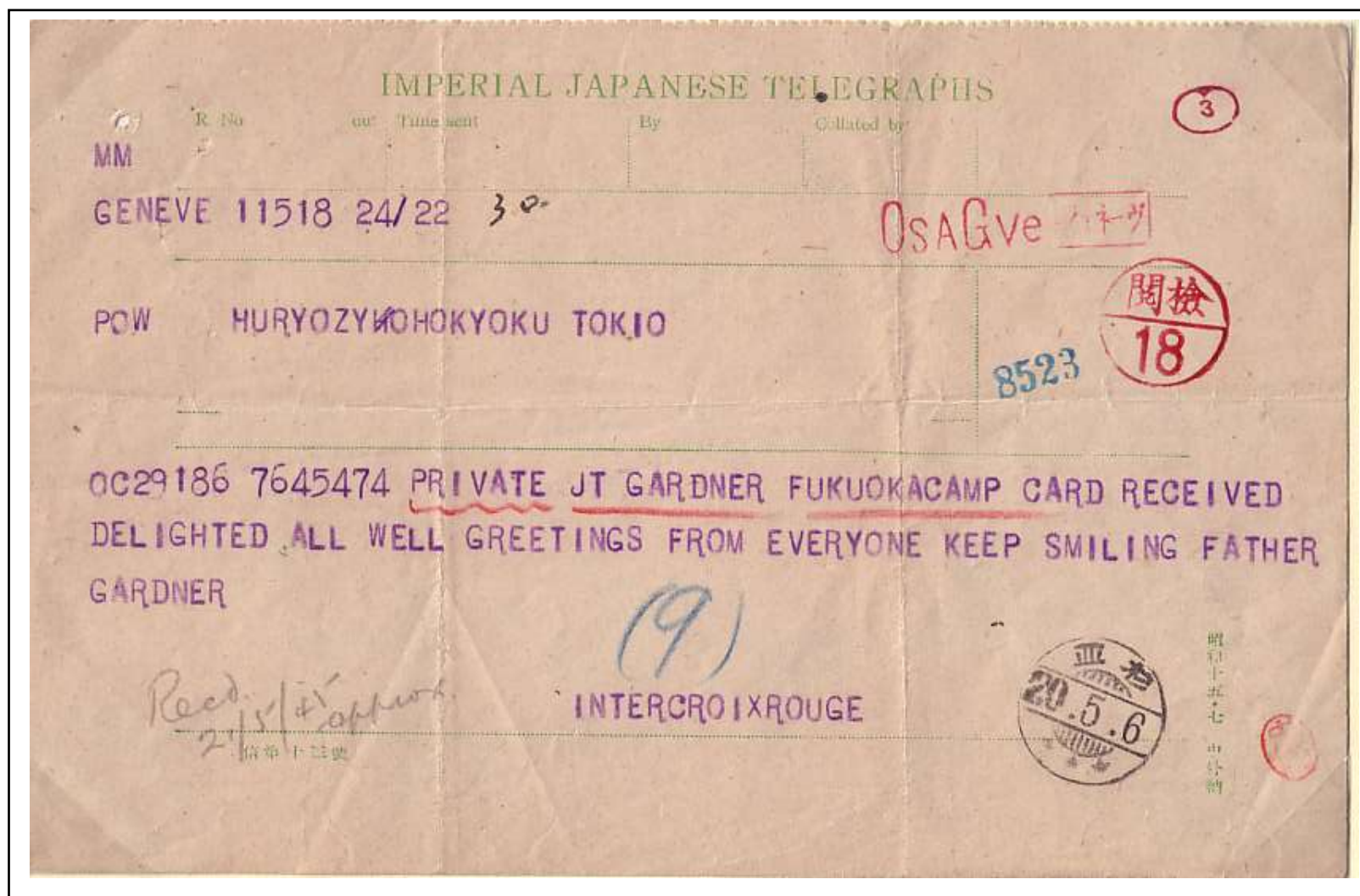
Christmas 1944 official airgraph postal stationery form printed by the GPO bearing 3d imprinted stamp.



"...We can only hope and pray that it really will end next year and all the men will come home at last "

The International Red Cross succeeded in persuading the Japanese to allow the exchange of telegrams at the end of 1944. Under this agreement, which started in early 1945, the prisoners were allowed to send and receive one message per year. The message was restricted to 10 words not including the address or signature.

Many telegrams were sent to prisoners of war in Japanese hands, but few were actually delivered — and probably even fewer were kept by the recipients because of shortages of everything (including paper) in the camps.



Telegram sent to Private John Gardner, Fukuoka camp, via International Red Cross (red OSK/GVE applied in Japan indicating the telegram was sent from Geneva to Osaka) Message sent from his Father; manuscript - received 21.5.45.

Fukuoka camp, located on the island of Kyushu, was in operation from Jan 42 - Sep 45, and housed over 10,000 POWs in 18 satellite camps throughout the area. Although some messages were forwarded to Tokyo during the few months the service was available, it is doubtful whether many telegrams were received by the prisoners. In addition to the problems of censorship and conveying the mail over large distances to so many camps, the Japanese often deliberately withheld prisoners' mail as a punishment.

7. 1945 — The Road to Victory

7.1 Gift parcels bring relief

Wednesday January 3 1945 — “After the excitement of the invasion and the Allies advance through France, we all hoped that the war would be finished by Christmas. Instead, we are into the new year with heavy hearts ... And now I can't even have a smoke... how much longer can this war last?”

The Blackout may have been lifted but there was still severe food restrictions. For many it was a gloomy time, only relieved by the welcome gift of food parcels from abroad, or cigarettes from home.

A typical food parcel sent from relatives or friends abroad could contain:

- tinned meat
- jam
- tinned milk
- jelly crystals.

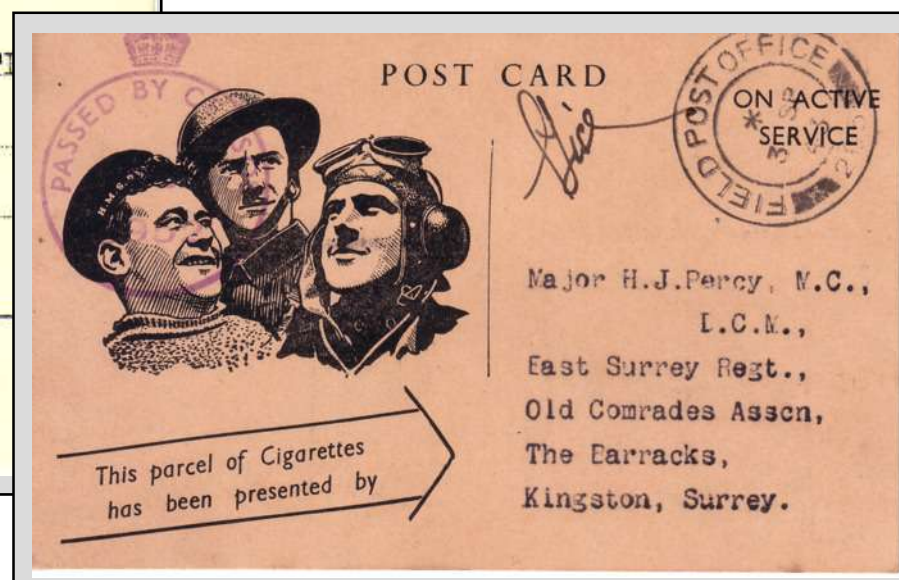
PLATE TO WHICH THE PARCEL IS ADDRESSED
8 Cross Rd
Purley,
Surrey,
England.

Gross Weight of Parcel.		CONTENTS.—The nature and value of the contents must be accurately stated. Under-valuation of the contents, or failure to describe them fully, may result in the seizure of the parcel.	NET WEIGHT OF CONTENTS.		VALUE AS MERCHANDISE.	
lbs.	ozs.		lbs.	ozs.	£	s. d.
7-0		2 tins Meat (12 oz ea) tin and 1/2 lb 1 Packet Fruit 10 lb tin Milk 1 lb 1 Packet Jelly Crystals 4 lb	3	2	2	6
			2	2	2	4

(For use of Post Office of Exchange only.) Name and Address of Sender—
Parcel Bill No.....
No. of Rates prepaid.....
Entry No.....
Date Stamp of Office of Exchange.....
INSTRUCTIONS GIVEN BY SENDER.
If undeliverable as addressed—deliver to.....
If undeliverable as addressed or at an alternative address if such is given } * ABANDON.
* RETURN
Strike out according to which is desired.
Sender's Signature: *Charles E. Wise*
Sch. C.4709.—5/1945.—5498L



Tobacco, like many other luxury items, was expensive and hard to come by.



Cigarette shortage — Women were told to give up smoking so the men could have their cigarettes. People clubbed together to send cigarettes to the Fighting Forces and the wounded.

A typical Forces cigarette 'thank you' card

7.2 Britain Struggles On

New Fish to Try

Saturday January 5 1945 — "The fish-man persuaded me to try whale meat today. I cooked it for lunch — Horrible! Repulsive! Revolting! It was like a solid lump of cod liver oil, or like 'fishy liver — even the dog wouldn't eat it! UGH! Give me nice bit of cod anyway."

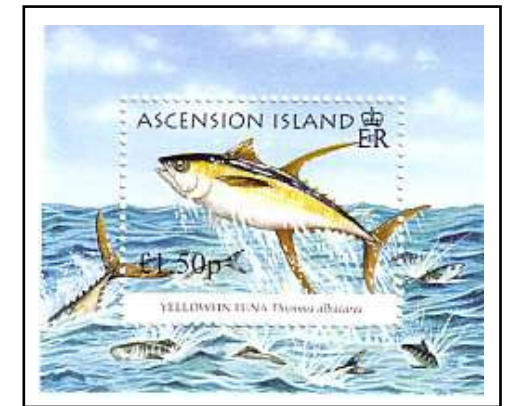
Fish was never rationed, but it was in short supply because Britain's fishing grounds were infested with U-boats. The British people had to get used to some unfamiliar varieties, but whale meat was a novelty that even the hungriest Britons found hard to swallow.



Fishing was a very dangerous occupation owing to mine infested waters and German U-boats



Tuna canning factory



Fresh salmon and tuna was occasionally available, but the more easily obtained canned salmon & tuna were very popular.



Finnish booklet issued 19.5.1997 — value 16,80 mk

Whale meat was available in the fish shops from January 1945, but proved very unpopular...



...Snoek or barracuda, introduced at the same time, was also rejected by the British public



7.3 The Allies advance through Europe

Roosevelt dies as the Allies win through

Saturday April 21 1945 — "The shock of losing poor Mr. Roosevelt has quite upset me, he had such a lovely smile. I think Winston will miss him."

By the end of April, the enemy was being soundly defeated in Europe. British and American forces had thrust deep into Nazi occupied territory; but the Free World was saddened, and mourned the unexpected death of US President Franklin D. Roosevelt.



April 12: Roosevelt dies suddenly of cerebral haemorrhage.



The funeral cortège



The free world pays tribute...



The President died whilst at his "Little White House" in Warm Springs, Georgia. It is said Churchill wept when he heard the news.



Stalin, FDR, Churchill
1945 overprint



As World War II loomed after 1938, with the Japanese invasion of China and the aggressions of Nazi Germany, FDR gave strong diplomatic and financial support to China and Britain, while remaining officially neutral. His goal was to make America the "Arsenal of Democracy" which would supply munitions to the Allies. In March 1941, Roosevelt, with Congressional approval, provided Lend-Lease aid to the countries fighting against Nazi Germany with Great Britain. He secured a near-unanimous declaration of war against Japan after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, calling it a "date which will live in infamy". He supervised the mobilization of the US economy to support the Allied war effort which saw unemployment evaporate and the industrial economy soar to heights no one ever expected.



V. President Truman
takes office

7.3 The Allies advance through Europe

The horrors of the Concentration Camps revealed

Sunday April 22 1945 — " My lighthearted mood of yesterday has gone — Last night I went to the pictures with my friends from the factory. We saw a lovely film, but then they ran the Pathe News. It made me feel quite sick, how could one human being do that to another? Those Nazi's will have to pay!"

A national obsession was the cinema, with 20-30 million going regularly to the 'pictures' every week. With no Television, it was the place to go to watch the latest news from the Front, and forget your own troubles for a few hours.



Hollywood escapist films were popular, but so were the official films including the newsreels and propaganda 'shorts' which were conducted through the Ministry of Information. During the war the Ministry of Information produced 1,887 films as well as vetting 3,200 newsreels and 380 features.

As the Allied troops moved into Germany and Eastern Europe they found the Concentration Camps. Over six million people had been murdered in these camps. Their discovery and aftermath was shown on the Newsreels, bringing the full horror to the attention of the people at home.



While victims of the Holocaust were primarily Jews, the Nazis also persecuted and often killed millions of members of other groups they considered inferior, undesirable or dangerous.



Poles and some other Slavic peoples; Soviets (particularly prisoners of war); Roma (also known as Gypsies); some Africans, Asians and others who did not belong to the "Aryan race"; the mentally ill and the physically disabled; homosexuals; and political opponents and religious dissidents such as communists, trade unionists, and Jehovah's Witnesses; all victims of the 'Final Solution'.

7.3 The Allies advance through Europe

The POW camps are relieved

Tuesday May 1 1945 — “Listened to the news today. There was a man from the Ministry saying that they expect to recover 135,000 British prisoners, taken in Europe over the last five years, and repatriate them all by Christmas. What a wonderful present that will be for so many families. It must end soon”

During the Allied push through Italy in 1943, many POWs were moved to new camps in Germany. However, some prisoners were fortunate that the Allies reached them before they could be moved. Others had to sit it out in Germany and wait for the hostilities to end.



All POWs were desperate for news of home.

On 21 July 1941 air letter sheets specifically designed for prisoners of war were issued. Although the postage rate for the air letter was only 2½d, the letter sheets were sold at 3d each



This letter sheet is addressed to Warrant Officer Hickman, who had been a Gunner on HMS Zulu and been taken prisoner following the sinking of his ship at Tobruk. It was returned to the sender, as W.O. Hickman had been repatriated by Allied troops in their advance through Italy.



Aug 17 1943 2½d POW letter sheet to Major Tregear in Camp PG29 in Italy.



Reduced scan of reverse

January 1945: Returned to sender with six line instructional cachet on reverse:

THIS LETTER FORMED PART OF UNDELIVERED MAILS WHICH FELL INTO THE HANDS OF THE ALLIED FORCES ADVANCING IN ITALY. IT IS UNDELIVERABLE AS ADDRESSED AND IS THEREFORE RETURNED TO YOU.

7.3 The Allies advance through Europe

Europe is liberated

Sunday 6 May 1945 — "I feel quite gay today; the news from Europe is good. France; Denmark, Holland, and Luxembourg, all now free. There's still a long way to go, and it will be a long hard slog, but at least now we are getting rid of those rotten Nazis, and their terrible V -bombs."

The liberation of northern France and the Benelux countries was of special significance for the inhabitants of London and the south east of England, because it denied the Germans launch zones for their V-1 and V-2 Vergeltungswaffen (reprisal weapons).



Luxembourg liberated by US 1st Army



5 May 1945: Front page of Kristeligt Dagblad (Newspaper) announces liberation of Denmark.



Field Marshall Montgomery, leading the British troops into Copenhagen.

The Allied advance through Europe was aided by the heroism of many civilians.

May 1945: On the verge of starvation, the Dutch were finally liberated after 5 years of German occupation...



Baarn 11 May 1945 - Postcard describes the joy and freedom of liberation...
"It is marvellous that once again we can say and write anything..."
(Correspondence is free from censorship for first time in 5 years)

7.4 The Beginning of the End

Britain celebrates Victory in Europe

Tuesday May 8 1945 : VE DAY — “It’s all over! After I heard the news on the wireless, I went outside and as I looked, fireworks began to erupt and the red glow of distant bonfires lit the sky — peaceful and joyous fires now, in place of the terrifying ones of the last years. Victory in Europe!”

When the war was won it was the victory that millions of people had worked and waited for. The armies had forced their way through Europe from east and west. It was known that the German surrender was near. When the day came, it meant the same thing to everybody: Victory in Europe.

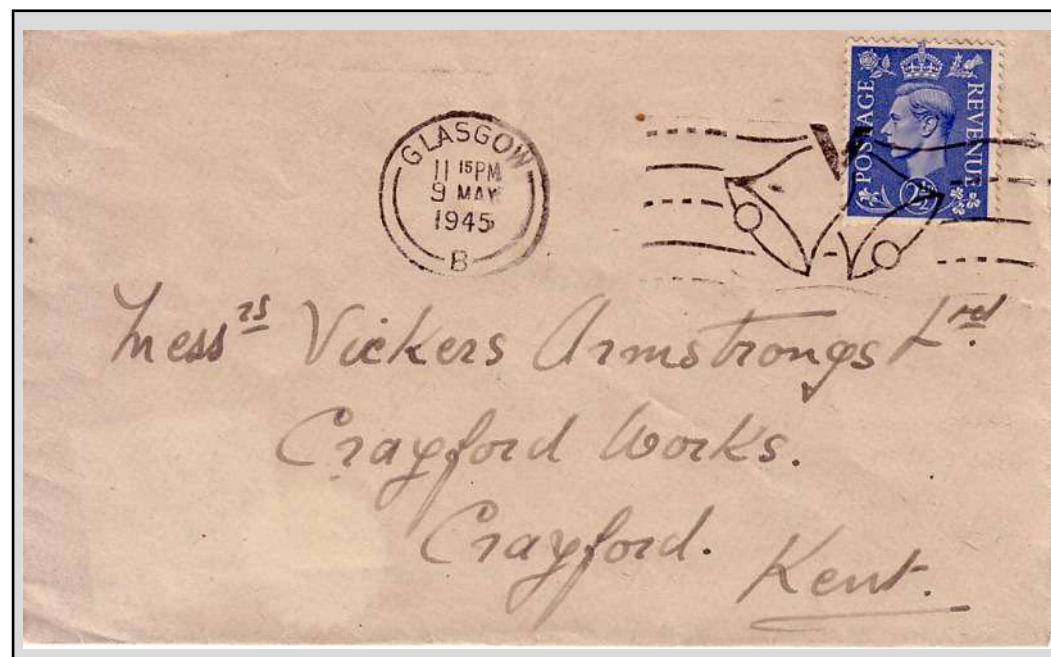
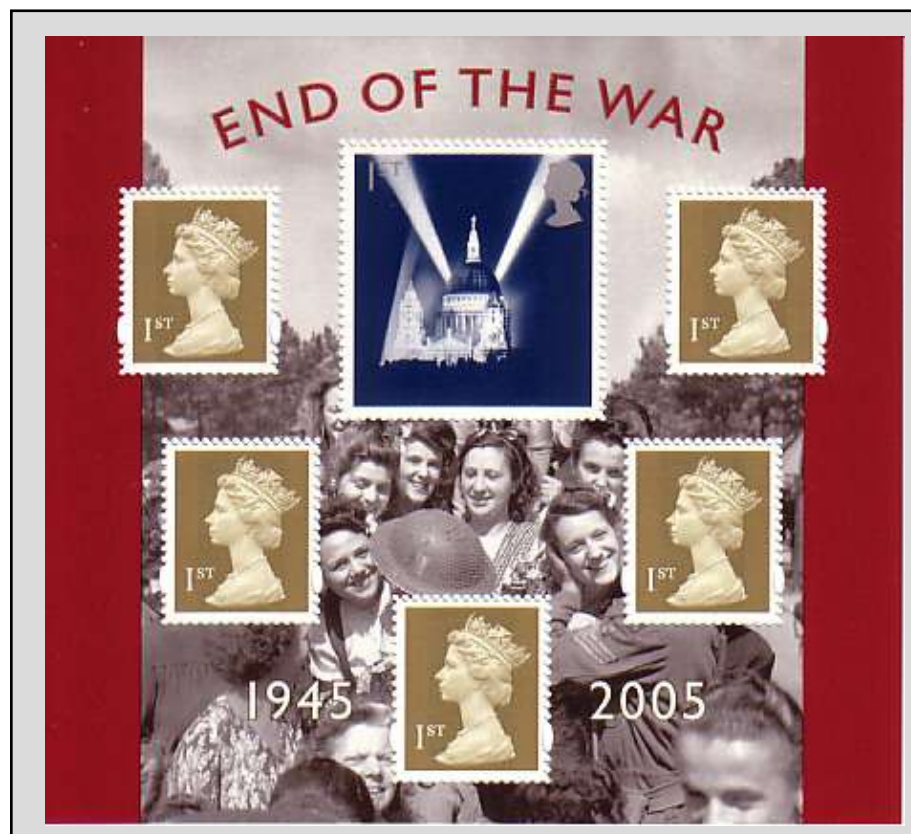


Peace and Victory in Europe



Eight times in ten hours, in response to the enthusiasm of the huge crowds that had gathered, the King and Queen, Princess Elizabeth and Margaret, stepped out onto the balcony of Buckingham Palace. On one occasion they were accompanied by Winston Churchill.

The celebrations were spontaneous and natural; The GPO responded with a ‘Victory Bells’ slogan...



The blocks for the above slogan were sent out to Postmasters in 1943, in sealed packets, to be opened when instructed. It was to be nearly two years before the slogan was bought into use two days after the official V-E Day, due to 8-9 May being Public Holidays (rare usage of 9 May shown). It was one of the few slogans that have been used at all towns and cities countrywide — approximately 500 dies of the slogan were used.

7.5 There's Still Japan

Japan holds fast

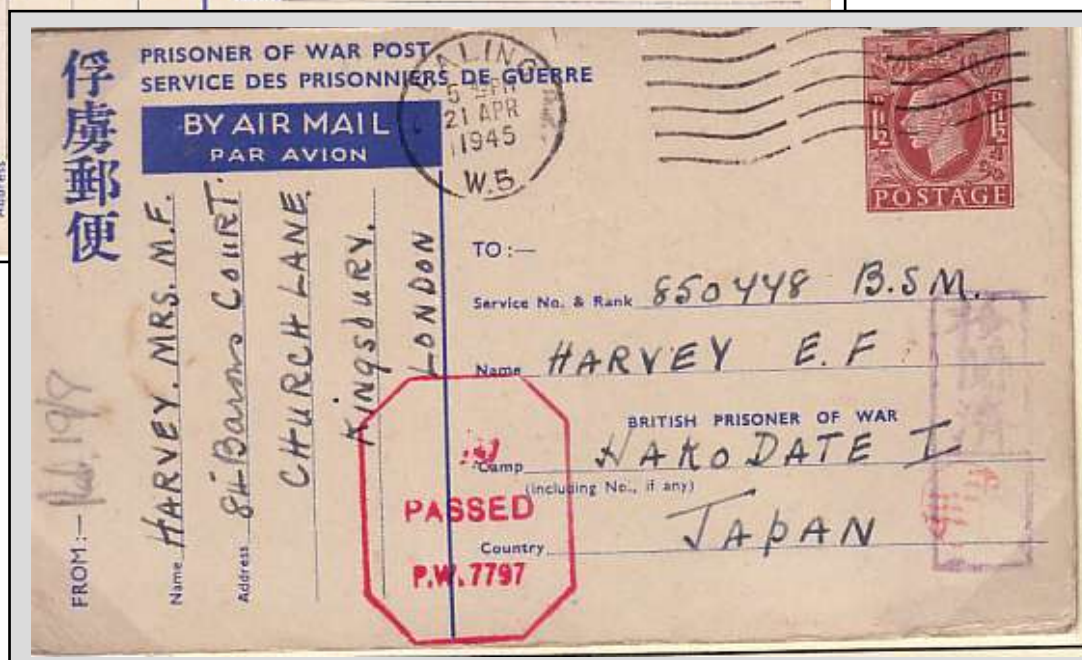
Saturday July 21 1945 — "One of the grand things about life these days is hearing of ex-POWs returning back home. Although the Japs are still holding Mrs Wilson's boy, we all hope it won't be long before he is home. Dad says some of the boys will be in a bad way when they do eventually get back."



An airmail card for prisoners of the Japanese was issued in March 1944. On 2nd April 1945 the postage rate was reduced to 1½d

For one month only (April) the previously issued 3d card could be accepted for payment of 2 x 1½d cards.

The usual route of the special airmail postal cards was via air to Teheran, rail to Moscow, Trans-Siberian Railway across Russia probably to Vladivostok, and a boat to Japan; or to Chita, then on to the Trans Manchuria railway to Pusan, Korea, then by ship to Shimonoski and finally overland to Tokyo to where they were eventually sorted for the camps. This meant a journey of some 12,000 miles, and often a transit period of six months to a year.



The issue date for these reduced rate cards is recorded as April 1945. This early used example (postmark 21 Apr) is one of the very few which reached their destination and received a Japanese censor mark.



NOTE. The particulars inserted on the address side and the message in the space below, must be TYPED or written clearly in BLOCK LETTERS. MESSAGES MUST NOT BE LONGER THAN 25 WORDS

Reduced scan of reverse: NOTE. The particulars inserted on the address side and the message in the space below, must be TYPED or written clearly in BLOCK LETTERS. MESSAGES MUST NOT BE LONGER THAN 25 WORDS'

A large quantity of mail to prisoners of war was found in storage after liberation in 1945. **This card posted Birmingham 25 April 1945 was returned being among mail captured by the Allies toward the end of the war.**

*Violet boxed cachet:
RETURNED IN UNDELIVERED MAILS
FROM TERRITORY FORMERLY OCCUPIED
BY JAPANESE FORCES.*



7.5 There's Still Japan

We win the War — but loose Churchill

Thursday July 26 1945 —“We have just heard the election news. I can't believe it, how ungrateful can a nation be? After leading us through such turmoil we have turned our back on poor Winnie. Mother just won't stop crying; Dad says we need a new beginning, and the Labour Party will give us it.”

Just months after VE Day, Britain held the first general election since 1935, as general elections had been suspended during World War II. It resulted in the shock election defeat of the Conservatives led by Winston Churchill, and the landslide victory of the Labour Party led by Clement Attlee, who won a majority of 145 seats.



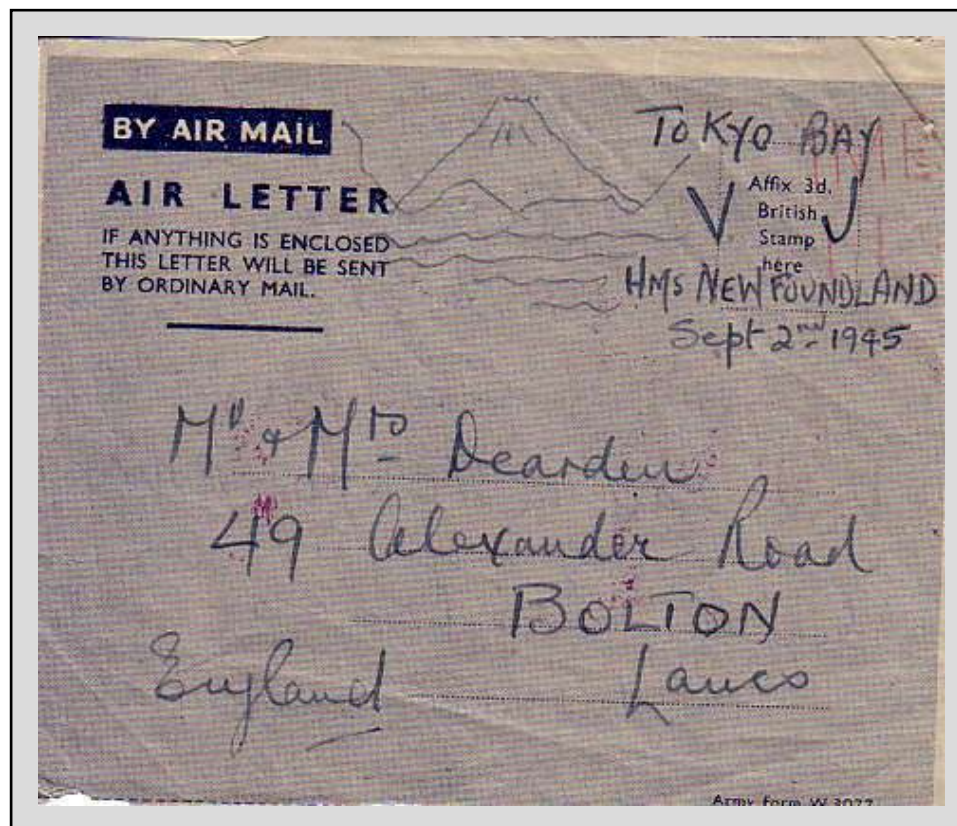
July 26: Clement Attlee elected as Britain's new prime minister after Labour won a sweeping victory in the general election.



The outgoing prime minister and great wartime leader Winston Churchill tendered his resignation immediately.

It was announced that a proclamation giving Japan an ultimatum to surrender had been signed by Mr Churchill before his departure.

On 15 August 1945 Emperor Hirohito broadcast to the Japanese people to announce the surrender of the Empire of Japan. On 30 August the first United States occupation troops landed in Yokosuka. On Sunday 2nd September the formal surrender documents were signed on board U.S.S. Missouri in Tokyo Bay, with General Douglas MacArthur presiding. Naval forces of the Allied navies were also present.



In 1943, V-Bells metal slogan dies were produced and sent secretly to Post Office sorting offices countrywide in sealed packages, with strict instructions that they were not to be used in stamp cancelling machines until further instructions. It was to be 2 years before they came in use, first in May 1945 and then again in August. The slogan is a combination of two bells signifying the Victory celebrations, along with the letter 'V' and the dot-dot-dot-dash Morse code representation.

Part air letter posted to England from HMS Newfoundland stationed in Tokyo Bay VJ Day

7.6 Christmas - 1945

The Best of times... for some

Christmas Eve 1945 — "The 'Battle' carries on... It is the best of times and the worst of times, but we mustn't grumble. It's up to us now to do what we can, to do justice to the bravery of the fallen, by seeing that we can make the most of the peace and freedom they have bequeathed us."

The first Christmas of peace wasn't always the perfect one people had dreamed of. It was still a time of worry and 'Making Do'. At home, most faced the enormous task of rebuilding their shattered lives.



With loved ones still away, it often wasn't the Christmas many had hoped for; there were still private battles to be won.

Some Japanese POW's came home for Xmas, but sadly many never returned. Those who did, often had a long recuperation battle ahead of them. Special arrangements were made for mail to former prisoners in the process of being repatriated. Their mail was sent via a 'clearing house' in London using Box 164 for onward transmission.



6d Airletter sent from Croydon to Sergeant Victor Turner (P.O.Box 164) who had, until recently, been a Prisoner of War held by the Japanese in one of the six camps on the island of Taiwan, Formosa. From the letter, written 9th October 1945 by Victor's wife, it is clear that he had not received any of her letters or cables sent to him since his liberation. She expresses the hope that he would pick them up when his ship called at Gibraltar.

Violet 'UNDELIVERED FOR REASONS STATED / RETURN TO SENDER

4 line violet cachet:

IT IS REGRETTED THIS LETTER COULD
NOT BE FORWARDED IN TIME TO CONNECT
WITH THE SHIP OR AIRCRAFT ON WHICH
THE ADDRESSEE WAS REPATRIATED

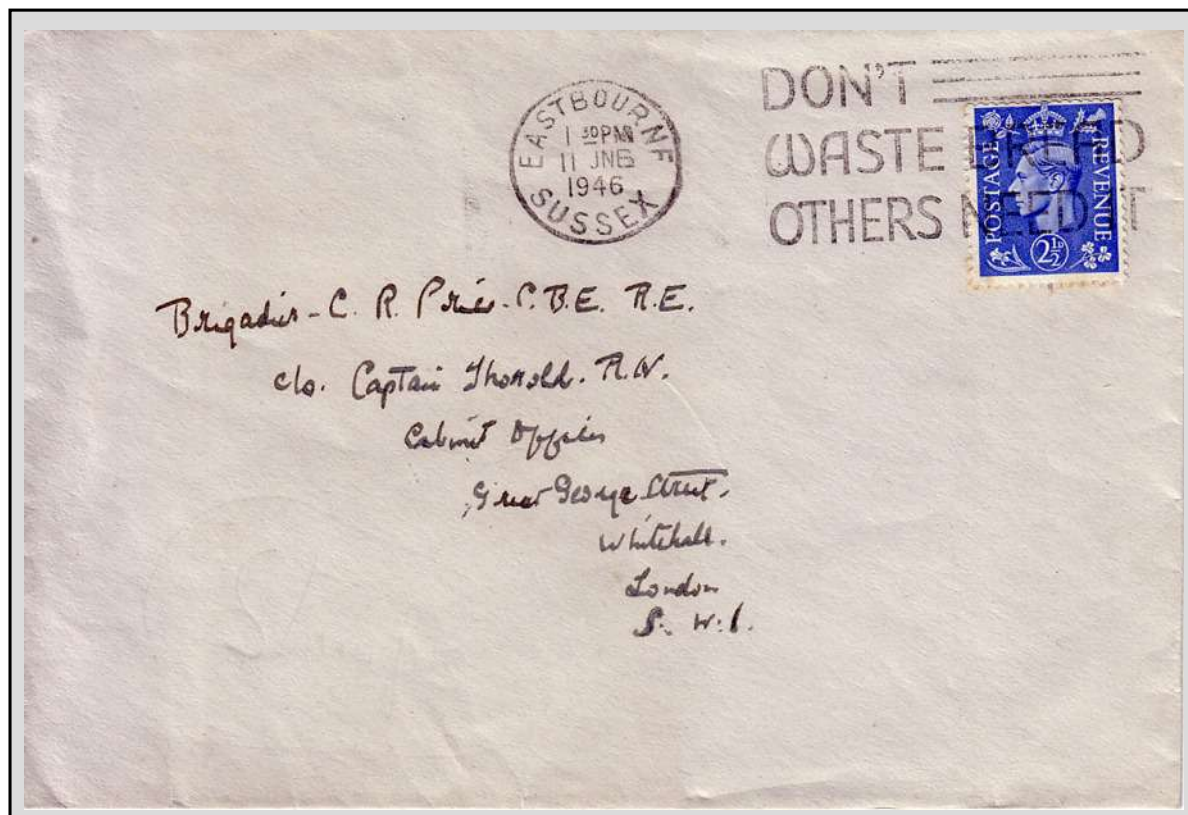
The use of the 6d civilian rate air letter was unnecessary, as correspondence to a returning prisoner of war was charged at the concessionary rate of 1½d.



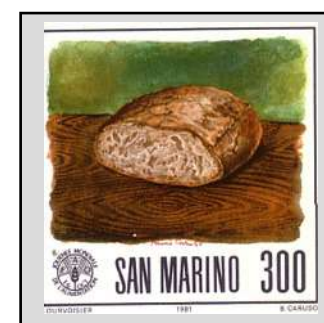
A forces 1½d air letter sent by the father of a soldier in the process of repatriation. His son had been a POW of the Japanese and was at the time the letter was sent, (19th September 1945), on board the repatriation ship Boissevain. P.O.Box 164, London was a central address from which mail was forwarded often via The War Organisation of the British Red Cross. In London the air letter was endorsed 'Boisse' for Boissevain and forwarded to the ship.

Postscript : Britain Prepares for Peace

Austerity and hardship did not finish with the end of the war, rationing was progressively removed from daily life, but it was 3 July, 1954, that the Government officially announced the end of rationing, when meat finally became 'off the ration', almost nine years after the war had ended.

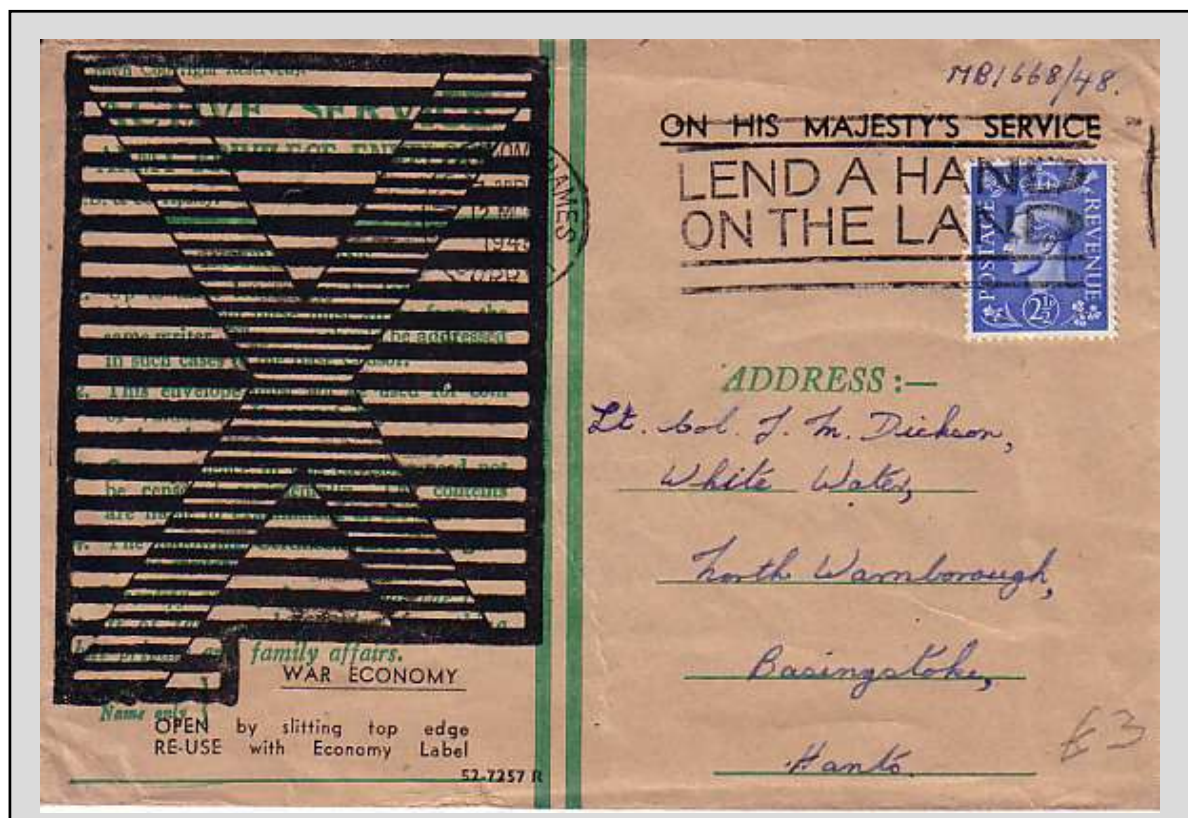


Tough Times Ahead — In the weeks following the armistice, scores of veterans who had been injured in body and spirit returned home to find life was not going to get better overnight.



Left: 'DON'T WASTE BREAD OTHERS NEED IT' slogan

Food and clothes rationing would continue, while bread, which had been available throughout the war years, was rationed for the first time on 21 July 1946.



SAVE WASTE PAPER FOR SALVAGE was still being urged in 1948



'Lend a Hand' was the order of the day..

Post-war economy measures meant that, to save paper, unused service envelopes were overprinted and re-used for official business.

Britain Prepares for Peace

Homes for the People

"We have to bind up the wounds of war. We have to reconstruct our ruined homes... We have to build up this country" - Clement Atlee.
With 750,000 new homes to be built and 500,000 in need of repair, the Post-war British Government announced a 2 year building plan.



Peace and Reconstruction was reflected in the stamp issue of June 11 1946.

Post-War Reconstruction

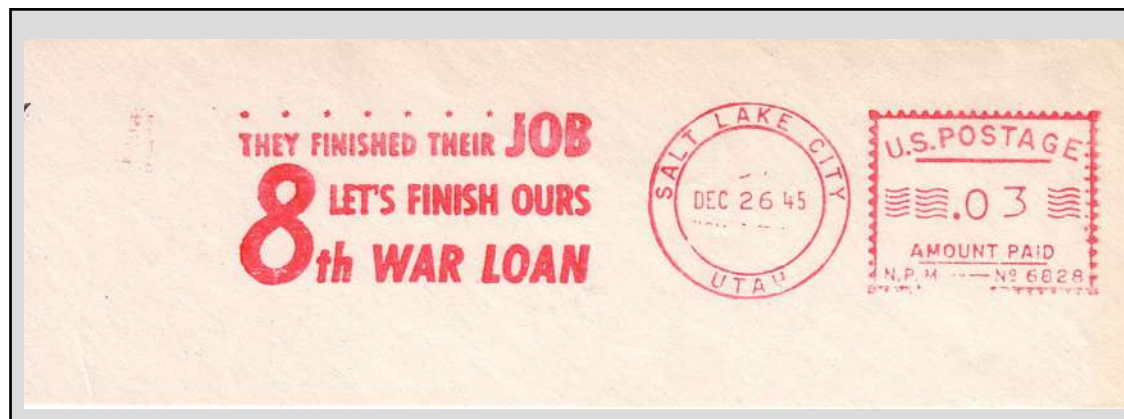
After the initial celebrations of VE and VJ day had passed, Britain continued to suffer many of the restrictions and difficulties of war-time, whilst attempting to re-build lives and homes.



Building workers were given priority release from the armed forces.



Billions of tons of concrete was required to re-construct buildings, bridges, dams, roads, and other structures.



The worldwide slaughter was accompanied by massive devastation; even in victorious Britain 6.5% of homes were destroyed, and the economy exhausted.
In December 1945, the British Government accepted £1,100 million loan from the USA.

Britain Prepares for Peace...

Out of the Ashes

The signing of the United Nations Charter was the beginning of the international community's effort to establish an effective world peace organisation.

The 'Charter of the United Nations' was agreed during a conference held in San Francisco 25 April 1945 — 26 June 1945

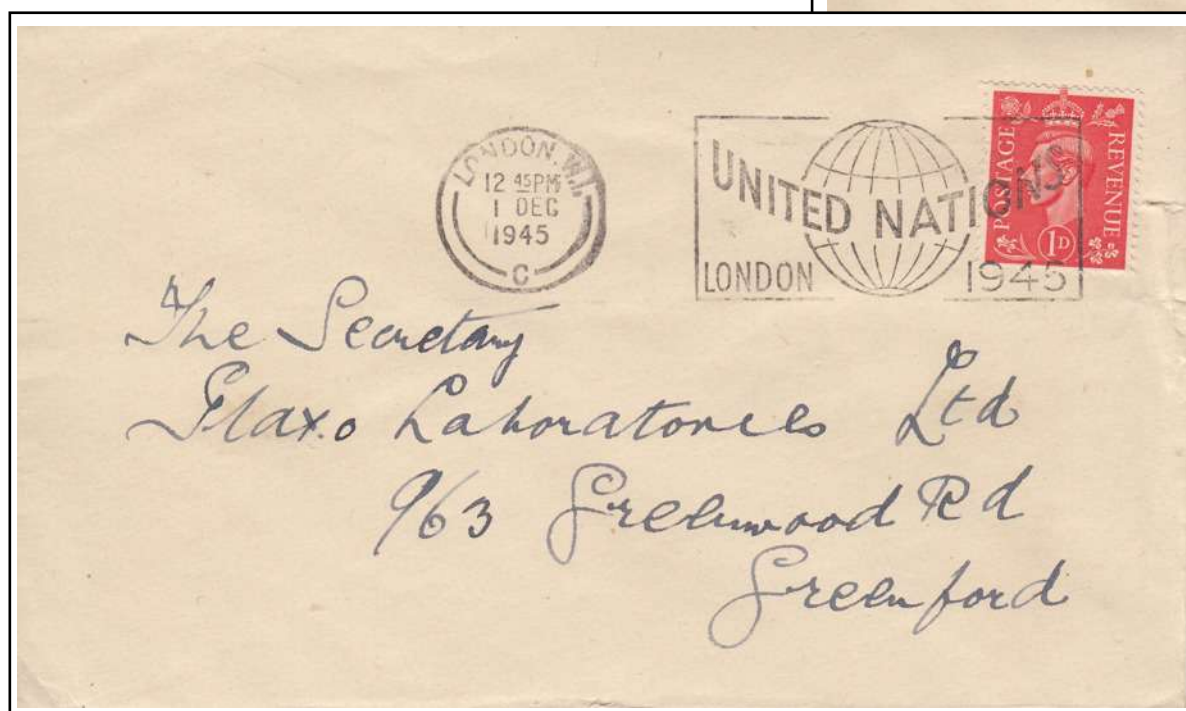
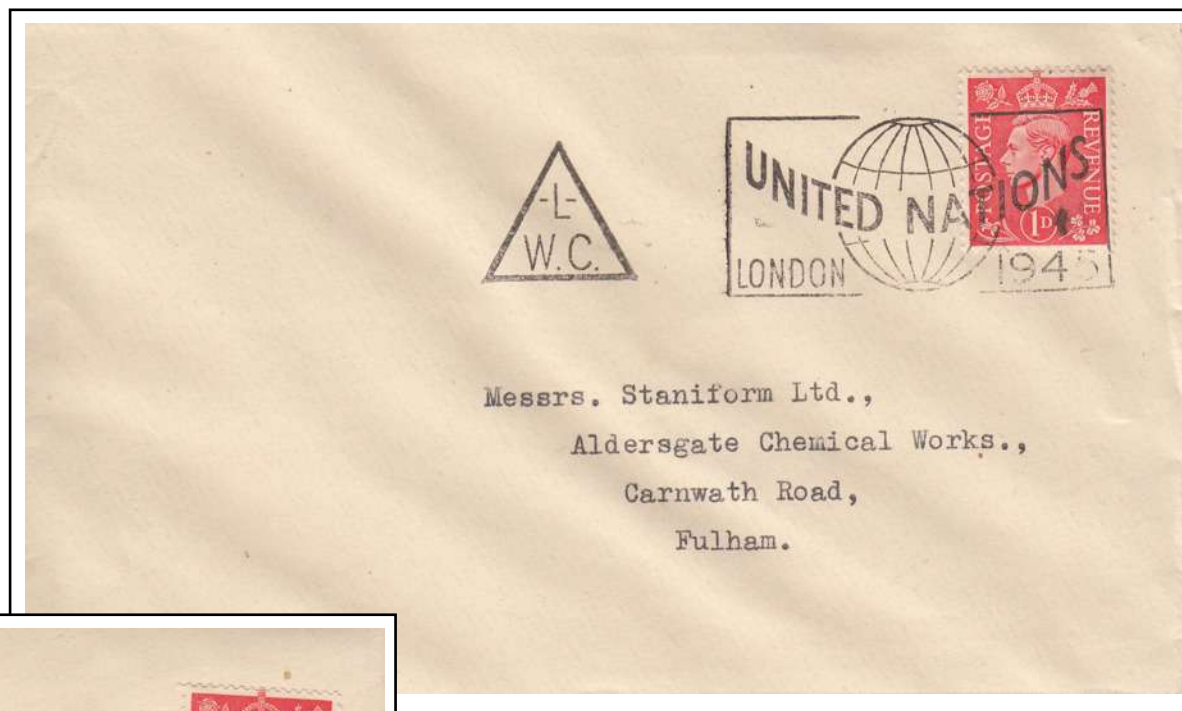


The US Postmaster General suggested an issue of stamps to commemorate and dedicate the conference to President Franklin D. Roosevelt. The design included an olive branch and the words "TOWARD UNITED NATIONS" — per Roosevelt's recommendations and sketch — On his death his name was added to the final design in honour of his efforts and contributions to the founding of the UN.



The 1st session of the General Assembly took place in London, England December 1945.

(right) Bulk rate items were indicated by using a triangle with the type of posting and the city noted instead of a circular dater. Mail posted after 4pm received a 'L' marking (in this case London W.C.)



4 Dec 1945: 'OFFICIAL PAID' LONDON E.C. red machine mark

UNITED NATIONS LONDON 1945 slogan in use 1 December 1945 — 24 January 1946. First Day of Use shown (left)

The total estimated human loss of life caused by World War II, irrespective of political alignment, was roughly 72 million people. The civilian toll was around 47 million, including about 20 million due to war related famine and disease. The military toll was about 25 million, including about 5 million prisoners of war.



The Allies lost around 61 million people, and the Axis lost 11 million. There was a disproportionate loss of life and property; some nations had a higher casualty rate than others, due to a number of factors including military tactics and crimes against humanity.



“Let us hope that the children of this War will grow up in Peace.”