

WAR-THEMED SLOGAN POSTMARKS IN BRITISH INDIA (1914–1945)

INTRODUCTION:

During the First and Second World Wars, slogan postmarks became important instruments of wartime communication and propaganda in British India. Postal authorities, along with associated organisations, used slogan cancellations to encourage financial contributions, promote material conservation, support recruitment efforts, and create awareness regarding public safety measures. Through their widespread use on everyday correspondence, these slogans transformed ordinary mail into an effective medium for disseminating wartime policies and encouraging public participation in the war effort.

This exhibit examines how such wartime postal propaganda reflected the political, economic, and social priorities of British India between 1914 and 1945.

TREATMENT

The exhibit adopts a thematic treatment structured around the principal objectives of wartime propaganda rather than a purely chronological arrangement.

The material is organised into sections covering:

- Financial Mobilisation for War,
- Recruitment and Patriotic Appeals,
- Civil Defence and Public Safety,
- Wartime Information and Awareness,
- Private/Semi-Official Wartime Slogans.

Special postmarks, machine slogan cancellations, and related wartime postal propaganda are studied together to demonstrate how postal communication supported the war effort across multiple levels of society.

The treatment further highlights importance of slogan postmarks as historical documents reflecting wartime priorities, public behaviour, and state communication strategies within British India.

The classification system used by A. K. Bayanwala in his book has been uniformly used

RARITY

Rare/ scarce items indicated by a red border.

No formal rarity index exists for slogan and special postmarks of this nature. The rarity of the material presented has therefore been assessed on the basis of recorded auction appearances, exhibit usage, and the known or observed period of postal usage.

Classifications are unrelated to valuation.

PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This exhibit studies war-related slogan and special postmarks used in British India during the First and Second World Wars. It illustrates the use of postal propaganda for wartime messaging and civilian mobilisation through slogans promoting War Loans, Defence Bonds, National Savings, civil defence, recruitment, patriotic appeals, and public safety awareness.

In keeping with the Open Philatelic class, relevant non-philatelic contextual material has also been included to strengthen the historical narrative and demonstrate the broader societal impact of these wartime messages.



Bayanwala Sl. No Sl 24. 1st Indian War related Slogan postmark. Used as Supplementary Postmark.

1918 War Loans launched during World War I to support India's pledged contribution of £45 million towards the British war effort. Government issued 5½% War Bonds and long-term loans in affordable denominations to encourage wider public participation in wartime financing!

EXHIBIT PLAN

Sl	Section	Page
1	Title Page	1
2	WAR FUND MOBILIZATION: DEFENCE SAVING CERTIFICATES 1940	2
3	CIVIL DEFENSE: AIR RAID PROTECTION I	3
4	CIVIL DEFENSE: AIR RAID PROTECTION I	4
5	NATIONAL WAR FRONT 1942	5
6	VICTORY HANDSTAMPS 1944	6
7	DELHI VICTORY WEEK 1946	7
8	CIVIL DEFENSE: MISCELLANEOUS & CONCLUSION	8

MEASUREMENT

CURRENCY: Re1= 16 Annas. 1

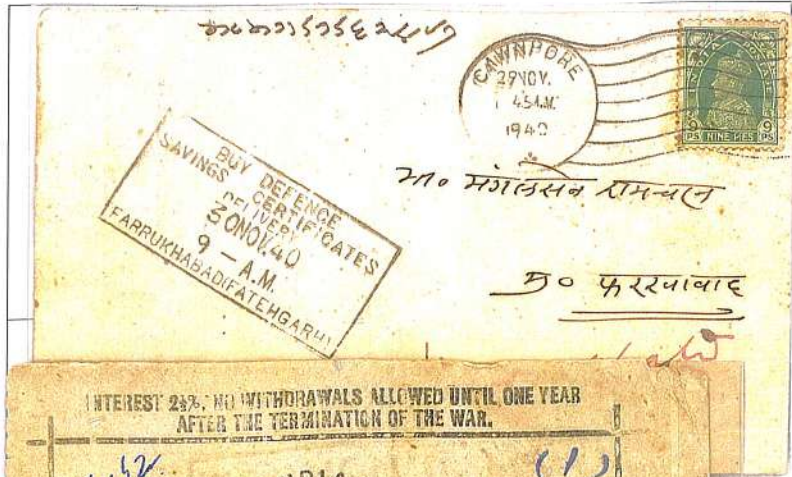
Anna= 12 Pies

WEIGHT: Inland Mail in Tola's(11.67 grams). External in Ounces Oz's (28.35 grams)

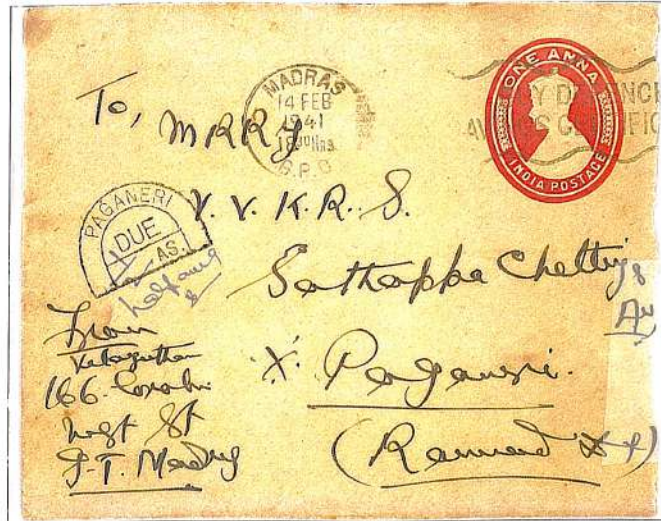
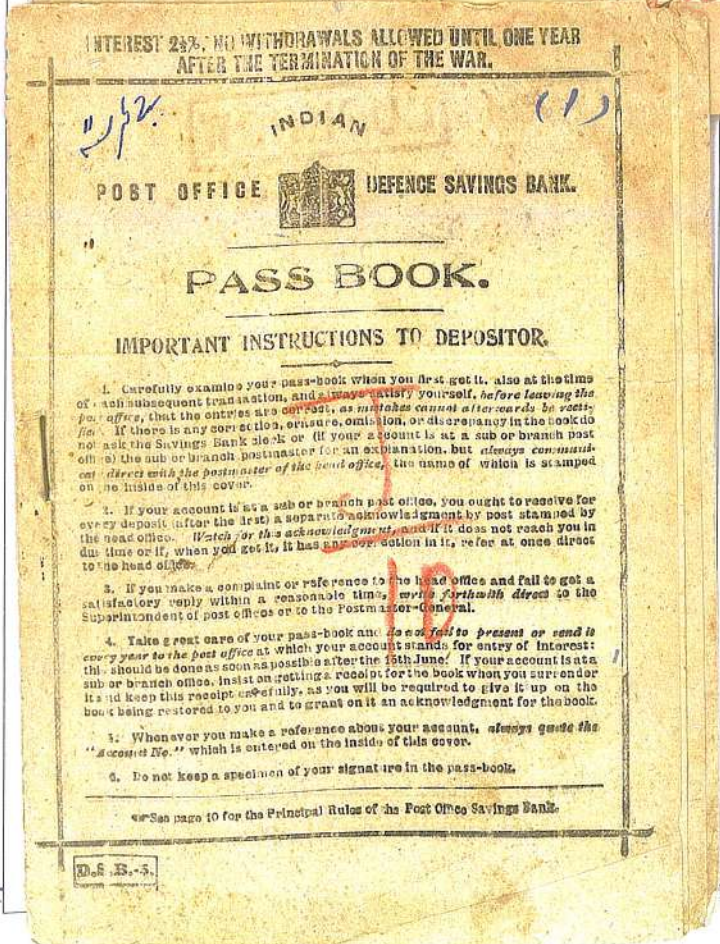
REFERENCES

- 1)A. K. Bayanwala: Slogans & Special Post-Marks of India
 - 2)Brian Cartwright: Slogan Cancellations (IP)
 - 3)B.T.Cheverton: Slogan Postmarks (IP)
- (IP)= INDIA POST, published by India Study Circle, London

India Defence Savings Certificates were introduced by the Government of British India in August 1940 to raise public funds for World War II military expenditure while also absorbing excess liquidity and controlling inflation. Issued through the postal savings system in denominations such as Rs. 10, Rs. 50, and Rs. 100, these certificates were primarily structured as long-term investments. In 1943, the scheme evolved into the broader Post Office National Savings Certificates programme, and following the end of the war in 1946, investors were permitted to convert their holdings into regular National Savings Certificates.

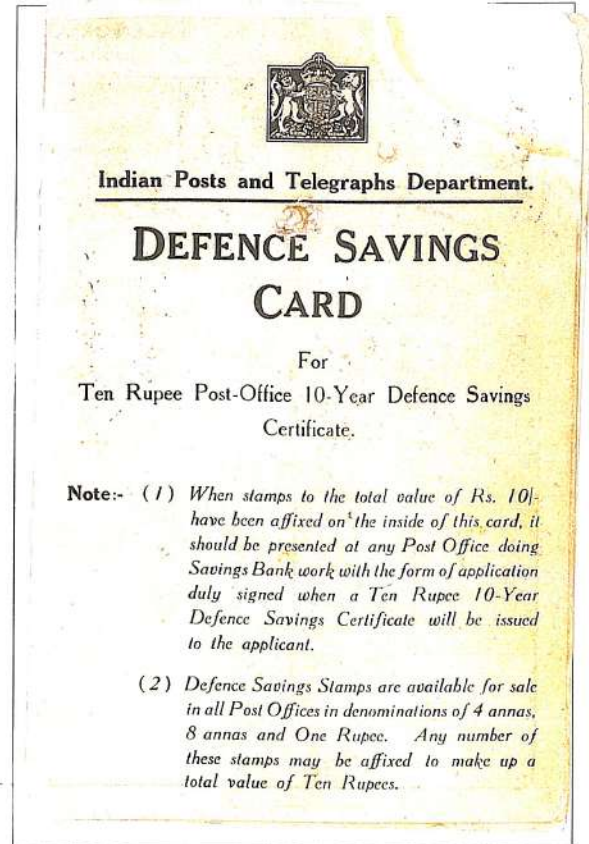


Delivered Farrukhabad 30th November 1940., Used as **DELIVERY** postmark. **Bayanwala Type SI - 29**



Posted Madras GPO 14th February 1941, Used as **CANCELLOR.2** wavy lines with duplex date stamp. **Bayanwala Type SI - 31**

Used as **CANCELLOR** in Golden Temple 4th November 1941. **UNRECORDED BY BAYANWALA**



SPACE FOR AFFIXING STAMPS.
(The total value of the stamps affixed below should be exactly Ten Rupees.)



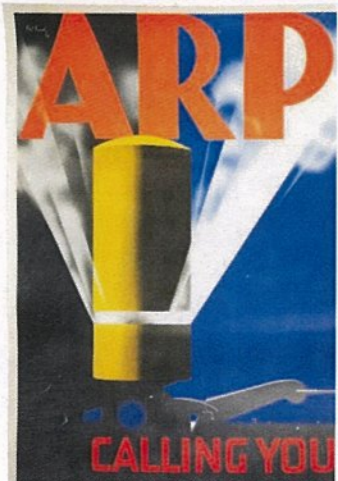
Reduced copy of inside of the pass book with Re 1 stamp **"SAVE FOR INDIA'S DEFENCE"**

CIVIL DEFENCE: AIR RAID PROTECTION 1940'S

During World War II, the British administration established extensive Air Raid Precaution (ARP) measures across India in response to the threat of Japanese attacks, particularly along the eastern coast. Major cities enforced blackouts, constructed shelters and trenches, and organised trained wardens to manage civilian safety, rescue, and first-aid operations. In vulnerable coastal centres such as Visakhapatnam, which experienced Japanese bombing raids in 1942, concrete bunkers and defensive structures were also constructed for protection

Key Measures:

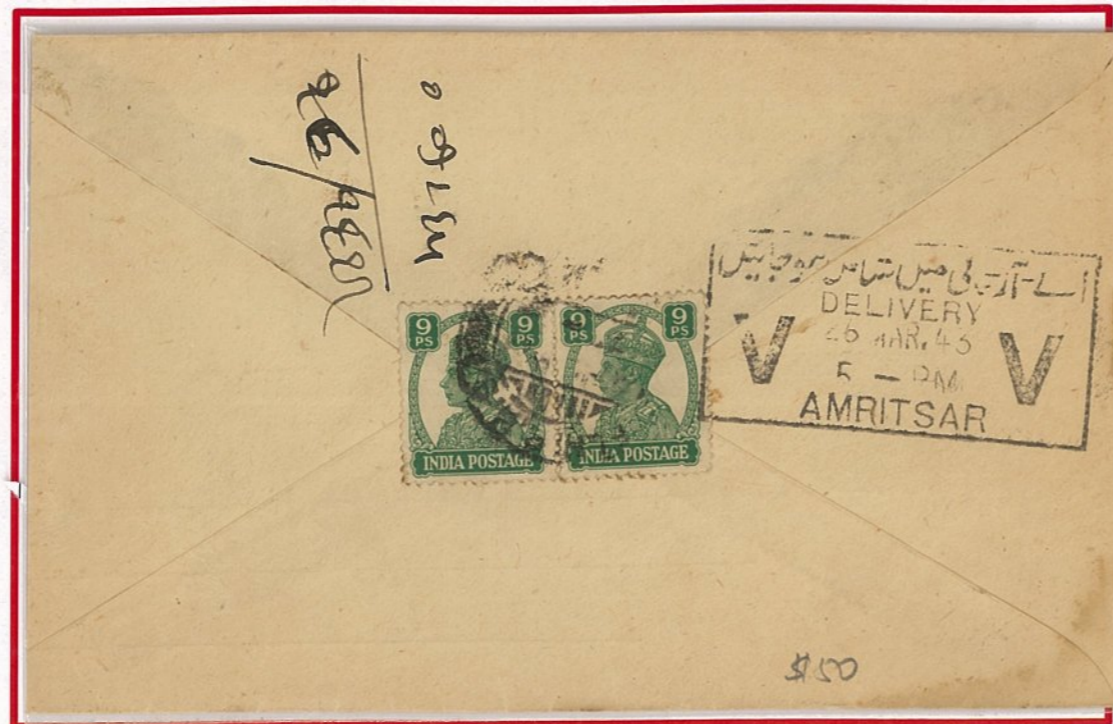
- **ARP Wardens:** Volunteers enforcing rules, guiding civilians, giving first aid, reporting incidents.
- **Shelters:** Trenches and concrete "pillboxes" built across cities; some still exist.
- **Sirens:** Installed to signal alerts and "all clear."
- **Blackouts:** Strict night lighting controls to conceal targets.
- **Camouflage:** Taj Mahal disguised with bamboo scaffolding.
- **Evacuations:** Temporary exodus from Madras after Colombo raids (1942).
- **Fire & Rescue:** Auxiliary Fire Service and rescue teams formed.
- **Defences:** Anti-aircraft guns and airfields for Allied fighters like Spitfires.



Reduced image of A.R.P poster



Urdu slogan reading "A. R. P MEIN SHAMIL HO JAYE" (JOIN A. R. P SERVICES).
UNRECORDED BY BAYANWALA

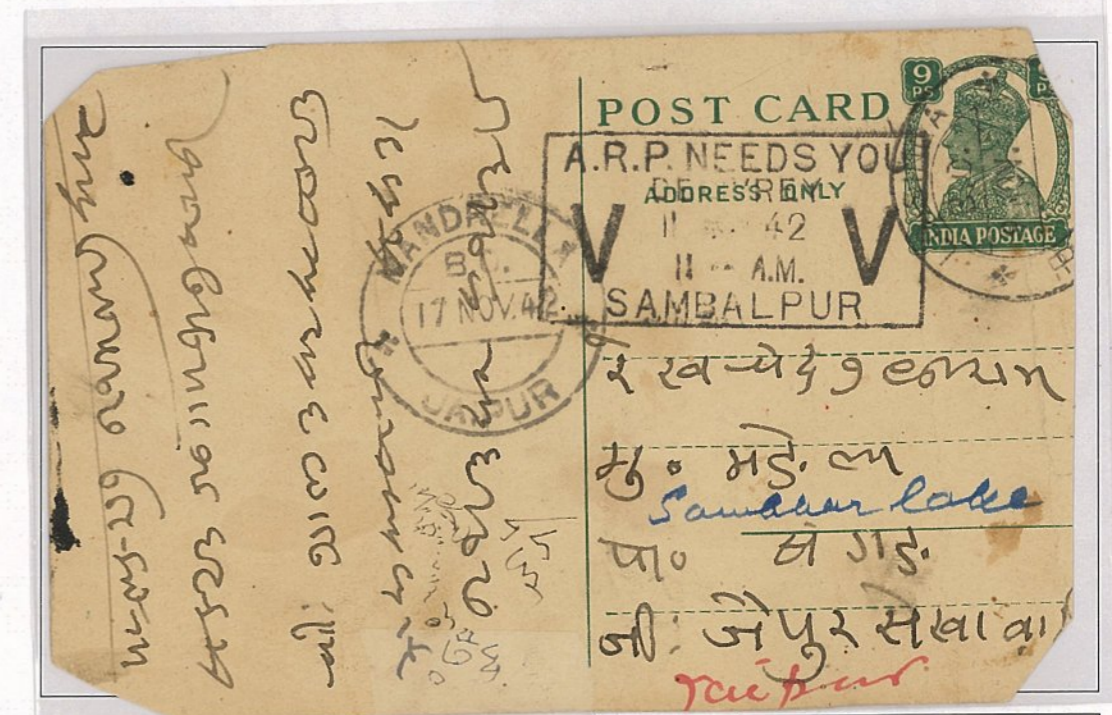


"JOIN THE A.R.P"

- Used as **DELIVERY** Postmark Delivered Agra 1st February 1943.
- **Bayanwala Type Sl. 88**



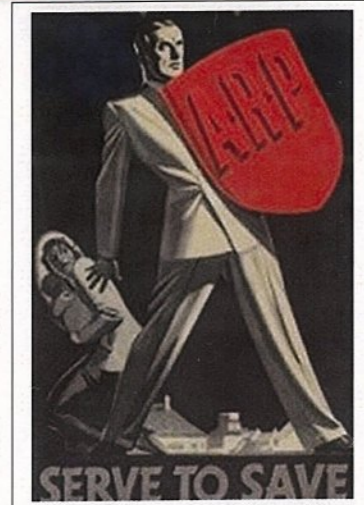
Reduced image of A.R.P poster

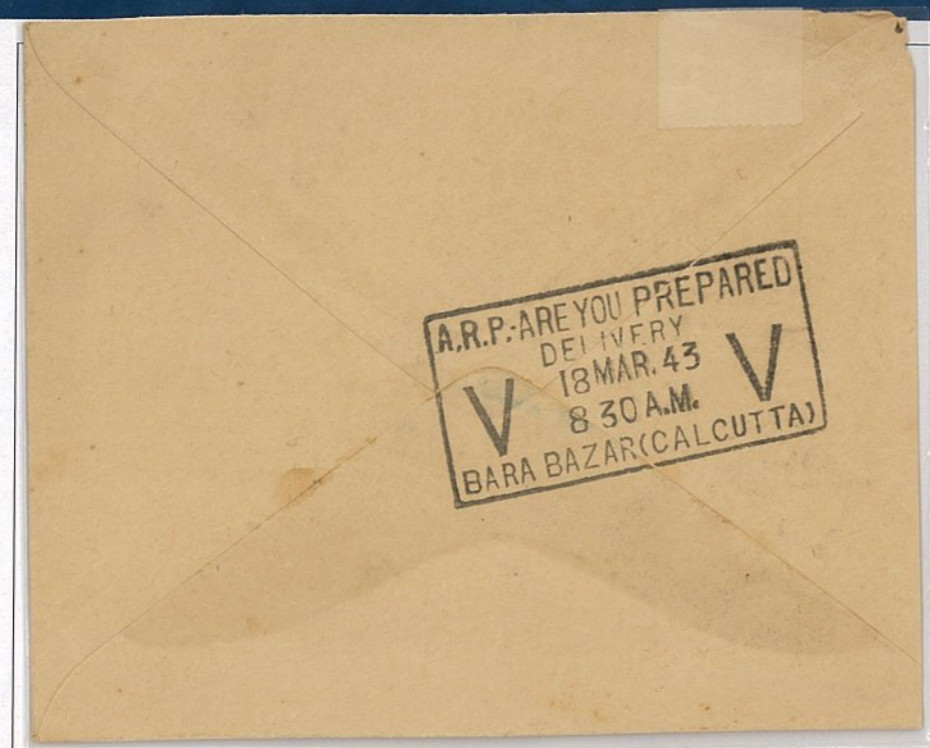


"A.R.P NEEDS YOU"

- Used as **DELIVERY** Postmark
- Delivered Sambalpur 17th November 1942.
- **Bayanwala Type Sl. 91**

Reduced image of A.R.P poster

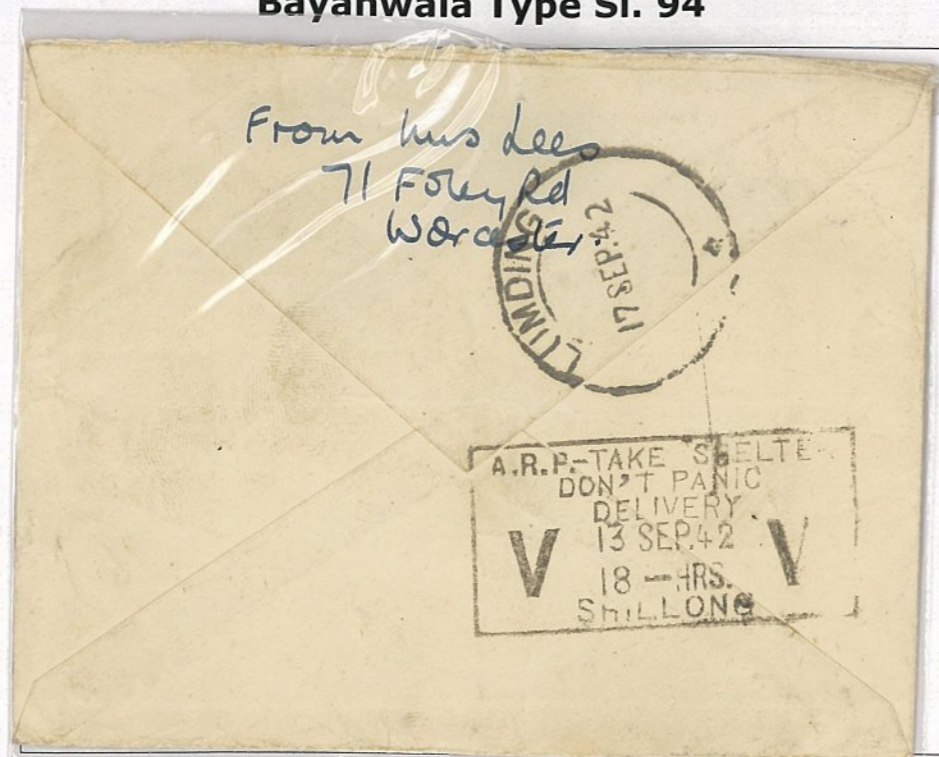




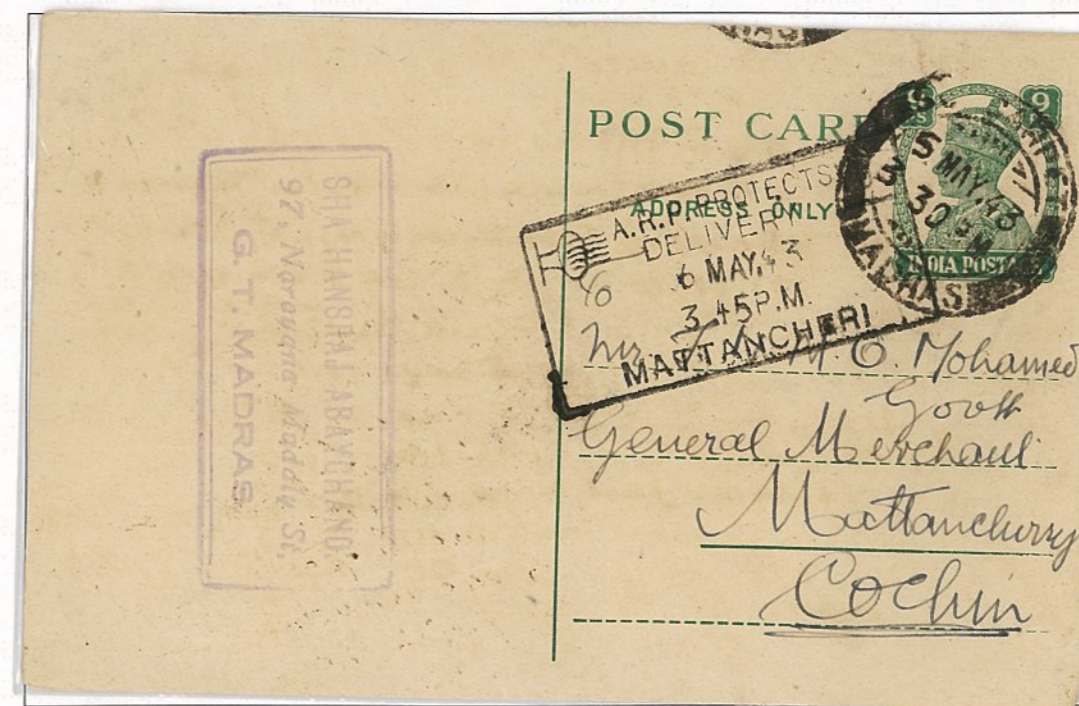
Slogan "A.R.P ARE YOU PREPARED". Delivered Bara Bazar, Calcutta 18th March 1943. **Bayanwala Type Sl. 94**



Slogan "JOIN A.R.P SERVICES". Air Mail Censored letter from Mombasa, Kenya. Delivered Bombay 20th August 1942. **Bayanwala Type Sl. 89**



Slogan "A.R.P- TAKE SHELTER. DON'T PANIC". Air Mail Censored letter from Worcester, England. Delivered Shillong 13th September 1942 (wartime disruptions resulted in almost 2 months delivery by Air Mail!) **Not recorded by Bayanwala**

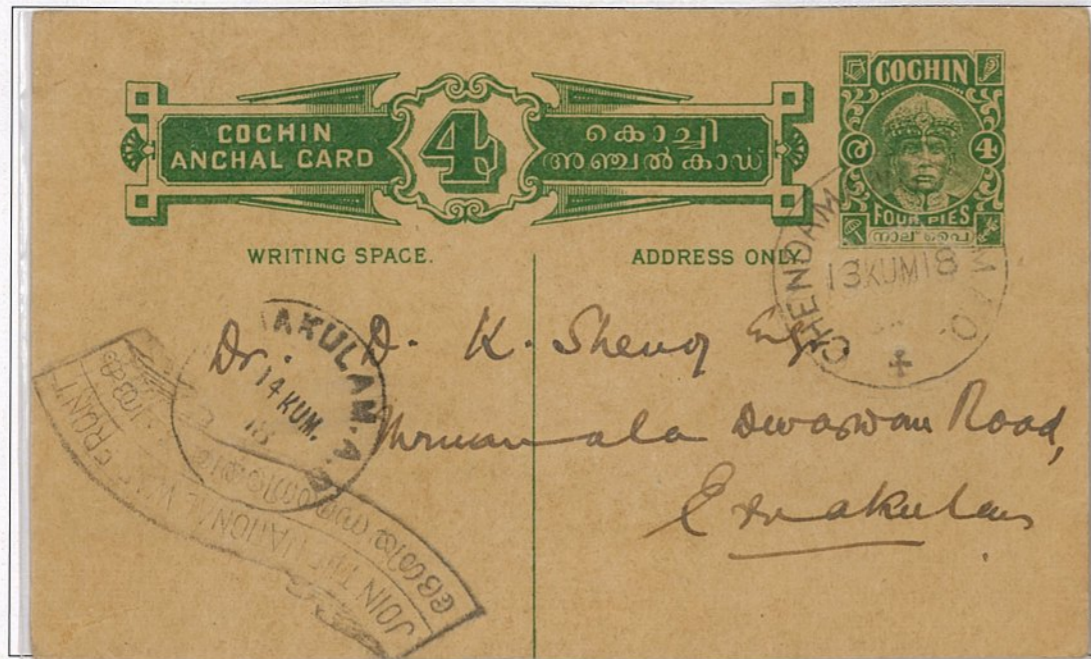


Slogan "A.R.P PROTECTS YOU". Delivered Mattancheri 6th 1942. **Bayanwala Type Sl. 92**

NATIONAL WAR FRONT

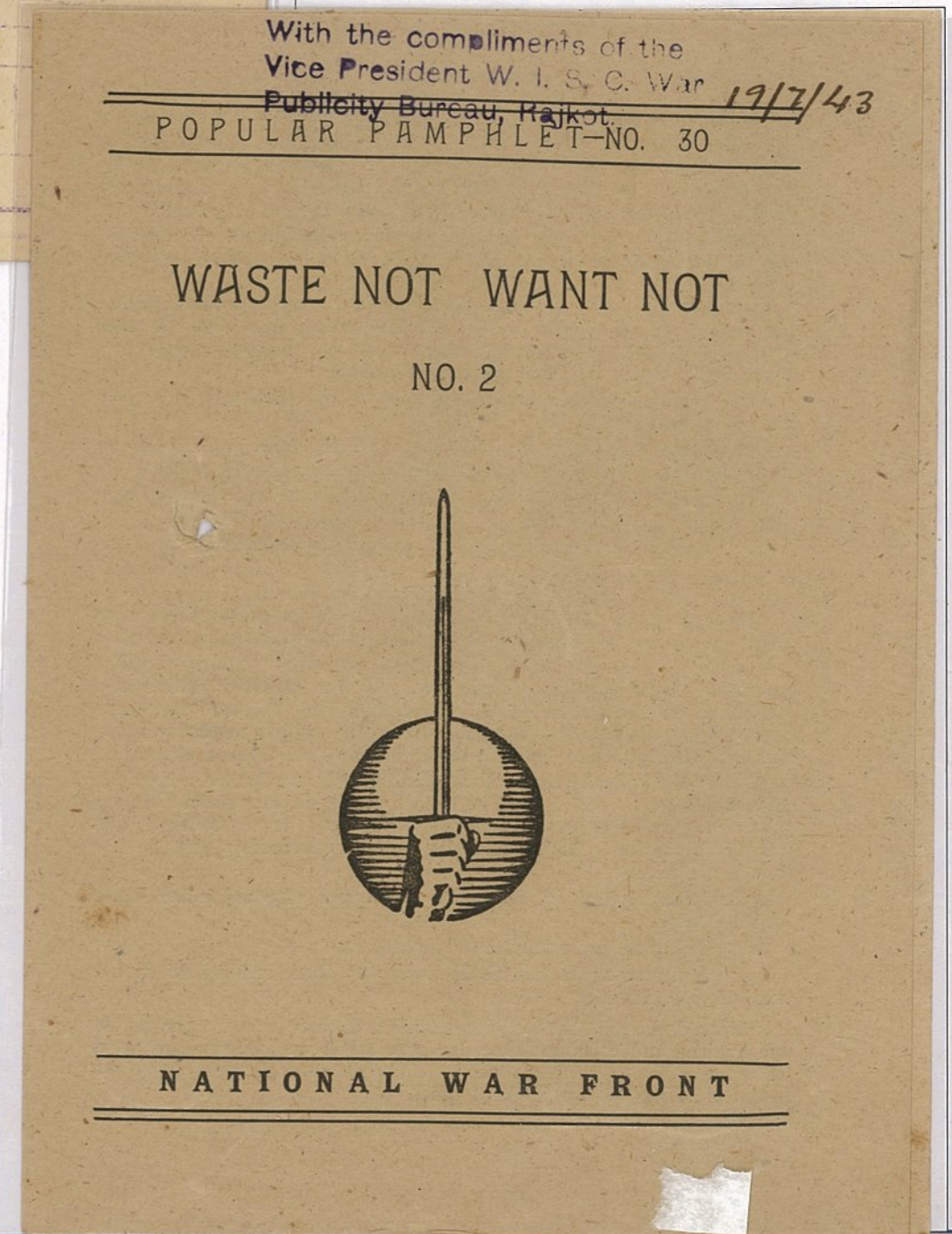
The National War Front was established by the British Indian Government in 1942 as a large-scale wartime propaganda and public relations organisation to mobilise civilian support for the Allied war effort during World War II.

Operating from Victory House in Madras, it disseminated war information, propaganda material, and recruitment appeals across urban and rural India through pamphlets, lectures, and local outreach networks. **BAYANWALA TYPE SL, 96, used in Cochin Anchal State**

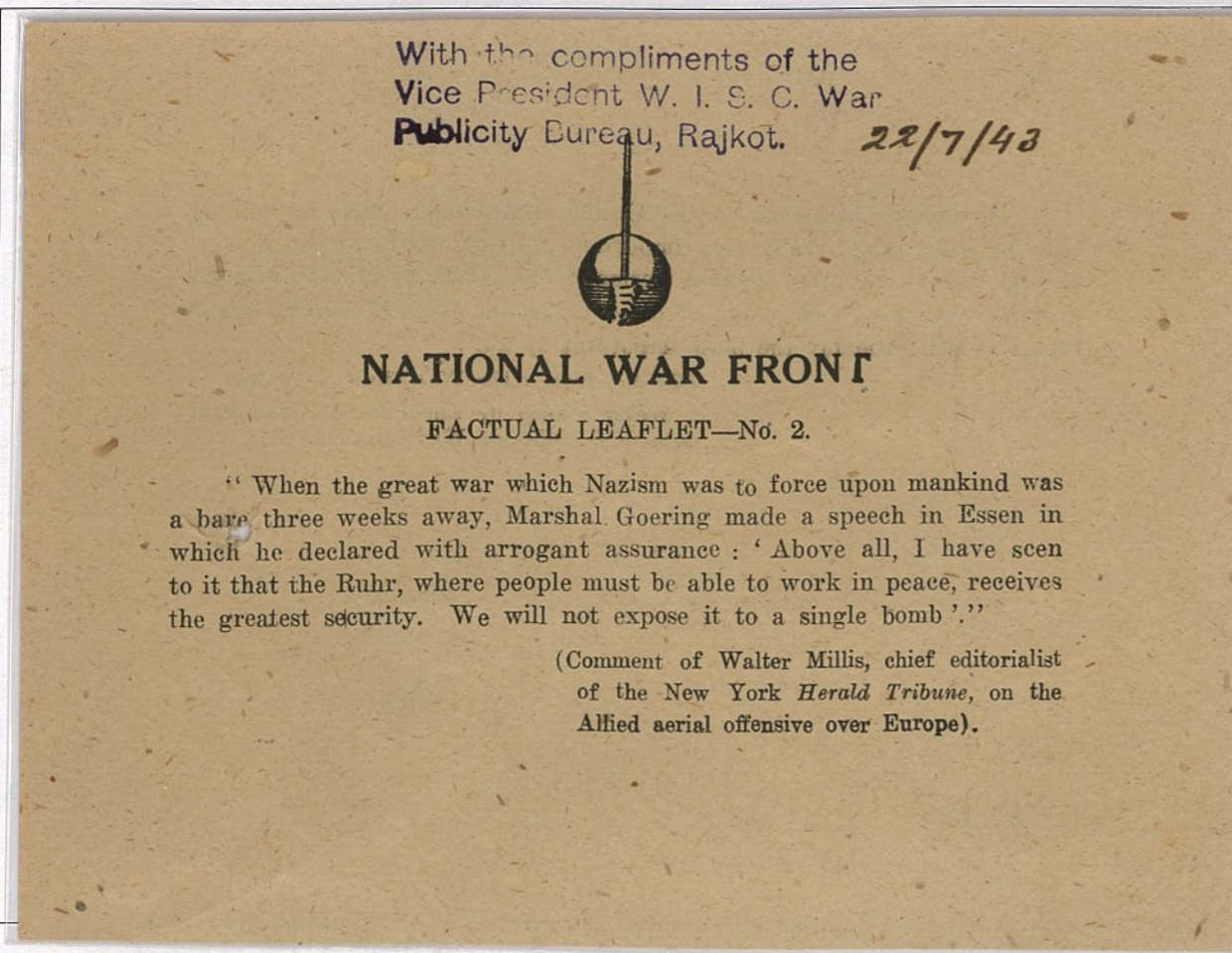


Posted **IRINJALAKUDA** On
13th KAR (Karkidakam) 17
 (1117) **Malayalam Era**
 (Kerala), reaching
CRANGANORE next day.
 Gregorian equivalent **28 July**
1942

Posted Chendamangalam On 13th KUM (Kumbham) 18(1118)
 Malayalam Era (Kerala), reaching Ernakulam next day.
 Gregorian equivalent 25 February 1943



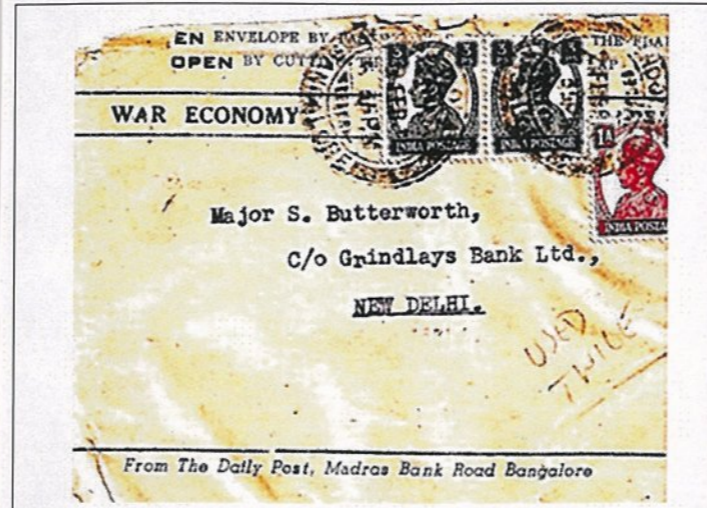
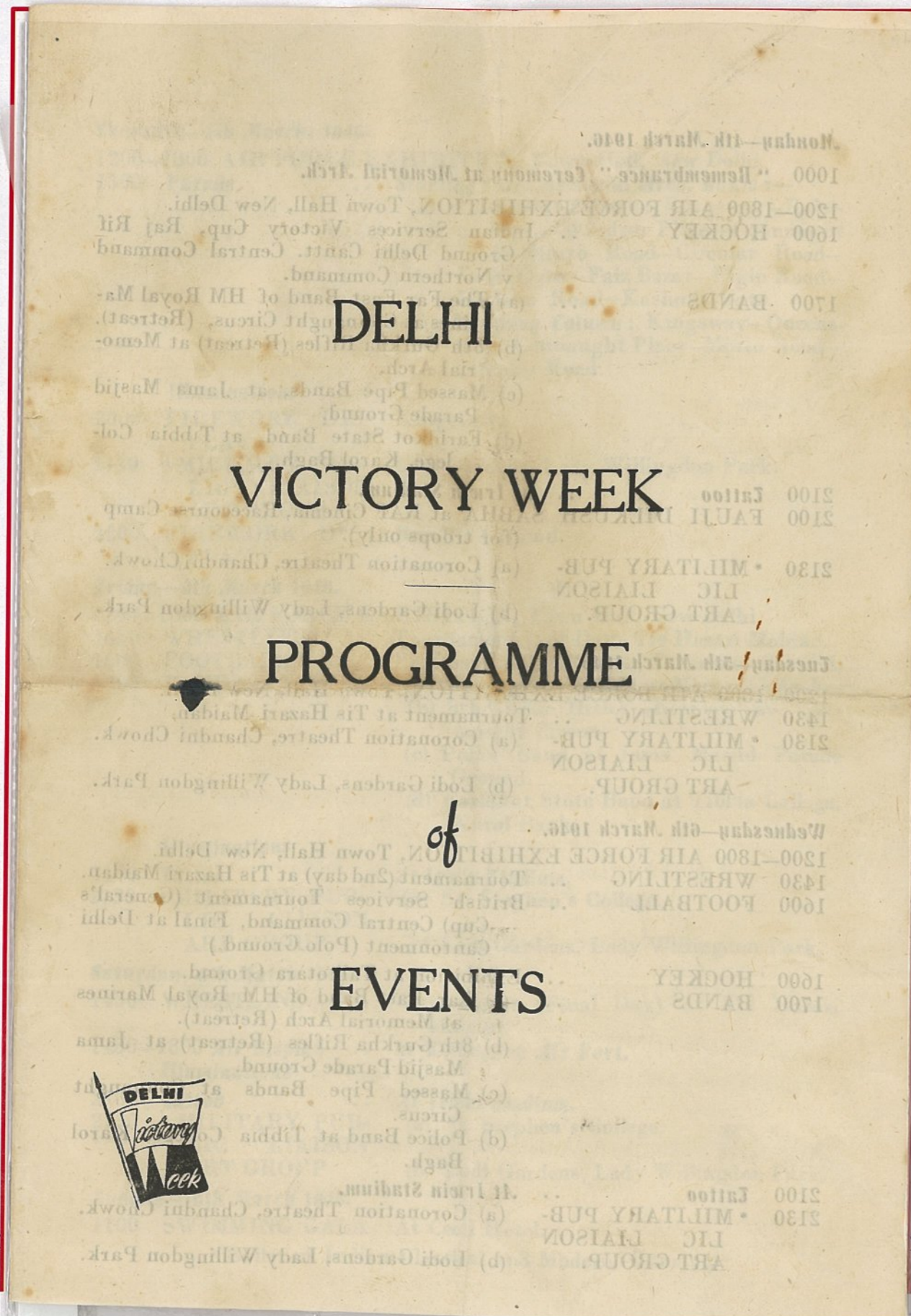
VARIATIONS IN
 SLOPE AND LETTERING
 AMONGST THE P. O's.



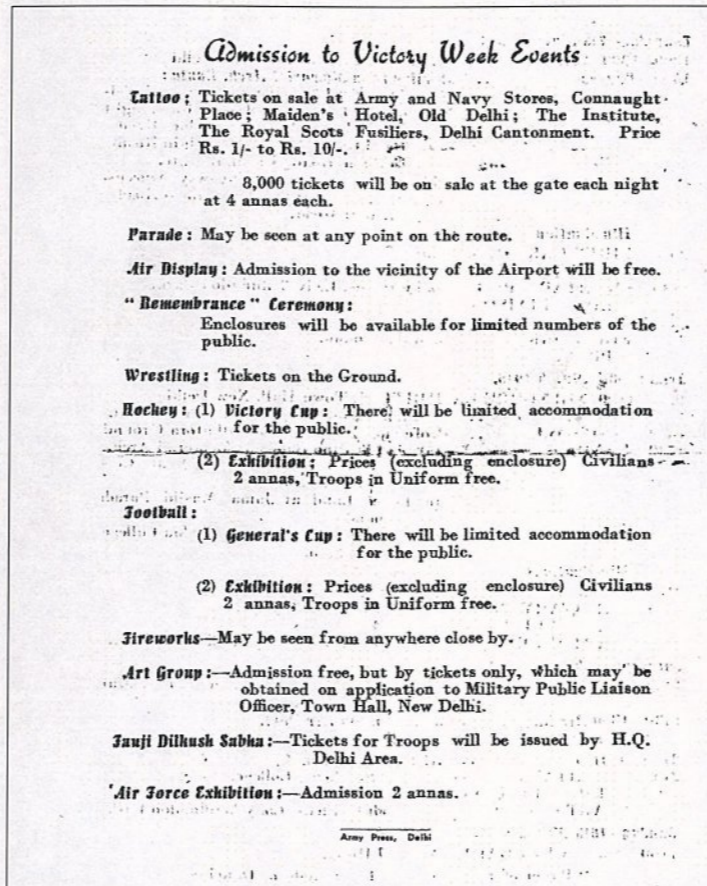
DELHI VICTORY WEEK

Delhi Victory Week, held from 4-9 March 1946, was organised by the British Government in India to commemorate the Allied victory in World War II. The celebrations culminated in a major Victory Parade in Delhi on 7 March 1946, reviewed by Lord Mountbatten, Supreme Allied Commander, South East Asia, and involving British Indian and Allied forces.

Intended as a display of imperial military strength and victory, celebrations took place amid widespread nationalist protests and public unrest associated with Indian National Army trials and the growing independence movement. Used only as DELIVERY postmark from Delhi GPO from 16th February 1946. BAYANWALA SI-101



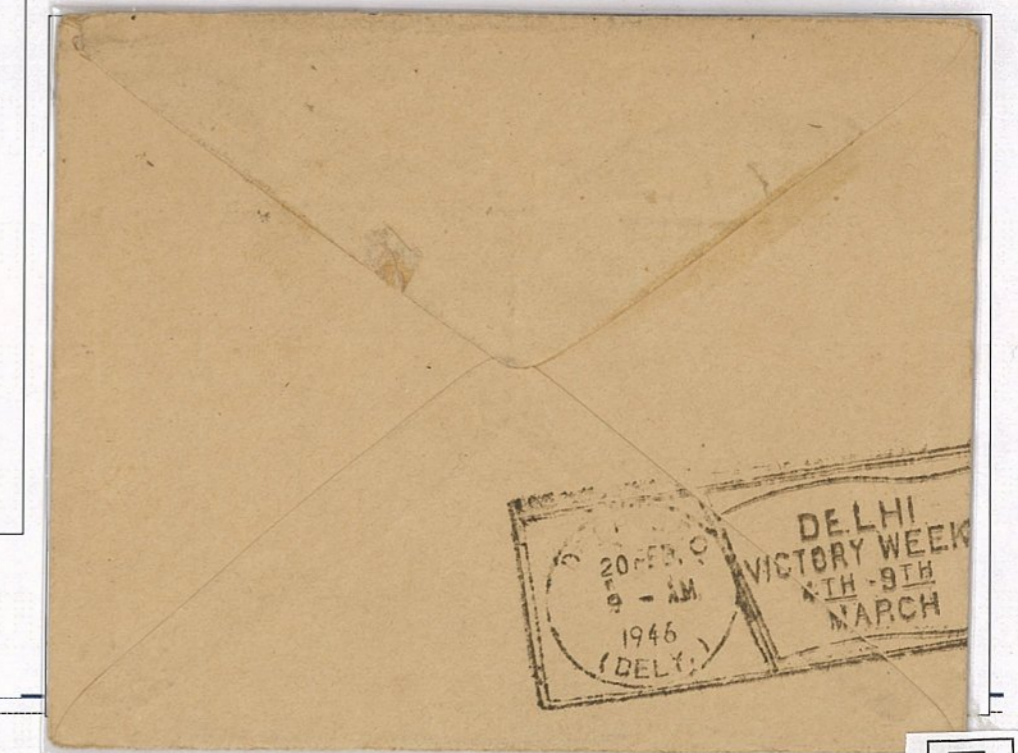
REVERSE →



← COPY OF PAGE 4 OF PROGRAM (REDUCED TO < 30%)



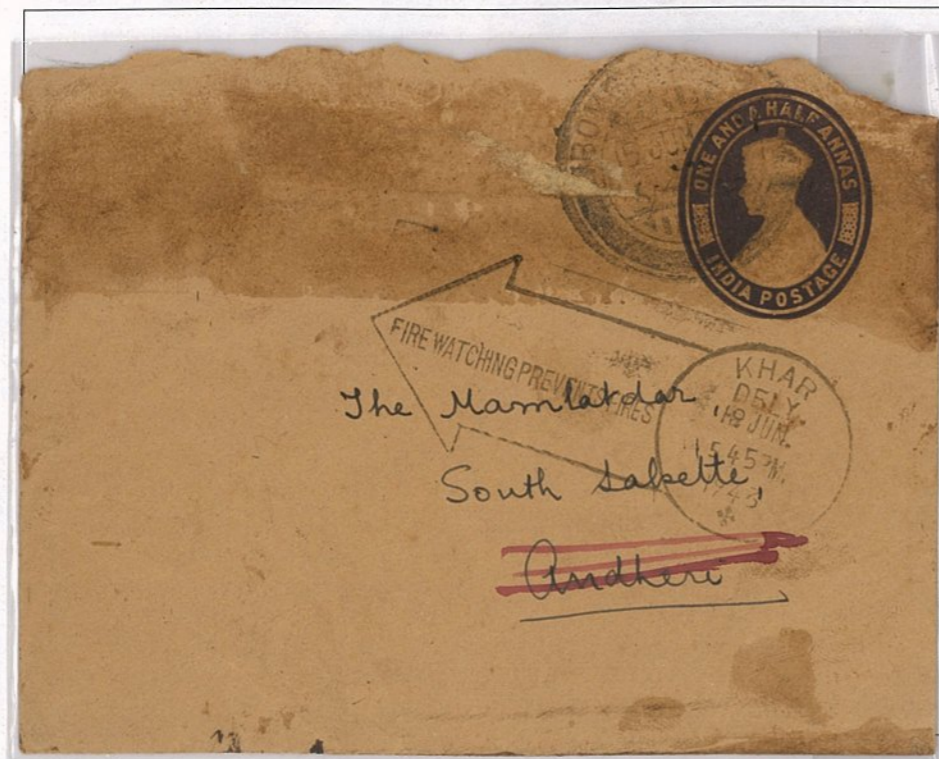
↑ **FIRST DAY USE.** Delivered New Delhi 16th February 1946. **WAR ECONOMY slip** in the front.



↓ Delivered New Delhi 20th February 1946



Slogan "**CARELESS TALKS COST LIVES**", World War II message. **SUPPLEMENTARY** Post mark. Stamped Jaipur 13th June 1944. Effort to stop rumours about Allies defeats, especially in the Eastern sector and Japanese gains.
Bayanwala Type Sl. 97



Slogan "**FIRE WATCHING PREVENTS FIRES**". Delivered Khar 18th June 1943. Used as DELIVERY cancellation. **Not recorded by Bayanwala**



Slogan "**WHEN SIRENS SOUND, TAKE COVER**". Delivered Poona 2nd July September 1942. Used as DELIVERY cancellation. **Bayanwala Type Sl. 99**

CIVIL CONCLUSION

- The exhibit demonstrates how slogan and special postmarks became important instruments of wartime communication and propaganda in British India during the two World Wars.
- Postal slogans promoted defence savings, civil defence, air-raid precautions, public safety, conservation, and patriotic participation through the widespread circulation of everyday mail.
- Machine slogans, special handstamps, and commemorative markings illustrate the diverse methods used by postal authorities and associated organisations to mobilise civilian support for the war effort.
- The material reflects the political, financial, and social priorities of the colonial administration during wartime, while also documenting the atmosphere of public mobilisation in British India.
- By combining philatelic and historical context, the exhibit highlights the broader significance of wartime postal propaganda beyond its purely postal function.
- These slogan postmarks survive today as important historical records of how the postal system was used to influence public behaviour, strengthen morale, and support wartime administration between 1914 and 1945.