

This frame contains a range of censored mail originating in the smaller islands of the British West Indies during World War II. Their special feature is that they were all "open" items, mostly postcards, but also window envelopes or unsealed envelopes containing circulars or cards. As such they did not have to be opened and re-sealed but merely "Passed" by the censorship officers. A standard handstamp of British manufacture was issued to nearly all the islands bearing a crown in an upright octagonal frame above the word "Passed". Below this was printed the colony code, a one or two letter code (which was different for each colony) leaving a space for the censor to write in his or her individual censor number. Not all the censorship offices used the octagonal mark in the way intended, as shown in a few cases in this frame. Many of these marks are scarce and several are the only examples of their type recorded. For one or two of the Caribbean islands, no octagonal marks have yet been seen, although it seems likely that the handstamps were delivered to all

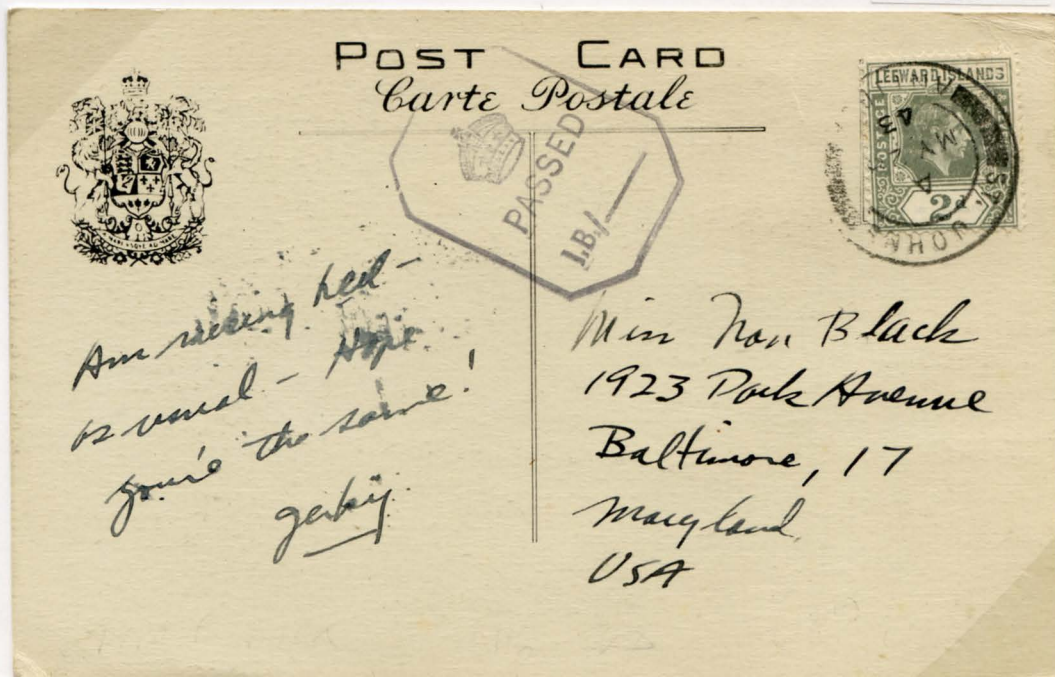
of them.



Antigua

B was the Antigua code and IB would normally signify transit censorship.

26 May 1943



EKD of Burrows S4.

Customers had the right to take their unopened mail to the Post Office and have it examined by the postal clerk on duty. Acting as the censor, the clerk would indicate that the item had passed by applying the octagonal hand-stamp, usually across the back-flap of the cover.

Censoring open mail in the BWI

Antigua

The Antiguan censors did not appear to use the octagonal handstamp as it was conventionally used by most other colonies.

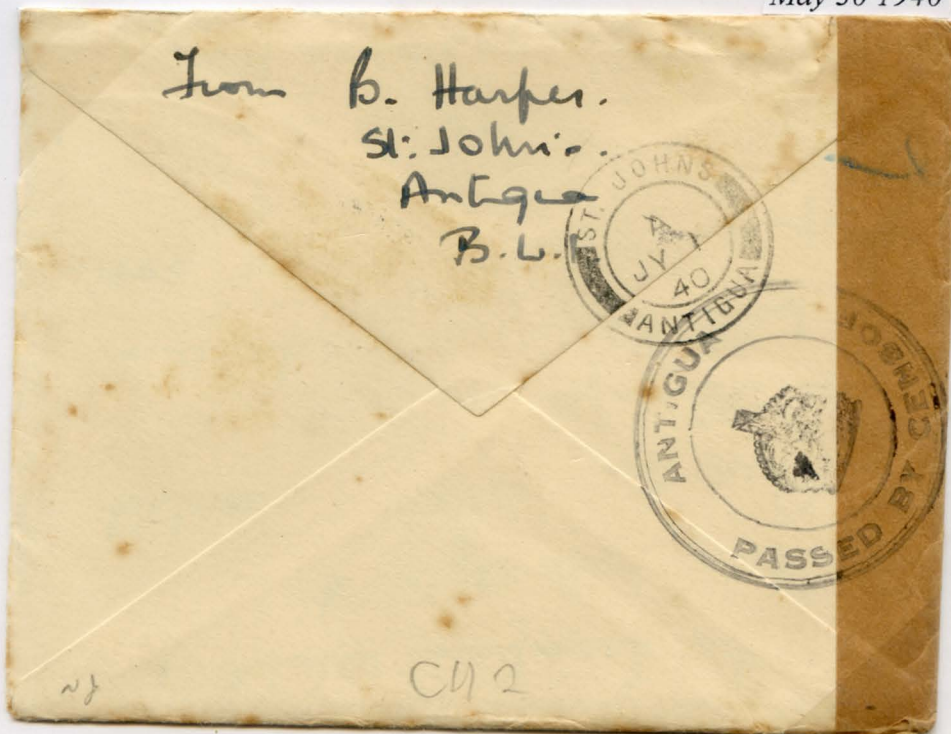
24 Jan 1943



Octagonal B/100 hand-stamp Burrows type S3 on cover to Antigua from USA with ms 2 signifying the censor's personal number.

Incorrect usage of the "Passed" handstamp

May 30 1940



Cover to Belgium but returned to Antigua with boxed "No service Return to Sender". Censored on return in Antigua on 1 July 1940 and marked Burrows Crown Passed type S1.

Censoring open mail in the BWI

Bahamas

27 Oct 1944



Postcard to Cannes censored with an octagonal "Passed" handstamp. The "IG" code was allocated to Bahamas. This is the last date recorded for this scarce mark.

26 Jan 1942



Window envelope from Bahamas, passed by a censor using an octagonal handstamp with a UK code (Torrance and Morenweiser type H2d).

The village markings of ANTIGUA

BARNES HILL

EKD 15 Feb 1939



Fe ??



LKD ? Apr 1939



A.W. Morley.
46 Carnforth Ave.
Castleton.
Rochdale.

Barnes Hill, Bethesda and Newfield are a mystery. Sub-POs for each were opened in the 1880s and closed on 1 Jan 1932. No cancels have been seen during those periods, but several post-dated items, including at least four covers, survive. Were they cancelled by favour?

BETHESDA

7 Apr 1939 (only date known)



A.W. Morley.
46 Carnforth Ave.
Castleton.
Rochdale.

One additional cover recorded

These covers to Morley are regarded with suspicion but they are addressed in different hands.

The Village markings of ANTIGUA



NEWFIELD

LKD 9 Oct 1939



Oct 7



EKD 7 Apr 1939

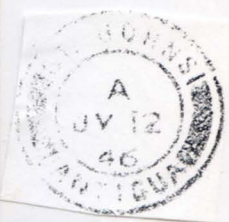
Surface mail to the UK, correctly rated.



ST PHILIPS

11 Jul 1946

EKD 11 Jul 1946
LKD 14 Nov 1946



backstamp

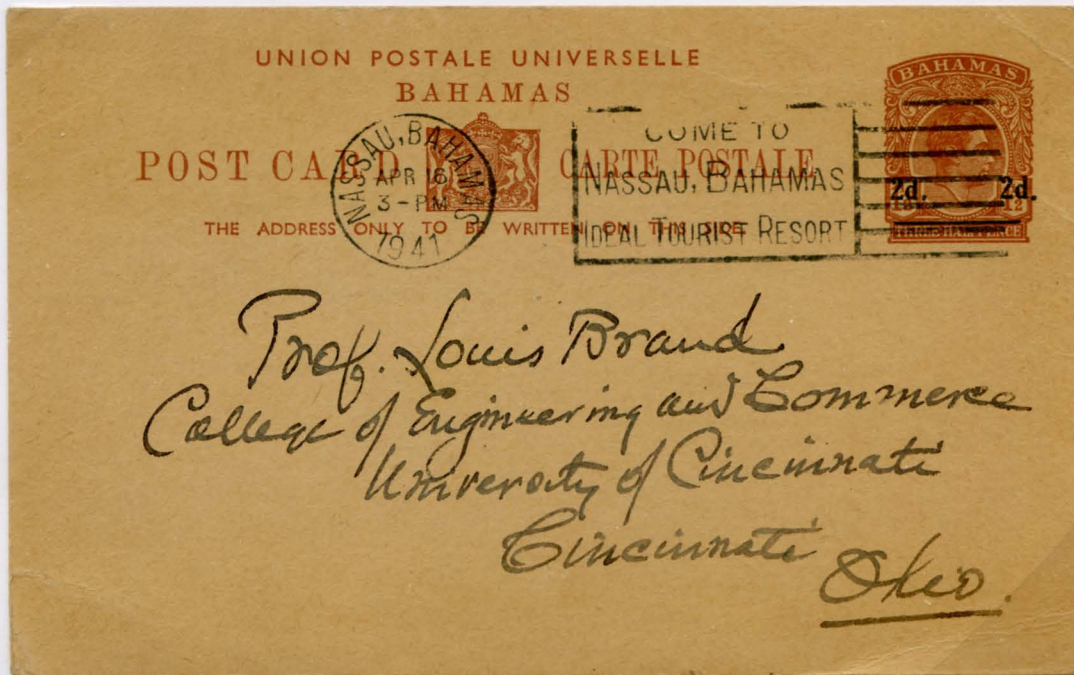
Office closed in 1948

St Philips (previously Montpelier) to New Jersey.

Bahamas
1940 Provisional postcard

In 1940 the postcard rate was raised to 2d but supplies were slow in arriving so a few existing 1 1/2d cards were overprinted 2d. Unused examples used to be rare until a stock of about ten were released in 1980. Used have always been rarities.

Ap 16 1941



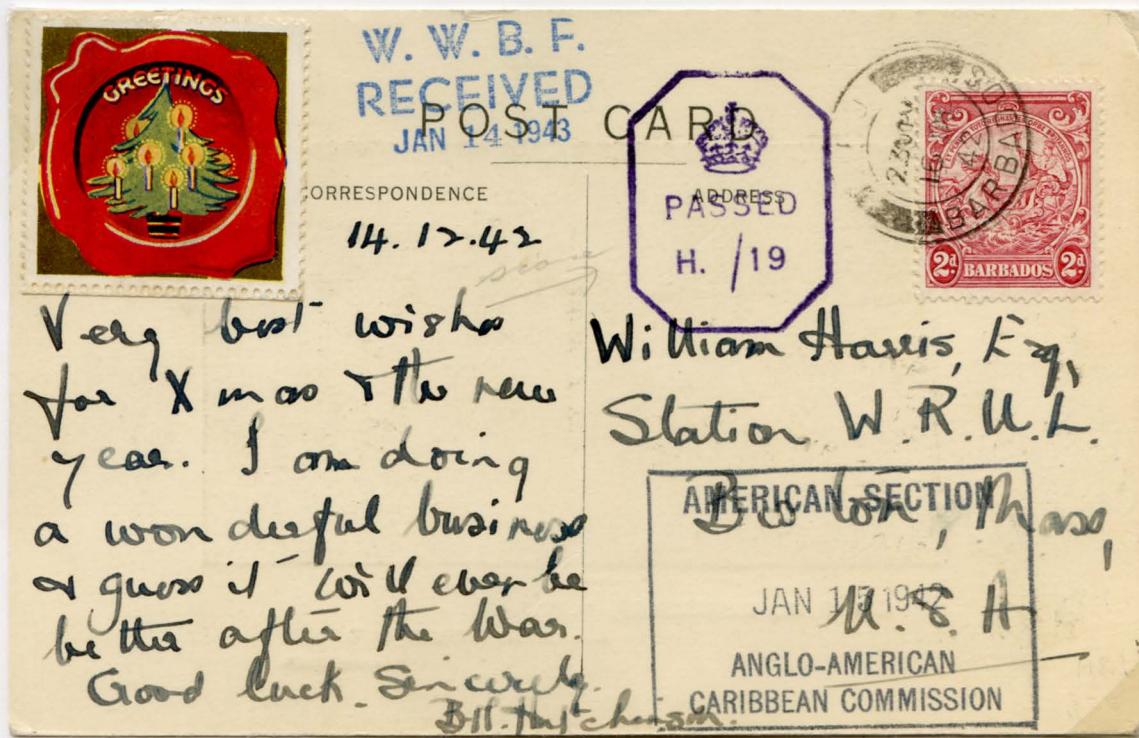
Surface mail to Ohio. Only five used examples have been seen.

Ap 22 1941



To Greece, message in Greek. The only example known updated.

16 Dec 1942



Postcard to USA with octagonal boxed Passed mark applied in Barbados (Shepherd type H8a). Code-letter "H" was allocated to Barbados.

Earliest date recorded

19 Mar 1943



Postcard to USA with the code changed to "IH". Shepherd speculates that this signifies handling by a more senior censor ("Inspector"), but it could also stand for "Imperial".

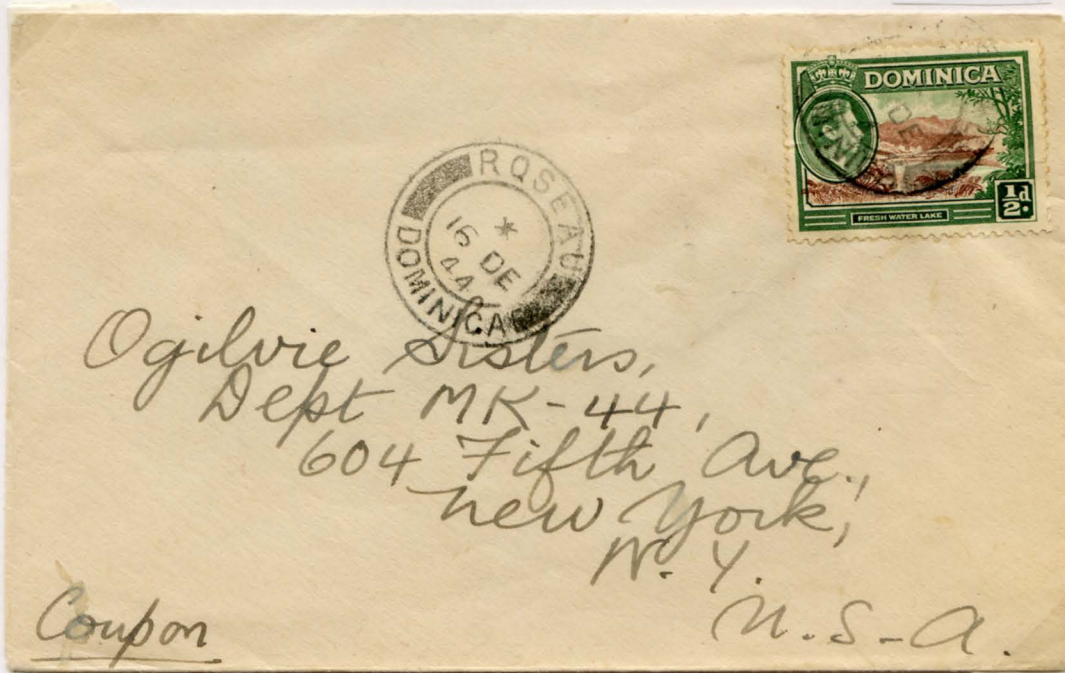
Examined by a US censor on arrival.

Censoring open mail in the BWI

Dominica

Envelope from Dominica to USA, marked "Coupon" and sent un-sealed.

16 De 1944



The reverse of this cover bears the first recorded example from Dominica of the octagonal Passed mark.



Xerox of reverse. The handstamp is in pale lilac, RR being the Dominica code.

Censoring open mail in the BWI

Grenada

S was the number allocated to Grenada.

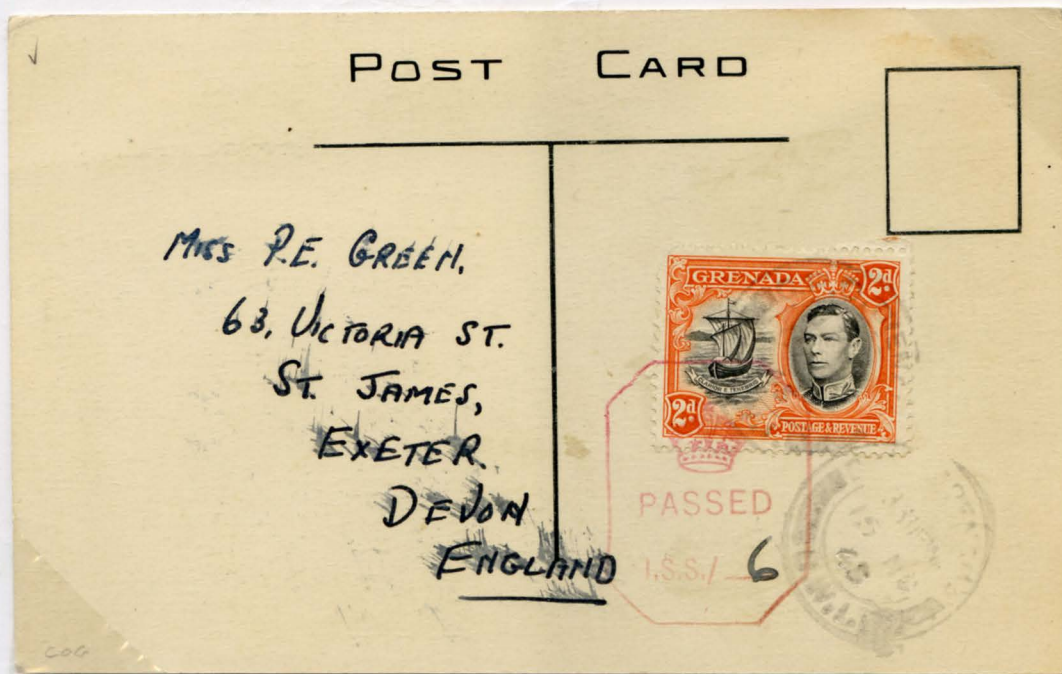
23 Oc 1942



Cover from Grenada to USA, left un-sealed and therefore eligible for the application of the "Passed" octagonal handstamp. Very few examples recorded.

Xerox of the reverse.
Burrows type H5.

15 Nov 1943



Crown Passed ISS/...in hexagonal box with manuscript 6 censor mark (Burrows H6)

Censoring open mail in the BWI

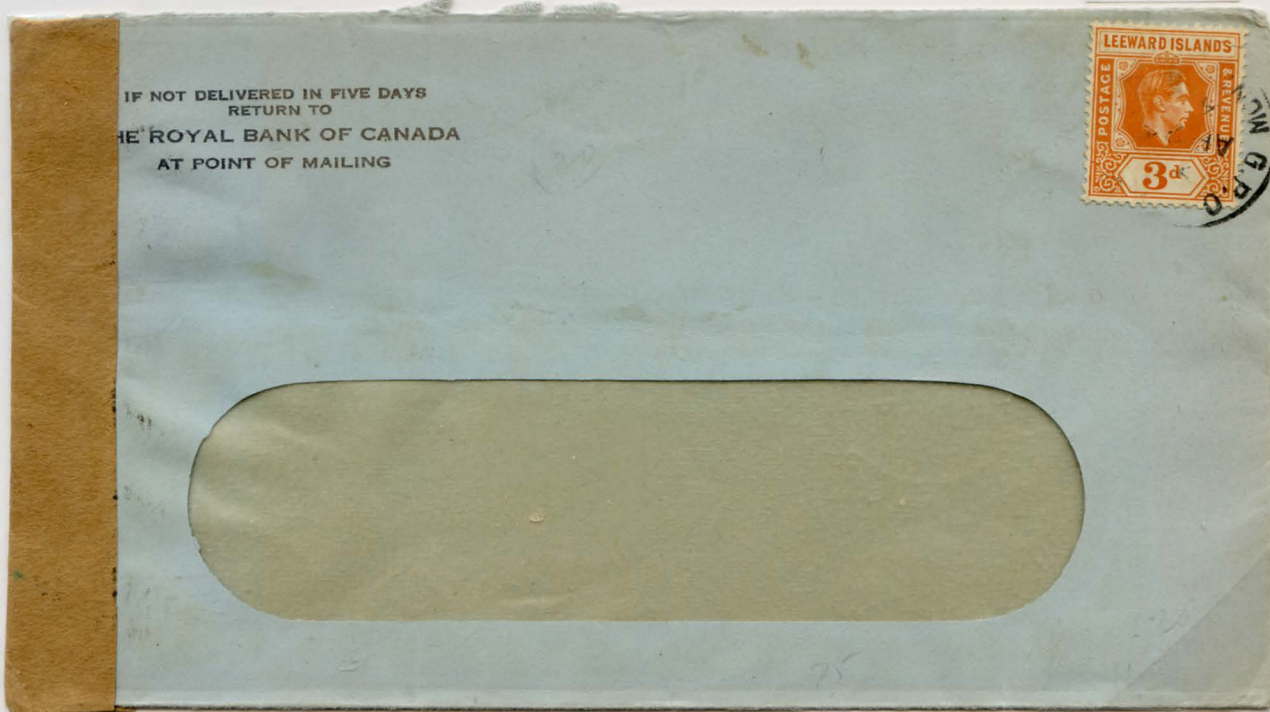
Montserrat

28 Ju 1943



Postcard to England with rare Passed octagonal handstamp, using AA code for Montserrat.

24 Ap 1943



Window envelope from Montserrat passed by Montserrat censor 19 who uses the octagonal handstamp (in black) struck over a brown re-sealing tape.

Only one example recorded in the Roses handbook.

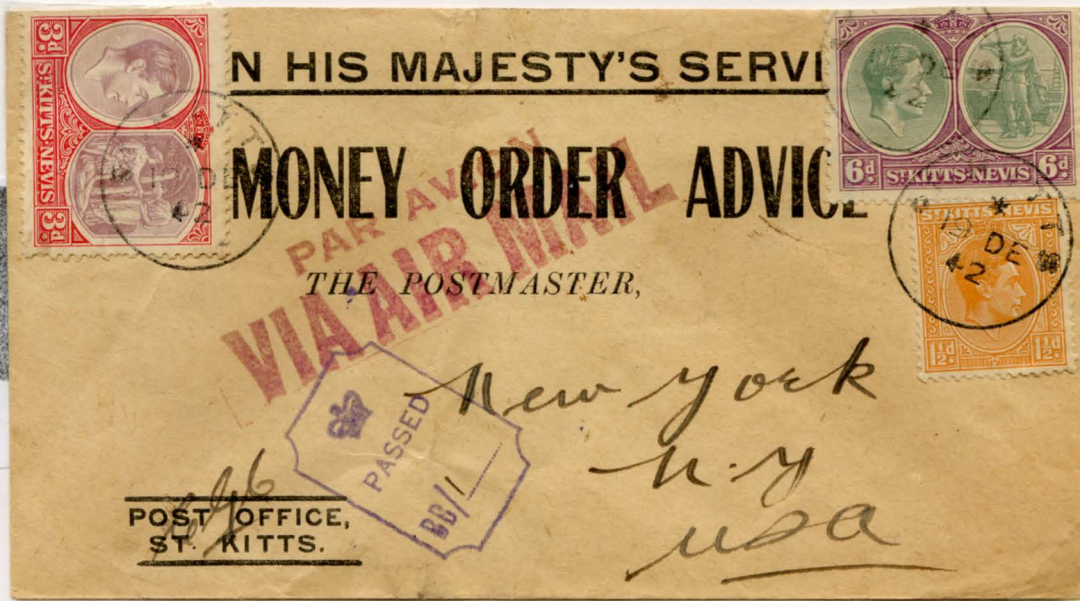


Censoring open mail in the BWI

St. Kitts-Nevis

The censors in Basseterre had a different style Passed handstamp with chamfered corners. They do not seem to have used it as restrictively as their fellow censors in the other islands.

19 De 1942



POST OFFICE,
ST. KITTS.

Handstamps
on reverse.

Unsealed envelope to New York containing a Money Order Advice. The back flap is re-sealed with a piece of brown tape tied with the octagonal handstamp. The handstamp is also struck on the face of the cover with censor number 1 added.

St. Kitts was allocated the code BB (B was the code allocated to Antigua).

9 Jy 1942

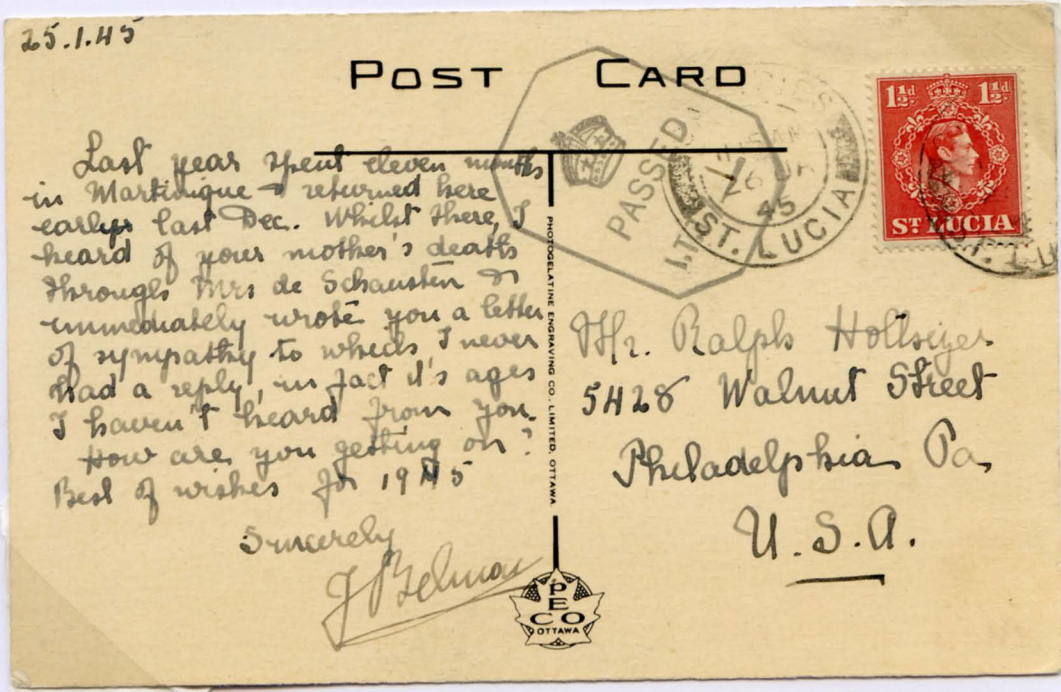


Backstamps

Envelope from New York, passed on arrival in St. Kitts.

St. Lucia

26 Jan 1945



Postcard to Philadelphia, passed by Censor 1 using octagonal handstamp (Ritchie type H2). TT was the code for St. Lucia.

St Vincent

U was the code allocated to St Vincent.

19 July 1944



Picture postcard to a soldier in Exeter. Hexagonal IUU/... (unlisted by Burrows) with censor 2 adding his number in manuscript. Re-censored in the UK with the Crown over circle mark.

St Vincent

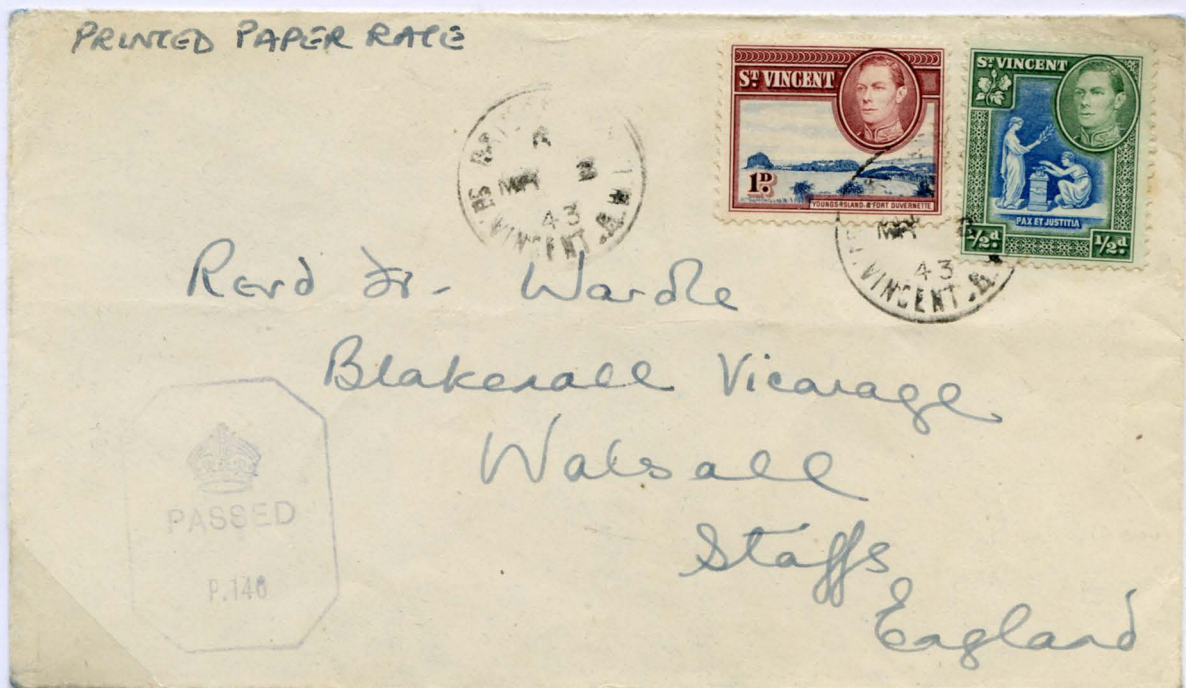
U was the code allocated to St Vincent.

11 Mar 1943



Registered cover to Bath with octagonal Passed hand-stamp UU/1, Burrows H7.

3 May 1943



Open envelope that was marked with octagonal Passed P.146 on arrival in the UK.