

German occupation of the Channel Islands

Mail "across enemy lines" via the Red Cross message service

During the entire duration of the war, the only part of the United Kingdom that fell to the Nazis was the [English] Channel Islands ("Norman Islands" to the German occupiers) off the coast of France — Jersey, Guernsey, Alderney, Herm, Jethou, and Sark. The Nazi occupiers built a concentration camp on Alderney Island, northernmost of the group, where hundreds of Jews from France were tormented and worked to death as slave laborers.

The International Committee of the Red Cross managed postal communication between residents of the Channel Islands and their relatives in Great Britain. At a cost to the sender of one shilling, a message limited to 25 words, written or typed on a special formular lettersheet, went from Jersey or Guernsey via Paris, Geneva, Marseilles, and Lisbon, to its British destination. Letters originating in the United Kingdom reversed that routing. The recipient replied on the back of the same form. With due allowance for censorship en route, a typical letter required three to four months' transit in each direction before reaching its delivery address.

This letter from England to Guernsey, censored by British authorities at London, by the Red Cross at Geneva, and by German authorities at Paris, began its voyage on July 30, 1942. The undated reply message on the back, similarly checked by censors, arrived back at Leeds many months later.

RED CROSS MESSAGE BUREAU,
30,
15, BELLEVUE TERRACE,
WOODHOUSE LANE,
STEC. 7.

WAR ORGANISATION OF THE BRITISH RED CROSS
AND ORDER OF ST. JOHN

To
Enquire (Indicate)
in a Cross Reply

ENQUIRY
(Indicate)

Name TUBB
Christian name Mrs AGNES
Surname
Address 15, BELLEVUE TERRACE,
WOODHOUSE LANE,
STEC. 7.

Relationship of Enquirer to Addressee:
What Purpose is the Enquirer pursuing?

The Enquirer declares under the pain of perjury that the following
message should be transmitted to him.
The Promoter will undertake to the Enquirer: that the latter
will deliver the message.

DARLING. RECEIVED MESSAGE UNIT
IN HOSPITAL. GREAT COMFORT KNOWING
ALL WELL. ALL WELL. ALL
SEE YOU ALL LOVE
AGNES AGNES UNIT

Date 30

ADDRESSEE
(Indicate)

Name BOALCH
Christian name Mrs J.
Surname
Address MARK BOALCH
WANTS ROAD
GUERNSEY

The Addressee's reply to be written on the
back of the message and to be sent to the
Enquirer.

RED CROSS MESSAGE BUREAU,
30,
15, BELLEVUE TERRACE,
WOODHOUSE LANE,
STEC. 7.

TO
ENQUIRE (Indicate)
in a Cross Reply

ENQUIRY
(Indicate)

Name
Christian name
Surname
Address

Relationship of Enquirer to Addressee:
What Purpose is the Enquirer pursuing?

The Enquirer declares under the pain of perjury that the following
message should be transmitted to him.
The Promoter will undertake to the Enquirer: that the latter
will deliver the message.

Dear both,
Please get message. You
are both well, we are. I miss you
a lot. Longing to see you. Love
Sandy Dee, Miss. Joyce.

Yours David

631

COMITÉ INTERNATIONAL DE LA CROIX-ROUGE - GENÈVE

INTER ARMA CARITAS

ADDRESSEE
Empfänger

ALCH
Miss J.
MARK BOALCH HOUSE
WANTS ROAD ST MARTINS
GUERNSEY C.I.

20.