

GREENLAND MAIL DURING WORLD WAR II

Purpose of exhibit: Present the postal history of Greenland during the disruption of mail service caused by the German invasion of Denmark in April 1940 until the resumption of normal service in June 1945.

Scope: Civilian mail sent through the Greenland Post Office. Wartime postal innovations, new delivery methods within the island, new air and surface routes via the neutral U.S. to Denmark and the free world.

Prewar delivery to Denmark. Ships of the semi-official Greenland Company carried all the mail between Greenland and Copenhagen until the German invasion closed the Company's shipping routes.



Wartime mail delivered by ship before the German invasion, Oct 1939

Delivery innovations. New mail routes were developed across the Atlantic to Denmark via the U.S. These routes ended when the U.S. entered the war in December 1941, while mail to the free world continued throughout the war.

Resumption of service. The wartime mail routes to Denmark via the U.S., which had closed in 1941, reopened when the war in Europe ended.

- Chapters**
1. Mail within Greenland 1940-45
 2. Mail to Denmark 1940-41
 3. Mail to foreign countries 1940-45
 4. Resumption of Service 1945

Blue borders highlight the most important items

Mail within Greenland

Internal mail was delivered primarily by sled

Mail routes on the west coast of the island stayed the same during the war



Mail carried by sled between two West Coast settlements
Patriotic charity label on Christmas mail

MAIL WITHIN GREENLAND

Wartime route for mail sent across Greenland

During the war a sled route was opened up by Julianhaab on the southern tip of the island to carry mail between the coasts. Before the war this mail had been carried by ship to the company office in Copenhagen and then by ship back to the other coast.



Mail sent from the West Coast to the East Coast
Julianhaab transit marking applied to mail routed via southern Greenland
Confidential official mail from Godthaab to Angmagssalik
Docketed arrival 20 November - 61 Days in transit

Mail to Denmark

New Route after German Invasion

Mail to Denmark was sent via the neutral U.S. when Company ships stopped sailing to Greenland in April 1940



Via the United States and across the Atlantic by sea
20¢ domestic letter

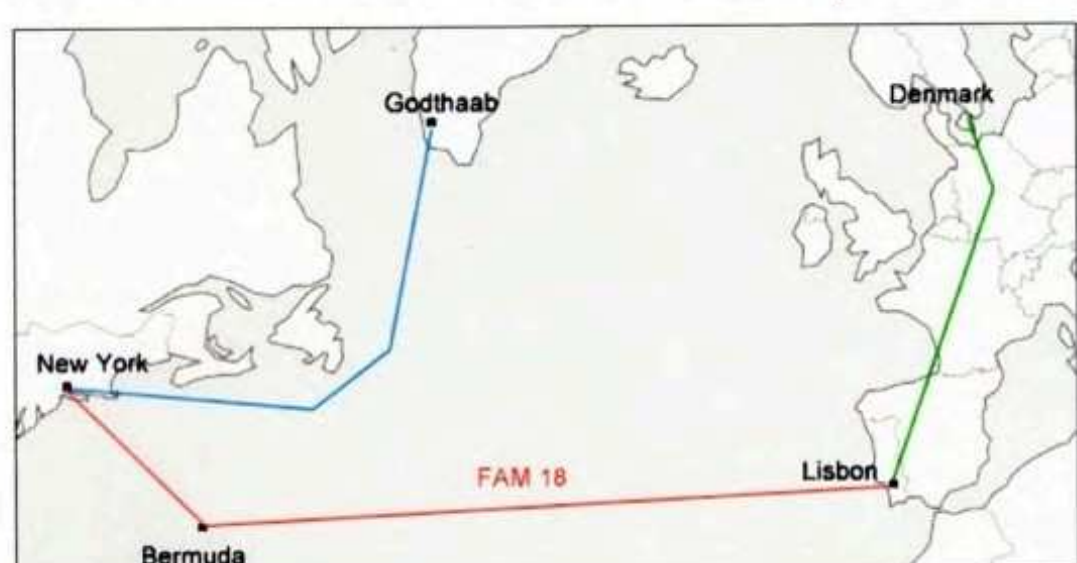


Danish censor tape on back

MAIL TO DENMARK

Air mail service from Greenland to Denmark

Carried by sea to New York or Philadelphia, by air on FAM 18 to Lisbon, and through Germany to Denmark



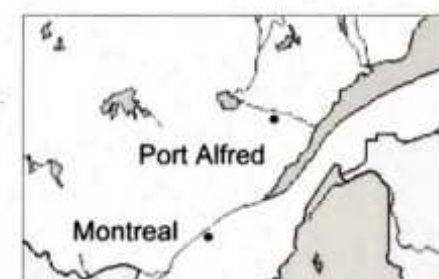
"PAQUEBOT" marking applied at Philadelphia when the ship's crewman handed the mail to the U.S. postmaster

Paquet markings used on one voyage only

MAIL TO DENMARK

Mail to Denmark routed through Canada in error

Letter carried by ship from Greenland to Port Alfred, Quebec



Refranked with Canada postage at Port Alfred
10¢ rate for air in Canada, surface across the Atlantic, air in Europe
Greenland stamps paid full postage so reason for refranking is unclear

Canada could not exchange mail with German occupied Denmark
Letter sent through diplomatic channels to the neutral U.S. for delivery

Eight 10¢ rate examples known to this exhibitor

MAIL TO DENMARK

Mail confiscated by British censors at Bermuda

Letters containing items of value were held as war prizes



Grey marking "Released by Prize Court" used in June 1950
Confiscated philatelic mail was sold in auctions in Bermuda after the War

MAIL TO DENMARK

End of wartime mail service to Denmark

U.S. mail service to axis-occupied Europe was suspended from December 1941 until the European war ended in May 1945 stopping mail service from Greenland to Denmark



Late mail returned to Greenland by U.S. Post Office
Mailed 24 November, reached the U.S. after service stopped 12 December
Held in the U.S. and sent back to Greenland after April 1942



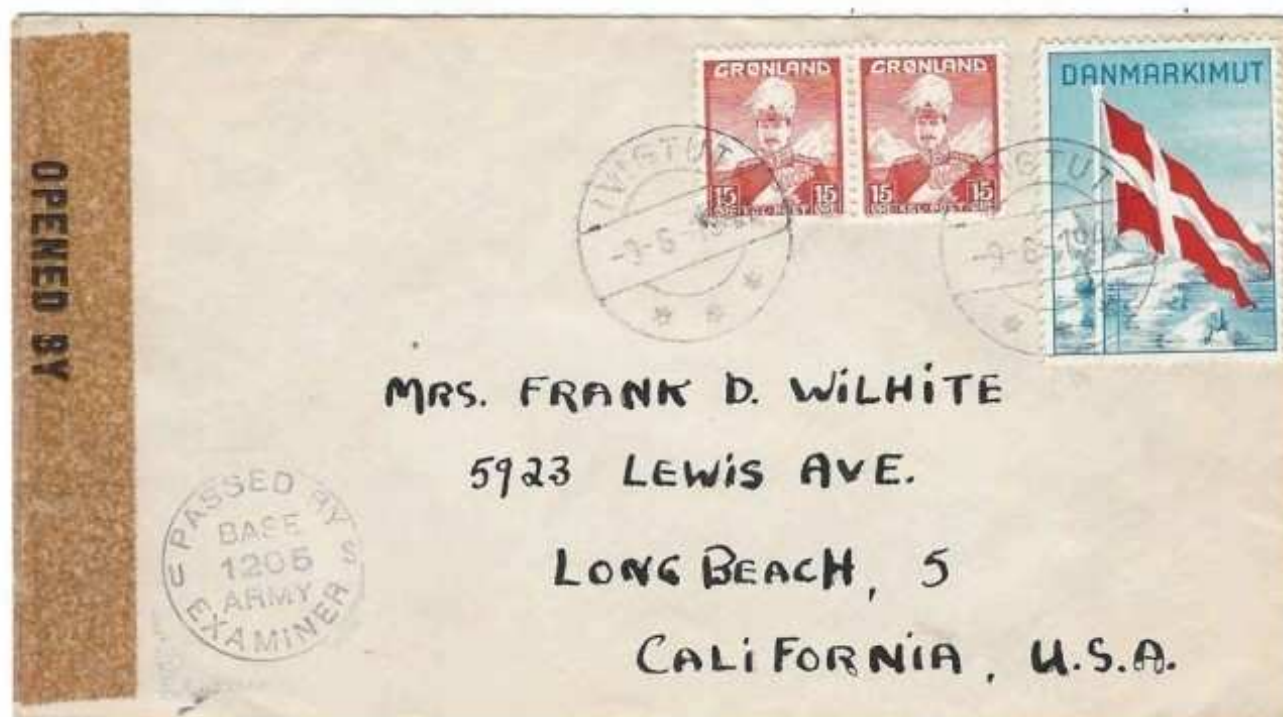
Mail to Foreign Countries

Routed by ship or air to North America

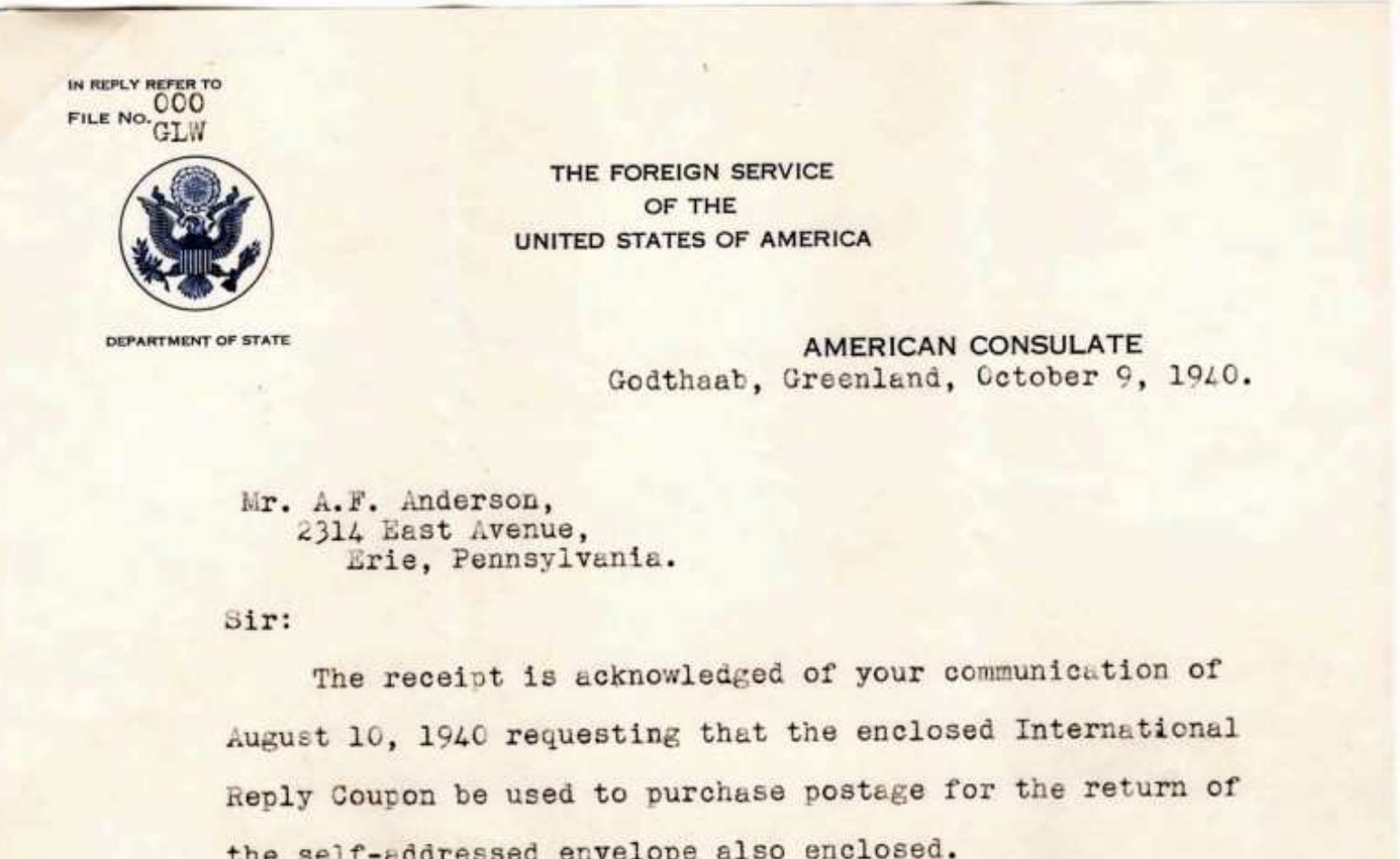
Most foreign mail was addressed to the U.S. or Canada



By ship via Canada to U.S., 30¢ foreign letter



Flown by Army Mail Service to New York, sent by surface from there



Refranked with Canada postage at Port Alfred
3¢ letter rate to U.S.

Greenland stamps paid postage, so reason for refranking is unclear

Three 3¢ rate examples known to this exhibitor

MAIL TO FOREIGN COUNTRIES

Mail delivered by Eastern Arctic Patrol ship Nascopic

The ship stopped in Greenland during her 1940 voyage to Canada's Eastern Arctic regions



Posted while Nascopic was at Godthaab
Sent to the Mayor of Ottawa



Oval marking applied to mail processed on board

MAIL TO FOREIGN COUNTRIES

Foreign mail handled by U.S. Army Mail Service

From 1943, the Army Mail Service transferred Greenland's foreign mail to New York, where it entered the U.S. mails



Registered to U.S., processed by three registered mail systems
Greenland, U.S. Army, and U.S. civilian

Military and civilian registry back stamps



MAIL TO FOREIGN COUNTRIES

Delivery resolved after the War ended

Addressee gone away, sent to Greenland in error, arrived in Denmark after the War

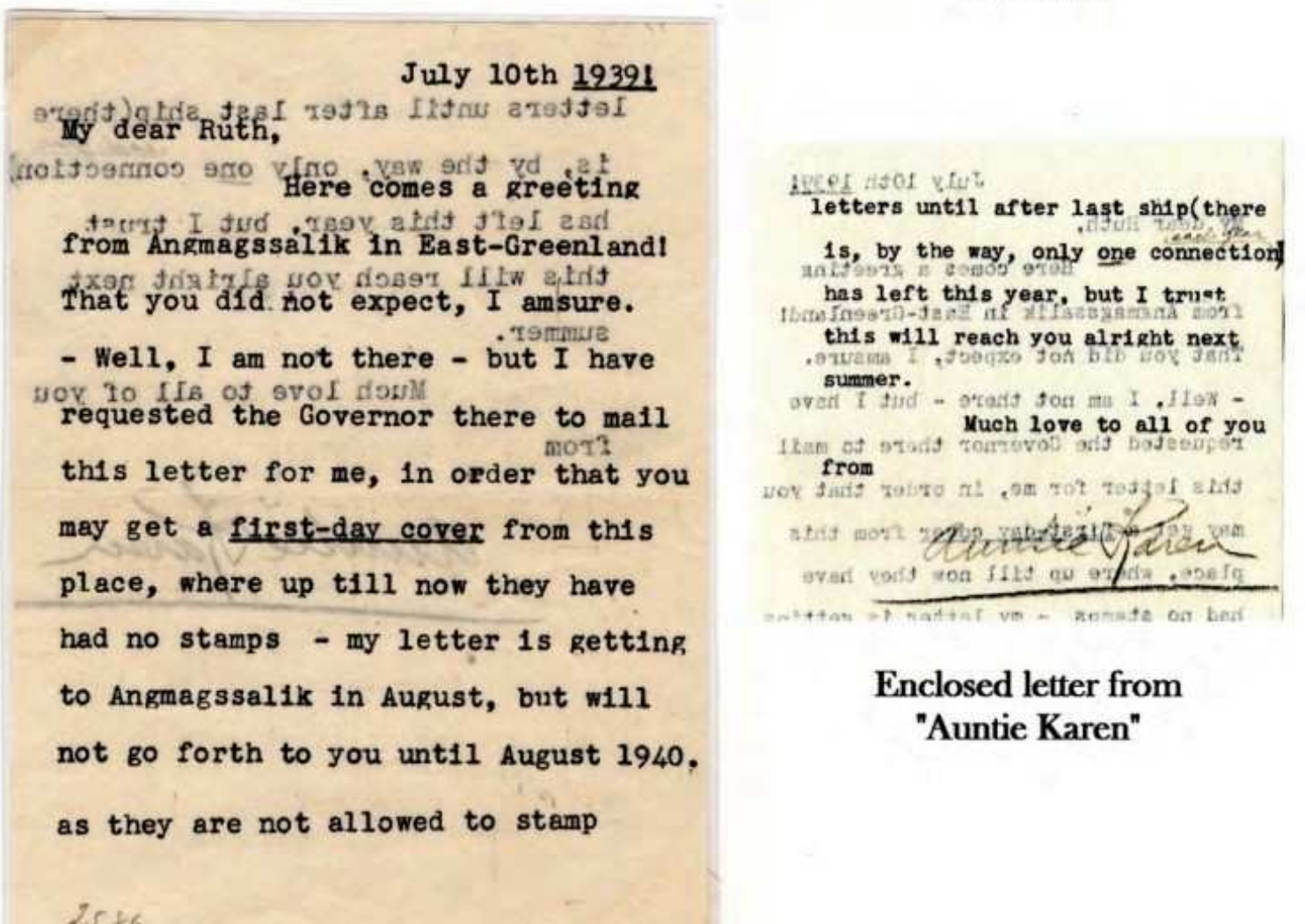


Angmagssalik - England - Godthaab - Berlin - Julianhaab - Copenhagen
1939 1940 1941 1941 1942 1945

Table of Events

1. 1939	Angmagssalik	Postmarked when post office opened 20 Sep
2. 1940	England	Arrived at Tring 30 Oct
3. 1940	England	Sent to "GREENLAND" even though the return address, c/o Greenland's Strøelse, was in Copenhagen
4. 1941	Godthaab	Arrived 19 Jun, returned to "DENMARK" before 8 Dec
5. 1941	Berlin	Censored at Berlin
6. 1942	Julianhaab	Back to Greenland, reason unknown, arrived 10 Feb
7. 1942	Greenland	Held in Greenland, no service to Denmark after Dec 1941
8. 1945	Greenland	"Returned to Copenhagen August 2 1945" in red crayon
9. 1945	Copenhagen	Postwar Danish censor 439 opened letter on arrival

MAIL TO FOREIGN COUNTRIES



Enclosed letter from "Auntie Karen"

Resumption of Service to Denmark

The wartime route via the U.S. restarted in June 1945

Greenland accepted mail to Denmark when the European war ended 5 May 1945. The earliest mail was forwarded to the U.S. before the U.S. had resumed service to Denmark.



Forwarded from Greenland before U.S. service began
Posted in Greenland 15 May and routed to the U.S.
Arrived in New York before the U.S. began letter delivery to Denmark 15 June
RETURNED TO SENDER from New York to Greenland

Scarce example from the brief period when Greenland had begun accepting mail to Europe but United States service was still suspended

RESUMPTION OF SERVICE TO DENMARK

Air Mail via the U.S. to Denmark

Flown by the U.S. Army Mail Service to New York and then by commercial airlines to Europe



APO 858 transit postmark at Narsarsuaq showing transport by Army Mail Service



American Issue used briefly during a stamp shortage in 1945

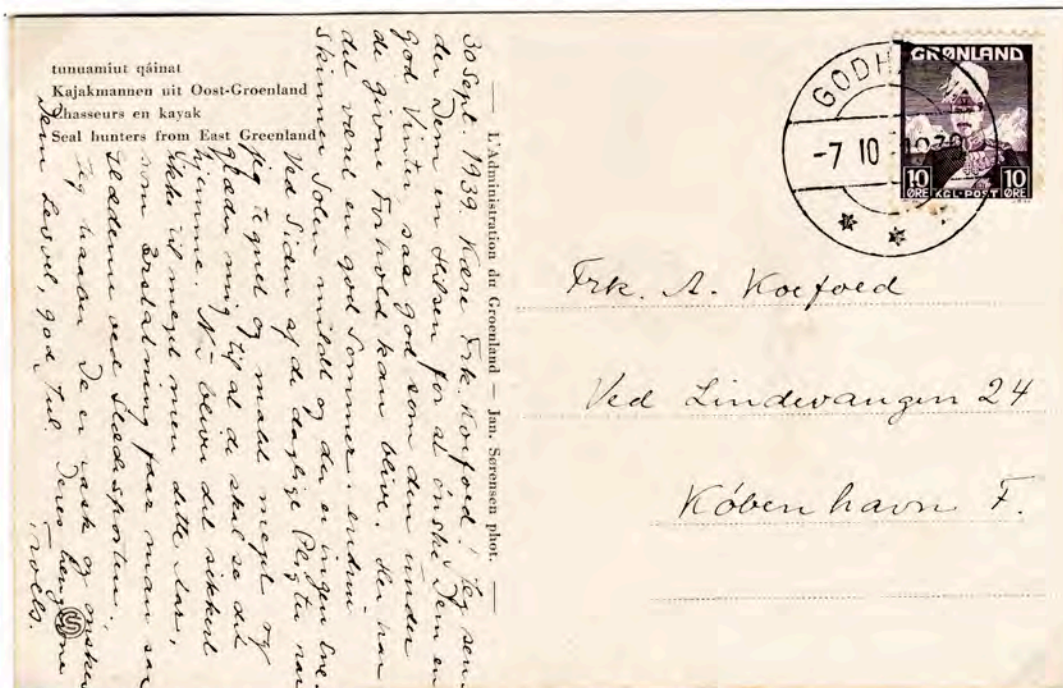
Epilogue The new spirit of postal innovation brought on by the world war continued afterward, leading to more modernized services within Greenland and direct air mail service to Europe and North America by 1954.

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Chapters

- | | | | |
|--------------------------|---------|------------------------------|---------|
| 1. Mail within Greenland | 1940-45 | 3. Mail to foreign countries | 1940-45 |
| 2. Mail to Denmark | 1940-41 | 4. Resumption of Service | 1945 |

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Mail within Greenland

Internal mail was delivered primarily by sled

Mail routes on the west coast of the island
stayed the same during the war

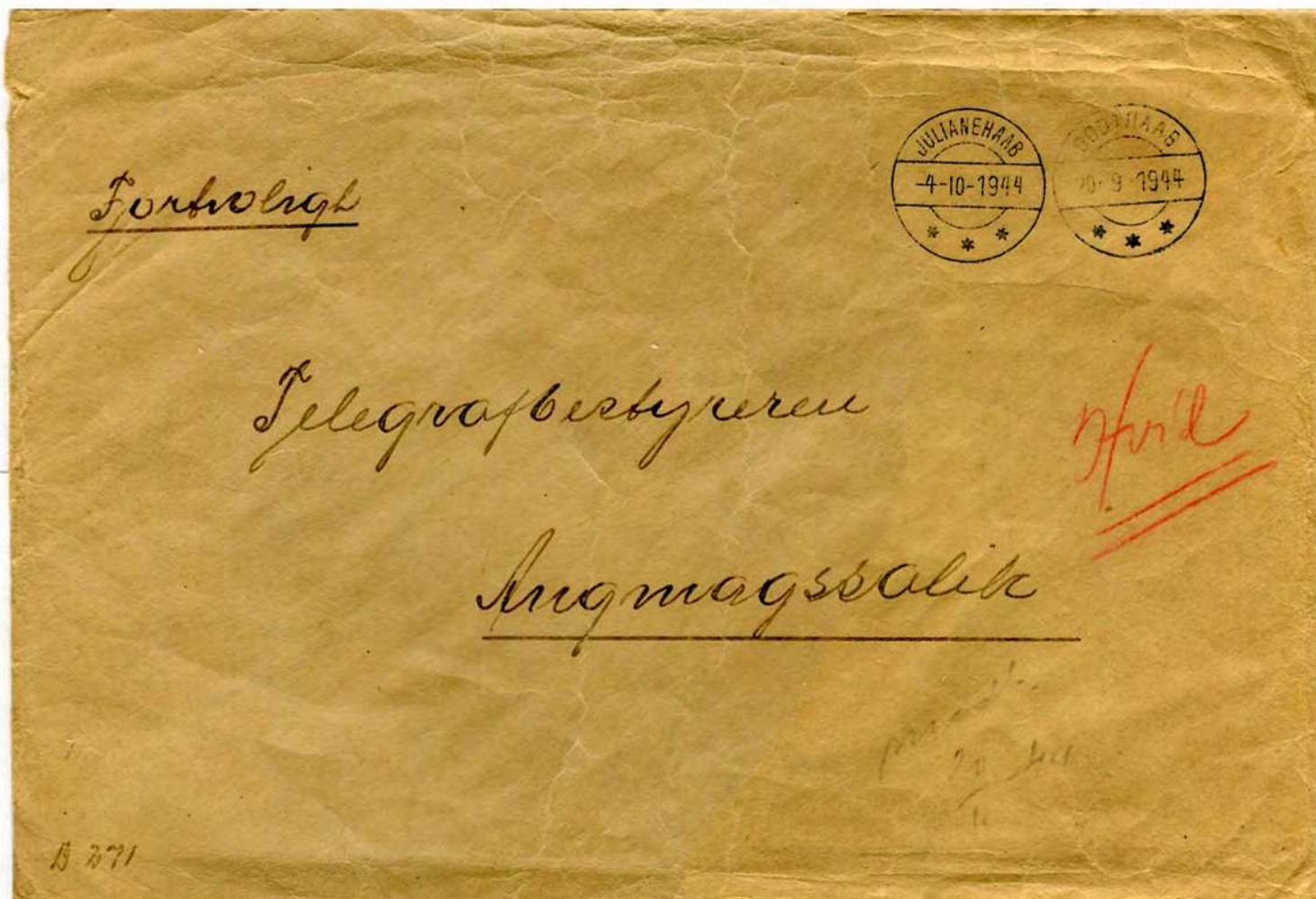


Mail carried by sled between two West Coast settlements

Patriotic charity label on Christmas mail

Wartime route for mail sent across Greenland

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Julianehaab transit marking applied to mail routed via southern Greenland

Confidential official mail from Godthaab to Angmagssalik

Docketed arrival 20 November - 61 Days in transit

Mail to Denmark

New Route after German Invasion

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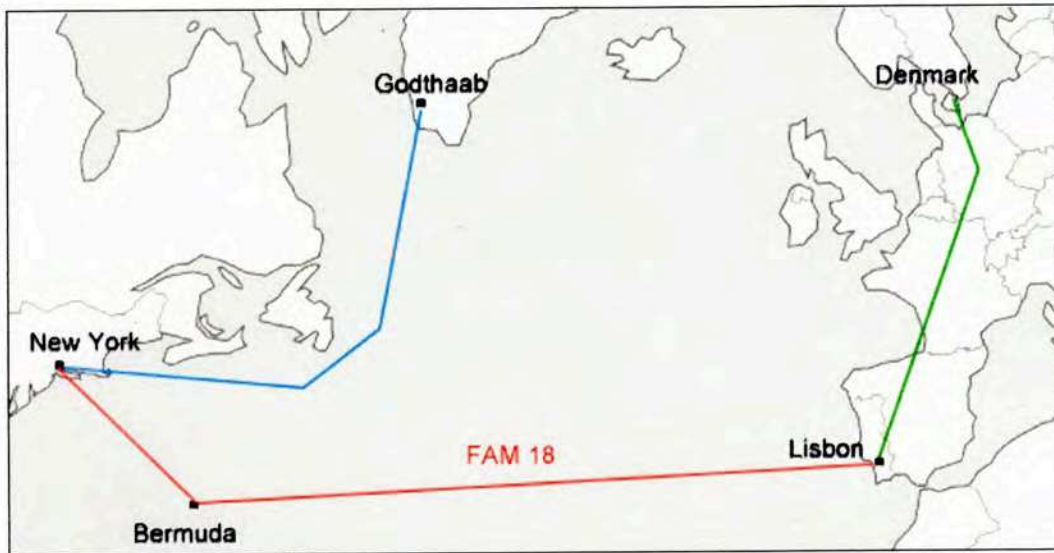
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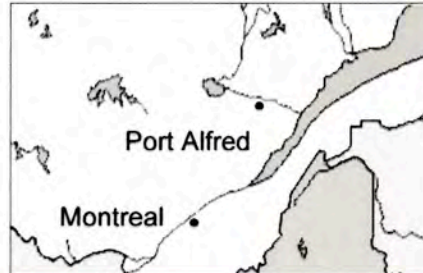


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when the ship's crewman handed the mail to the U.S. postmaster

Paquebot markings used on one voyage only

Mail to Denmark routed through Canada in error

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Eight 10¢ rate examples known to this exhibitor

Mail confiscated by British censors at Bermuda

Letters containing items of value were held as war prizes



Sent via U.S.
and across
Atlantic

Copy of front

Held in Bermuda for value of postage stamps inside
Grey marking "Released by Prize Court" used in June 1950

Confiscated philatelic mail was sold in auctions in Bermuda after the War

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Late mail returned to Greenland by U.S. Post Office

Mailed 24 November, reached the U.S. after service stopped 12 December
Held in the U.S. and sent back to Greenland after April 1942



Mail to Foreign Countries

Routed by ship or air to North America

Most foreign mail was addressed to the U.S. or Canada



EXAMINED BY

C. 248

Canadian censor
at Ottawa

By ship via Canada to U.S., 30ø foreign letter



Flown by Army Mail Service to New York, sent by surface from there

IN REPLY REFER TO
000
FILE NO. GLW



DEPARTMENT OF STATE

THE FOREIGN SERVICE
OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

AMERICAN CONSULATE
Godthaab, Greenland, October 9, 1940.

Mr. A.F. Anderson,
2314 East Avenue,
Erie, Pennsylvania.

Sir:

The receipt is acknowledged of your communication of August 10, 1940 requesting that the enclosed International Reply Coupon be used to purchase postage for the return of the self-addressed envelope also enclosed.

American Consulate,
Godthaab, Greenland.



A.F. ANDERSON
2314 EAST AVE.
ERIE, PA. U.S.A.

**Refranked with Canada postage at Port Alfred
3¢ letter rate to U.S.**

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Mail delivered by Eastern Arctic Patrol ship *Nascopie*

The ship stopped in Greenland during her 1940 voyage to Canada's Eastern Arctic regions



Posted while *Nascopie* was at Godthaab
Sent to the Mayor of Ottawa



Oval marking applied to mail processed on board

Foreign mail handled by U.S. Army Mail Service

From 1943, the Army Mail Service transferred Greenland's foreign mail to New York, where it entered the U.S. mails



**Registered to U.S., processed by three registered mail systems
Greenland, U.S. Army, and U.S. civilian**

Military and civilian registry back stamps



APO 615 (Iviglut)



Washington, D.C.

Delivery resolved after the War ended

Addressee gone away, sent to Greenland in error, arrived in Denmark after the War



Angmagssalik - England - Godthaab - Berlin - Julianehaab - Copenhagen
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9.
6.
5.
8.



4.
3.

Copy of back

July 10th 1939!

My dear Ruth,

Here comes a greeting from Angmagssalik in East-Greenland!

That you did not expect, I am sure.

- Well, I am not there - but I have requested the Governor there to mail this letter for me, in order that you may get a first-day cover from this place, where up till now they have had no stamps - my letter is getting to Angmagssalik in August, but will not go forth to you until August 1940, as they are not allowed to stamp

2586

July 10th 1939!

letters until after last ship (there is, by the way, only one connection has left this year, but I trust this will reach you alright next summer.

- Well, I am not there - but I have Much love to all of you from

Auntie Karen

Enclosed letter from "Auntie Karen"

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