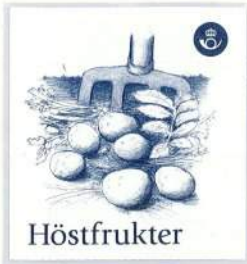


The population are called upon to do their bit, the government promoting the 'Dig for Victory' campaign. People with gardens are encouraged to replace flower beds and lawns with vegetable patches, while public parks, bomb sites and railway embankments become allotments.



Höstfrukter



Self adhesive booklet pane with cover.



Home grown fruit and vegetables become the order of the day throughout the country.

Seed companies respond to increased wartime demand.

'S & S' perf in used by Sutton & Sons Ltd, a long established supplier of seeds, bulbs, and other horticultural products.



Resident Beekeepers turn the Tower of London moat into an allotment.



The Post Office promotes the Government's campaign through a slogan cancel which is used mainly between March and December, but also at other times at some offices. Unusually, and so as to emphasise the importance of the campaign, the slogan is also used in conjunction with 'PAID' dies.



The keeping of livestock becomes commonplace as people seek ways to supplement their rations.



To augment their diet people keep chickens and rabbits in their back gardens. Bee keeping takes on a new importance, honey providing a substitute for sugar.



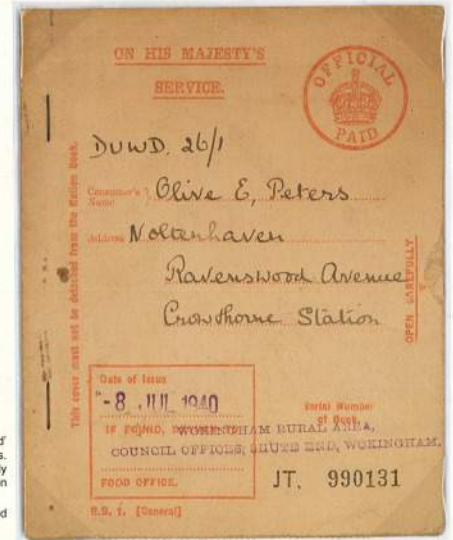
Ration books are sent 'Official Paid' thus economising on envelopes. School children are frequently employed to address the ration books. On the inside front cover local food retailers are listed.



Rationing is introduced despite the continued importation of essential foodstuffs and the population's efforts to grow more food. On 8 January the rationing of bacon, butter and sugar is introduced, soon to be followed by a range of other basic foods.



Some people form Pig Clubs, sharing the meat when the pig is slaughtered.



Achieving a healthy diet becomes a challenge. In 1939 the Government set up the Ministry of Food under Lord Woolton to provides information to help the population adapt to the food shortages. The judicious and creative use of available food is promoted while at the same time emphasising the importance of maintaining a healthy diet.



The eating of potatoes and carrots as a source of energy and essential vitamins is recommended. 'Potato Pete' and 'Doctor Carrot' are soon championing their health giving properties.



This Post Office slogan reinforces the importance to the war effort of the role of the housewife in the kitchen. The slogan was used from 20 June to 18 July, 50 dies being used. The Cambridge cancel is an example of its very late use.

The Government's message is reinforced by BBC radio programmes and meter cancellations used by food companies.



A morning radio programme The Kitchen Front provides housewives with recipes to create 'wholesome and tasty' meals using available ingredients.



Slogan meter marks frequently draw attention to the health giving properties of specific foods.



'One pot' stews and casseroles become regular dishes supplementing meagre meat rations with ample vegetables. The 1940 £1.30 booklet was issued in conjunction with a Royal Mail recipes cards promotion.

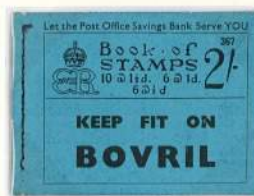


Housewives are encouraged to use all cuts of meat.



The 'National Wheat meal loaf' becomes the standard recipe for home-made bread.

Unilever, the maker of Bovril, uses advertising on Post Office booklet covers to promote its health giving qualities. The 1940 booklet is particularly apt. The 2/- booklet contains 1936 Edward VIII panes, the 1940 2/6 booklet George VI panes.



During 1940 the Women's Institute turn 1,170 tons of fruit into jam and preserves, there being a glut of plums during the year. Home-grown and wild fruit also facilitate the making of preserves and pies.



Country people tend to eat more healthily than urban dwellers, having more space to keep livestock or grow extra vegetables. They also have easy access to herbs, berries and fungi that can be collected and cooked.



Rosehips are turned into syrup for use as a sweetener.



Country folk forage for edible mushrooms.



Being 'off ration' a pig's head makes an excellent stew.

'Blackberrying' is a popular activity in late summer in downland areas.

With continental Europe now under German occupation Britain confronts the reality of a sea or airborne invasion from across the English Channel. While Churchill rallies the Nation the armed forces prepare to defend the country.



Immediately following the BEF withdrawal Churchill, in speeches to Parliament and radio broadcasts, robustly declares his Government's determination to fight on and calls upon the British people to prepare to defend their country.



Existing forces are strengthened, Catterick Camp in Yorkshire, along with many similar military establishments, becoming a full-scale training centre for new recruits.



Units returning from France are re-equipped. Having returned with just 9 tanks, by the end of June the 1st Armoured Division can muster 81 medium tanks.



FPO 254 is allotted to the 1st Infantry Division on 3 June. Returning troops are rested, reorganised and brought up to strength. The 1st Infantry Division is reconstituted as part of 1st Corp based in South Yorkshire within Northern Command.

Coastal defences are hurriedly prepared, particularly on beaches considered most vulnerable to attack.



Britain's entire south eastern coastline is considered an area for potential landings and has to be defended. Type 20 GPO Greetings Telegram designed by Ida Mackintosh Simpson was issued on 20 November 1939 and withdrawn on 4 December 1940.



Sea bathing is prohibited as potential invasion beaches are mined and tank traps erected. Proof printing of German postal stationery card from the 'Get to know Germany' series.

The Army hastily prepares to defend the country. Concentrated in the south east eight of the best equipped and trained divisions make ready to repel the invader, the remaining seven divisions being strategically deployed around the country or held in reserve.



FPO 394 was allotted to the 56th Infantry Division on 12 July 1940. Originally designated the 1st London Division, by September the 56th Infantry Division is protecting the most vulnerable stretch of coastline between Sheppy and Rye.

Churchill renames the LDV the Home Guard on 31 July. The force is now nearly half a million strong.



Initially volunteers have no uniforms and often no weapons.



Volunteers are often elderly, but being World War I veterans are capable of holding a rifle.



Auxiliary Units, recruited from among the Home Guard, are to go underground in the event of an invasion. They are then to operate as saboteurs behind the advancing enemy lines.



The infantry dig in while many artillery units, including the 15th (Isle of Man) Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment, protect ports and airfields.



A citizen's volunteer army is formed to give support to the Army. Called the Local Defence Volunteers (LDV), within a day of the call for volunteers some 25,000 men have enrolled.



Mail from the Local Defence Volunteers is post free on condition it is identifiable and initialed by an officer.



On 13 May Anthony Eden, Secretary of War, broadcasts to the nation urging all male civilians between 17 and 65 to enrol as local defence volunteers. The stamp depicts Eden presiding over the signing of the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty in 1936.



Such is the fear of airborne invasion following the use of paratroops in Norway and Holland that the press dubs the Home Guard 'Parashots'. A rumour circulates that a nun, while travelling on a train raised her habit to expose the hairy leg of a German paratrooper. Such is the paranoia at this time that the rumour is believed.



'Cromwell', the codeword meaning 'invasion imminent' is issued on the 7 September in response to an invasion scare. 1½ million Home Guard mobilise and auxiliary units report to their bunkers. It is a false alarm.



A German paratrooper ??

The defence of the Channel is critical, the Royal Navy being tasked with repelling the anticipated seaborne invasion.



Portsmouth becomes the base for many Home Fleet ships. This cover franked with 'NAVAL BARRACKS PORTSMOUTH' cancels dated 25 July is posted at the height of the invasion scare.

RAF Air supremacy is imperative to prevent a German invasion. Fighter Command, under its Commander-in-Chief Air Chief Marshal Dowding, thus becomes the bulwark of Britain's defence against the Luftwaffe. Equipped with two new single wing fighters, the Hurricane and Spitfire, Fighter Command prepares to do battle.



Dowding becomes C-in-C of the newly formed RAF Fighter Command in July 1936.



The Hawker Hurricane designed by Sydney Camm first flies on 6 November 1935.



Some Hurricane squadrons, including No 58 'Punjab', have previously seen action in France.



The first production Hurricane flies in late 1937 and in February 1938 No 111 Squadron becomes the first to be equipped with the aircraft.



Developed by Reginald Mitchell from his S.6B seaplane the Spitfire enters service on 4 August 1939 with No 19 Squadron at Duxford. It is to become the symbol of Britain's defiance.



Only four battleships, including HMS Rodney, are in home waters in June 1940. They are supported by an array of vessels, including the cruisers HMS Sheffield and Cardiff, and numerous destroyers including the Polish destroyer HMS Blyskawica.



A myriad of smaller vessels also patrol British coastal waters. Requisitioned trawlers, drifters and pleasure craft come under the control of the Royal Naval Patrol Service with its headquarters at the 'Sparrow's Nest' in Lowestoft. (The minesweeper trawler HMS Elk sinks off Plymouth on 27 November after hitting a mine.) The cover is back stamped with a 'RECEIVED FROM H.M.S.HIP' cachet and a Lowestoft receiving office cancel dated 13 December 1940.

Two secret 'weapons' are to give invaluable support to Britain's defence, RADAR and the Bletchley Park code breakers.



Developed by Watson-Watt, RADAR forms the first line of defence against the Luftwaffe. C-30A Rota autogiros are used to calibrate Chain Home (RADAR) along Britain's southeast and east coasts.



Escaping the invasion of their own country Polish cryptographers have smuggled German ENIGMA machines to Britain. By early April code-breakers at Bletchley Park led by Alan Turing are successfully deciphering low-level Luftwaffe codes.



5.2 supported by Dominion troops and other Allies in Britain.

The Dominions rally in support of the mother country following Britain's declaration of war. Within days Canada, Australia and New Zealand are mobilising their forces to send to Europe.



The British Empire coloured red. The ocean's colour ranges from lavender to deep blue. A 'bronze' shade (right) is the result of oxidation.

Canadian troops are the first Dominion forces to sail. On 10 December 1939 the Canadian troop convoy TC1 leaves Halifax bound for Britain, followed by many more. Originally destined for the continent, with the fall of France Canadian units deploy in the defence of south east England.



Requisitioned liners, including Aquitania and Monarch of Bermuda sail in convoy TC1 bringing the Canadian 1st Infantry Division to Britain.



As a dominion Canada has the right to decide whether to enter the war. On 10 September Prime Minister Mackenzie King declares war, Parliament being recalled in an emergency session.



1951 Dominion coat of arms bilingual booklet.

Following the attack on the French fleet at Mers-el-Kebir French Canadians possibly have an ambivalent attitude towards supporting Britain.



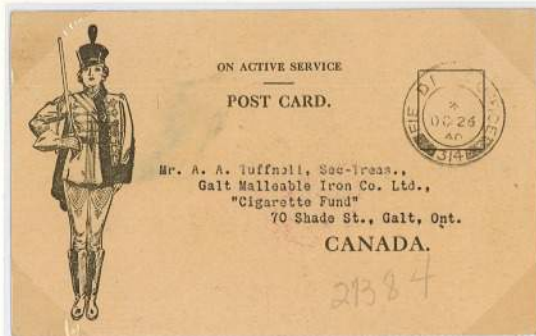
The Royal Hamilton Light Infantry sails for Britain on 2 July and the Black Watch of Canada follows on 24 August. Both Regiments are part of the Canadian 2nd Infantry Division.



Mail posted on troopships awaiting departure is held until after the convoy's departure less any incautious word in the letter alerts an enemy agent. Convoy TC7 sails from Halifax to Britain on 27 August transporting 10,958 troops of the 2nd Division.



Mail to Canadian troops is despatched from Base APO in Ottawa and offloaded in Liverpool or Glasgow. This mail bag label indicates that some goes via New York.



Initial accommodation could be Spartan. Bordon camp is a hatted camp, dismantled after the First World War, then hastily reconstructed to house the influx of Canadian troops.

Canadian troops initially use the civilian postal service as no postal units accompanied them to Britain. To identify it as military mail the sender's unit cachet, in this instance 'No 1 Convalescent Depot, RCAMC', is applied to the reverse of the cover.

Like their British counterparts, Canadian troops receive cigarette parcels. During June Canadian postal units begin to be issued with British FPO date stamps. FPO 314 was allotted to 1st Canadian Infantry Division on 27 June 1940. The reverse bears 'Headquarters 1st F.D. REGT. R.C.H.A.' and '6/54 Battery Office' cachets.



US1, the first troopship convoy bringing Australian and New Zealand troops to fight in France sails on 5 January carrying the 1st Echelon of the 2nd New Zealand Expeditionary Force (2nd NZEF) and the 6th Division of the 2nd Australian Imperial Force (2 AIF).



Robert Menzies, the Australian Prime Minister, declares war on 3 September.



Crowds gather to wave troops off.



The requisitioned ocean liners Orford, Strathnaver and Rangitata are three of the eleven troopships that sail in convoy US1.



Mail posted on board troopships joining Convoy US1 from Australia is endorsed with numbered cachets that identify the ship. 'H.M. TRANSPORT No. 2' is used on board the Orfordes, No 1 on Empress of Japan, No 3 Strathnaver, No 4 Otranto and No 5 Orford.



SS Awatea leaves Wellington on 11 December 1939 with the advance guard of the 2nd NZEF. They disembark at Port Said on 7 January.



HMS Eagle is among Royal Navy vessels escorting troop convoys US1 and US2 across the Indian Ocean to Suez.



The 'N.Z. ARMY / BASE POST OFFICE' cancel was used at Maadi Camp from 14 February to 4 March. New Zealand units were issued with the boxed numbered censor cachets distributed to all allied forces in the Middle East.

On arrival in the Middle East New Zealand troops remain in Egypt while the Australians are entrained to Palestine. Like the Canadian forces in Britain both are to undergo training before moving to France. With Italy's entry into the war they remain in the Middle East.



Red tends to fade when exposed to strong sunlight. (Missing red with normal)



The Australian 6 Division Postal Unit is using the 'DIV. SUPPLY H.Q. G.P.O. / S.M.1' cancel at Jullis on the date of posting.

In July agreement is reached with the Palestine postal authority allowing all correspondence posted at Army Post Offices to be prepaid with British postage stamps. However Australian troops have to continue to prepay postage using Palestine stamps.

New Zealand does not develop its own air force, choosing to contribute to the RAF instead. By 1939 550 New Zealanders have joined. On 8 April No 75 Squadron reform and is redesignated a New Zealand squadron. It is equipped with 30 Wellington bombers purchased by New Zealand.



The remnants of defeated Allied armies escaping to Britain are initially based away from potential invasion areas to enable them to organise and train in preparedness to defend the host nation.



French forces were stationed in Wales, escaping airmen together with their aircraft being based at St Athans.



Polish troops are encamped around Glasgow and become involved in training and coastal defence in anticipation of a German invasion from Norway.

The earliest recorded Polish "undercover" letter. Sent from Teschen to Thomas Cook's Box 506 in Lisbon it is censored in Munich. From here it was conveyed by Cook to London where it was censored, the true name and destination added and a THOS COOK & SON LTD / ENEMY MAIL' cachet applied. It was then placed in the ordinary mail using a 'TC' (Thomas Cook) perfin. The Polish authorities deciphered the pseudonym beneath the label, before forwarding it to its destination, the cryptonym '260/90' representing Kwaterna Glowna, Centralny Ośrodek Wyszczolenia (HQ Central Training Centre).

Czech troops first base in Britain is in Cholmondeley, Cheshire.



A handstamp commemorating the visit of the exiled Czech President, Dr E Benes, to the Czech's camp at Cholmondeley was used on 26 July. 'Cholmondeley' was quickly removed as its inclusion breached security regulations.



General Sikorski, Commander-in-Chief Polish Forces

Australian and New Zealand troops sailing for the Middle East in Convoy US3 are, on the fall of France, hastily rerouted via the Cape to Britain, 5,500 troops disembarking at Gourock on 16 June.



The troopships Empress of Japan sails in Convoy US3.



The 'H.M. TRANSPORT' cachet was used on board troopships in US3, the use of numbered cachets used in US1 having been discontinued for security reasons.



Nick-named 'Kiwis', the New Zealanders are soon reinforcing the defence of south east England.



The British FPO 455 date stamp was used by New Zealand troops of the 2nd Echelon, 2NZEF at Mychett Camp in Aldershot.

