

Indian Army Postal Service 1939 - 1947

1.Introduction:

During the Second World War, starting 1939, the assignment of the Indian Army Postal Service lasted for more than eight years in thirty countries spread over Asia, Africa and Europe. It worked with a peak strength of 5000 volunteers from the P&T department.

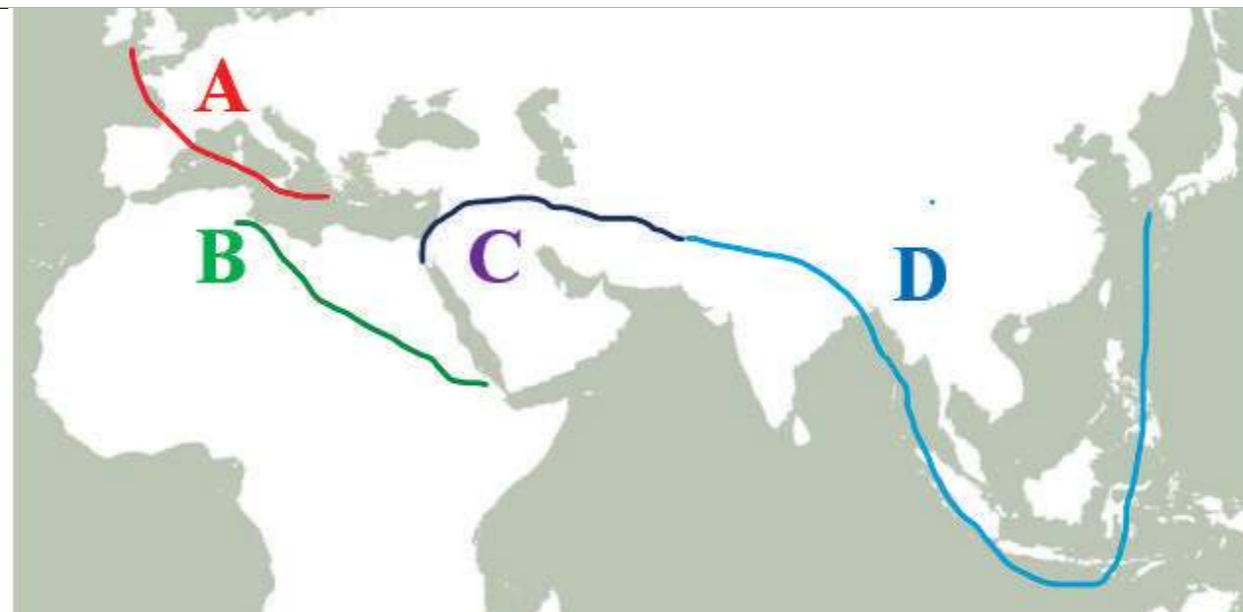
(Indian Army Post Offices Locations and Movements 1938-1947 Brig D S Virk)

Aim of the exhibit is to showcase:

- The widespread deployment of the Indian Army Post Offices during the Second World War from 1939 onwards in **Burma, Ceylon, China, Cyprus, DEI Java & Sumatra, Egypt, Eritrea, Greece, Hong Kong, India, Indo - Chine, Iraq, Italy, Japan, Lebanon, Libya, Malaya, Palestine, Persia, Singapore, Sudan, Syria and Great Britain** .
- Specialised stationery used by the Indian Forces during 1939-1947
- Auxiliary markings used during postal journey
- Indian Army Postal Service, coordination within Interservice and its Allied Partners

Bibliography and Reference

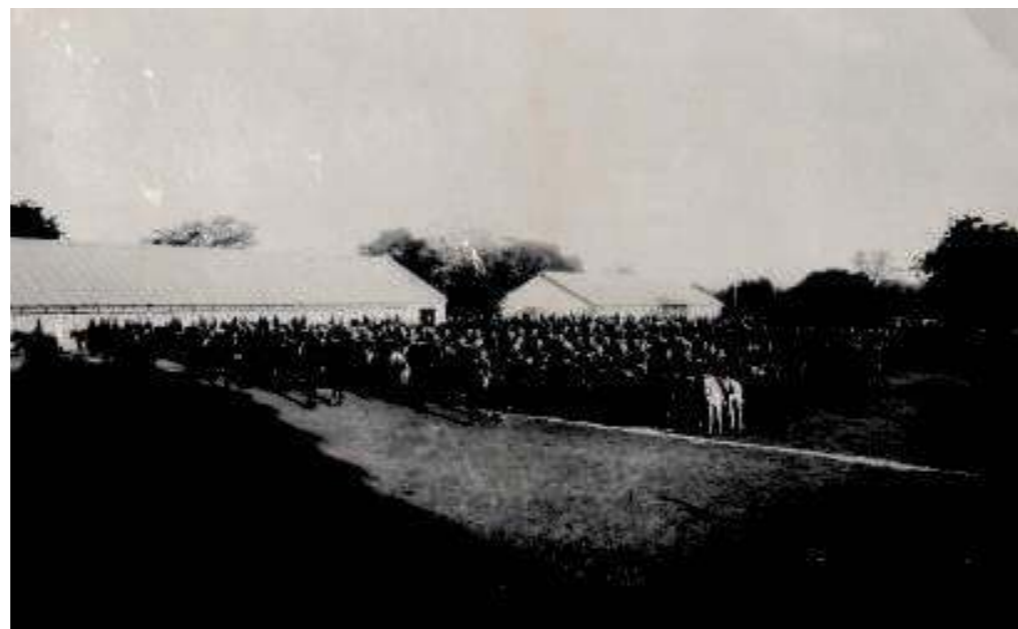
Indian Army Post Offices In The Second World War-Brig DS Virk
 Indian Army Post Offices: Locations and Movements 1939-1947 - Brig. D.S. Virk
 History Of The Indian Army Postal Service Vol 3-EB Proud



The countries and battle fronts highlighted on the map, have been identified after researching the Postal Stationery displayed in this exhibit. These postally used covers used in this exhibit were serviced by Indian Army Postal Service between 1939 and 1947.

- | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| A-WESTERN EUROPE BATTLEFIELD | B-NORTH AFRICA BATTLEFIELD | C-MIDDLE EAST BATTLEFIELD | D-SOUTH-EAST ASIA BATTLEFIELD |
| 1 Great Britain | 1 Egypt | 1 Syria | 1 India |
| 2 Italy | 2 Libya | 2 Lebanon | 2 China |
| 3 Greece | 3 Eritrea | 3 Palestine | 3 Ceylon |
| 4 Cyprus | 4 Sudan | 4 Iraq | 4 Burma |
| | | 5 Persia | 5 Malaya |
| | | | 6 Singapore |
| | | | 7 Hong Kong |
| | | | 8 Indo-Chine |
| | | | 9 DEI Java & Sumatra |
| | | | 10 Japan |

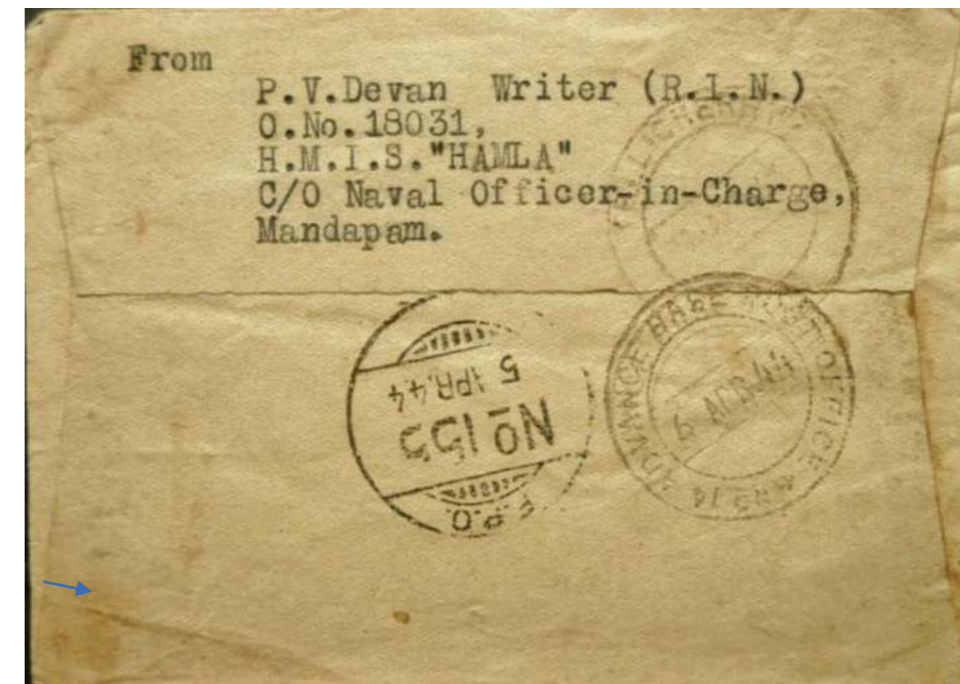
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“This is a photo of our last mounted parade. It was taken very early in the morning” picture postcard written by a father to his daughter”

Origin Kirkee, India (29th February 1940)

Destination UK



Origin FPO 155 Mandapam, India (5th April 1944)

Route ABPO 14 at Madras, India **Destination** Tellicherry, India

Scarce Covers Distribution		
Symbol	Notation	Quantity
★	Unrecorded by E Proud	11
●	More than 300 points given by E Proud	9
■	New Discoveries as a result of my original research	2

2. Indian Base Post Office (BPO)

The mobilization and administration of Postal Service were taken over by the GHQ of the Army, the P&T Department maintained a special War Branch to help in the staffing and its running.

The Base Post Office worked on the lines of a Head Post office, providing counter facilities to the base units, replace casualties in the Base and Field Post Offices and establish additional Field Post Offices (FPO) where necessary.



Origin: FPO 1 Nahakki Camp, NWFP India (6th Oct, 1935)
 In 1935, FPO was opened for the Mohmand Operations

Mohmand Operations 1935

Between 1923 and 1939, FPO's were opened on the North-Western Indian Frontier. In those days war preparation was to counter a possible Russian threat through Afghanistan and not a war in Europe, Far and Middle East.

Many officers/Regiments from fighting formations went on to distinguish themselves during the Second World War as they honed their leadership skills in the passes and hills of this frontier. These included Claude Auchinleck and Harold Alexander, the Commanders of the Peshawar and Nowshera Brigades in the 1935 Mohmand expedition.



Origin: BPO 2 at Khartoum, Sudan (6th March, 1941)

Indian stamps in Sudan were brought into use in December 1940, for all purpose except airmail. In March 1941 the use of Indian stamps was sanctioned even for air mail



Origin: BPO 2 at Khartoum, Sudan (9th Sept, 1941)



BPO 1 at Cairo, Egypt in April, 1941

Indian FPO s started functioning fully under their own regulations with effect from 1st May 1941. Prior to this the FPO s were required to sell Egyptian postage stamps and were permitted in return to use the Egyptian mail service for the conveyance of their bags

Post much deliberation and resistance from various stakeholders, the British authorities later extended to cover the usage of the postage stamps of all Dominions whose forces were serving in PAI Force or the Middle East.

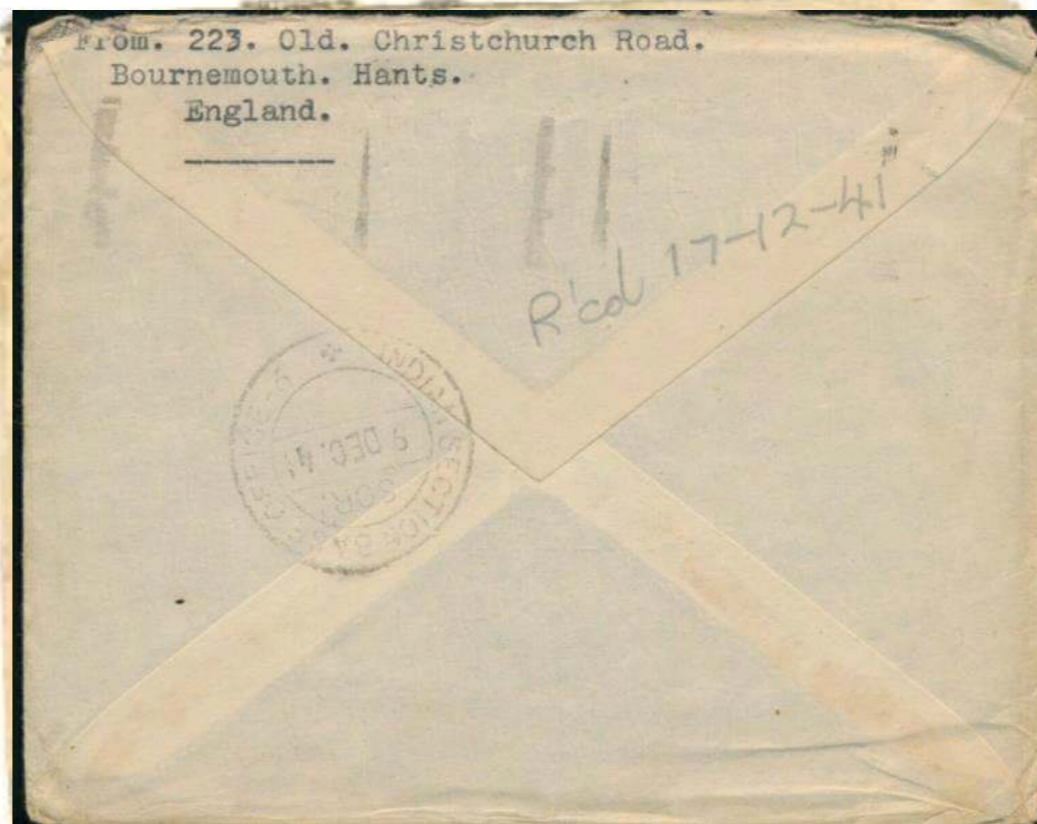
BPO 1 at Cairo, Egypt in April, 1941



Route/Transit: IND BPO R, Cairo (20th Sept 1943)
Rate: Mixed use of Indian and Great Britain stamps

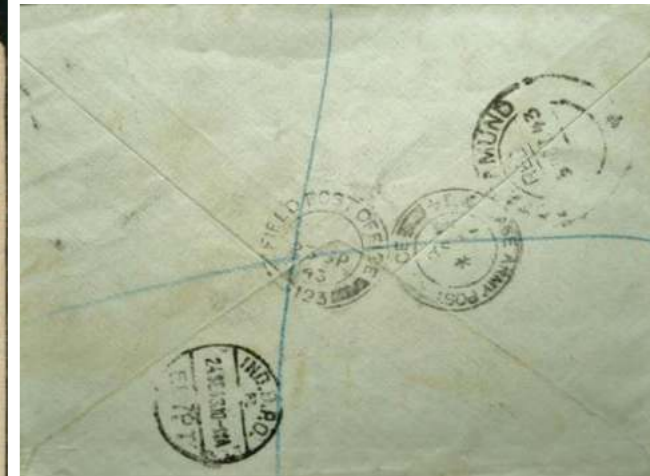


Origin: Camp D'Internment Militaire, Bornhausen, Eschenz, Switzerland
Destination: Lt Col G S N Hughes, IAMC c/o 2nd Echelon (Indian) MEF
Route/Transit British Base Army Post Office (24th June 1944)
2nd Echelon Postal Unit (27th June 1944); No 2 Base Office, Bari, Italy (30th June 1944) Indian Base Post No 1, Mena Camp (faint)



Origin: UK (26th Sept 1941)
Route ISBPO 3 Georgetown, Malaya-Penang (9th Dec 1941)

Japan invaded Malaya 8/9 Dec 1941; Penang was bombed by 14th Dec 1941, The Supervisor embarked his 60 men on an overloaded ferry got them to Butterworth, nearest Railway station and reached Singapore in a troop train

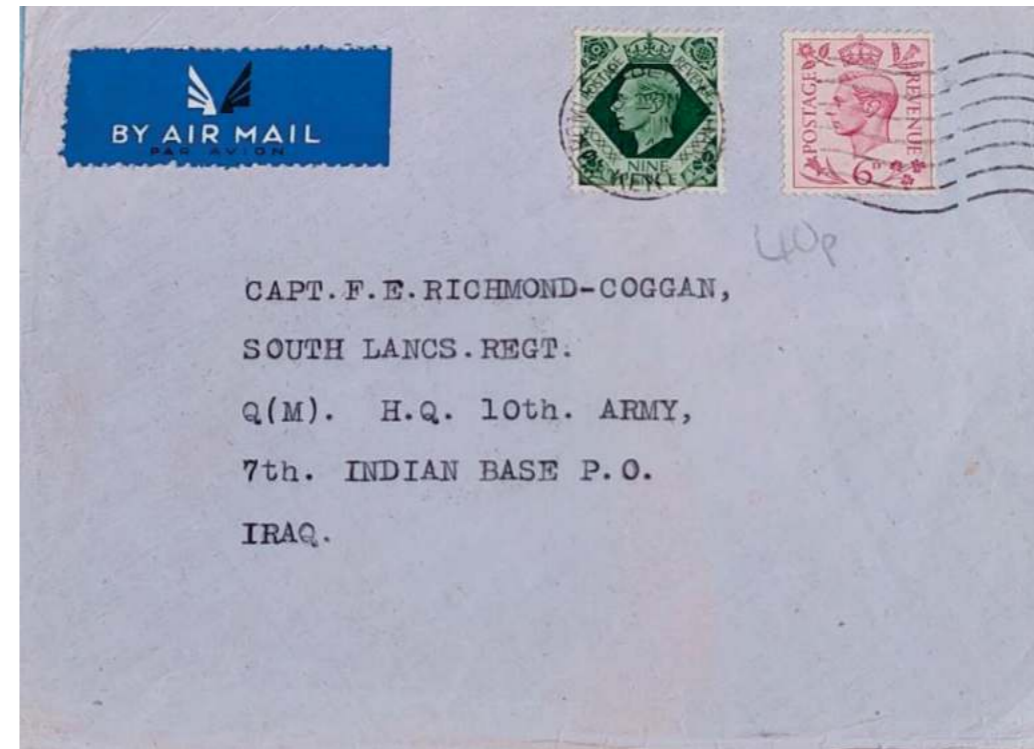


Reverse
IND BPO R, Cairo (20th Sept 1943)



Origin: FPO 33 at Changi, Singapore, Malaya (29th July 1941)

Route/Transit: Indian Base Office 4 in black/green colour at Singapore, Malaya on 30th July 1941



Origin : Kent, England (15th June 1942)
Destination 7 IBPO, Baghdad Iraq

In January 1942 the Iraq Force was placed under the command of GHQ Middle East and February it was known as 10 th Army



Route: 10 ABPO Ranchi India (27th Mar 1944)

Destination Redirected to 24 ABPO Chhindwara India (30th Mar 1944) THIS CDS UNRECORDED



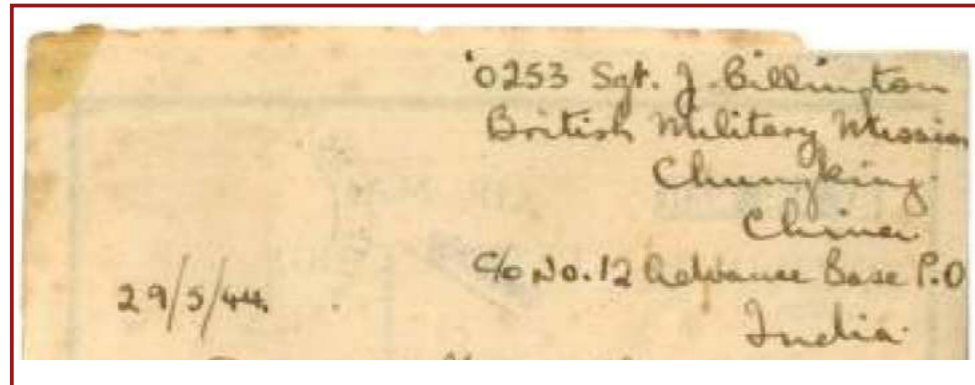
Reverse
7 IBPO, Baghdad Iraq

Origin: UK (28th Jan, 1944)

Route/Transit: C Base Post Office Basra Margil

Sor/Dely (4/5th Feb, 1944)

Destination: PAI Force redirected to MEF



Route/Transit :15 ABPO at Manipur Road, India
(22 February)1946

Addressed to:

East Africa 2nd Echelon was located at Ranchi, India

Origin: No 20 ABPO, Chas, India (11th April 1946)

(1st January 1946 and 31st May 1946 at Chas. - EBP NS) ★

Origin: British Military Mission, Chungking;12 ABPO Calcutta, India (2nd June 1944)

New Discovery

The writer Sgt. J. Billington was part of the **British Military Mission Chungking, China.**

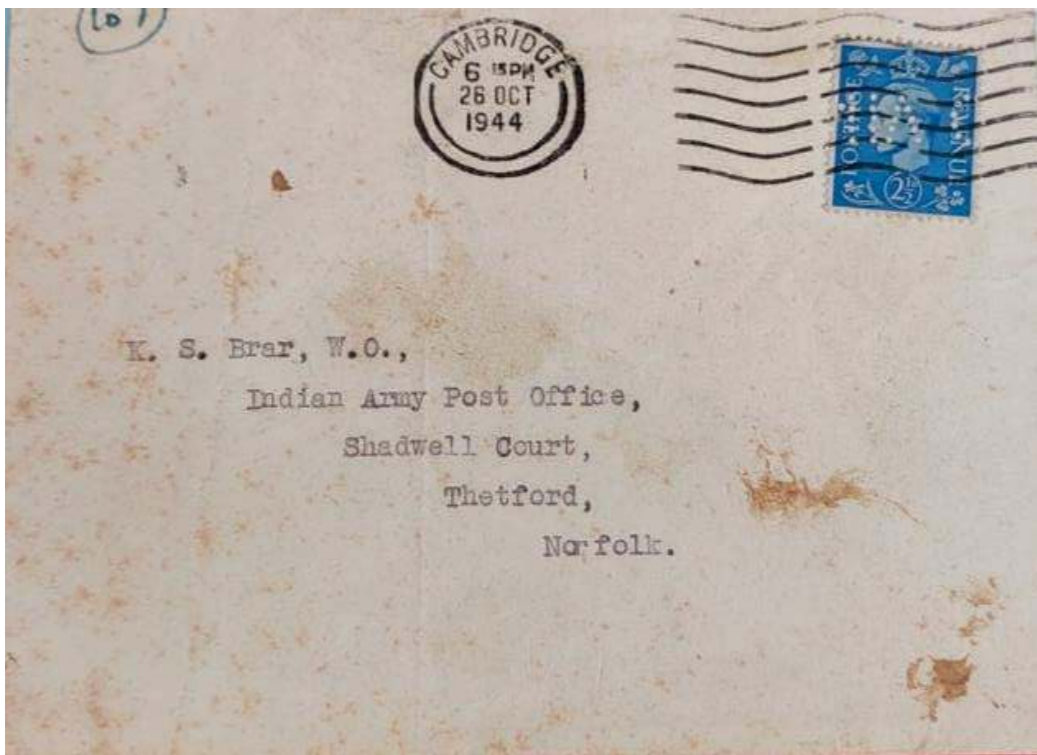
The postal address mentioned is c/o no 12 Advance Base P.O India.

204 Mission known as Tulip Force, was a secret British Military Mission to China organized in 1940-1941. They were to infiltrate into China, and train Chinese guerrillas to fight the Japanese



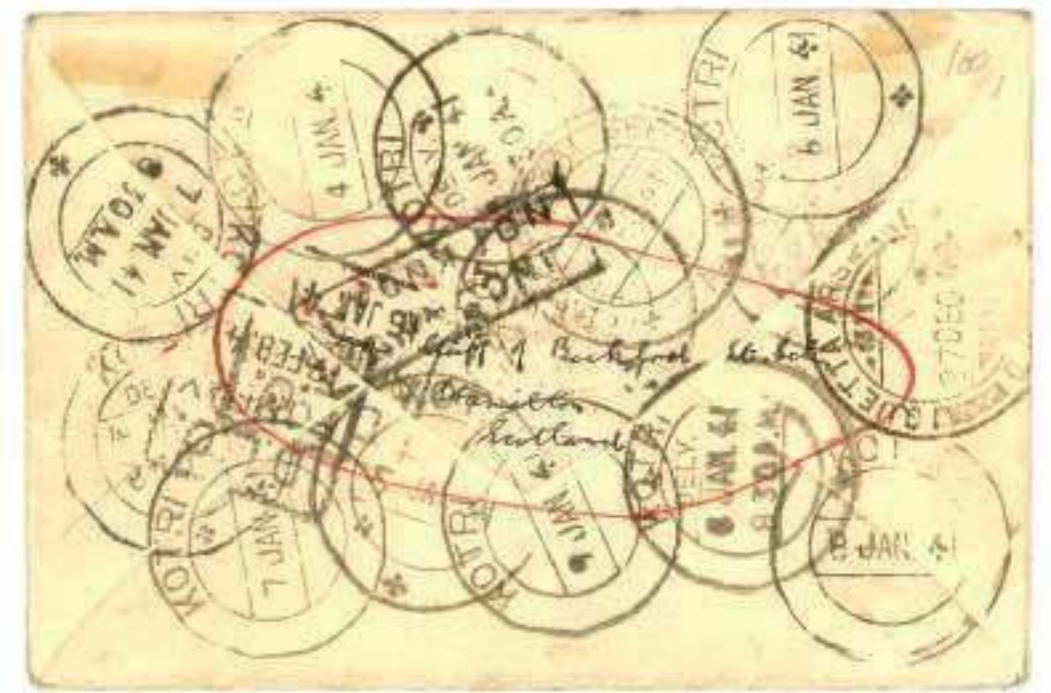
Origin: 30 ABPO, Coconada India (13th Nov 1944) ★

First served by FPO 205 and 206 but their mail was always delayed due to routing via Madras. They were replaced by NO 30 ABPO



No 32 ABPO arrived in England in July 1944 and was to provide full postal facilities to the permanent staff of the Four Indian Base Camps-1 military hospital and a supply platoon and the Indian prisoners recovered from the POW camps in Europe. After the defeat of Germany, the Indian Liaison Officers with the Allied Command recovered nearly 20,000 undelivered letters for Indian prisoners from German Camps and from the International Red Cross depots in Sweden and Switzerland. This ABPO delivered whatever it could to the freed prisoners and returned the rest to the senders. During its tenure the ABPO served over 13,000 ex POWs and 2,000 men based there. It closed down officially on 31st August 1945

Destination: **32 ABPO, Shadwell Court, Thetford, Great Britain.** (27th October 1944)



Base Postal Depot, New Delhi (29th Dec 1940)
 NOT OPENED BY CENSOR (Mumbai CS) • INCONNU NOT KNOWN (Mumbai DLO) Undelivered for reasons stated to be returned to sender to the address shown on cover (Mumbai DLO) (red) RETOUR



Reverse
No 32 ABPO

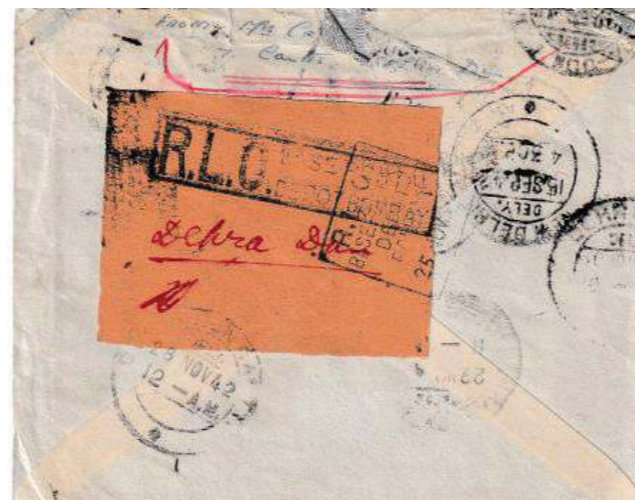
Origin: Dehra Dun, India
Destination: c/o Imperial Bank, New Delhi (September 1942)

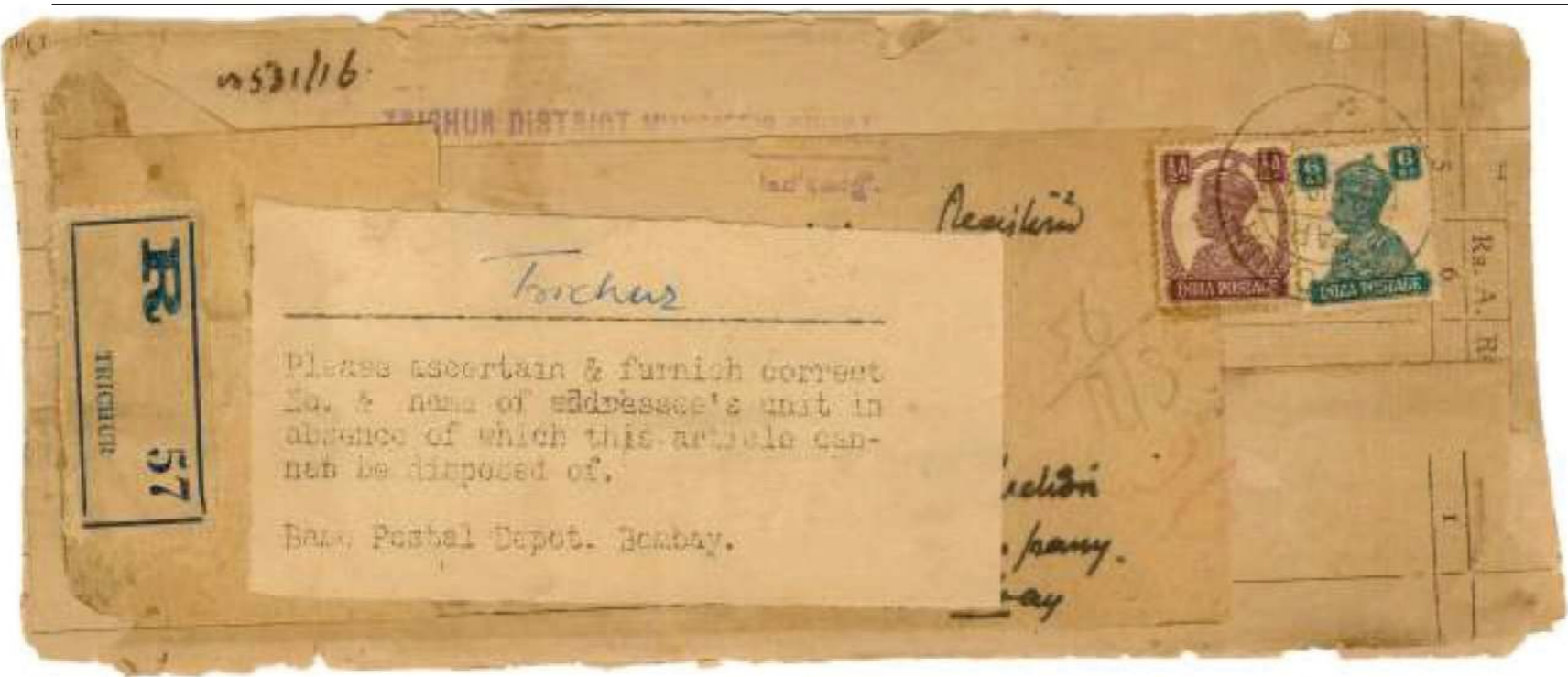
Boxed Address Not Known in GHQ Postal Clearing House (violet) and Further Address not known (black).
 A label with the handstamp **-RLO BASE POSTAL DEPOT BOMBAY** (black) and with the date stamp of **RLO BASE POSTAL DEPOT BOMBAY**

During the war, if the address was confidential then it could be addressed to the bank. The banks then would redirect accordingly as per the list with them.



Origin: **FPO No 15 at Manipur Road** (21st August 1944) Cachet Egypt EPP IT PAYS TO LEND slogan (6 September 1944), Route/transit: **Base Postal Depot, Bombay** (31st August 1944), **Cairo 2** (15th September 1944), **Lisboa Central** (26th February 1945)





The cover has been returned to the sender from **Base Postal Depot, Bombay** with a label. At the reverse an acknowledgment card

BASE POSTAL DEPOT BOMBAY / 'D'BR 20 AUG 43 / REGN



Reverse
BASE POSTAL DEPOT BOMBAY

Cachet: **Found open or damaged and officially secured PO O2E (I)** in violet
Slip: **IAF z-2253** titled **LAST LOCATION AT O2E(I)** redirected to **Abbottabad, India.**

In addition to referring to military records, the Postal Unit built its own Card Index of Officers, this was used by the two (India and South East Asia) Echelons. This unit was dispersed in May 1947 and the outstanding mail tracing work was given back to the Postal Section of the O2E Tracing record office, GHQ(I) for the undeliverable mail was located at Jhansi.

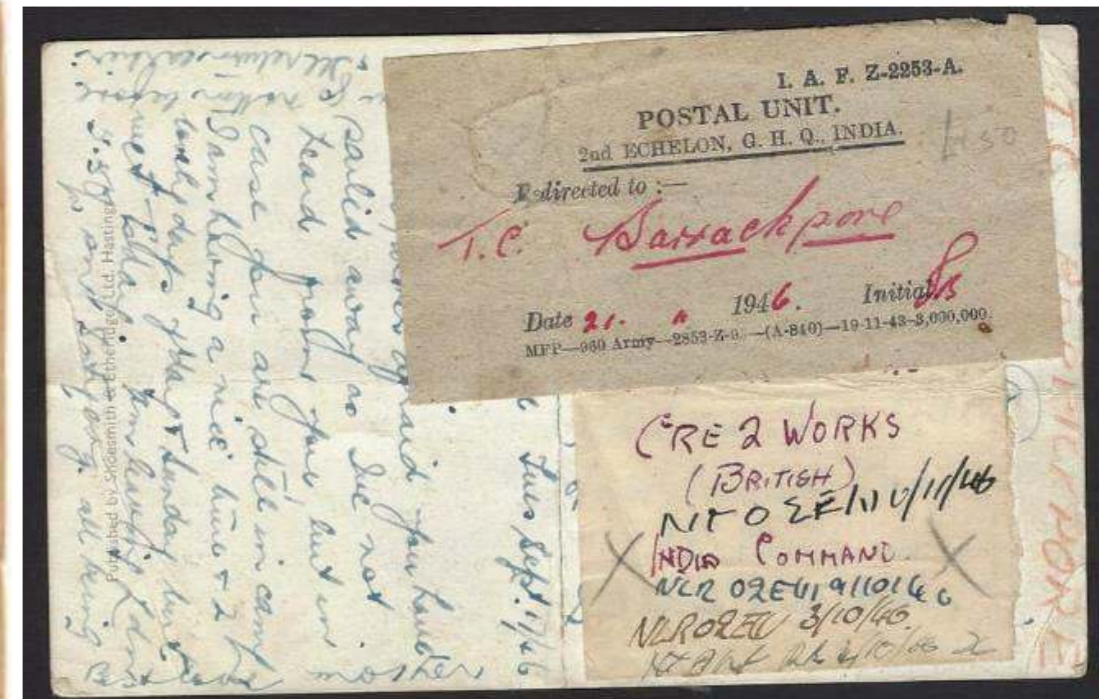


NO Trace 2nd Echelon GHQ India
boxed in violet and the
Further Address Not Known
in black, RLO Base Post Depot

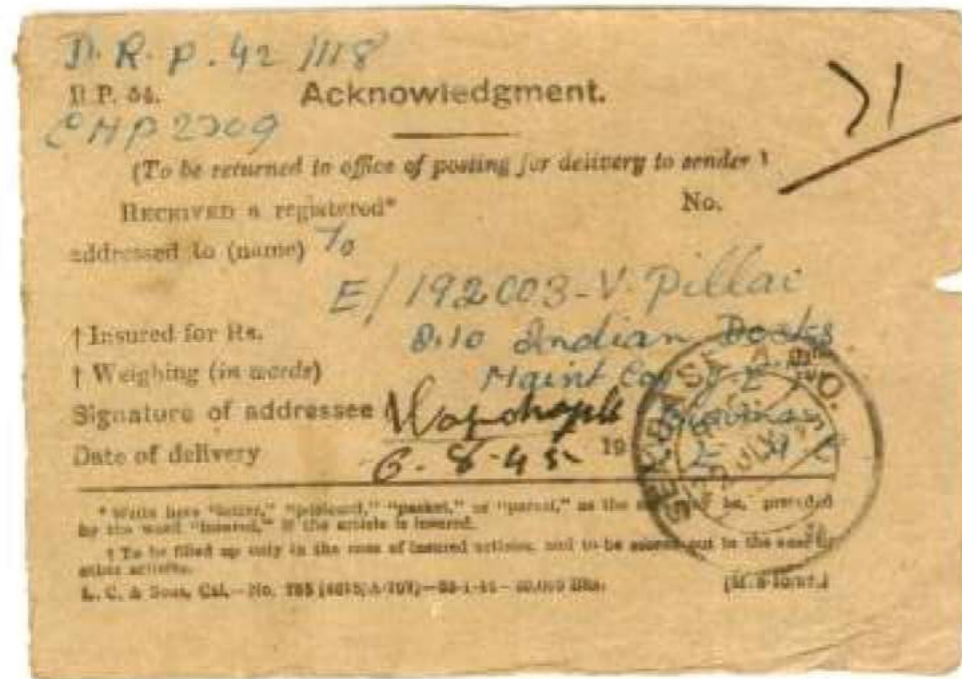




Ambulance Cover : No 14 Advance Base Post Office at Madras, India (28th December 1943)
 ABPO 14 has put the handstamp- Unit Not Under No 14 ABPO (violet)



Slip: IAF z-2253 -Postal Unit 2nd Echelon GHQ India (21st November 1946) redirected to Barrackpore, India.



SEABASE APO (22nd July 1945)

On the formation of the Southeast Asia Command, this was opened at Calcutta, India in August 1944 to deal exclusively with SEAC mail.



Origin: Margherita, India (8th Mar 1943)
 Route/Transit: 6 ABPO Gauhati (9th Mar 1943), 9 FPO Gauhati Jhalukbari (10th Mar 1943), 9 FPO Gauhati (14th Mar 1943), 6 ABPO Gauhati (14th Mar 1943), Postal Unit-02 E INDIA Jhansi India (25th Mar 1943), Margherita (1st Apr 1943)



Reverse
 Postal Unit
 02 E INDIA Jhansi India

Cachet NOT ON BPO RECORD (BLACK);
 INSUFFICIENTLY ADDRESSED FOR
 DISPOSAL (PURPLE) Postal Unit GHQ
 (INDIA) HQ 2nd ECHELON
 redirected/returned SIIP ATTACHED



Army Mail Exchange Office (Regn) (3rd Mar 1947)

*In early 1946, 12 ABPO and SEABPO (opened in 1944 to deal exclusively with the SEAC mail) were disbanded, their remaining duties were taken over by a new mail office called the **Army Mail Exchange Office** which dealt with mails of FPO s serving in South East Asia and Japan. (1st May 1946-31st July 1947)*

On cessation of army postal facilities, The AMEO transferred its responsibilities for the FPO s in Japan to Calcutta GPO. **This CDS is unrecorded by EBP**

3. Indian Field Post Office (FPO)

The operational formations-Armies, Corps, Divisions and Brigades were given FPO s which moved with them. The main reason was to ensure that the actual location of field units was not disclosed in the postal address.

Wherever the FPO went a BPO was within their reach. The location of the BPO were disclosed confidentially to important civil mail centers to enable them to direct mail quickly and correctly

Origin: FPO 12 at P. Sudan,
Sudan (MAY 21 1941) ●

**(CDS used between
20th March 1941-20th
April 1941)**

“It is similar to types used by the Sudan Forces and almost certainly originated from that source” Brig DS Virk



Origin: FPO S9 Gauhati, India



Origin: FPO 12 Nicosia, Cyprus (17th May 1944)

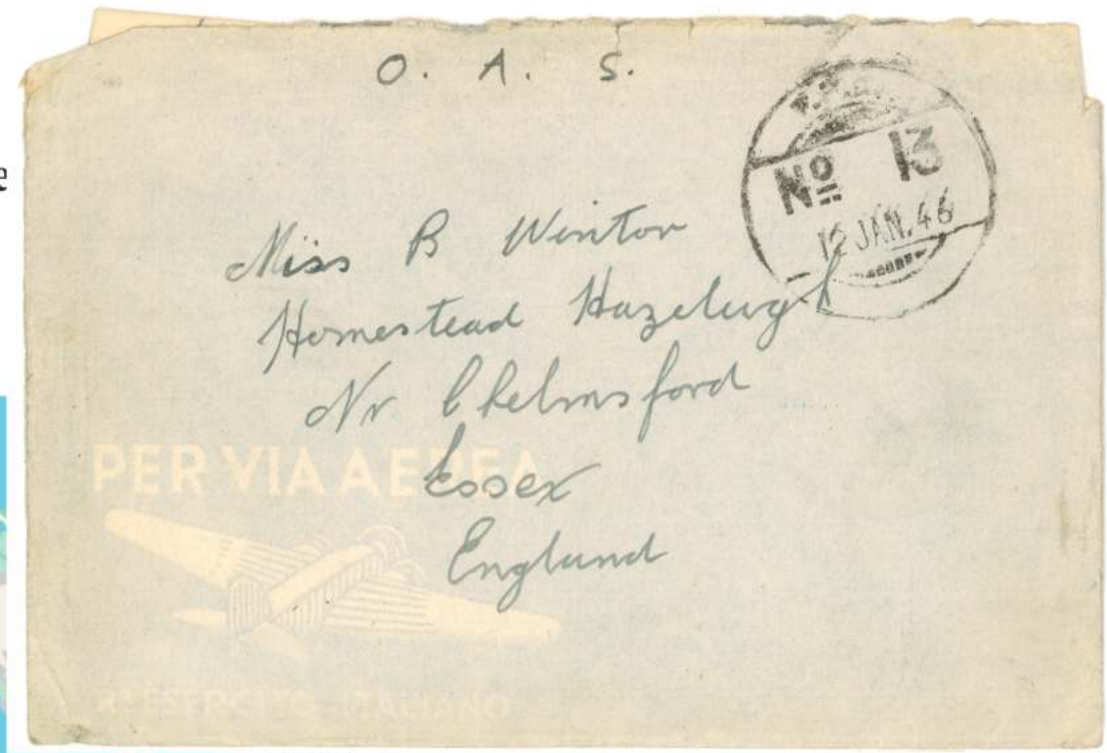
Route/transit: Base Post Office No 1 at Mena, Egypt (23rd May 1944)

Movement of FPO 13

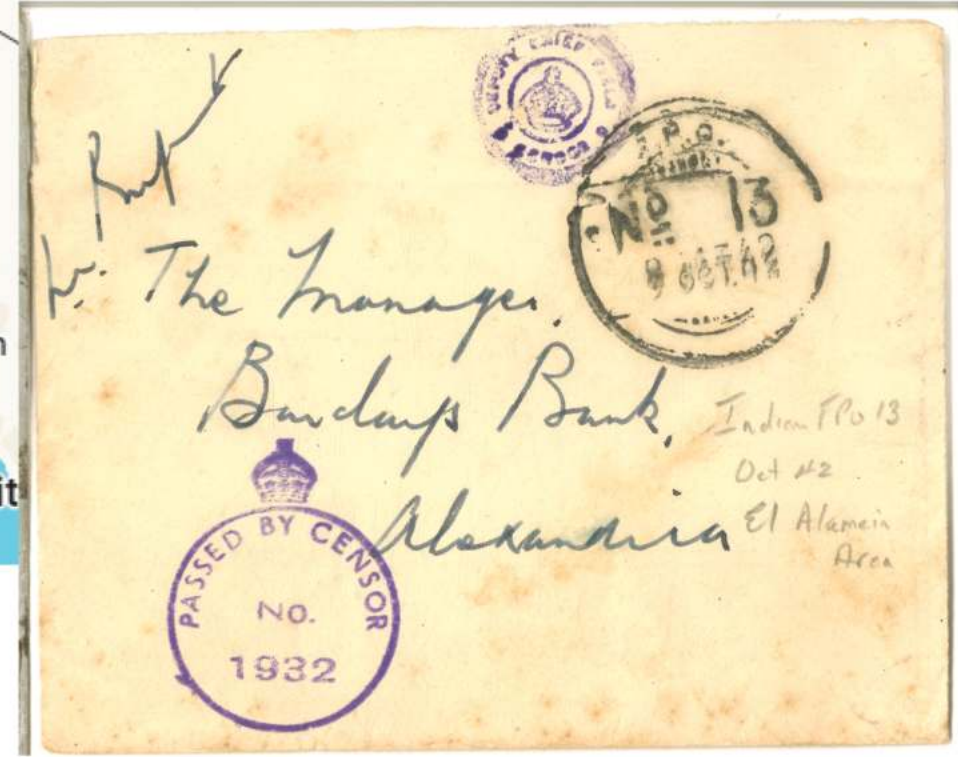
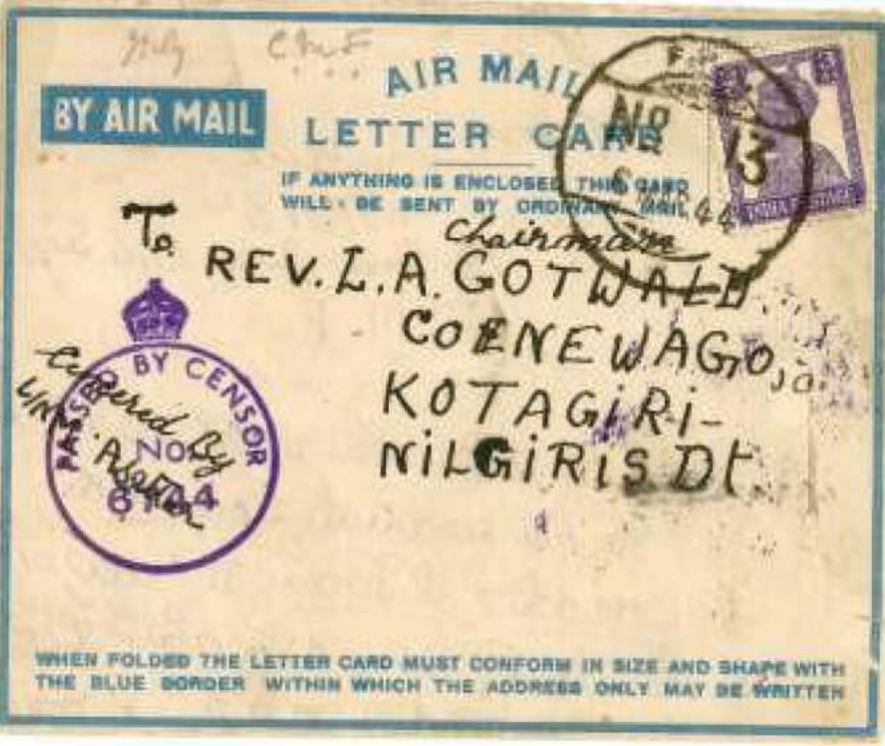
GEBEIT to KAVALA

Distance covered - 7597 km
(9th Oct 1942 - 12th Jan 1946)

Origin: 13 FPO Kavalla Gree
(12th Jan,1946)
Destination UK



Origin: FPO 13 M Cassino Area, Italy (6th Mar1944)
The Battle of Monte Cassino(17 Jan 1944 – 19 May 1944), also known as the Battle for Rome and the Battle for Cassino, was a series of four assaults made by the Allies against German forces in Italy during the Italian Campaign during World War II



Origin: FPO 13 El Alamein Area, Egypt(9th Oct 1942)

The Second Battle of El Alamein (23 October – 11 November 1942) took place near the Egyptian railway halt of El Alamein. The First Battle of El Alamein and the Battle of Alam el Halfa had prevented the Axis from advancing further into Egypt.

Origin: FPO 13 Gelbeit Sudan (29th Jan 1941)
Route: IND BPO Cairo Egypt (7th Feb 1941)





Origin: FPO 16, around Salonika, Greece (24th July 1945) Route/transit: FPO No 17 at Athens (port), Greece (27th July 1945) Destination: Madras, India; Cachet: Careless Talks saves Lives.

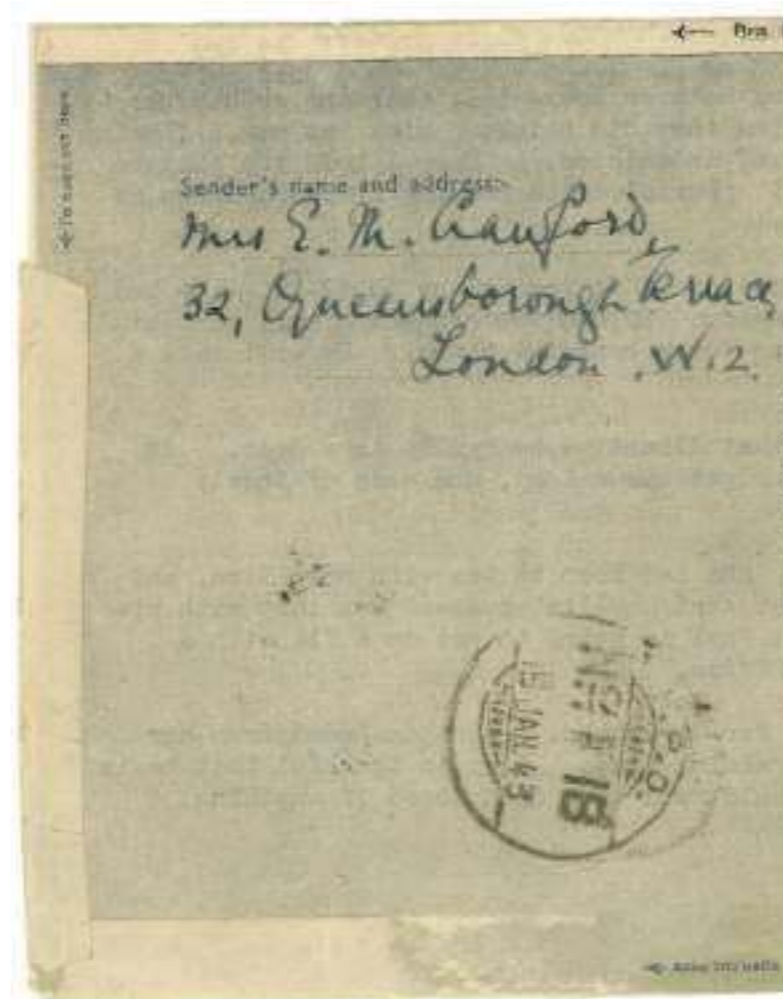
FPO 16 was a stationary office which arrived in Sudan on 2nd December 1940 without its date stamps, used date stamp (R) L.71 until it was redesignated FPO R2, so it never functioned as FPO 16. (Not seen by E.B. Proud) FPO R2 was seen in Sudan and Italy. It left Taranto, Italy on 15 January 1946 being disbanded at Nagpur on 14 May 1946 (E. B. Proud)

FPO 17 Athens operated as a mail and sorting office doing the duties of a section Base Post Office. It was allowed to make direct air mail despatches to India, first one was made on 23rd May. Though direct despatches from Karachi were not allowed as all mail travelled to Naples, Italy

The FPO 16 CDS helps us identify its usage and its location. A new discovery

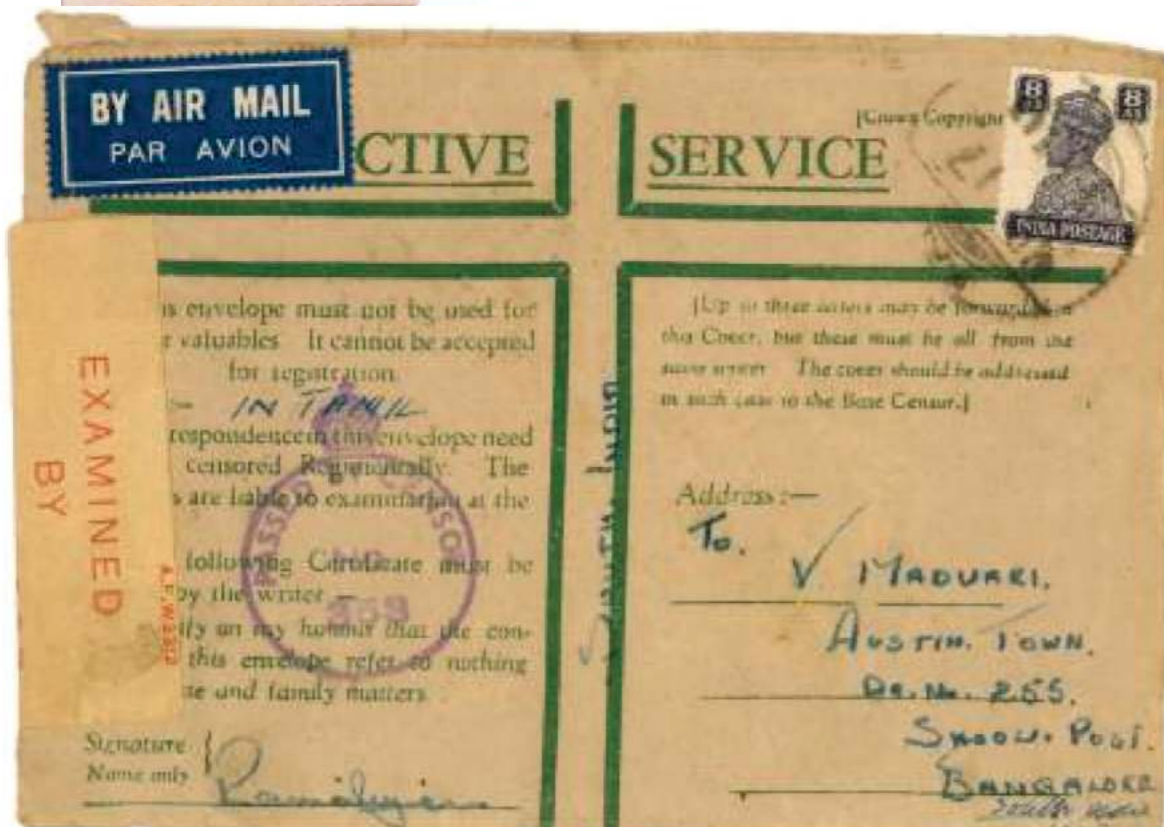


Reverse FPO 16 & 17
New Discovery



Origin: FPO R2 at Atbara, Sudan (4th October, 1941) to Great Britain.

As per EB Proud R2 was a new designation of FPO 16 which had lost its date stamps. This reserve FPO and travelled between Sudan and Italy



Destination: HQ Shaiba Sub-Area, Persia & Iraq Force (Persia and Iraq Force) Route/transit FPO 18 at Basra-Margil (15 January 1943)

Origin: FPO 17 at Qastina, Palestine (5th Oct 1943)



Origin: FPO 19 Fayid, Egypt (18th September 1939)

FPO 19; The first FPO to be established abroad during Second World War

Origin: FPO 19 Fayid, Egypt (18th September 1939)

Orders were issued on 26th July 1939 to 11th Infantry Brigade at Ahmednagar to be ready to move overseas within four days. The personnel arrived on 28th July, the equipment on the 29th and the raising of 19 FPO was completed by 30th July 1939. It sailed with "FORCE HERON" with postage stamp stocks and postal orders but no direction regarding postal address, rates, facilities and postal control at destination. The DG P&T informed that accounts would be submitted to Bombay GPO.



Origin: FPO 19 Tobruk, Libya (Force Heron) on 12th June 1942 ●
 Rommel surrounded Tobruk and captured it within 24 hrs which began on the morning of the 20th June 1942 All the personnel of FPO 19 became POWs. It was attached to 11 Brigade, 4 Div.

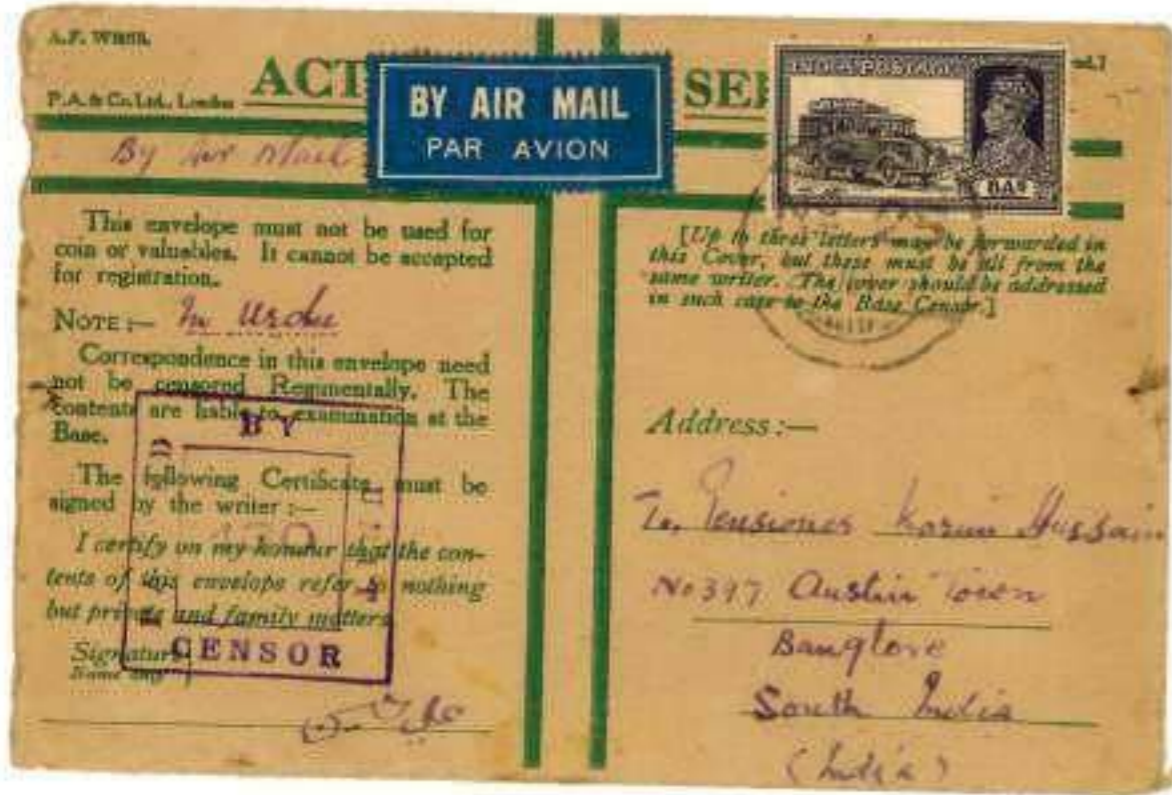


Origin FPO 20 at Medan, DEI Sumatra (26th January 1946)



Origin FPO 25 Beni Yusef (3rd May 1940) ★

In 1939-1940 Egypt ONLY allowed foreign post offices to act as agents of Egyptian Postal Office. They allowed reduced postage rates for surface letters posted by the troops to Empire countries provided they were paid for by special Egyptian postage stamps called "Army Seals". After much persuasion in October 1941, the Egyptian authorities allowed the British controlled FPOs to function as per their own regulations



Origin: **FPO 25** (24th July, 1941) **Katana, Syria**

The FPO 25 was attached with 5 Brigade which suffered severe casualties in a campaign against Vichy Government. The Battle of Damascus (18–21 June 1941) was the final action of the Allied advance on Damascus in Syria during the Syria–Lebanon Campaign in Second World War. On 21 June the Vichy French garrison in Damascus surrendered to the Allied forces.

Origin: **FPO 27** around **Jedeide, Syria**
(29th May, 1945)

The British Post Office had raised a question that British troops served by Indian APO should be permitted to use British stamps at British rates. The Indian Post Office resisted this claim, but it could not stop its FPOs overseas from accepting mail from troops prepaid with British stamps so long as it did not have to carry that mail to the destination under its own arrangements and cost. This became acceptable in all theatres.



Route/Transit: **Base Post Office** (11th July 1942)(19th July 1942) (24th July 1942); **FPO 24, Tahag, Egypt**
Seen (22nd July 1942) DLO Bombay
(21st Sept 1942), Poona (23rd Sept 1942)

On 28 June 1942 Brig DW Reid was captured when his brigade was overrun in a rearguard action at the Fuka Pass during the withdrawal to Alamein. He spent sixteen months as a prisoner of war in Sulmona POW camp PG78, Italy eventually escaping with two other Brigadiers through the British 8th Army lines at Cassino on 9 November 1943



Origin: **FPO 28** **Macidena, Italy** (24th April 1945)

It was attached with 3 Motor Brigade and then later with 43 Lorried Brigade.



Origin: **FPO 29 Kuala Lumpur, Malaya Selangor**(28th April 1941)

The DADAPS stated that local stamps had to be used in view of the Malayan currency prevalent. The DG P&T confirmed the arrangement. Except for the Federated Malaya States and the Straits Settlement, the others had their own stamps and systems-Malaya and Kedah being one of these.

FPO 29 was attached with 9 Div HQ at Kuala Lumpur and was destroyed or captured on or before. 14th February 1942



Origin: **FPO 35 Sar -i-pul Persia** (23rd Nov 1941-13th Dec 1941)
Office stamp used on money orders used as emergency date stamp



Origin: **FPO 36, Sungei Patani, Kedah, Malaya** (24th July 1941)

Captured or destroyed by 14th Feb 1942



Origin: **FPO 40 at Port Blair, Andaman Islands** (12th December 1945)

Japanese Forces sailed to Andamans in 1942 post the conquest of Burma and occupied Andaman and Nicobar Islands without any opposition. Sometime in 1945, the control of the island was nominally handed over to the Azad Hind Government. It was reoccupied by the Allied Forces, 116 Brigade on 7th October 1945 when they landed at Port Blair.

The envelope bears the badge of 2 Queen Victoria 's Own Rajput Light Inf



Origin: FPO 41 at Lanciano, Italy (8th January 1944)



FPO 42 Larino, Italy (15th October, 1943) ★



Origin: 53 FPO, Baghdad (2nd Jul, 1941)



Origin: FPO 55 Taranto Italy. (23rd Dec 1944) ★



Origin: **FPO 58-B, Ipoh Perak, Malaya** : An improvised branch. ●

*The Malaya 25c Postage Paid cover used.
FPO 58-B was an improvised branch and was captured or destroyed on or before 14th Feb 1942*



Origin: **FPO 72 at Pyinmana, Burma** (2nd October 1945)

5/1 Punjab Regt was based around Nasik and were preparing to leave for BCOF duties in Japan.



Origin: **FPO 76 at Trincomalee, Ceylon** on 15th June 1942

By agreement with the local administration FPOs started using Indian postage stamps once the Base Post Office arrived in May 1942 and the senior postal officer arrived in June 1942.



Origin: **FPO 80*, Ledo, India** (17th November 1944)

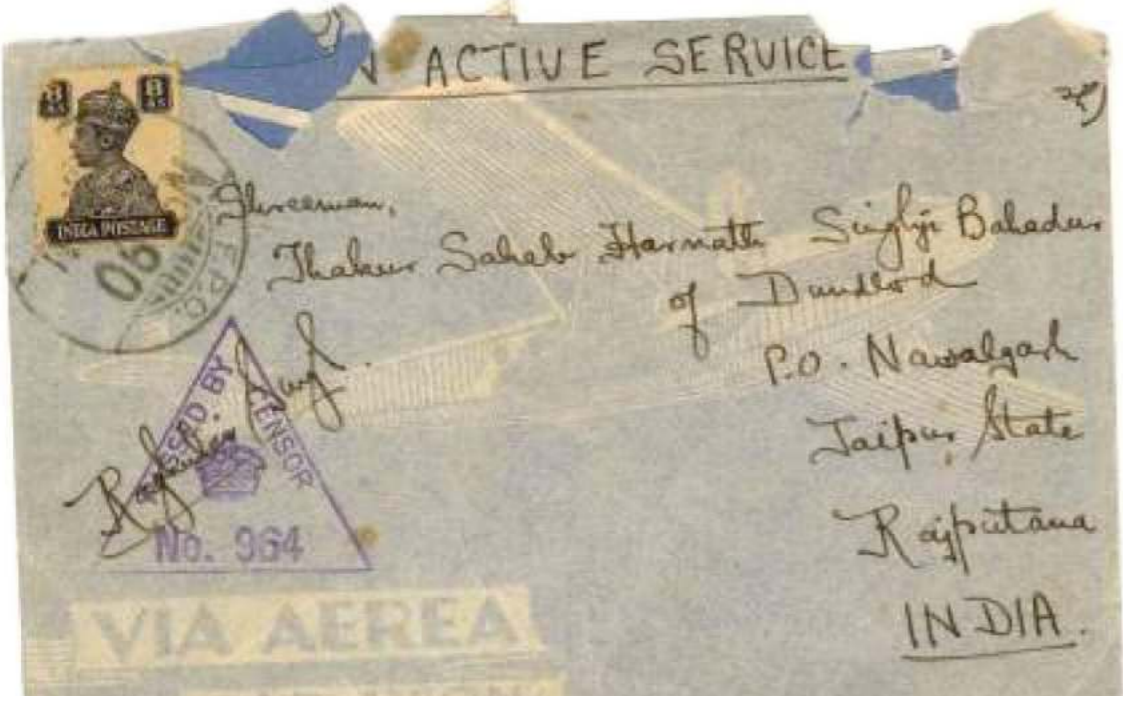
*The **Ledo Road** from Ledo, Assam, India to Kunming, Yunnan, China was an overland connection between India and China, built during Second World War to enable the Allied Forces to deliver supplies to China and aid the war effort against Japan. After the Japanese cut off the Burma Road in 1942 an alternative was required, hence the construction of the Ledo Road. It was renamed the **Stilwell Road**, after General Joseph Stilwell of the U S Army in early 1945 at the suggestion of Chiang Kai Shek.*



Origin : FPO 82t Pyawbwe, Burma(17th April 1945)
Signed by Major General David Tennant Cowan CB, CBE, DSO & Bar, MC, also known as "Punch" Cowan.



Origin: FPO 88 at Saida (Sidon), Lebanon (12th September 1944)
Route/transit: Base Post Office (14th September 1944)



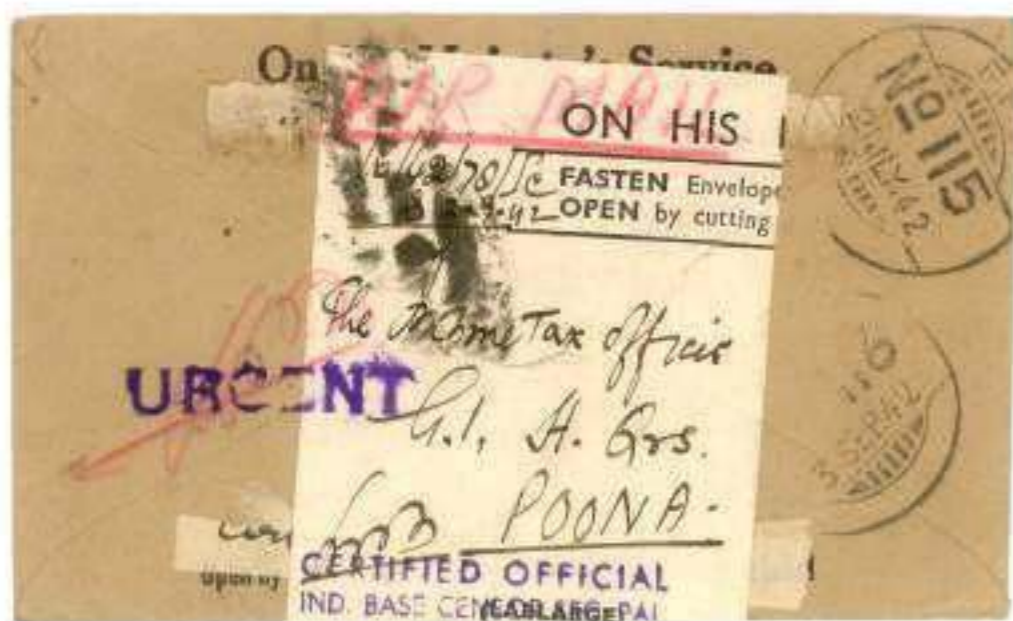
Origin : FPO 90, Asmara (Fiat showroom), Eritrea-September 1941

The captured Italian printed Ala Littoria printed airmail envelope
Only used by FPO 90 in Eritrea. This was probably made locally and is not known used after the FPO left Eritrea



Origin: FPO 96 at Quetta, India (6th March 1946)

It is addressed to General Head Quarters (India) the Joint repatriation office (India). This office was handling the repatriation of the Second World War -Prisoners of War

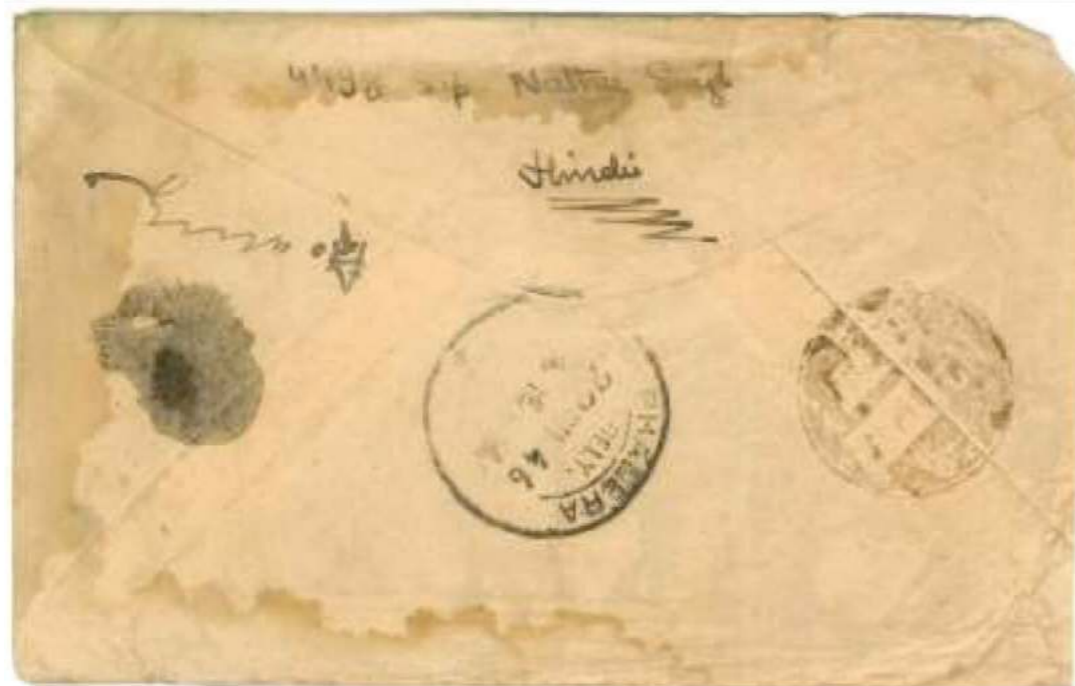


Origin: FPO 115, Damascus (21st July 1942), FPO 116 at Haifa, Palestine dated 3rd September 1942.



Origin: FPO 134, Calcutta India (26th Apr 1945) HQ Eastern Command Destination Bombay India

SIGNED BY (LATER) FM KM CARIAPPA



Origin :FPO 147 Bangalore India (12th May 1945)



Origin : FPO 127 Kowloon, Hong Kong (11th June 1946) ●

The indistinct postmark at the left is Proud type D2 negative datestamp (recorded used 30th April–29th December, 1946.

FPO 127 travelled within **India** and Hong Kong and was disbanded at Nagpur on 13th February 1947



Origin: **FPO 148 at Kure, Japan** (25th November 1946)

FPO 148 was part of British Commonwealth Occupation Force (BCOF), Japan. It also served as transit office for air/surface mails both incoming and outgoing.



Origin: **FPO 192 at Lashio, Burma** (11th April 1946)

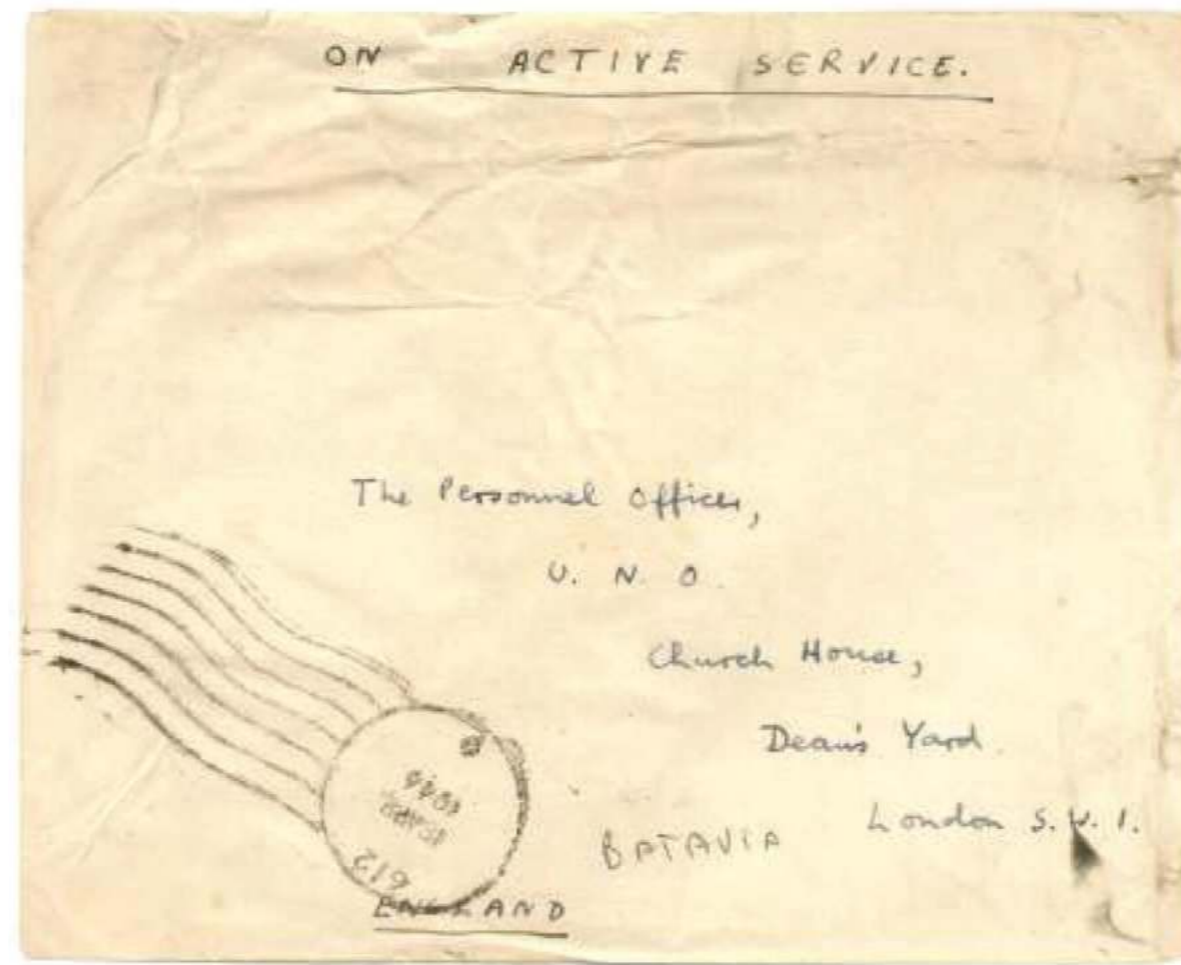
Lashio played a strategic role during the Second World War, as once the supplies landed at Rangoon, it moved by rail to Lashio. The Burma Road originated from Lashio; the material was transported to China from here. This was before Japan was at war with the British.



Origin: **FPO 153, Malacca, Malaya** (7th February 1946)



Origin: **FPO 202 Kluang, Johore, Malaya,**
(15th April 1946)

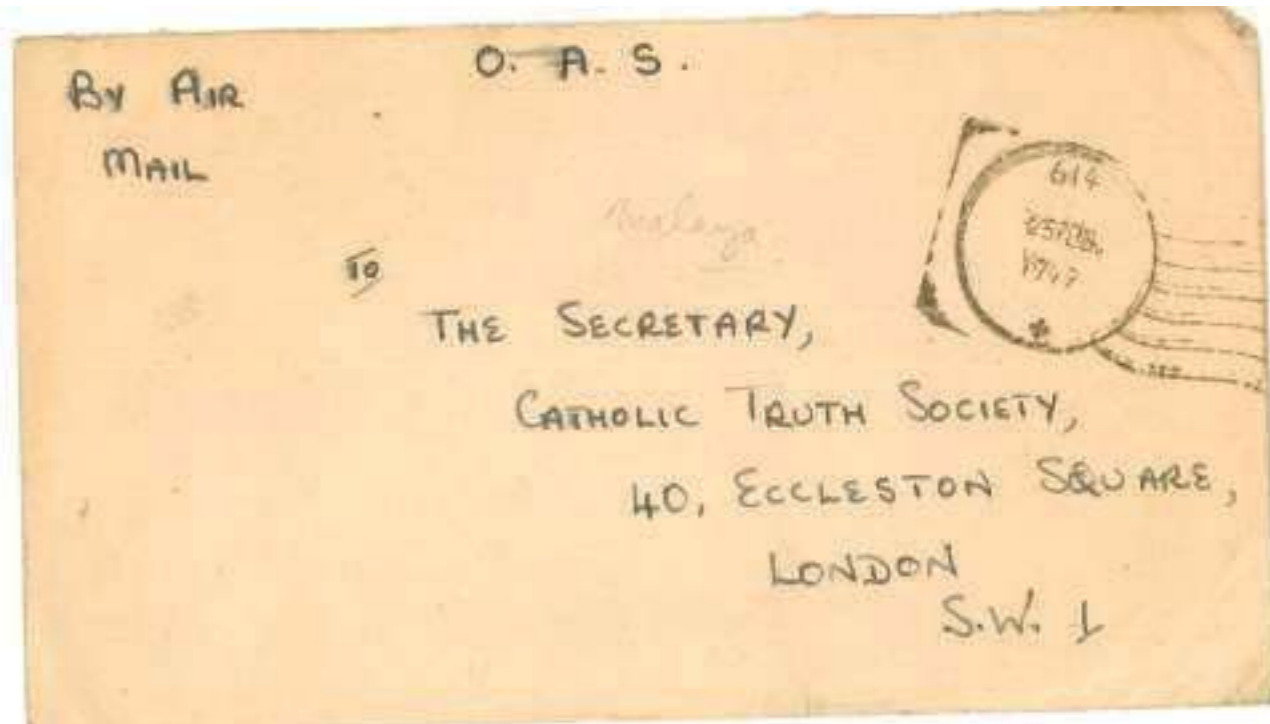


Origin: FPO 612, Batavia, DEI, Java (15nd April 1946)

The toughest occupation job faced by SEAC was on the island of Java. This was the heartland of Indonesian nationalists who had proclaimed the Republic of Indonesia on 18th August 1945 and were determined to resist by force of arms the return of Dutch colonial rule.

The Corps FPO 612 functioned there for one whole year with 5 Div. of XV Corps (renamed Allied Forces NEI). Things did not go smoothly in East Java, the troops faced armed resistance and was made to retire to the docks. The 49th Brigade had heavy casualties including their Brigade Commander. There were ambushes, roadblocks and sniping in and around Batavia. Post the truce in November 1946, the British Indian Forces left Java

Origin: Simla, India (3rd Aug 1945)
 Route/Transit: **Base Office 2 Naples Italy** (8th Aug 1945)
 Destination **FPO 213 Gorizi Italy** (11th August 1945) ★



Origin: FPO 221 at Saigon, Indo China, BMM (4th May 1946)

Origin: FPO 614 Singapore, Malaya on 25th February 1947



Origin: FPO 645, Ipoh, Malaya, Perak (10th December 1946)



Origin: FPO 653 Tokyo, Japan (3rd Nov 1948) ●



Origin: FPO 648 at Medan, DEI, Sumatra (18th October 1946)

In the Indonesian city of Surabaya, the 20th Indian Div. fought its largest set of battles since the end of second world war. Large part of the city was reduced to rubble, some 15000 were killed



Origin: FPO 660, Kuala Lumpur, Malaya (14th December 1945)



Origin: **FPO 668, Arkonam India** (16th October 1945) ★
 FPO 668 was a reserve FPO of 26 Division Postal Unit for Air
 trooping APO Arkonam, India. There is no record of use of FPO 668



Origin: **FPO R9 at Gaza, Palestine** (12th April, 1943) ●
 R9 was a reserve FPO and travelled between Lebanon and Palestine



FPO R7 ●
 Limassol, Cyprus (27th July 1942)



Origin: **R11 Geneifa, Egypt** on 15th March, 1943



FPO B Command HQ, Colombo, Ceylon (22nd April 1945)
 This was an improvised FPO



Origin: FPO S-285, Sudan (11th June, 1942)



Origin: **CAMP P.O. L-75**. These were improvised field post offices, result of emergency conditions which could not be satisfied by the provision of regular field post offices. L75 has not been identified

L68,69,71,75-76,80,81 and L102 were supplied by the Indian P&T Dept to various FPOs in Middle East.



Origin: **FPO E615** (13th September 1940) **Baqush, Egypt** ★
 (Seen between 19 May 1940 - August 1940) or Abd-El-Qadir, Egypt

In 1939-1940 the "E" series of datestamps were issued to the British Army in Egypt but were lent to various Commonwealth units at various periods. Those used by Indian FPOs were employed in East Africa or Egypt.

4. Specialised stationery used by The Indian Forces

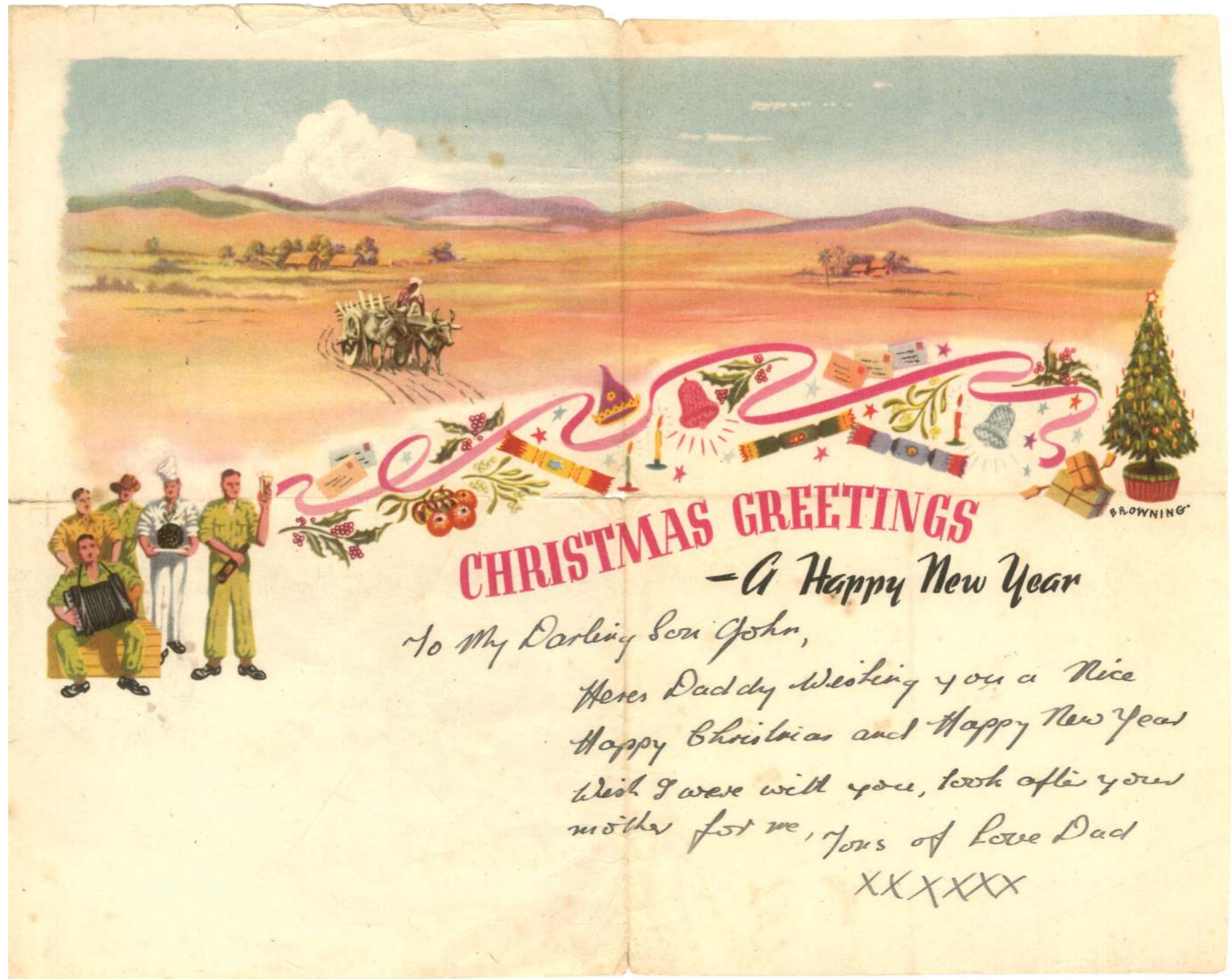
Air Mail Letter - Christmas Greetings



Air Mail Letter - Christmas Greetings

Air Mail Letter Card IAFF 1083 (Greetings)
posted at British FPO 260 (attached with 2 DIV,
seen in India and Burma).

*These were issued by commands on ration basis for
issue to their personnel for sending X Mas and New
Year greetings. One Free letter was allowed in 1941
and 1942, four in 1943 and five in 1944 and 1945.*

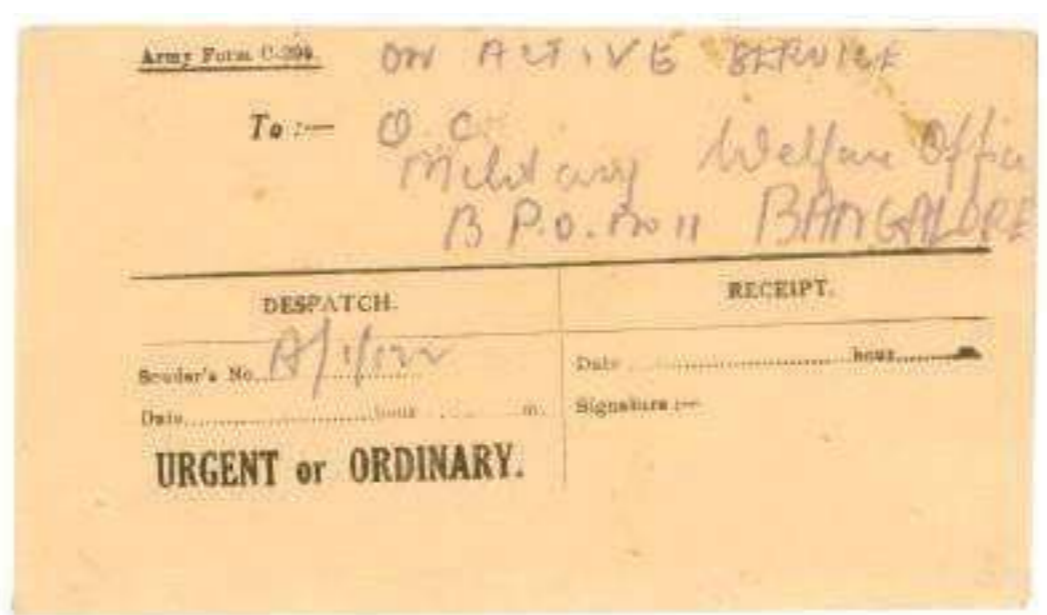




Origin: FPO 19 El Hamra Libya (1st Mar, 1942)

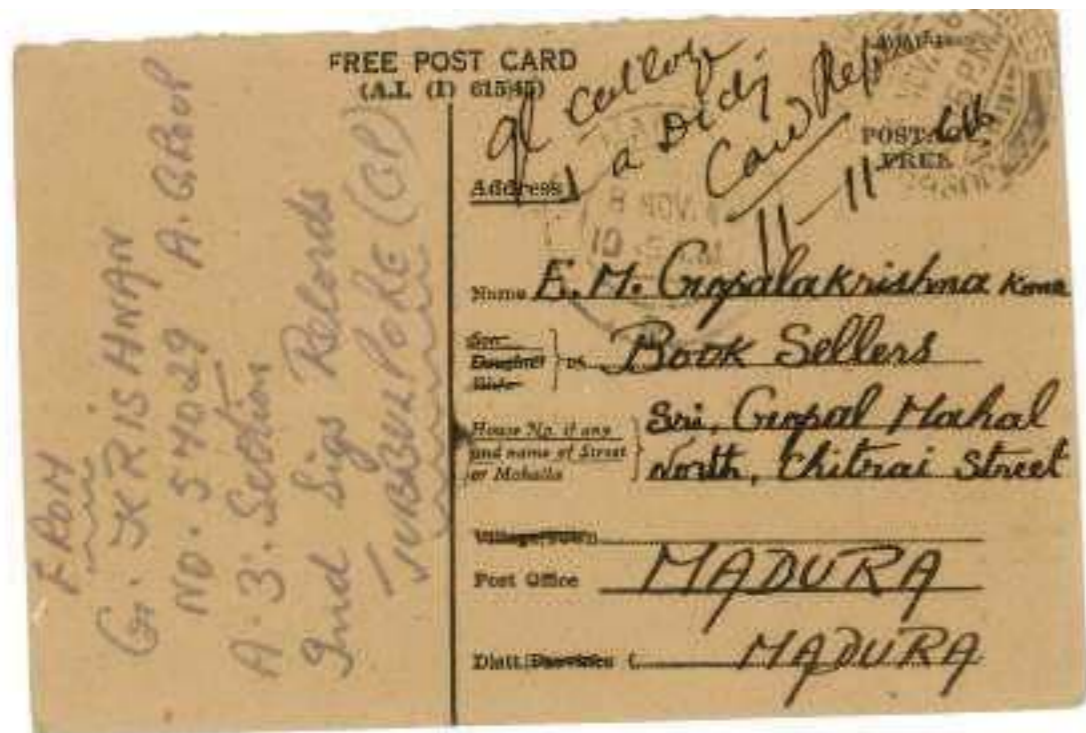
This FPO was serving 11 Infantry Brigade of 4 Infantry Division.

The inverted red triangle is the logo of YMCA (Young Men's Christian Association) which supplied stationeries and dry food items to Indian "Christian" forces personnels in WW2 which is why envelopes were printed With INDIAN FORCES.

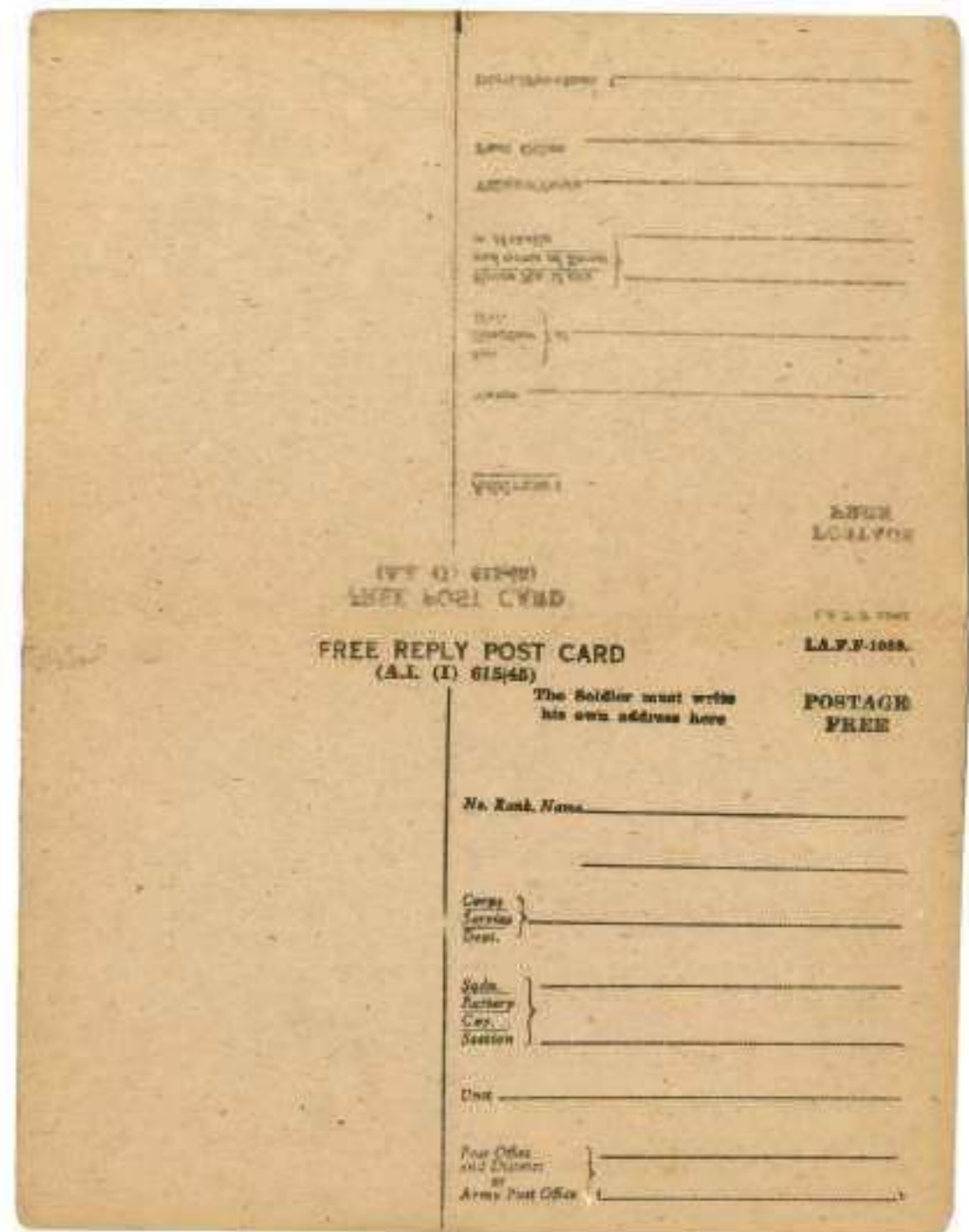


Origin: FPO 69 Tegnupal, India (13 Oct 1942)
 Destination: 11 ABPO, Bangalore India (25 Oct 1942)

Army Form C-398



The Postage Free Reply Postcard (IAFF 1089), issued for inland correspondence to Indian soldiers in India after the end of the War at the scale of 4 per month



SECURITY: THINK- BEFORE YOU WRITE !!

BY AIR MAIL

AIR LETTER
IF ANYTHING IS ENCLOSED
THIS LETTER WILL BE SENT
BY ORDINARY MAIL.

FORCES MAIL

Miss Beryl Winton
"Homestead"
Roxeleigh near
Chelmsford
Essex.

264286
RAF Post

I. A. F. F.—1083

KALYAN A.P.O. 23 NOV 1945

Name _____
Rank _____
No. _____
Written in _____
(Language)

THIS LETTER IS FOR THE USE OF H. M. FORCES ONLY

SPECIAL GSI 82-99-4-15 2-50

Army Form W-5192,
(Modified for India)

H. M. FORCES OVERSEAS
DUTY-FREE CONCESSION FOR GIFTS SENT
TO THE UNITED KINGDOM

The following declaration must be completed and signed by the sender of the package—
declare that the contents of this parcel are as shown below, and are sent as a gift.

Goods	Quantity	Value
Dress material Indian made	15 yards	75/-

Signature of sender: *AE Furze*
Date: 15/7/44

Stamp: *AE Furze*
Stamp: *E. Daynard*

Postage stamps: 31, 1R, 1R, 1R

H.M FORCES OVERSEAS Duty-Free Concession for gifts sent to UK;
Army Form W-5192 (modified for India)(15th July 1944) by Capt. AE Furze.

This label was to be affixed to any package which weighed more than 5lbs

Department of Supply Contracts
Directorate Quotation

My new address is

No. 264286 Rank Lt Name A. F. Furze RA 50
Unit H. M. Forces, RA 50 Depot
124 Camp, KALYAN,
INDIA COMMAND
Please inform all my friends 22 Nov 45

Origin: Kalyan APO, India (23rd Nov, 1945)
Destination UK

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA,
DEPARTMENT OF SUPPLY
CONTRACTS DIRECTORATE
New Delhi,

Date as postmark: _____

Tender No. 87/LM-233/524/11/13

The Director of Contracts thanks you for your quotation
which he regrets he is unable to accept on this occasion.

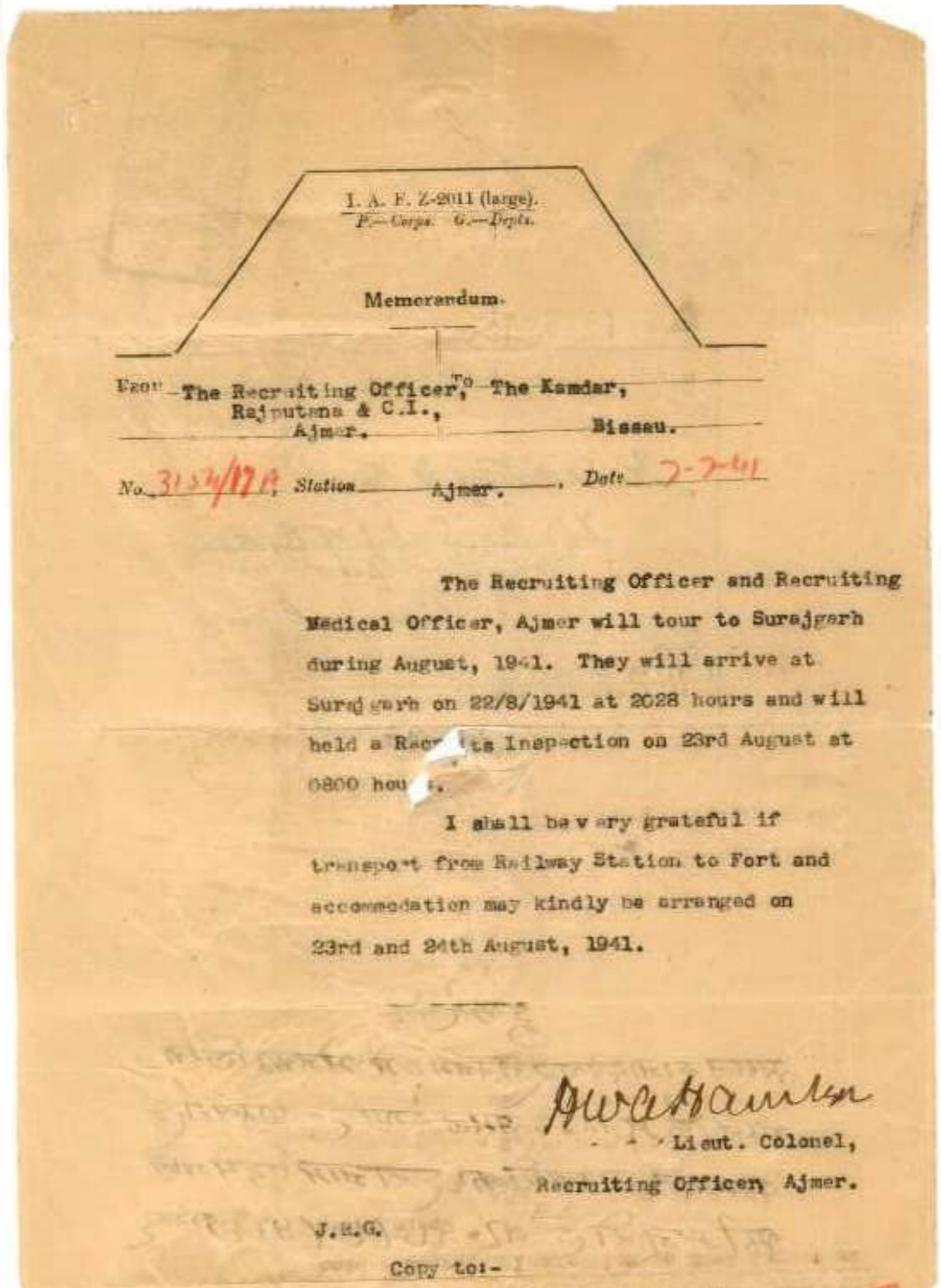
A. F. F. THOMAS, Brigadier,
Director of Contracts.

GIPD—51—83 Director of Contracts—11-7-40—10,006.

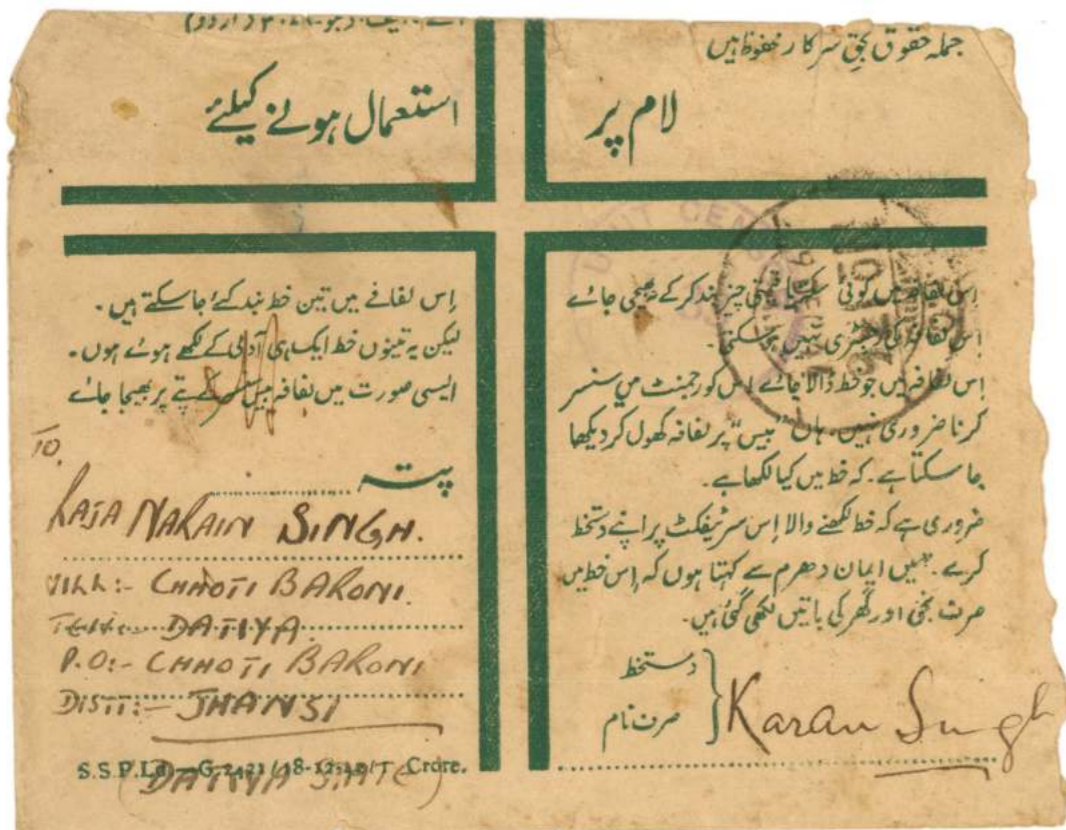
Air Graph

One of the two big postal innovations of Second World War was the AIRGRAPH other being the AIR MAIL LETTER.

It reached India when the Kodak filming plant was installed at Bombay in December 1941. The outgoing airgraph service to UK was introduced as an experimental measure on 2nd February 1942

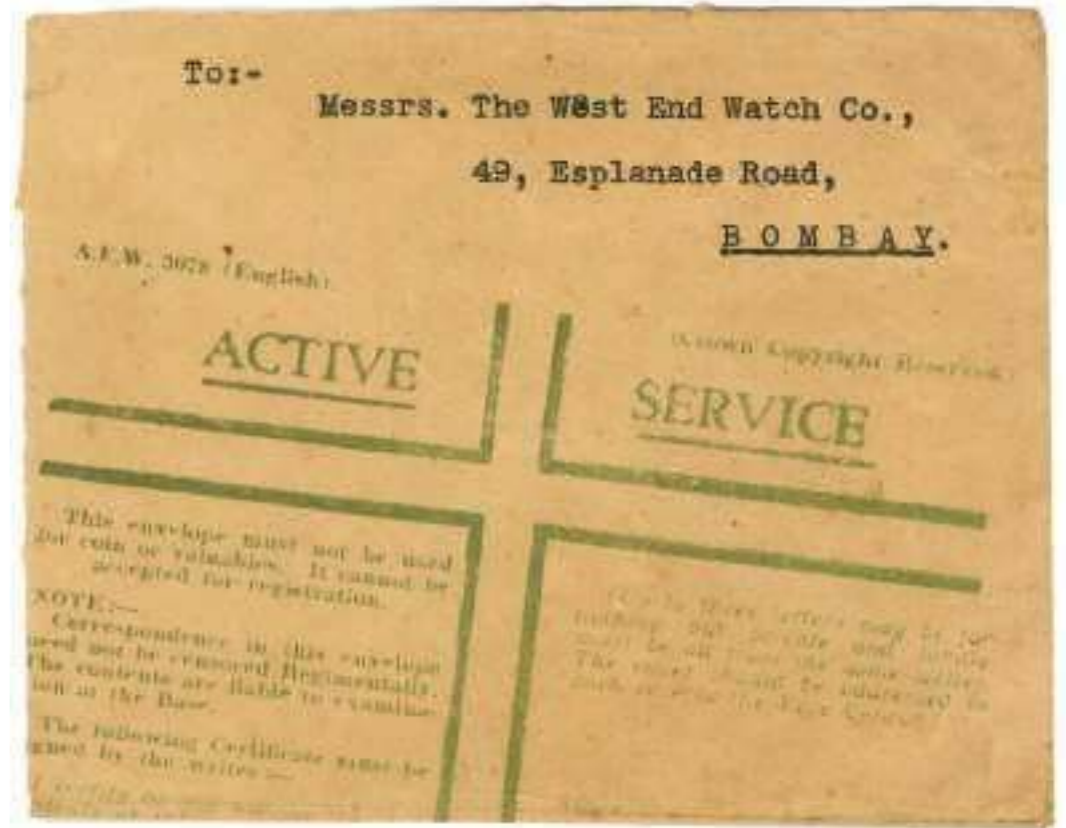


Honour Envelope



The Honour Envelope also known as the Green Envelope Letter (A.F.W.3078)

Letters from soldiers on active service were subjected to censorship by their junior officers from the same unit to ensure that details such as location and military objectives were not disclosed. However, as a privilege, soldiers were given one Honour Envelope per month in which they could send self-censored personal and private letters to loved ones. A random sample were opened at HQ and if a soldier had betrayed the trust placed, he would be court-martialed and punished



Origin: C-BASE POST OFFICE at Basra Ashar, Iraq

(1st August 1941)

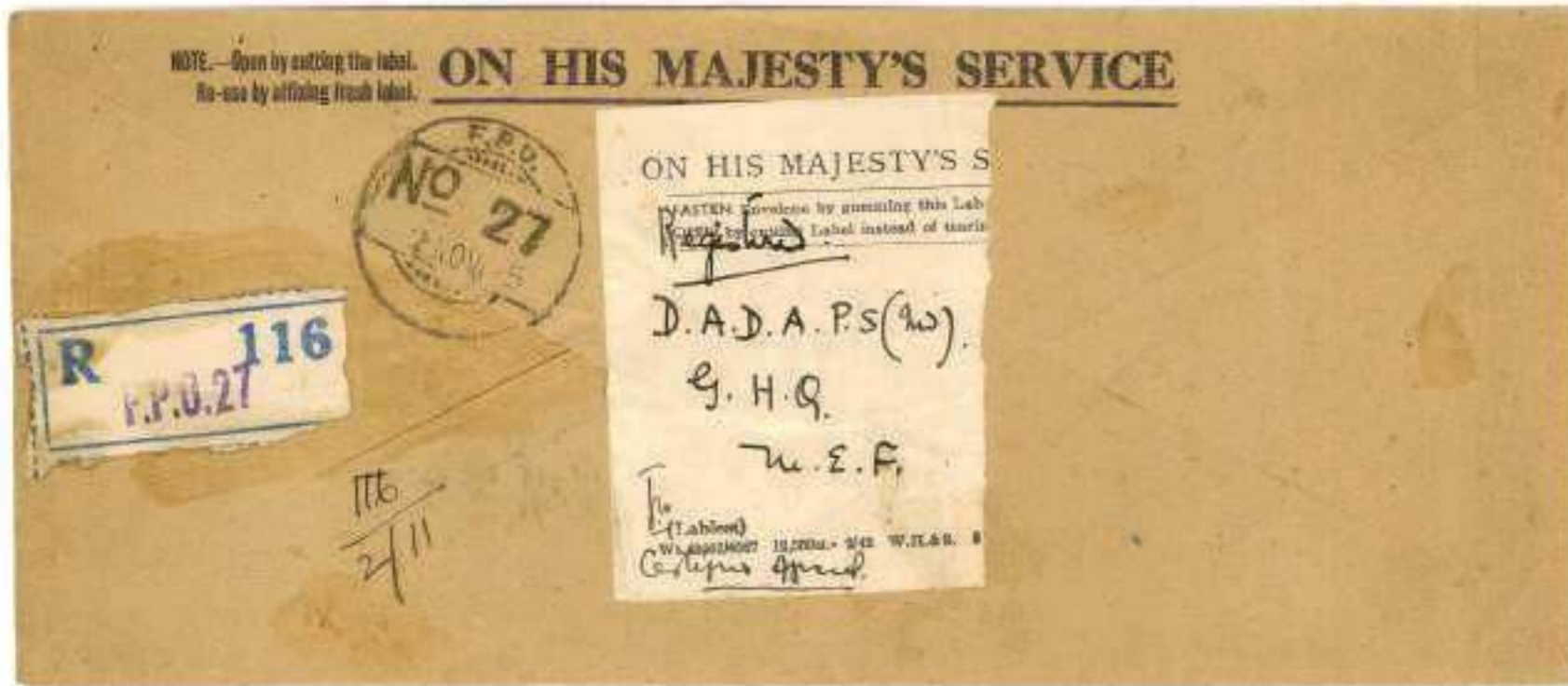
This Green/ Honour Envelope ((Roman Urdu) was printed on 6 February 1941 and 80,000 were printed. The template of this Honour Envelope was based on the earlier version, when they were introduced in March 1915 during the First World War.

These were reintroduced, the Director General vide his Post Office Circular No 20 on 17th December 1942 allowed the troops in India to use Green



The Blue Triangle Air letter, 1.A.F.F.-1083(Triangle) was issued to the troops in place of the Green Cover or the Honour Envelope. This too was not to be censored at the regiment. It was subject to censorship at the Base

Economy Slip

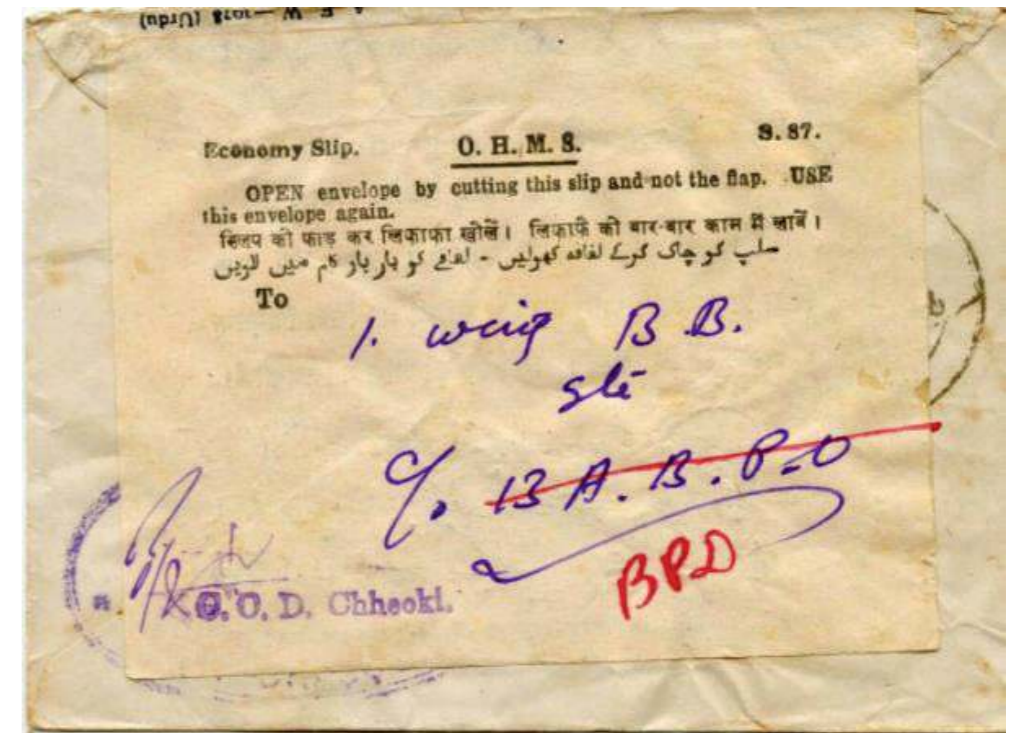
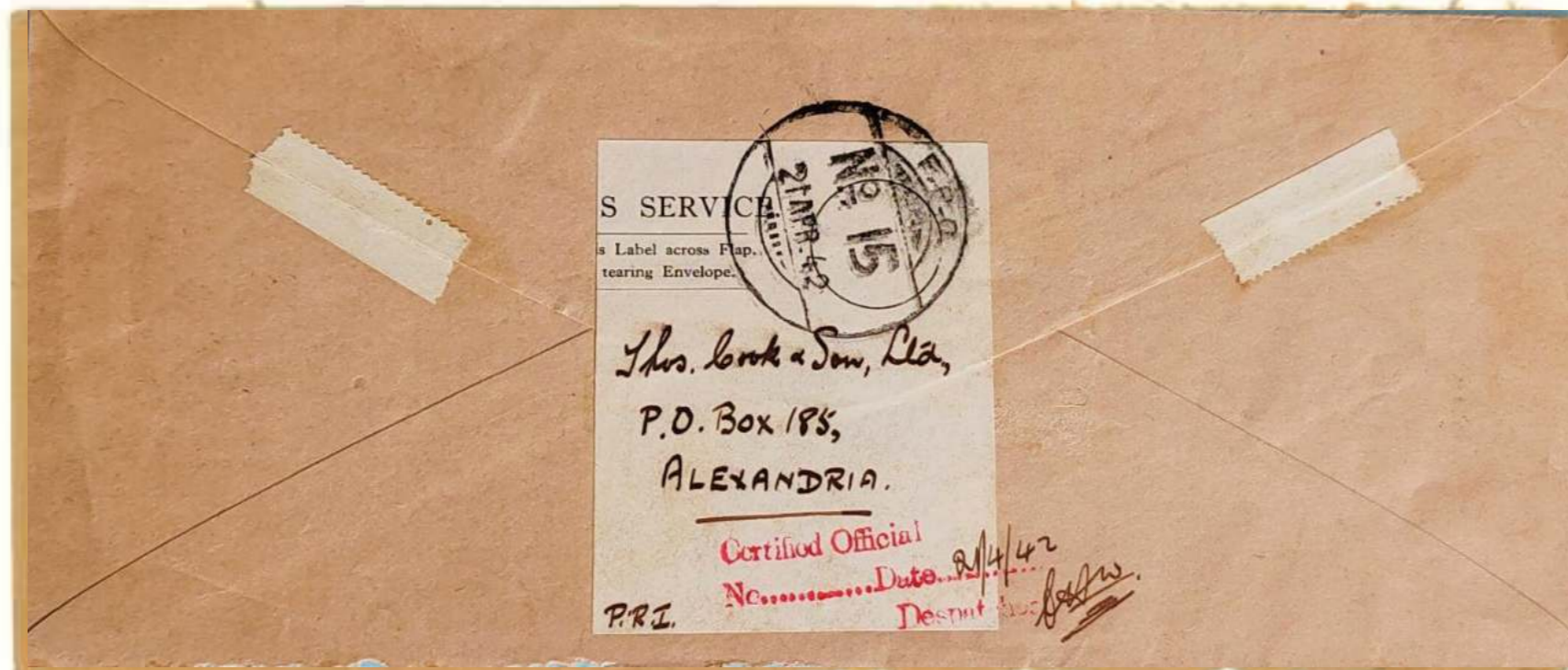


FPO 27 Ablah, Lebanon on 2nd November 1945.



th
FPO 15 Halfaya, Egypt (21st April 1942) This is written on the Second half of the economy label

Cairo (27 April 1942) it was during Battle of Cauldron against Rommel's Forces it lost all its heavy equipment
The second half of the label is affixed on the letter flap ★

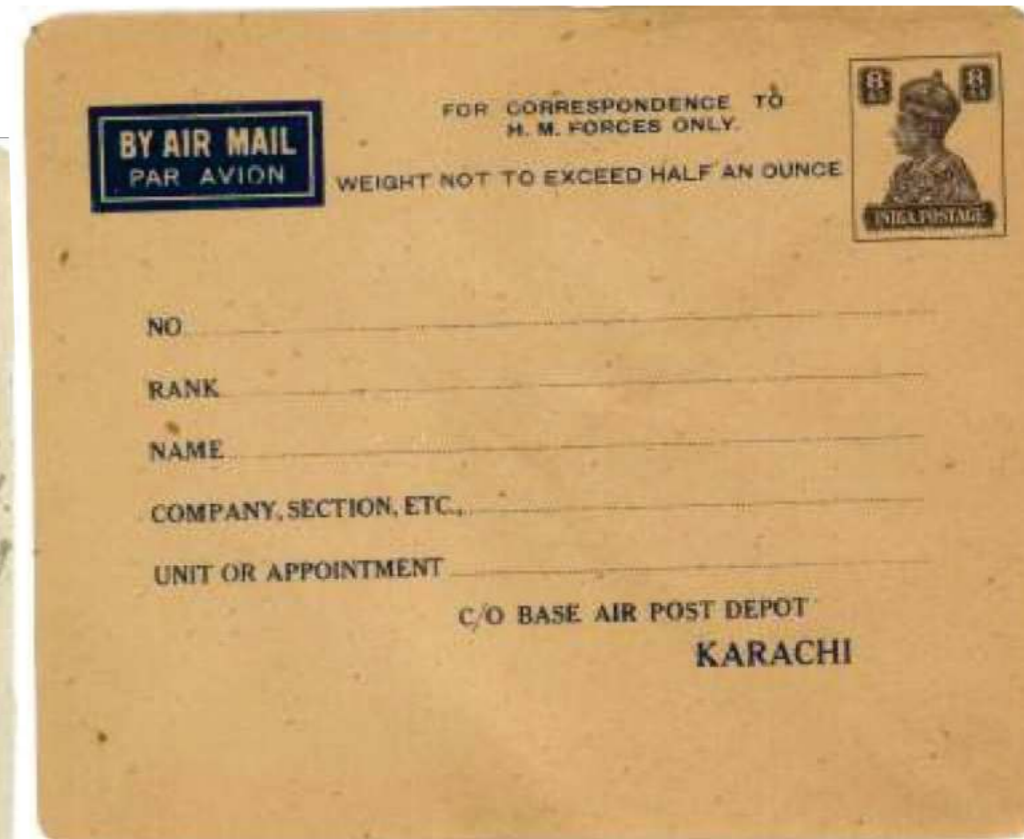


5. Indian Army Postal Service, coordination within interservice and its Allied Partners



In December 1940, due to the morale factor, correspondents in India were permitted to send to soldiers on field service overseas Air Mail Letters and Postcards at the reduced 8 as and 4 as rates. In May 1941, reciprocity was granted by giving similar concession to soldiers on field service for writing to their homes.

To facilitate the use of this concession 8 as Forces Air Mail Envelopes—pink and later buff coloured were issued by the P&T department for correspondence to and from the soldiers overseas.



Postal facilities and concessions granted to British and Indian troops were extended to the Polish soldiers. The operational Polish FPO left in the first half and their BPO in December 1943 for the Middle East, the PAI FORCES continued to look after the Polish units which remained behind in Persia and Iraq.

Alphas KK within the octagonal stamp (Palestine)



Origin R2 CDS on NEW ZEALAND stamp in 1944 at Taranto, Italy



(a) British O2E PAI FORCE

(b) British O2E MEF

To track and trace service personnel to deliver, redirect or send the mail back to the sender as is shown

1 a KGVI Burma Postage
FPO 605 Monywa, Burma (13th April 1945)

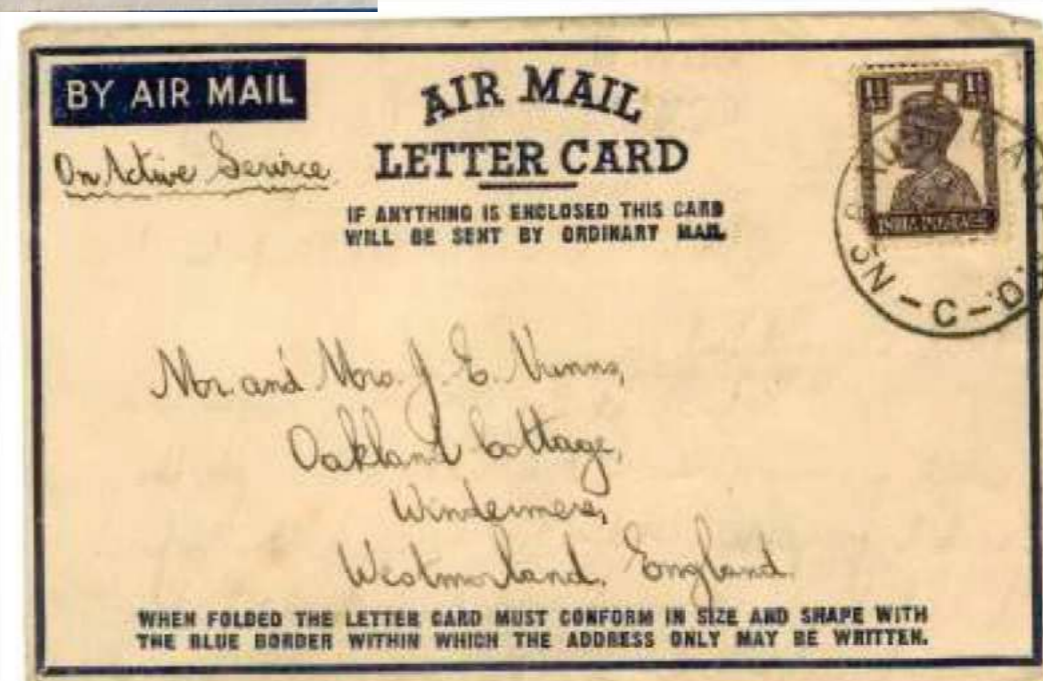


Received From HM Ships in blue, Colaba, Bombay (19th March 1941);
Bombay GPO (19th March 1941) Base Postal Depot *A* Bombay (20th March 1941)
Co ordination between Navy and the IAPS

REVERSE
Received From HM Ships



All RAF mail was handed over to the
RAF Base Post Office but they coordinated with The IAPS



Origin :No 8 Aus.
Base PO
(Australian) Kure, J

An integrated BPO was at Kure, Japan. Detachment of Brindiv Postal unit formed the Indian Section of the Integrated Base Post Office (BPO)

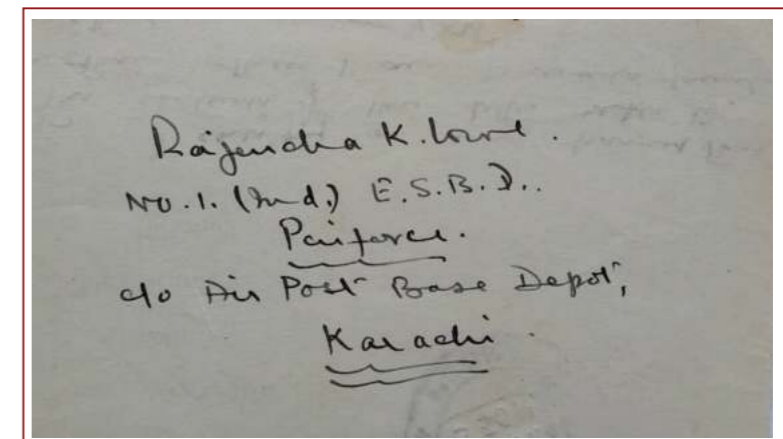




Civil labour force and contractors, civilians employed with MES using the services of Indian Army Postal Service



Address mentioned inside



10 July
 The Empress of Scotland
 Dear Mom and Dad.
 I am just scribbling a few lines to catch the post at Bombay. We don't know if we shall get ashore there but at least the mail will go. We are due to get in sometime this morning. No one knows yet how long we will stay there but they say she will reach Liverpool in 14 days from Bombay. That puts it somewhere between the 25th and 28th. There are rumours going that we will

only stop at ... of ...
 we will be in Liverpool on the 25th. Incidentally this ship travels 500 miles every 24 hrs.
 We have had a miserable trip from Singapore. She is full to capacity with troops about 2000 Indian and is going to Bombay merely to pick up cargo clearing out of India. The weather has been poor all the way, cloudy and wet. There hasn't been a decent day's sunshine all the way yet but it's just as well because it keeps things cool. Still no doubt we will strike hot weather soon but when we do

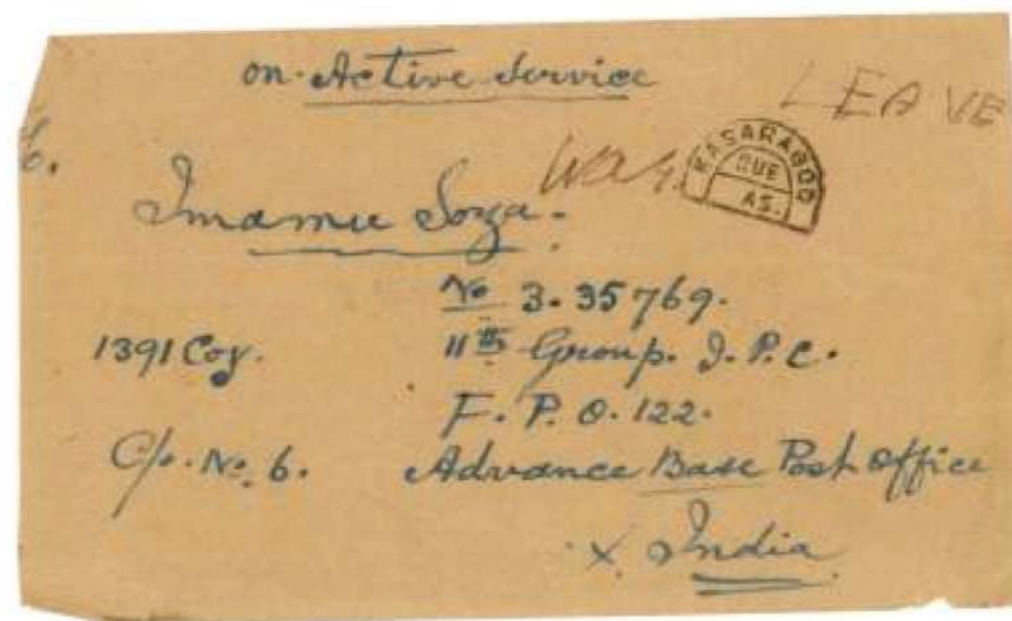
Maritime Mail-Paquebot off the Bombay coast, India onward to United Kingdom

The Empress of Scotland (10th July 1947) carried troops from Japan while returning to England post war BCOF duties in Japan.

He writes "to catch the post at Bombay. We don't know if we shall get ashore there but at least the mail will go." "She is full to capacity with troops about 2000, going to Bombay merely to pick up army leaving out of India." "This should be the last letter from over the water; we shall stop at Port Said no doubt but it won't be worth writing from there."

POSTAGE DUE LETTER TO SOLDIER

The deficient postage was paid from Defence Fund as letters were arriving from troops overseas without postage, their correspondents in India also began sending their letters with insufficient postage or no postage at all.



Origin: **British FPO 6 (7th Ju 1943) Halasuru, Bangalore** located between June to Nov 1943
 All the BFPO in India used datestamps of the standard British Type, FPO 6 had, in addition a single-ring datestamp of unique patterns which was probably locally supplied
 Scarce

6. Auxiliary markings used during postal journey

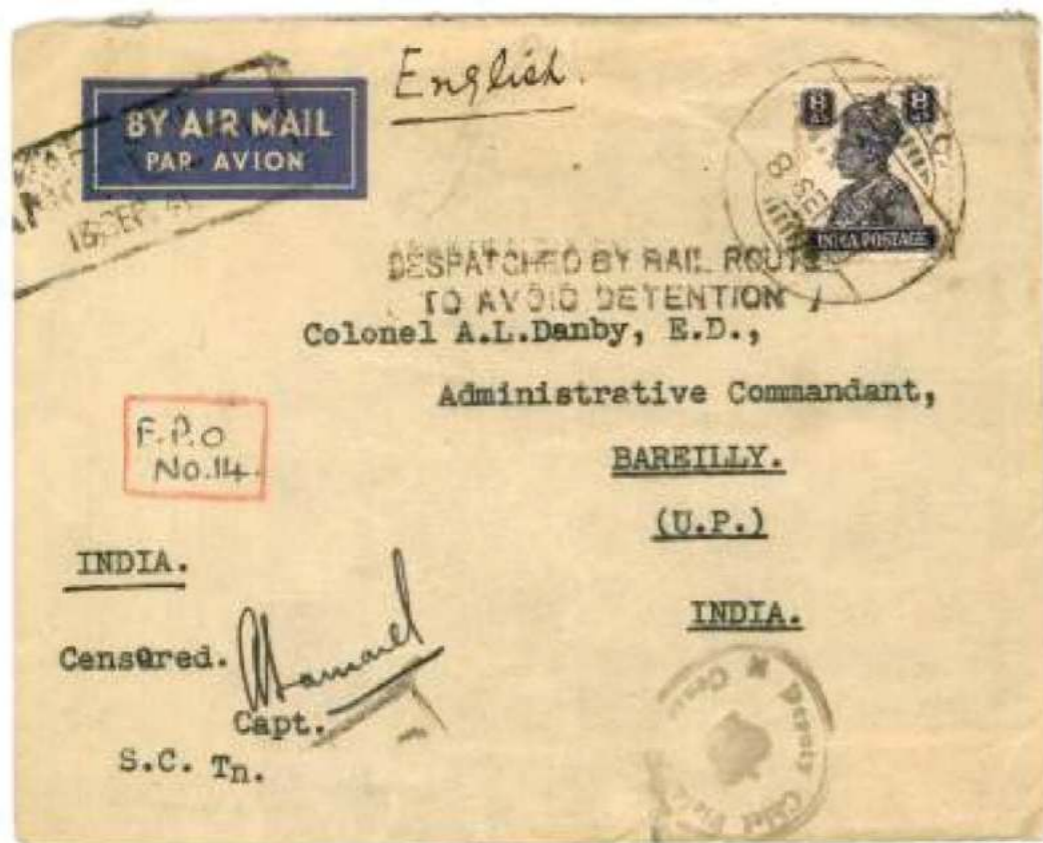


India to UK the surface rate was 2 ½ annas for 1 ounce and for an Airmail 8 annas for ½ ounce. In November 1940 the rates were revised from 2 ½ annas to 3 1/2 annas. This hit the British soldiers in India as they were treated on peacetime duty



The cover with the **United Nations Cachet 1945** (1st December 1945 to 19th January 1946, London)

Forwarding Agent cachet of Lloyds Bank, Bombay (20th December 1945)

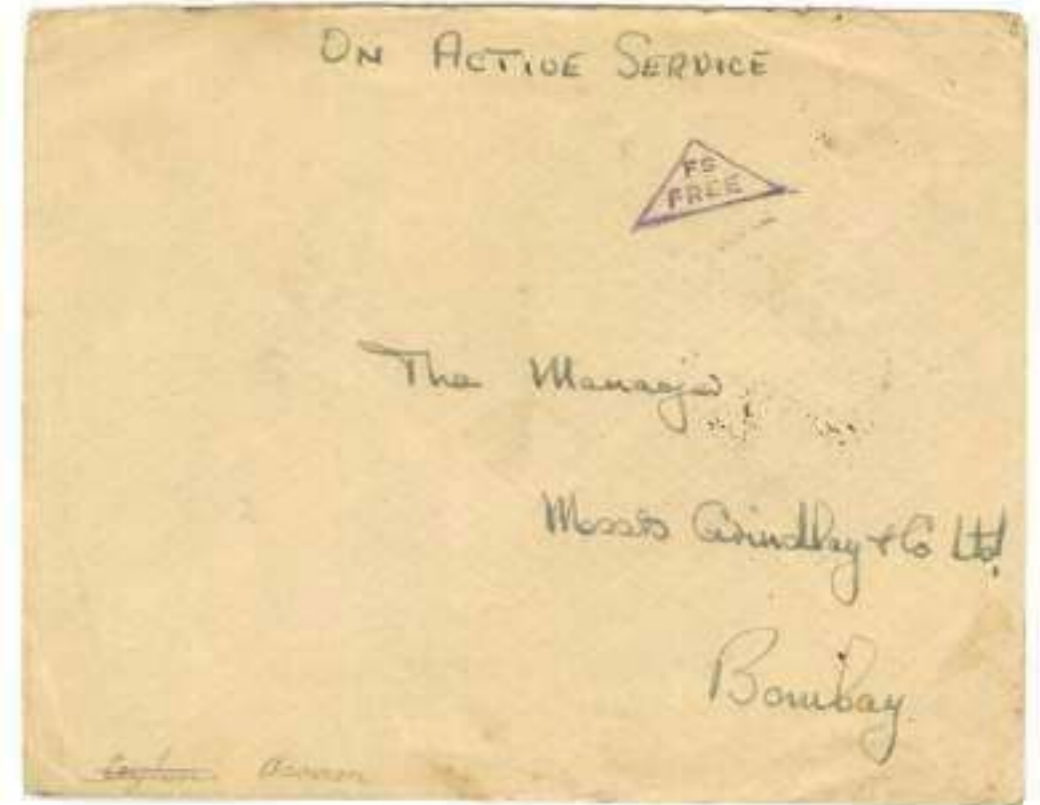


Despatched By Rail Route / To Avoid Detention handstamp was applied at Karachi as it was the air terminus for mail from Iraq, Iran and Iranian Gulf countries and airmail addressed to other parts of India (in this case to Bareilly) was generally sent by rail from Karachi.

Postage Free /REALISED cancellations



Usage of handstamps- **On Active Service Not To Be Taxed** and **On Active Service No Postage Due** and **Karachi Cancelled** to indicate the termination of air transportation of the cover at Karachi. It was a arrival datestamp used at Karachi on airmail which was being transferred to a surface route.





FS Free



Interestingly this letter has been posted without a cover. Indian Section Base Office No. 10 Ranchi, India on (5th September 1942)
TREAT AS PREPAID AND DELIVER FREE CALCUTTA GPO in black

The Army Mail Section was located with Calcutta GPO and placed in charge of a senior P&T Officer Major KC Sen, a veteran of First World War. An APS liaison Officer was stationed in Calcutta in July 1942 to ensure speedy clearance of army mails through the existing P & T channels as it was the mail centre for the Assam and Arakan fronts. On May 1941, the Defence Department agreed to pay the deficiency of insufficiently paid letters and parcels. Later, it paid full postage on the unpaid letters as return of these letters to senders could give them a wrong impression about the well-being and safety of the addressees. The cost was borne by the Defence Funds, but all concerned were warned not to give any publicity to this practice. In June 1942, the troops serving in the field service areas in India were granted the same free surface mail concession as the troops overseas. The Kolkata GPO instructional mark was primarily intended for the outgoing destination countries which did not know the the free franking facility extended to Indian forces personnel on active service in India in 6/1942.



Insufficiently paid for Transmission by Air Mail boxed in black
Bombay Airmail (7th January 1943)
British FPO was attached with 2 Div and was seen in India and Burma between 1942 - 45

C-Base Post Office (4th September 1941)

FULL POSTAGE REALISED BASE AIR POST DEPOT. c/o Base Postal Depot Bombay has been struck out twice, once by two blue horizontal line and 2 boxed black lines. This was recorded at Base Air Post Depot, Karachi on 17th September 1941.





Reverse
The cachet UNDELIVERED FOR REASON STATED RETURN TO SENDER notation 'DEMOB' (de-mobilized i.e. sent home) and the cover was returned. Found Open or Damaged and Officially Secured strip applied

Magenta boxed handstamp, 'It is regretted that this letter could not be delivered at the address stated' which meant that the addressee had been killed in action.



marking noting:
BELIEVED RETURNED TO UNITED KINGDOM that the recipient has returned to the United Kingdom



Reverse

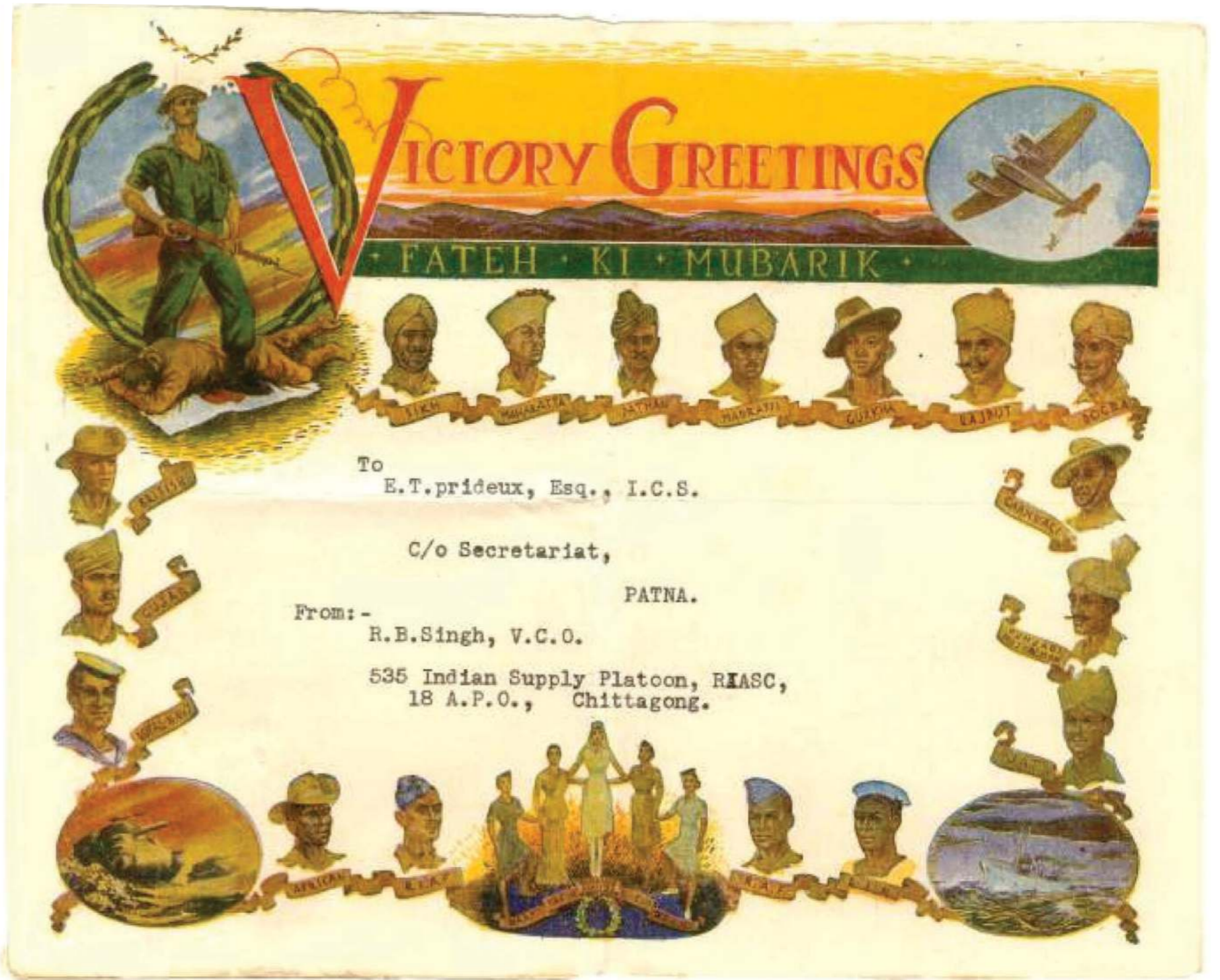
REPATRIATED TO U.K

7. Victory Celebrations and homeward bound British soldiers



Cachet :Invalided to India

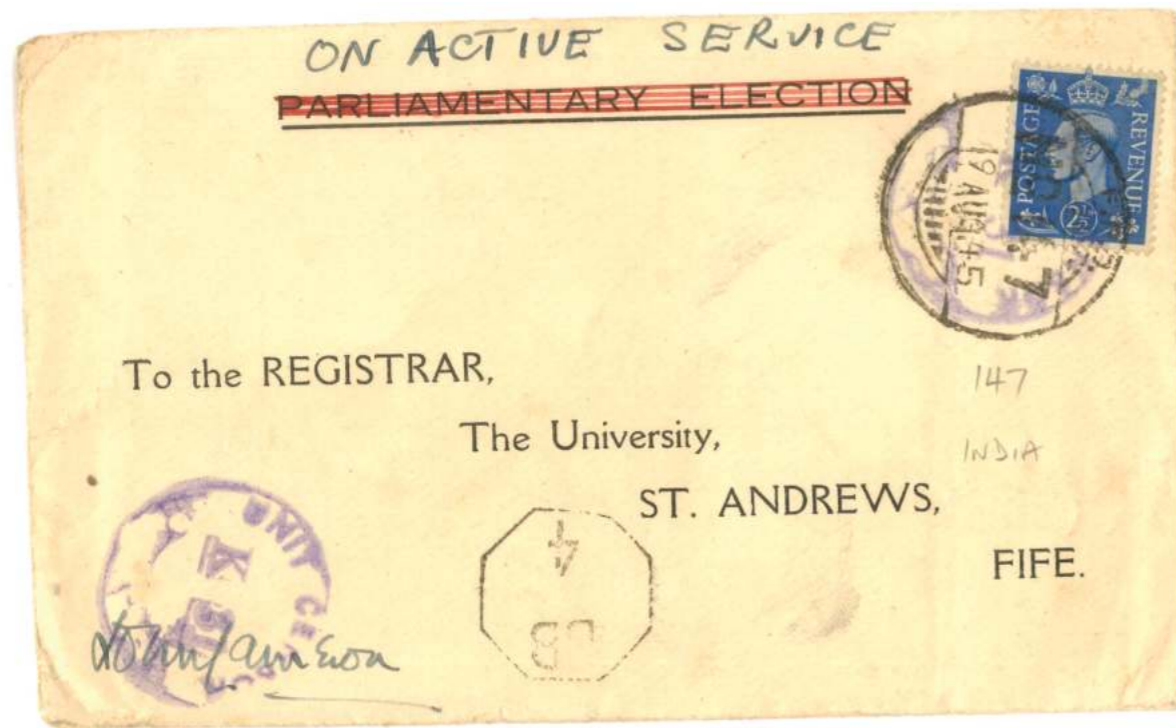
Kalyan Camp Complex was built to house the homeward bound British soldiers. There were 5 separate self-contained camps. Each camp was at first given a small civil post office. In August 1945 Kalyan Base Post Office was opened at the group HQ camp. Each of the four satellite camps was given its own FPO, bearing the same number as the camp in which it was located. This closed in December 1946



Pictorial Victory Greetings Air Letter Form and Enveloped Letter was issued to the troops in connection with the Victory celebrations in March 1946. CDS on this is of 13th February 1946

Reverse
Origin: Kalyan APO, India (9th Jan, 1946)
Route/Transit: Kalyan APO 5 (9th Jan, 1946) ★

Epilogue:



FPO 147 at Bangalore, India on 19th August 1945 to **St Andrews, Scotland**. Parliamentary Election has been struck with pen and On Active Service has been written.

The **1945 United Kingdom general election** was a national election held on 5 July 1945.



Epilogue:

FPO operations ceased in India in October 1946, though some of the FPO s sent out on occupational duties did not return home until December 1947. During this deployment 5000 volunteers from the Indian Post and Telegraphs Department served the Indian Army for 8 years spread over the continents of Asia, Africa and Europe.

This has been an opportunity for me to track location, historical timeline, different stationery used and interesting auxiliary markings used in its postal journey.

The letters help us hear these soldiers or their loved ones. Each letter censored but still convey emotions, memories, anxiety, situations and their excitement. Postal history of the Second World War distinctively travelled in times of adversity with no guarantee on time, routes, travel duration and relied on luck and the Indian Army Postal Service network to reach its destination. Letter writing was the only connect between the nomadic battle-hardened soldier and their family or friends and vice versa. An eye opener for us today, as we live in this digital era with access to mostly everything instantaneous.