

MALTA "SERVICES WEEK" CANCELLATION. APPROVED "COMBINATION" COVERS.

A Souvenir Cover with the Maltese Cross and the badges of the British Army, the R.A.F. and the Royal Navy, and inscribed Visit of H.M. THE QUEEN/MALTA SERVICES WEEK/NOVEMBER 1967 at the top and POSTAL & COURIER/COMMUNICATIONS R.E. at the foot was issued by the Services Post Office on November 17th, during the recent Royal Visit, and sold for the Services Benevolent Fund.

On the Occasion of the visit, the Services in Malta held a "Malta Services Week" in the Independence Arena at Floriana and among the various Services stands a temporary Services Post Office was set up on November 17th.

A special cancellation was in use on November 17th, 18th and 19th, and only British stamps, which incidentally, were on sale at this temporary Post Office, were normally cancelled with this special hand-stamp. This read:—

BRITISH FORCES POSTAL SERVICES within a double circle enclosing a crown, the date and the "Combined Operation" symbol with "1000" at foot of circle.

By an arrangement with the G.P.O., Malta, current Maltese stamps, including the newly-issued Royal Visit set and the 1967 Christmas set, were also on sale on a separate counter manned by local G.P.O. clerks. A rubber cancellation specially issued by the G.P.O. Malta was used to cancel Maltese stamps on the covers, or on other envelopes. The cancellation was inscribed:

"MALTA SERVICES WEEK — 1967", in a double-lined circle and the date across the centre.

It was also permissible to have the covers franked with both local and British stamps, the former being cancelled with the "local" handstamp, and the latter by the Services Post Office one; thus, if so desired, covers on which both local and British stamps had been affixed could have both the local as well as the Services cancellations.

This temporary Post Office consisted of one room, very neatly laid out, and manned simultaneously by Services and civilian personnel. Frames displaying British stamp issues included blocks of phosphor-graphite stamps and colour proofs of the new British definitive issue were hung on the wall on the side of the Services counter, while on the wall on the side of the Malta G.P.O. counter frames displaying blocks of four of some modern Malta sets and the different stages of production of some sets were hung.

On November 17th, the first day of the servicing of these covers, this post office was open to the public from 2 p.m. to 5.45 p.m., and both counters were kept very busy indeed, the response to this new venture from both local and British Services and civilian philatelists being excellent.

Surg. Captain J.H. Mercieca.