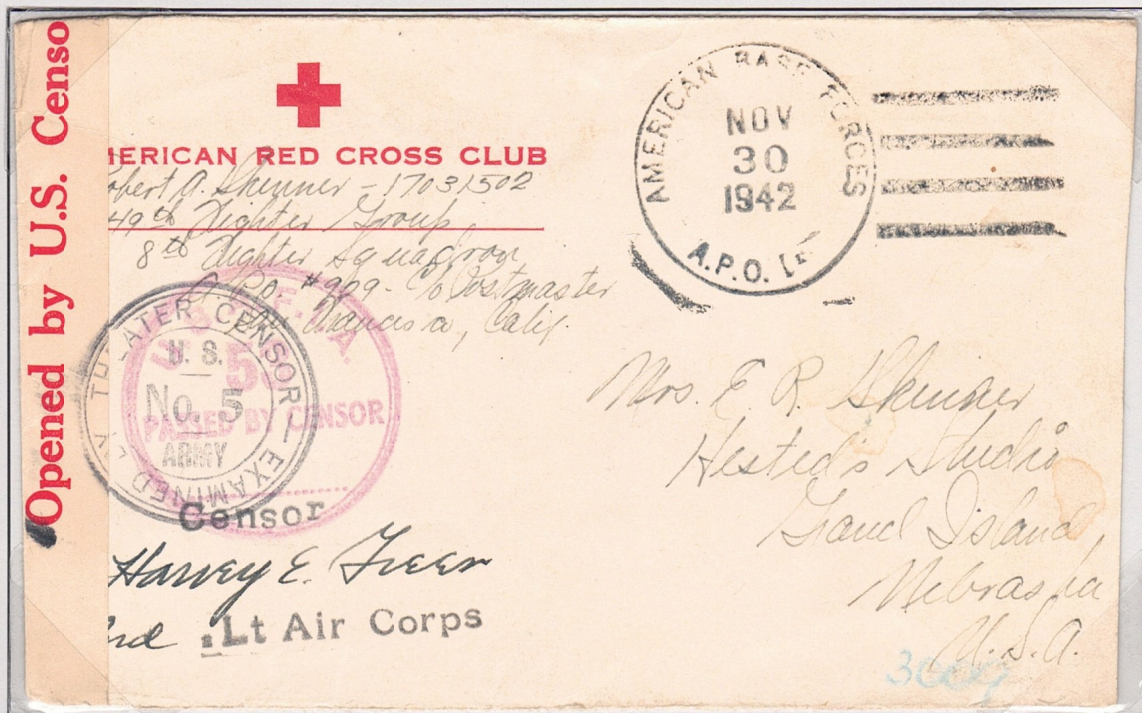


Allied fighter aircraft operations 1939-1945

THE MAIN ALLIED COUNTRIES STRUGGLE TO DOMINATE
THE THIRD DIMENSION OF THE BATTLEFIELD; THE AIR



The rare provisional "Censor/ Lt Air Corps" censor mark, recorded by Richard Helbock in his "Passed by Army censor" handbook (2006), on 30/11 1942 only. There are also "US Army Forces In Australia No. 53" and "Theater Censor No. 5" censor marks and a censor label on this unusually triple censored free mail letter with return address of the 49th Fighter Group, based at Port Moresby, New Guinea, in November 1942.

One example of the development of Allied air power during World War II is the US 49th Fighter Group. From a modest start at Selfridge Field, Michigan, in the end of 1940, it was transferred to Australia at the start of 1942 and began operations against the Japanese. By war's end, the 49th Fighter Group's pilots had destroyed 668 enemy aircraft, becoming the highest scoring US fighter group in the Pacific.

A fighter aircraft is designed to hunt and destroy enemy aircraft in the air. The fighter aircraft evolved during World War I when scout planes were armed with guns and then started to engage each other in aerial battles. It was however during World War II that air power grew in importance to the degree that it became very difficult, if not impossible, to win battles if you did not also dominate the third dimension of the battlefield, the air. This exhibit gives you the history of the main Allied countries struggle to dominate the air during World War II, by telling you the story of the main weapon that was used to reach that goal, the fighter aircraft.

Allied fighter aircraft operations 1939-1945

THE MAIN ALLIED COUNTRIES STRUGGLE TO DOMINATE
THE THIRD DIMENSION OF THE BATTLEFIELD; THE AIR

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Title page | 1 |
| Plan of exhibit | 1 |
| 1. At the outbreak of the war, the fighter units are still being built up ... | 10 |
| a. ... in the worldwide British Commonwealth. | 3 |
| b. ... in the military focused Soviet Union. | 4 |
| c. ... in the industrialized United States. | 3 |
| 2. ... and in the beginning of the war, the fighter aircraft and tactics are tested in combat ... | 16 |
| a. ... during the retreat and evacuation in France. | 4 |
| b. ... at the famous victory in the battle of Britain. | 9 |
| c. ... with better protection of British airspace at night. | 3 |
| 3. ... however when the war becomes a global war, serious shortcomings occur ... | 14 |
| a. ... over the important Mediterranean supply routes. | 2 |
| b. ... after the German invasion of the Soviet Union. | 6 |
| c. ... following the surprise attack on Pearl Harbor. | 3 |
| d. ... in the air war over occupied Western Europe. | 3 |
| 4. ... but later in the war, the fighter units play a major part in the victories ... | 20 |
| a. ... during the naval actions in the vast Pacific Ocean. | 5 |
| b. ... from North Africa and up through the Italian mainland. | 4 |
| c. ... in the large decisive battles on the Eastern front. | 6 |
| d. ... with improved air cover for the vital Atlantic sea lanes. | 2 |
| e. ... in the daylight bomber campaign high over Germany. | 3 |
| 5. ... and in the end of the war, air supremacy has finally been reached ... | 18 |
| a. ... at the Anglo-American invasion of occupied France. | 3 |
| b. ... in the big Soviet summer offensive in Belorussia. | 3 |
| c. ... with the Japanese retreat towards their home islands. | 5 |
| d. ... when the last desperate German resistance is broken. | 4 |
| e. ... during the final months before the Japanese surrender. | 3 |
| Pages in total | 80 |

1. At the outbreak of the war, the fighter units are still being built up ...

a. ... in the worldwide British Commonwealth.

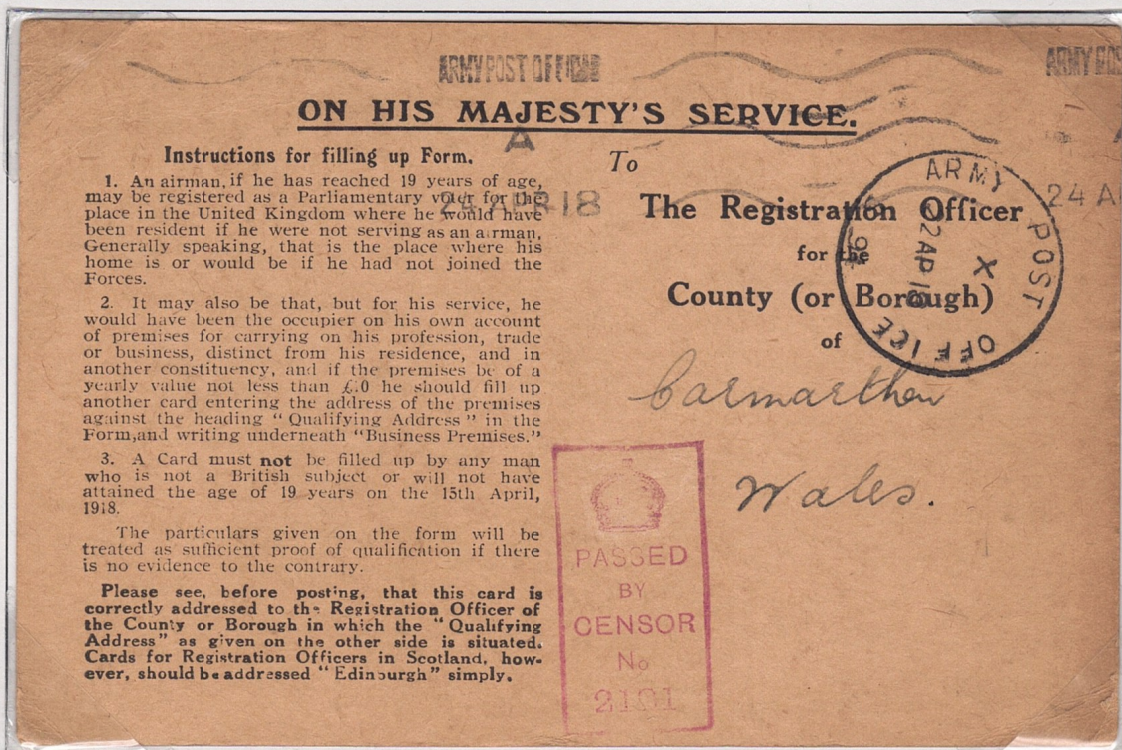
The most numerous fighter in Great Britain is the Hawker Hurricane



The Hawker Hurricane is the most important fighter ...



... in the Royal Air Force in September 1939 with armament consisting of, for its time, the large number of eight wing mounted machine guns.



A very early postal item from the RAF, a censored Air Force voting registration postal card p/m 22/4 1918, only about 3 weeks after its formation. Signed on the reverse "Thomas Llewelyn, 3rd air mech, RAF 57 squadron, a WW1 Western front fighter- and later bomber-reconnaissance unit."

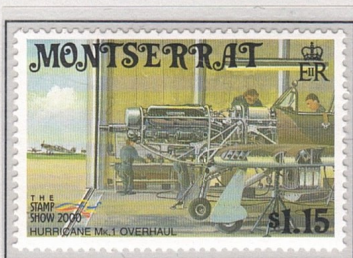


Perforation shift and defective print

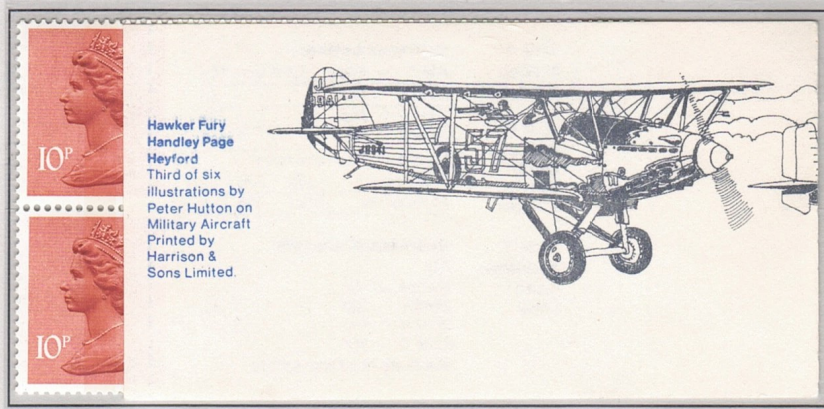


About 500 Hurricanes are flying with the RAF Fighter Command led by Hugh Dowding.

The Hurricane is the first monoplane fighter in the RAF since its formation in April 1918 by merging the Royal Flying Corps and the Royal Naval Air Service.



The 1 030 hp Rolls Royce Merlin engine provides a top speed of 550 km/h.



Hawker Hart incorrectly identified as Hawker Fury.

The basic design of the Hurricane is largely based on Hawkers earlier wooden/metal biplanes, many still in use in the British Commonwealth.

1. At the outbreak of the war, the fighter units are still being built up ...

a. ... in the worldwide British Commonwealth.

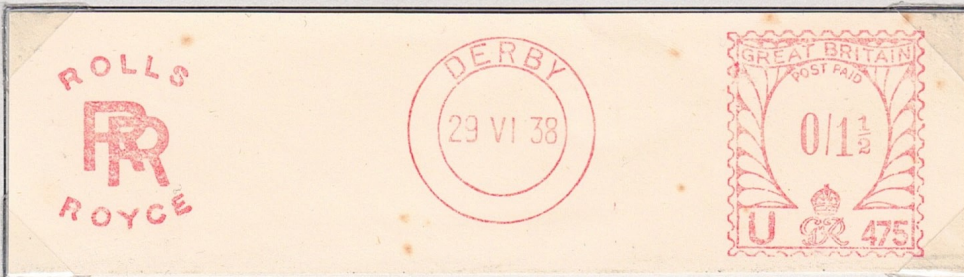
The best British fighter is the Supermarine Spitfire



The most modern RAF fighter available is the Supermarine Spitfire, a design by Reginald Mitchell that has still not been built in large numbers.



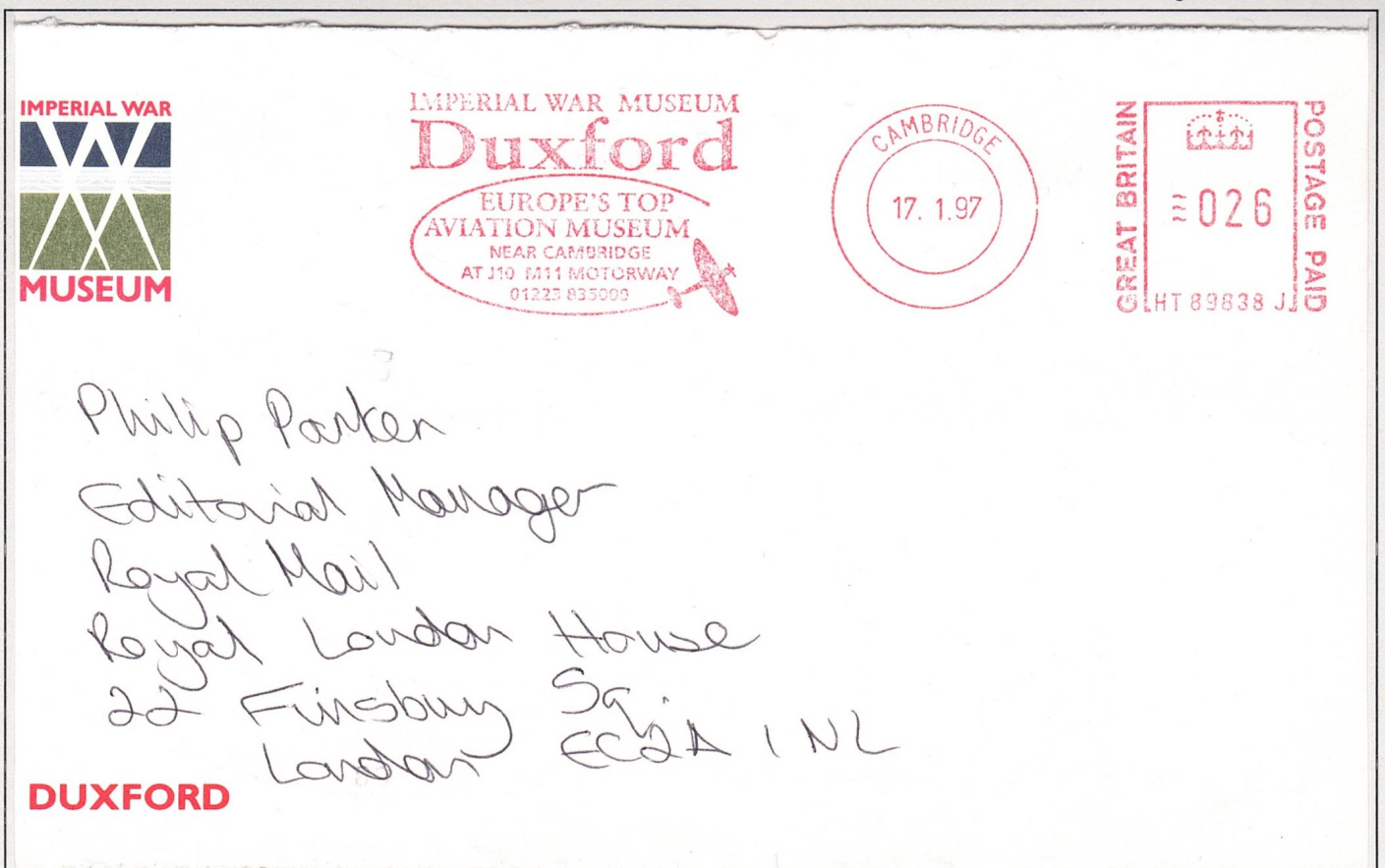
The agile Spitfire is of all metal construction.



Just like the Hurricane it is powered by the Rolls Royce built Merlin engine ...



... and carries the similar eight machine gun armament.

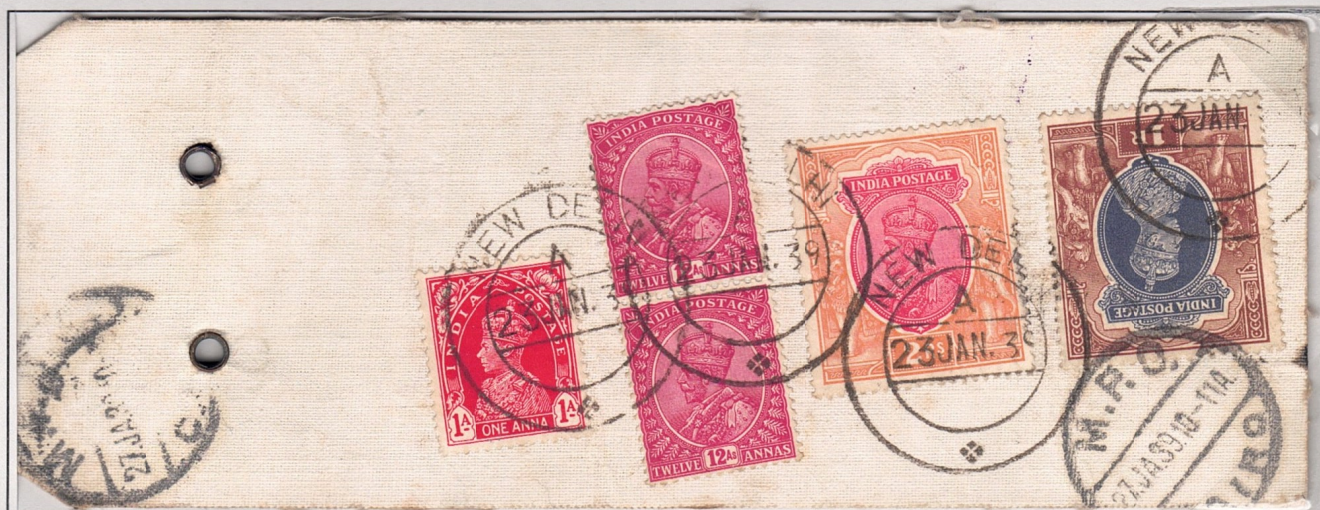


The elliptical wing makes the Spitfire easy to identify even from a distance and also gives it very good flying characteristics.

1. At the outbreak of the war, the fighter units are still being built up ...

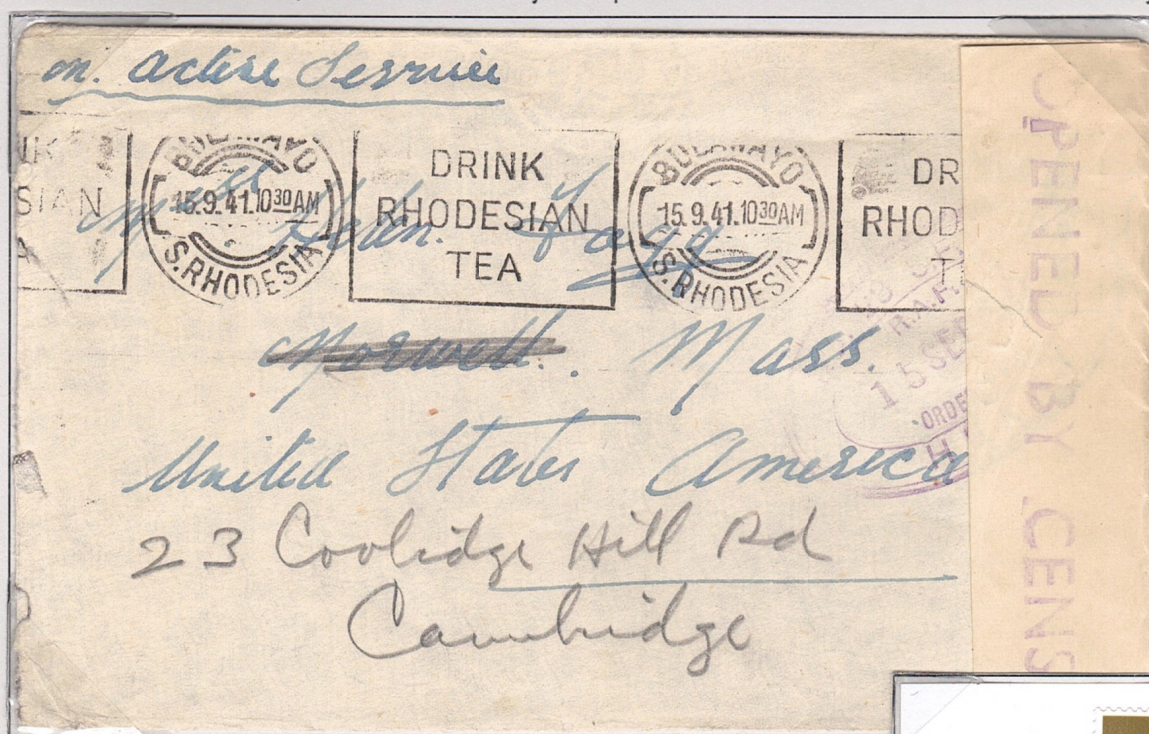
a. ... in the worldwide British Commonwealth.

The number of British pilots is rapidly increasing



Military Post Office Cairo arrival postmark (in use 26/4 1937-29/9 1939) on a registered parcel tag sent from RAF HQ India 23/1 1939 to RAF HQ Middle East. New Delhi registered label and addresses on reverse.

With the outbreak of war, the demand for many more pilots at the RAF bases worldwide becomes really urgent and ...



Return address Sgt Praddock, 36386, 23 S.F.T.S.,
Heary, Bulawayo, Southern Rhodesia and arrival
postmark Norwell, Mass. 28/10 1941 on reverse.

Free mail letter with censor label from the 23 Service Flying Training School, Southern Rhodesia, sent to Norwell, Massachusetts, redirected to Cambridge.

... Southern Rhodesia becomes a base for many new military flying schools.



Canada
is another
country heavily
involved in the
air training
programme ...

... and the
number of
pilots in
the RAF
is quickly
increasing.



1. At the outbreak of the war, the fighter units are still being built up ...

b. ... in the military focused Soviet Union.

Aviation is highlighted in Soviet propaganda



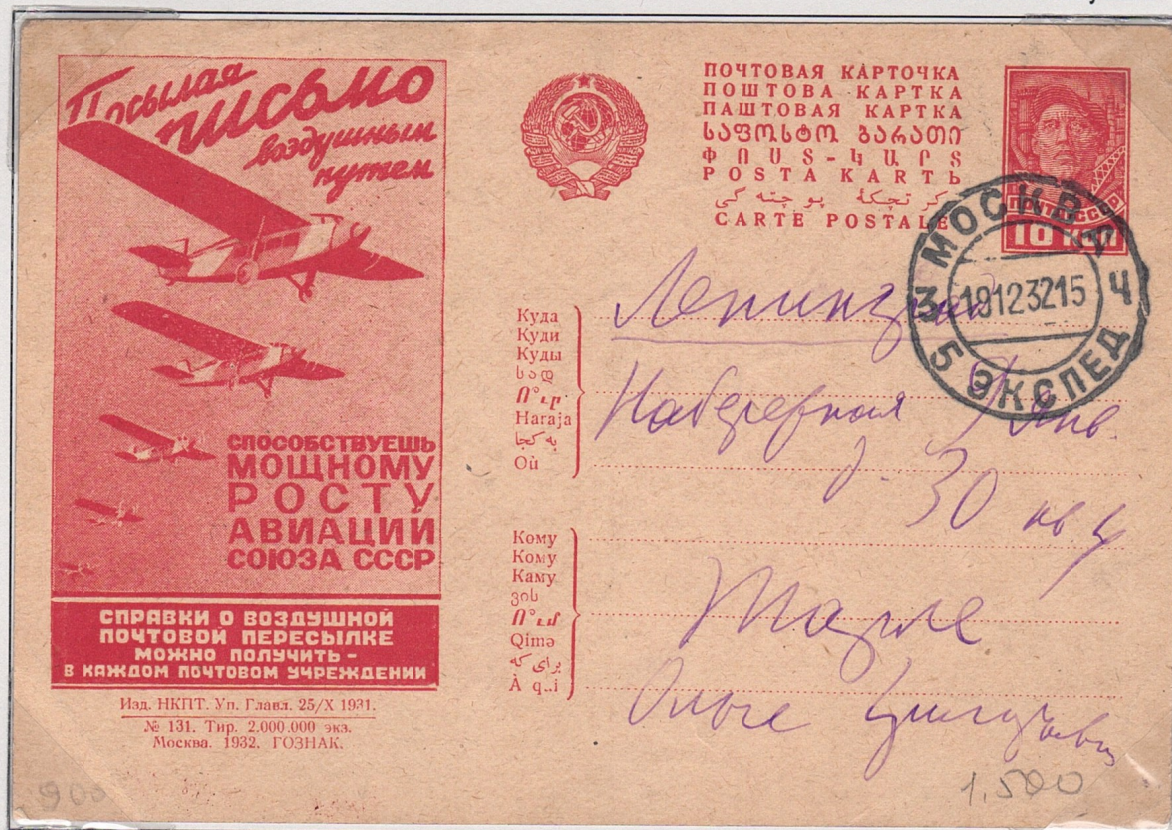
Flag shift



Record breaking flights in the late 1930's are heavily used in Soviet propaganda ...



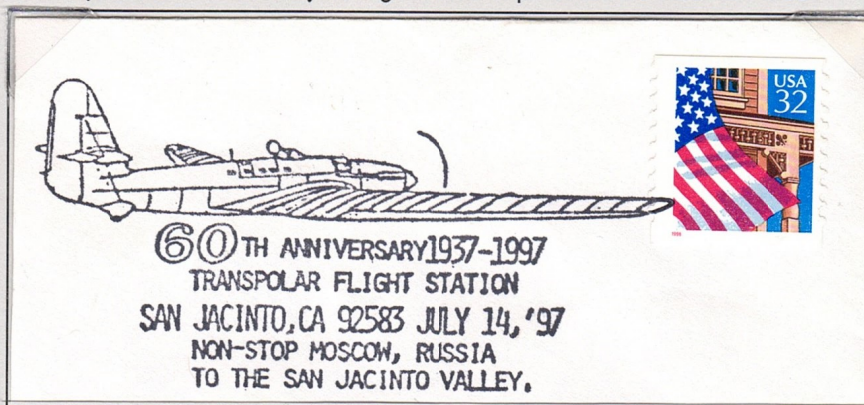
... and the aviators involved like Valery Chkalov become icons for the Soviet youth.



The many young men and also women inspired by the propaganda are trained to obtain a civilian pilot's licence and at the same time provide a numerically strong reserve of pilots for the Red Air Force.



The Soviet North Pole flights are ...



... not only used to impress the Soviet people, they are also a way for the Soviet Union to show the World the progression of the Communist state.

1. At the outbreak of the war, the fighter units are still being built up ...

b. ... in the military focused Soviet Union.

Military production is top priority for communist Russia



The aim for Soviet aircraft designers like Seymour Lavochkin is to provide the World's largest army, the Red Army, with fighter aircraft in huge quantities.

The aircraft of the Red Army Air Force are built mainly by wood to save on the scarce raw materials like aluminium and to make them easy to mass produce.

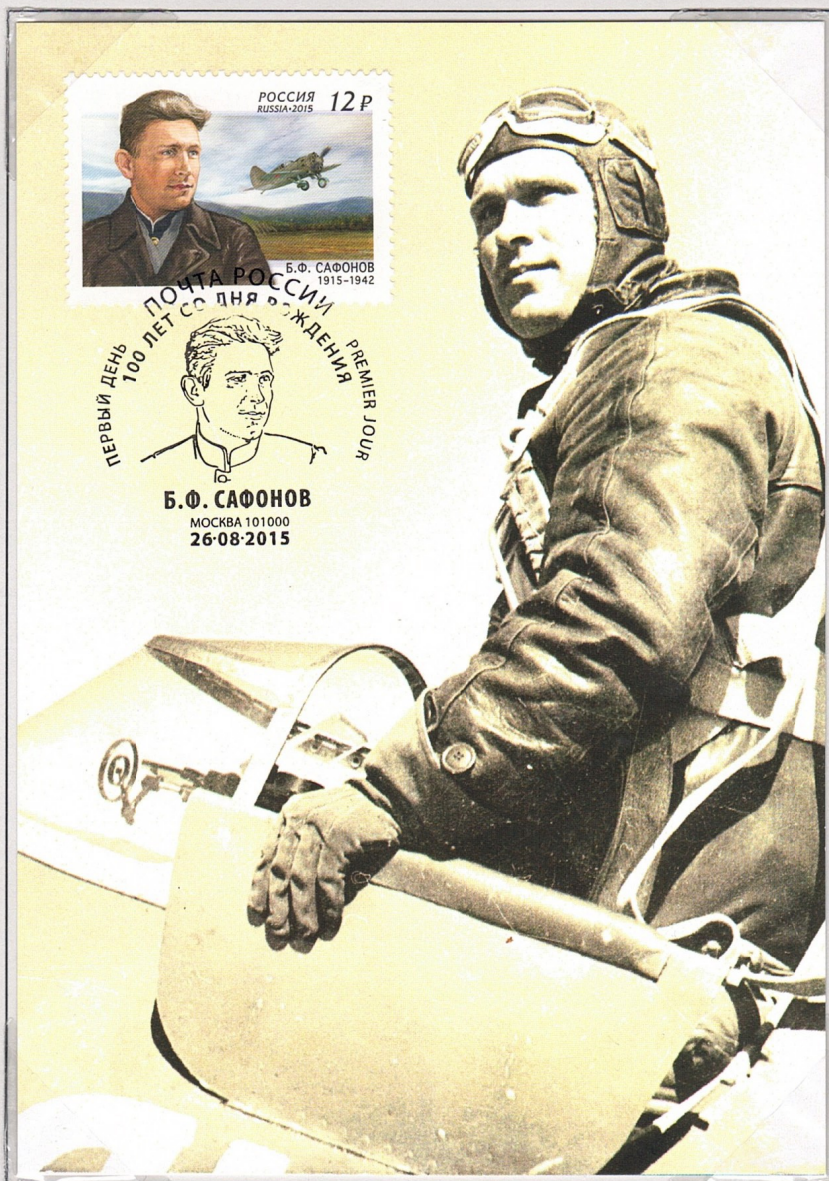


They are built to survive in harsh climate, operating from airfields without hangars and very rudimentary runways.

1. At the outbreak of the war, the fighter units are still being built up ...

b. ... in the military focused Soviet Union.

Soviet construction bureaus are working on new fighter prototypes



The end of the 1930's sees Soviet construction bureaus working on modern successors to the old fighter aircraft with open cockpits like ...



... the Polikarpov I-15 biplane with fixed landing gear and ...



... the Polikarpov I-16, both built in massive numbers but soon outdated.



The MiG design bureau is now started with the MiG-1, first in a long line of fighter aircraft.



Set-off



Double print



Alexander Yakovlev, the distinguished designer of trainer aircraft like the standard trainer for the Red Air Force, the Yakovlev UT-2, now also switches focus and becomes a successful designer of fighter aircraft.

1. At the outbreak of the war, the fighter units are still being built up ...

b. ... in the military focused Soviet Union.


Soviet aircraft manufacturers are provided with German research results

Stempelbild

WATENSTEDT 49
16 6 38
über
BRAUNSCHWEIG

Reichswerke Aktiengesellschaft
für Erzbergbau und Eisenhütten
„Hermann Göring“

045
Deutsche
Reichspost

Francotyp: *Sm. 22056* Post: *Watenstedt über Braunschweig*
Firma: *Reichswerke Aktiengesellschaft für Erzbergbau & Eisenhütten „Hermann Göring“*
Motor *A.E.G.* Nr. *144314* 220 Volt ~ *1/2 PS Reichswerke Braunschweig G.m.b.H.*
Übersetzung: Motor: / Masch.: Riemen
Geliefert: *16.6.38.*
23.10.40. 
STAHLWERKE BRAUNSCHWEIG
GMBH
Watenstedt 2 über Braunschweig
Spezialeinrichtungen:
Merkmale:
Sperrung auf *RM. 500.--*
angefangene Karte Nr.:
Nr.: Permutationsnummer *3581a*
rte Klischees: *1. fester Kl.*
Fabrik Stolzenberg, Berlin SW 68 3000. 3. 37.

Unique archive card of a franking machine from the archive of the Francotyp franking machine company. The Reichswerke AG für Erzbergbau und Eisenhütten „Hermann Göring“ was the first of a large group of companies owned by the German state and created to increase the production of iron, weapons and machines.

With the signing of the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact in August 1939 Germany became an unexpected ally to the Soviet Union. Secrets of the German rearmament programme, where Hermann Göring is a key figure both as commander of the Luftwaffe and as a strong promoter of the arms industry, is now shared with the Soviet Union.



German aviation research is presented to Soviet aviation design bureaus ...



... so they can use it in their latest aircraft projects.

1. At the outbreak of the war, the fighter units are still being built up ...

c. ... in the industrialized United States.

American aircraft production is rapidly rising



Meter slogan proof printed on manufacturers proof paper.



There is also a large demand for military trainer aircraft.

American aviation companies have good times in the end of the 1930's, like the Wright Aeronautical Corporation, who is a major engine manufacturer.



Punched vignette proof

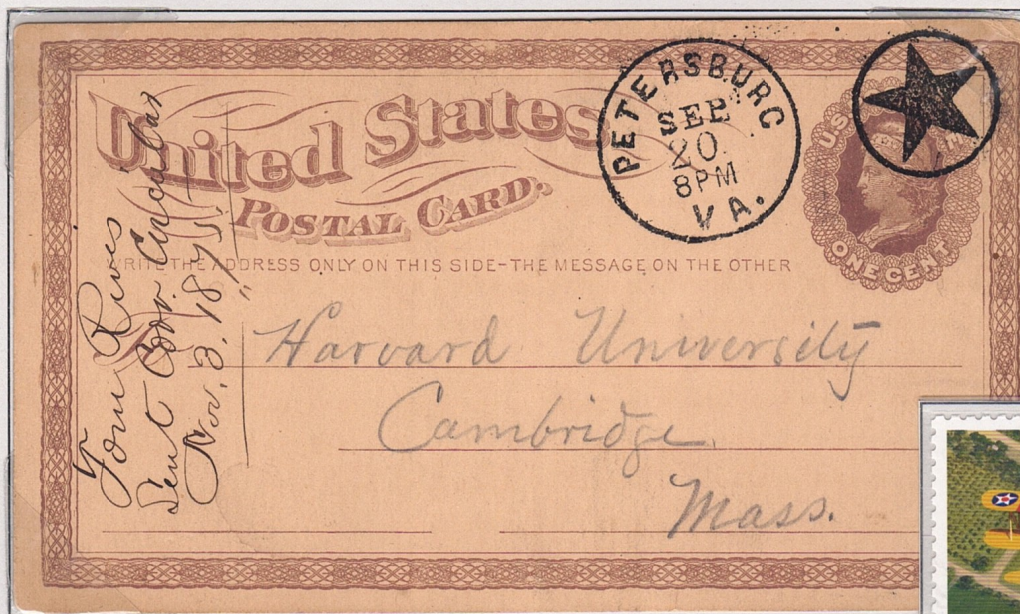


Punched proof



The Vultee Corporation at Vultee Field are also receiving export orders for their military designs.

The North American Aviation company starts to receive large orders for the AT-6 Texan trainer from air forces worldwide and eventually almost 15 500 Texans will be built.



Fancy star cancel 1875



Though a lot of US aircraft are exported, many remain in their manufacturing country painted with the national symbol, the five-pointed star in a ring, ...

... as America starts to build up its air power again.

1. At the outbreak of the war, the fighter units are still being built up ...

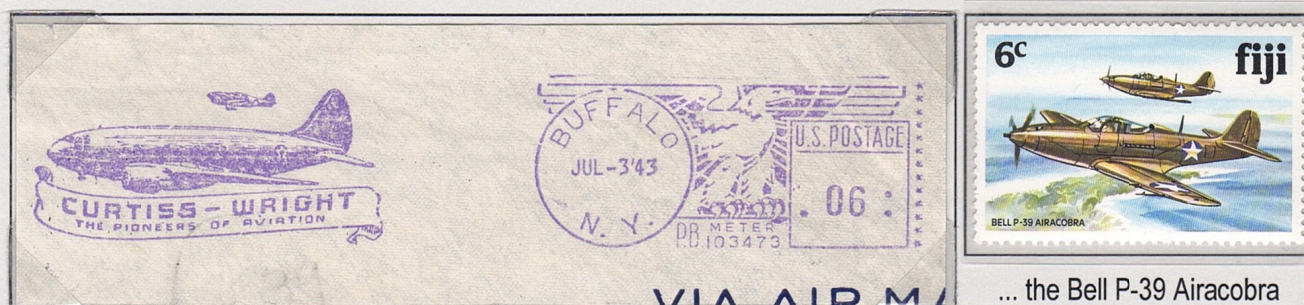
c. ... in the industrialized United States.

The US Army Air Corps is building up its fighter strength



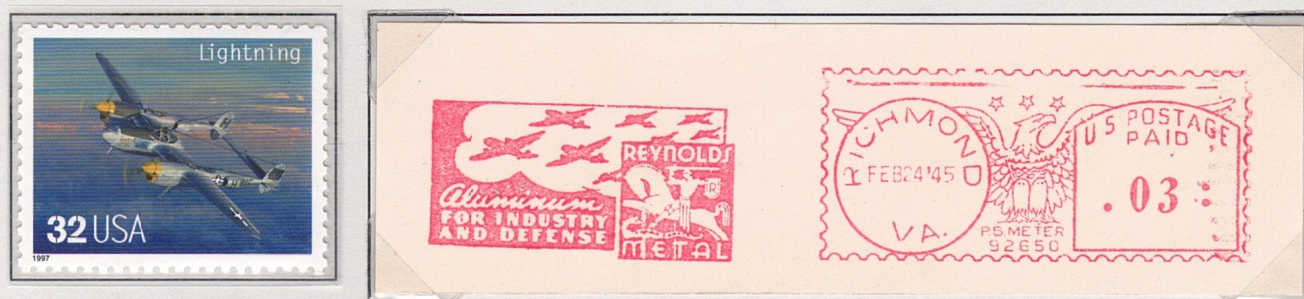
Eddie Rickenbacker stamp and h/s "Returned to sender Service temporarily suspended" on a 60 cent air mail rate letter to Kosovo in May 1999. NATO was then bombing Yugoslavia to force president Milošević to withdraw his troops from Kosovo and the letter was returned to the addressee with p/m "Moundsville 3/6 1999" on reverse.

During World War I many American pilots like famous fighter ace Eddie Rickenbacker were flying French planes but in 1939 the US Army Air Corps no longer have to depend on aircraft from foreign manufacturers.



The P-40 from the Curtiss Wright Corporation is among the new fighter aircraft ordered to equip the new American air bases that are being built, as well as ...

... the Bell P-39 Airacobra with the engine behind the pilot ...



... and the twin-engined Lockheed P-38 Lightning ...

... all of them modern looking all metal constructions.

1. At the outbreak of the war, the fighter units are still being built up ...

c. ... in the industrialized United States.

The Grumman F4F Wildcat becomes the main US Navy fighter

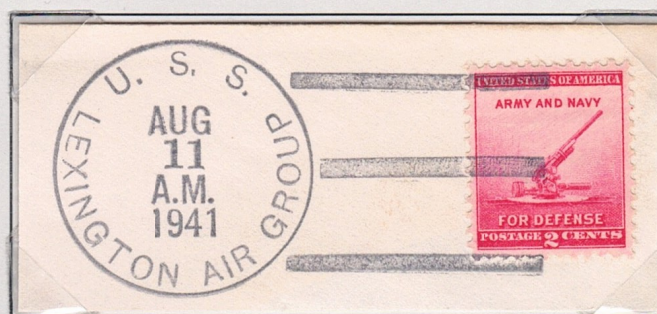


The Wildcat is the first mono-plane fighter in the US Navy.

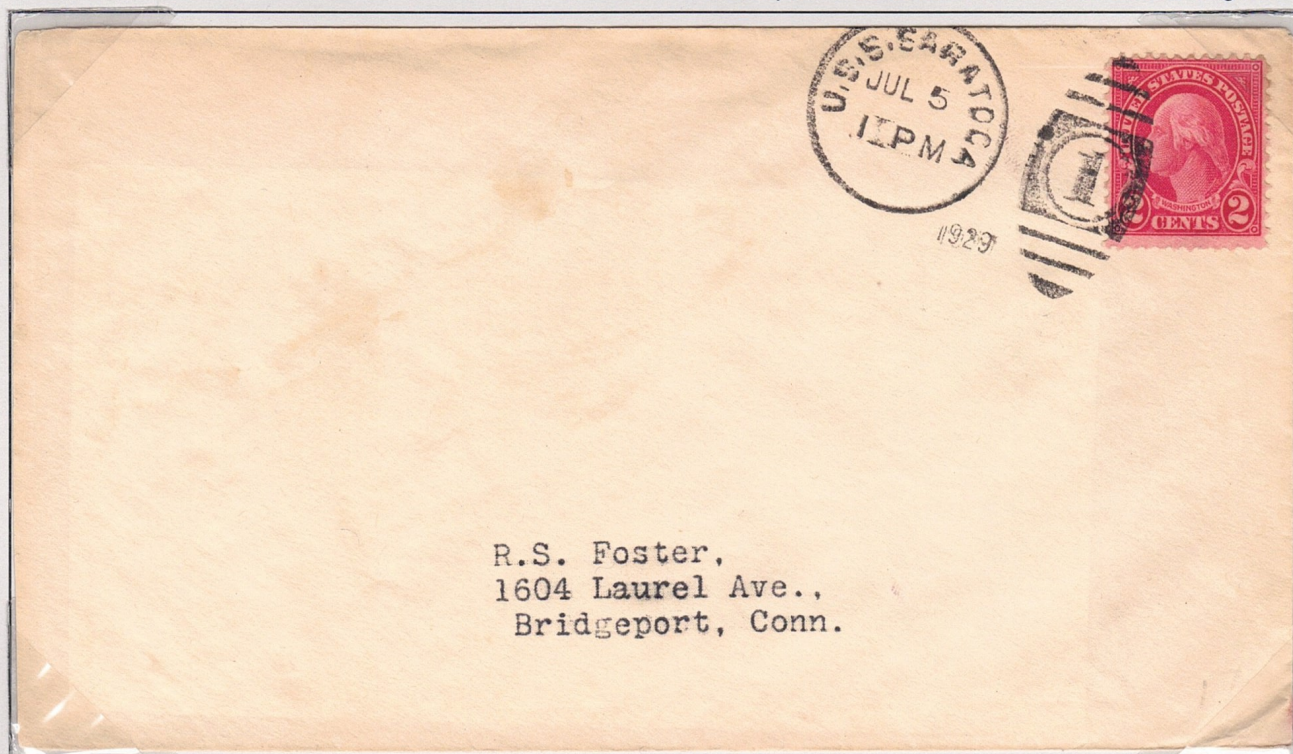
In 1939 the Grumman F4F Wildcat makes its first flight and very soon the US Navy is placing its first order on the type.



It will soon join the air groups of the new carriers being built ...



... to complement older carriers like the USS Lexington.



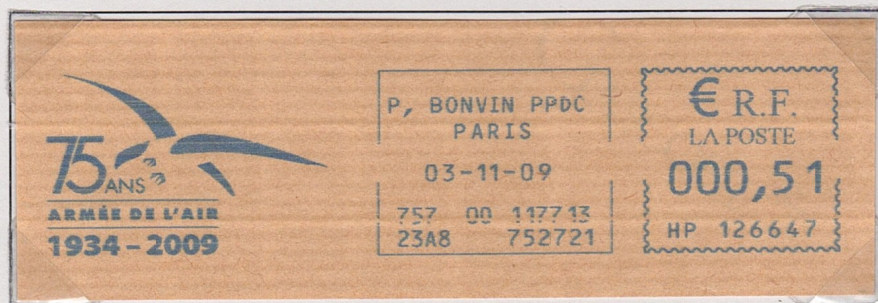
Error cancel USS Earatoga (in use 1929-31) instead of USS Saratoga on a 2 cent domestic surface mail rate letter. Rated "C" for scarce in the "Catalog of United States Naval Postmarks" handbook (1997) edited by David A. Kent.

Another older carrier soon equipped with Wildcats is the USS Saratoga, rebuilt from a battle cruiser hull 1922-25.

2. ... and in the beginning of the war, the fighter aircraft and tactics are tested in combat ...

a. ... during the retreat and evacuation in France.

British fighter tactics are inferior to German fighter tactics



When Hitler invades France in May 1940 pilots of the large but dated French Armée de l'Air meet the Luftwaffe in air battles trying to halt their advance ...

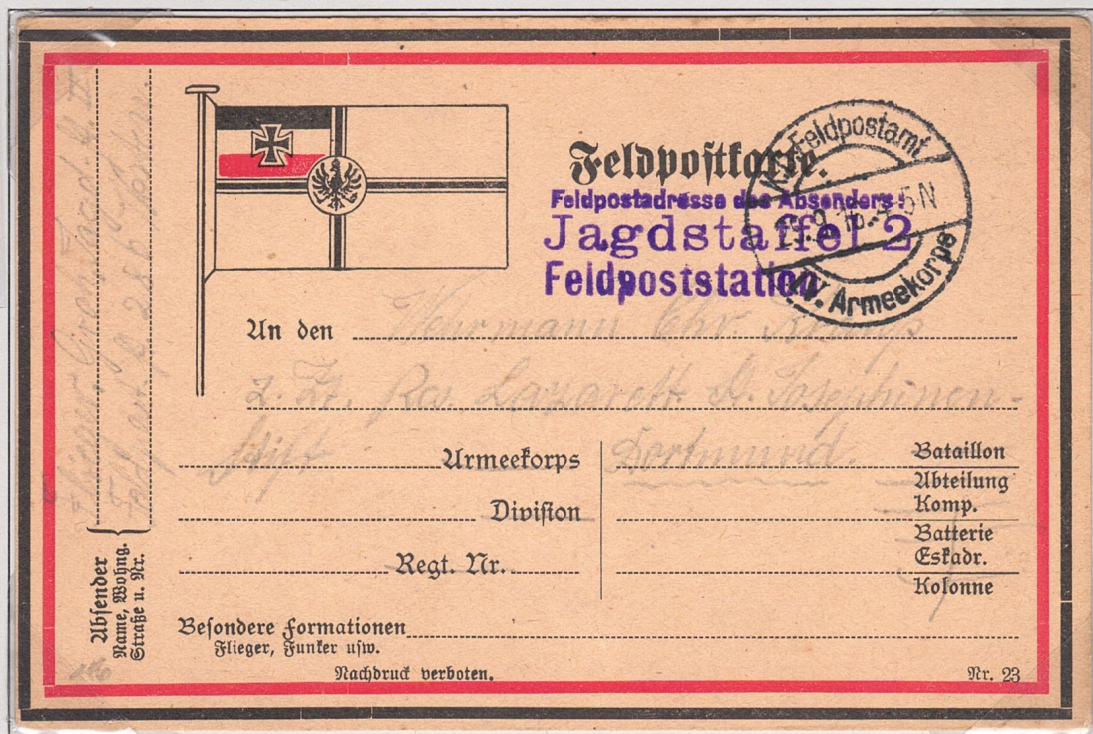


... together with British Hurricane pilots that fly into combat in tactically inferior V-formations.



Air combat tactics were developed by pilots of WW I and above all by ...

Scarce early free mail from Jagdstaffel 2 Boecke. P/m 29/9 1916, only 7 weeks after its formation as one of the first fighter units in the world.



... Oswald Boelcke, the creator of the German fighter units of WW1, commander of Jagdstaffel 2 and also named the "Father of air fighting tactics". His rules for air combat, the Dicta Boelcke, are fundamental reading for every fighter pilot.



In the Condor Legion during the Spanish civil war German pilots have taken the legacy of Boelcke a step further with the "finger four" formation, based on two pairs of aircraft, each with a flight leader who is covered by his wingman.



In air combat between fighters this formation is far superior to the tight British formations.

2. ... and in the beginning of the war, the fighter aircraft and tactics are tested in combat ...

a. ... during the retreat and evacuation in France.

The Messerschmitt Bf 109 is superior to the Hawker Hurricane



The Messerschmitt Bf 109 is equipped with a 1 200 hp Daimler Benz engine with direct fuel injection, allowing negative-g manoeuvres and tight dives in air battles



... with the larger and slower Hurricanes, that are also ...



... too few as Hugh Dowding keeps most of them in the U.K..



Only three items are recorded of the RAF censor h/s type R26 (21/2-12/3 1940) in the "Censorship in the RAF" handbook (2015) by Colley, Garrard and Muchall. Here is a fourth item, p/m as late as 23/3 1940. Type R26 was used at Perpignan in southern France where Fairey Battle bomber crews were sent to practice night flying training during the winter of 1939-1940.

The Hurricanes are not able to stop the German air offensive and also fail to protect the Fairey Battle bombers attacking the German advance. They are forced to operate at night with very poor results.

2. ... and in the beginning of the war, the fighter aircraft and tactics are tested in combat ...

a. ... during the retreat and evacuation in France.

The Supermarine Spitfire is almost equal to the Messerschmitt Bf 109



The Supermarine Spitfire joins the Hawker Hurricane in larger numbers ...



... and prove be very similar in speed and flying performance to the Messerschmitt fighter ...



... when they meet in combat over the Dunkirk beaches.



"Crime novels" stamp with "bullet holes" Sweden 2010

... as their shells explode when they hit the target.

Many Messerschmitt fighters however have the advantage of being armed with Ikaria automatic cannons and even better ones are being developed by the Mauser company. They have superior firepower in the air ...



The machine guns from Rheinmetall-Borsig that complement the automatic cannons have just as the British machine guns shorter range and to rectify this British engineers try to ...

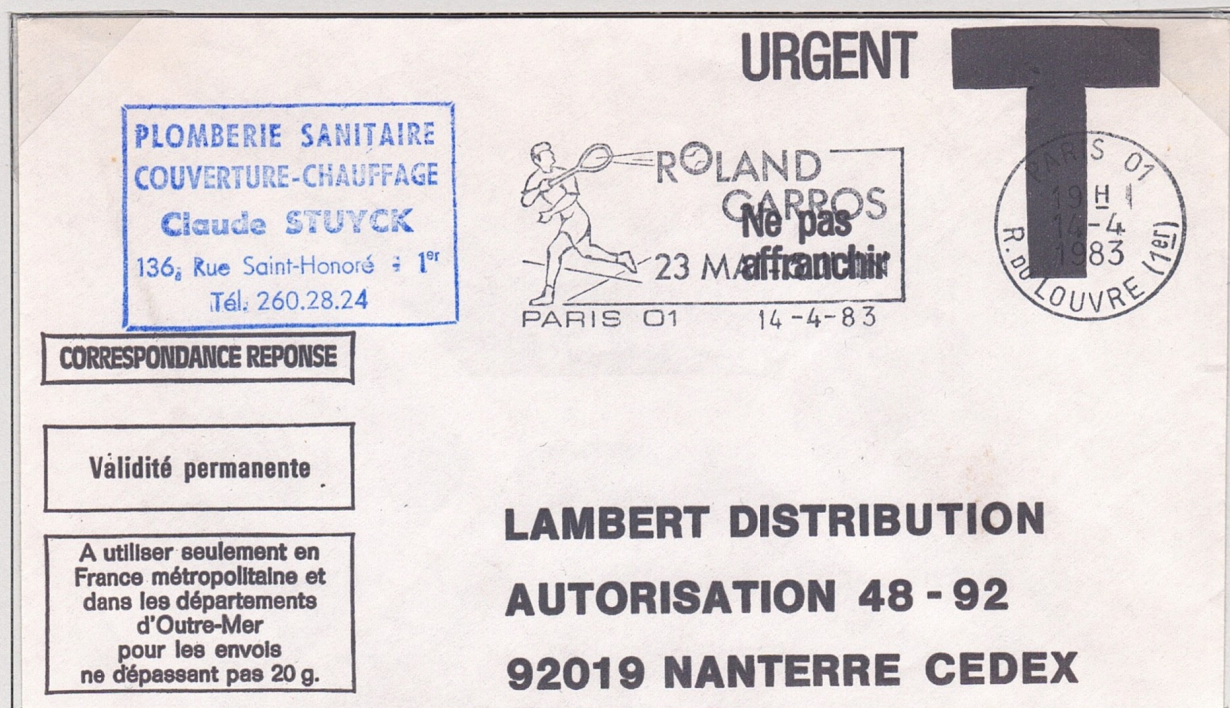


... mount automatic cannons in the wings of the Spitfire.

2. ... and in the beginning of the war, the fighter aircraft and tactics are tested in combat ...

a. ... during the retreat and evacuation in France.

The fighter aces rise to fame in the aerial battles



Free reply envelope p/m Roland Garros, the tennis tournament named in honour of the French pioneer pilot.

In April 1915 French pilot Roland Garros downed his first German aircraft with a machine gun firing through the propeller hub and very soon after air battles between opposing fighters, dogfights, started to take place where fighter aces with five or more downed enemies quickly became war heroes and rose to public fame.

The sender of the postcard, Carl Holler, was also a folk singer known as Niels Sörensen. He downed at least two Allied aircraft and wrote a book about his experiences.



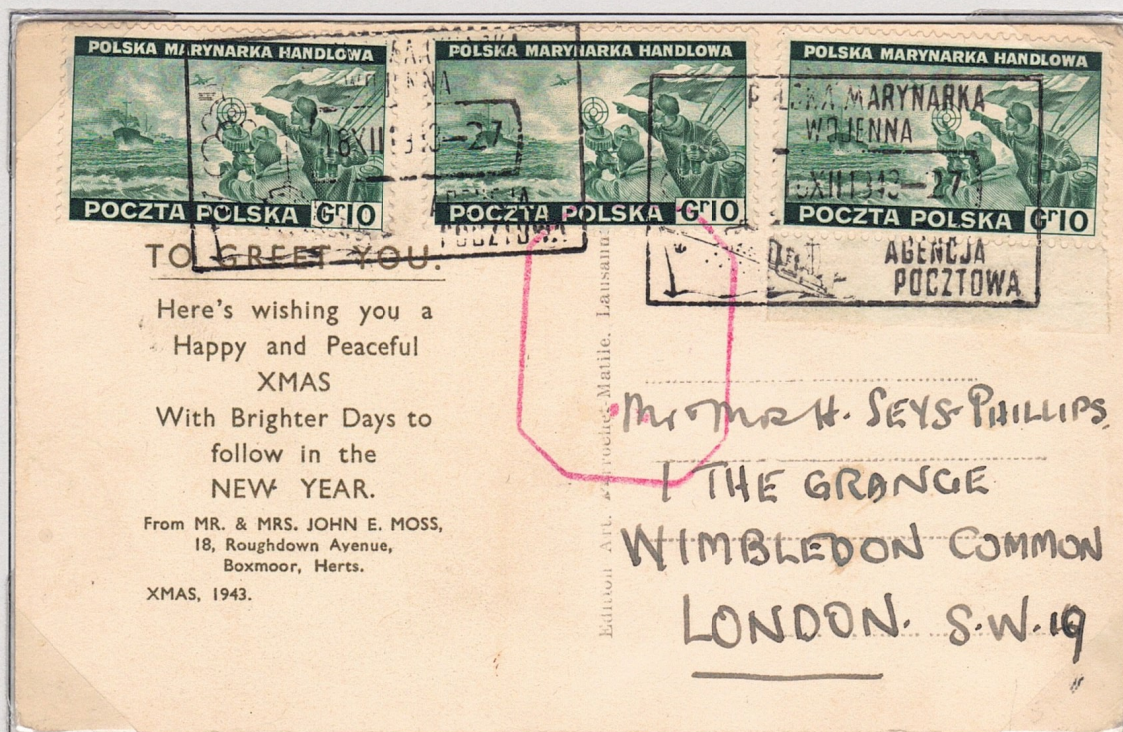
Free mail from Jagdstaffel 6 on 19/6 1917, just a few days before it was combined with three similar units to create the Jagdgeschwader 1, or "Richthofen's Flying Circus", the most famous fighter unit of all time.

Manfred von Richthofen or the "Red Baron" is the most famous ace and the unit that in WW II bears his name, the Jagdgeschwader 2 "Richthofen", is very successful over France in the summer of 1940. After the German victory and evacuation of the British forces Jagdgeschwader 2 can count in 11 fighter aces among their pilots.

2. ... and in the beginning of the war, the fighter aircraft and tactics are tested in combat ...

b. ... at the famous victory in the battle of Britain.

The radar chain proves its great value for the British air defence



Merchant navy stamps and p/m from the free Polish government in exile maritime postal agency 27, the submarine Wilk, (p/m in use 15/12 1941-11/7 1945) and red civil censor h/s on a 30 groszy rate postcard sent 18/12 1943.

After the fall of France the Luftwaffe start to attack the merchant navy convoys in the English channel. The German strategy is to bring the RAF into battle and neutralise the British fighter defence.



Female plotters keep track of enemy aircraft ...



... in operation rooms at the fighter squadrons that get the main information from ...



...the radar chain along the British coastline.



Thanks to the radar the British fighters can take off quickly ...



... and engage the enemy from above and out of ...

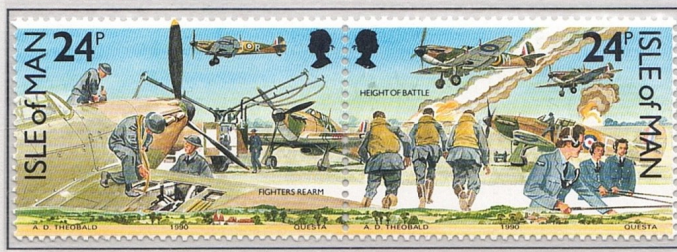


... the sun to blind their opponents.

2. ... and in the beginning of the war, the fighter aircraft and tactics are tested in combat ...

b. ... at the famous victory in the battle of Britain.

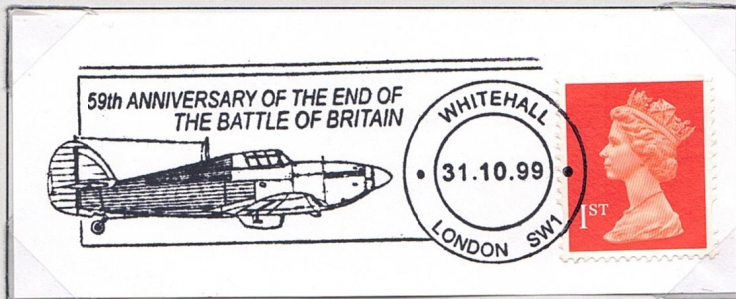
The attacks on British airfields are difficult to handle for the RAF



In August 1940 British airfields are under heavy attack ...



... from Luftwaffe bombers.



Although Hurricane fighters are able to destroy many aircraft ...



"Stuka retouch" variety

... or damage them but ...



... many airfields in the southwest of England are seriously damaged by repeated enemy attacks.



25th Anniversary of Battle of Britain stamp with machine cancellation 11 September 1965, two days before the official date of issue for these stamps on a 4 d. domestic surface mail rate letter.

Pilot shortage also become a problem and inexperienced replacements are brought in from training units.

2. ... and in the beginning of the war, the fighter aircraft and tactics are tested in combat ...

b. ... at the famous victory in the battle of Britain.

The RAF can regain the initiative when London becomes Luftwaffe's main target



Blue doctor blade flaw



Blue colour shift



Black and grey colour shift



... the fighter squadrons better possibilities to strike back.

In September 1940 air battles rage over St Paul's Cathedral when the Luftwaffe switch target and start to attack London, reducing the pressure on British airfields and fighter bases and giving...



The rugged Hurricane fighters often attack the bombers ...



... leaving the faster Spitfires ...



"Damaged wing" variety ... to do real damage to the escort fighters.



The attacking Luftwaffe are losing almost twice as many aircraft as the defending Fighter Command.



British pilots now also adopt the German way of flying in pairs.



The Hurricanes are crucial for the British victory ...



... and a German effort to make their fighters carry bombs is not successful.

2. ... and in the beginning of the war, the fighter aircraft and tactics are tested in combat ...

b. ... at the famous victory in the battle of Britain.

German aircraft are not designed for a strategic bomber offensive



Most Luftwaffe aircraft are designed for close range army cooperation and though the Junkers Ju 87 Stuka is excellent for support of ground troops it is very vulnerable in air battles with British fighters.



The Messerschmitt Bf 109 is lacking fuel capacity for long escort missions ...



... which the British fighters take advantage of and ...



"Damaged tailplane" variety

... cause much damage to the bombers when their escort has left them.



German bombers like the slow Heinkel He 111, ...



... initially built by the Heinkel company disguised as an airliner, is too lightly armed and its bomb load is also too small to make it really effective.

2. ... and in the beginning of the war, the fighter aircraft and tactics are tested in combat ...

b. ... at the famous victory in the battle of Britain.

German fighters are limited by poor tactics



During the "Postkrieg" of the Cold War this 50 pf. international surface mail rate letter p/m Hannover 3 31/3 1969 addressed to the Soviet Union was returned by Soviet postal authorities. They did not accept the 20 pf. stamp since the Junkers Ju 52 airliner depicted on it had been used by Hitler on his propaganda tours.

The vulnerability of their bombers over England is a nasty surprise for the Luftwaffe. In the mid 1930's the Junkers Ju 52 had also been used as a bomber and thought good enough but now even the latest German bomber models have high loss rates.



Luftwaffe fighters are now ordered to fly close to the bombers for better protection but this also means ignoring many basic tactics for air combat already used by the "Red Baron" in WWI.



German fighters have to fly at slower speeds and loose initiative as ...

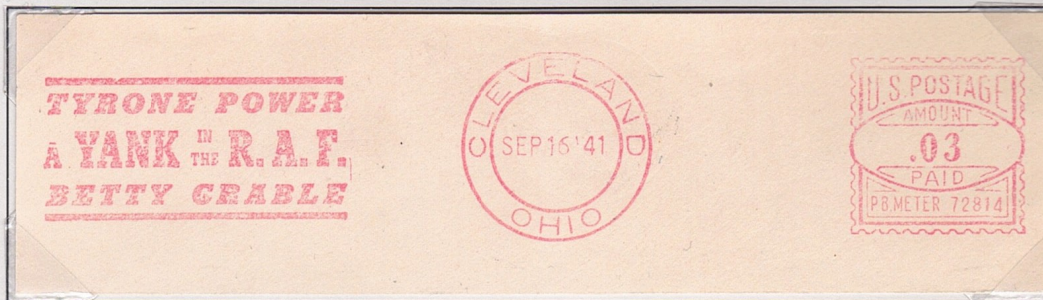


... bomber losses are reduced
but fighter losses rise instead.

2. ... and in the beginning of the war, the fighter aircraft and tactics are tested in combat ...

b. ... at the famous victory in the battle of Britain.

The RAF is strengthened by voluntary pilots



... experienced aces as the Czech pilot Alois Vasatko.

During the battle of Britain pilots from many countries join the RAF to help them defeat the Luftwaffe, among them are volunteer pilots from the United States and ...



Foreign squadrons like Czech 312 squadron and ...



... the Polish 302 "City of Poznan" squadron, with many battle hardened pilots, are now set up.



Red dot flaw

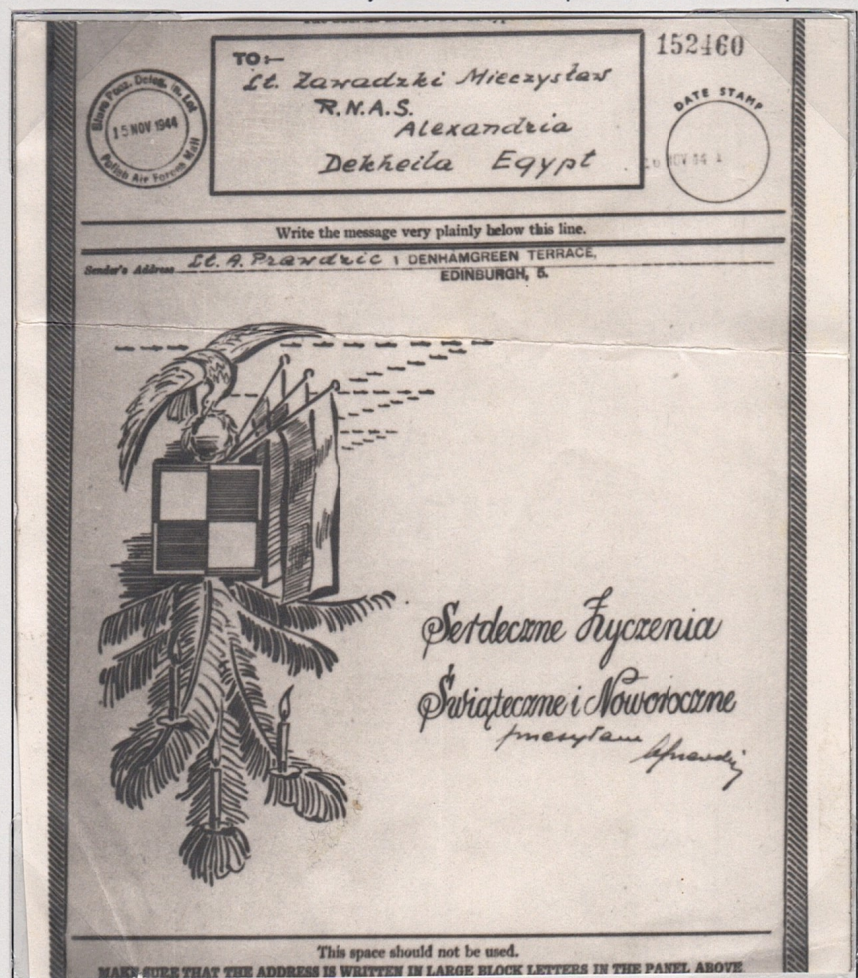


Black colour shift



Orange doctor blade flaw

They contribute a lot to the air defences during the battle and ...



... the most numerous and successful foreign squadrons are the Polish.

2. ... and in the beginning of the war, the fighter aircraft and tactics are tested in combat ...

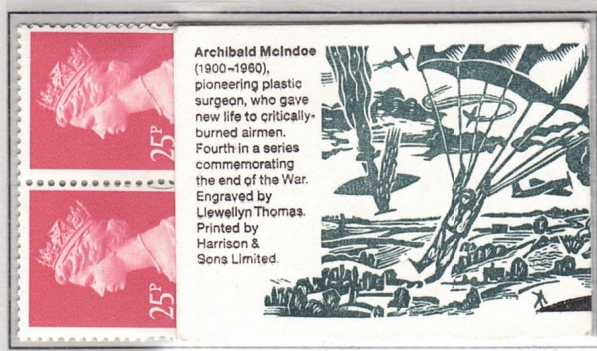
b. ... at the famous victory in the battle of Britain.

The experienced German aircrews are decimated over Britain



Free mail from the Luftwaffe hospital in Wildbad close to Stuttgart which had room for 150 patients at the start of the war and was later greatly expanded.

In Germany a number of hospitals are set up or expanded to be able to take care of all Luftwaffe airmen that are wounded during the battle of Britain.



RAF pilots can often parachute to safety over home territory ...

... and are soon ready for action again ...



... while many German airmen shot down in air battles become prisoners of war.



Print flaw

2. ... and in the beginning of the war, the fighter aircraft and tactics are tested in combat ...

b. ... at the famous victory in the battle of Britain.

The British fighter pilots become national heroes



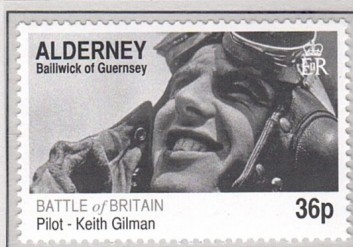
Gold colour shift



At the height of the battle of Britain Prime Minister Winston Churchill ...



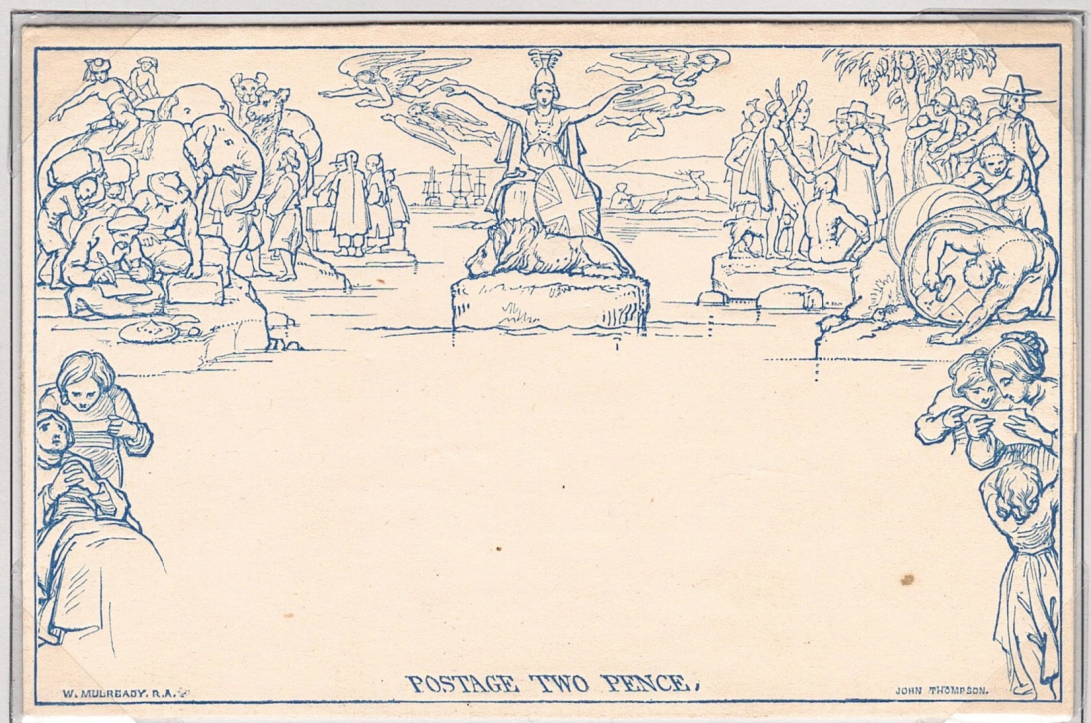
... gives a very famous speech in honour of "The Few" fighter pilots that are "turning the tide of the World War by their prowess and by their devotion"



"The Few" are given the credit they rightfully deserve and ...



... become the new heroes and icons of the nation ...



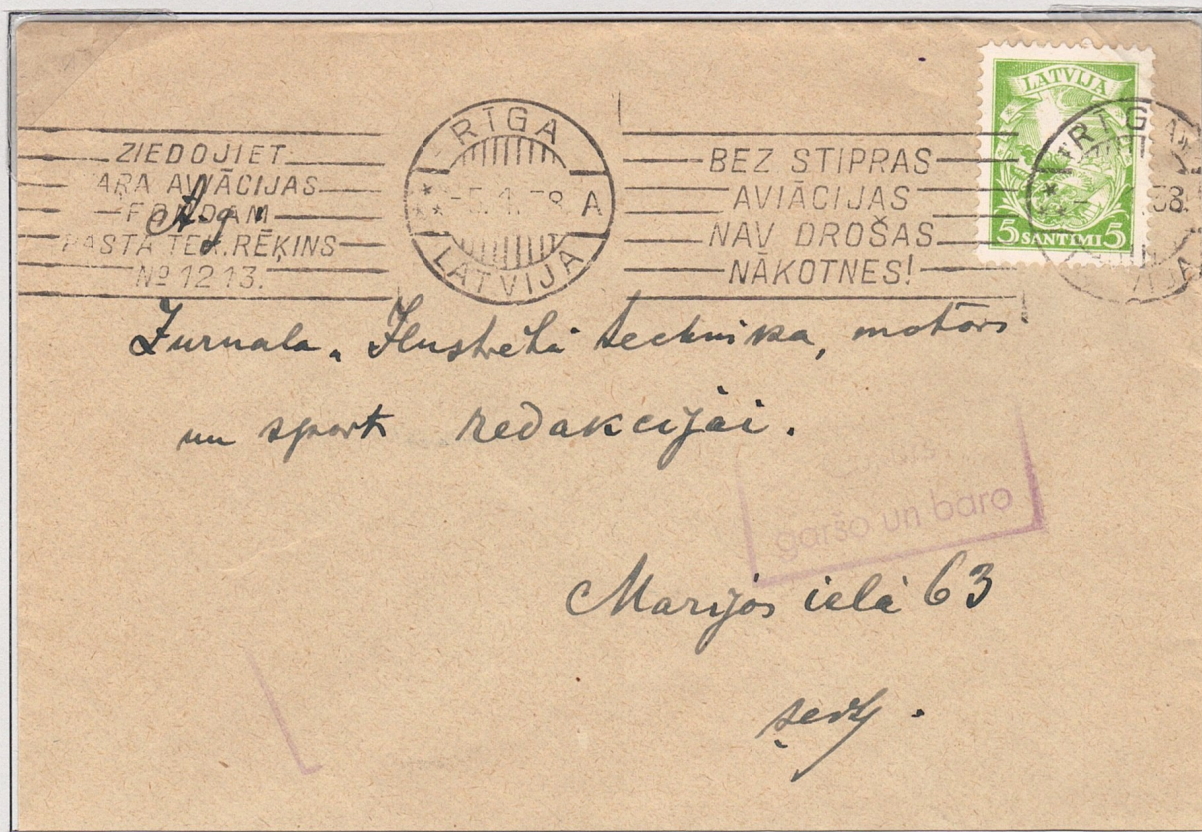
The 2 d. Mulready letter sheet was issued on 6 May 1840, almost exactly 100 years before the battle of Britain began. It shows Britannia in the middle surrounded by people from the British Empire. Royal Navy ships that had created this vast Empire are seen to the left of her.

... and the RAF is now looked upon with pride around Britain and the British Empire just like the powerful Royal Navy that had been admired by the British people for centuries.

2. ... and in the beginning of the war, the fighter aircraft and tactics are tested in combat ...

b. ... at the famous victory in the battle of Britain.

Public fundraising help to increase the British fighter production



"Donate to the Air Force Fund postal check account 12 13, Without a strong Air Force no safe future!"
Machine canc. type ī in Rīga (in use 13/2 1936-30/4 1938) on a 5 santimu local rate letter sent 5/1 1938.
Purple postal slogan cancel "Sugar is nourishing and good" in use 20/12 1937-8/1 1938.

Public fundraising for fighter purchases has earlier been done in for example Latvia a couple of years back.
During the battle of Britain however more money than ever before is raised by the public to buy aircraft.



All over the British Commonwealth money is raised to help the war effort by producing more and more weapons for the British armed forces in factories ...

... where mostly women work.



Imperforate proofs without gum

Stamps are also printed to raise money for the war effort like this issue from Suriname in August 1941.
The proceeds from these stamps benefit the Prince Bernard Fund that is buying Spitfires for the RAF.

2. ... and in the beginning of the war, the fighter aircraft and tactics are tested in combat ...

c. ... with better protection of British airspace at night.

The Luftwaffe start to attack under cover of darkness



Having failed in daylight the Luftwaffe begin to operate at night in a bombing campaign that will be known as the blitz.



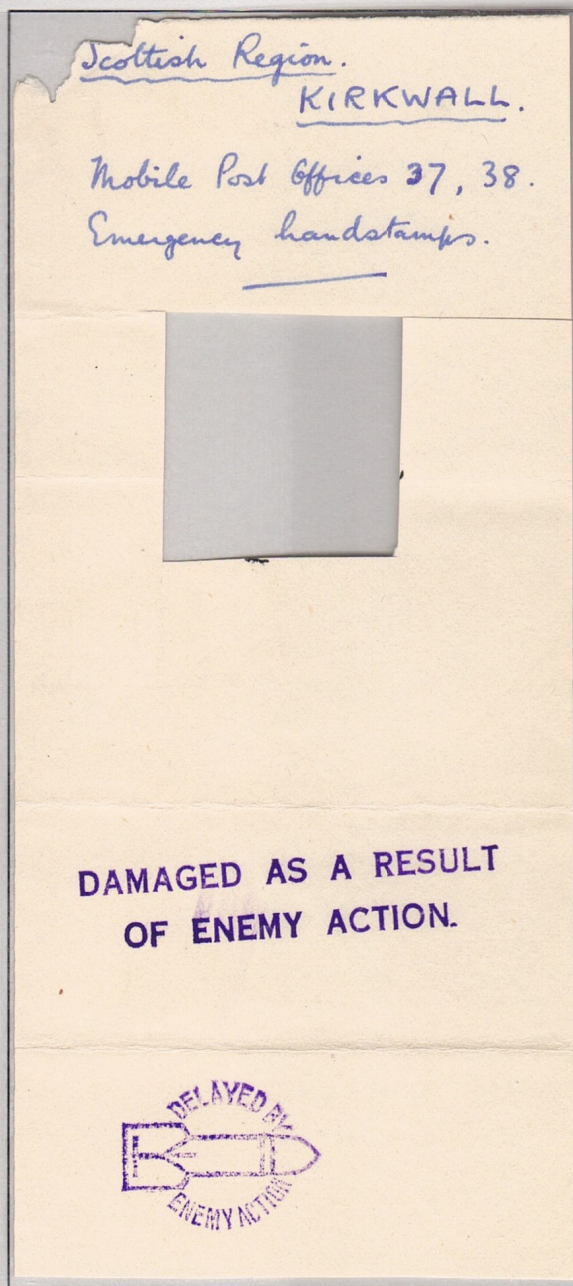
British fighters have at first big problems finding the German bombers at night and ...



... cities like Coventry are severely damaged by bombs.



The RAF as well as the civil defence refuse to surrender...



Proof strikes of rubber stamps issued 17 July 1941 to cities considered prime targets for blitz attacks. Most of these rubber stamps were never used and only very few of these proof strikes exist today.

Above proofs were for Kirkwall, Orkney Islands near Scapa Flow, the main British naval base in the war. "Damaged as a result of enemy action" was intended for use on parcels while "Delayed by enemy action" was intended for use on ordinary mail, only after a delay of more than 48 hours, as a consequence of damage caused by bombing, on domestic mail only.

... even if the British civil population and their daily life become seriously affected by enemy action.

2. ... and in the beginning of the war, the fighter aircraft and tactics are tested in combat ...

c. ... with better protection of British airspace at night.

Airborne radar is of great value for the British night fighter defence

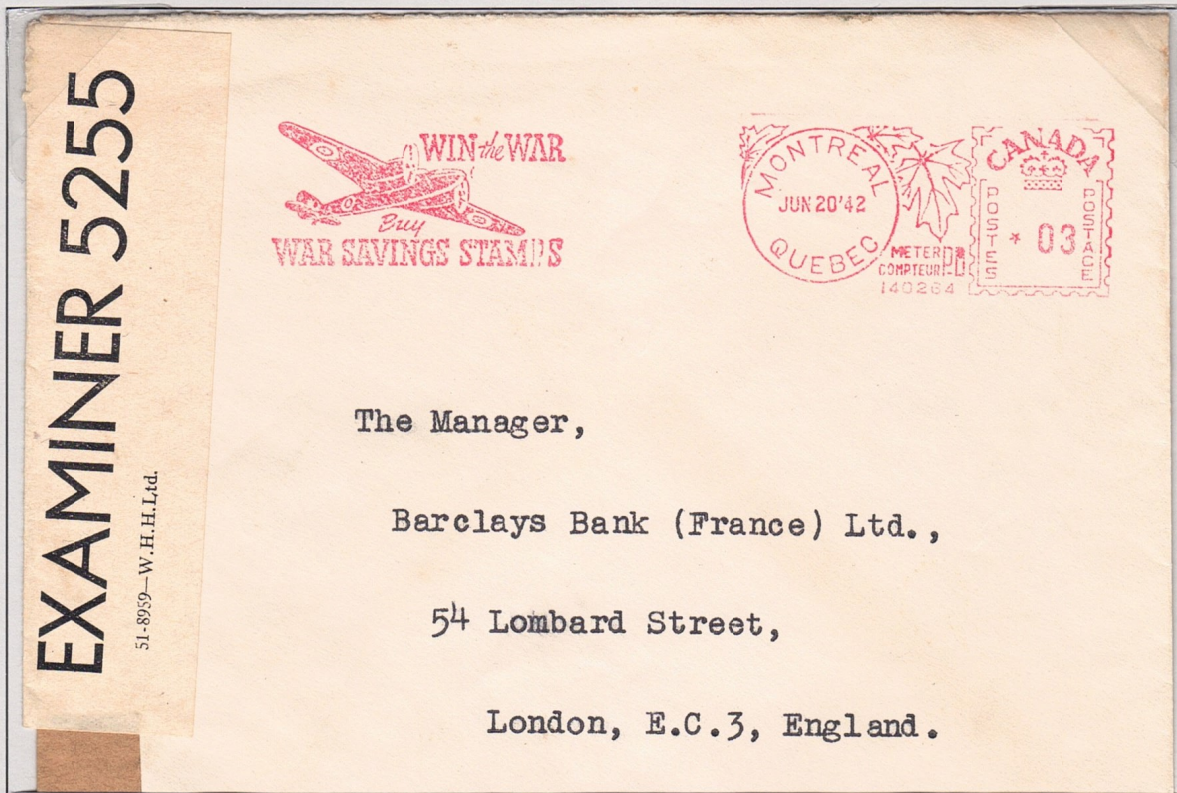


"Major scale break" flaw on upper right stamp

Despite some initial *flaws* with the new radar technique the key to find the enemy at night is to install it into ...



... big fighters like the Bristol Blenheim.



The Blenheim has earlier been deployed as a heavy fighter but has proven to be a failure in battle with the more manoeuvrable one engined fighters.



As a night fighter however it is a success.



Another heavy fighter outclassed by day but ...



... great as a night fighter is the Boulton Paul Defiant.

2. ... and in the beginning of the war, the fighter aircraft and tactics are tested in combat ...

c. ... with better protection of British airspace at night.

New purpose built night fighters are constructed

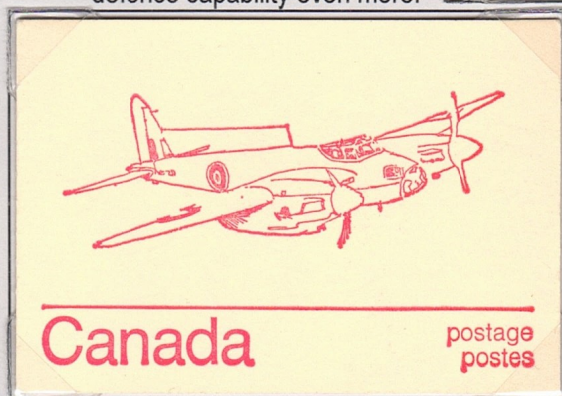
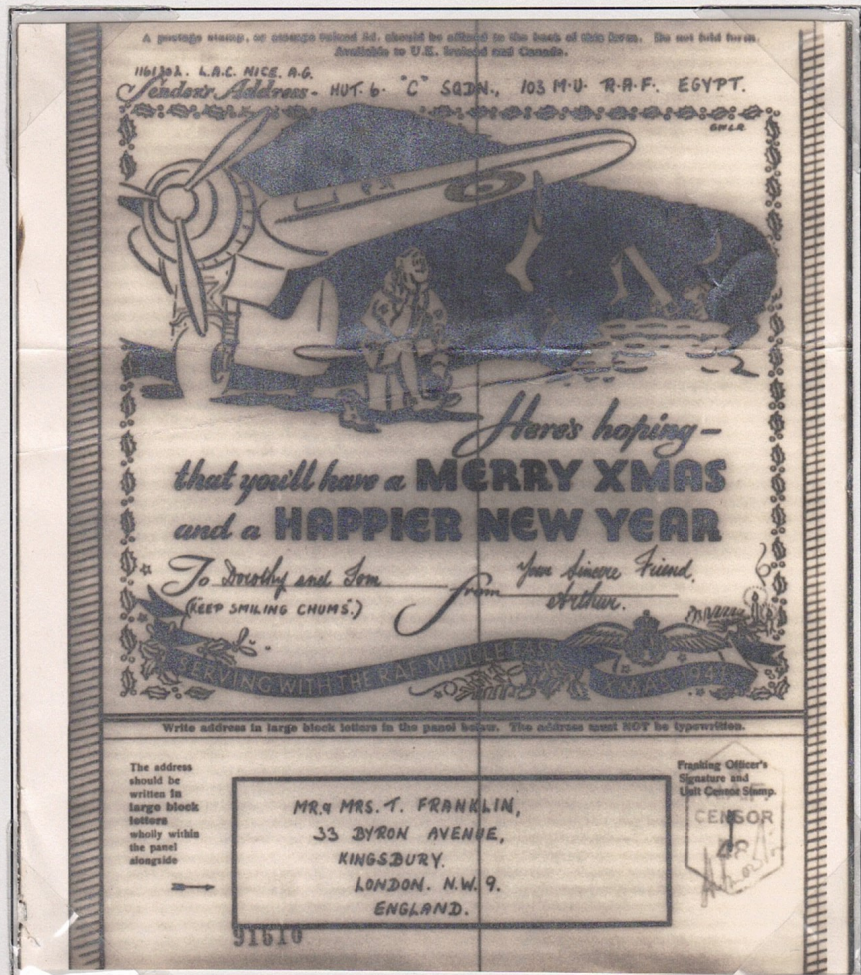


With new night fighters emerging such as the powerful Bristol Beaufighter that is quickly developed ...



... by using components from the Bristol Beaufort torpedo bomber ...

.. the RAF improves its night defence capability even more.



The de Havilland Mosquito, constructed mainly by wood ...



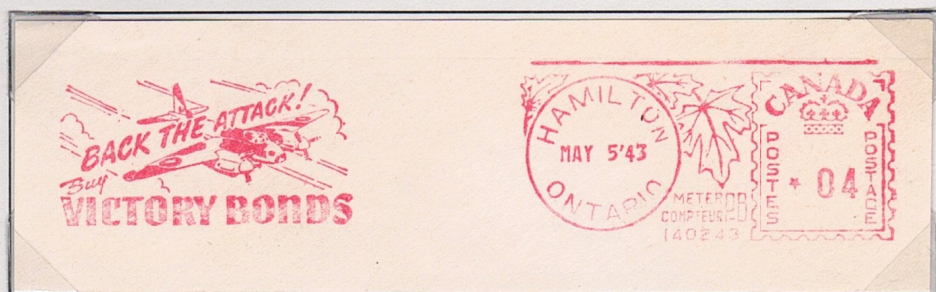
... and a great night fighter ...



... is flying as a prototype around this time and will become a truly multi role plane.



Apart from being a good high speed bomber ...



... the Mosquito will also perform very well as a day fighter and attack aircraft.

3. ... however when the war becomes a global war, serious shortcomings occur ...

a. ... over the important Mediterranean supply routes.

The Italian Air Force is joined by powerful Luftwaffe units over Malta



In January 1941 Luftwaffe units join the Italian Air Force in attacks on Malta.



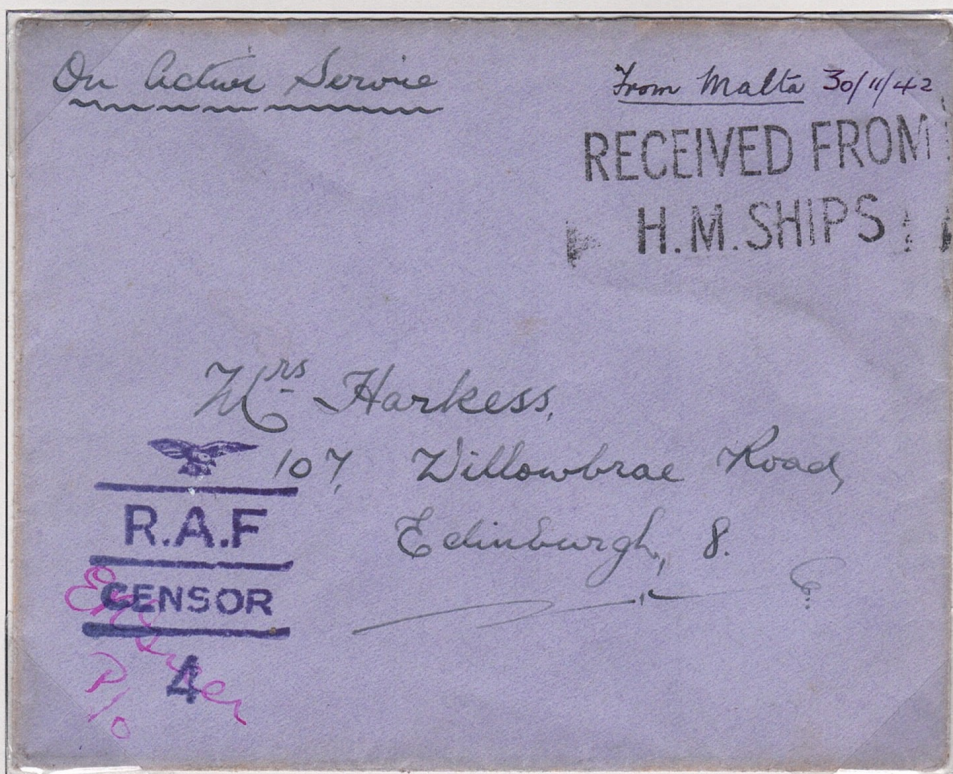
The few defending Gloster Gladiator biplanes are easily defeated by Bf 109 fighters.



With the RAF on Malta almost neutralised Axis aircraft can dominate the airspace over the central Mediterranean.



Hawker Hurricanes are flown in from the aircraft carrier HMS Ark Royal in attempts to reinforce the islands fighter units.



The town of Valetta is seriously damaged by German bombs.



... Maltese people are awarded the George Cross for their heroism.

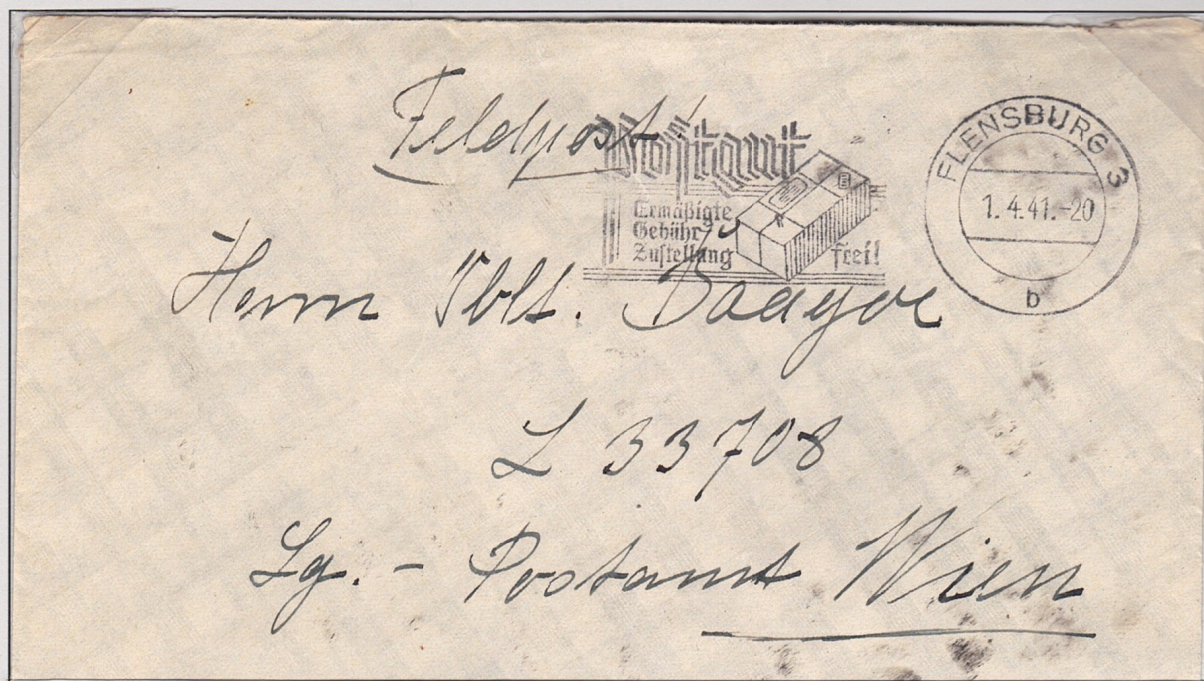
A very early example of the RAF censor hand stamp type R8 used on Malta. The "Censorship in the RAF" handbook (2015) by Colley, Garrard and Muchall states that type R8 was in use on Malta from December 1942 up to June 1944 but according to the manuscript notation on this free mail letter it was probably sent already in November 1942. The R8 no 4 censor was located at the Air HQ, Malta.

The air war over Malta will rage back and forth until the end of 1942 and the ...

3. ... however when the war becomes a global war, serious shortcomings occur ...

a. ... over the important Mediterranean supply routes.

The RAF is unable to stop the Axis advance towards Egypt



Free mail to Oberleutnant Sophus Baagoe, one of two pilots credited with the kill of Squadron Leader "Pat" Pattle, the highest-scoring Western Allied pilot of WWII. Pattle had at least 50 victories when he was killed on 20/4 1941 in his Hurricane over Athens, Greece by Bf 110:s from Zerstörergeschwader 26. Baagoe (14 victories) was killed on 14/5 1941 over Crete and posthumously awarded the Knight's Cross.

To assist Italy in the Mediterranean, in April 1941 Hitler invades Yugoslavia and then Greece, where RAF pilots mostly find themselves outclassed by experienced Messerschmitt-equipped Luftwaffe units.



Commonwealth air units can not stop the advance from Libya into Egypt ...

"The 1940 Free Christmas Air Mail letter rate is rare"

is stated in the "Censorship in the RAF" handbook (2015) by Colley, Garrard and Muchall.



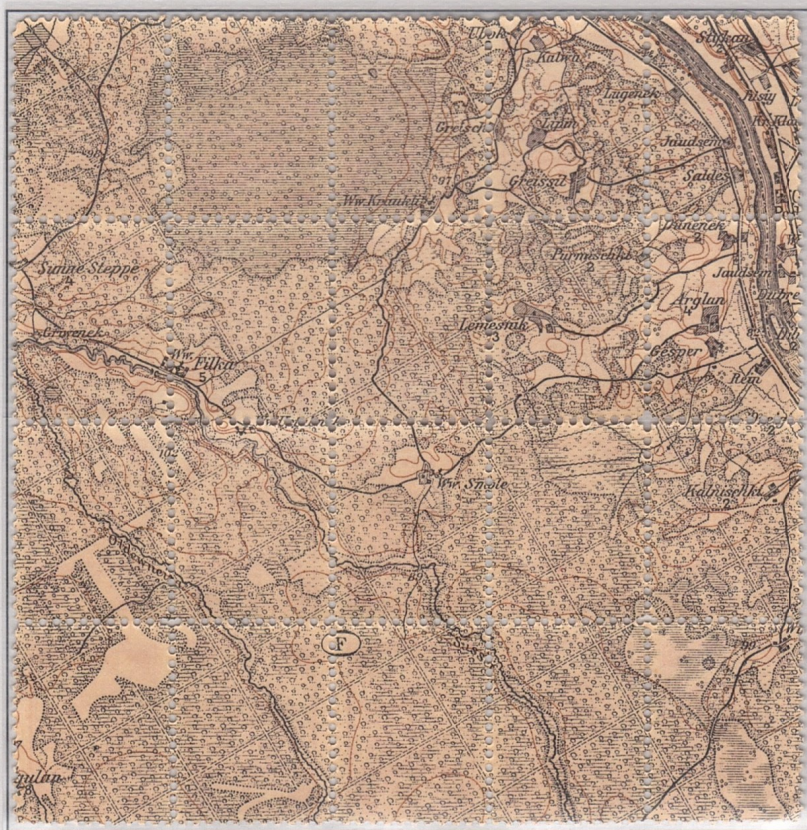
RAF censor h/s type R2 No 202 (RAF Habbaniya 27/6 -20/12 1940) and FPO 171 p/m (Egypt 5 Line of Communications Postal Unit 2/9 1940-29/4 1941), on a free air mail rate letter sent from Iraq via Egypt.

... and a Luftwaffe unit is sent as far east as Iraq to attack the RAF base in Habbaniya during a coup d'etat.

3. ... however when the war becomes a global war, serious shortcomings occur ...

b. ... after the German invasion of the Soviet Union.

The Red Air Force is taken by surprise on the ground



Reverse side of a block of twenty stamps of Latvia's first issue of 1918, printed on left over German military maps of Western Russia.

... these air bases have already been mapped out by the German aerial reconnaissance, resulting in the bombing and destruction of thousands of planes.



Double print

A few days into the German invasion only a small part of the Soviet fighter strength is still flying, although ...



At Soviet air bases during the German invasion in June 1941 ...



*Aircraft watermark
Luxembourg 1928*

... most of the aircraft are parked close together out in the open and ...



Margin perforation error caused by a paper fold

... in Soviet propaganda the Red Air Force units strike back hard at the invaders. In reality however these moments are few and far between.

3. ... however when the war becomes a global war, serious shortcomings occur ...

b. ... after the German invasion of the Soviet Union.

German aircraft totally dominate Soviet airspace after the invasion



Partly imperforated block of four

With almost complete German air superiority during these first months of the invasion bombers like the Heinkel He 111 successfully attack Soviet targets ...



Imperforate phase proof



Imperforate colour proof



Free mail from the first pilot to score a victory over the Eastern front, Oberleutnant and Knight's Cross recipient Robert Olejnik (an I-16 at 03.40 hrs on the 22 June). As a Staffelfkapitän in Jagdgeschwader 3 in the first three months of the German invasion, he shot down 32 Soviet aircraft.

... while at the same time the experienced Luftwaffe fighter aces are scoring aerial victories in a way that has never been matched before or since in the entire history of aerial warfare.

3. ... however when the war becomes a global war, serious shortcomings occur ...

b. ... after the German invasion of the Soviet Union.

There are to few modern Soviet fighters available



In the summer of 1941 some modern looking Soviet fighters are in service like the MiG-3 and ...

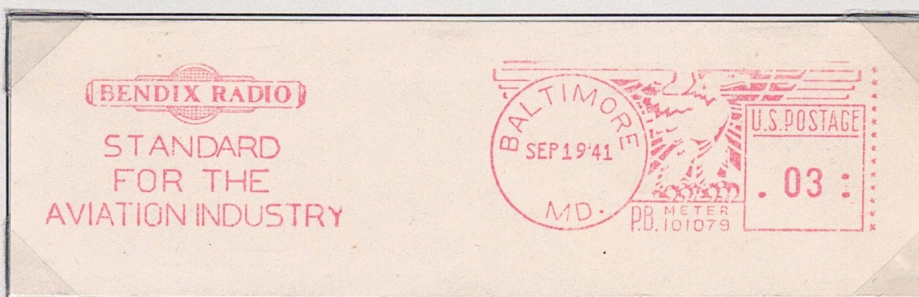


... the LaGG-3 but they have very moderate successes.



Free mail from field post number L 32781, III Gruppe Jagdgeschwader 52, supporting the German Army Group South in Ukraine and soon to become the most successful Jagdgruppe in the entire Luftwaffe.

Unfortunately these two fighters only make up a small part of the Soviet fighter strength in this period of the war and as they are also difficult to fly they are no match for the Messerschmitt equipped German fighter units.



Many Soviet fighters are also lacking radio communications equipment and ...



... dangerous ramming attacks are often tried to bring the enemy down.

3. ... however when the war becomes a global war, serious shortcomings occur ...

b. ... after the German invasion of the Soviet Union.

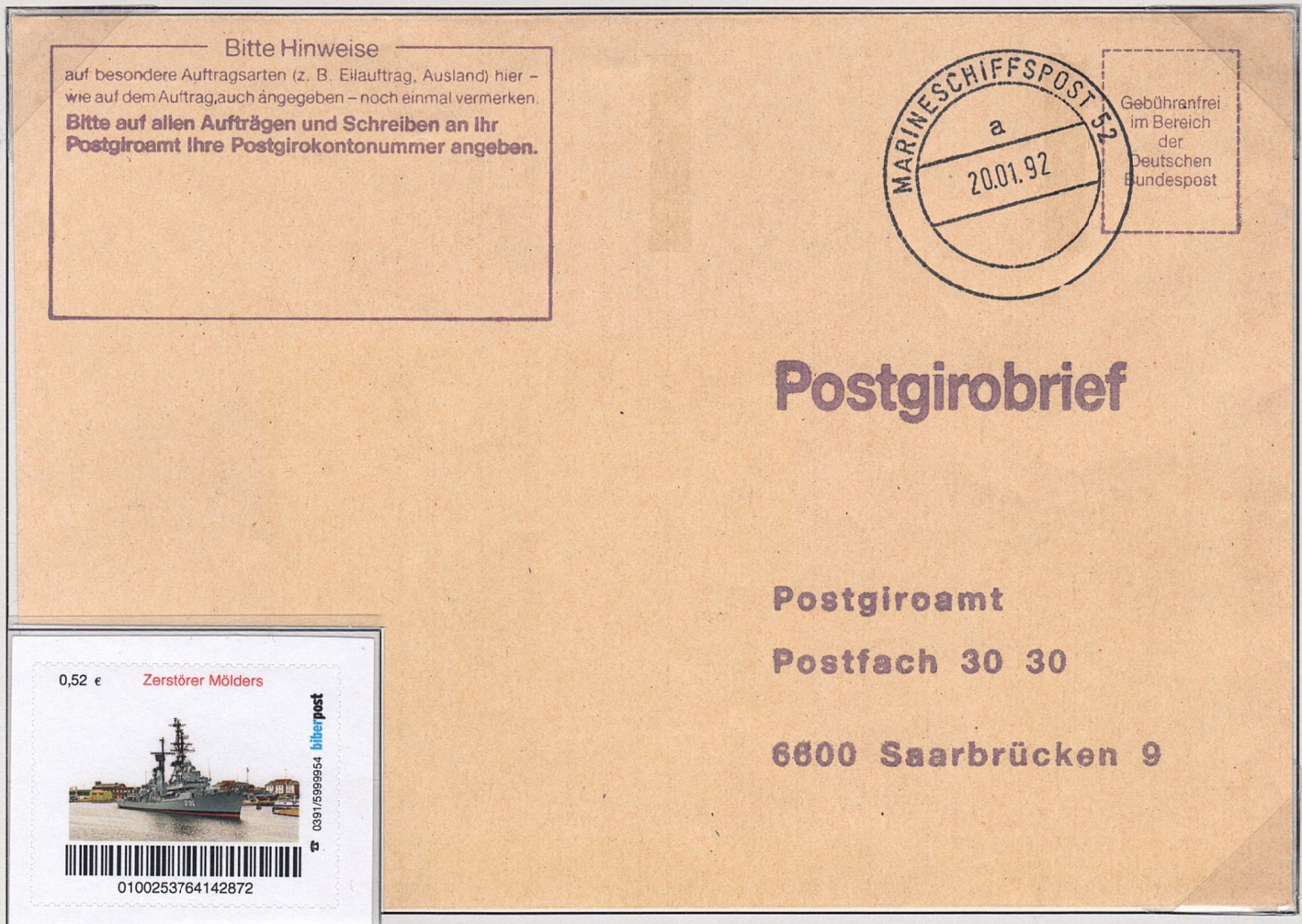
The many Soviet pilots are poorly trained and led



Soviet pilots suffer from short training periods and poor leadership ...



... and commanders like Boris Safonov, the first to be awarded The Hero of the Soviet Union title twice, are rare exceptions.



German local mail stamp

Marineschiffspost 52=guided-missile destroyer Mölders, named after the famous fighter pilot, on a free postal giro letter sent as the German ship operated in the Mediterranean.

While Safonov eventually shoot down over 20 German aircraft, it is still not much compared to many Luftwaffe pilots. The commander of Jagdgeschwader 51, Oberst Werner Mölders, is in July 1941 the first pilot ever to reach 100 aerial victories.

3. ... however when the war becomes a global war, serious shortcomings occur ...

b. ... after the German invasion of the Soviet Union.

Balkan and Hungarian pilots are supporting the Luftwaffe in the south



On the southern front the Luftwaffe is supported by the Romanian Air Force partly equipped with Heinkel He 112 and Messerschmitt Bf 109 fighters. The pilots are not always as good as German pilots but there are exceptions like Alexandru Șerbănescu, a superb fighter pilot and leader with eventually 47 victories.



Germany have also supplied trainer aircraft to a lot of the countries taking part in the invasion as well as ...



... training some of their pilots.



Hungary is another German-friendly nation ...



... in due time supplied with the Messerschmitt Bf 109.



Bulgarian pilots are also flying the Messerschmitt fighter.

3. ... however when the war becomes a global war, serious shortcomings occur ...

b. ... after the German invasion of the Soviet Union.

The Red Air Force face well trained Finnish pilots in the north

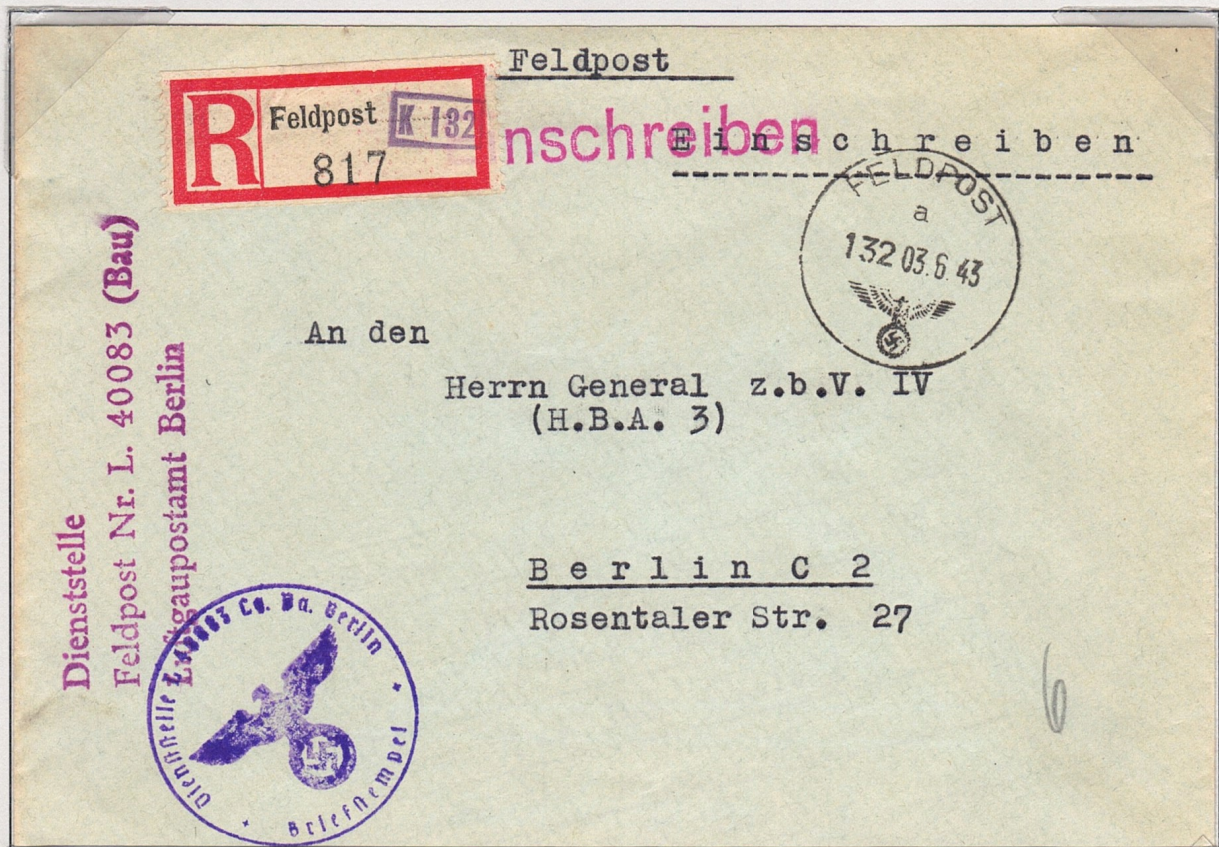


Swastika watermark 1925

Finland also joins Germany in the war against the Soviet Union and their aircraft carry swastikas too. It has been this way since the first aircraft of the Finnish Air Force in 1918 was painted with swastikas by the giver, ...



... Eric von Rosen,
as his personal
symbol of
good luck.



Registered free mail from field post number L 40083, Luftgau-Stab Finnland, Rovaniemi,
with a Berlin C 2 8/6 43 arrival cancellation on reverse

The few but very well trained Finnish pilots are superior to most of their Soviet opponents and are reinforced by Luftwaffe units led from the German Air District Headquarters in Rovaniemi in northern Finland.

3. ... however when the war becomes a global war, serious shortcomings occur ...

c. ... following the surprise attack on Pearl Harbor.

The US Pacific Fleet base in Hawaii is successfully attacked by Japanese aircraft



In December 1941 aircraft from six Japanese aircraft carriers attack the American Pearl Harbor base in Hawaii.

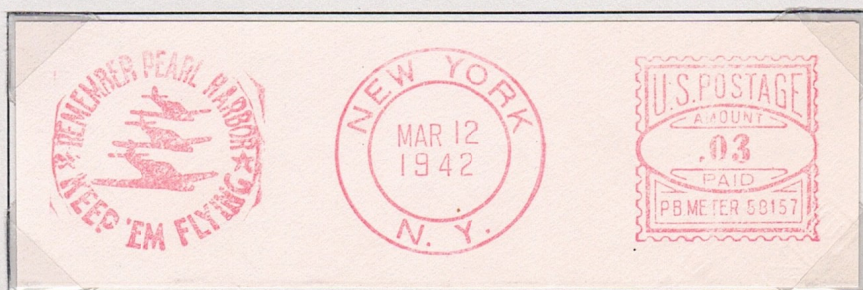


Japanese dive bombers, torpedo bombers and fighters in the shape of the Mitsubishi A6M Zero achieve complete surprise when they appear over the Pacific fleet base.

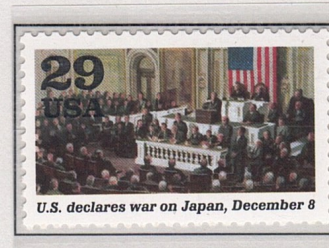


Very early example of the US armed forces 6 cent concession air mail rate in use from 26 December 1941 to the end of the war. This letter was mailed not later than the 31 December 1941 according to the unusual provisional manuscript censor marking. Machine cancellation from Hickam Field which was the main air base in Hawaii and got severely damaged during the Japanese attack.

American aircraft carriers are at sea and remain intact but eight battleships are sunk or damaged in the attack. Over 2 400 American lives are lost and at air bases near Pearl Harbor about 250 military aircraft are destroyed.



The attack leads to a strong American wish for revenge ...

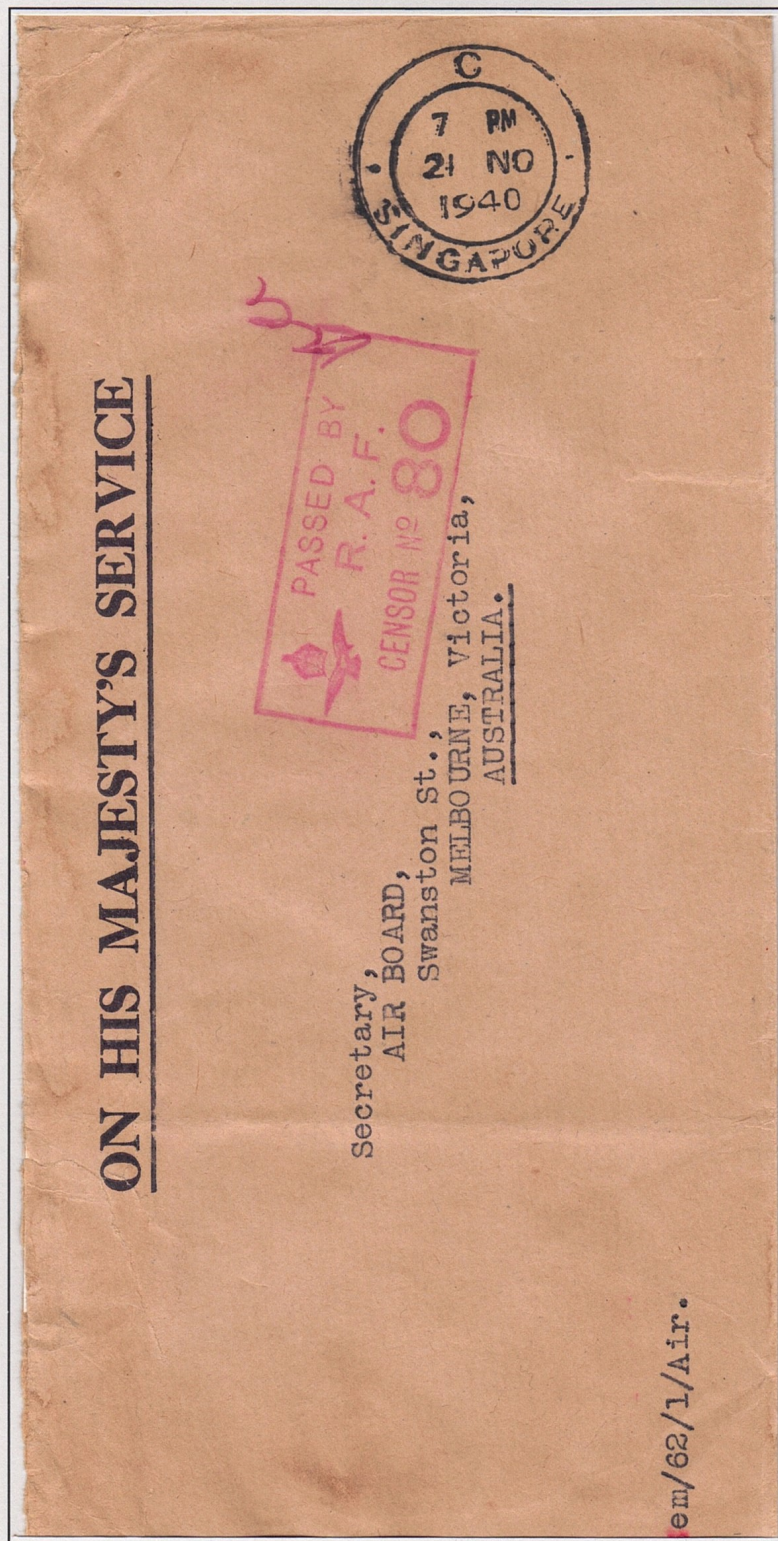


... and the next day president Roosevelt declares war on Japan.

3. ... however when the war becomes a global war, serious shortcomings occur ...

c. ... following the surprise attack on Pearl Harbor.

Japanese fighters are superior to all Allied fighters in the Far East



The scarce RAF censor hand stamp type R2 from Singapore is only recorded during October-November 1940 and only one item with censor No 80 is known in the "Censorship in the RAF" handbook (2015) by Colley, Garrard and Muchall.

The army Nakajima Ki-43 Oscar is as superior as the Zero in the air and soon Singapore falls as the RAF in Malaya suffer heavy losses.



Monochrome proof



After Pearl Harbor the light and highly manoeuvrable Mitsubishi A6M Zeros, flown by well trained navy pilots, turn up all over the Pacific ...



... and its already superior range is further enhanced by external drop tanks.



The dated Boeing P-26 Peashooter is defeated over the Philippines.

Hawker Hurricane fighters sent as reinforcements to the Far East are of little help.



3. ... however when the war becomes a global war, serious shortcomings occur ...

c. ... following the surprise attack on Pearl Harbor.

The aircraft carriers spearhead the Japanese conquest of the Pacific



At the start of 1942, Japanese carrier pilots ...



... and aircraft seem to be invincible.



Early censored prisoner of war letter to Japan, sent in June 1942, the first month the Japanese authorities allowed mail to their POW camps. Addressed to Leading Aircraftman G. A. Vassie, Java, c/o the British POW Information Bureau in Tokyo from where it was sent to the Zentsuji Camp (crayon notation in blue). This camp was opened in January 1942 and held about 750 Allied prisoners, mostly officers.

Japanese carrier units take part in the victory in the battle of the Java Sea, followed by a Japanese invasion of Java resulting in many Allied prisoners of war.

Postmarks from APO 913 are "extremely scarce" if they have dates earlier than June 1942, states Richard Helbock in his 2006 handbook "Passed by Army censor". APO 913 was established at Nandi Airbase, Viti Levu, Fiji, on 15/2 -42. There is also a personal manuscript censor marking on this 6 cent concession air mail rate letter.

Fiji is one location from where US fighter units try to halt the Japanese offensive and keep the supply lines to Australia open but they can not stop ...

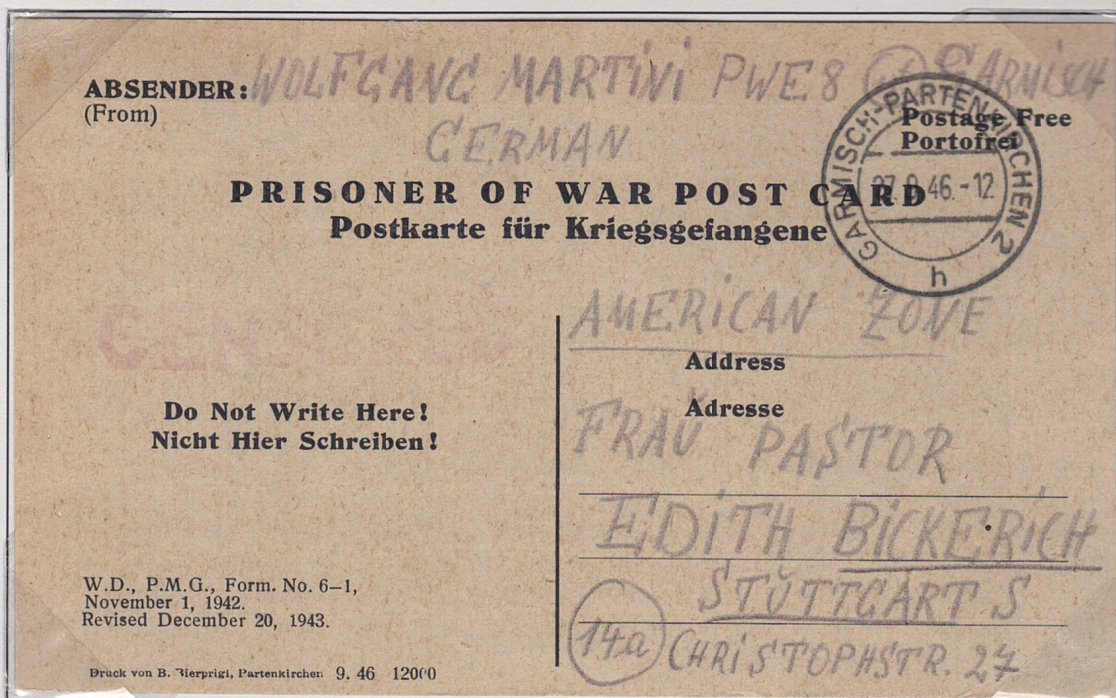


... carrier based aircraft to bomb Darwin in northern Australia in February 1942.

3. ... however when the war becomes a global war, serious shortcomings occur ...

d. ... in the air war over occupied Western Europe.

British cross Channel sweeps are not very successful



Free censored POW PC from General der Luftnachrichtentruppe Wolfgang Martini, main patron of radar science in the German High Command (Camp PWE 8, Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany).

In the spring of 1942 the RAF is flying fighter sweeps over occupied Western Europe trying to engage Luftwaffe fighters in battle and destroy them, but now the advantage of radar is on the German side.



The RAF is at this time building up its fighter strength but many pilots are new and inexperienced and victories rarely come easy in air battles with the fewer but very capable German fighter pilots.

Many British pilots are also victims of anti-aircraft guns, a weapon first used by Prussia to shoot down manned mail balloons during the siege of Paris in 1870, the first victim being the "Daguerre".



Domestic 20 c. rate letter from the "Daguerre", shot down east of Paris on 12/11 1870. A part of the letters were sent onward, like this one with arrival p/m Gannat 27/11 1870 on the reverse.

3. ... however when the war becomes a global war, serious shortcomings occur ...

d. ... in the air war over occupied Western Europe.

Bomber escort missions are still very dangerous



From the beginning of the war British bombers have been flying daylight raids over German territory but they have proven to be very vulnerable ...

... without strong support from escorting fighters.



In 1942 groups of RAF fighters are escorting ...



... small numbers of bombers flying at low level ...



... with the latest Spitfire version, the Mark V.

Kriegsgefangenenpost

Luft Post
Air Mail

(18) 2/6

GEPRÜFT
77^{An}

Mrs A. E. Penn

63 CAMBRIDGE DRIVE

Empfangsort: LEE S.K. 12.

Straße: London.

Kreis: ENGLAND.

Land:

Gebührenfrei

Landesteil (Provinz usw.)

PASSED
P.W. 9524

Free double censored POW air mail letter sheet written 28/8 1943 by Sgt. Cyril G. Penn at Stalag Luft 3 at Sagan (Zagan, Poland) As a member of a Bristol Blenheim crew he was shot down over Cherbourg on 10/7 1941 bombing the Cherbourg docks.

This is still very dangerous and many British airmen are killed or sent to prisoner of war camps.

3. ... however when the war becomes a global war, serious shortcomings occur ...

d. ... in the air war over occupied Western Europe.

The Spitfire is inferior to the new Focke Wulf Fw 190



At the start of 1942 the RAF is fully aware of the threat of the Focke Wulf Fw 190 over Western Europe. This new fighter complement and is in many ways better than the Messerschmitt Bf 109 in the Luftwaffe. More importantly, the radial engined Fw 190 is also superior in almost every aspect to the new Spitfires.



The powerful Fw 190 is designed by Kurt Tank who has also designed the Focke Wulf Fw 56 Stösser advanced trainer.



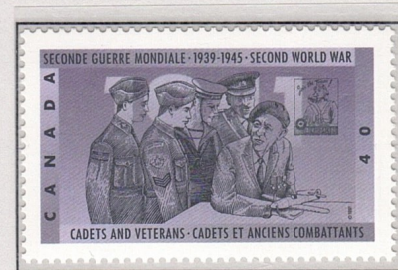
Although that the Spitfire has evolved from the Mark I ...



... via the more powerful Mark II ...



... to the even better Mark V, often armed with cannons ...

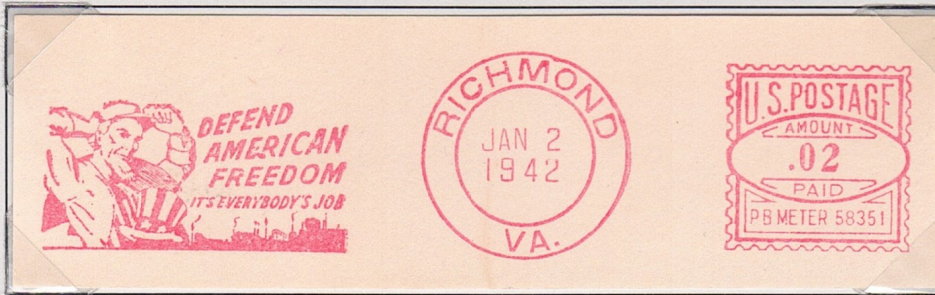


... the British fighter pilots are now technically outclassed.

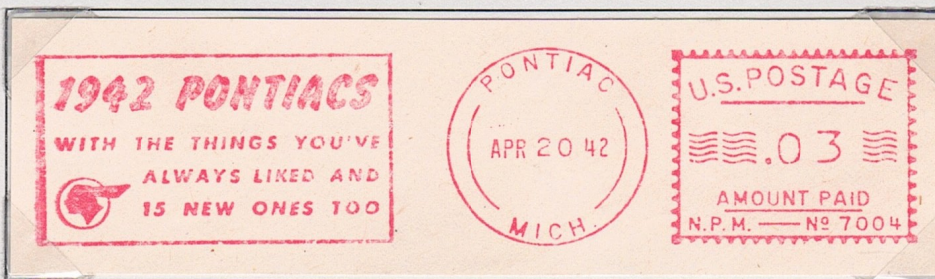
4. ... but later in the war, the fighter units play a major part in the victories ...

a. ... during the naval actions in the vast Pacific Ocean.

The American industry speed up the war production



With the United States fully engaged in the war, all efforts are made to turn every peacetime factory into a supplier to the armed forces.



During 1942 American car production is halted in favour of arms production and the giant motor industry around Detroit becomes the "Arsenal of Democracy".



Perforation shift



President Roosevelt has in a speech been aiming at "fifty thousand planes a year".



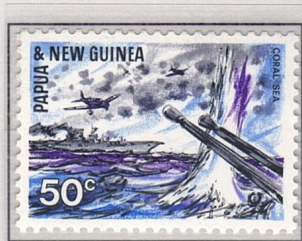
Postmark of 10/3 1942, the first day of operations at APO 920 (Batchelor Airfield, Northern Territory, Australia). A very early example of US forces mail from Australia, sent by a member of the 197th Coast Artillery Regiment (Anti-Aircraft), arriving 9/3 1942 in Brisbane, 2000 miles from where this 6 cent concession air mail rate letter was postmarked. It carries the standard "racetrack" censor mark and a censor signature by the letters sender.

All efforts to increase the arms production are necessary as American forces quickly go into action. Northern Australia becomes a major staging area for American aerial operations in the South Pacific.

4. ... but later in the war, the fighter units play a major part in the victories ...

a. ... during the naval actions in the vast Pacific Ocean.

The Coral Sea battle is fought solely between carrier aircraft



In May 1942 an Allied fleet face the Japanese Navy in the Coral Sea.



It is the first naval battle in history where the opposing fleets never meet, only their aircraft.

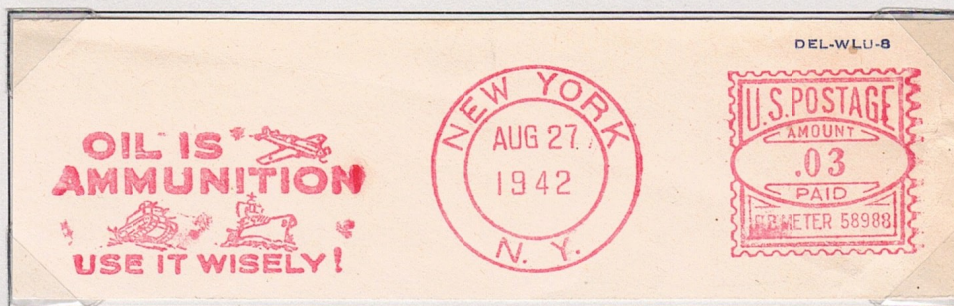


American fighter pilots begin to appreciate the toughness and firepower of the Wildcat.



Duplex type 6 postmark from the USS Lexington dated 15 March 1928, the day before the first day of postal service as listed in the "Catalog of United States Naval Postmarks" handbook (1997) edited by David A. Kent, on a domestic 2 cent surface mail rate letter.

The American old carrier USS Lexington is sunk in the battle, but so is the Japanese light carrier Shoho and although more American than Japanese ships are sunk or damaged, the Japanese expansion is halted.



The Coral Sea battle is another proof to the fact that aircraft are just as important weapons of war as tanks or battleships, not the least ...

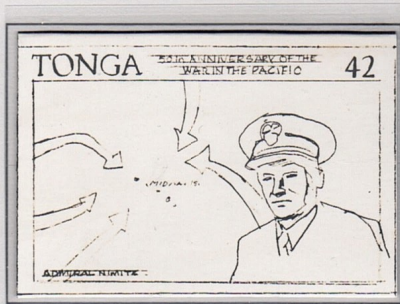


... the ones operating from the powerful aircraft carriers.

4. ... but later in the war, the fighter units play a major part in the victories ...

a. ... during the naval actions in the vast Pacific Ocean.

Four Japanese aircraft carriers are sunk in the battle of Midway



Unique monochrome artist essay proof with minor differences compared to the released stamp.



In June 1942 large Japanese and American naval forces meet in combat at the Midway atoll.



Zero pilots have some success in the battle.



Wildcat pilots however fight back with improved tactics.



The American aircraft carrier USS Yorktown is lost in the battle ...

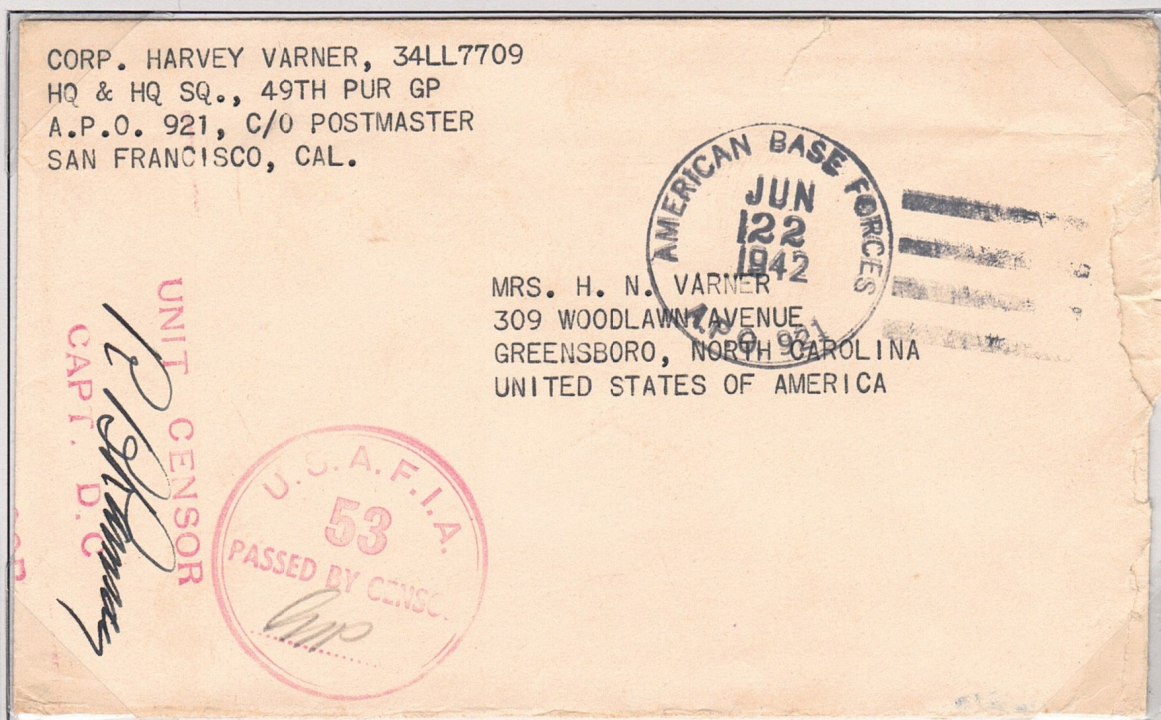
... but American dive bombers sink four Japanese carriers.



The battle is rightfully regarded as the ...



... turning point in the war against Japan ...



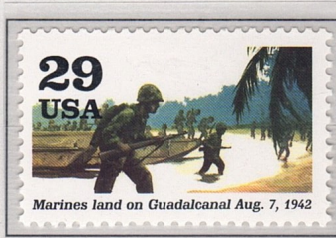
Rare "Unit Censor Capt. D.C" provisional censor mark, unlisted in Helbock's "Passed by Army censor" handbook (2006), which also lists the earliest known date for the "US Army Forces In Australia No. 53" censor mark as 30/11 1942 but this free mail letter is postmarked 22/6 1942, over five months earlier. APO 921=Mount Isa, Queensland, Australia.

... and all over the Pacific Allied air units can very soon move forward their positions, like the 49th Pursuit Group that a few months after Midway move their operations from Australia to New Guinea.

4. ... but later in the war, the fighter units play a major part in the victories ...

a. ... during the naval actions in the vast Pacific Ocean.

Henderson Field is the key to the Japanese defeat on Guadalcanal



In August 1942 strong Allied forces land on Guadalcanal in the Solomon Islands ...



... and capture the airstrip on the island, Henderson Field, from Japanese troops.



Hard battles follow as the Japanese Navy bring in reinforcements.

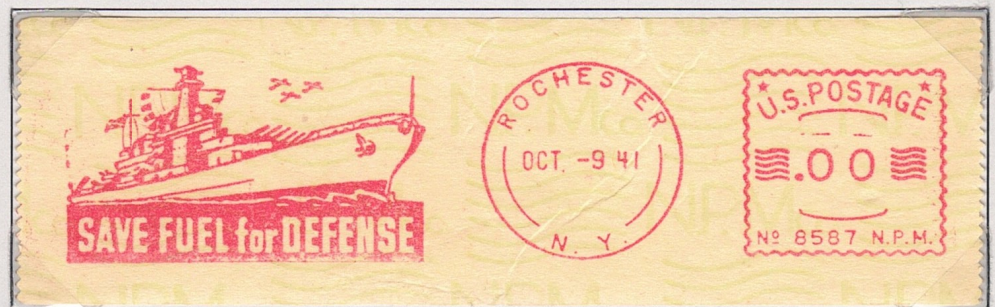


Return address of the USS Hornet on a 6 cent concession air mail rate postal stationery envelope. It was from this Yorktown-class aircraft carrier that the Doolittle-raid on Tokyo was launched and she also took part in the battle of Midway. Providing air cover for the Solomons campaign, she was sunk in the battle of the Santa Cruz Islands on the 26/10 1942.

American naval forces also bring in strong backup and in December Japanese troops are being withdrawn, even if it takes two more months of fighting on land and several large naval battles before the island is totally in Allied hands.



American aircraft are important for the victories on both land and sea and ...



Meter slogan proof printed on manufacturers proof paper.

...after the battle Guadalcanal become a major air and navy base for new offensives.

4. ... but later in the war, the fighter units play a major part in the victories ...

a. ... during the naval actions in the vast Pacific Ocean.

A victorious carrier fighter is created in the Grumman F6F Hellcat



In late 1942 the Grumman F6F Hellcat carrier fighter ...



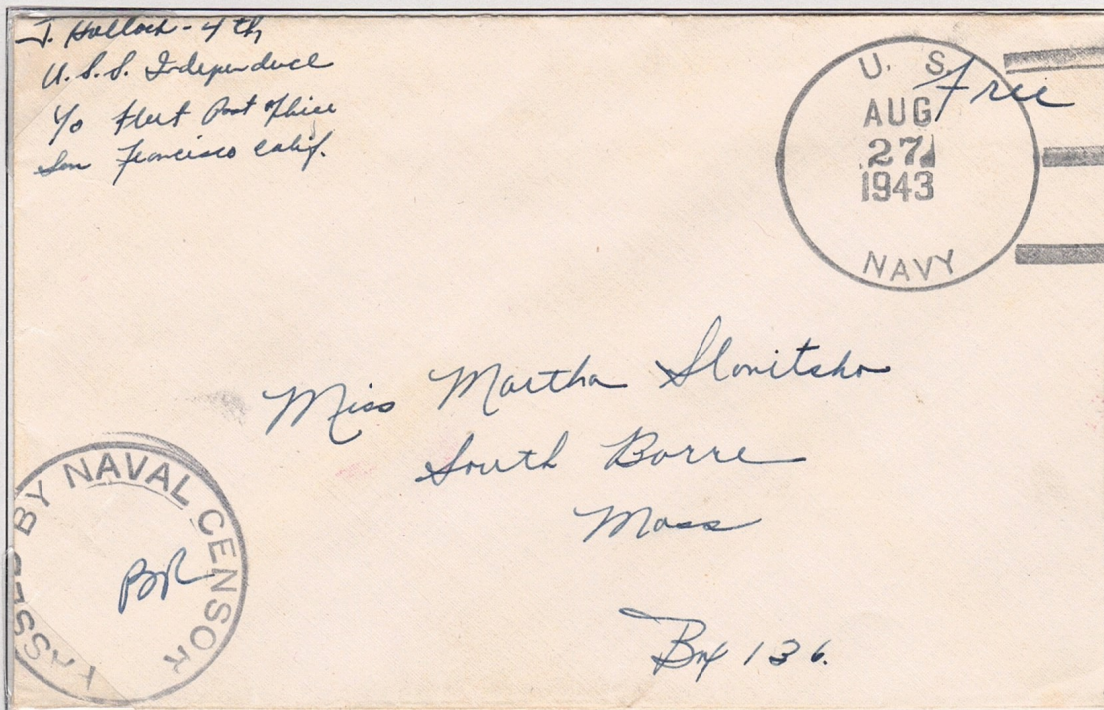
... is being developed based on close studies and ...



... combat experience with the Mitsubishi Zero.



It is in many ways superior to the latest Zero models and the Hellcat prototype is followed by serial production of eventually over 12 270 aircraft built at Grumman's Long Island plant.



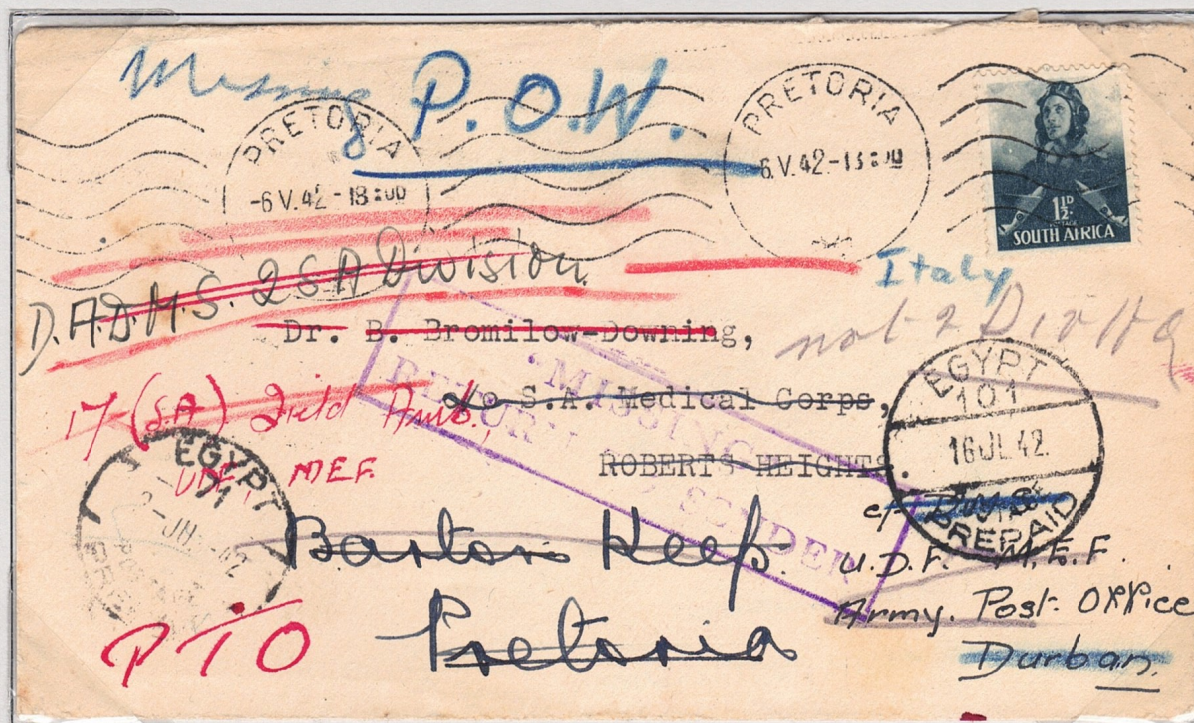
Free mail from the USS Independence, first of a new class of escort carriers converted from cruiser hulls. Sent in August 1943 as she conducted air strikes at Marcus Island in the north-western Pacific.

Hellcats from the USS Independence are the first to see action and are soon followed by many more. With the Hellcat the newly built US aircraft carriers have upper hand over their Japanese opponents.

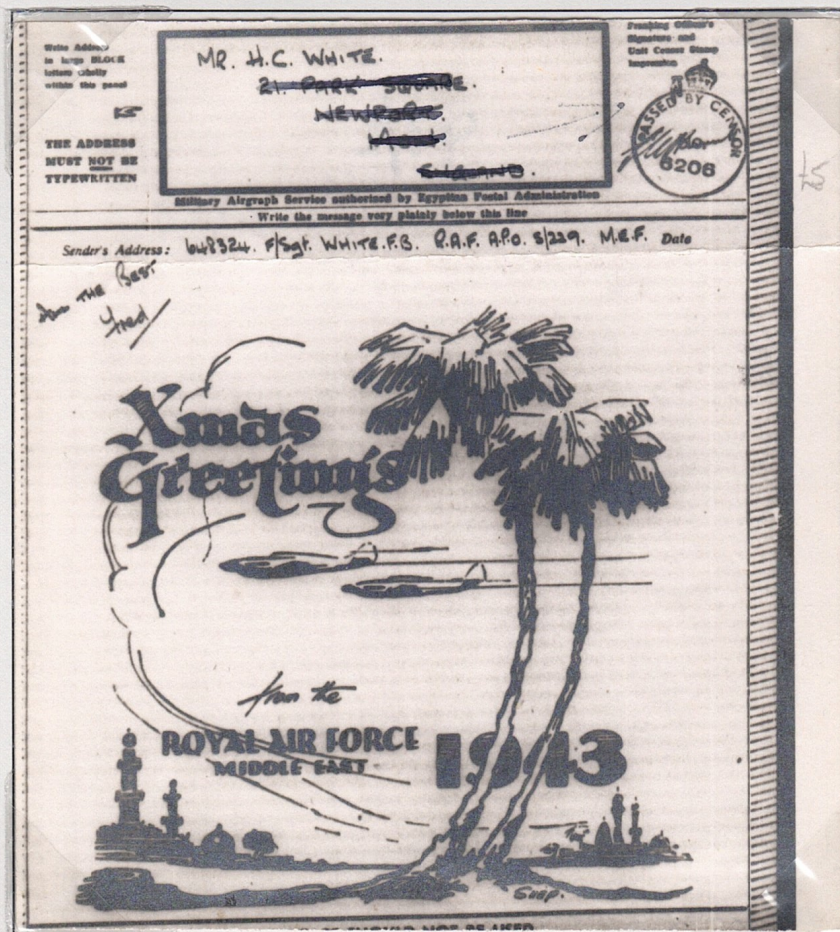
4. ... but later in the war, the fighter units play a major part in the victories ...

b. ... from North Africa and up through the Italian mainland.

RAF fighter units are vital for the victory at El Alamein



South African airman stamp and three EPP postmarks; 71,101 and 37 (1/9 1942 on reverse) on this originally domestic 1 1/2 d. surface mail rate letter, redirected to Egypt, later returned to sender with "Missing... h/s and "POW in Italy" notation. Return address and "2 Echelon UDF MEF Missing" h/s with signature on reverse.



In October 1942 British and Commonwealth pilots in Egypt provide close air support ...



... for the British 8th Army in the crucial battle of El Alamein.



Rugged fighter bombers ...

... flying at low level are vital for Allied victory in the desert.

4. ... but later in the war, the fighter units play a major part in the victories ...

b. ... from North Africa and up through the Italian mainland.

American air units join the British before the Axis defeat in Tunisia



Rare provisional censor mark from the U.K. The "Censored by" provisional censor mark is unlisted in Helbock's "Passed by Army censor" handbook (2006) which only records one item with a provisional censor from the U.K. The free mail letter also has a standard "racetrack" censor h/s and return address 817th Engineer Aviation Battalion, which landed in north-western Africa on 21/11 1942. APO 887=HQ European Theatre of Operations, London.

In November 1942 a part of the American air units that have gathered in the United Kingdom take part in operation Torch, an Anglo-American invasion of the Vichy French areas of north-western Africa; Morocco and Algeria.



Perforation shift

The forces led by General Eisenhower then advance against the Axis held Tunisia.



The initially hostile Vichy French forces soon join the Allies and Free French pilots like famous author Antoine de Saint-Exupéry.



More Spitfires become available as both sides bring in reinforcements.



The long-range Lockheed P-38 Lightning is also used in the desert war where the Axis are forced to surrender in May 1943.

4. ... but later in the war, the fighter units play a major part in the victories ...

b. ... from North Africa and up through the Italian mainland.

Luftwaffe's southern front is undermined by the North African defeat



White dot flaw



"Ear flap flaw" variety



White dot flaw

At the end of the North African campaign, despite that some Allied pilots still show individual flaws in aerial combat, their strength in numbers give them big advantages over German and Italian pilots ...



Free double censored POW card from Hauptmann and Knight's Cross recipient Martin Mossdorf, Gruppenkommandeur of I. Gruppe Sturzkampfgeschwader 3, in Camp 44, Granda Lygne, Canada. He was taken prisoner during a mission over the Halfaya Pass on the Egyptian/Libyan border on 11/11 1942, when the entire strength of 15 Ju 87 Stukas taking part were downed by P-40 fighters.



... and with the Axis surrender in Tunisia a lot of Luftwaffe aircraft and equipment are lost and many men become prisoners of war, on top of the ones already lost earlier during the desert campaign.

The Allies then cross the Mediterranean and invade Sicily in mid-1943 but the Hawker Hurricane is by then rarely used in front line service anymore.

4. ... but later in the war, the fighter units play a major part in the victories ...

b. ... from North Africa and up through the Italian mainland.

Fighter bombers support the Allied offensive in Italy



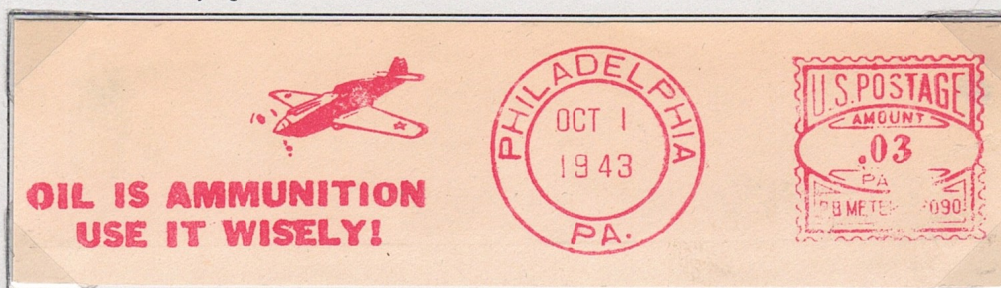
The big and powerful Republic P 47 Thunderbolt is one of the Allied fighter bombers flying ...



... at low level over the rugged Italian landscape ...



... just like the North American P-51 Mustang, soon to find fame as the ultimate long range escort fighter.



The slow but rugged Curtiss P-40 Warhawk is also still used as a fighter bomber here.

Many Spitfire squadrons cover the rather slow Allied advance in Italy, like RAF No. 43 "Fighting Cocks" squadron, which from the end of 1943 fly top cover for fighter bombers but also attack ground targets.



Colour proof pairs with sheet margin from the upper right corner of the imperforated proof sheet

4. ... but later in the war, the fighter units play a major part in the victories ...

c. ... in the large decisive battles on the Eastern front.

Soviet factories lay the foundation for coming victories in the air

Stempelbild

DESSAU 1 52
20 10 42

HUGO JUNKERS WERKE
G.M.B.H.
WERK KALORIFERBAU
DESSAU

020
Deutsche Reichspost

Francotyp *Em 24022* Post *Dechau 1*
Firma *Kaloriferwerk H. Junkers G.m.b.H.*
Motor *A.E.G.* Nr. *6 526 370* 220 Volt ~ 1/2 PS
Übersetzung: Motor Masch. Riemen
Geliefert *20. 10. 42*
Stand des Summenzählers Sperrung *Rück 500,-*
Stand des Kartenzählers angefangene Karte Nr.
Plombenschlüssel (Post) gez. Nr. Permutationsnummer *8188 A*
Reserveklischees oder geänderte Klischees *1 fest. Kl.*
Spezialeinrichtungen
Merkmale

Fabrik Stolzenberg, Berlin SW 68 3000.12.39.

Unique archive card of a franking machine from the archive of the Francotyp franking machine company. The Werk Kaloriferbau of the Hugo Junkers Werke manufactured heating products for common households.

Soviet aircraft factories have in 1942 been moved eastwards away from the frontline and are soon back in full production. German military production is also increasing but is way behind Soviet output. As German bomber losses increase on all fronts, one of the main producers, Junkers, also take time to build civilian heating products.



Nearly 10 000 fighter aircraft are delivered to Soviet pilots in their second year of the war ...



... giving vital air support to the Red Army during the coming offensive operations.

4. ... but later in the war, the fighter units play a major part in the victories ...

c. ... in the large decisive battles on the Eastern front.

Western aircraft are strengthening the Red Air Force



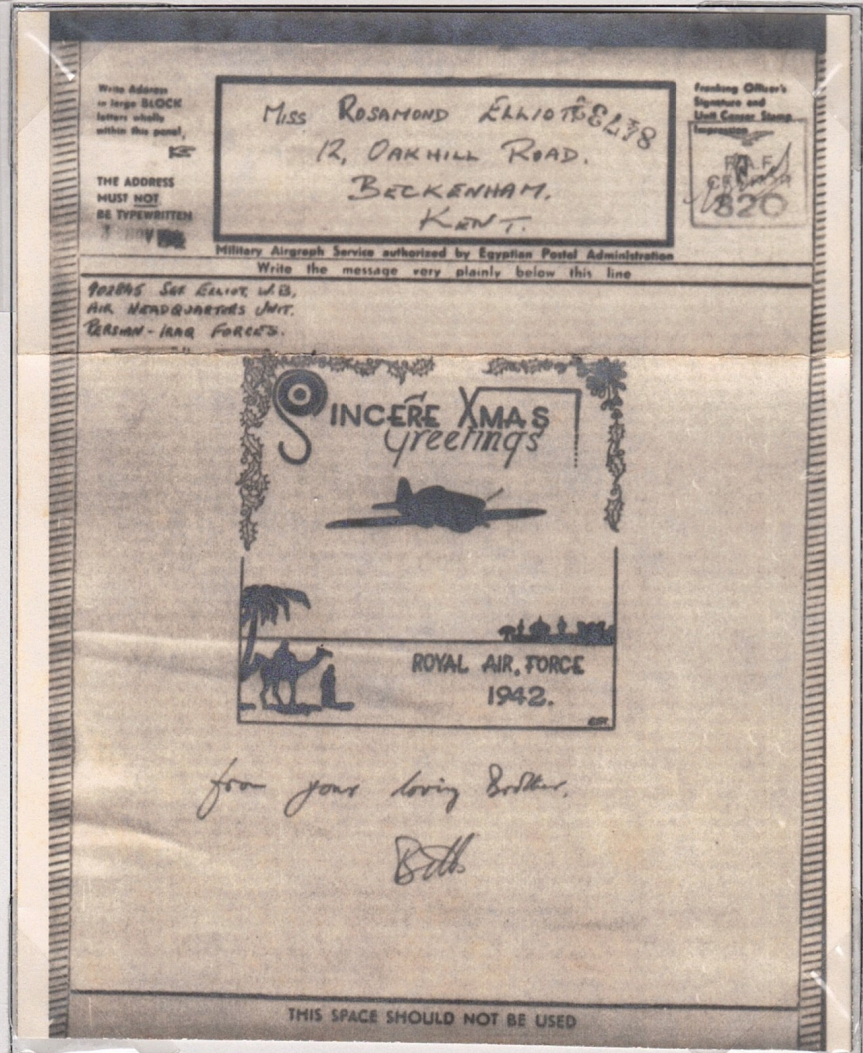
Blue colour shift

Many American and British aircraft are sent to Russia during the war with ...



... Anglo-American pilot instructors.

More than 2 800 Hawker Hurricanes are delivered from England, many via Iraq.



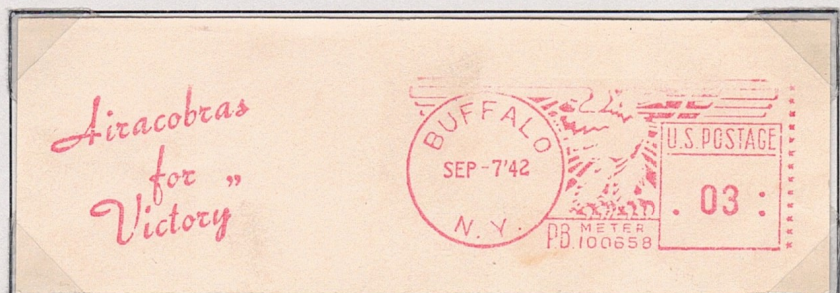
The productive US industry is sending a lot of aircraft to the Soviet Union ...



... via the Lend-Lease Act, many delivered by Arctic convoys.



The highly decorated fighter ace Boris Safonov is flying the Curtiss P-40.



Over 5 700 Bell P-39 Airacobras are soon flying with the Red Air Force.

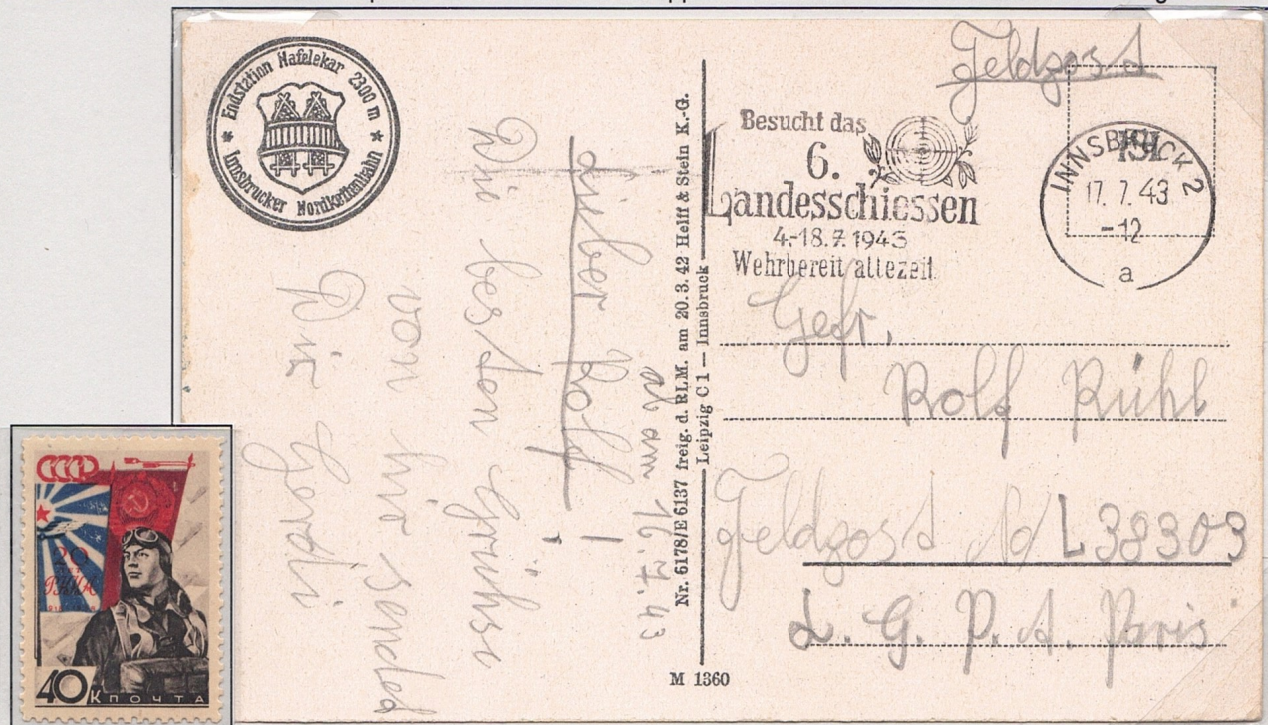
4. ... but later in the war, the fighter units play a major part in the victories ...

c. ... in the large decisive battles on the Eastern front.

Organization of the Red Air Force is successfully improved



The innovative commander of the Red Army Air Force, Alexander Novikov, is successfully organizing Soviet aircraft into air armies and improve coordination of air support over the Eastern front battlefields during 1942.



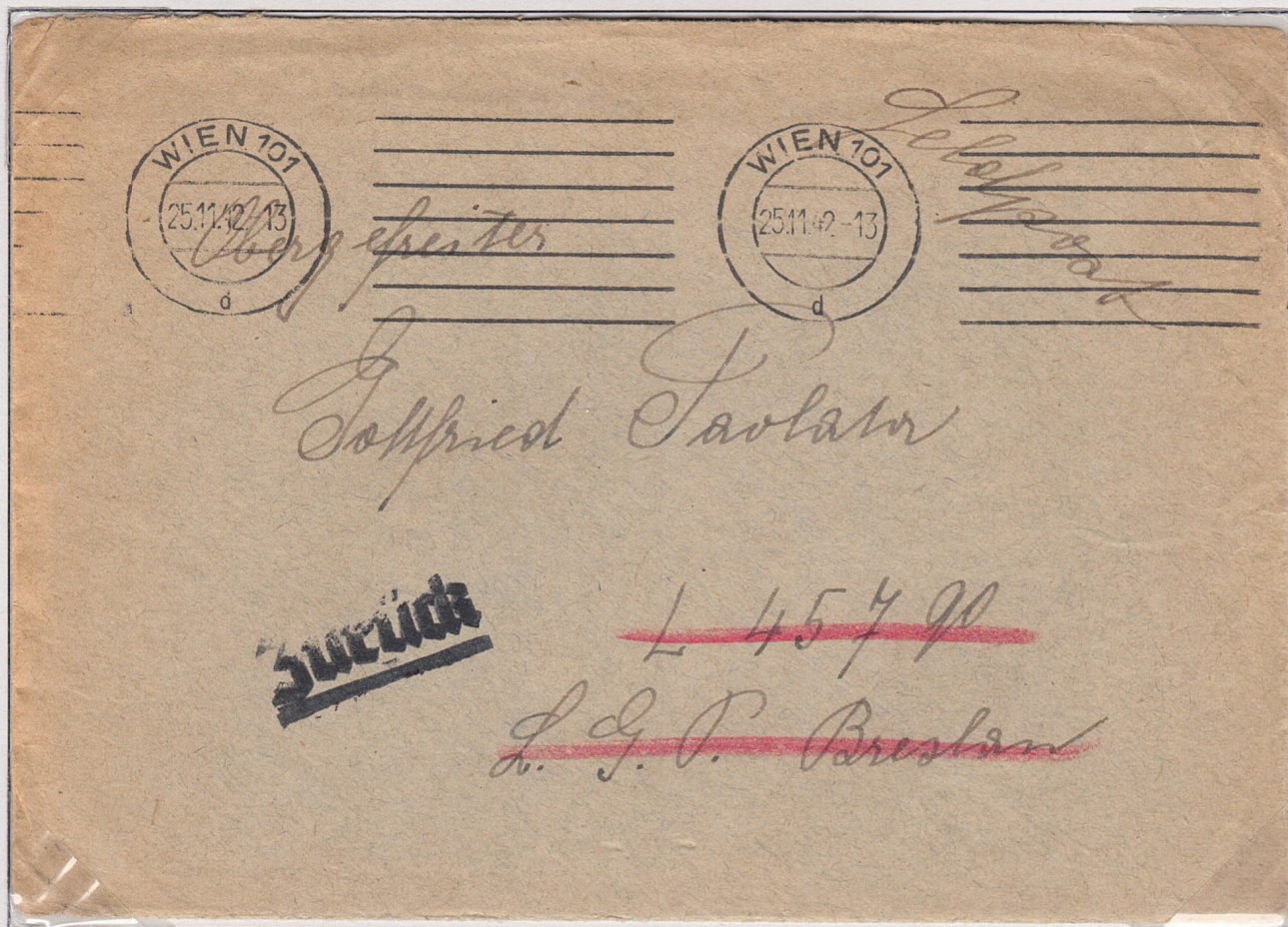
This gives Soviet pilots a foundation to gain ground ...

Free mail to FP number L 38303, 3 Staffel Jagd-Gruppe Ost, a special fighter training unit. ... as units of the Luftwaffe also changes. Fresh German fighter pilots receive training for the Eastern front at a new special unit in France where experienced aces are instructors.

4. ... but later in the war, the fighter units play a major part in the victories ...

c. ... in the large decisive battles on the Eastern front.

Soviet fighters win the air war over Stalingrad



Hand stamp "Zurück"="Return" on a field post letter addressed to one of the few Luftwaffe units trapped inside the Stalingrad pocket in the end of 1942. L 45790=Luftnachrichten-Betriebs-Kompanie Nahaufklärungs-Gruppe 16, a unit that was disbanded in February 1943 after heavy losses at Stalingrad.

In 1942 the Red Air Force is growing stronger and is in the end of the year heavily involved in the battle of Stalingrad, where the German Sixth Army is surrounded and in February 1943 is forced to surrender. Soviet fighter units are important for the victory as they neutralise the transport planes supporting the German troops.



Perforation error

Hundreds of Ju 52:s are downed by Soviet fighters in the battle.



The air battle over Stalingrad marks a new start for the Red Air Force with a stronger and more competent leadership ...



... and with new and modern fighter aircraft there is no longer any need for dangerous ramming attacks with outdated aircraft to destroy an enemy.

4. ... but later in the war, the fighter units play a major part in the victories ...

c. ... in the large decisive battles on the Eastern front.

Improved Soviet fighters are involved in the victory at Kursk



The Lavochkin La-5, developed from the LaGG-3, is one of the Soviet fighters ...



... performing well over the battlefield around Kursk in July and August 1943 ...



... where thousands of tanks and aircraft are involved and even if combat losses are still relatively high on the Soviet side, German forces are halted and soon forced to retreat.



The performance of fighters like the La-5 contribute in no small way to the victory and some Soviet air regiments are in honour given the Guards title and badge on their planes for success in battles like Kursk, where many low level missions are flown to escort the vital ...

... ground attack aircraft.

4. ... but later in the war, the fighter units play a major part in the victories ...

c. ... in the large decisive battles on the Eastern front.

Women become successful fighter pilots in the Red Air Force



Famous air navigator Marina Raskova that has been part of a pre-war record flight from Moscow to the Far East has used her personal connections to Stalin to found three all female air regiments, including a fighter regiment.



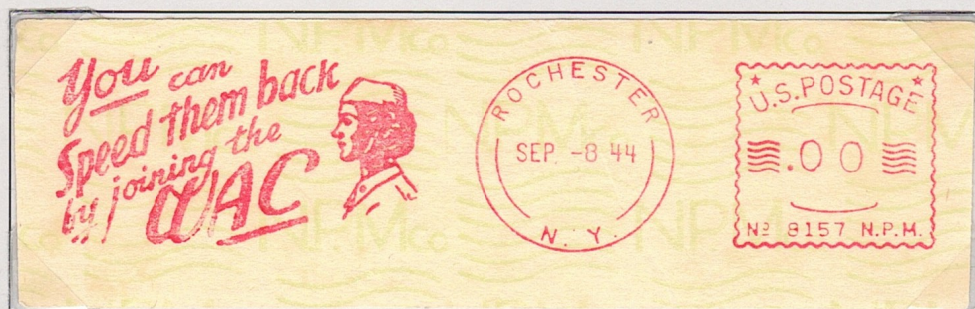
Black text omitted



In the USA pilots like Jacqueline Cochran ferry fighter aircraft from the factories ...



The most famous and successful of the Soviet female fighter pilots is ace pilot Lydia Litvyak, also called "the White Rose of Stalingrad".



Meter slogan proof printed on manufacturers proof paper.

... and in the Women's Army Corps there are female aircraft mechanics and air controllers but it is only in the Soviet Union that women fly in combat against the enemy.

4. ... but later in the war, the fighter units play a major part in the victories ...

d. ... with improved air cover for the vital Atlantic sea lanes.

Better naval fighters are introduced



The Atlantic convoys are vital for the Allied war effort and are ...



... apart from submarines attacked by Focke Wulf Condor bombers.



Return address of the 33rd Pursuit (Fighter) Squadron at APO 810 (Baldurshagi, Iceland 8/9 1941-29/4 1942) on a 3 cent surface mail rate letter self censored by the letters sender. **This letter is unusual as it does not carry a censor hand stamp** as most US military mail from Iceland does during the war.

Iceland is an important base for Allied naval and air units protecting the convoys and in August 1941 the 33rd Pursuit (Fighter) Squadron arrives as one of the first American units on the island. Their land based Curtiss P-40s provide air defence around Iceland but later naval fighters are able to follow the convoys from America and all the way to Europe.



British merchant ship based Sea Hurricanes take off from catapults and ...



... then carrier based Fairey Fulmars are used for convoy protection but ...

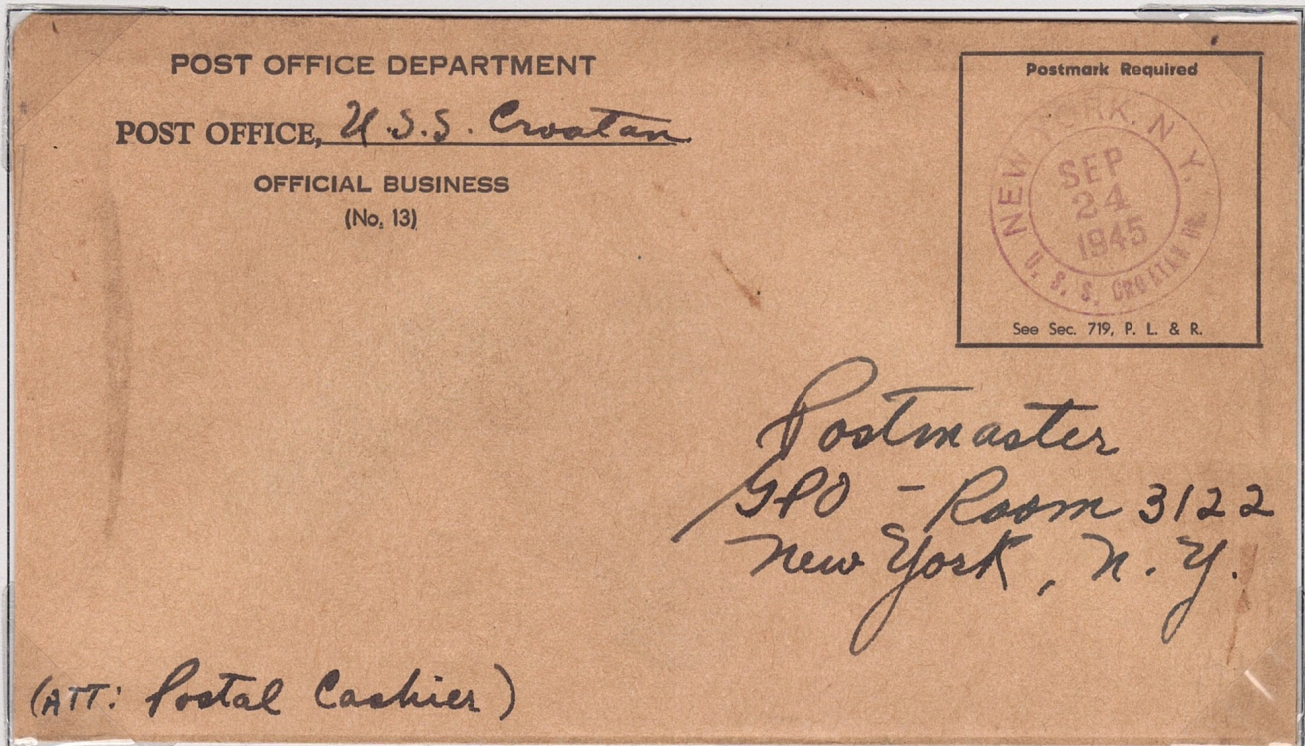


... they are later mostly replaced by better carrier based Grumman planes.

4. ... but later in the war, the fighter units play a major part in the victories ...

d. ... with improved air cover for the vital Atlantic sea lanes.

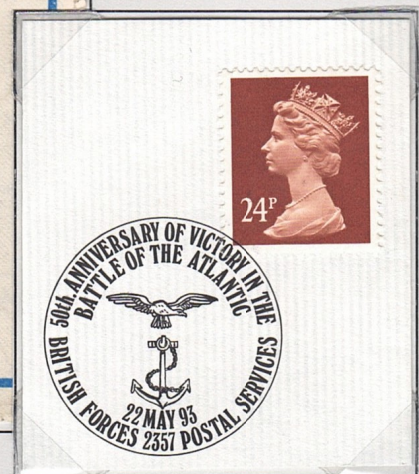
More Allied aircraft carriers become available



Official mail from the USS Croatan, a Bouge-class escort carrier equipped with 12 Grumman Wildcat fighters. The smaller but more quickly built escort carriers is the solution to provide Allied convoys with enough fighter cover ...



The "tombstone" censor hand stamp was in use from 17/12 1939 and up to the end of the war.



Censored air mail letter card from the Lend Lease carrier HMS Archer, the only Long Island-class escort carrier in use by the Royal Navy during WW II.

... to be able to neutralise the threat from German air and naval units...

... and during 1943 this is accomplished.

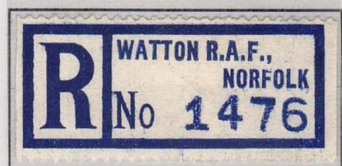
4. ... but later in the war, the fighter units make a great contribution to the victories ...

e. ... in the daylight bomber campaign high over Germany.

The US Eight Army Air Force operate in large numbers from British airfields



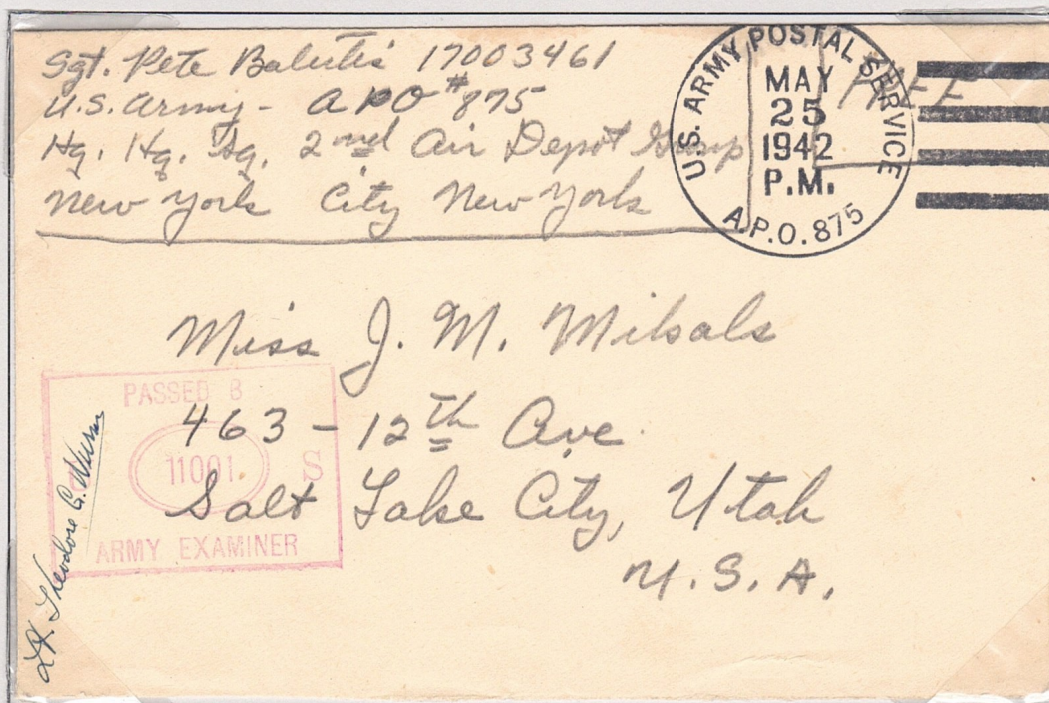
Operating from
British airfields ...



... in East Anglia, the
Eastern part of England ...



... the US Eight Army Air Force fly day missions with big four-
engined bombers with heavy armament and crews up to ten.



A very early example of US Army Air Corps mail from England, sent from APO 875 (2nd Air Depot Group, Kettering) on 25/5 1942, two days after its establishment and also the earliest date reported from APO 875 in the "Passed by Army censor" handbook (2006) by Richard Helbock. This free mail letter also has a standard "racetrack" censor hand stamp.

When the first small units of the Eight Army Air Force begin to arrive in England in May 1942 Army planners are sure that the bombers have good chances of survival over enemy territory.



But losses on many missions
are high and the bombers ...



... need escort deep
over German airspace ...

Perfin used by
Esso Petroleum
Co. 1952-1965

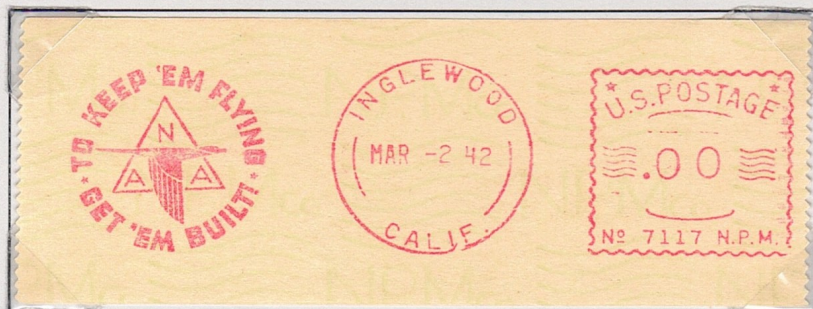


... by long range fighters
with big fuel capacity.

4. ... but later in the war, the fighter units make a great contribution to the victories ...

e. ... in the daylight bomber campaign high over Germany.

The North American P-51 Mustang becomes the main Allied escort fighter



Meter slogan proof printed on manufacturers proof paper.

The P-51 Mustang is the first fighter constructed by North American Aviation and is showing great potential already during the test flights.



The P-51 is able to escort bombers all the way ...



... from the bases in England to Berlin and back again.



Powered by the Packard built Merlin engine of British origin the P-51 becomes the ultimate escort fighter.




"Return to sender.." "Missing in action" h/s on a 6 cent concession air mail rate postal stationery envelope to Lt. Robson, APO 634 (Wellingborough, England), who became a POW when his bomber was shot down by a fighter on 13/11 1943. "US Army Postal Service Control Section 21/1 1944" and "New York N Y Grand Central Annex 9/2 1944" on reverse.

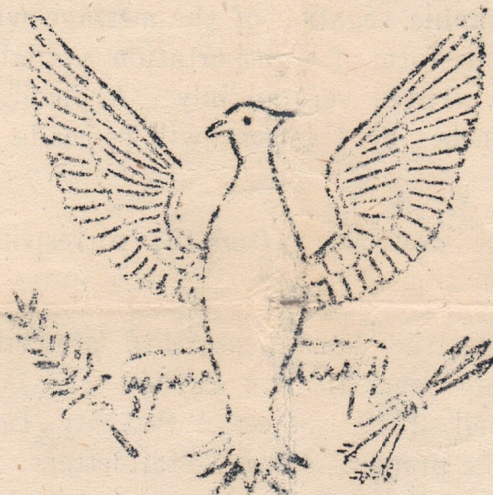


With six wing mounted machine guns, a top speed of 700 km/h and great manoeuvrability on top of great fuel capacity, the P-51 Mustang is the main reason for the decrease in losses of Allied bombers and aircrews during 1944-1945.

4. ... but later in the war, the fighter units make a great contribution to the victories ...

e. ... in the daylight bomber campaign high over Germany.



The American fighter groups finally win the air war over Germany

| | | |
|--|--|-----------------|
|  CENSORS STAMP | | SENDERS ADDRESS |
| | | DATE |



A Merry Xmas! Happy New Year!

4th FIGHTER GROUP



Original V-mail form

The 4th Fighter Group exchange their P-47s for P-51s in the spring of 1944 and finally become the highest scoring US Army Air Force fighter group of the war with over 1 000 enemy planes destroyed. The fighter groups finally win the air war over Germany by not only flying defensive escort missions but also offensive fighter sweeps that is inflicting the Luftwaffe irreplaceable losses.

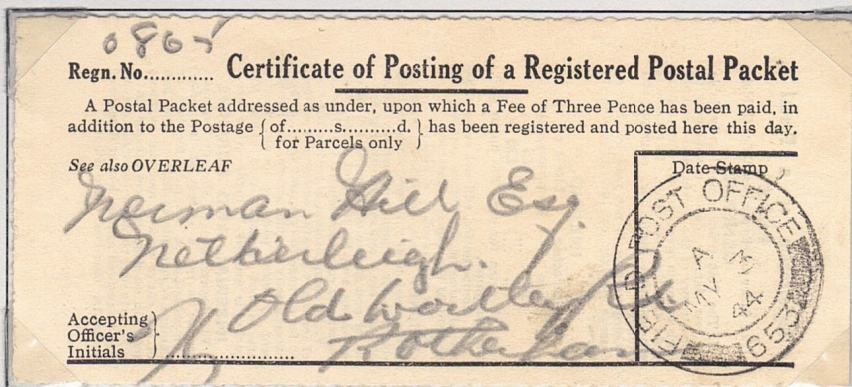
5. ... and in the end of the war, air supremacy has finally been reached ...

a. ... at the Anglo-American invasion of occupied France.

The D-Day invasion fleet is well protected by Allied fighters



At the D-Day invasion in Normandy in June 1944 the Allies have total domination in the air.



FPO 653 postmark, in use by the Canadian Army Postal Service 1942-1944, on a registered postal packet certificate.

Canadian fighter squadrons have gathered in England to provide air cover for one of the five landing sectors where Canadian troops are sent ashore.



Partly imperforated block of ten

Nearly 15 000 missions are flown by Allied aircraft on this day and for easy identification by the anti-aircraft batteries they ...



Free mail letter with "tombstone" censor hand stamp (in use 17/12 1939 to the end of the war) with message inside addressed from HMS Bulolo, a passenger ship rebuilt as a Landing Ship HQ, at D-Day commanding the operations on "Gold Beach".

At one of the two British landing sectors the fighter aircraft operations are led from the HMS Bulolo, a HQ ship carrying the commanders of the assault force including Air Force units led by an Air Staff Officer.



... are painted with clearly visible black and white stripes.

5. ... and in the end of the war, air supremacy has finally been reached ...

a. ... at the Anglo-American invasion of occupied France.

New versions of Spitfires and Mustangs are flying over Normandy



During the D-Day invasion some squadrons providing the Allied troops with air cover are still flying the Spitfire Mark V version ...



... although the better Mark IX is now also widely used as the main fighter version.



New and improved versions of photo reconnaissance Spitfires are also flying over Normandy.



Self censored 6 cent concession air mail rate letter from 7.5 victory ace Lieutenant Colonel John H. Lowell of the 384 Fighter Squadron, 364 Fighter Group. APO 557 in return address=Brampton Grange, England, APO 636 in postmark=HQ 8th Air Force Service Command, Honington, England.

The greatly improved D-version of the P-51 Mustang is also at this time introduced in the Eight Army Air Force. The pilots of the 364 Fighter Group use it with very good results over France during the second half of 1944.

5. ... and in the end of the war, air supremacy has finally been reached ...

a. ... at the Anglo-American invasion of occupied France.

Allied fighter bombers are vital for the Allied advance in France



Hawker Typhoons ...



... often armed with rockets
for ground attack ...



... are important for support of
the Allied armies in France.



The rare RAF base censor hand stamp type R20 number 13 (attached to 2nd TAF), of which only six items are recorded in the "Censorship in the RAF" handbook by Colley, Garrard and Muchall(2015). Also RAF censor h/s type R15 (in use August 1944-October 1945), only a few known from southern France, on an OAS postcard with FPO 111 postmark (Marseille).



Big and powerful Republic P-47
Thunderbolts of the US Ninth Army
Air Force are also very active in the ...

The 2nd Tactical Air Force has been created
only for ground support during the invasion
and they make good use of their Hawker
Typhoons after the D-Day landings.



... ground support role in France and
are often led via radio from modified
Sherman tanks at the frontline.

5. ... and in the end of the war, air supremacy has finally been reached ...

b. ... in the big Soviet summer offensive in Belorussia.

The Red Air Force has built up an overwhelming strength in numbers



Brown colour proof



Red colour proof



The Free French Normandie-Niemen regiment is one of many air units involved in the big Soviet offensive in Belorussia in June 1944, Operation Bagration, aiming at breaking through the central sector of the German frontline.



Air cover over the battlefield ...



... consists of more than 2 300 Soviet fighter aircraft, greatly outnumbering the Luftwaffe ...



... that over this part of the Eastern front only can call on less than 700 aircraft of all types.



Despite heavy losses the Red Army and Air Force quickly break through the German lines and reach the outskirts of Warsaw in the end of July, coming within striking distance to Berlin.



In the south Rumania change sides and pilots like 17 victory ace Traian Darjan join the Allies.

5. ... and in the end of the war, air supremacy has finally been reached ...

b. ... in the big Soviet summer offensive in Belorussia.

Soviet fighters have evolved to war winning aircraft



The Belorussian offensive does not only show the growing quantity but also the improved quality of Soviet airpower.

Parts of wood in the aircraft are now often replaced by metals like aluminium.

Stamp printed on aluminium foil
Hungary 1955



Over-inked lower margin

A new generation of Soviet fighters, like the fast and powerful Lavochkin La-7, an aerodynamically improved version of the La-5, ...



... and the development of the Yak-9, ...



... the fast and agile Yak-3, are more than a match for German fighters.



Die proof in black signed by the engraver Yves Beaujard

Some Normandy-Niemen pilots having earlier flown the Spitfire claims the Yak-3 to be better.



5. ... and in the end of the war, air supremacy has finally been reached ...

b. ... in the big Soviet summer offensive in Belorussia.

Soviet pilots make the most successful Allied aces



Though not as successful as many Luftwaffe aces often constantly in action over the target rich Eastern front, gifted commander Alexander Pokryshkin, involved in the summer operations in 1944 is credited with 59 victories.



The ultimate Allied ace of the war, Ivan Kozhedub, manages to score 62 victories flying Lavochkin fighters. Kozhedub is awarded the Hero of the Soviet Union title three times, just like Alexander Pokryshkin.



Double print flaw



Set-off

Perforation
flaw

The many flaws that made Soviet airmen inferior during early war years are now mostly history.

5. ... and in the end of the war, air supremacy has finally been reached ...

c. ... with the Japanese retreat towards their home islands.

The quality of Japanese pilots decrease as the war goes on



Original V-mail form

From the middle of 1943 it is obvious that there is a large decrease in the flying skills of Japanese replacement pilots as their training is cut short mainly by lack of aviation fuel. The US pilot training programmes on the other hand are not only producing frontline pilots in much larger numbers than Japan but also provide their airmen with longer and better training.

5. ... and in the end of the war, air supremacy has finally been reached ...

c. ... with the Japanese retreat towards their home islands.

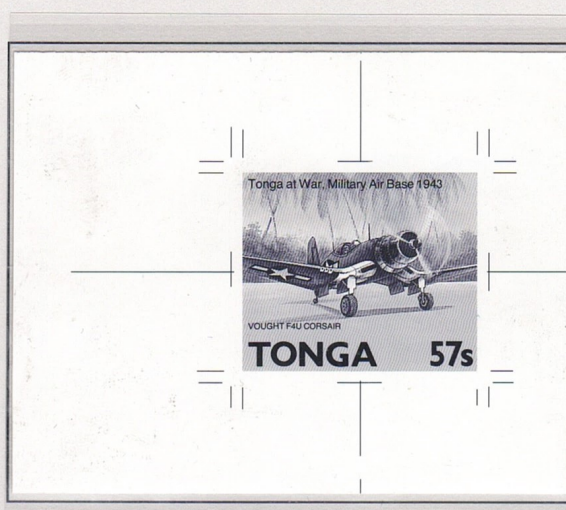
The Vought F4U Corsair becomes one of the best fighters of the war



In 1989 Walsall Security Printers produced a Vought F4U Corsair stamp for the Kingdom of Tonga.

*The process started by printing chromalin proofs on thick cardboard to check that all colours were correct. **This proof was only printed in 5 copies.***

Intended as a carrier based fighter but firstly used by land based Marine Corps squadrons due to problems landing on carrier decks the Vought F4U Corsair is finally ready for Navy use in April 1944.



*Next about 20 **monochrome proofs** were printed in black and white on thin card to check the design.*



*A plate proof sheet of **imperforate stamps** was then printed for a final check of any mistakes before the main printing run.*

The Corsair quickly proves superior to most Japanese fighters and is used both as a fighter and a ground attack aircraft.



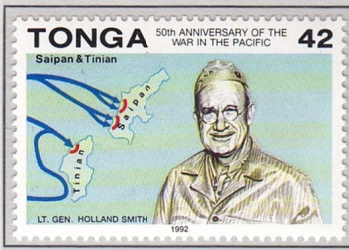
***Progressive colour proofs** were produced at several stages for checking purposes before the ordinary stamp printing run and a few stamps were overprinted "specimen" for promotional purposes.*

Faster than the Grumman Hellcat, despite using the same Pratt & Whitney engine, mostly armed with six machine guns and often bombs and rockets it is regarded as the best all-round fighter in the Pacific theatre.

5. ... and in the end of the war, air supremacy has finally been reached ...

c. ... with the Japanese retreat towards their home islands.

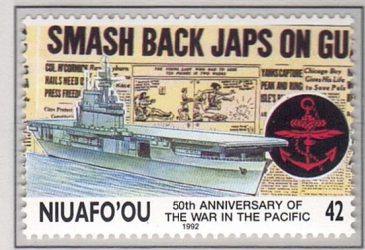
The battle of the Philippine Sea marks the end of Japanese naval air power



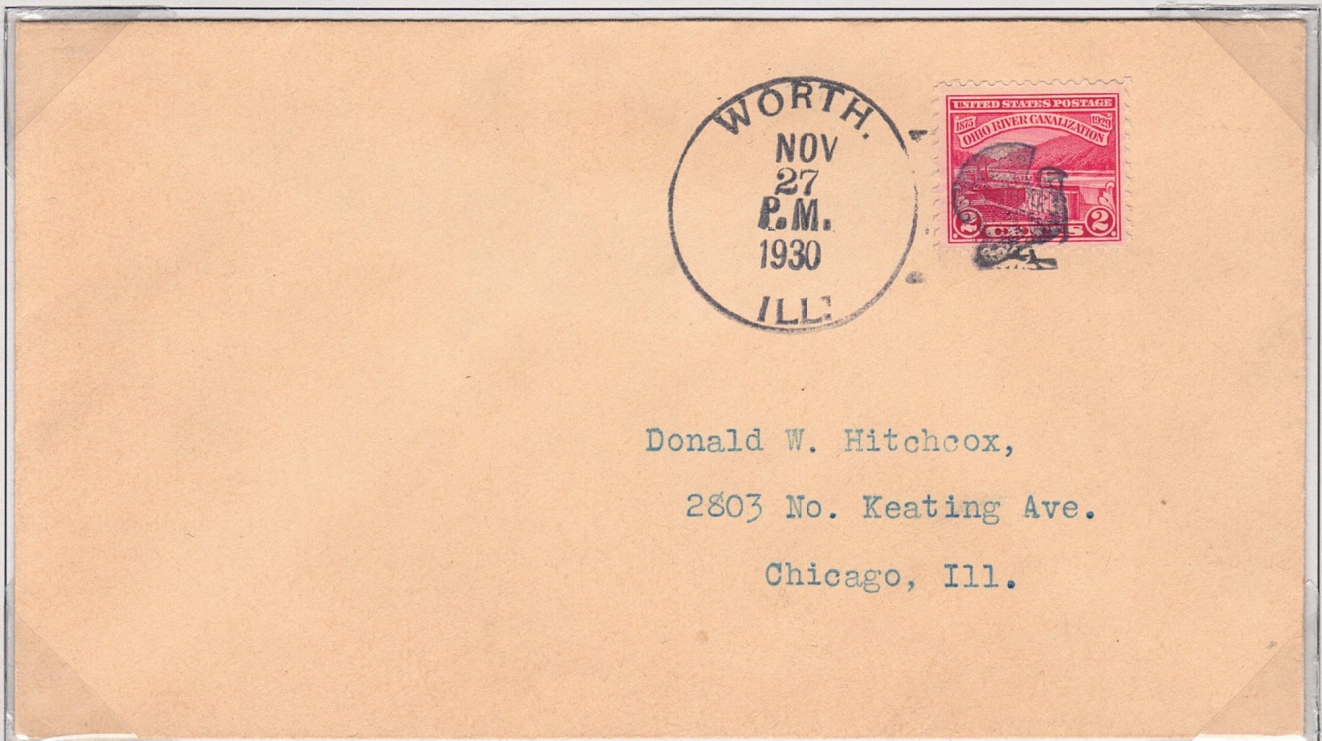
In June 1944 off the Mariana Islands ...



... large US and Japanese naval forces face each other ...



... in the largest aircraft carrier battle in history.



Fancy turkey cancel on a 2 cent domestic rate letter

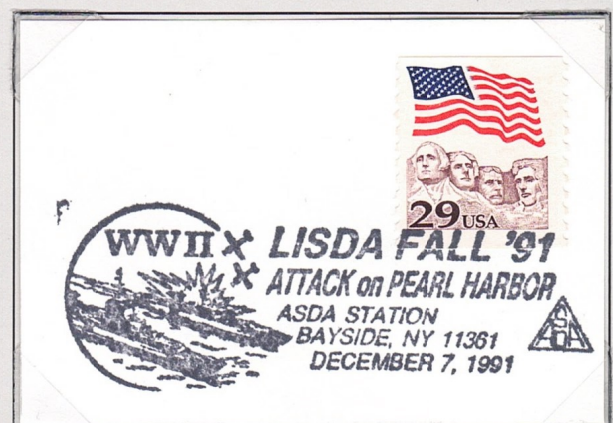
The battle of the Philippine Sea proves a disaster for the Japanese Navy as their aircraft carriers are now manned largely by inexperienced aircrews when many of the best pilots have been lost earlier in the war. Japan lose over 550 aircraft and 3 carriers in the battle also known as the "Great Marianas Turkey Shoot".



Perforation shift

The Commander in Chief of the US Pacific Fleet, Admiral Nimitz ...

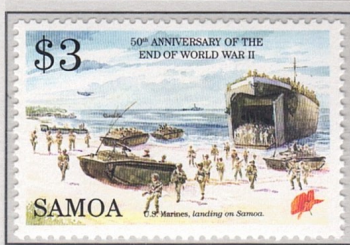
... can after the battle be sure that Japanese naval air power is now history.



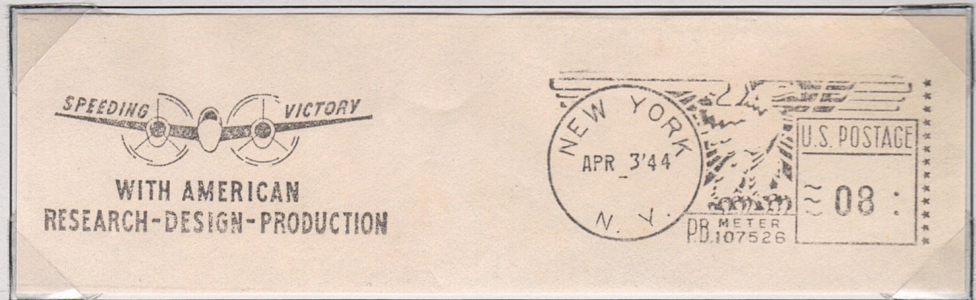
5. ... and in the end of the war, air supremacy has finally been reached ...

c. ... with the Japanese retreat towards their home islands.

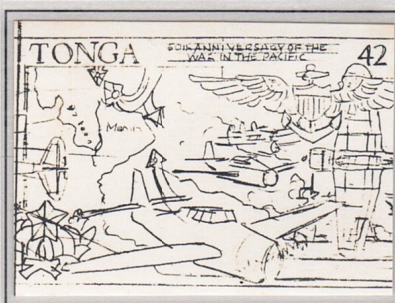
Allied fighter cover is vital for the Pacific island hopping campaigns



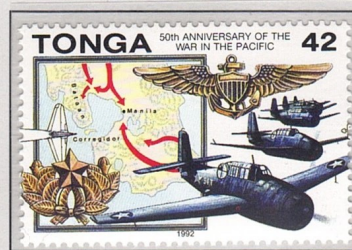
During 1944 US forces continue their conquest of the Pacific islands ...



... and the now superior aircraft of the American air units are vital for the victories.



Unique monochrome artist essay proof with minor differences compared to the released stamp.



The successful fighter aircraft clear the way for torpedo bombers ...



... and medium bombers during these campaigns.



Very unusual non-standard "Official Navy Censor" hand stamp on a 6 cent concession air mail rate postal stationery envelope with return address USN 907 = Hawkins Field, Tarawa, Gilbert Islands. Hawkins Field was built by the Japanese but taken over by US Marines and used by F4U Corsairs attacking the Marshall Islands in mid-44.

This strategy to move from island to island and use each as a base for capturing the next is called island hopping. It includes strong aerial support and less important islands are simply bypassed but neutralized by air attacks.

5. ... and in the end of the war, air supremacy has finally been reached ...

c. ... with the Japanese retreat towards their home islands.

The top scoring US pilots fly the Lockheed P-38 Lightning

10.000 Frs A GAGNER EN ACHETANT UN

RICKENBACKER

SEULES VOITURES AMÉRICAINES

6 Cylindres à 7 paliers 12 et 20 HP

8 Cylindres en ligne à 9 paliers 30 HP

vendues au
PRIX DE L'USINE
C. I. F. ANVERS

LES PLUS
COUTEUSES LA-BAS
LES MOINS CHÈRES ICI

Agence générale
RICKENBACKER
A. DEJONGHE, 58-60, Bd Ad. Max, Bruxelles. — Tél. 12082

PUBLICITY OFFICE, 60, rue d'Angleterre, Bruxelles
Publicité Enveloppes chèques postaux, annonces murales,
Trains et toutes Publicités.

PAPETERIES GODIN A HUY
Papiers d'écriture et d'impression, Cahiers et Enveloppes
Fabrique spéciale de Papiers à Cigarettes



In the Pacific the Lockheed P-38 Lightning is in demand for long range missions ...

On address side p/m Bruxelles
cheques/Brussel checks 26/6 1926

Reverse side of a Belgian free postal giro envelope with advertisement for the Rickenbacker car which was produced by the company led by former race car driver and WW I ace pilot Eddie Rickenbacker 1922-1927.

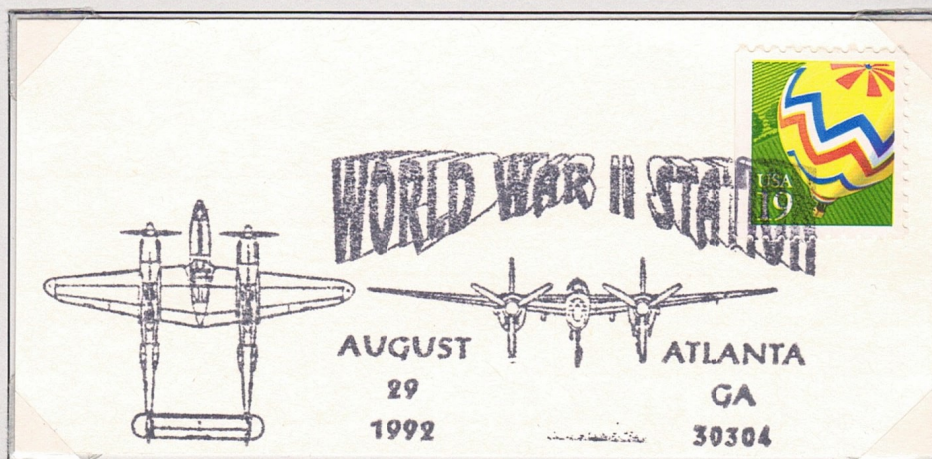
... and it is also the fighter flown by the American top aces against Japan. In April 1944 Richard Bong surpasses Eddie Rickenbacker's record of 26 planes shot down. He will eventually end the war as Americas ace of aces with 40 victories.



It is the only US fighter in production throughout ...



... the US involvement in the war.



The size of the P-38 makes it less agile than one-engined fighters but in fast hit and run style attacks it is superior with high speed and heavy armament.

5. ... and in the end of the war, air supremacy has finally been reached ...

d. ... when the last desperate German resistance is broken.

Many V-1 weapons are destroyed by Allied fighters



After the D-Day invasion many British fighters are transferred from Normandy for a new task, ...

... to assist in the destruction of Hitler's latest terror weapon, the fast and low flying V-1 rockets mainly launched at London.



The V-1 rockets, known as "buzz bombs", are causing much damage but many are destroyed by British fighters with their guns or simply by using their wingtip to send the V-1 into an uncontrolled dive.



The first Allied operational jet fighter, the Gloster Meteor, is well suited for V-1 missions ...



... as well as the Hawker Tempest, developed from the Hawker Typhoon ...



... and the Spitfire Mark XII with clipped wings for high speed at low level.

5. ... and in the end of the war, air supremacy has finally been reached ...

d. ... when the last German desperate resistance is broken.

An increasing lack of aviation fuel is a big problem for the Luftwaffe



US bombers continue their operations at daylight ...



... and during night time British bombers follow up their attacks.

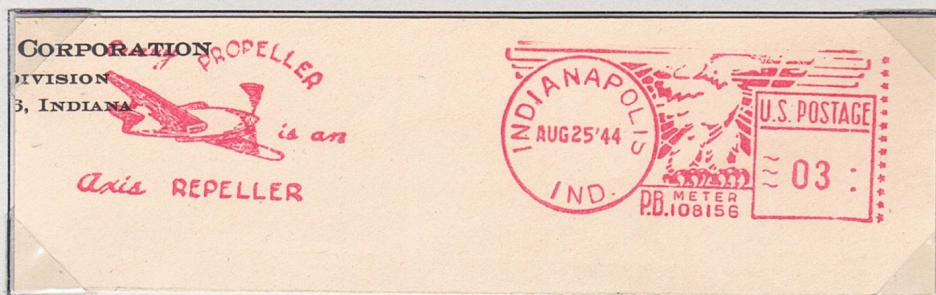


In the middle of 1944 the bomber crews are often directed ...



Free mail from one of the very few Luftwaffe pilots to fly the rocket powered Messerschmitt Me 163 in combat, Oberfeldwebel Friedrich-Peter Husser. Having shot down several B 17 bombers flying the Fw 190, he was injured in a landing accident with the Me 163 in October 1944 flying with Jagdgeschwader 400 against Allied bomber formations.

... against the synthetic oil plants left to produce the vital aviation fuel. The extremely fast and novel Messerschmitt Me 163 Komet rocket interceptor is used for the defence but it is only built in small numbers and pilot accidents are plentiful.



The P-51 Mustang continues to perform very well in the escort fighter role during the bombing campaign against the German oil industry and very soon the Luftwaffe ...



... become even more outnumbered because of lack of aviation fuel.

5. ... and in the end of the war, air supremacy has finally been reached ...

d. ... when the last German desperate resistance is broken.

German jet fighters arrive too late to win back control of the skies



After years of intense studies of jet propulsion and airframe development by German scientists and aircraft designers but also delayed by official disinterest and interference from Hitler himself, ...



Free mail from field post number L 31517, 2. Staffel Jagdgeschwader 7, the first jet fighter wing in the world, as well as the most successful jet fighter unit in wartime Luftwaffe, equipped with the Messerschmitt Me 262.

... in July 1944 the formidable Messerschmitt Me 262 becomes operational and quickly gives the Luftwaffe a fighter superior to everything flying on the Allied side. With a top speed of 870 km/h and heavily armed, it is a lethal weapon but thanks to Allied strength in numbers, the Me 262 is often shot down at take off or landing.

5. ... and in the end of the war, air supremacy has finally been reached ...

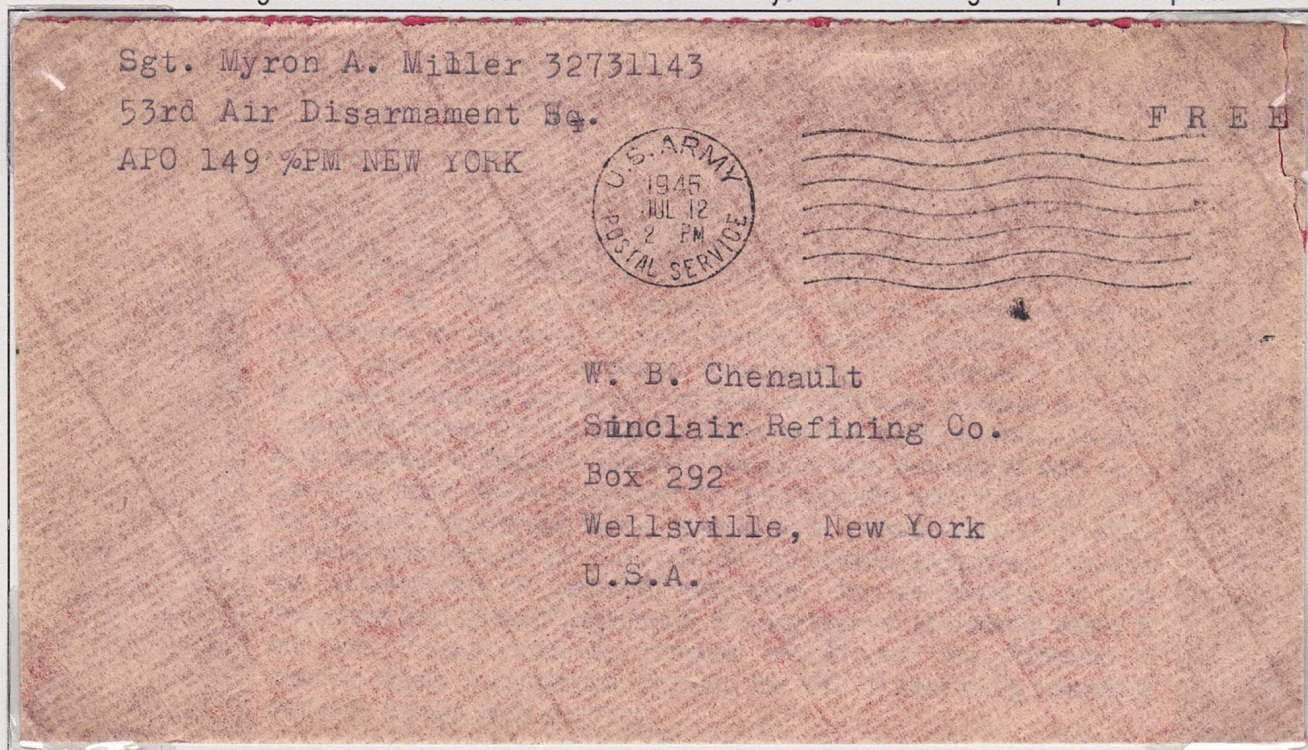
d. ... when the last desperate German resistance is broken.

The Luftwaffe is a shadow of its former glory in the last days of the Third Reich



Late free mail from FP number L 55319, III Gruppe Jagdgeschwader 300, a night/day defence of the Reich unit that lost many experienced aces during the last year of the war.

... the remaining Luftwaffe units are at the start of the last war year in real shortage of experienced pilots.



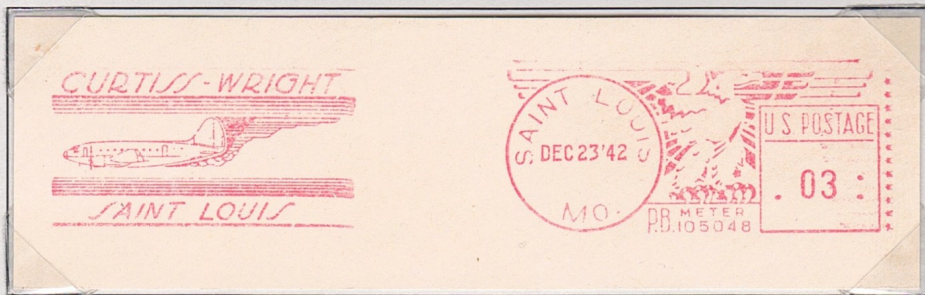
Unusual return address of the 53rd Air Disarmament Squadron on a free mail letter from APO 149=HQ IX Air Service Command, based in Luxembourg, Luxembourg in July 1945. Not censored as the war in Europe had ended.

Before and after the German surrender in May 1945 special Allied units are tidying up abandoned Luftwaffe bases with focus on finding and examining German jet technology and identifying new inventions important to their own forces.

5. ... and in the end of the war, air supremacy has finally been reached ...

e. ... during the final months before the Japanese surrender.

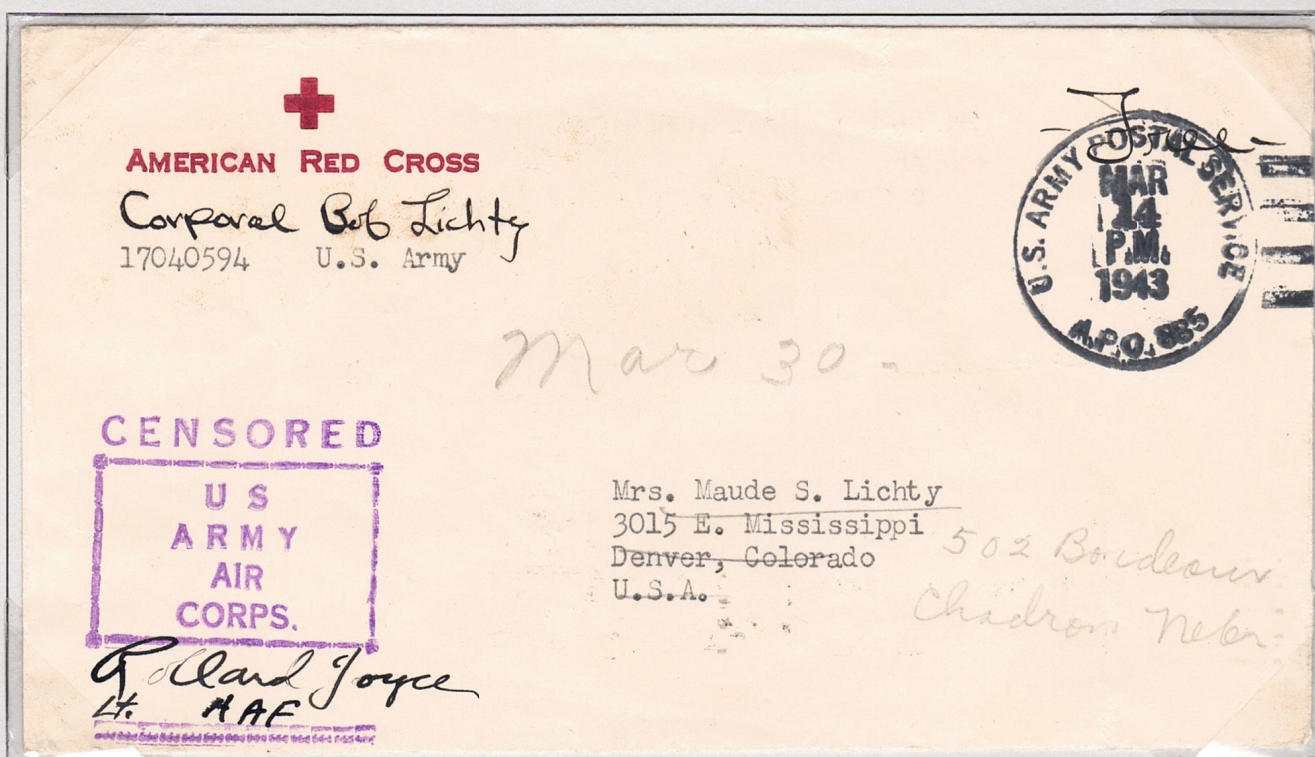
Japanese airpower is defeated in the China Burma India Theatre



Fighter operations in the China Burma India Theatre is from the beginning of the war focused on escorting transport aircraft with vital supplies over the Himalayas ...



... and providing air cover for the Burma road, both bringing necessary help to the Chinese front.



Very late usage of the "US Army Air Corps" provisional boxed censor mark. Richard Helbock's "Passed by Army censor" handbook (2006) states that this CBI theatre censor mark is known between 3/8 - 17/9 1942 only and is "extremely scarce". This free mail letter however is postmarked 14/3 1943 with a Denver, Colorado machine cancellation on the reverse dated 29/3 1943. APO 885=HQ Tenth Air Force New Delhi, India (June 1942-March 1946).

The US Tenth Air Force with headquarters in New Delhi in India is initially responsible for all air combat operations in this theatre and are later joined by the US Fourteenth Air Force as Allied air power in the area is growing stronger.



General Claire Chennault, the leader of ...



... the "Flying Tigers" are joined by air units with ...



... better planes like the P-61 Black Widow night fighter ...

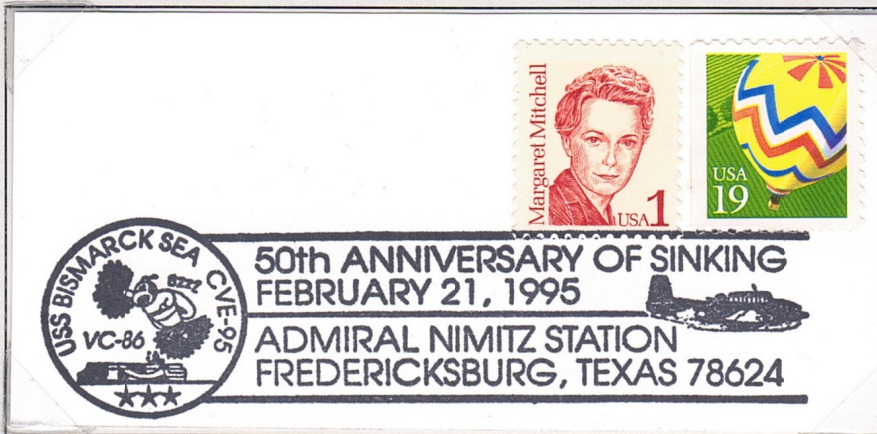


... and improved Spitfire versions at the war's end.

5. ... and in the end of the war, air supremacy has finally been reached ...

e. ... during the final months before the Japanese surrender.

Japanese suicide pilots can not change the outcome of the war



From the end of 1944, suicide missions is a final desperate Japanese way to attack Allied warships, especially aircraft carriers. The USS Bismarck Sea is lost in such an attack in February 1945, which are often made with old aircraft ...



White dot flaw

... as output of newer ones like the Kawasaki Ki-61 is slowed down by bombing raids.



To counter this threat fighter cover for the Allied fleets is increased, often in the shape of carrier based squadrons flying the Vought F4U Corsair.



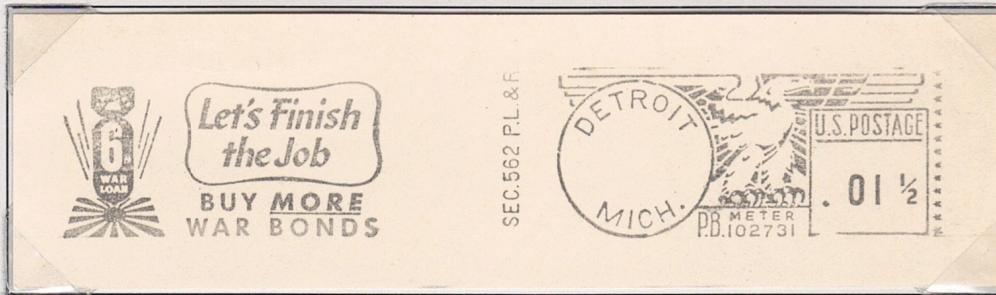
Letter with explanatory label that it has been accidentally damaged in the post, probably in a letter box fire.

Large fires are often the result if a Japanese pilot manages to crash his plane into a carrier flight deck but despite that thousands of suicide, or kamikaze, missions are flown, only three US carriers are sunk and they are quickly replaced.

5. ... and in the end of the war, air supremacy has finally been reached ...

e. ... during the final months before the Japanese surrender.

Japanese military production has been bombed into ruins when the war ends



Set-off

... the Japanese aviation industry that is slowly fading away.

In the last year of the war the massive American bombing campaign with B-29 bombers from the Marianas destroys much of the Japanese cities as well as ...

APO 86 was in operation on Iwo Jima, the Bonin Islands (8th Station Hospital), from 14 March 1945 to 30 October 1948

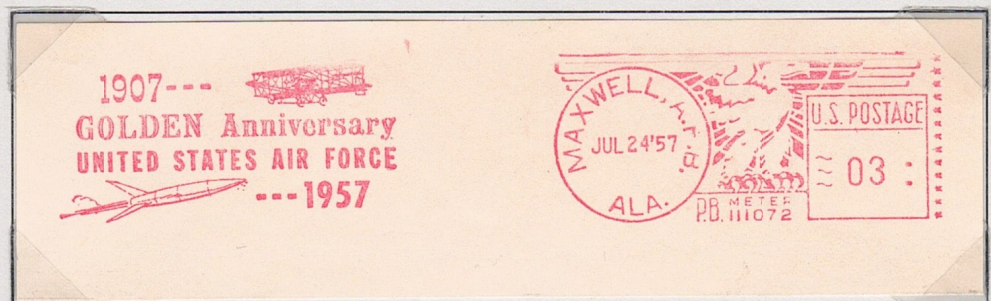


Very early campaign mail from Iwo Jima with APO 86 return address. As this 6 cent concession air mail rate letter was sent from Iwo Jima during the first days of March 1945, about one and a half week before Army Post Office 86 was in operation on the island, it had to be censored and sent via the US Navy. The letter's sender, Cpl. Brenneman, was a VII Fighter Command forward ground observer who helped target enemy positions for air strikes from Army and Navy aircraft.

When Iwo Jima is captured by US forces in March 1945 after fierce battles the VII Fighter Command use the island and its airfields for successful Very Long Range (VLR) B-29 bomber escort missions against Japan with their P-51 Mustangs.



The B-29 with the atomic bomb put an end to the war in the air ...



... that started almost six years earlier with biplanes not too different from World War I fighters and ends with jet fighters as well as rocket engines and rocket armament.