

Extracts from a Wartime Diary

1939 - 1945

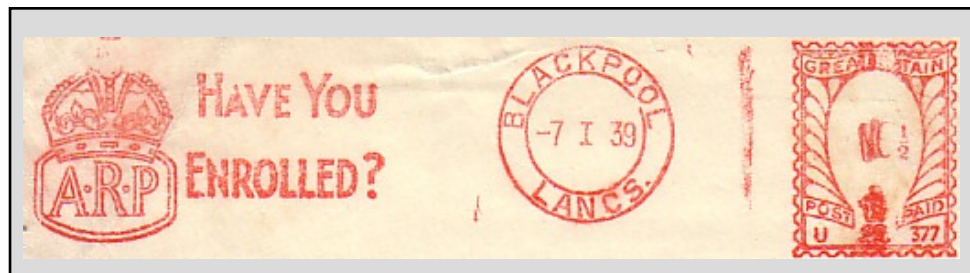
September 1939 — Germany invades Poland, as a consequence Britain and France declared war on Germany. But with the fall of France in 1940, Britain stood alone, until the United States and the Soviet Union joined her as allies in 1941.

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.



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.

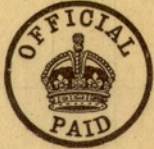
NOW IS YOUR OPPORTUNITY TO REGISTER YOUR CHILDREN FOR EVACUATION. FILL UP THIS PAPER AND RETURN IT AT ONCE.

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 w 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



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.



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.”



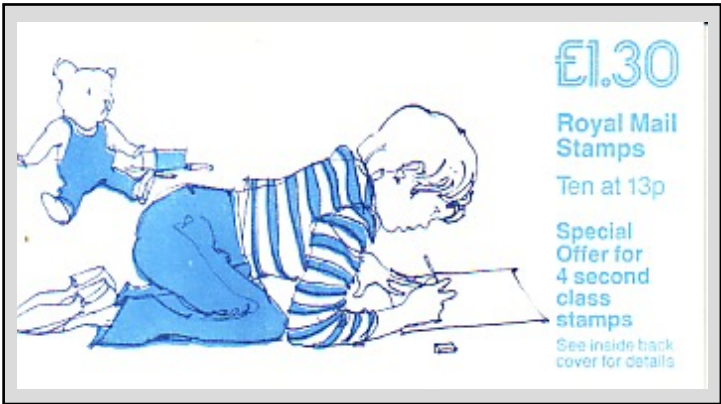
120,000 left Glasgow for the safety of Scottish countryside. Young children were also evacuated from other large cities.



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

GENERAL POST OFFICE Duplicate

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 W. H. H.
Address of Billet Laurence Park

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

Stamp of Paying Office
KINCARDINESHIRE
39
LAURENCE PARK
*
4
76

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.

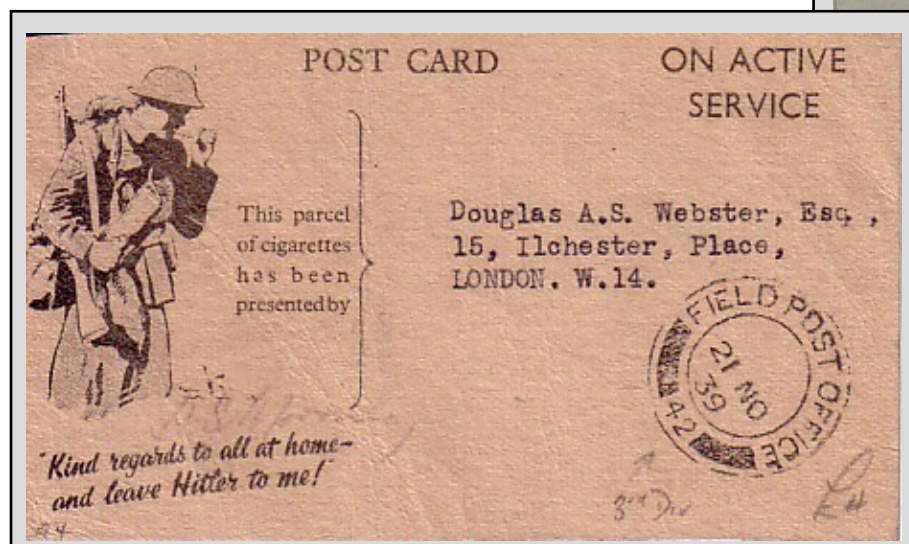


No. 1 Air Formation Official Service Air Mail.

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'

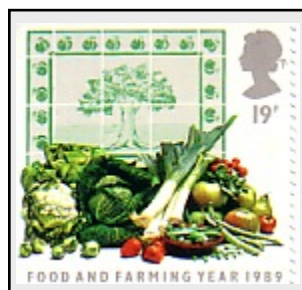
The Home Front Mobilised

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



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.

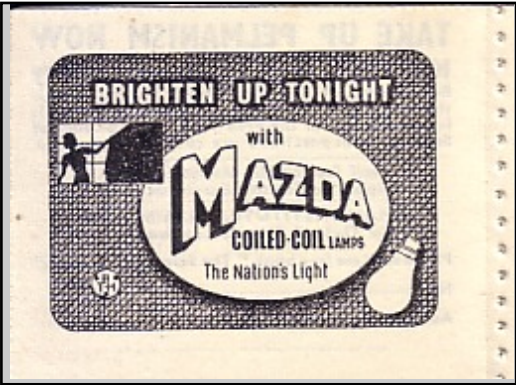
During the Munich Crisis of September 1938, 38 million gas masks were distributed to the civil population. Germany had signed the 1925 Geneva Protocol promising that it would not employ poison gas, but most people expected that Hitler to use it.



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.



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."

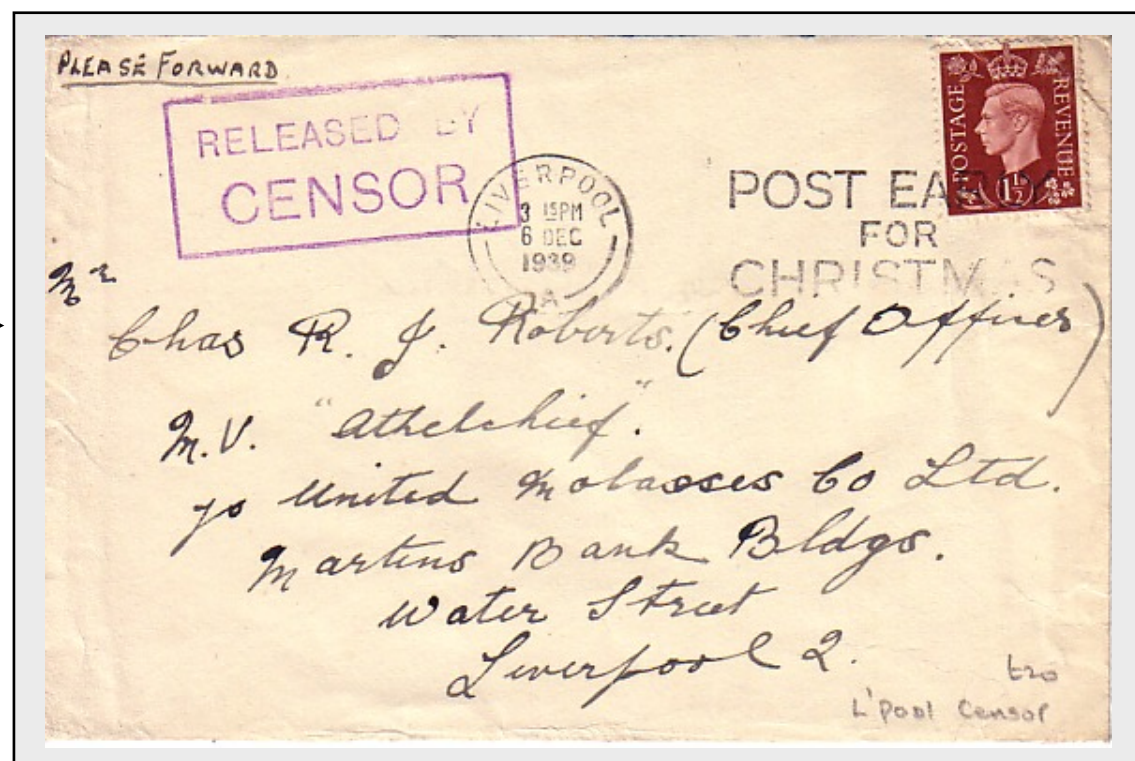
All mail leaving the country and some internal mail was subject to censorship, for security and statistical purposes. At the start of the war, the censors were based in Liverpool under the control of the War Office.

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)

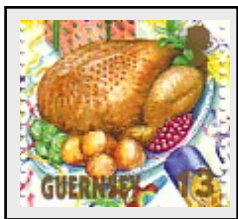
Sealed mail was opened and then resealed with an *OPENED BY CENSOR* label. (right)

1.6 Christmas, we have plenty now, but what about next year?

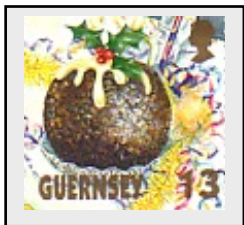
Winning the ‘War of Nerves’

Monday 25th December 1939 — “ It doesn’t seem the same without Ted here, but at least the children are back. With rationing coming in the New Year we are determined to enjoy this Xmas. I say if we are merry at Christmas, we shall show those Nazis that we are winning this war of nerves.”

For families with loved ones away, Christmas ‘39 was a difficult time. Rationing was to be introduced in the New Year, so many made the most of what they had and celebrated in the traditional manner.



Turkey...



... and Plum pudding.

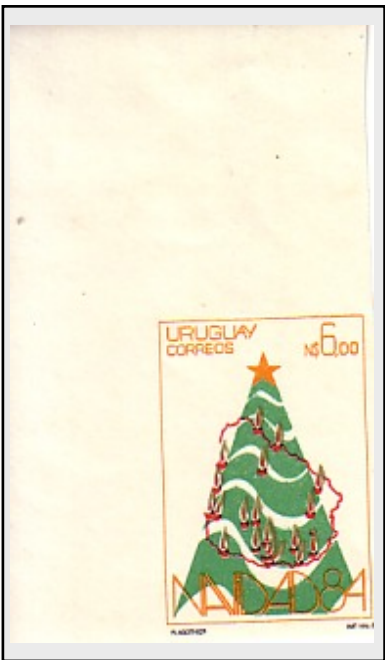
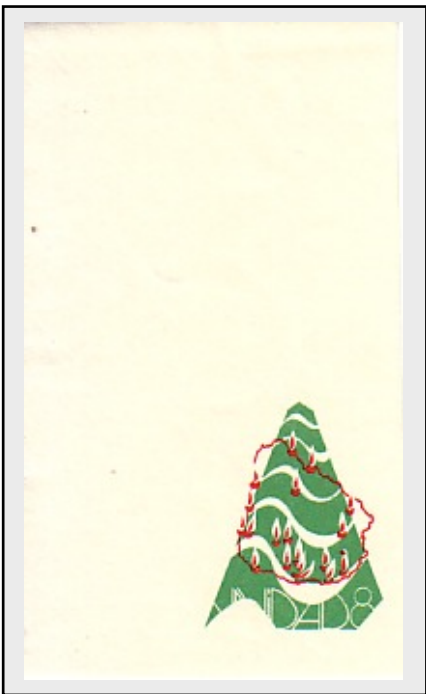


For most this was a happy time and people spent freely on food and presents.

However, there were a few restrictions which affected some aspects of

the seasonal festivities...

Many sent and received their traditional greetings cards, however a rather un-festive GPO continued to remind the people they should ‘Grow More Food — Dig for Victory’ (the slogan was in use throughout the Christmas period)



... The ‘Blackout’ ensured the family Christmas tree decorations were rather more re-

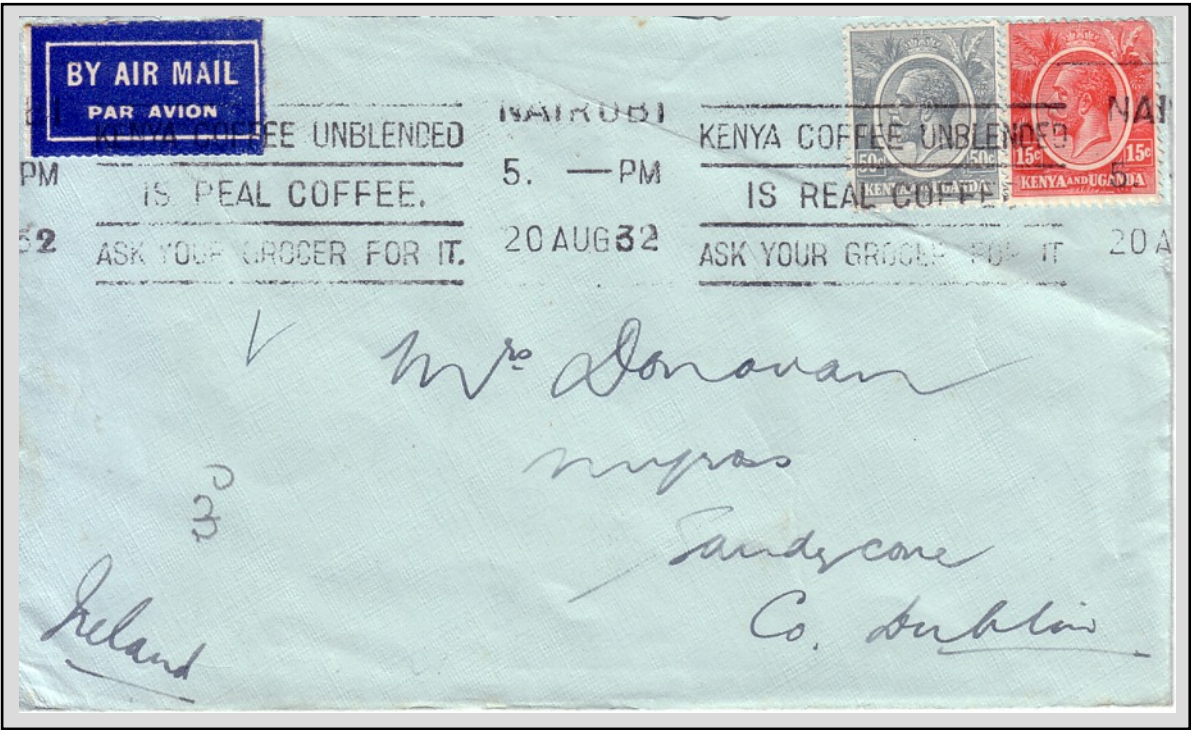


As families gathered together to decorate their homes and trees, they looked forward to a more settled 1940...

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.

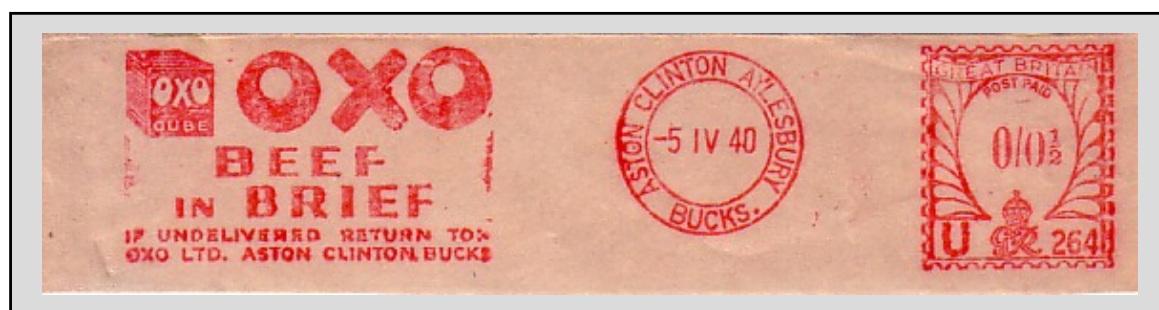


A good 'cuppa' tea



"GIVES YOU STRENGTH"

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.



A mug of beef tea was the favoured way to fend off the chill of winter.
5.4.1940: Universal Postal Franking machine with 1/2d GVI die (Prefix U264)



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

2.1 We are on Rations

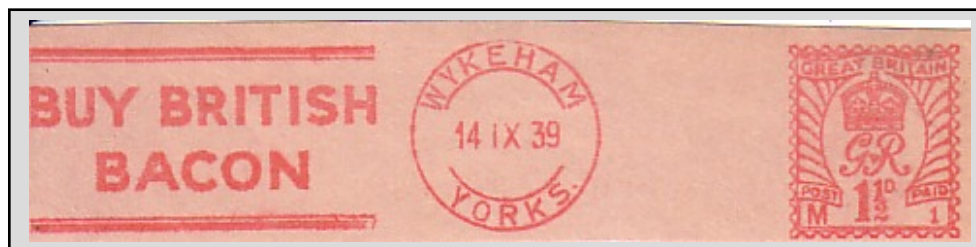
Economies in the Kitchen

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.

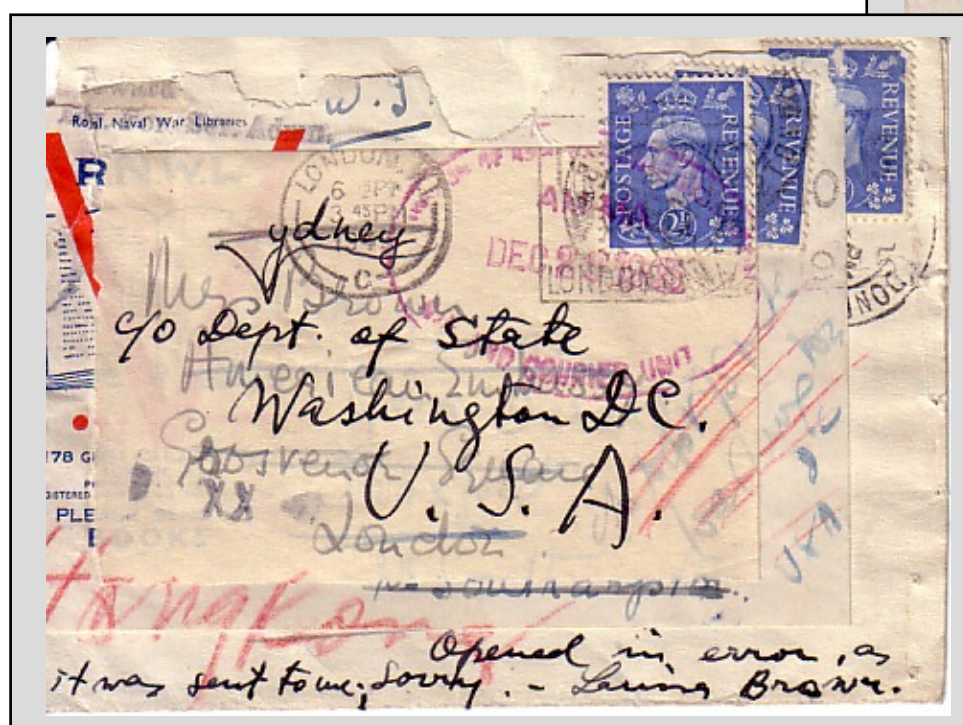
2.1 We are on Rations

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."

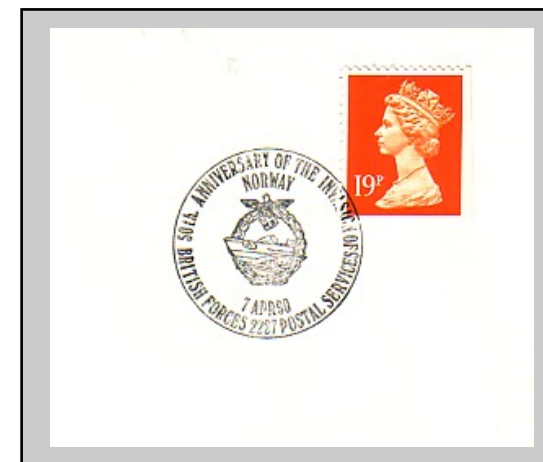


28 March 1940, Letter written in English St. Albans to Denmark.

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.

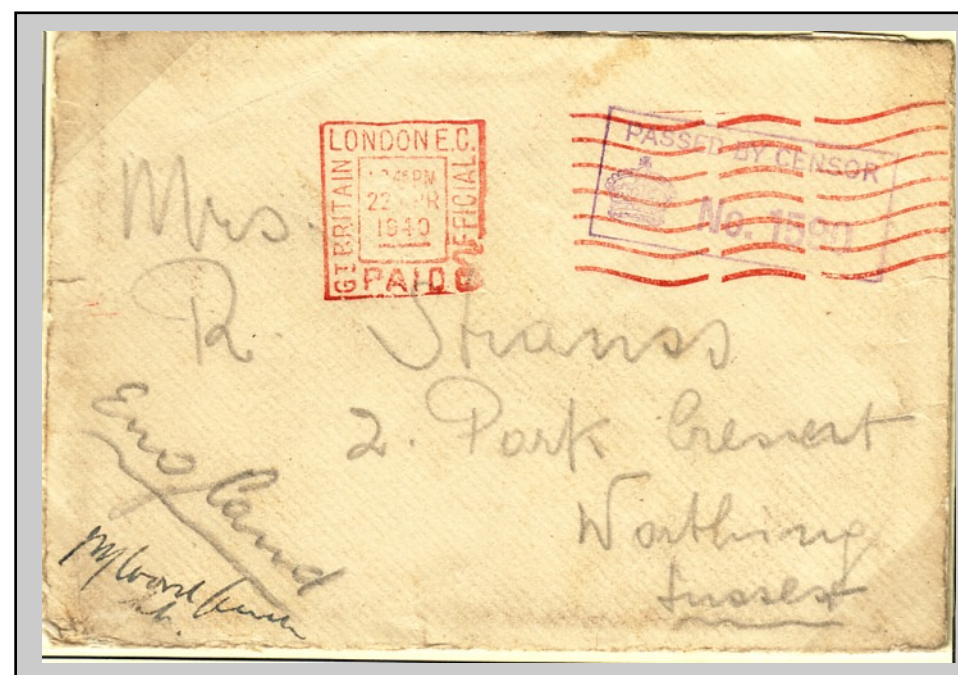


The Germans invade Denmark & Norway

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



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

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)

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, philatelists were determined to celebrate the phenomenal success of the introduction of Uniform Penny Postage (and the ‘penny black’)...

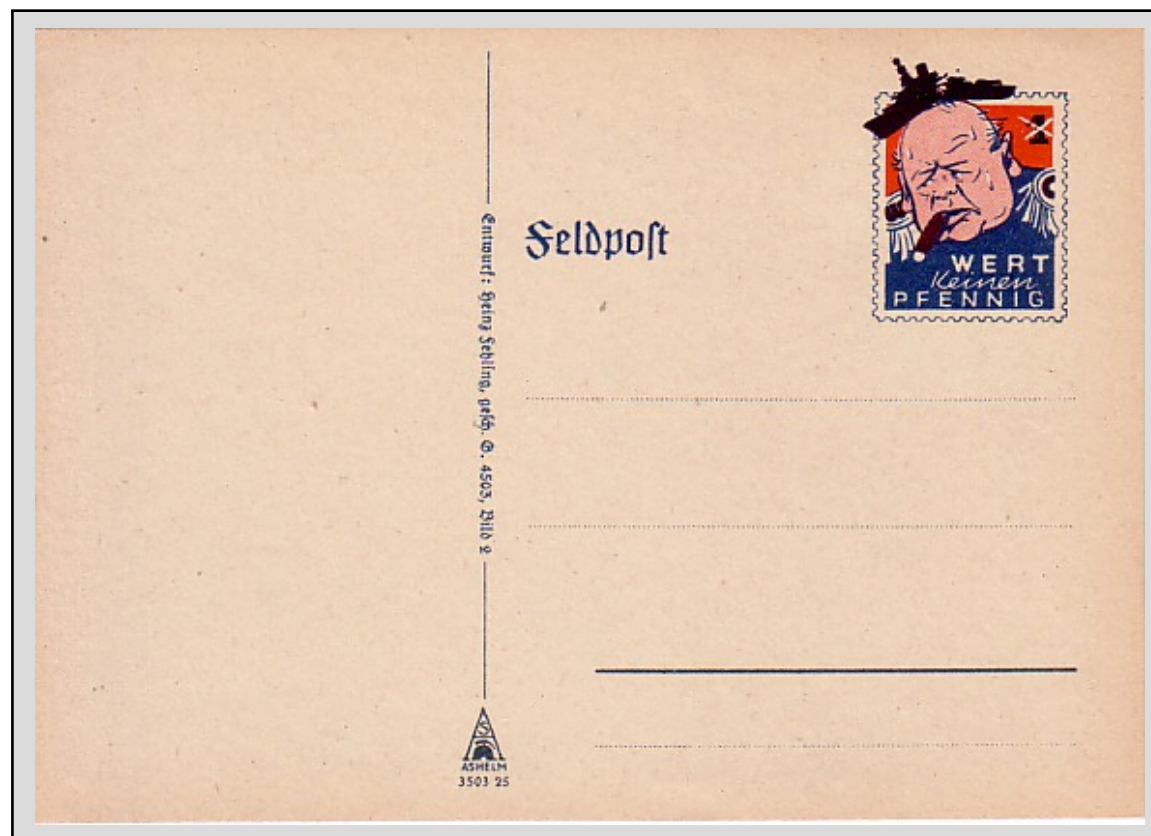


The Royal Philatelic Society Stamp Centenary Exhibition in aid of the Lord Mayor's Red Cross & St. John Fund
Special illustrated registered cover franked with the 1940 Centenary set of six stamps, and cancelled with special red Exhibition handstamp.

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...”

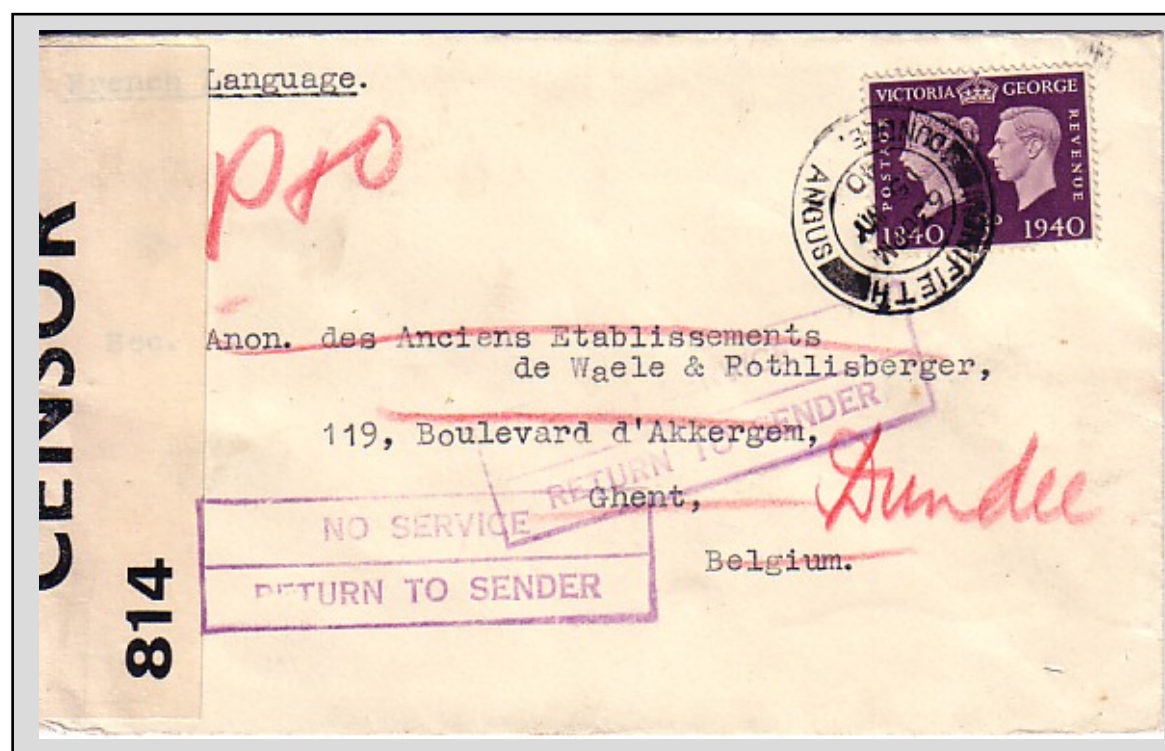


...You ask what is our policy? I will say: It is to wage war by sea, land and air with all our might and with all the strength that God can give us: to wage war against a monstrous tyranny, ... That is our policy. You ask, What is our aim? ...Victory — victory at all costs, victory in spite of all terror, 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



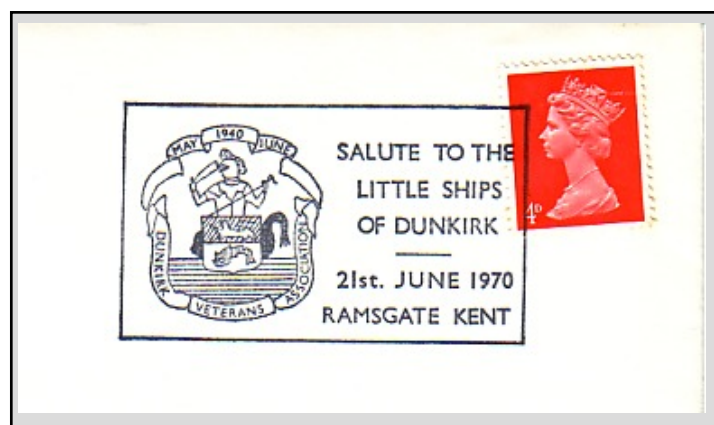
NO SERVICE/ RETURN TO SENDER cachet: Letter Dundee to Belgium 15 May 1940
Brussels fell to the German 6th Army on 17 May.

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

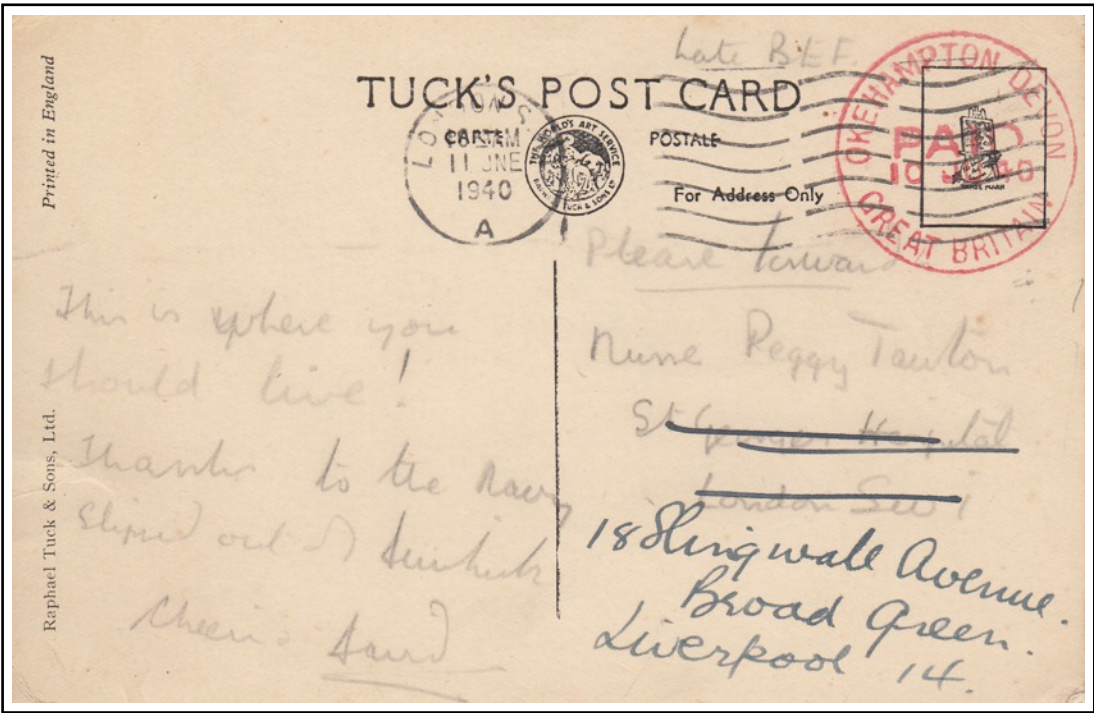
On the first day, only 7,011 men were evacuated, but by the ninth day, a total of 338,226 soldiers (198,229 British and 139,997 French) had been rescued by the hastily assembled fleet of little boats.



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.

From 2 402 3.0 BULFORD BARRACKS 11

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.



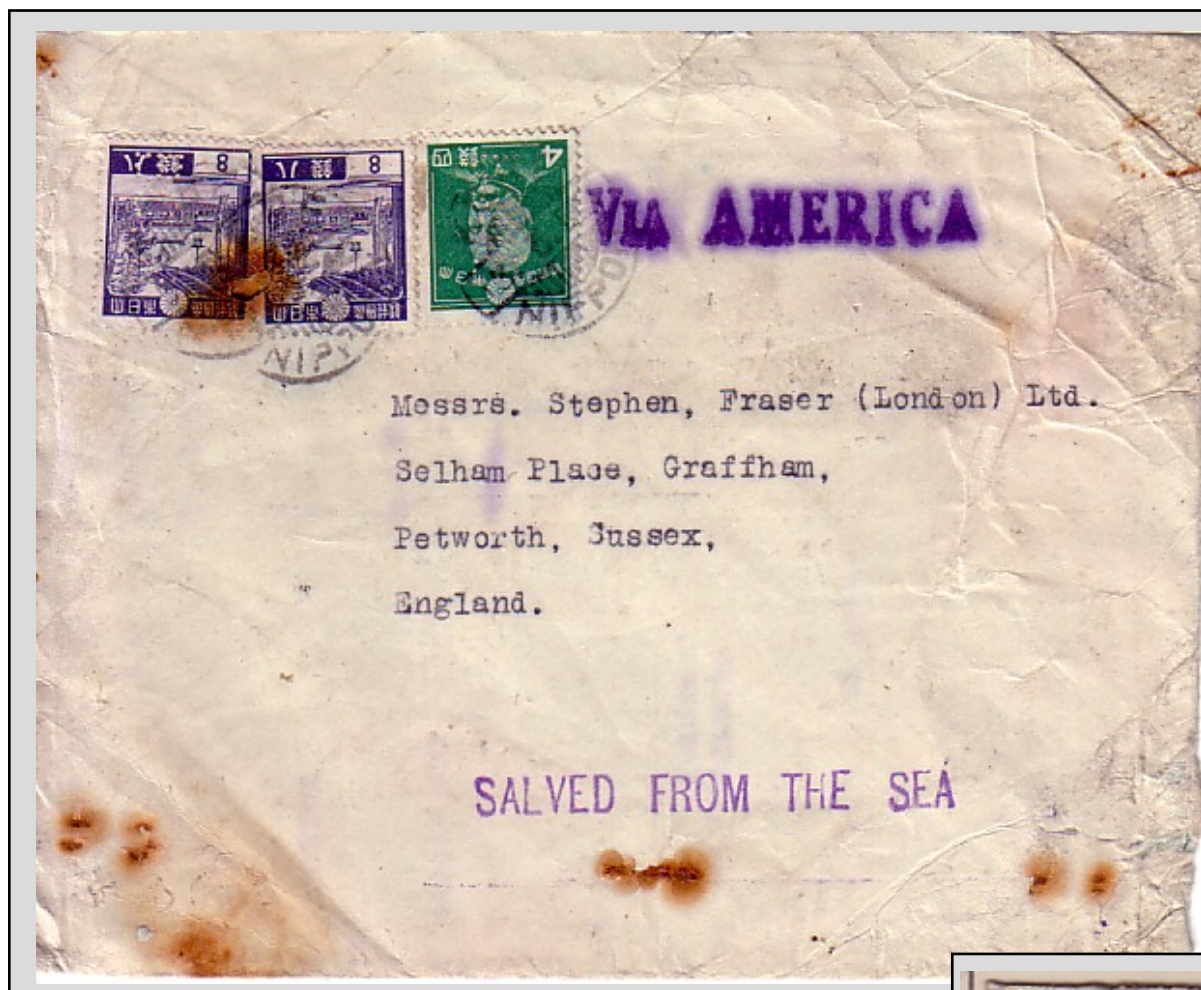
A radio was considered essential to most households during the war.

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

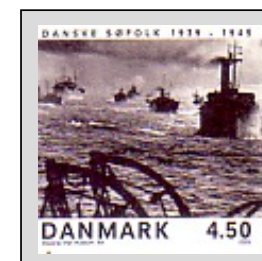
On June 7, 1940 the British turbo-electric powered ship 'Eros' was severely damaged by a torpedo fired from a German submarine U-48, under the command of Captain Rösling. This act of war occurred not far from Donegal coast of Ireland and the crew of 62 managed to beach the Eros on the Irish coast without 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?”

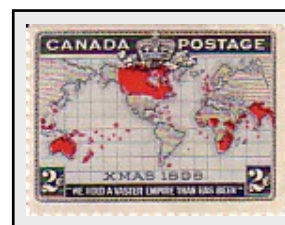
‘Britain Stands Alone’ A common slogan but untrue.... her Empire including Australia; Canada, South Africa, and India , alongside her European allies, were all at war with Germany from the onset of hostilities.



Blue



Bluish-green



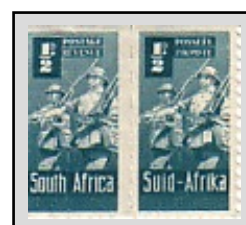
Lavender



Hitler & Mussolini

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

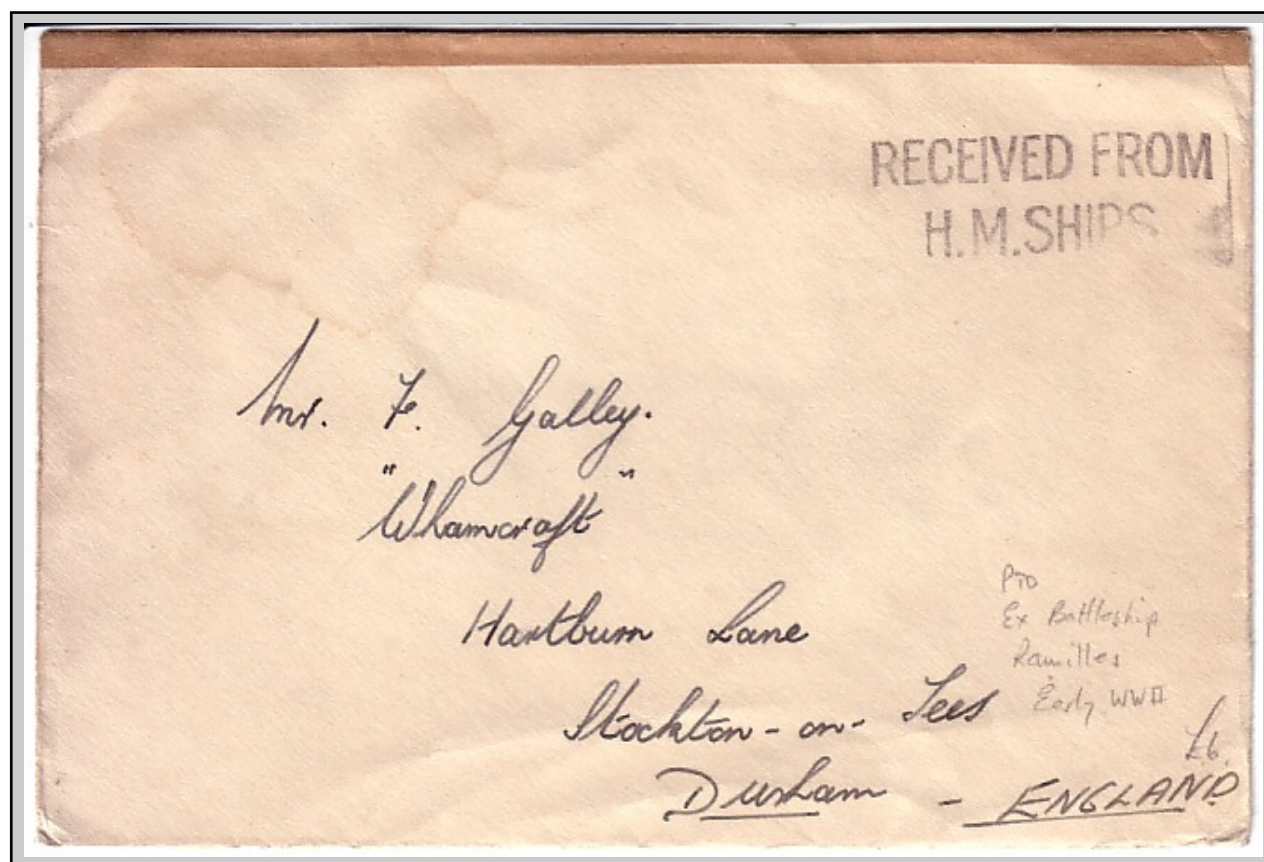
Winston Churchill,
HOUSE OF COMMONS,
4 JUNE 1940



“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

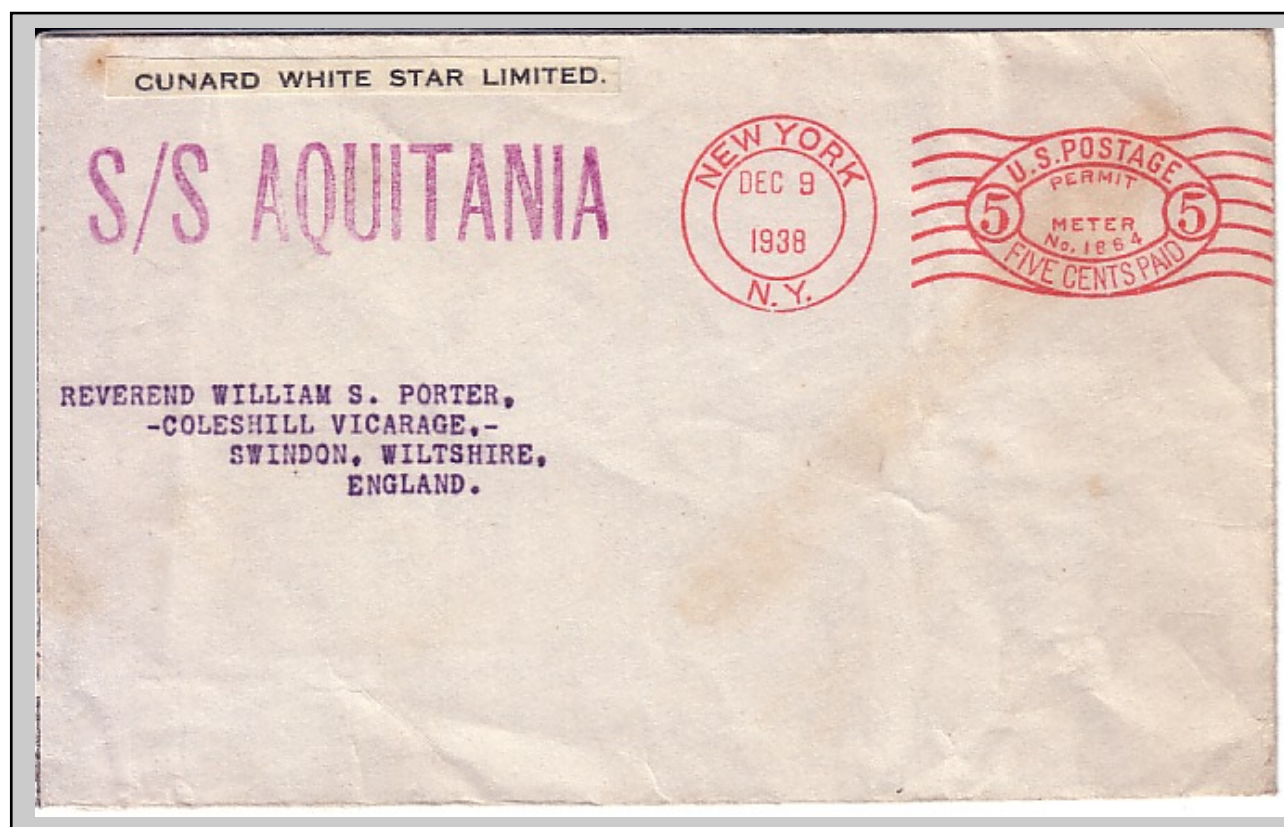


5/- Recess printed stamps with JOHN ASH imprint



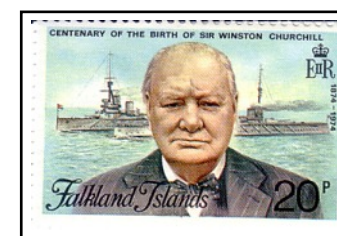
Typo

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.



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')



"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."

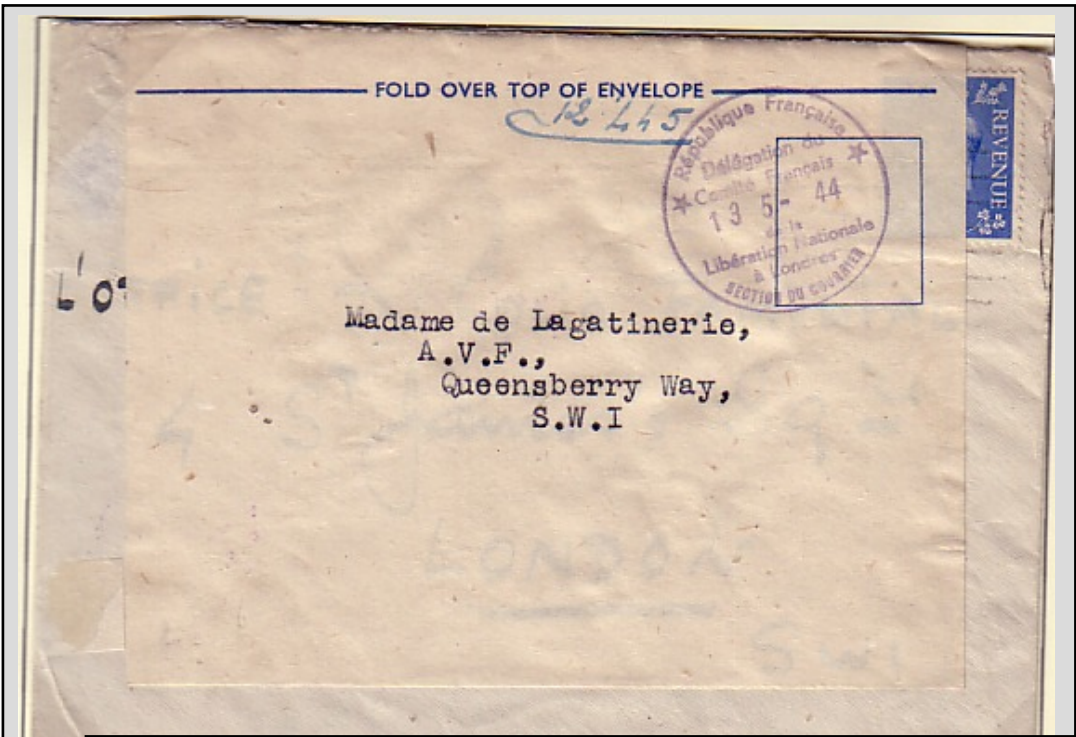
Message sent from Churchill to Australian Prime Minister Menzies at the the first anniversary of the outbreak of the War

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

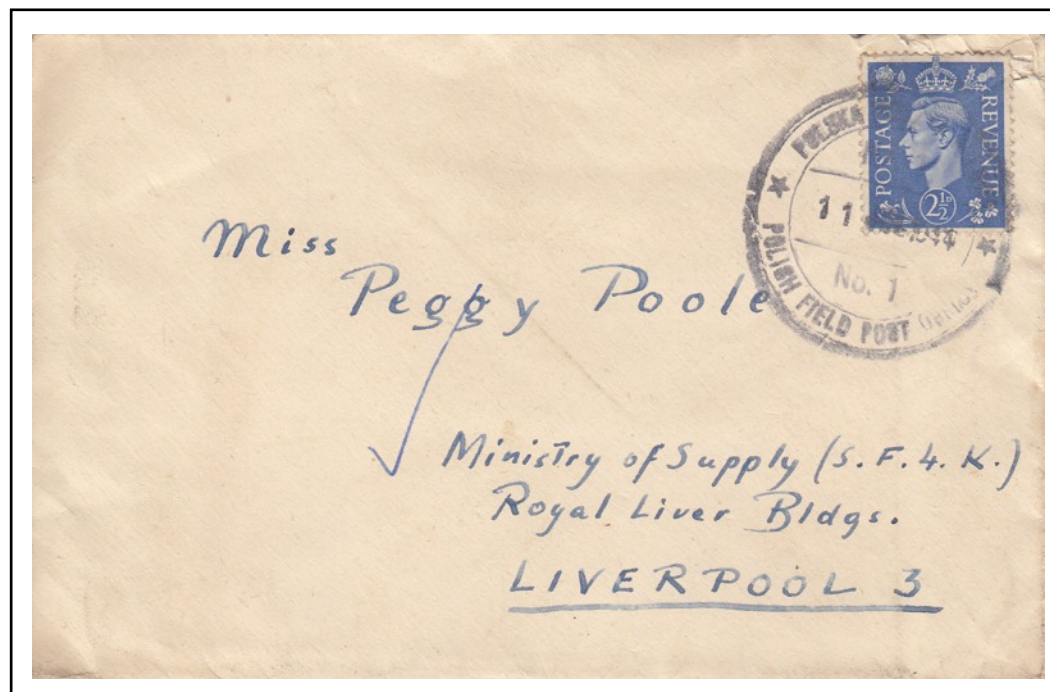
"... Mrs Bates daughter is even walking out with one of them Polish chaps, he does seem quite nice, but he is always so sad. She says he misses his home and family. I bet he does... Oh... drat this war! and blast Hitler!"

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.



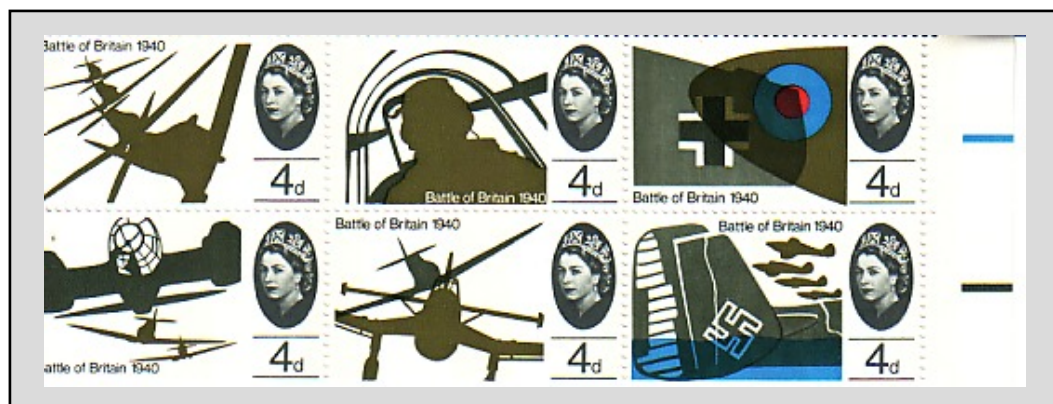
Around Britain's coast were the RDF (Radio Direction Finding) stations, forming the 'Chain Home' Radar system devised by R. Watson-Watt.

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



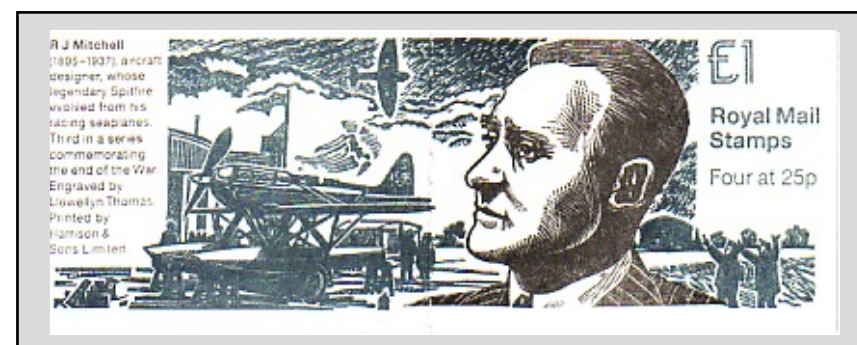
Original artwork of an un-adopted design

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.



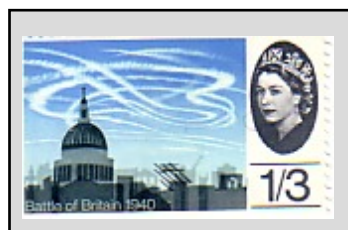
R.J. Mitchell, designer of the Spitfire.

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.



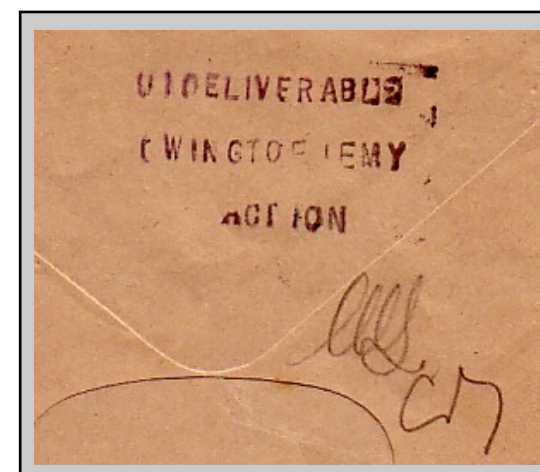
Beginning 7 Sep 1940, London was bombed on 92 consecutive nights. By the end of 1940 the death toll from bombing in London was 13,600 and over 250,000 Londoners had lost their homes.



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.



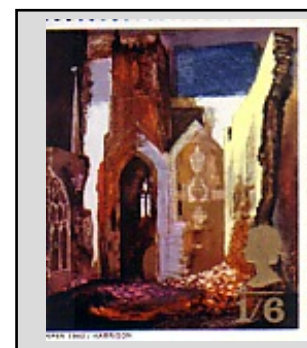
The men who saved St. Paul’s were the first recipients of the new honour — the George Cross — invented to reward civilians who performed acts of conspicuous bravery.

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

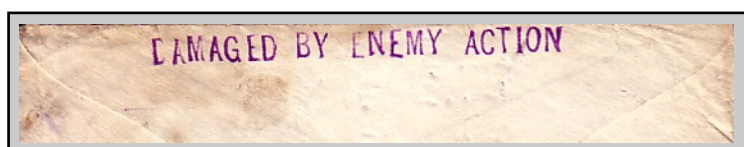


Volunteers attend to the casualties



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.



2.6 1940, First Christmas under Fire

Rationing affects the celebrations

Wednesday December 25 1940 — "We didn't have much but at least we are still all together, we shouldn't take that for granted, not in wartime. I gave Dad the pullover I have been knitting for him, and Mum some soap, it didn't seem much but she was pleased. The kids had fewer toys this year."

This was the first Christmas 'on the ration', with food rationing having been a part of everyday life for almost a year. Toys were becoming scarce and expensive. The most popular adult present for Christmas 1940 was soap.



Soap, tea and toys were popular Christmas presents.

01672

**BRITAIN'S
— LEADING —
LIGHT CAR**

SINGER

POSTS **TELEGRAPHS**

DRINK LIPTON'S TEA

NOTICE.

This form must accompany any inquiry made respecting this Telegram.
The name of the Sender, if telegraphed, is written after the text.

Charges to be paid by Office Stamp.

Rs. As.

Handed in at (Office of Origin.)	Date.	Hour.	Minute.	Service Instructions.	Words.
Kandukatta	19	10	5		13

To Oppidial Rangoon

Send one Thousand
rs five rs note
by webber account
Kasareddy

சென்னை கி. பி. எஸ். & சி. லீட்ஸ் லி.
பி. பி. எஸ். கி. பி. எஸ். கி. பி. எஸ்.
பி. பி. எஸ். கி. பி. எஸ். கி. பி. எஸ்.

Reed. here at 19 11 29 M.

GOLD FLAKE CIGARETTES

Karim Box Press, — Printers — Cal. — 0662 — 20-24 — 40,000 Bks. (8, 5)

Advertising Agents.
 Indian States and Eastern Agency.

70, Apollo Street, BOMBAY.
 5, Temple Chambers, CALCUTTA.

Tea and cigarettes, the traditional answer to the stresses of war, were welcome presents.

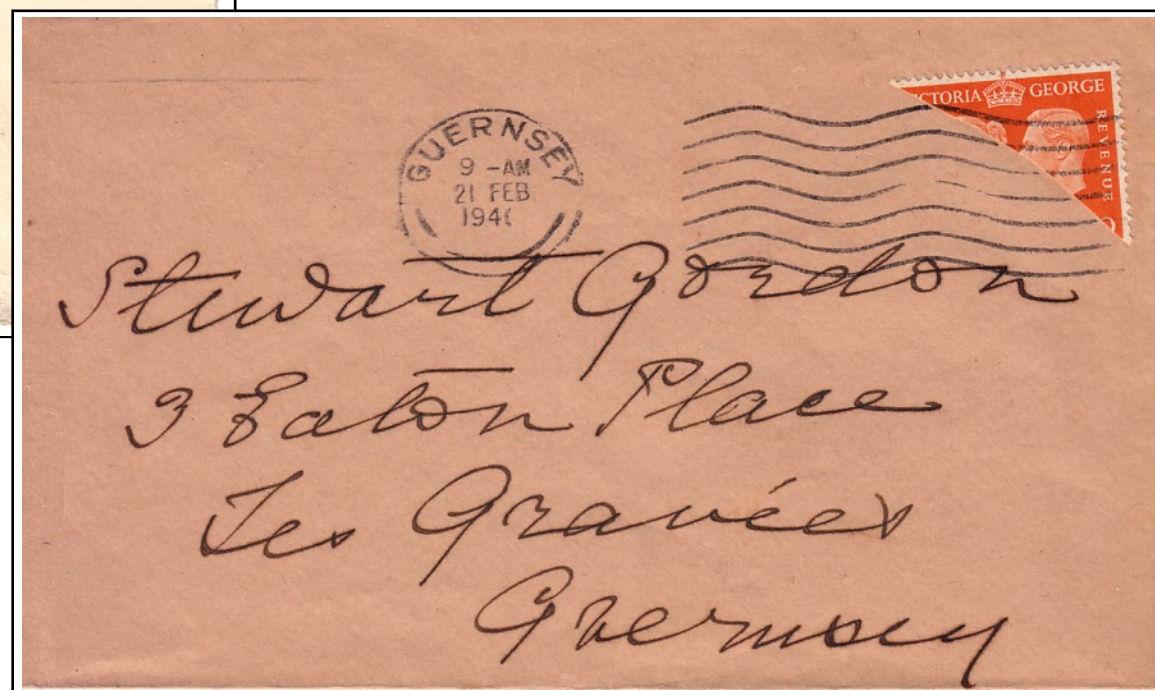
3: 1941 — Total War

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

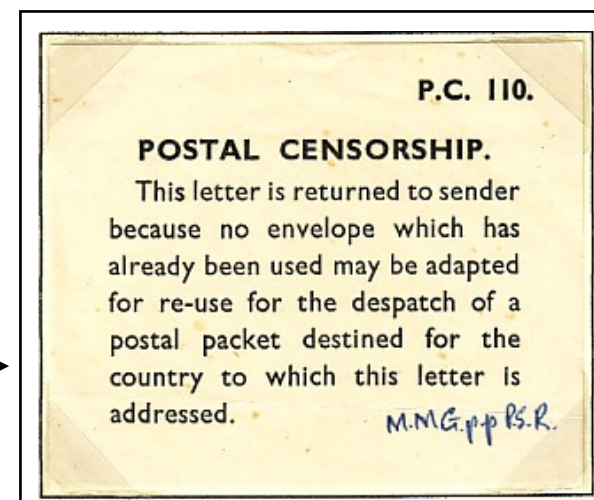
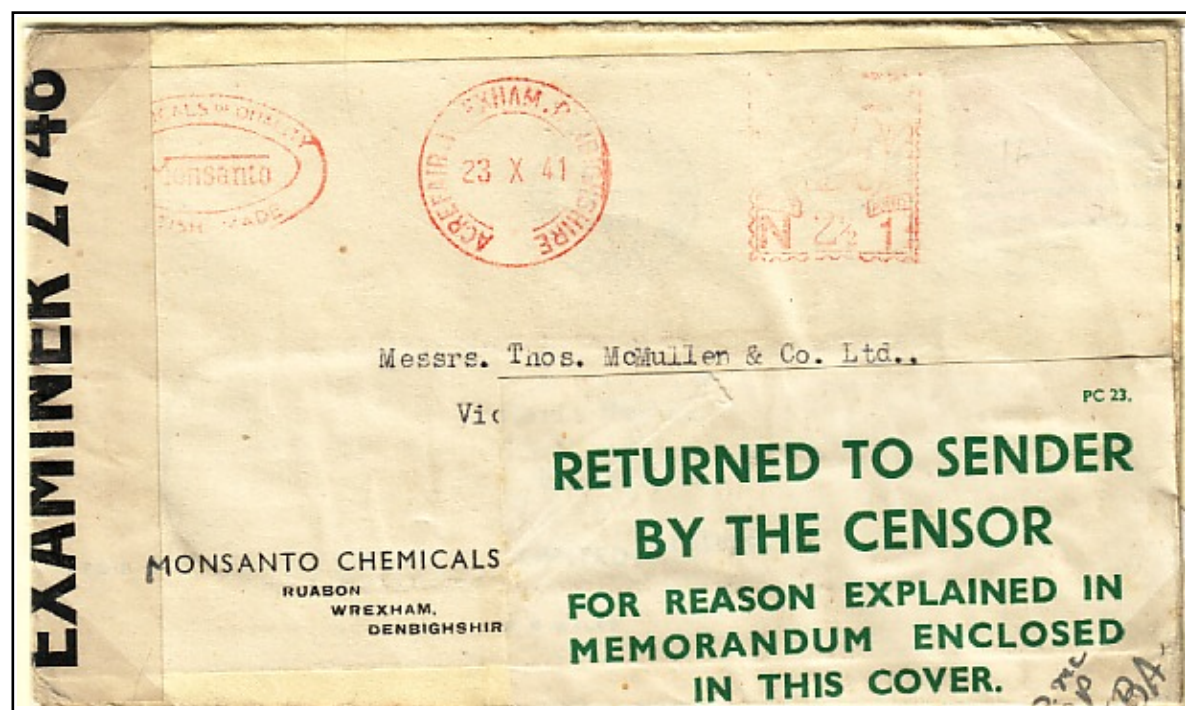


3.2 In the interest of National Security

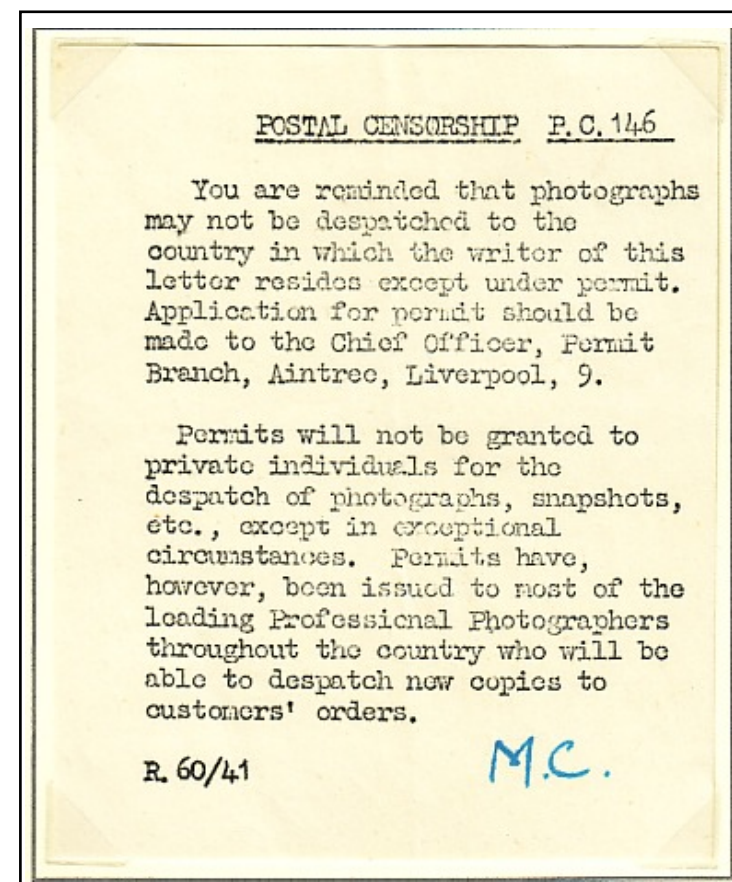
Postal Censorship

"...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.



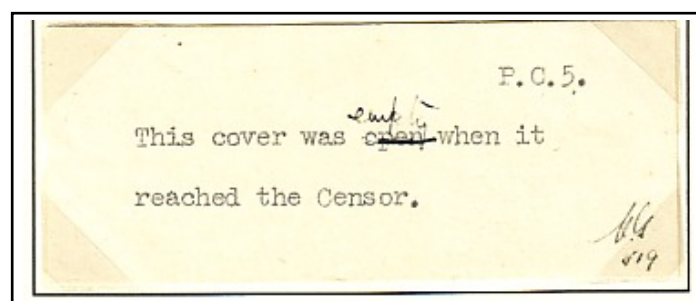
3.2 In the interest of National Security

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.

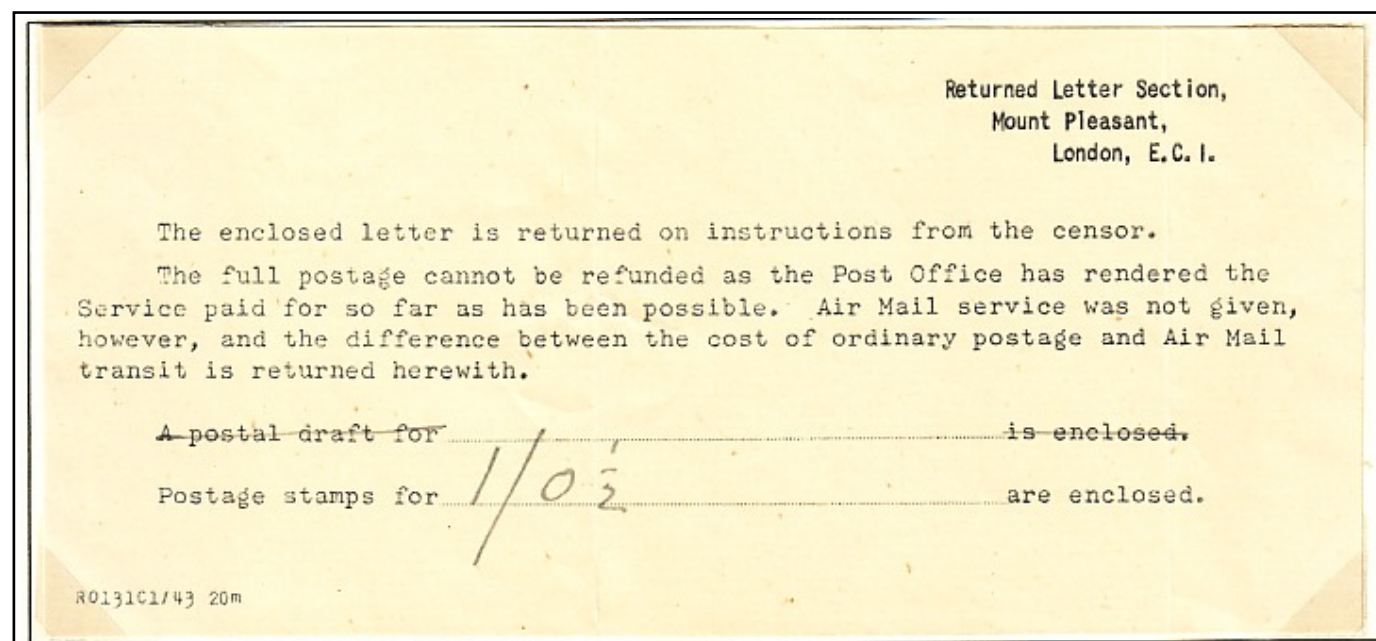
To do this effectively requires Censorship at the point at which information is gathered, censorship of private correspondence being the most well known (and resented) examples of this.



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

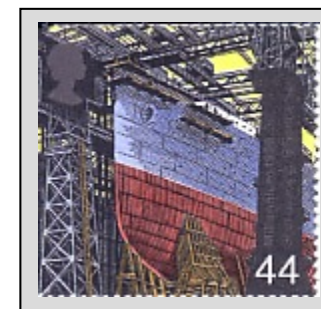
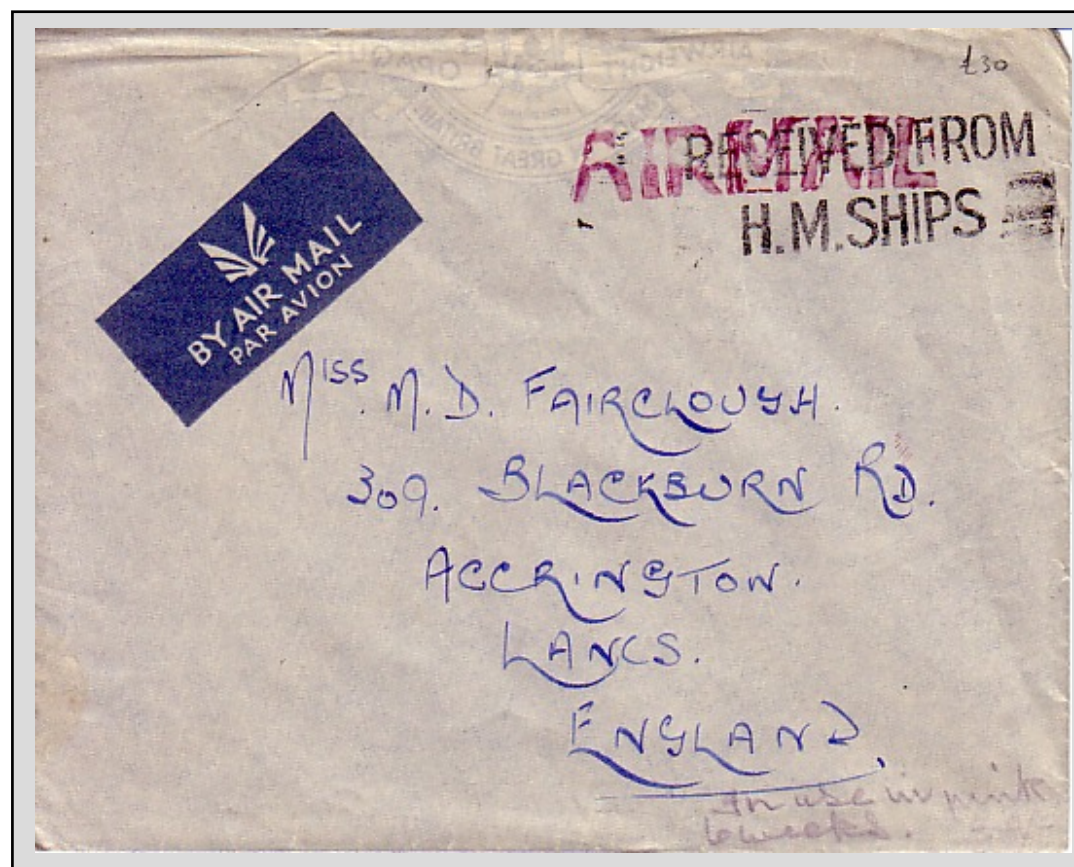
Tuesday February 11 1941 — “Dad says Mr Roosevelt wants to help us but he can’t because his country does not want to get involved with the war. So America is going to lend us vital tools, ships, tanks, etc. and we will pay for them when we’ve won the war.”

“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.

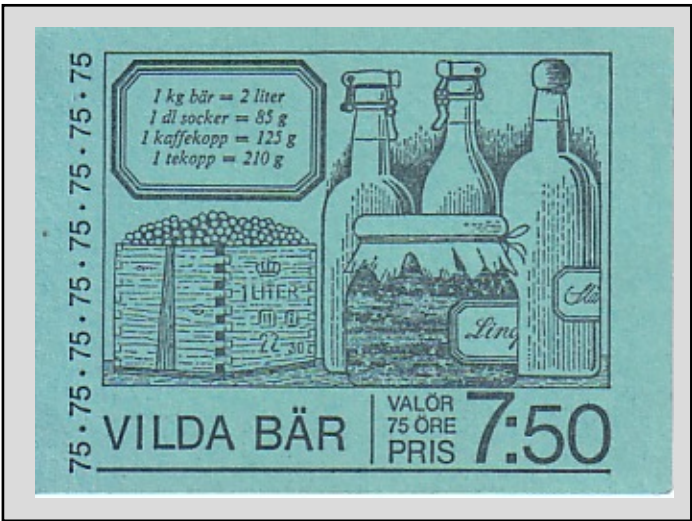


Jam was rationed (Mar 1941) but extra sugar could be obtained to make home-made jams during the fruit season.

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

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.



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



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



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)

3.4 The Spirit of Wartime

The 'Blitzkrieg'

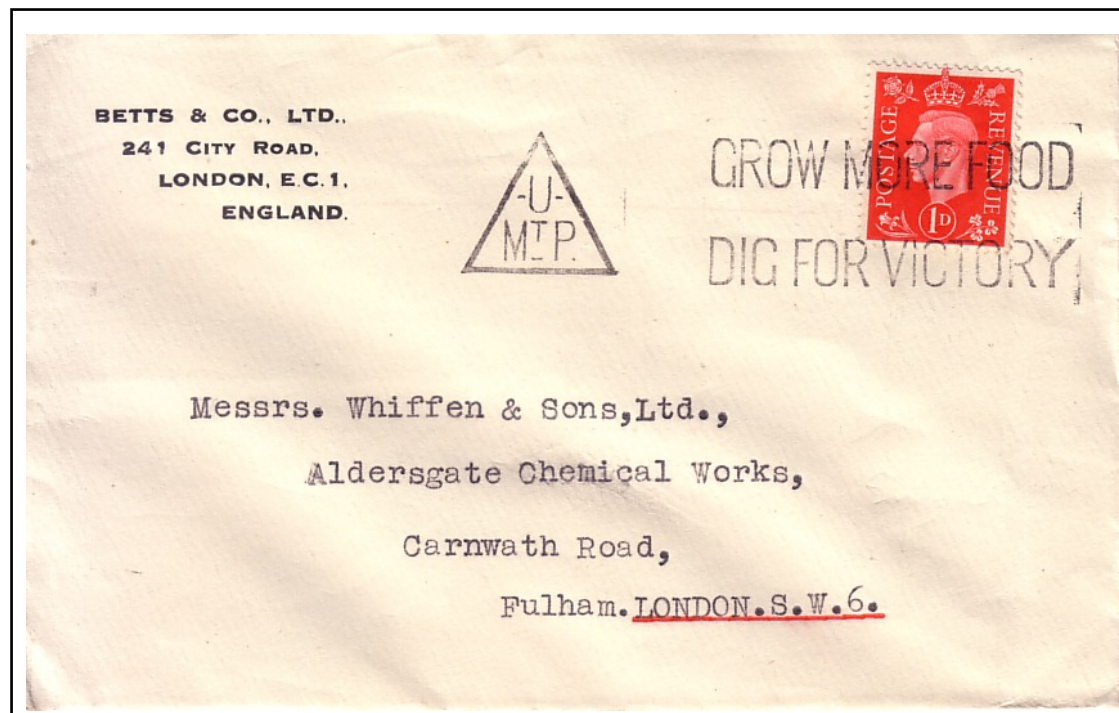
Saturday 17 May 1941: "One grows so tired of all the destruction and disruption... That Hitler is just a flippin' madman, bombing all us women and children... How much longer can it go on..."

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*

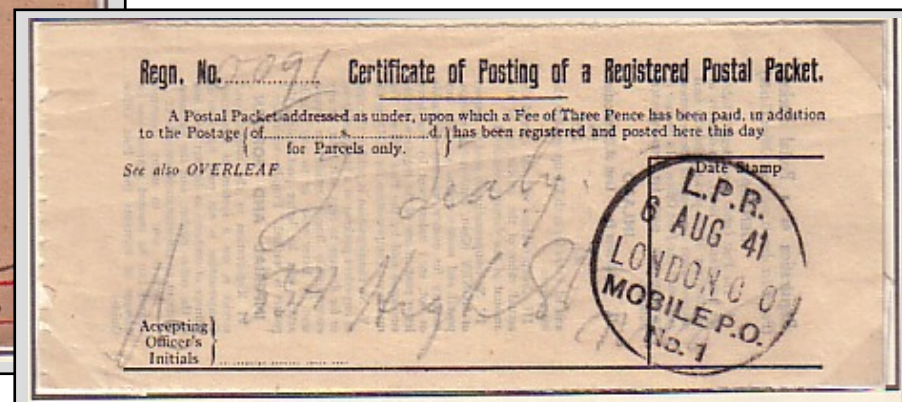
The size, location and function of Mount Pleasant sorting office made it a likely target for German bombers, and it was struck numerous times. On 16 September 1940 Mount Pleasant was hit for the first time by incendiary bombs. The Parcel Office received further direct raids from incendiaries and high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



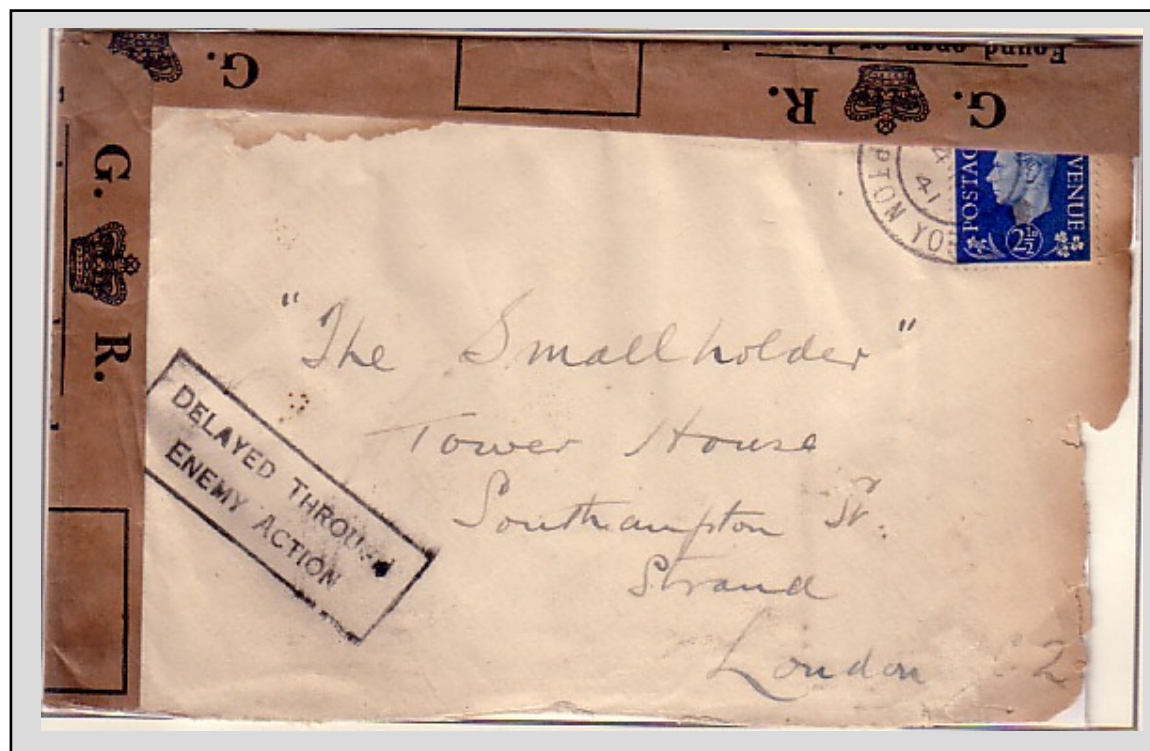
The first emergency Mobile Post Office, provided on an experimental basis, was set up in Aldersgate, City of London. 6 Aug 1941

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.

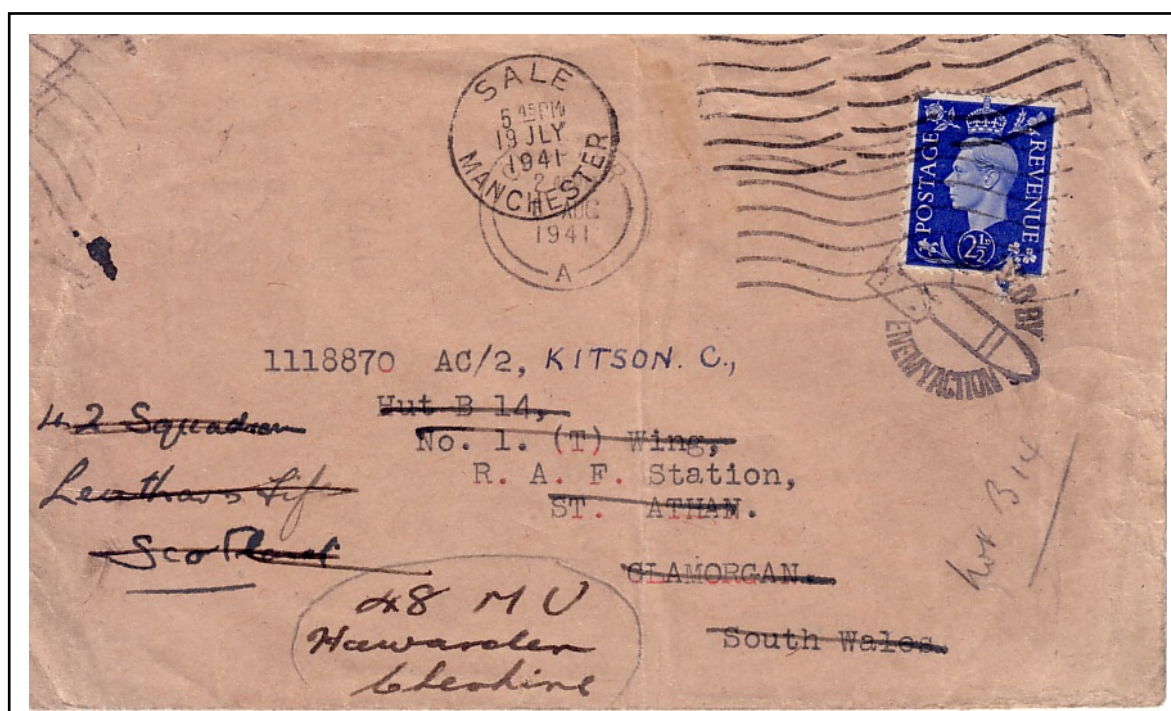


De La Rue p14x13½ Waterlow p12½ Harrison p14x15

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

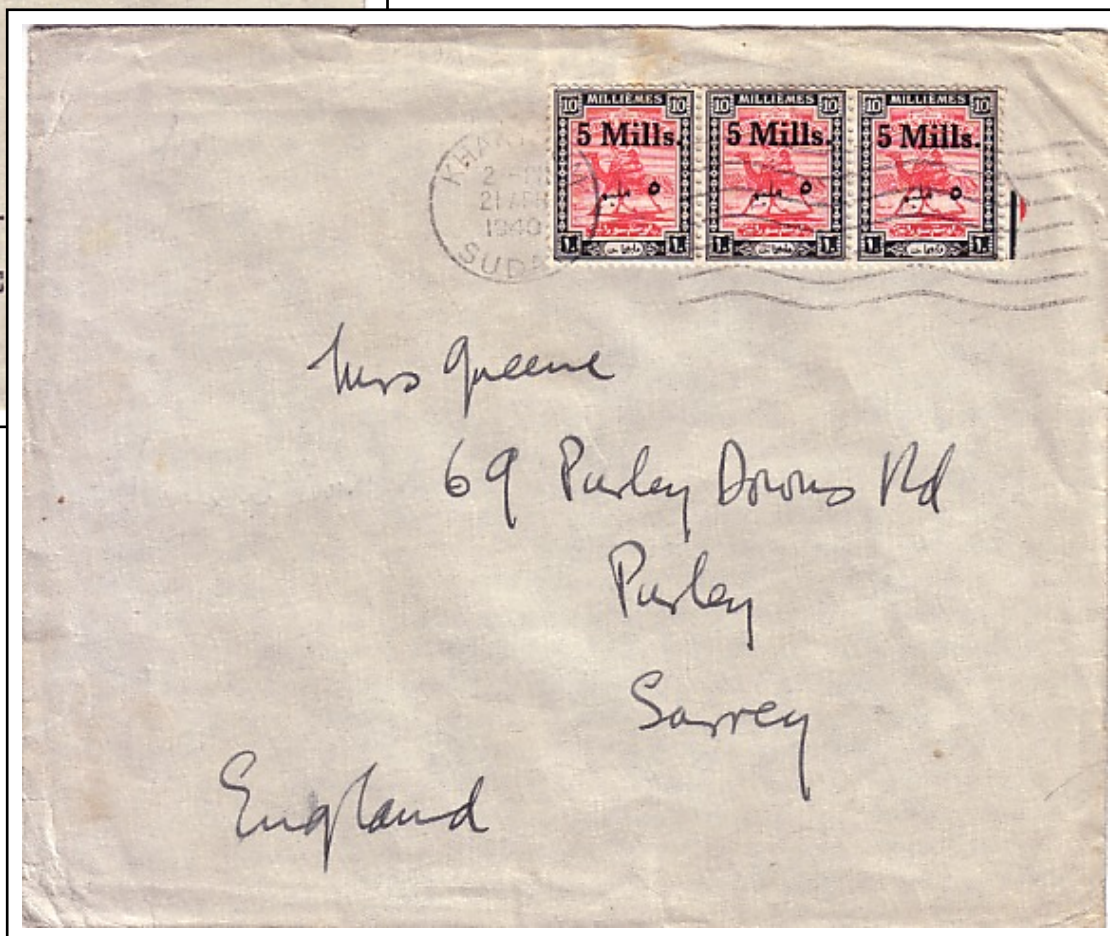


In 1940 the need for a 4½pt to meet the rate for Forces letters to UK., required 119,760 copies of the 8pt to be surcharged in English & Arabic at Khartoum. This was insufficient to meet demand and a further 60,000 4½pt on 5m were printed in English.



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.



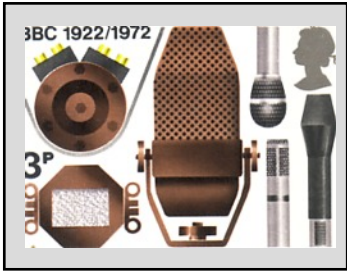
23.1.43 - 15m & 3pt ‘Palm Trees’ on double censored cover (Sudan & India)

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 BBCs radio service was beamed across Europe to give the allies version of events.



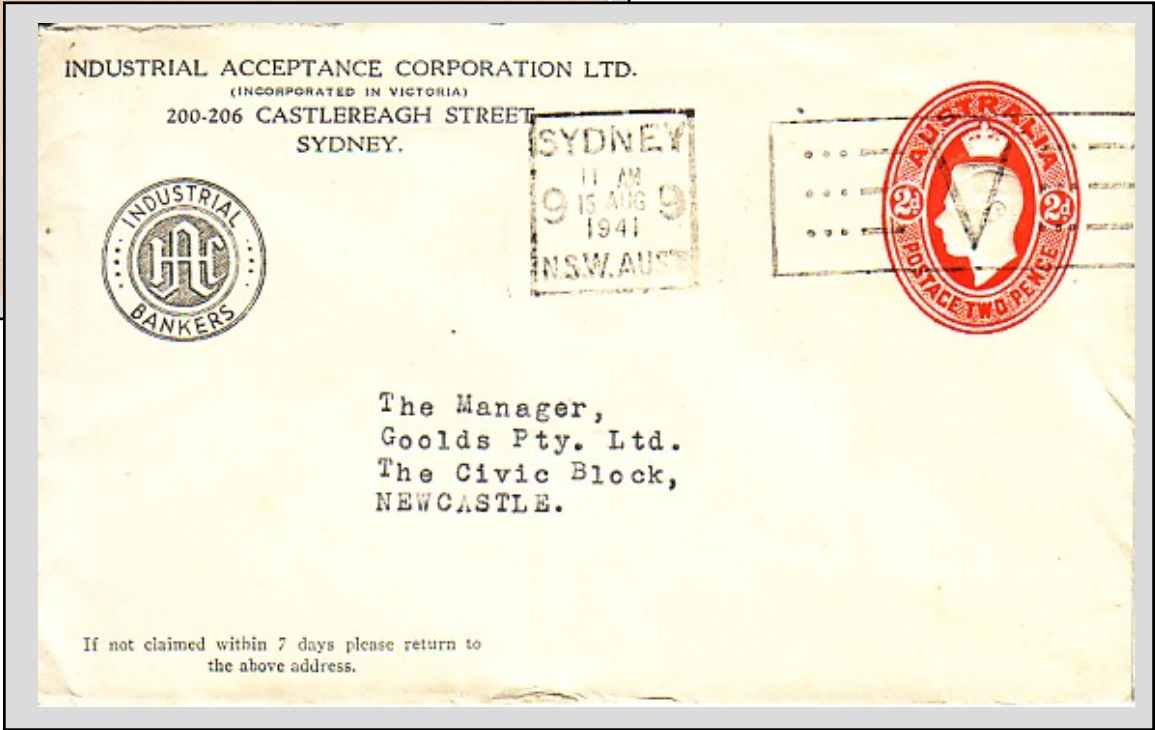
Douglas Ritchie of the BBC European Service, suggested an audible V using the Morse code rhythm — three dots and a dash and the opening bars of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony — should be used as the call-sign by the BBC in its foreign language programmes to occupied Europe for the rest of the war. The irony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

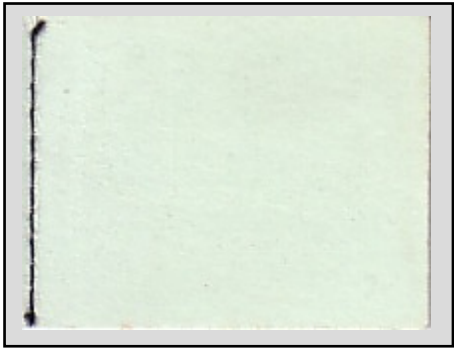


3.4 The Spirit of Wartime

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.

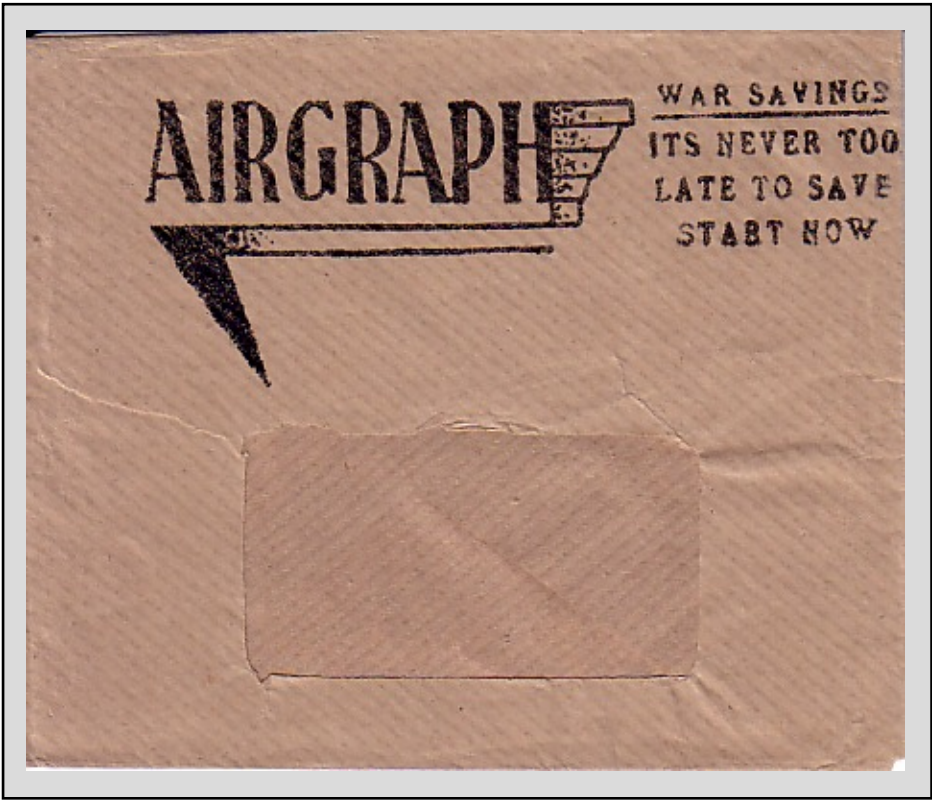


Economy booklet issued June 1940 with plain pale green cover, no printing on cover and blank interleave to save ink. Booklet was only available from a slot machine inside GPO building., London.



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

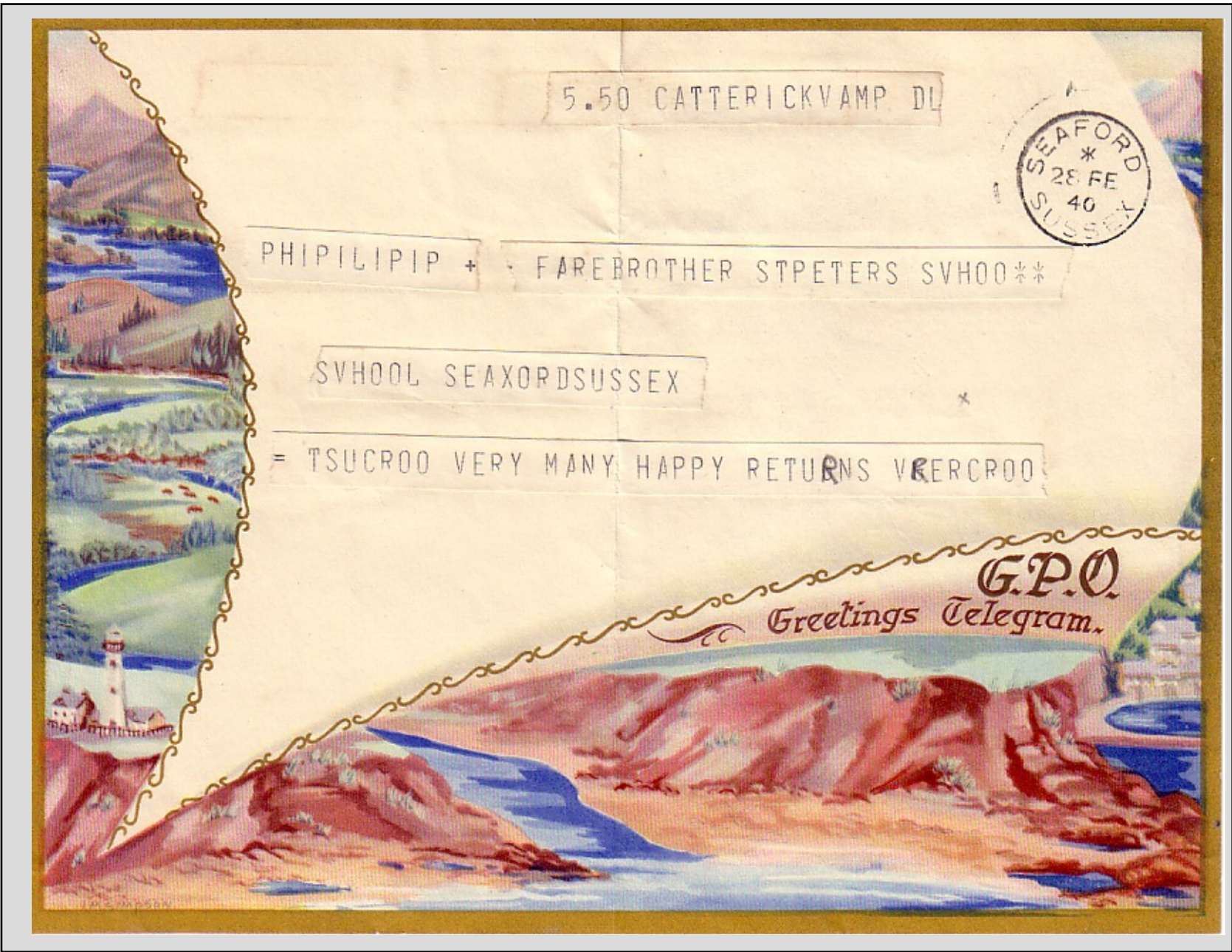
Sustaining morale

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!"



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]

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.

