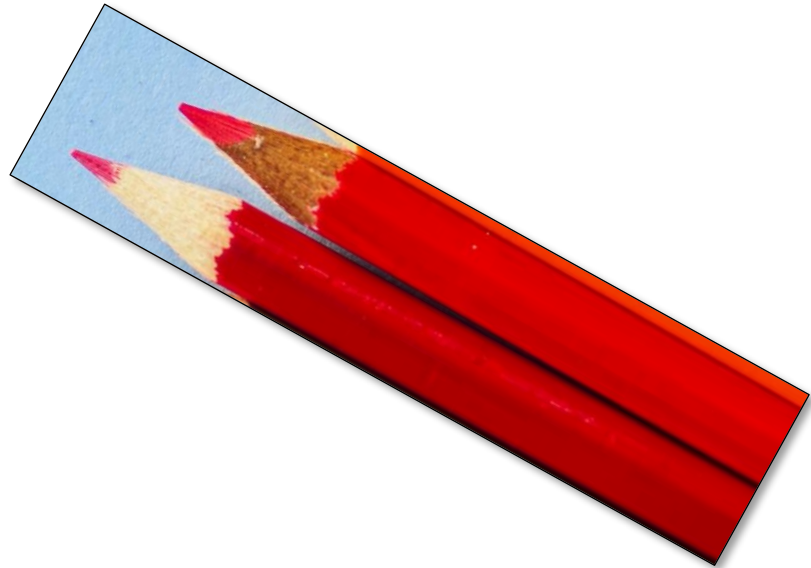


West Africa Study Circle

Civil Censorship in Gambia World War II



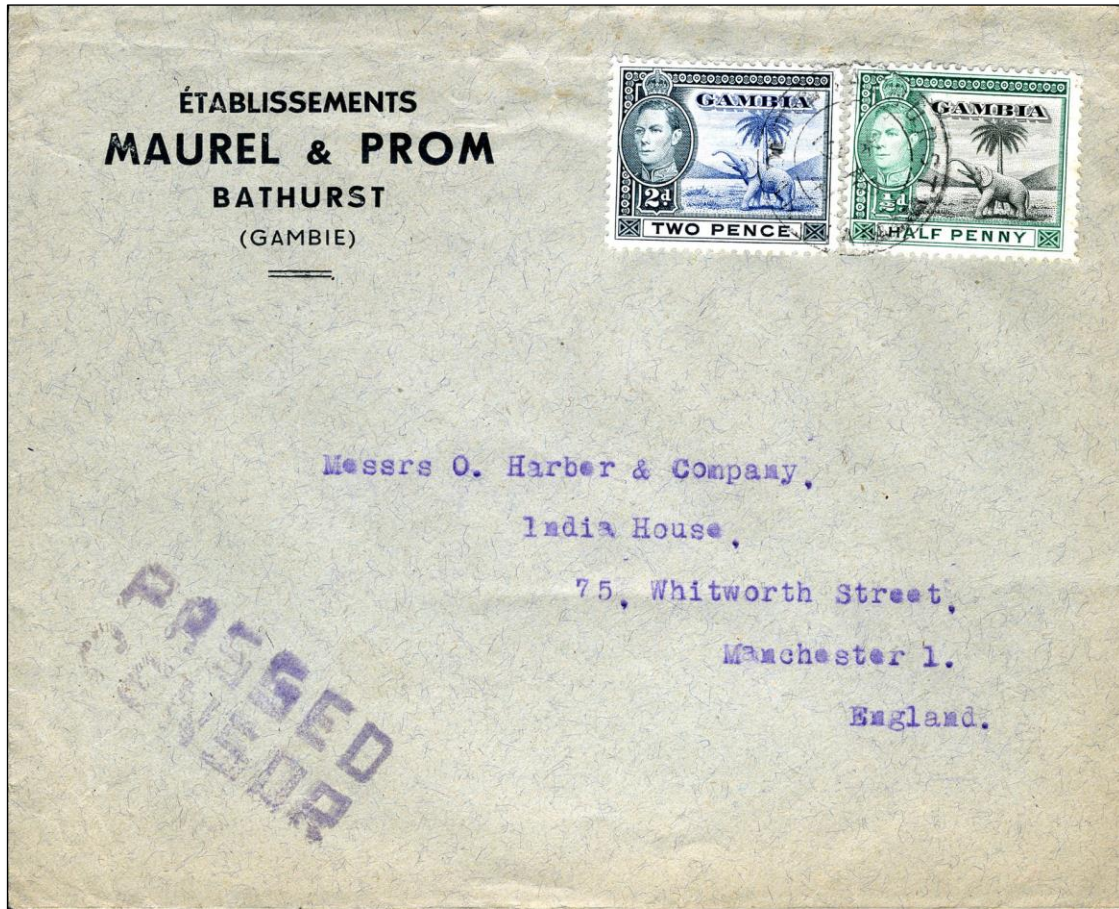
Frank Walton RDP FRPSL

6 March 2021

Background

- Gambia very similar to other peer countries at beginning of WWII:
 - Civil labels from 1 Sep 1939
 - Civil handstamps from 4 Mar 1941
- All changed in Feb 1942 with arrival of team of five Imperial Censors
- Reverted to local only from summer 1942.

Early Civil Handstamps



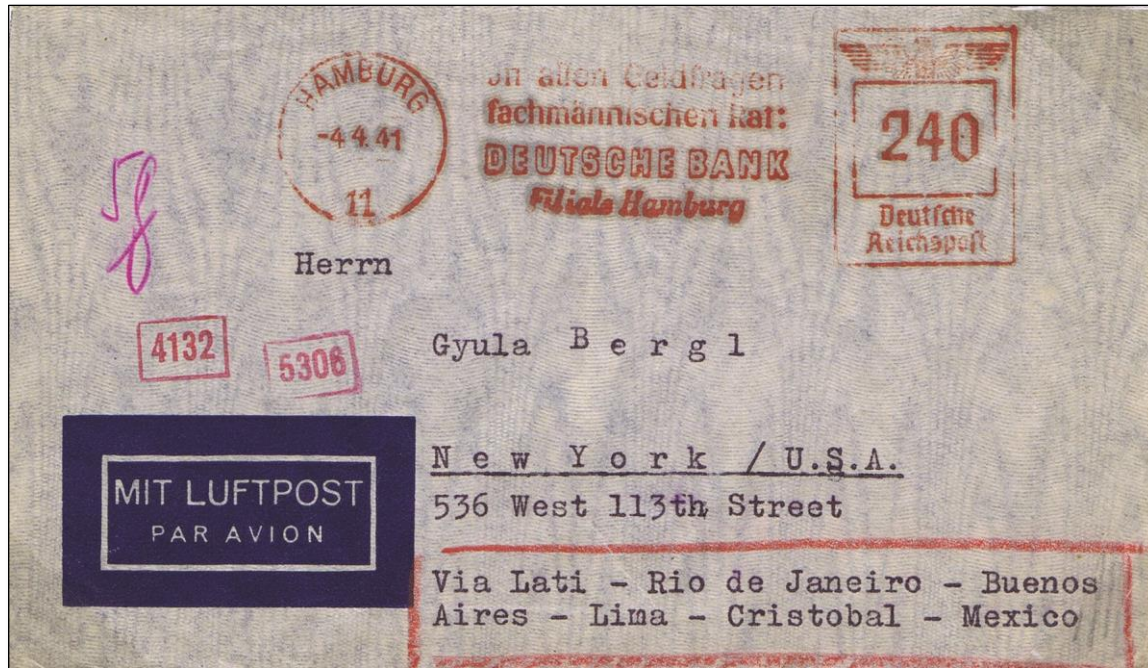
19 April 1941



30 July 1941

Type 1 & Type 2 Civil Handstamps

LATI Service



4 April 1941. Germany to USA avoiding allied censorship



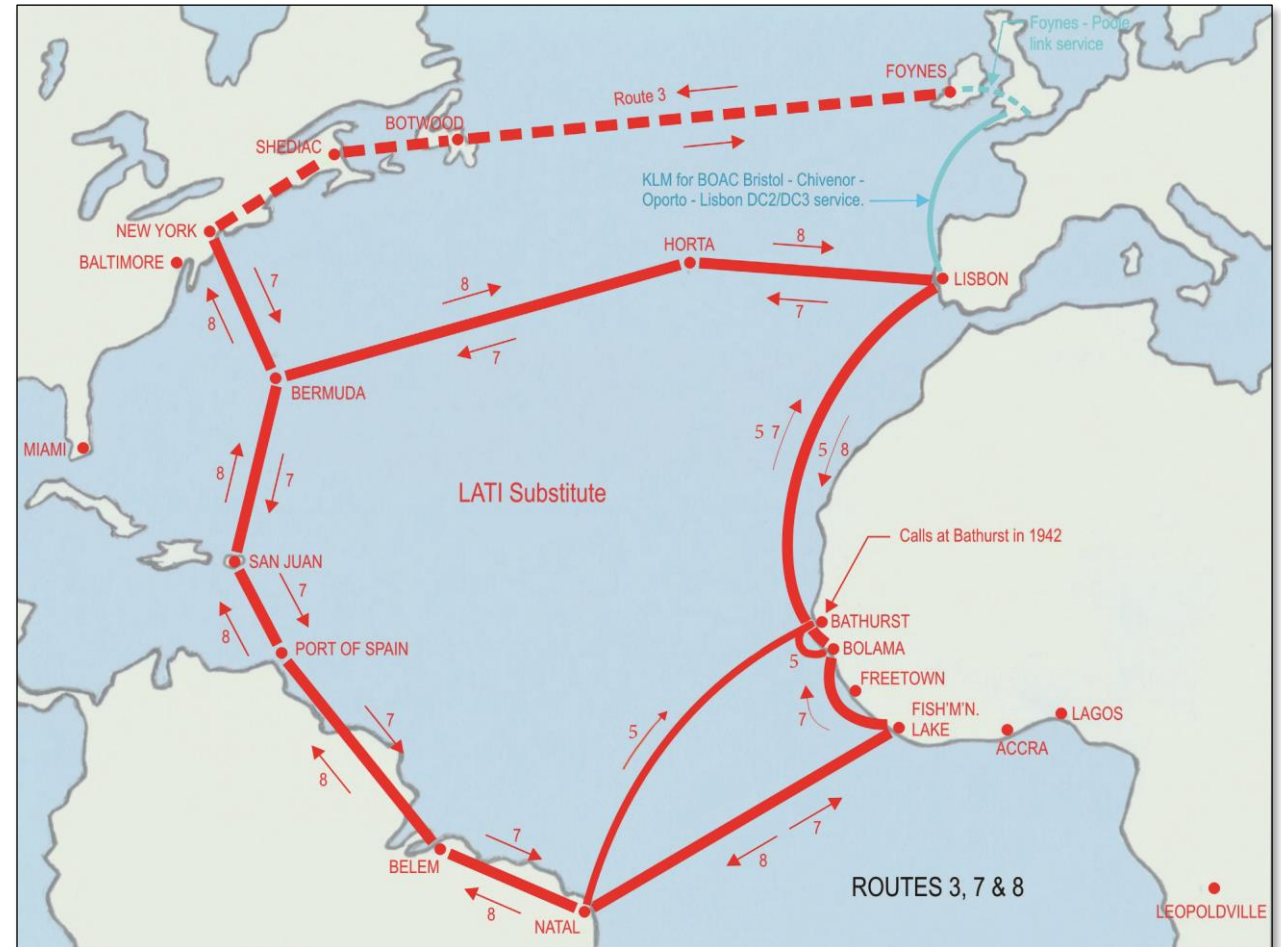
LATI Route

USA Enters the War

- Pearl Harbour...
- USA ceased supplying fuel to LATI in Brazil, instantly closing the service
- Pan Am 'LATI Substitute' service commenced
- Agreement to intercept mail at Bathurst for inspection by allies.

Pan Am LATI Substitute Spring 1942

- Two basic options:
 - Northern Routes 7 & 8 via Lisbon to be censored in Bermuda
 - Southern Routes 5, 7 & 8 via Lisbon to be censored in Bathurst
- At least, that was the plan...



Map after Peter Wingent: thanks!

Planned Operations at Bathurst

- Mail to be split into three groups
 - ‘Non-enemy’ transit mail to be censored as best as possible and forwarded to destination as soon as possible
 - ‘Enemy’ transit mail to be separated and forwarded to London by BOAC route from Lagos which called at Bathurst
 - Terminal mail, i.e. to or from Gambia, to be ignored by Imperial Censors
- But...

Calls at Bathurst

- Concerns raised
 - Political pressure from Brazil re interception of mail
 - Commercial pressure re delay in transit times
- Most flights did not call at Bathurst
 - Route 5: 3 called, 11 missed
 - Route 7: 5 called, 7 missed
 - Route 8: 4 called, 8 missed
 - In total, only 12 of 38 flights between January and July 1942 called at Bathurst for allied censorship.

British Imperial Censors sent to Bathurst

Numbers
used:

- 5453
- 5524
- 5960
- 6185
- 7219

"JAARSTROOM"		Dutch	Allocated to Elder, Dempster Lines Ltd.	VAN OS	1494	-	-	FOREIGN													
<p>I hereby Certify that the Provisions actually laden on board this Ship are sufficient, according to the requirements of the Merchant Shipping Acts, for.....Statute Adults for a voyage of.....days. Date of Departure.....19..... (Signature) <i>Robinson</i> Master. Date.....19.....</p>																					
<p>NAMES AND DESCRIPTIONS OF BRITISH PASSENGERS EMBARKED AT THE PORT OF.....</p>																					
(1) Contract Ticket Number	(2) Port at which Passengers have contracted to land	(3) NAMES OF PASSENGERS	(4) CLASS (Whether 1st, 2nd, Tourist or 3rd)	(5) AGES OF PASSENGERS								(6) Last Address in the United Kingdom	(7) Profession, Occupation, or Calling of Passengers	(8) Country of last Permanent Residence*						(9) Country of Intended Future Permanent Residence*	
				Adults of 12 years and upwards				Child- ren be- tween 1 and 12		In- fants				England	Wales	Scotland	Northern Ireland	Ire	Other parts of the British Empire		Foreign Countries
				Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females										
A 6 875	FREETOWN	Mark McFarlane	Cabin	38							"Croft Cottage, Dark Lane, Kingsley Cheshire.	Govt. Official 1							GAMBIA		
✓6 873	FREETOWN	William W. Cramb	Cabin	55							58, Sewerby Street, Moss Side, Manchester	Govt. Offl. 1	1						GAMBIA		
✓6 872	FREETOWN	Richard George Bale	Cabin	33							22 Brompton Av., Liverpool, 17.	Govt. Offl. 1	1						GAMBIA		
✓6 877	FREETOWN	Frederick Edward Warren	Cabin	40							"Oakland", Irby Rd. Heswall, Cheshire	Govt. Offl. 1	1						GAMBIA		
✓6 874	FREETOWN	Edward Oswald Jacobs	Cabin	55							11, King's Avenue, Meots, Wirral, Ches.	Govt. Offl. 1	1						GAMBIA		
A/6 876	FREETOWN	Kenneth Martin Frederick Quintaba	Cabin	20							24, Highlands Gdns. Ilford, Essex.	Govt. Offl. 1	1						GAMBIA		

Arrived at Bathurst on 12 Feb 1942, via Freetown

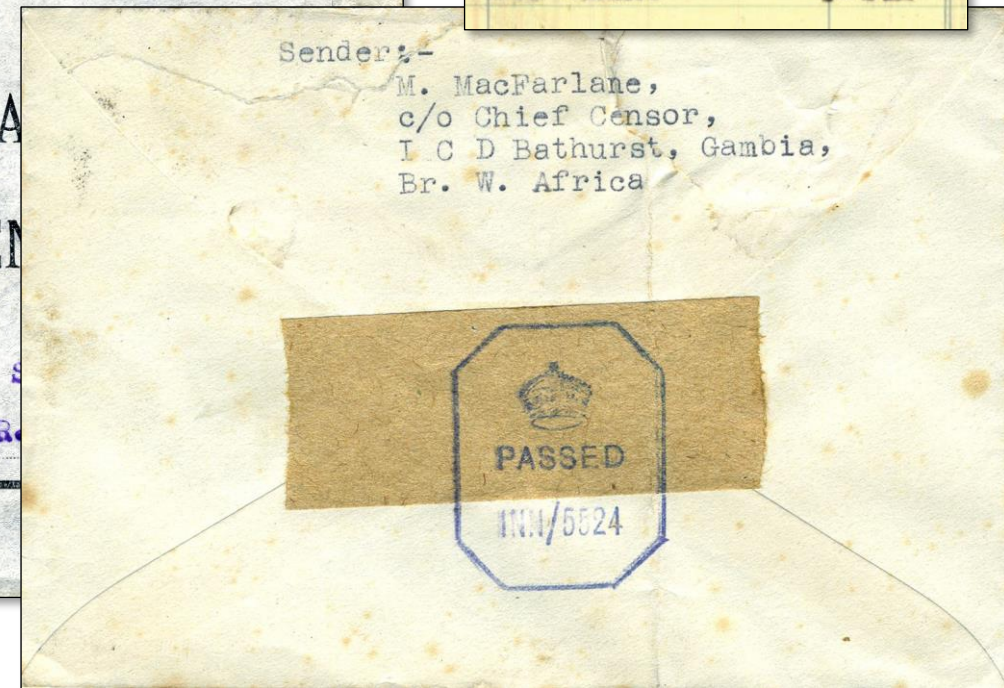
Labels used by Imperial Censors at Bathurst



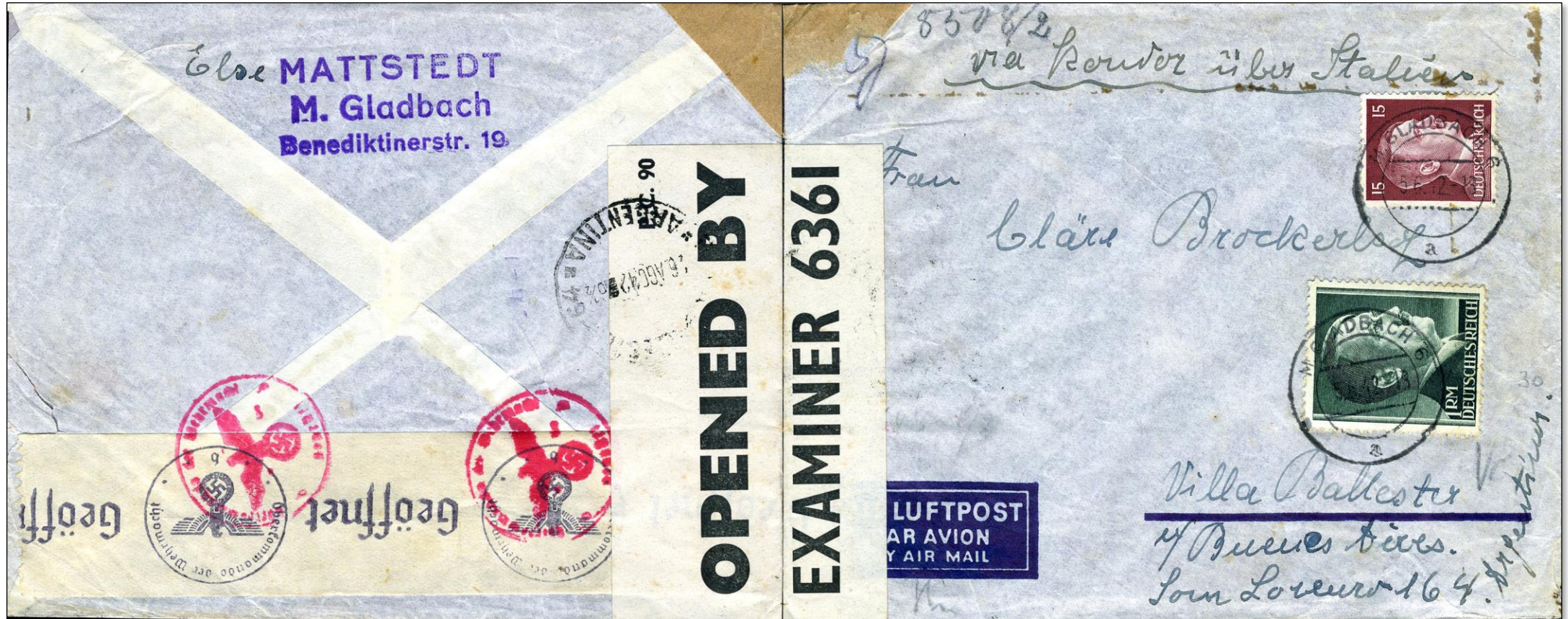
Handstamps used by Imperial Censors at Bathurst



NAMES OF PASSENGERS	CLASS (Whether 1st, 2nd, Tourist or 3rd)
Mark McFarlane	Cabin



Enemy Mail Forwarded to London



5 June 1942 - Germany to Argentina. Censored in Berlin, then (probably) by Pan Am Flight 8008 from Lisbon destined for Natal. Intercepted in Bathurst and forwarded to London where it was censored by Examiner 6361. Likely to have been sent to New York by Pan Am Route 3, then FAM 6 to Argentina.

Enemy Mail Forwarded to London



8 July 1942 - Germany to Argentina. Censored in Berlin, then by Pan Am Flight 8012 from Lisbon to Natal, but intercepted in Bathurst and forwarded to London where it was censored by Examiner 824. CONDEMNED by London censor and RELEASED at the end of the war.

Demise of Bathurst Censorship

- By July 1942 it was decided that the delays caused by censorship in Bathurst were unacceptable
- The San Juan agreement came into force, and allied censorship moved to Puerto Rico
- The Imperial censor team in Bathurst was redeployed in December 1942.

Any Questions?