

Britain's defeat in France immediately endangers its maritime security. The French Armistice enables Germany to gain access to French Channel and Atlantic Ocean ports from which the Kriegsmarine can now launch attacks against Allied shipping.



On 22 June the armistice is signed in the Forest of Compiègne in the same railway carriage in which Germany had signed the armistice that ended the First World War.

Two days later on 16 June Marshal Petain, who has become the French Premier, establishes a government in Vichy and sues for peace.

Fearing the French Fleet will fall into German hands Britain determines to neutralise it. At the time of the Armistice the fleet is dispersed in various French, British and North African ports.



Many of the 100,000 French troops that have been evacuated return to France, only 3,000 joining De Gaulle's Free French forces in Britain. French troops evacuated from Dunkirk were given the same postal concession as their British allies.



Charles de Gaulle, having escaped from France, broadcasts from London on 18 June calling upon all Frenchmen to resist the Germans.



De Gaulle's proclamation to the French people.

On 14 June German troops enter Paris.



Ships in the French naval base of Toulon remain unmoored.



French ships in British ports, including Le Triomphant and the submarine Surcouf are seized.



"I have the orders... to use whatever force may be necessary to prevent your ships from falling into German or Italian hands." - Vice Admiral Sir James Somerville to French Admiral Gervais, July 3, 1940.

On 3 July 'Force H', sailing from Gibraltar, cripples or sink ships of the French fleet at Mers-el-Kebir with a considerable loss of French lives. This action provokes a strong and lasting hostility towards the British.



Trial colour die proof for Algeria's 1949 'Naval Welfare Fund' issue depicting the French battleship Richelieu. The issued stamp is in blue. On 8 July the Richelieu is attacked and damaged at Dakar by Swordfish flying off HMS Hermes.



In Alexandria Admiral Cunningham persuades the French Admiral, Godfroy, to de-fuel and disarm his ships.



This cover to France from a crewmember of the French cruiser Duquesne attracts the attention of British, Egyptian and German censors, being opened and resealed by each. It is back stamped with 'Bâtiments Français stationnaire à Alexandrie' (Stationary French ship at Alexandria) cachets. The Duquesne is neutralised at Alexandria on 3 July.

The Channel Islands are now vulnerable to German attack. Considered of no strategic importance by the British Government, the islands have been demilitarized and their inhabitants given the opportunity to evacuate to mainland Britain.



The Channel Islands situated a few miles off the French coast have been part of England since the Norman Conquest in 1066. Missing black (no inscriptions or Queen's head) with normal imperforate and printed on gummed paper, only one sheet of this error is believed to exist.



Of the 42,000 inhabitants of Guernsey 17,000 choose to evacuate including large numbers of school children.



Encouraged by the Bailiff of Jersey to remain only 6,000 of the island's 50,000 inhabitants choose to be evacuated.



German suspicions of the islands' fortifications including Mont Orgueil on Jersey and Fort George on Guernsey prompts their bombing of the islands.



Heinkel He III's bomb Guernsey and Jersey on 28 June. The Heinkel overprint was applied on Bulgaria's 1940 King Boris III stamps for the 1945 Air issue.



Realising invasion is imminent the British Post Office suspends delivery of mail to the islands. The unusual Italic 'Service Suspended' handstamp has only been seen used between 28 June and 1 July on mail addressed to the Guernsey or Jersey.



German soldiers fly into Guernsey and Jersey in Junkers Ju 52/3 transports.

German troops occupy the Channel Islands, landing on Guernsey and Jersey on 30 June, Alderney the following day and Sark on 4 July. The only part of Great Britain to be occupied, the islands are to remain under German subjugation until their liberation in 1945.



The occupying forces quickly establish themselves on the islands, setting up their headquarters in the Crown Hotel on Guernsey's North Esplanade.



German civil government is established on Guernsey on 2 July and six days later on Jersey.



Almost all of Sark's population remain on the island, Sybil Hathaway, the Dame of Sark, negotiating with the Germans on the islanders' behalf.



The Wehrmacht unit cachet, FP Nr 10772 D' is allotted to 7th Company, II Battalion, 216 Infantry Division of Infantry Regiment 348 based on Alderney soon after the occupation of the island. The entire population of Alderney had elected to be evacuated.

Following the occupation Channel Islanders immediately loose contact with relatives and friends who chose to be evacuated. Communications are not restored until the International Red Cross Civilian Postal Message Scheme between the Islands and Geneva is established.



The postal service between the islands and the mainland is terminated immediately by the occupying authorities. Posted in Jersey on 1 July and bearing a manuscript 'No postal service' and a 'RETURN TO SENDER' cachet this cover addressed to Mrs Nunan is returned to the sender, F. Nunan, probably the husband or close relative.



Some enterprising islanders seek to circumvent the restriction by attempting to send messages via the British Vice Consul in Lisbon. Such correspondence remains uncanceled and are returned to the sender with the manuscript explanation 'Cannot be forwarded'. The enclosure requests that 'the contents of this letter' be communicated to the intended recipient. Very few of these covers are believed to exist.

2753-1016

COMITÉ INTERNATIONAL DE LA CROIX-ROUGE
Palais du Conseil Général
GENÈVE (Suisse) C.M.L. 2301/2

B.B.C.
Mess. Bureau 515
DEMANDEUR — ANFRAGESTELLER — ENQUIRER

Nom - Name *Robilliard Mrs.*
Prénom - Christian name - Vorname *J.*
Rue - Street - Strasse
Localité - Locality - Ortschaft
Département - County - Provinz
Pays - Country - Land

Message à transmettre — Mitteilung — Message
(25 mots au maximum, nouvelles de caractère strictement personnel et familial — nicht über 25 Worte, nur persönliche Familienangelegenheiten) — (not over 25 words, family news of strictly personal character)

Dear Dad, Look after yourself. all well. our love. Lily

Date - Datum *14 Jan. 1940*

DESTINATAIRE — EMPFÄNGER — ADDRESSEE

Nom - Name *Cooper Mrs.*
Prénom - Christian name - Vorname *P.W.*
Rue - Street - Strasse *5. Harland Street*
Localité - Locality - Ortschaft *St. Peter's Port*
Province - County - Provinz *Suerny*
Pays - Country - Land *Channel - Islands.*

ANTWORT UMSEITIG REPONSE AU VERSO REPLY OVERLEAF
Bitte sehr deutlich schreiben Prière d'écrire très lisiblement Please write very clearly

Communications with the outside world can now only be done through the International Red Cross in Geneva using specially produced reply message forms. To facilitate this service Red Cross offices open on the islands and in British towns and cities, but transmission is very slow, forms being sent via Portugal, and by train between Marseilles and Geneva.

'B.R.C. Mess Bureau 515' is situated at 201 High Street, Guildford. George Bradshaw of the Controlling Committee of the States of Guernsey Red Cross Department is required to counter sign all incoming and outgoing mail. Outgoing mail from Britain is censored, the reverse of this message form being endorsed with a 'PASSED P.57' hexagonal censor cachet. This version of the message form is in use from October 1940 to May 1941.

A shortage of postage stamps on the islands necessitates the creation of new designs. While one proposal accepts the changed circumstances of the islanders another introduces an element of defiance.



On Jersey a design for new stamps that reflects the islands change of status are forwarded to Berlin for approval. Designed by a local printer, J. T. Bigwood, they are, considering the design, surprisingly rejected.

Printed in imperforate sheets of thirty (3x10), they are known with and without a swastika and '1940' overprint. With the exception of two sheets of each, these stamps are destroyed. (C)



A design for Guernsey by Ted Vaudin is accepted and is ready by November, but due to delays in Berlin is not issued on the island until 18 February 1941. The stamps are rouletted as no perforator is available.



While adapting the Guernsey design for use on Jersey Major N.V.L. Rybot defiantly adds a small capital 'A' in each frame corner, said to be an abbreviation of 'Ad Avenum Adolf Atrox' (To Hell with Atrocious Hitler). Imperforate plate proof printed on stout card.

Britain, now driven from Western Europe and isolated, is powerless to prevent Hitler consolidating his gains and extending Germany's hegemony in Central Europe. Joseph Stalin, the Russian leader, having entered into a Non-Aggression Pact with Germany, is now also free to pursue his ambitions for territorial acquisition in Eastern Europe.



Mail to Hungary is despatched via the 'Horseshoe' route and Egypt, but following the country's signing of the Tripartite Pact on 20 November all postal communications with the UK cease. The 'T.4188' cachet was applied in Egypt on only transit mail through the country.



Horthy, the Hungarian Regent, sees Germany as a bulwark against Soviet encroachment.



The Romanian oil fields at Ploesti, are critical to the German war machine.

The Balkan countries fear Soviet encroachment and are economically dependent upon Germany. In November Hungary and Romania sign the Tripartite Pact effectively becoming allies of Germany. Bulgaria follows in March 1941.



The manuscript Feldpost 17405C on the reverse of this cover indicates the sender is a member of 2nd Company, Infantry Regiment 93, 13th Panzer Division stationed in Ploesti. The Division is part of the German military Mission deployed to safeguard Romanian oil supplies for the Reich.

Stalin pursues an expansionist policy, Finland, Eastern Poland and the Baltic states succumbing to Soviet aggression.



Joseph Stalin



Poles welcomed (sic) Russian troops as they occupy eastern Poland following the German invasion.



Under the terms of the German-Soviet Pact the Baltic States came within Russia's sphere of influence. In August the USSR annexes them as Soviet Republics, their loss of sovereignty being quickly emphasised with the issue of new or overprinted stamps.



Russia invades Finland on 30 November 1939. The British government, while opposing the invasion is powerless to intervene. However a small number of British volunteers, including John Rankin, travel to Finland to support the Finns.

Posted from Helsinki on 23 March 1940, ten days after the Finnish surrender the Olympic Games 'promotional' cover is endorsed with a 'KENTTAPOSTIA' (Field Post) cachet and a Finnish censor cachet enclosing a manuscript EA. It was censored on its arrival in Britain.

Churchill looks to the United States for support, but public opinion in America is strongly isolationist persuading Roosevelt against becoming involved in a European war while seeking re-election as President.



The author Ernest Hemingway reflects the American mood when he comments: 'We were fools to be sucked in once into a European war and we shall never be sucked in again.'



The Marx cartoonist Harold Miller graphically expresses British hopes.



However limited support is given. In a deal brokered by Roosevelt during September the US Congress agree to supply Britain with fifty old destroyers in exchange for basing rights in a number of Caribbean islands, Newfoundland and British Guiana.

The prevailing opinion is that 'the bombers will always get through'. Following the declaration of war pre-planned measures to mitigate the effects of bombing are immediately brought into force by the British Government.



Civilians had experienced aerial bombing during World War One. With 1,750 bombers in 1939 the German Luftwaffe poses a formidable threat.

The civilian population has to be protected.



'Civil Defence' becomes the overarching term for protecting the population against aerial bombing. Civilians are called upon to play their part.



In 1935 the Home Office established the Air Raid Precaution Department tasked with developing a strategy of 'passive air defence'. Recruitment of ARP personnel was actively pursued.



Anti-aircraft gun, searchlight and barrage balloon defences are provided by the military. RAF Fighter Command aircraft are to intercept incoming 'bandits' before they reach their target. Supporting the RAF is the Royal Observer Corps and Britain's secret weapon, RADAR.



The fear of gas attack leads to the entire population being issued with gas masks during March 1938.



Recruitment to the London Fire Brigade is increased while the Auxiliary Fire Service, formed to augment the London and regional fire brigades, enlist 200,000 fire fighters, including 5,000 women in support roles by September 1939.



Every village, town and city in the United Kingdom has air raid sirens. They first sound the warning in London in September 1939 and then become an almost daily part of life in the capital and other major cities a year later during the height of the Blitz.

Russian 1934 20k postal stationery envelope.



Fearing large numbers of casualties places of entertainment are initially closed.



A blackout is rigorously imposed. No lights are to be visible at night. Air Raid Wardens patrol the streets to ensure compliance. There were three printings of the US 1929 Electric Light's Golden Jubilee issue: flat plate, rotary press and rotary press coil. The latter has a red joint line in the central perforations.



Similarly mass spectator events, including football matches are prohibited. Both measures are soon rescinded due to the adverse effect on the public's morale.

Black colour shift (top) with normal.

Steps to safeguard the Nation's treasures are taken, art galleries and museums removing their collections to safer locations.



Botticelli's 'Mystic Nativity' is taken from the National Gallery and temporarily stored in the Eagle Tower at Caernarvon Castle before being transferred to the Manod slate mines in north Wales.

Within a week over three million school children and mothers with children under 5 are evacuated from London and other major cities. Many return during the 'Phoney War' period, but the invasion threat during June and the onset of the Blitz leads to a second wave of evacuations from coastal areas and major cities.



Evacuees are not informed of their destination for security reasons. On arrival children have to write home to inform parents of their new address. Adult evacuees apply to have their mail redirected.



Barbara Dawson's mum tells her to look after her brother and sister as they left Kings Cross for Northampton. However siblings frequently suffer the traumas of separation when accommodation cannot be found for the whole family.

Many take to the fresh air and enjoy country life. It takes others a little time to settle to country ways.

Children from St George's School, Notting Hill Gate, London are billeted at Laycock Abbey in Wiltshire. The Abbey's chapel becomes their classroom.



Lucy Parker, an evacuee in Laycock, comments she has never picked primroses before.



London Transport buses take children to mainline stations where they are entrained to as yet unknown destinations.



Hospital patients and the blind are also evacuated to places of safety.

The Railway Executive Committee organise the mass evacuation from London and 17 other British towns.



Some wealthy families send their children to friends or relatives abroad. The US President's wife, Eleanor Roosevelt, arranges for some to travel to America.



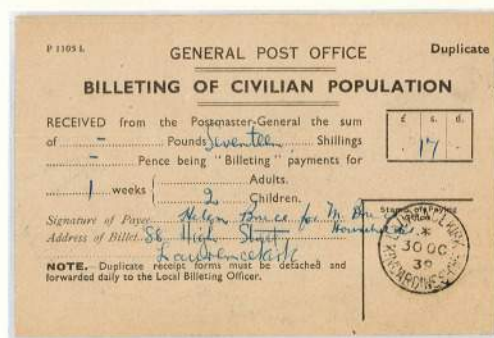
Saying good-bye is an emotional experience.



Under the guidance of the Children's Overseas Reception Board children are evacuated to the Dominions. Laycock Castle and the Polish ship Batory take evacuees to South Africa and Australia respectively.



The King refuses to send the Princesses Elizabeth and Margaret to Canada.



Those taking evacuees into their homes receive 'Billeting' payments, 10/6 for the first child under 14, but if two, then 8/6 each. These are collected from their local Post Office, in this instance Laurencekirk, Kincardineshire.

To ensure the country's security information is strictly controlled. The Ministry of Information, set up on 5 September 1939, is given the responsibility for ensuring only information considered advantageous to Britain's war aims reaches the public domain. From 9 October 1939 the Press and Censorship Bureau is given the sole responsibility for issuing information to the Press.



Lord Reith is appointed Director General of the Ministry of Information.



The British press and BBC cease, in the true sense, to be free, the people hearing only what the Government wishes them to hear.



Press correspondence receives separate censorship attention, being resealed by the orange 'EXAMINED / BY CENSOR' P. & C.B. (Press & Censorship Bureau) label. The manuscript '305' identifies the individual censor. The P. & C.B. 'EXAMINED / BY CENSOR' label comes into use following the transfer of control to the Postal & Telegraph Censorship to the Ministry of Information on 24 April. Censor numbers from 200 to 240 are common, 300 to 310 less so.



Ed Murrow, the London based European director of CBS, makes nightly radio broadcasts to American audiences.



From September the BBC broadcasts to Europe from Bush House.



Misleading information and rumours that spread 'alarm and despondency' are considered unpatriotic and dangerous. The instigators can find themselves before the magistrates.



'OPENED BY CENSOR' PC65 labels are used until April when the word 'CENSOR', much disliked by the British public, is replaced by the word 'EXAMINER' on new PC90 labels. The pencilled number '76' identifies the individual censor.

Censorship of mail is quickly imposed by the Government to ensure information of benefit to an enemy does not reach Germany. From August 1939 a significant amount of incoming and outgoing overseas mail is censored, this being undertaken mainly in the Littlewoods Football Pools building in Liverpool, but also in nearly 20 other censor stations around the country.



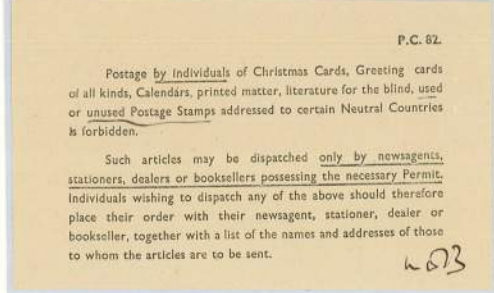
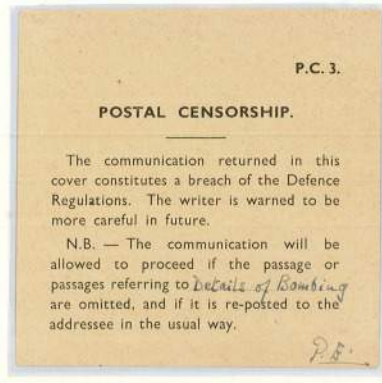
Censored incoming mail redirected from a civilian address to a military barracks resealed with an 'OPENED BY EXAMINER 4255' P.C. 90 label. Under security regulations military personnel are not permitted to receive mail directly to their unit from overseas, in this instance from Iceland. The use of a civilian address thus creates what can be considered an 'undercover address'.



Prohibited enclosures, and there are many, cannot under censorship regulations be sent abroad. Offending items are returned with a PC23 label attached and a 'memorandum' enclosed indicating the contravening content.



The offending items. Without the necessary permit private individuals are not allowed to send used or unused postage stamps abroad. This correspondence is addressed to Holland. Despite war-time economies it is decided not to cancel the stamp issue commemorating the Centenary of the first adhesive postage stamp.



Postage by Individuals of Christmas Cards, Greeting cards of all kinds, Calendars, printed matter, literature for the blind, used or unused Postage Stamps addressed to certain Neutral Countries is forbidden. Such articles may be dispatched only by newsgagents, stationers, dealers or booksellers possessing the necessary Permit. Individuals wishing to dispatch any of the above should therefore place their order with their newsgagent, stationer, dealer or bookseller, together with a list of the names and addresses of those to whom the articles are to be sent.



With offices in Liverpool, the Postal & Telegraph Censorship Department issues trade and individual permits allowing regular despatches of second class mail (i.e. parcels and printed matter). Permit numbers prefixed with 'C' appear to be issued to philatelic traders, in this instance Whitfield King (seal on reverse).



Only the British Philatelic Association Ltd is permitted to export stamps. Dealers have to send consignments to its London office to receive the necessary permit cachets before being forwarded.