

Latest Comments on Censored Mail of World War 1.

Marks - Labels - Seals.

By A. Galea S.J.

Censored Mail of the Two World Wars is a branch of postal history that is interesting, still developing and within the means of the collector on a limited budget.

This part of Postal history is well documented in "Said" and in the "Malta Hand Book", and so, I am limiting my comments to the illustrations published using them to record and publish undocumented material.

The illustrations fall under these headings:

- A. Censorship Marks.
- B. Labels.
- C. Wax Seals.

A. Censorship Marks

There are 3 single line "PASSED BY CENSOR" strikes (Said 1,2,3) plus a recently reported 50.5 mm x 6mm known to have been in use during the first days of censorship (introduced on 3rd August 1914, the day before Great Britain declared war) until mid-October 1914. (Latest recorded date 18th October).

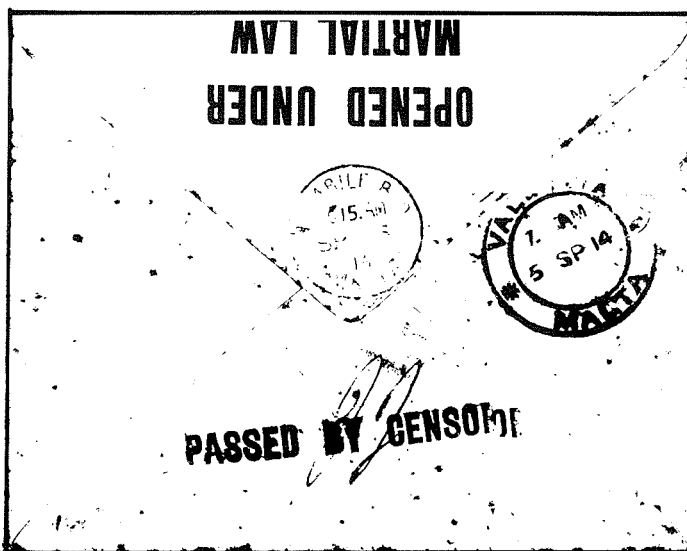


Figure 1

The envelope illustrated in fig. 1, shows one of these "Passed by Censor" single line (Said N°1) together with an "OPENED UNDER / MARTIAL LAW", re-sealing label (Said N°15). It was customary for the censor to initial his name in lead pencil or blue. This was omitted (one in twenty). On the front it bears a G.V. ½d green cancelled by the G.P.O. Cross and addressed to Notabile.

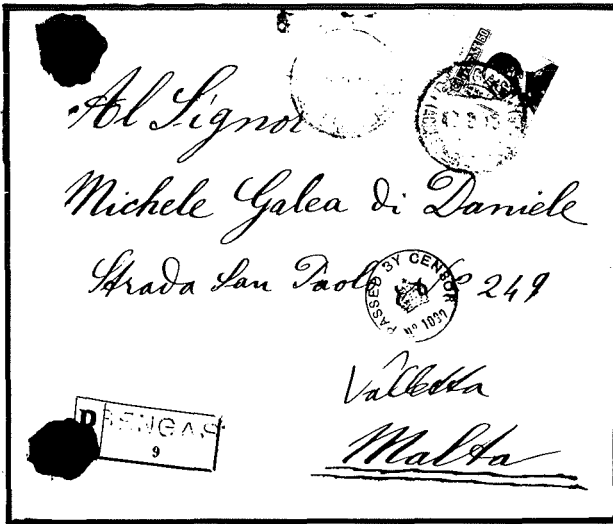


Figure 2

Fig. 2 shows a cover having a "CROWN and Number in a Circle", Passed by Censor strike. These censorship marks arrived in Malta in mid-October 1914, and definitely replaced the initial types. They were used until 31st May 1916. The numbers recorded by me run from :- 1074 to 1089 with the exception of 1088 which so far has not been seen. 1086 is known on incoming mail only. All the others are known on incoming mail and out-going mail. Occasionally the Censors initials are outside the Circle, or on the Crown.

The cover illustrated in fig.2 is registered and bears "mark N° 1080". Number 1074, 1075, 1076, 1077, and 1080 have been reported on registered covers, which seems to suggest that the censorship of registered mail was the responsibility of certain censors only. 1074, 1077, and 1080, have not been recorded previously.

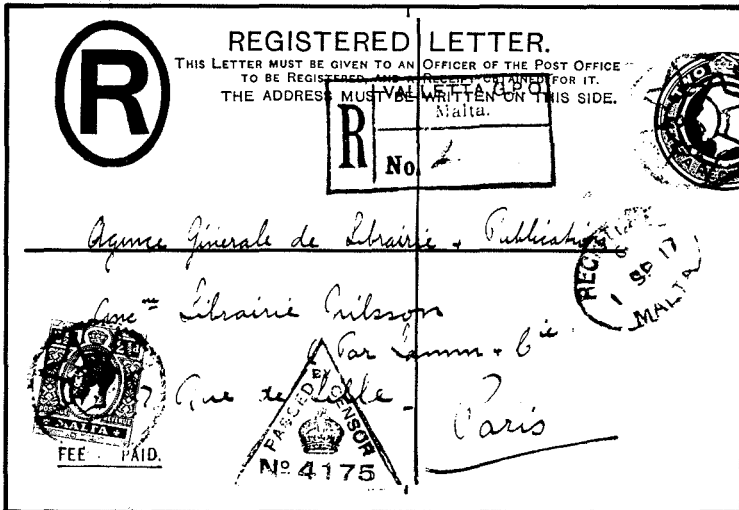


Figure 3

Fig. 3 illustrates a cover which is cancelled by a "CROWN and NUMBER in a TRIANGLE" in red. This series came into use in May 1915, (earliest recorded date is 31st, exactly one year before the last known use of the previous series).

Thirty eight numbers have been identified - five in the 3XXX range (3174, 3478, 3690. 3674, 3801) the rest in the 4XXX. 4159 to 4182 (42), form an unbroken series, and out of the series 4263 to 4273 only 4264 and 4265 have not yet been recorded. I would like to record Nos. 4163, 4270, which have not been recorded previously. 3174, 3478, have been seen in RED, 3690, in RED and BLUE, 3764, 3801, in BLACK, used between 1916 - 1917, on out-going mail. 4159 to 4182, have almost all been seen on both incoming and out-going mail. The exception being on 4163, (31 Au 17) in BLACK, which has only been seen on "out-going" mail. Triangular Strikes were applied with different coloured inks.

RED	1915 - 1917
VIOLET & MAROON	1917
GREY & OFF-BLACK	1917 - 1918
BLACK	1918 - 1919

GREEN has so far been unrecorded but I have seen it on a few namely 4165 (1918); 4182 (1918); and on 4159 and 4180, (date unverifiable). So far only 4175, 4176 and 4181 have been reported on registered covers, however 4174 has also been seen. Could it be that Censors in possession of 1074 / 1075 / 1076 etc., in a circle were given 4174 / 4175 / 4176 etc., in a triangle? Items bearing the 4263 - 4273 marks in Red, Purple/Red, Maroon, and Green, are dated 31 De 16 to Jy 1919, when censorship seems to have been stopped. The only reported item is after this date is on 21 De 19.

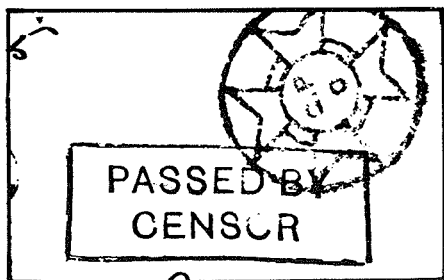
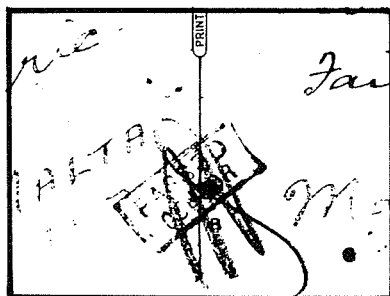


Figure 4

Figure 5



Figs 4 and 5 depict cards showing two different Boxed "PASSED BY / CENSOR" and "PASSED / CENSOR".

An unframed and two framed double-line "PASSED / CENSOR" and "PASSED BY / CENSOR" (Said 4 - 6) in use 1915 and later are considered as Malta censorship marks, but some doubt exists, as to if they were really applied in Malta. As can be seen from Fig. 5 the framed Passed / Censor appears on a card with a message from Malta, but bearing a G.B. ½d cancelled Manchester, 4.15 p.m. 14 De 17. Perhaps the card had been vetted by a non-G.P.O. censor, handed back to the sender, and posted in England by a friend.

B. Labels

The resealing labels form the second item of interest in censored mail, printed in BLACK on WHITE, ORANGE, and GREY paper:- some of which had already been printed on the obverse side. The labels come in two basic sizes:- single line for long seals, and double line for short. Except for the double-line "OPENED UNDER MARTIAL LAW", 46.5 mm first line, 40 mm, second line, all labels are known with and without numbers. Five basic types are known.

Single line "Opened under martial law", lettering 80 mm long, and 7 mm upper, 5 mm lower type; Known with numbers 1 to 7; however I have seen one without number bearing the date 21 Oct 15.

Nos 1 and 7 are known on Orange paper; Nos 3, 5,, and 7 on Grey have been seen by me, which have not ben recorded so far. Single line "OPENED UNDER MARTIAL LAW" lettering measuring 93 × 7 mm. Without number, and with Nos 5 and 7 have been recorded. N°6 (Oc. and Dec. 16), grey pape have been seen by me.

Double line "OPENED UNDER MARTIAL LAW", lettering measuring first line 46.5 and second line 40.5 mm, 7mm high recorded for 5 Sep 14 and 3 De 14.

Double line "OPENED UNDER / MARTIAL LAW", lettering 4 mm high, first line 50-51 and second 46.5 mm to full stop, 50 mm to end of number, have been recorded with N°7, and without number, to which I would like to add the following:-

N°4	(Ju 18)
N°5	(25 Ju 18)
N°6	(Ap 19)
N°7	(Ju 18)

Same, but thinner lettering, 5 mm high, No number, and Numbers 2 to 5 have been reported.

Fig. 2



Fig. 6

C. Wax Seals

Fig. 2 and 6 illustrated show wax seals. These red wax seals, applied to secure re-sealing lables on censor covers (until 1915) form the final item of Philatelic interest in Censored Mail. Two seals are known to me:-

A 16 × 13 mm upright oval, enclosing a crown, "VR", and crowned lion in an horizontal oval. (Fig. N°6.)

"CROWN - FROM MALTA - G.P.O.", circular seal, diameter 30 mm, originally dispatched to Malta on 22-7-1897. Only partial impressions of this seal are known on covers Fig. N°2.

It might be of interest to point out that Censoship was limited to incoming and out-going mail. Fig. 1 bears a GV ½d cancelled across, back stamped double ring Valletta 7 AM 5 SP 14, re-sealed with OPENED UNDER / MARTIAL LAW overstamped cds Notabile 10.50am. 5 SP 14, may appear, at first, glance to be an internal cover that was censored by mistake. Most probably, it was an envelope from a Maltese rating using a local adhesive and sending the letter through the military mail. Upon arrival at the GPO it was considered as an incoming rather than an internal item and handled accordingly.