

WEST AFRICA – SECOND WORLD WAR MILITARY, FREE CHRISTMAS AIR LETTERS.

Air Mail Letter Cards (later known as Air Letters or Aerogrammes) were first issued to personnel serving in the West African Command on 1st October 1941 and for Christmas 1941 every one of them was issued with one free AMLC.

8th December 1941. FPO 106, Takoradi to the UK. Endorsed 'Free Xmas Mail'. Passed by Base Censor in manuscript.)



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A new discovery! Until recently it was assumed that the first free Christmas Air Mail for those serving in West Africa was provided in 1941. I recently acquired the illustrated cover together with its original letter (next slide). I am not able to find any information on the provision of this service.

6th December 1940. From a member of the RAF in the Gold Coast. Endorsed 'On Active Service Xmas Air Mail'. Passed by Gold Coast (12) and UK (P93) Censors .



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6th December 1940. Letter from a member of the RAF in the Gold Coast to the UK. The letter says *inter alia*

‘I am writing this as we have been told that it will reach England before Christmas’.

And

‘As I am only allowed one page I must close now’

The letter may have been flown by BOAC as Flight WAN 6 flown by *Clare* left Lagos/Freetown on 18th December 1940 arriving at Poole on 21st December 1940. It is also possible that it was flown by the RAF

Usual. 6.12.40.

My dear Mother,

I am writing this as we have been told that it will reach England before Xmas. First of all thanks a lot for the cablegram which I received yesterday. Glad to hear you are all o.k. & that up to now you have escaped from the nasty chunks of iron the jennies have been chucking around. I am very well at present in spite of the grub which is on just about the same standard as what I was used to in my first two years in the R.A.F. I am quite content to stay here for a bit if there is any chance of seeing the world from here. I am safe enough here so long as I can keep free from the queer ailments which are peculiar to this climate, so there is no need to worry about me at all. Actually it is a very interesting experience which I would never have had if I had stayed at home.

I got a parcel from ~~her~~ a few days since which was posted on Oct 18th. Please thank her for it for me, & tell her she was only a month out in the time she expected me to receive it. I can tell you what I would like best for a Xmas present & that is for you to order the "Overseas Daily Mirror" to be sent out here every week for a Quarter. If you would do that I would appreciate it immensely.

As I am only allowed one page I must close now.

Wishing you all the very best for Xmas & the New Year

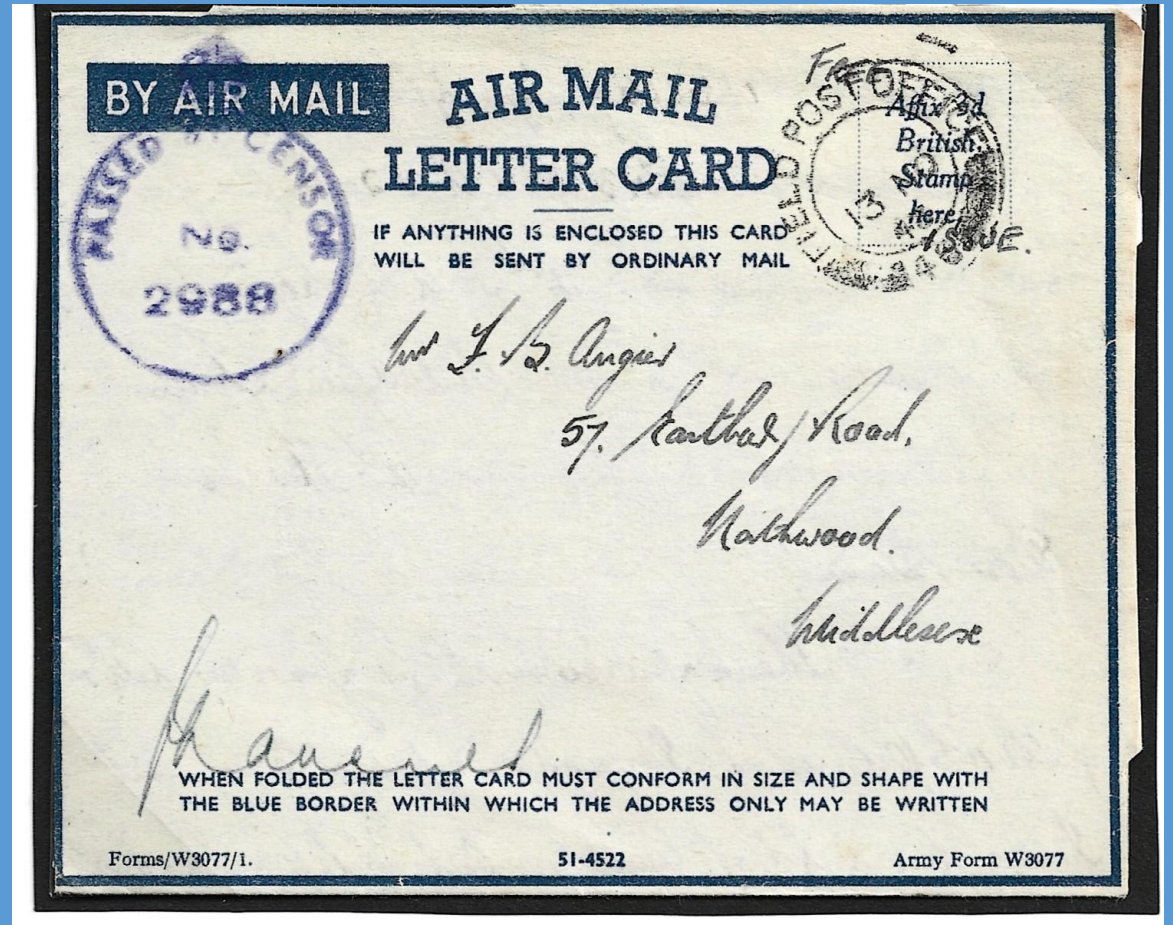
Your ever loving son

Tom

P.S. Get all your presents out of my allotment. Get something for the children at home.

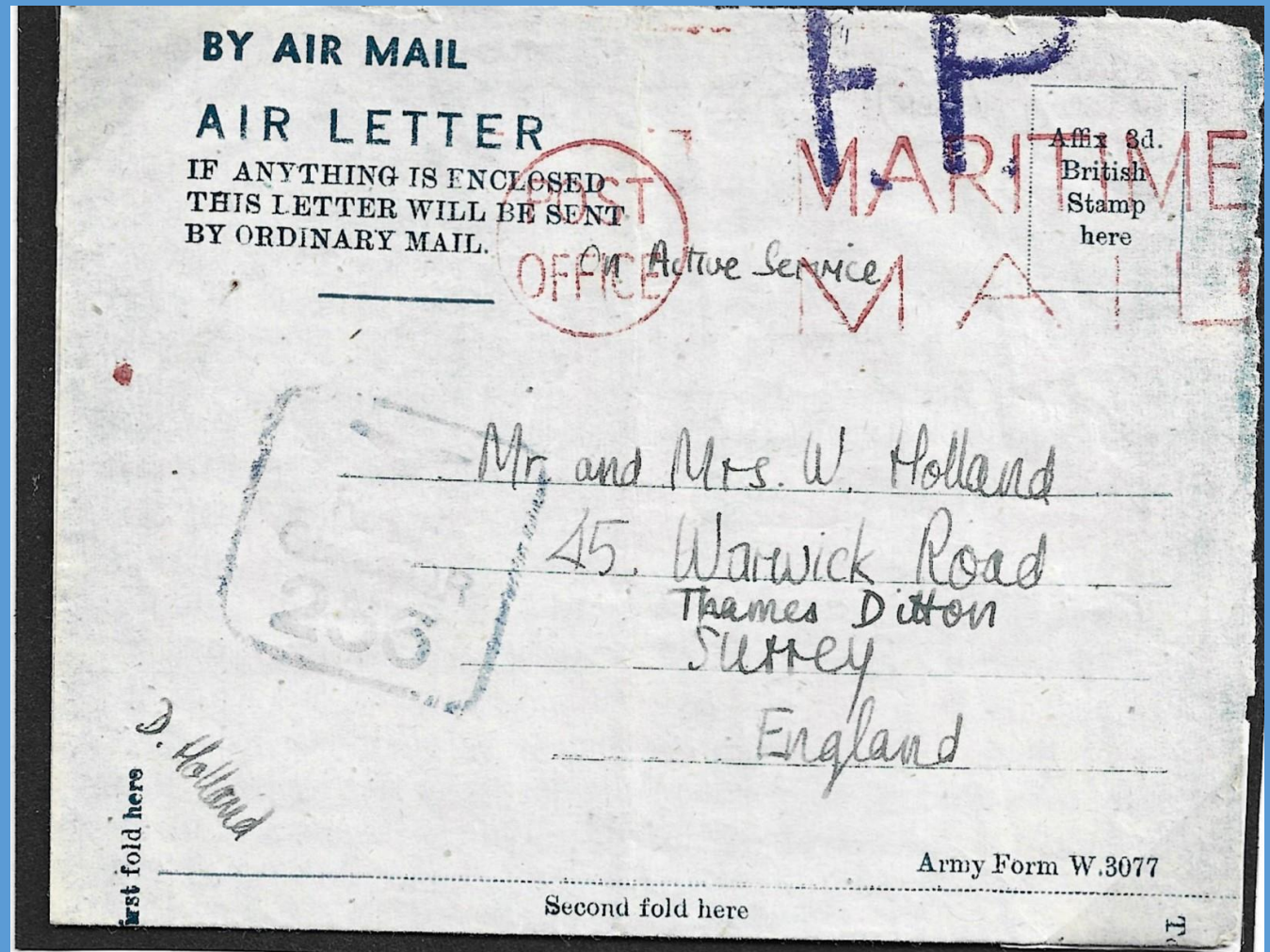
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13th November 1943. FPO 46, Lagos to the UK. Endorsed 'Free Issue' Passed by Army censor(2988). Transit time 42 days so likely sent by sea. The letter arrived on Christmas Day.



WEST AFRICA – SECOND WORLD WAR MILITARY, FREE CHRISTMAS AIR LETTERS.

20th November 1943. Bathurst to the UK. Free Christmas Issue marked FP (presumably Free Post). The Airletter is a West African printing (Daynes & Lutwyche Type WA08.02). It seems that the letter was sent by sea as it has been stamped 'Maritime Mail'. Passed by RAF Censor (256)



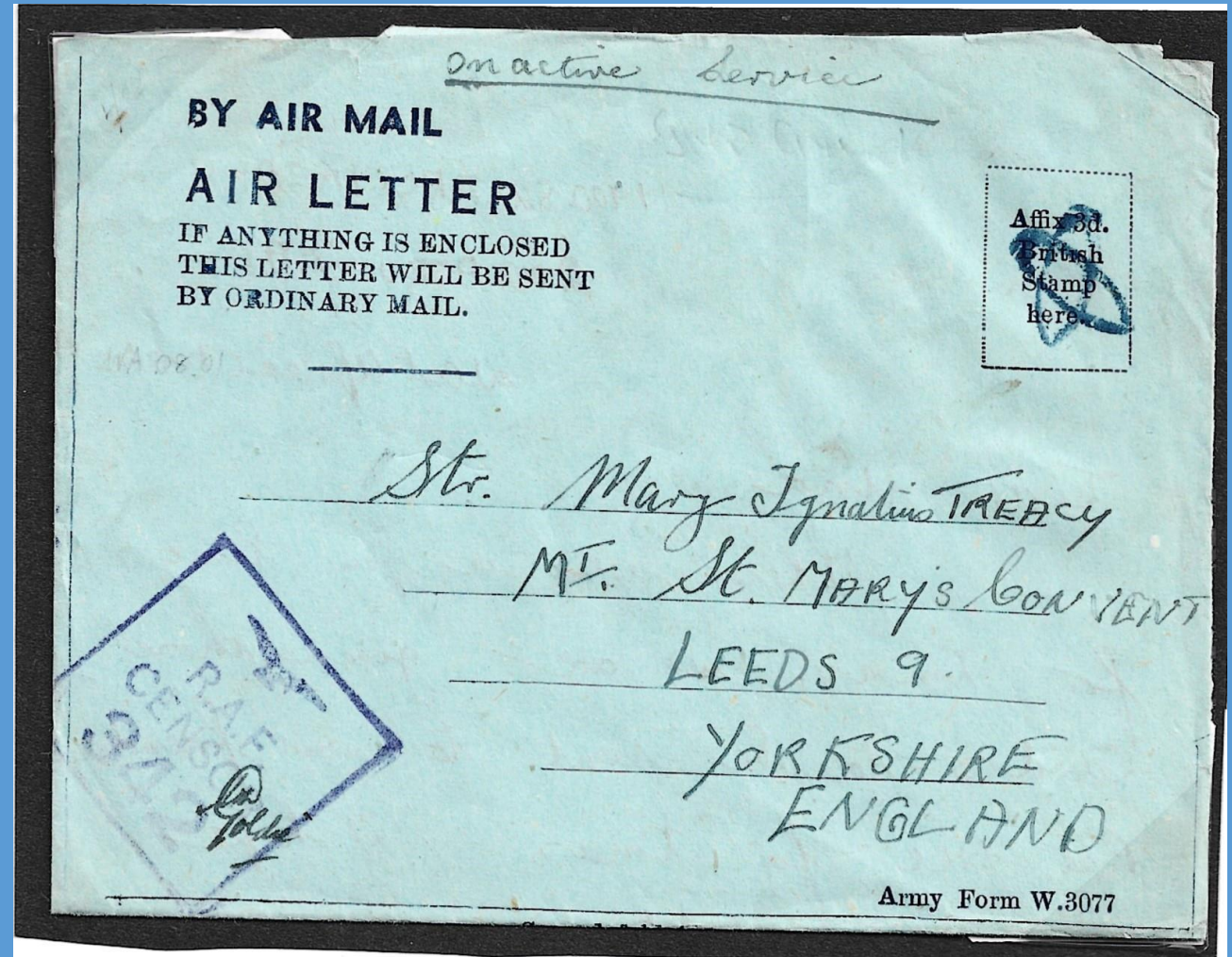
WEST AFRICA – SECOND WORLD WAR MILITARY, FREE CHRISTMAS AIR LETTERS.

10th December 1943. FPO 109, Bathurst to the UK.
Stamped 'Xmas Mail' but 3d Postage paid. Passed
by RAF Censor (256).



WEST AFRICA – SECOND WORLD WAR MILITARY, FREE CHRISTMAS AIR LETTERS.

Christmas 1944. From an Aircraftman in Air Sea Rescue to the UK via Bathurst. The Airletter was produced in West Africa (Daynes & Lutwyche Type WA8.01) . Curious star mark. Passed by RAF Censor (342).



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For Christmas 1944 a Forces Free Air Letter was produced in West Africa.

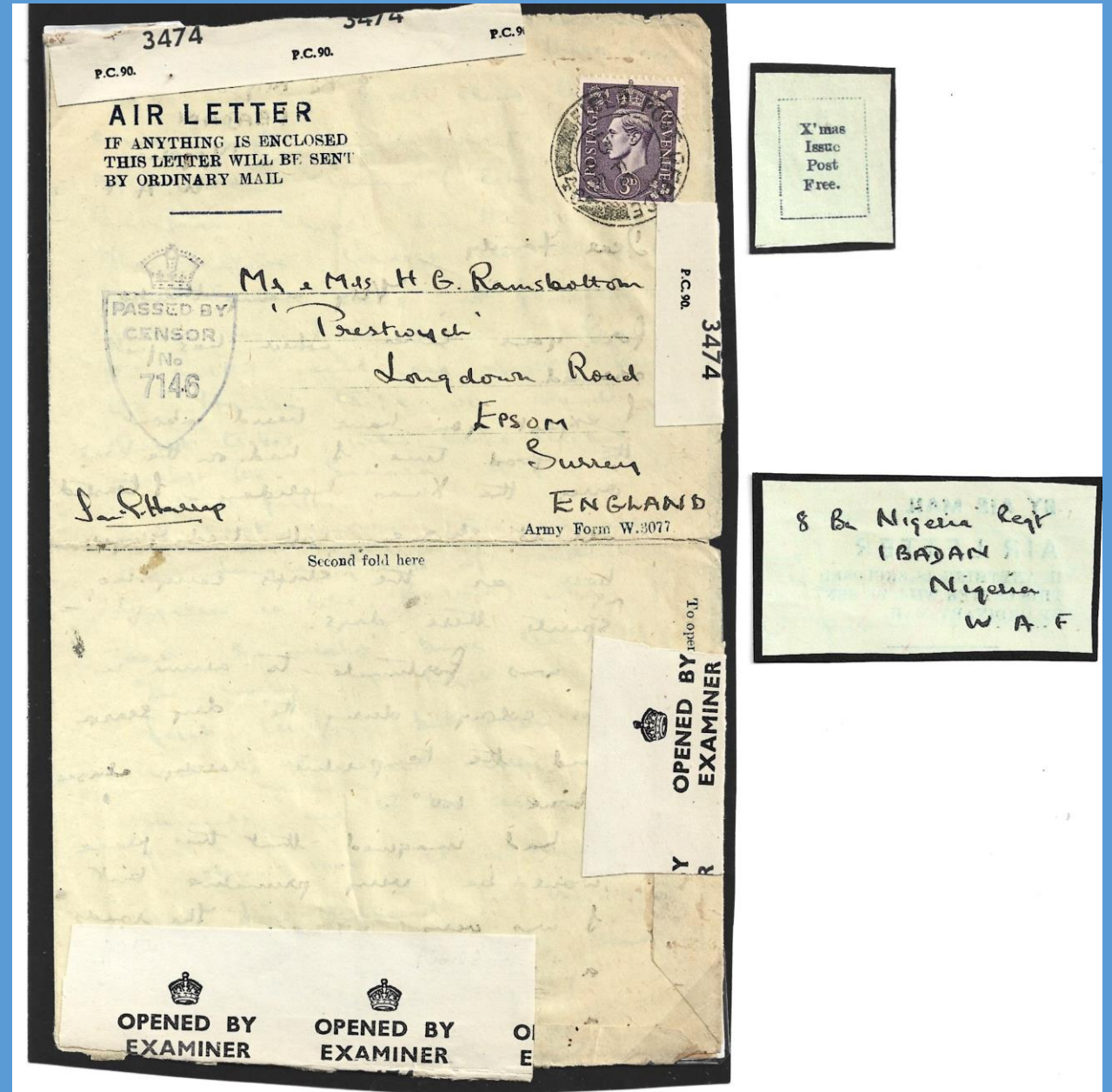
2nd December 1944. From FPO 109, Bathurst to the UK. Passed by RAF Censor (342).



WEST AFRICA – SECOND WORLD WAR MILITARY, FREE CHRISTMAS AIR LETTERS.

At least two printings were made of the 1944 Christmas letter.

13th February 1945. Ibadan to the UK via FPO 46, Lagos. The Airletter is one of the 2nd printing of the Christmas letter (words Cut Here removed from the top right hand corner) and has been used as an ordinary Airletter. Passed by Army Censor(7146) opened by UK civilian Censor (3474).



WEST AFRICA – SECOND WORLD WAR MILITARY, FREE CHRISTMAS AIR LETTERS.

9th December 1945. FPO 873 Calcutta to Late, Gold Coast and forwarded to Aburi. Written by a soldier in the West Africa Force. Transit time 22 days.



WEST AFRICA – SECOND WORLD WAR MILITARY, FREE CHRISTMAS AIR LETTERS.

9th December 1945. Inside of the Airletter on the previous slide.

