

POSTAL HISTORY OF THE ITALIAN SOCIAL REPUBLIC 1943 - 1945

The purpose of this exhibit is to illustrate the postal history of the Italian Social Republic by showing postal documents that witness the usual function of its postal services, as well as the ones affected by special circumstances related to war.

In mid-1943 Allies started occupying Sicily and Southern Italy. It then became obvious that the war was not going well, and that a peace treaty was necessary to save what was salvageable. Mussolini was arrested by some hierarchs of the Italian Fascist Party in July 1943. An armistice was signed between Allies and Italian Kingdom confined to South, effective 8 September 1943. Germans, who were not consulted about the Armistice, took Mussolini out of imprisonment with a paratrooper operation, and a separate state in northern Italy (Repubblica Sociale Italiana = RSI) was established on 23 September 1943. By then, the German Army had already occupied the Northern and Central Italy, in addition to surrounding and threatening the Italian forces outside the Italian mainland, as well as outside places with Italian presence, such as Greece, Aegean Islands, Croatia, etc.

The new state initially used the Italian Kingdom stamps, postal structures and regulations. Some changes were required based on the needs of war, resource constraints and unavailable routes, as well as German takeover.

The efforts to transport mail conflicted with the realities of war. These caused some creative mail payment and transport methods.

The rates were Kingdom rates until 1 October 1944, when a new fee schedule came in effect. Details of fee schedules are shown as the exhibit progresses.

Map of the RSI



A: Borders when RSI was proclaimed, 23 September 1943. Most cities close to this border were already war zone at the time, and no mail exchange was possible.

B: July 1944, when Allied advance started to slow down.

C: October 1944, when front stabilized until the final Allied attack of April 1945. The only exception was Ravenna (blue arrow), occupied by Allies in December 1944

PLAN

I - Newly-proclaimed Republic

- a) Early mail
- b) Blocked Postal Routes

II - Basic services and discounts

III - Additional and collateral services

IV - Central Italy

Border moving North until winter of 1944

V - Outside offices and territories:

- a) Betasom (France)
- b) Aegean Islands

VI - OZAK & OZAV

German-occupied Italian lands

VII - German-Italian interaction in postal services

VIII - Mail serving military personnel

Italian Field Post and civilian discounts for military

IX - Unconventional ways to pay for mail

X - Local and private postal services

XI - Partisan and combat-related mail

XII - International mail

- a) Civilian Mail
- b) POW Mail

XIII - End of The Italian Social Republic

The material with expert's certificates are marked by a **C** under the explanation

Rate schedules, rules and regulations initially followed those of the Kingdom of Italy

100c (centesimi) = 1L (Lira).

50% discounts were allowed for mail between municipal offices and same-district civilian mail.

Government correspondence was free for basic services, but additional services were to be added in full.

Air mail was not operational as of 23 September 1943. Domestic air mail could never be reestablished. Very limited international air mail with German support became available erratically, in 1944.

International mail (postcards and letters only) reestablished slowly, with limitations, in January 1944.

Postcards	30c
Letters	50c
Printed Matter	10c
Official Forms	60c up to 200 grams
Registration Fee	1.25L regular. 60c unsealed
Express Fee	1.25L



Postcard sent from Venice to Verona on 23 September 1943, the day of the proclamation of the RSI. Franked 30c for Schedule A postcard. This is a capture notification, sent by Catholic volunteers, to the family of an Italian soldier made prisoner by Germans



Express Postcard
from Littoria
(today Latina) to
Finalborgo,
Savona.
Mailed on
24 September
1943, arrived on
the 27th.
Franked 30c for
postcard and
1.25L for express,
total 1.55L



Red Cross correspondence from Udine to Brescia. Free official mail. Oval mark as proof of free mail, and linear "Notizie Prigionieri di Guerra" (POW News) accessory mark. Sent on 27 September 1943, arrived on the 29th.



Postcard from Fiume (today Rijeka in Croatia) to Naples. Mailed on 24 September. Intercepted by the Allies en-route, arrived on 19 April 1944, in Naples under Allied occupation. Purple ACS (Allied Censor Services) mark. Free official mail. Naples was claimed by RSI as own territory for eight days, 23 to 30 September 1943

Registered cover from Milan to Brindisi, Southern territory outside RSI. Mailed on 1 October 1943. Returned to sender, back in Milan on 22 November. 1.25L registration + 50c letter = 1.75L



Milan arrival postmark



International mail was immediately suspended after Armistice of 8 September 1943, and was not reestablished until 15 January 1944. No clear rules were issued regarding processing of mail during the suspension period. *It is the exhibitor's conclusion from personal research that private correspondence was returned to sender. POW-related International Red Cross mail was held until mail exchange was reestablished.*



Postcard from Genova to Switzerland. 5 October 1943. Marks "Return to sender" (AL MITTENTE), and "suspended service" (SERVIZIO SOSPESO). International postcard fee was 75c. Franked 80c, likely for lack of 25c stamps.

5.10.43
Returned 4.2.44

Handwritten on reverse:
Returned on 2 February 44

Registered to Red Cross Switzerland from Pisa. 30 October 1943. Held and delivered on 21 May 1944. German Censorship tape applied at Munich office: "(d)" imprinted on the tape. Franked 2.75L: 1.25L letter + 1.5L registration.



Arrival mark



Basic postal services were letter, postcard, official letters, printed mail, with discounts. There were two rate schedules. The first one was a continuation of the Kingdom rate schedule. Some services available in Kingdom were suspended during the War. One example is presented below. Second schedule was effective as of 1 October 1944.

Discounts: 50% within same postal district, 50% between municipalities (by decree), 50% to and from hospitals (de-facto), 100% (free) for enlisted men, 50% for officers. Discounts were only for base services. Additional services were charged in full. Some previously available discounts were suspended in RSI period, such as book order postcards and invoices. These were accepted without discount, as a postcard or letter. There was no domestic air mail in RSI.

Postage Due:

1- Penalty postage due was double the missing amount.

2- "Tassa semplice" = "Simple Tax" = "postage due without penalty" meant the original fee was to be paid by the recipient without penalty. In Kingdom, this method was used to pass on the official fees to private citizens. In RSI, this method was also used when lack of franking was justifiable due to stamp shortages.

	Schedule A from Proclamation	Schedule B from 1 October 1944
Postcards	30c	50c
Letters	50c	1L
Printed Matter	10c	20c
Official Forms	60c	1.20L
Registration Fee	1.25L	1.50L
Unsealed Registration	60c	Full 1.50L. Discount abolished.
Express Fee	1.25L	2.50L



Invoice from Motta di Livenza to S Polo di Piave. Franked 30c, (suspended) invoice rate. The postal employee returned the document to the sender, asking that additional stamp be applied for total 50c. Handwritten "Al mittente per migliore affrancatura" (to the sender for better franking) on the upper border. Additional 20c stamp was applied. The dates of the two postmarks are 10 July 1944 for 30c and 11 July for the 20c. Arrival record is official seal dated 15 July 1944, inside.

Domestic letter
Milan to
Brescia,
Franked 50c,
9 September
1944.
Uncommon
early single use
of 50c in
schedule A,
issued in
August 1944



Arrival mark



Domestic letter
within the city of
Milan, dated 29
September 1944.
Franked 25c, 50%
discount for same
district. Manual
"ANNULLATO"
(cancelled) mark
used to complete
the machine
cancellation that
failed to hit the
stamp.



Lettercard from Milan to Piacenza, mailed on 6 December 1944. Censor mark of Piacenza, 22R, applied on arrival. 1 Lira as ordinary letter, 25c printed franking completed with 75c

Cover from Milan to Legnano. Date 24 April 1945, final day the RSI postal services remained functional in Milan. The anti-fascist insurrection started the next day. Delivered 2 May 1945. 1L letter. Not censored.





Cover from Treviso to Venice, 28 April 1945. Revenue stamps used for 1L Schedule B fee, but not accepted. Ordinary stamps used as postage due for 2L with penalty. Cancelled with linear "Per Segnatasse" (for postage due) mark of Venice. Censor mark and tape on the left border.

Cover from Vallemosso to Biella, dated 16 May 1944. Schedule A. Lack of stamps at origin handwritten on right upper corner. A large TS mark applied by the accepting post office (Tassa Semplice = postage due without penalty). Fee paid with a 50c postage due stamp on arrival, 17 May 1944. Regular letter without penalty



Same-district postcard within the city of Milan, 14 February 1944. Franked 15c, 50% discount on 30c rate, postmarked by the private agency postmark of the newspaper "Corriere della Sera". Sent to the newspaper by the customer. The newspaper's agency permit number used as address



Postcard from Pavia to Bologna, franked 30c, dated 1 June 1944.

This 30c stamp was used four days before 5 June 1944, its official day of issue.

C



Postcard from Pavia to Genova, dated 21 December 1944. Franked 50c for a domestic postcard. The stamp under the postmarked one shows traces of a postmark. Covered with another 50c stamp before mailing.

Paid phone bill, same-district postcard within Abbiategrasso. 50% discount on 50c. Bisect 50c stamp for 25c. One of the two known 50c bisects, both from same correspondence same day.

Date:
19 April 1945

STIPEL
Società per azioni
Capitale L. 330.000.000 versato
Sede in TORINO

ESERCIZIO DI
MILANO

Vedere a tergo le norme
per il pagamento.

Imposte registro, entrate
e tasse concessione
governativa

ABBONAMENTO 189,75

Imposte registro, entrate
e tasse concessione
governativa 51,25

Tasse e quote
diverse 2,60

CONVERSAZIONI 174,35

IMPOSTA ENTRATA
SU QUOTE DIVERSE 10

TOTALE DA PAGARE 418,05

Le imposte di registro 5%, sull'entrata 2%, l'addizionale 1% e la tassa di concessione governativa 20% sono corrisposte in modo virtuale presso gli uffici finanziari di Torino.

NB. - Per la validità della quietanza esigere l'applicazione del timbro a data STIPEL o della BANCA esattrice.

~~Chiusura del conto sul totale e l'addizionale 1%~~
~~questo corrisposto in modo virtuale presso gli uffici~~
~~finanziari di Torino.~~

21 TRIMESTRE 1945-XXIII

341 Petri Giuseppe fu
II Agostino
Via S. Carlo 3
ABBIATEGRASSO

21 APR 1945
BANCA POSTALE
ABBIATEGRASSO

Per quietanza STIPEL
l'esattore

Postcard from
Brescia to Seren
De Grappa,
dated 13 June
1944.

Schedule A
Linear purple
mark "Zona
sprovvista di
francobolli"
(area not
supplied with
stamps).

The explanation
was accepted
and a 30c stamp
applied on
arrival, 16 June,
without penalty.



Postcard from
Malborghetto to
Teolo, mailed on
1 October 1944,
first day of
Schedule B.
Dropped in the
mail without
stamps, and taxed
on arrival with 1L
ordinary stamps
used as postage
due, (50c x 2 as
penalty postage
due).
Arrived on
9 October 1944





Printed matter from Pavia to Travaccò Siccomario. Official correspondence.
 Sent on 29 September 1944. Arrival date 1 October, handwritten inside.
*Rare use of the 10c stamp in Schedule A. It was only possible between
 18 and 30 September 1944*

C



Official correspondence from Genova, date 21 December 1944, to Diano Castello.
 Schedule B printed matter rate 20c. Arrived 3 January 1945



Official form Pozzonovo to Tribano. Arrived on 16 March 1945. Franked 5c: erroneously discounted twice over the base rate of 20c (50% for municipal office correspondence, and 50% for same-district). The three-line purple mark attests the correspondence is equivalent to printed matter by decree



Official correspondence from a hospital at Abetina to Milano, dated 26 October 1944, arrived on the 31st as noted on the institutional handstamp. Franked as printed matter with 10c in Schedule B (50% discount over 20c base rate) and not contested.

Hospitals' claims for the 50% municipal discount were tolerated, despite lack of supporting regulations.

This could be regular mail with discounts, or official printed forms with filled blanks (manoscritti). Private use of the latter was possible, but weight limits were lower, and did not make sense outside government offices



Official forms from Cerrione to Verrone, 14 June 1944. 60c reduced by 50% to 30c for municipal mail. 60c was higher than 50c letter, but base weight was 200 grams for official mail, instead of twenty



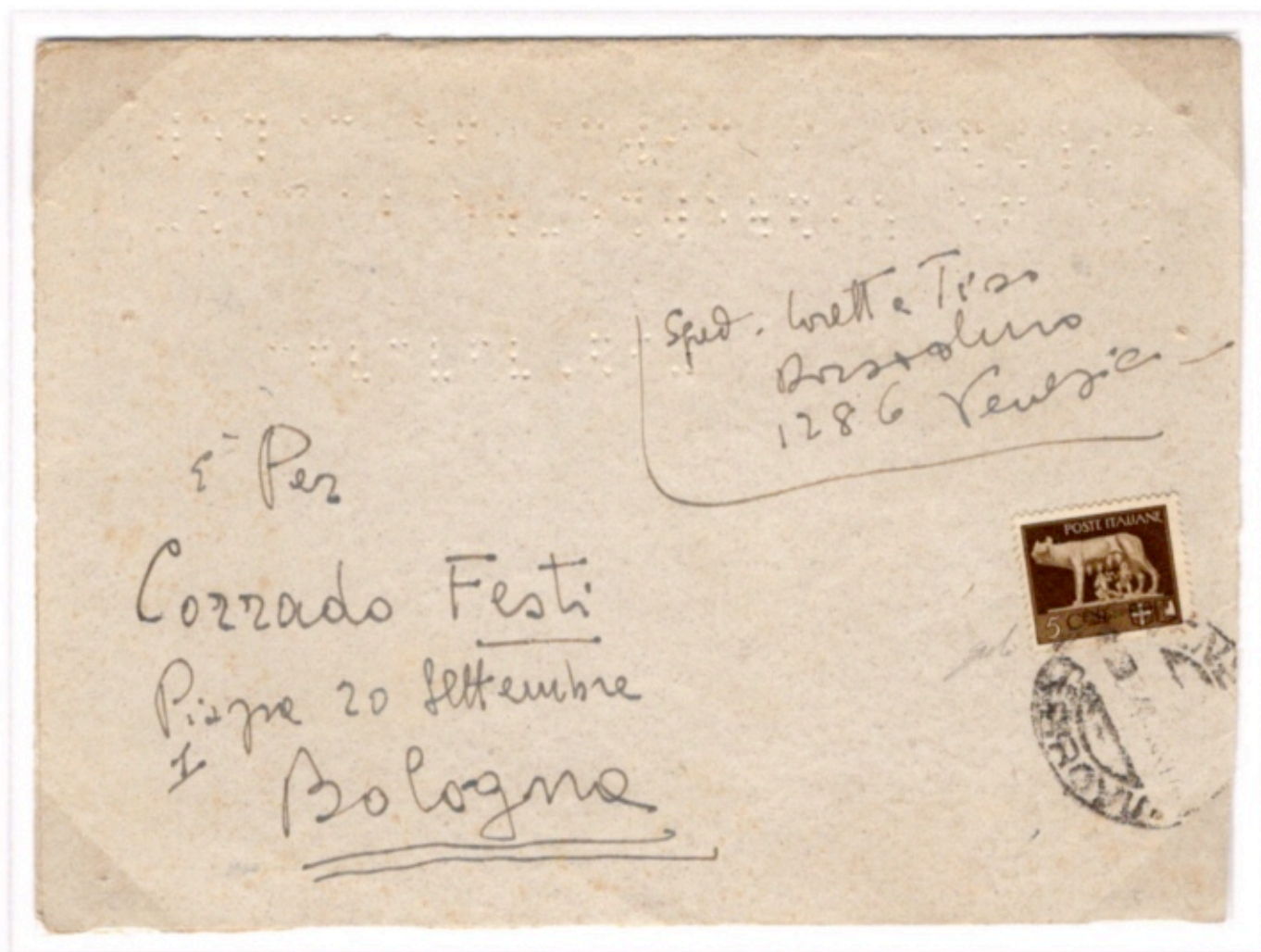
Cover Borghetto to St Angelo Lodigiano, 23 September 1944. Base fee 50c letter with Schedule A, reduced to 25c for municipal mail, tripled for three times regular weight to 75c

The two main additional services were Express and Registration.

Express was carried the same as regular mail in separate bags, was delivered as soon as arrived at the post office. Collateral services illustrated here are poste restante, authorized delivery by private means, return receipt and cash on delivery. International services are shown under international correspondence

Some previously available discounts were suspended in RSI period, such as Braille correspondence. These mail pieces were still accepted, but without discount, as a postcard or a letter. Shown below is a rare example of a mailpiece that was accepted despite service being suspended.

	Schedule A from Proclamation	Schedule B from 1 October 1944
Registration Fee	1.25L	1.50L
Express Fee	1.25L	2.50L
Authorized Private Delivery	10c	20c
Return Receipt Fee	50c	1L
Poste Restante Fee	15c upfront, or 25c by recipient	25c upfront, or 50c by recipient



Blind person correspondence written in Braille alphabet, from Venice, date 3 March 1944. Kingdom period discounted rate of 5c was suspended in RSI. This letter was supposed to be franked 50c as a letter

Registered
same-
district
letter within
the city of
Imperia:
25c
discounted
letter +
1.25L
registration.
Date:
11 August
1944



Registered
letter from
Milan to
Stresa
Borromeo,
mailed on 24
January 1944,
arrived on
25th. Franked
1.75L (50c
letter + 1.25L
registration)
with
Francotyp
brand meter
mark



Registered letter within the city of Bologna on 4 February 1945. Franked 2L: 50c same-district letter + 1.50L registration. Returned with "AL MITTENTE" (to sender) and "COMPIUTA GIACENZA" (waiting period ended) marks. Date of return: 28 February 1945

Registered letter from Finale Ligure to Genova. Date 7 April 1945. Transit from Savona the same day, and arrival on 9 April. Franked 2.5L, 1L letter, 1.5L registration. Censor tape and marks of Genova



Registered
postcard within
the city of Turin.

Date 5 April
1945.

Franked 1.75L:
25c same-district
card, 1.5L
registration

The 75c stamp
on the right is
second printing,
without
watermark.
Extremely rare
use in RSI due
to limited
distribution.

C



Registered
postcard Vipiteno
to Campo di
Trens. 14 March
1945, returned to
sender on 18
April. Franked 2L:
50c postcard +
1.50L registration.



Arrival mark



Registered official form from Rovato to Cabiato, fee paid by recipient without penalty (T.S.), 75c on arrival: 15c discounted official form + 60c unsealed registration (Schedule A). Sent on 6 September 1944, arrived on the 7th. *Rare example of 75c single franking, especially on arrival.*



Registered letter from Milan to Siena, 1.75L (50c letter + 1.25L registration Schedule A) paid by the recipient. Postage due stamps cancelled by the mail carrier of Siena (Siena Portalettere). Mailed on 21 December 1943, arrived on 3 January 1944

Express mail was carried as ordinary mail, but in separate bags. Upon arrival at the post office, express was delivered with a courier, regardless of the delivery schedule for ordinary mail.



Express
Postcard,
Torviana to
Mercato
Saraceno, with
Rimini transit.
Date:
30 October
1943, arrival
2 November.
30c postcard +
1.25L express
fee = 1.55L.

Express cover
from Cittiglio
to Biella. Date
26 July 1944,
arrival 28 July.
50c cover +
1.25L
express=
1.75L



In case the express mail had to be delivered outside the city limits, the recipient was to be charged additional 40c for every 500 meters (1/3mi) the courier had to walk. 500m outside the limit was charged as 80c for a total 1000m courier trip.



Enhanced detail from reverse, showing extra 80c payment.



Express letter from Turin to Barcola, a maritime neighborhood of Trieste.
 The Lungomare (Beachfront) is farther outside the city.
 Additional express delivery fee charged $40c \times 2 = 80c$.
 The fee was 50c letter + 1.25L express = 1.75L. Franked 1.90L
 Mailed on 3 August 1944, arrived on the 8th



Express letter from Milan to Fossano (Cuneo). Franked 3.50 L for 1L letter + 2.50L express. Date: 20 March 1944, arrived on 22 March

Important cover with rare use of 3L stamp in RSI



Arrival mark



Prepayment of the express fee was mandatory. This fee could not be transferred to the recipient as postage due. The base fee could be postage due, once the express fee was paid. Post office was given the option to process such mail as ordinary, without applying postage due.

Express cover
from Milan to
Brescia.
Franked 2.55L.
Required 3.50L.
Express fee
(2.5L) paid,
handwritten
"L2" to show
taxation of the
letter fee, but
later processed
as ordinary
letter. Date:
19 March 1945
Arrived on the
20th



Arrival mark
"Brescia Ordinarie"



Express cover
from Intra to
Biella. Franked
3L instead of
3.50. Postage
due 1L, missing
50c x 2.
Schedule B.
Date 16 April
1945. Delivered
on 22 May,
after the end of
RSI.

**Very rare
example of the
3L stamp used
in RSI period**

Unusual rate of 4.50L, same district registered express letter within the city of Milan. 50c same-district letter + 1.5L registration + 2.50L express. Schedule B. Milan Censor tape. Date: 26 March 1945

Very rare combination of 1.25L and 3L denominations, already rare when used individually

vermiccio per censura



Registered Express cover from Milan to Piacenza. Date 26 March 1945, arrival 30 March. 1L letter + 1.50L registration + 2.50L express = 5L. Schedule B. Censor mark (92R) and tape of Piacenza are seen

C

Newspapers were entitled to have their mail carried with first available transport means "outside the bag", without having to wait for the next mail bag to be filled. There was no additional charge for this privilege.



Ordinary letter, with special envelope FUORI SACCO (outside the bag) from Milan to Turin, to a Sports Newspaper. Date: 15 March 1944, which is also the last day of validity of the stamp with the King's portrait without the overprint. 50c for a Schedule A letter.



Express letter from a funeral home in Turin to a newspaper in Milan, declared to contain "urgent obituaries" (Necrologia urgente). 3.5L for express letter. Date: 25 November 1944

Some agencies were authorized to deliver correspondence inside the same postal district. The charge was 10c with Schedule A, and 20c with Schedule B. Return service was to be charged separately. Out-of-district mail was not authorized.



Return stamp on reverse



Letter within city of Milan. Delivery attempted by an authorized agency. Recipient was unavailable, and the letter was returned to sender. 10c each way under Schedule A

C

Circolo Filologico Milanese (Milan Philological Society), was one of the centers of anti-fascist resistance. Many members gave fake addresses

Credito Italiano

SEDE DI MILANO

Spett.

Società Italiana Spiriti

Mod. 2812 E. O.

Milano
Large Isarco, 2



Cover within city of Milan by authorized private delivery, with rectangular agency mark. 20 centesimi for Schedule B private delivery fee. Authorized delivery was supposed to use its own stamps, but ordinary stamps were tolerated due to shortages.



COMUNE DI ROVIGO

EST. 1902. AUT. 1904. PROV. 1902



Sabini
Direttore

Assicurazioni Generali

Rovigo

Return receipts (RR) were sent together with the mail, mostly stamped and even postmarked in advance. There was no same-district discount for the RR. It was possible to request RR to sent back registered, by adding stamps for the fee.



Front of the registered cover, reduced to 50% original size



RR registered cover from Vigevano to Como, returned to sender. Date 27 February 1945. Prepaid RR, cancelled at the origin post office attached to the cover. 2.50L for registered letter (1L letter + 1.5L registration) and 1L for RR, Schedule B.

Return receipt of a registered letter from Susa to Ministry of the Navy. Franked by the sender using a Francotyp brand meter mark.

Date:

11 September 1944.

Received and returned on

29 September.

Schedule A 50c fee.

Delivery marked by Posta da Campo

(Field Post) 873



Postal stationery used as "homemade" return receipt for a registered letter from Tambre d'Alpago to Farra d'Alpago.

Date:

1 February 1945.

Franked 1L, Schedule B: 30c Mazzini postcard + 70c additional stamps.



Transit and arrival marks on reverse



Registered insured letter, from Maccagno to Milan. Mailed on 22 December, arrived 25 December 1944. The Maccagno postmark on the stamps shows an erroneous year, 1934.

Franked 5 Lire. 37 grams = double weight of 20 g = 1L x 2 = 2 L Registration 1.50L + 75 c for each 100L insured = 1.50L. 2 + 1.50 + 1.50 = 5 L total.

This letter is also very important for showing three examples of second set 75c (unwatermarked) Destroyed Monuments stamps. This stamp was almost never used in the RSI period, due to low demand for the first set (watermarked) same denomination stamps.

The very rare situations of unwatermarked 75c on document usually include a single stamp. This cover is exceptional for having more than one example.



14 Lire COD
registered
letter from
Padova to
Dolo. Date:
2 August
1944.
Schedule A.
Franked
1.7L:
60c official
forms + 60c
unsealed
registration
+ 50c COD
fee.

Registered
official letter
From Milan
to Verona,
17L COD.
Date:
4 November
1944
Franked
3.70L:
1.20L official
forms,
1 L COD fee,
1.50L
registration
Schedule B



Poste restante items were held at the postoffice to be picked up. Schedule A required 15c if paid upfront, and 30c if paid by the recipient. The fees were 30c and 50c, respectively, for Schedule B.

Cover from
Imperia to San
Remo, franked
65c: 50c letter
+ 15c Poste
Restante
upfront fee.
Date: 20 June
1944, arrival 24
June 1944



Arrival mark



GOLDONI & IODIO - GENOVA
Casella Postale 186

Delirano - 4708

ESPRESSO

26

Egregio Signor

RAG. BARACCHINI ANTONIO

Fermo Posta

TORINO



The "impossible" combination of Express and PR. The former meant priority delivery, and latter "keep without delivery". Postal regulations state nothing was needed above express fee. Very few letters with both services paid, which were not necessary, are known. From Genova to Turin. Date: 13 April 1944. 1.90L = 50c letter, 1.25L express, 15c poste restante. 33R censor mark of Turin with tape.



Folded message form, mailed as letter, from RSI Consulate in Munich, Germany. Sent to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs inside diplomatic pouch. Mailed free from the Ministry post office to municipality of Buia. Administrative seal inside shows 1 March 1945 as date of arrival



Radio message from Japan, transcribed and mailed from Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the relatives. 2.5L registered letter: 1L letter + 1.5L registration in schedule B. Handwritten note on front: "Received on 1 March 1945"



Registered from Livorno to Rome. Mailed ten days before Allies entered the city, intercepted and marked with ACS Allied censor mark. Apparently held for several months before being delivered on 1 February 1945. Free official mail.

Qm. 1/2/1945

Date received
handwritten on reverse



Cover from Rome to Verona. Rome taken on 5 June, few days after the mailing date 30 May 1944. Intercepted, marked ACS and held until end of the war. Returned to sender from Verona on 27 June 1945. 50c letter fee, Schedule A



Arrival mark





Official letter mailed from Milan to Siena on 21 June 1944. Returned to sender (AL MITTENTE) due to service suspended (SERVIZIO SOSPESO).

German army withdrew north, leaving the city of Siena to Allies on 2 July 1944.

Franked 1.70L: 1.10L official forms with enclosure + 60c unsealed registration



Postcard from Cervia.
25 June 1944. Returned
for suspended service,
combat ongoing for
several months.
The city of S. Agata
Feltria (province Pesaro)
was taken by Allies on
21 September 1944.
30c for postcard



On reverse:
Returned on 3 August 1944



Registered letter
Pesaro to
Fossombrone,
then returned.
Mailed on 13
June 1944.
Intercepted by
Allies en-route.
Shows Allied ACS
mark. Returned
on 31 March
1945 City of
Pesaro was taken
by the Allies on
28 September
1944.
50c letter, 1.25L
registration,
1.75L total



Arrival mark

The border between RSI and Allied-occupied South stabilized in September 1944, at the "Gothic Line" (the green arrow). The last significant Allied conquest before the final April offensive was Ravenna on Eastern coast, in December 1944.

North-Central Italy



Map not to scale,
locations are
approximative

Incoming POW mail from Stalag IV F, in Hartmannsdorf, Germany to Pisa. Mailed on 9 May 1944. ACS (Allied Censor Services) mark. The cover was probably intercepted by the Allies around the date Pisa was taken, 2 September 1944.



Registered cover Faenza (Ravenna) to Switzerland. 2.75L: 1.25 foreign letter + 1.50 registration. Censored by RSI in Ravenna (43R), intercepted en-route by Allies, censored (blue 4078), arrived in Rome on 6 July 1945, and reached its destination on 11 August 1945



Censorship mark of Ravenna, 43R





Return receipt of a registered letter between Rignano sull'Arno and Florence. Mailed from Florence on 11 July 1944, intercepted and held by the Allies, released on 4 January 1945. Franked 50c. City of Florence was taken by the Allies on 4 August 1944



Registered express cover from Genova to Livorno. Mailed on 27 May 1944. The purple censorship mark Nr 8005 belongs to Livorno censorship under Southern Administration, evidence it was processed after 19 July 1944, date Livorno was taken by the Allies. Franked 4L: 1.50L heavy letter triple weight (50c X 3) + 1.25L registration + 1.25L express





Arrival mark on reverse

The Command of the Italian Submarine Base of Bordeaux took sides with the Germans after the Armistice, and was considered RSI territory. The correspondence was transported by military courier to the naval base of La Spezia in Italy, then mailed to destination. This route explains both the absence of German censorship marks, and relatively quick transport time. Internal postal rates applied.



Cover from BETASOM to Genova. Mailed on 9 March, arrived on 17 March 1944.

Franked properly for domestic letter, 50 centesimi, with one of the Base's own overprinted stamps celebrating the proclamation of the RSI. The Base's censorship marks are seen. Though the motivation behind these overprints was philatelic, some stamps saw legitimate postal use.

V.b

Leros



Outside Territories, Aegean Islands

After the Armistice of 8 September 1943, the part of the Aegean Islands not already occupied by Allies became RSI territory. RSI postal rates applied. Transport was by air, as provided by Germans. Mail exchange was possible from February to late September of 1944. Italian-German reply postcards were distributed, two each month, to adult residents of the Islands for mail exchange with Italian mainland. Sealed correspondence was discouraged and frequently refused.



Reply postcard, first part, from St. Maura, Island of Leros, to Pistoia in Italy. Mailed on 4 February. Must be one of the first batches of mail sent to Italy. 30c for domestic postcard. Censored in Munich (Red Ad mark on lower border).

Leros was contested. It changed hands twice, ending back with Italian-German forces after a few months under British rule. Civilian mail from this island is very unusual.

Reply postcard from Rhodes to Cuneo mailed on 13 April, arrived on 23 June 1944.

30c for domestic postcard, added 50c for air mail surcharge. Munich censorship (Red Ad). On the left, blue arrival mark is noted.



For postal censorship reasons, Germans discouraged sealed correspondence from the Islands. Majority of known correspondence is on postcards. Only six covers are recorded: two civilian letters, three Red Cross covers, and one official form presented on next page. The mail exchange, carried by German planes, was possible from February to September 1944



Cover from Cos to Red Cross in Switzerland. Franked 1.25L RSI international letter rate. Censored on the island (blue rectangular mark), then in Munich (swastika with letter d on the tape, left border). Mailed on 2 August, transit from Rhodes on 31 August.



Rhodes transit on reverse

Cover from Rhodes to a soldier in Como. Forwarded to the new unit, with handwritten annotation. German censorship in Munich, with censor tape and machine mark (Ad). **26 September is probably the last date for postal connection with Italian mainland.** 50c air mail surcharge only. Letters to soldiers were free, additional services charged in full.



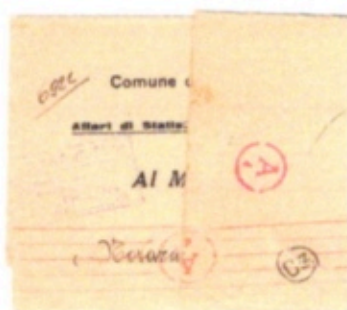
Exchange of population census information between municipalities was made with two-sided folded letters. These were filled out, then franked on reverse and mailed back. *Presented here is the only such document known to have arrived in Northern Italy from The Aegean Islands in the RSI period*



Mailed on 1 September 1943, from Cavaglio d'Agogna. This part folded inside when mailed from Rhodes.



Arrival mark. 23 June 1944



Accidentally folded, passing through the mechanical device used to mark the letters "Censored" in Munich (Letter d under A)

Municipal information exchange between Cavaglio d'Agogna (Novara, Northern Italy) and Rhodes. Mailed from Italy on 1 September 1943, shortly before RSI. Response mailed from Rhodes on 26 April 1944, RSI period. Arrived on 23 June 1944. Censored in Munich, Germany. Folded accidentally as shown above, being passed by censorship. Franked 25c each way for 50% discounted municipal rate over 50c for an ordinary letter. No air mail fee added, but no doubt flown to Munich with a German plane on the way to Italy



Germans occupied Northeast Italy with the Armistice. This was a dual administration with German superiority. Lubiana was different, as presented later this section.

OZAV: Operations Zone Alpen-Vorland

OZAK: Operations Zone Alpen-Kustland



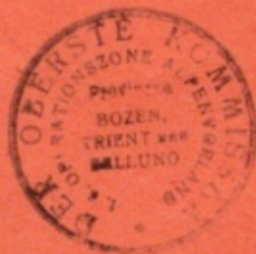
Registered card from Rovigno D'Istria (OZAK) on 26 December 1944 to Germany. Taken directly to Germany through German censorship of Munich (Red Ad and smaller letters and numbers, all German) Franked 2.50L. Calculated 1L card +1.50L registration. 2L (50c +1.5L) would have been enough, as rates for Germany were discounted.

DER OBERSTE KOMMISSAR

für die Operationszone Alpenvorland
Arbeitsbereich XI



An Herrn
Johann Gänsbacher
Kommiss. Bürgermeister
Sarnthein.



Free mail from OZAV Commissioner in Bolzano to the mayor of city of Sarentino (Sarnthein), another city in OZAV. Mailed on 7 February, arrived on 9 February 1945. German administrative offices were entitled to free mail.

In OZAV area, Germans started their own postal system "Deutsche Dienstpost Adria". This was the region they hoped to annex into Germany after the war. Civilians had a choice of using German or Italian mail. The German postal system provided advantages for correspondence sent to Germany. Dedicated periphery post offices were also established, though these were mainly used for philatelic purposes. Use of the "Dienstpost Adria" for personal correspondence was not the norm

OZAK & OZAV



Registered letter from Gemona del Friuli (Udine) on 25 March 1944, to Germany. Marked "Durch Deutsche Dienstpost Adria". Taken directly to Germany without Italian censorship. Arrived on 2 April 1944. Eight days is a fast transit time for a letter to Germany by Italian mail. Usual expectation was 5-6 weeks or longer. Franked 1L letter to Germany + 1.5L registration = 2.5L

Free mail to an Italian officer, from Riva del Garda, mailed on 5 June 1944. Sent to German Feldpost 81910A, serving an artillery regiment stationed in Verona. The handwritten blue 9/6 on the right upper corner is almost certainly the day it was received.



Province of Lubiana (today Ljubljana in Slovenia) was annexed in 1941. Germans occupied the province swiftly after the Armistice of 8 September. It was part of OZAK, with a much higher weight of German administration. Was claimed by RSI as own territory; mail to the province was considered domestic mail.



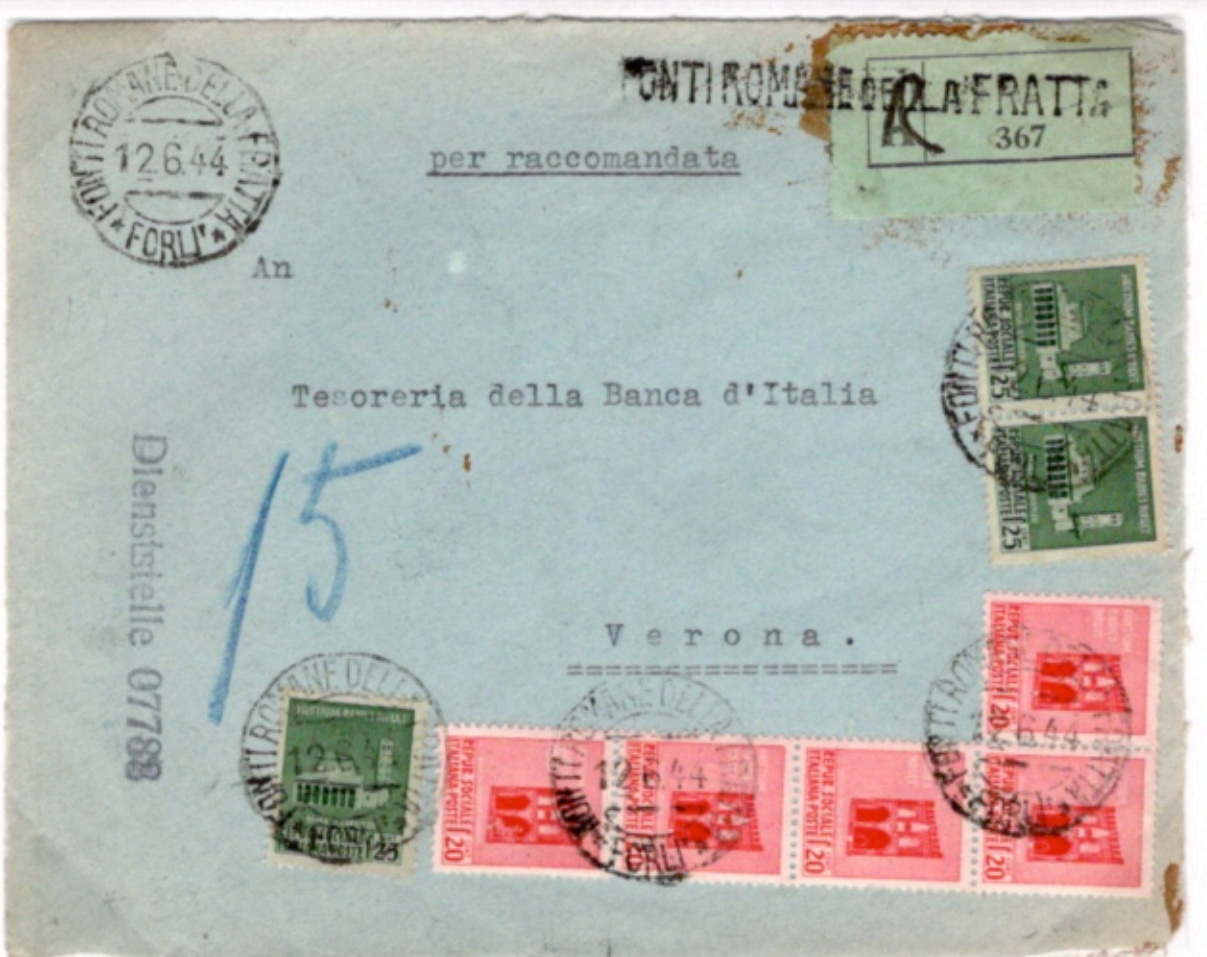
Postcard from Lubiana to Florence. Square PSSD and number 11 censor marks of Lubiana near the stamps. "Nulla di Censurabile" (nothing that needs censorship) linear mark with round censor mark of Florence. Mailed on 10 December 1943, arrived on 14 December. Italian internal postcard rate of 30c

Express postcard from Padova mailed on 16 March 1944. Linear Slovenian mark over the address "DOSTAVITI" (can be delivered), is proof of arrival in Lubiana. Franked as internal mail, 30c postcard + 1.25L express.



German presence was ubiquitous in the RSI. Italian military units were assigned German 8xxxx Feldpost (FP) numbers. Key government offices were overseen by German officers.

Cover from an Italian soldier, training in Munsingen, Germany. Feldpost 82012. An Italian Anti-tank unit of Monterosa Division. Sent on 7 April 1944, passed through Munich censorship, arrived in Modena on 22 April 1944. Franked 25c for discounted letter, stamp canceled with FP mark. The red circular "Briefstempel" over the "Ad" Munich censorship shows that stamp was not needed



Registered cover from Fonti Romane della Fratta (Forlì), to the Treasury of Bank of Italy in Verona. 50c letter + 1.25L registration = 1.75L. Arrived on 15 June 1944. Marked in origin also with "Dienststelle 07788" belonging to the German 278th Infantry Division stationed in Forlì. Probably German unit oversaw the operations, but did not send the letter



Cover from Feldpost 80269, an RSI military unit stationed in Cremona, sent within the city. Free through Italian mail. Censored in Cremona (purple circular).

The linear propaganda mark "Il comunismo spoglia l'uomo della sua libertà-Pio XI" (Communism takes the man's freedom away-Pius XI) also applied with the same ink as the censor marks.

Free cover from Cernobbio to Turin. Sent by German High Command Ordnance Depot. The German franchise mark honored by Italian postal services. Mailed on 20 September 1944, arrived the next day.



Cover from a civilian worker in France. Handwritten Feldpost 13921B assigned at Organization Todt in Marseille. Feldpost was free mail, but the absence of an official German mark caused postage due, though at lower domestic rate of 50c. Arrived on 21 August 1944

C



Cover from a civilian translator, mailed to Switzerland on 26 July 1944. Feldpost 20911 was stationed at a German naval base in Genova. Italian stamps cancelled with German Feldpost postmark. Italian censorship was bypassed. German Munich censorship (d) on the tape, right border. 1.25L non-EPU letter.

Military Mail of Kingdom of Italy (Posta Militare=PM) was immediately disbanded following the Armistice. After few months of chaos, "Posta da Campo" was formed, named after German "Feldpost". Earliest known official memo naming military mail as "Posta da Campo" is dated 21 December 1943. Some mail concentration centers were established to gather and research destination for military mail. The system already existed in Kingdom, but the purpose was routing of the mail, while RSI used the concentration centers when more research was needed.



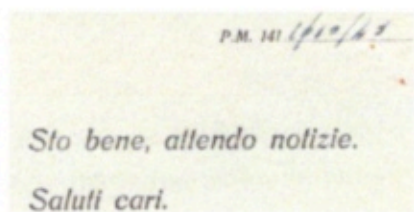
Detail of front.
Handritten in red
says: "Back to
sender, PM 146
does not exist".



Registered from Switzerland to PM 146. This unit was transferred to South before the Armistice, and belonged to a co-belligerent Italian unit at the Allied side. Forwarded to RSI side by mistake, sent to Alessandria for research at the Concentration Center. Marked with the rare "Posta da Campo Concentramento 5200" postmark, then returned to sender.

The two dates of 5200, 19 and 23 August, must be the start and end dates of research process. Mailed on 8 July 1944, transit from Munich censorship station (d under swastika) 10 August 1944, back in Lugano, Switzerland on 1 September 1944

The name of the military post of the RSI was changed to "Posta da Campo" as Italian translation of the German "Feldpost". The only "Posta Militare" that was allowed to function, for about one month, was Number 141, in Zara (Today Zadar, Croatia). When the Germans occupied the Province of Zara, Italian soldiers stationed in this small province agreed to cooperate, were not taken prisoners, and kept their usual duties until further orders were received.



Detail from reverse, showing allowed preprinted message.



Military Postcard, free mail, from a soldier with Posta Militare 141 to Belluno. Mailed on 1 October 1943, one week after proclamation of the RSI.

The four newly constituted RSI divisions were assigned German Feldpost numbers "8xxxx". The new postmarks showed Republican "Fascio", and German style three digit "Kenn-Nummer" (identification number that works in combination with Feldpost Number) before the date. The letters above the date depicted the names of the divisions: A: San Marco B: Italia C: Monterosa D: Littorio. This system was the same even when the divisions were outside the Italian soil for training or combat.

Feldpost



German stationery from Feldpost 86136E, mailed on 26 June 1944. Italia Division (letter B), 1st Bersaglieri regiment, 3rd battalion 9th company, in training in Heuberg, Germany. The red "Ad" and small rectangular 7127 belong to German censorship of Munich. Free soldier mail.

Letter from Feldpost 82012, also showing Feldpost number 85996A, from Division Monterosa (letter C), 2nd Alpine regiment anti-tank company, Northern Apennine mountains close to the East Coast of Italian peninsula. Passed by civilian censorship of Bologna (Purple 41R on left). Mailed on: 21 November 1944. Arrived on: 14 December 1944. Free soldier mail

verriccio per censura



Stationary units, not directly assigned for combat, were issued three-digit "Posta da Campo" numbers.

Cover to a soldier in the RSI army, sent on 30 August 1944, from Posta da Campo 805 in Parma to field post 751, in Bologna. Returned to sender, as recipient transferred to another unit (linear purple mark). Censored in Cremona on transit (censor 11R). Franked 25c with 50% discount. Could have been sent free.



Cover from Posta da Campo 795, Aerial Defense Depot in Milan, to city of Milan. Date 21 August 1944. Free soldier mail.



Poste restante postcard from Povo to Lonigo, 7 September 1944. The addressee is a "Hauptmann" (Captain), an Italian officer in German uniform. Correspondence to officers was entitled to 50% discount = 15c for postcard. The poste restante fee, paid by the sender, was 15c. $15 + 15 = 30c$. Unusual case of a correspondence sent to an officer without using a military address.

One of the two known postcards using this fee combination

C



Express from Comerio to soldier at barracks in Pizzighettone. 25 August 1944, arrived on the 29th. Free letter for enlisted man, 1.25L for Express.

Important example of an express stamp single franking, possible for less than 4 months.

Bulk payment forms, expired stamps, unintended uses of special service stamps, as well as stampless cash payments are examples for creative ways found to deal with chronic and sometimes severe shortage of stamps



Postcard from Dronero to Monza, 16 March 1944, paid 30c (handwritten 0.30) Schedule A with oval PAGATO (paid) mark. No account number on the card. Paid cash for lack of stamps



Letter within city of Udine, 1 July 1944, franked 50c, also using Kingdom stamps that had expired as of 30 June 1943. Not taxed.

Same-district postcard within the city of Milan, 19 September 1944. Franked 15c, 50% discount on 30c rate Schedule A, with one 10c ordinary and a parcel stamp. Parcel stamps were allowed for ordinary use from January 1944, due to shortages. **Early use of 10c stamps; only 13 days possible in Schedule A**



Registered 1L letter, 1.5L registration, franked 2.5L with two Express stamps, unintended use as ordinary stamps, 15 April 1945. Bresso to Milan. Schedule B.

Public and private entities were allowed to open a postal account for wholesale payment of mail. The correspondence was sent stampless with an account number, and the stamps for the total were attached on a form at the end of the day. Postage due stamps were used. Ordinary stamps were used with a T overprint when postage due stamps were not available.

Example of postcard sent using the postal account for wholesale mail payment. The rectangular purple mark shows the account number for payment at the end of the day. Sent within the city of Milan.

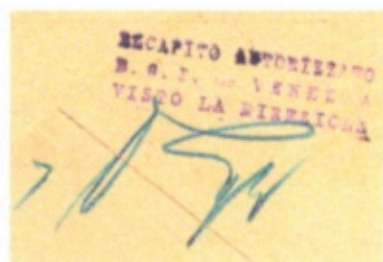


Wholesale mail payment form for six letters of 50c each, 14 April 1945. Novara. Schedule B same-district fee.

Only known example of 3L stamp with T overprint used in RSI period.

C

Financial services were affected by postal delays. Banca Commerciale Italiana (BCI) obtained authorization to use its own contracted couriers for mail transport. Stamps were affixed regularly and cancelled by the rectangular date stamp of the branch sending the correspondence. The approval mark of branch officers had to be on reverse. Clients' correspondence could also be carried. No published fee schedule is known for this service. Explanation of fees paid is not always possible due to the very small number of surviving postal documents, and lack of official publications



Authorization of the manager from Venice branch, on reverse.



Cover from Venice to Genova, transported by the BCI Couriers on behalf of Tirrenia Bank. Handed over to the postal service for local delivery in Genova. Franked 1.60L, stamps cancelled with rectangular bank mark on 17 January 1945, then Genova postmark on 24 January 1945. 50c covers same-district Schedule B letter. The 1.1L difference can be explained with theories such as heavy letter, authorized delivery fee, etc. but a clear explanation does not seem possible unless new documents are discovered.

Towards the end of the war, transportation of the civilian mail was impossible except for few main roads. The authorized company "Corrieri Alta Italia = CORALIT" (Couriers of Northern Italy) was using bicycles, which came in handy because of severe gas shortage. The basic rate was 14 Lire for first 50 grams, additional 14 Lire for every additional 20 grams, on top of the fee to be paid for postal services. RSI period mail is characterized by a rubber stamp identifying the office, date of service, and fee paid, usually on reverse.



Mark of Coralit Venice Branch and arrival postmark on reverse.



Cover from Venice to Rovigo, transported to Padova by CORALIT where it was mailed paying 2.50L for registered mail (1L letter + 1.5L registration), Schedule B. Handed in on 22 April. The mailing date of 14 May is the end of the postal moratorium imposed by the Allied Government. From Padova, the letter was taken to Rovigo, as confirmed by the postmark on reverse

X

Municipal Delivery Services

Effects of the war on mail delivery caused some local municipalities to take incoming mail from the nearest center and deliver it using their own devices. An additional fee was charged to the recipient. Pinzano al Tagliamento is one of the examples. Local delivery was provided by bicycles. Services started on 16 November 1944. All municipal delivery services were terminated by the decree of RSI Ministry of Telecommunications, dated 10 April 1945.



Letter from S. Vito al Tagliamento to Pinzano al Tagliamento. Franked 1L to cover Schedule B letter fee. A 50c local delivery stamp paying for letter delivery is seen.

C

Postcard from S Vito to Pinzano al Tagliamento franked 50c, Schedule B. The 25c local delivery stamp pays the postcard delivery fee.

C



Some local administrations issued, or overprinted, own stamps for different reasons. Teramo did so for celebration of the RSI, early in 1944. These stamps were not considered valid by the Postal Administration. Some genuinely used documents for good-faith communication exchange are known.

Some postage stamps were overprinted by the municipality of Castiglione d'Intelvi, to charge for the cost of resources that were assigned for mail transport, when postal administration could not provide. Most municipal services were for incoming mail, but this municipality mainly used own stamps for outgoing correspondence.

Printed matter from Teramo to Roseto Abruzzi, mailed on 29 February 1944, returned to sender. 10c printed matter + 60c unsealed registration = 70c local issue stamps



Cover from Castiglione d'Intelvi to Milan, 23 February 1945. Franked 1L with regular stamps for letter, and 1L overprinted for transport fee. Censored in Milan, tape on the right border. Arrived on the 27th

C



Arrival mark

For divided families at two sides of the border, there was no legal way of direct communication. After liberation of Rome, The Vatican Radio agreed to transmit short personal messages from civilians at the Allied side. These were taken down by Church volunteers at the RSI side, transcribed on formulary letters prepared locally, and mailed to interested parties. This type of correspondence was franked as postcards or letters. Donations sponsored this initiative.

SEGRETERIA DI STATO DI SUA SANTITÀ

TESTO DEL MESSAGGIO

STIAMO BENE ATTENDIAMO CON ANSIA NOTIZIE
VOSTRE VI SENVIAMO COL PENSIERO.
VOT. & BACI AFFETTIVOSI. BUON NATALE.
I GENITORI.

DATA DEL MESSAGGIO
19 - 11 - 1944

RADIO

Inside of the form, showing the provenience as the Secretariat of State of His Holiness (Vatican)



Folded message form, mailed as ordinary letter, From Torino to Savigliano.
Franked 1L as a Schedule B letter. Formulary printed by Catholic Youth Society.



Express letter damaged during Allied air attack, with burns and fallen, later reaffixed, express stamps. One 1 Lira stamp seems to be missing. Mailed on 25 February 1945. Portion of reverse with Verona transit postmark shown above.

From Fiesso Umbertino (Rovigo) to Bologna. Traveled through Verona and Modena, a long route. The shorter train route through Ferrara was not available due to Allied bombardments having destroyed most railroads.

Protective envelope provided by the Postal Administration. Probably damaged in Verona, taken back to Modena and processed, then sent to Bologna. Arrived on 20 March 1945.



Several free zones were established by Partisans in summer and fall of 1944, following the liberation of Rome, with the expectation of a quick German withdrawal from Italy. These lasted a few days to a few months. All these territories were taken back by nazi-fascist troops by the end of October 1944.

Free State of Ossola is the only one, out of about twenty, known to have a postal history footprint. Being located on the Swiss border, it also exchanged international mail. Was established on 4 September 1944 and occupied by RSI forces on 23 October 1944.

About two dozen documents are known from this state. The cover presented below is one of the two known covers with government letterhead.



Copy of the transit mark. The town of Locarno is just few miles across the Swiss border.



Cover with letterhead of the Government of Free Domodossola Zone, mailed to Postal Administration in Bellinzona, Switzerland on 4 October 1944. Also shows an official seal of the Government used as a censorship seal. Franked 1.25 Lire for an international letter. Carried across the border the same day.

X MAS (Tenth Assault Vehicle Flotilla), was a marine unit in Kingdom. It was reestablished in RSI as a land force. Between November 1944 and January 1945 it was deployed to Northeast Italy for anti-Partisan reprisals. During one of the operations, a postal bag of civilian correspondence was recovered. The mail got marked "CORRISPONDENZA SOTTRATTA DAI PARTIGIANI / E RICUPERATA DALLA Xª FLOTT MAS" (Correspondence Hijacked by Partisans and Recovered by Tenth Assault Vehicle Flotilla), then forwarded to destination. Mail originated from Trieste - Fiume area between 10 and 14 November 1944, bear transit marks of Gorizia, and appear delivered in January - February 1945. About fifteen pieces are known.



Copy of front, about 55% of original size



Express cover from Trieste to Ranica, province Bergamo, dated 14 November 1944. Transit mark of Gorizia applied after being turned over to postal services. 3.50L for Schedule B Express letter.

Two main groups presented here are civilian and POW correspondence.

There was only one international rate period. Foreign rates did not change on 1 October 1944.

Civilian rates were also two groups, depending on participation in the European Postal Congress in Vienna, in 1942. Italy had signed its final agreement, establishing discounted fees for a group of countries called "European Postal Union" (EPU). This mainly consisted of Axis countries and their allies. The fees were as follows:

	<u>EPU members</u>	<u>Others</u>
Postcards	50c	75c
Letters	1L	1.25L
Express	2.50L for both	
Registration	1.50L for both	

Printed matter services were suspended. These were sent as letters or cards. France was considered German territory. All letters were limited to 20 grams. Each additional 20g was 75c, but 20g in the Kingdom rate schedule, but 20g was maximum allowed in RSI. A rare exception is seen below.

POW forms to Swiss Red Cross were entitled to free basic international mail, with additional services to be paid if requested. Confusion existed at the time. Many POW letters to Swiss red Cross were franked as international letters



Cover containing fifteen POW information request forms from Fiume (today Rijeka, Croatia) to Red Cross in Geneva, Switzerland. Air Mail service was requested, but not possible.

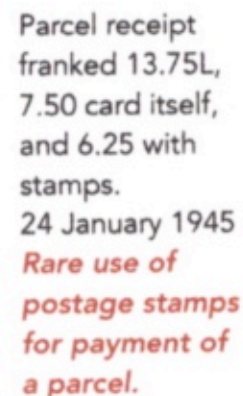
Dated 7 October 1944. Sixteen 50c stamps for 8L: 1.25L for first 20 grams, then 75c for each 20 grams or fraction, coming up to 180 to 200 grams. Plausible due to the number of the forms included.

Weight must have been tolerated for POW mail sent to the Red Cross. Only known examples with high amount franking are a few Red Cross letters originating from Fiume.

Italian (Fiume) and German (Munich) censorship tapes and marks are seen. Six more stamps on reverse.

Highest possible international franking that respected the rules was 5.25L (registered express up to 20gr).

Civilian mail international parcels were only allowed for Italian workers in Germany. The parcel receipts consisted of a larger piece that traveled with the parcel, and a small receipt portion kept by the sender. Stamps were dedicated to parcels and had two portions.



Parcel card for
a parcel sent
from Lurago
d'Erba to
Germany.
17 November
1944.
Paid 13.75L,
7.5L card and
6.25 with
stamps.

Rates: Same in
Schedule A & B

Up to 1 Kg: 8.75L
1-3 Kg: 11.25L
3-5 Kg: 13.75L

CEOLETTA (Coupon)
Per essere ritirata dal destinatario
(Pour être retirée par le destinataire)

REPUBBLICA SOCIALE ITALIANA
POSTE ITALIANE

POSTE ITALIANE
(POSTES ITALIENNES)

BOLLETTINO di spedizione
(Bulletin d'expédition)

PESO (Poids)
Grammi (Grammes) **550**

LURAGO D'ERBA
730

MITTENTE
(Expéditeur)
Nome, Cognome e indirizzo
(Nom et adresse)
Mauri
Erminia
Lurago d'Erba
(Como)

DESTINAZIONE
(Destination)
10185 A I Tenburg "T.I."
Germania

Valore dichiarato (in lettere) **Lire 11.**
Per l'estero ripetere qui sotto il valore paggiagliato in franchi oro
Valore déclaré (en lettres) **Francs 11.**

Dichiarazioni doganali N. **750**
Certificati o fatture N. **750**
Contenuto **indumenti**
(Contenu)

Assegno (Rue) **Lire 11.**
(Remboursement)

Diritti doganali
(Droits de douane)

Impronta del suggello o piombo di chiusura
Espressa da
suegli di invio

Per i pacchi diretti fuori del Regno
indicare l'Ufficio di uscita

Timbre de bureau d'origine
Timbre de la douane

ISTITUTO POLIGRAFICO DELLO STATO

Postcard from S. Agata Feltrinese to Munich, Germany.
1 August 1944.
EPU postcard rate of 50c. Italian censorship marks (purple, closer to stamps) and multiple German censorship signs of Munich are seen.



Unusual international Express letter from Bordighera to Berlin. 1L EPU letter, 1.50L registration and 2.50L Express = 5 L Total. By this date, the orange 2.5L Kingdom Express stamps had already been taken from the post offices for overprinting. **There are only five more known international RSI express letters franked with this stamp.** DATE: 15 January 1944, arrival 26 January. Red circular "Ad" Censor mark of Munich, Italian censor tape and marks. **Passed the border before the official mail opening date of 29 February 1944**



Arrival mark

XII.a

Mail to France

France was not invited to EPU because it was "German territory". Mail to France and Germany was to be franked 1L. Confusion lingered until the end of the war. Letters to France were mostly franked 1.25L.

First day of issue,
25c stamp on
cover to Lyon.
1.25L for non-
EPU rate.
German
censorship tape
and markings of
Munich (Ad).
Important
example of the
25c stamp used
on 5 June 1944,
the day of issue.



Registered from Bolzano to Strasbourg, address written as "Germany". Franked 2.60L: 1.5L registration, 1L for EPU letter, 10c excess. Sent on 3 November, reached the destination on the 13th. Returned to sender because the recipient had left the city. Strasbourg was taken on 23 November 1944. **One of the latest examples of RSI correspondence with Strasbourg.** German censorship of Munich (Ad) only, no Italian censorship. Bolzano was in OZAV (Section IV). International mail was directly taken by German postal services.



Arrival mark



Registered express letter from Venice to Zagreb. Franked 5L: 1L EPU letter (wrong), 1.5L registration and 2.50L international express. Italian censorship tape and blue Italian censor mark (200R Venice). The small green number on the right lower corner is a German censorship mark from Vienna.



Arrival mark

Registered express from Milan to Trebinje, then Croatia, today Bosnia & Hercegovina. Croatian mark "Promet Obustavljen Natrag" (Service suspended, back to sender) explains the return. 5.25L is correct non-EPU fee. Some remote parts of Croatia, such as Trebinje, could not receive mail because of successful Partizan activity.

C



Postcard from
Novara to
Goteborg,
Sweden. 75c non-
EPU postcard rate.
13 June 1944.
Purple Italian
(Novara 46R), red
German (Berlin
letter code b on
the sides of the
eagle) censorship
marks, and
chemical
censorship for
secret messages.



Registered cover
Udine to
Copenhagen,
Denmark. 8
February
1945. Franked
2.75L: 1.25L non-
EPU + 1.50L
registration. Purple
Italian (Udine -24R)
and red German
(Munich-d)
censorship marks,
also censorship
tapes.
Arrived 9 April



Arrival mark,
Brønshøj office
of Copenhagen.



Registered cover
Novara to
Charleroi,
Belgium. Franked
2.8L: 1.25L non-
EPU + 1.50L
registration with
5c excess, likely
caused by the
lack of 10c
stamps.
31 July 1944.
Purple Italian
(Novara, 46R)
and red German
(Munich)
censorship
marks, also
censorship tapes.

Registered cover
Florence to
Apeldoorn,
Holland. 29 May
1944. 1.25L non-
EPU letter + 1.5L
registration =
2.75L
Purple round
censor mark of
Florence 40R,
German
censorship tape
and red circle
"Ad" censor
mark of Munich.
Arrived 14 June
1944



Arrival mark



Registered
from Belluno
to Olmütz,
Moravia. Today,
Olomouc, Czech
Republic.
25 August 1944.
2.50L: 1L EPU
letter + 1.5L
registration.
German censor
tape and
markings of
Munich "Ad"



Arrival mark



Società Nazionale di Trasporti Fratelli Gondrand

ANONIMA - CAPITALE L. 25.000.000 - SOTTOSCRITTO E VERSATO
SUCCURSALE DI TRIESTE

RA CCOMANDA TA

Titl.

"GENERAL TRANSPORT" Allgemeine Transport=
gesellschaft vorml. Albert CROSS

Strada Brediceanu 2

TIMISOARA

Romania

Cover from
Trieste to
Timisoara,
Romania.
1.25L for non
EPU letter.
German
censorship
mark of
Vienna (g),
and Romania
censorship
mark on
arrival. 12
April 1944

Romanian
censorship



Letter from
Milan to
Lovinobaňa,
Slovakia.
Franked 1L
for EPU letter.
Date:
20 June 1944
German
censorship:
mark and
tape of
Vienna (g)



Registered letter from Milan to Vaduz, Liechtenstein. Franked 2.50L = 1L EPU letter (German territory) + 1.50L registration. Italian (Milan 81R) and German (Munich Ad) censorship tapes and censor marks. Date: 9 June 1944, arrived on 20 June.

Only three covers known from RSI to Liechtenstein
C

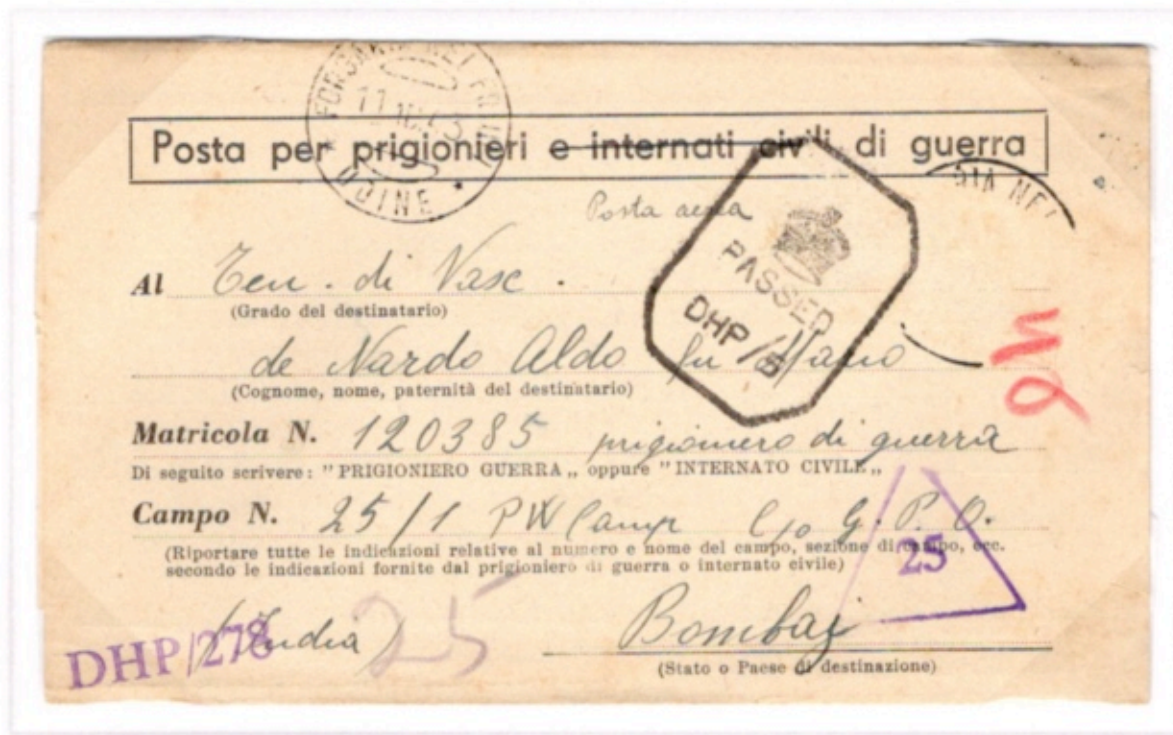


Cover from Arma di Taggia to Montecarlo, Monaco. Franked 1.25L non-EPU letter. Mailed on 19 June 1944. Passed through Italian (Imperia) and German (Munich- Ad) censors. The connection between RSI and Monaco was only open from February to August 1944.

XII.b

POW Destinations

POW correspondence was free if sent from surface. Air mail was possible, and required additional stamps, depending on destination. The exchange was provided by Red Cross. Germans only accepted Red Cross forms as incoming mail, while the Allied side allowed regular envelopes. Mail to India is shown here as a rare example. POW mail bearing RSI stamps is very rare, also because censorship routinely destroyed such mail, looking for hidden messages under the stamps.



POW letter from Forgaria nel Friuli to Bombay, India. Sent air mail, stamps taken out by censor, who applied its mark (DHP/5) in place of stamps.

Date:

11 October 1943

POW letter from Vercelli to Dehra Dun, India, on 7 November 1944. 2.50L air mail fee. Censorship mark of Novara (46R) and arrival British censor mark of Dehra Dun (DHN) are present.



The soldiers of the Royal Italian Army who refused to join German cause after the Armistice of 8 September 1943, became prisoners of Germans. They were kept in the German POW camps

Posta Prigionieri di Guerra

Stalag 366

Via aerea

Prisoner of War N.
PRIGIONIERO DI GUERRA

Al Tenente 343° Rgt. Ftr.
Frascaroli - Bresolin Luigi
M. Stammelager 366 - Zweiglager
Biala Podlaska G.G.

Camp N. _____

ITALIA POSTA AEREA 50
ITALIA POSTA AEREA 50
ITALIA POSTA AEREA 50
ITALIA POSTA AEREA 50
ITALIA POSTA AEREA 50

From Treviso to General Government (GG=Poland). Sent on 17 November 1943 to an Italian officer at a German POW camp. 2.50L was for airmail. It was unnecessary: there was no air mail to Poland, and surface POW mail was free. Stalag 366 censorship mark on the left side of the stamps

POW card from Pietra Ligure to Dachau Concentration Camp in Germany. 15 January 1944. Forwarded through Italian Red Cross office of Cuneo.

POSTA PER PRIGIONIERI E INTERNATI CIVILI DI GUERRA

Militari
(GRADO DEL DESTINATARIO)

A. b. Pinner Battista
(COGNOME - NOME - PATERNITÀ DEL DESTINATARIO)

Matricola N. 2/E A d 44 Vern Dienste
DI SEGUITO SCRIVERE: «PRIGIONIERO GUERRA» OPPURE «INTERNATO CIVILE»

Campo N. Dachau B. München Deutschland
(RIPORTARE TUTTE LE INDICAZIONI RELATIVE AL NUMERO E NOME DEL CAMPO SEZIONE DI CAMPO, ECC. SECONDO LE INDICAZIONI FORNITE DAL PRIGIONIERO DI GUERRA O INTERNATO CIVILE)

Germania
(STATO O PAESE DI DESTINAZIONE)

Mittente (Sender) *Dimar*
Cognome *Antonio*
Nome *Antigio*
Indirizzo *Militari Dachau*
1/3 Terrazza Pietra Ligure (Sabotage)

ROSSA ITALIANA - UFFICIO RICEVIMENTO INF. - CROCE ROSSA ITALIANA - CUNEO

Detail from reverse

POSTA PER PRIGIONIERI E INTERNATI CIVILI DI GUERRA

Al Benemé ^{Rh-2e} ^{British}
(GRADO DEL DESTINATARIO) ¹⁻⁷⁻⁴⁵

Granata Quino di Felice
(COGNOME-NOME-PATERNITÀ DEL DESTINATARIO)

Matricola N. 81-I-46601

DI SEGUITO SCRIVERE: "PRIGIONIERO GUERRA" OPPURE "INTERNATO CIVILE"

Campo N. P.W. 127 Information Bureau
(RIPORTARE TUTTE LE INDICAZIONI RELATIVE AL NUMERO E NOME DEL CAMPO SEZIONE DI CAMPO ECC. SECONDO LE INDICAZIONI FORNITE DAL PRIGIONIERO DI GUERRA O INTERNATO CIVILE)

PROVOST MARSHAL GENERAL WASHINGTON
(STATO O PAESE DI DESTINAZIONE) D.C.

877 AME ^{FEB 22} U.S.A

POSTA PER PRIGIO

AL CAPORAL
Grado del destinatario

FERRARI CAMILLE Di GIOVANNI
(Cognome e Nome e Surnom del destinatario)

Matricola - 9-W-I-5693- PRISONER OF WAR
di seguito scrivere: "PRIGIONIERO GUERRA", oppure "INTERNATO CIVILE".

Campo N. FLORENCE, ARIZONA
Riportare tutte indicazioni relative al numero e nome del campo sezione di campo ecc. secondo le indicazioni fornite dal prigioniero di guerra o internato civile).

U.S.A.
(Stato o paese di destinazione)

Detail from reverse. Italian red cross (red) and Parma censorship (purple)



POW postcard to East Africa, with Modena censorship (64R), German transit censorship of Munich "Ad" and arrival mark of "P/W East Africa 031". Free POW mail.

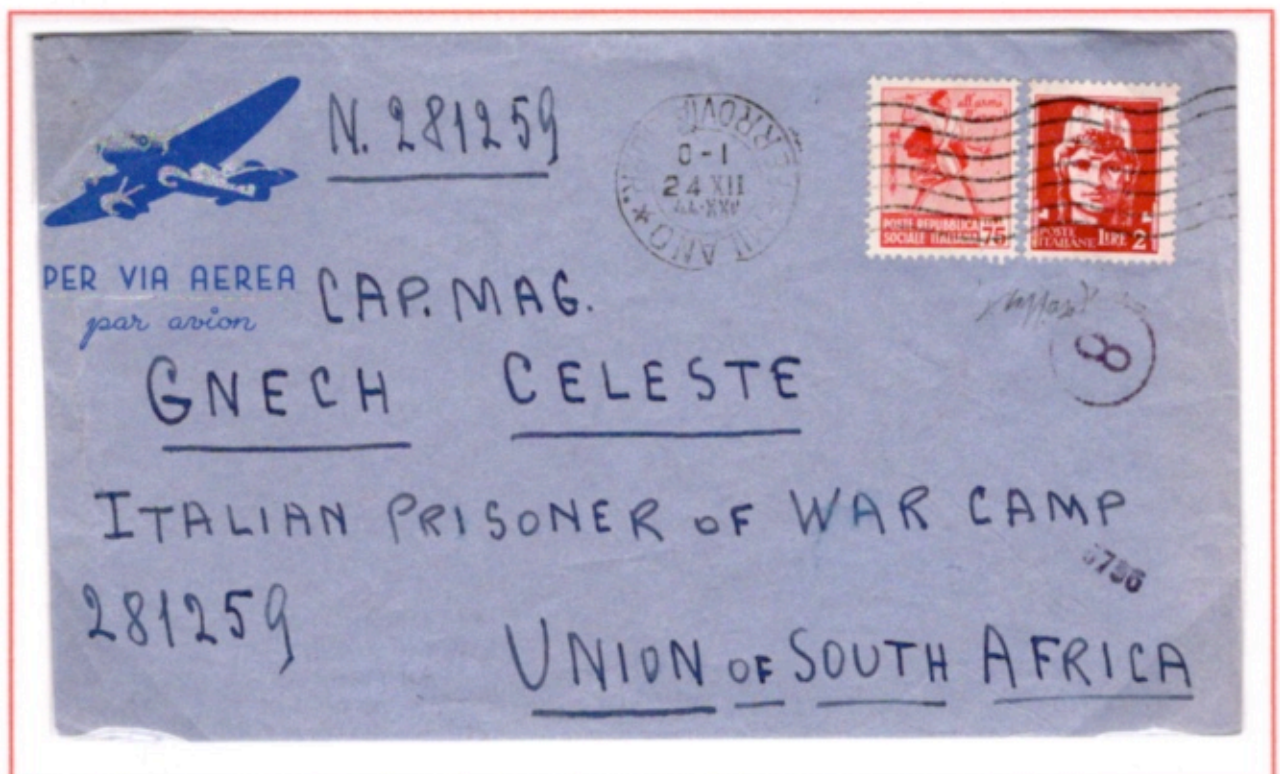
Date:
11 July 1944

Air mail POW letter from Milan to South Africa. Italian (purple 8) and German (purple 5756) censorship transit marks. 2.75L for air mail fee.

Date:
24 December 1944.

One of the rarest destinations with stamps added

C



Cover from
Ponteranica to
Rheinhausen
(Duisburg) in
Germany.
18 January 1945.
1L EPU rate.
Munich censor
"Ad". Duisburg
was taken on 12
April. Must have
been held in
Munich due to
unsafe route, and
returned on
20 April. Two
retour marks,
multiple
censorship signs.



Cover from
Cremona to
Dortmund,
Germany. 1L EPU
rate. Date:
27 February 1945.
Decision to return
made on 11 April
(handwritten),
processed on the
18th (Rectangular
Retour mark).
Dortmund was
taken on 13 April
1945. Italian
censorship tape
and purple Italian
censor mark of
Cremona (11R) are
on the left.



Cover from Bergamo to Switzerland, franked 1.25L for non-EPU letter. Very close to the end of the War. RSI censor tape on the left border. Intercepted by Allies and censored with "Military Censorship Civil Mail 0034"

C



Registered cover from Castello Sopra Lecco (Como) to Geislingen, Germany. Franked 2.50L: 1L EPU letter + 1.50L registration. Reached destination on 17 April 1945, then returned to sender. Allies took Geislingen on 21 April. Letter examined by Allied censorship (front). Italian censorship of Como (17R), and German censorship of Munich (green Ad, left), are also seen. Reached the sender on 3 June 1946



Geislingen



Back to the office of origin

The treaty that marked the end of the RSI was signed between the German and Allied forces on 29 April, effective 2 May. However, by 30 April, first day of the Postal Moratorium ordered by Allies, RSI was defunct.



Express postcard from Udine to Forgaria nel Friuli. Mailed on 25 April, Arrived on 29 April. Completed the course in full RSI period. 50c card + 2.50L Express = 3L

This postcard is very important for being one of the few known single uses of the 3L stamp in RSI period

C

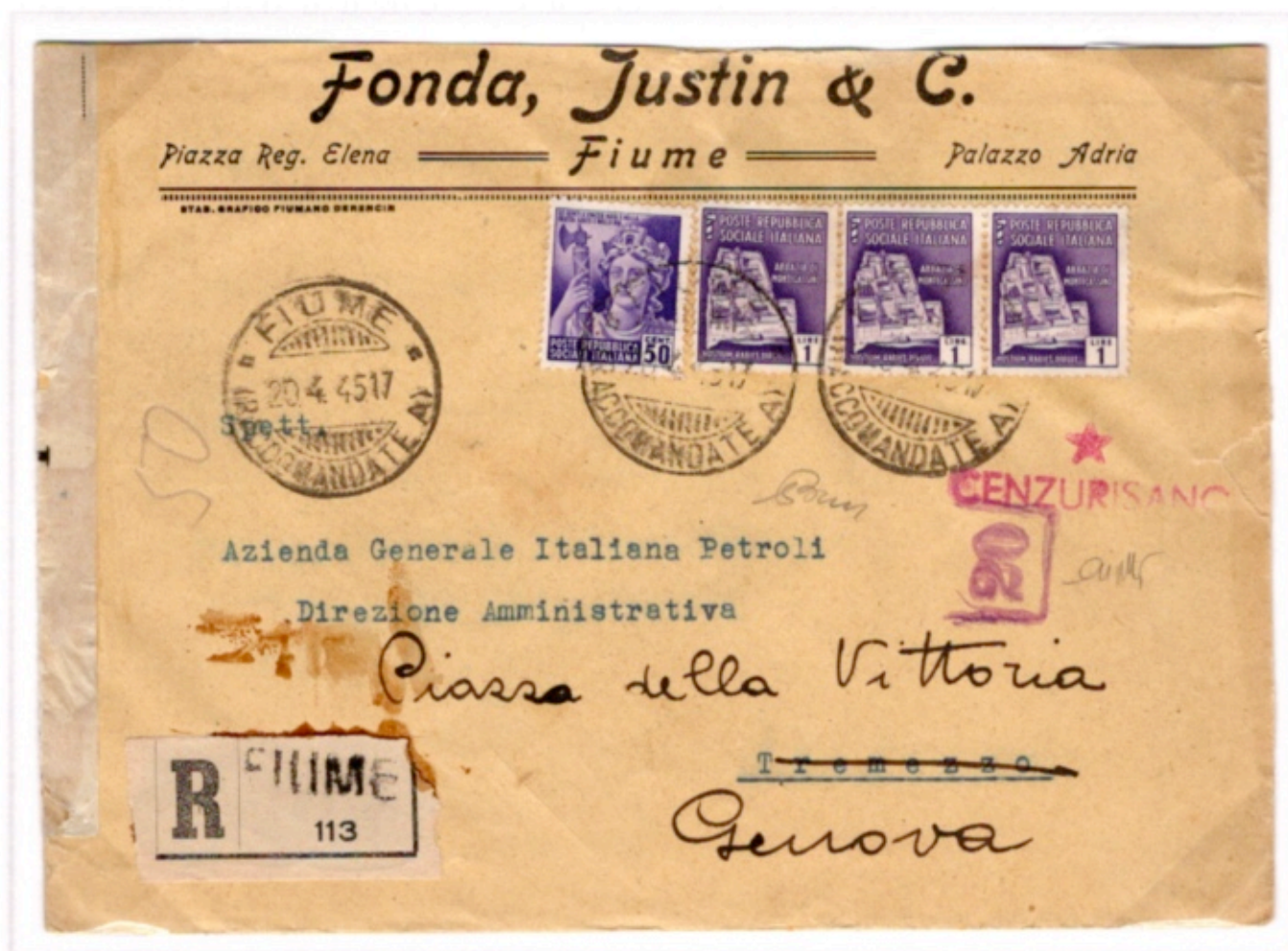


Registered cover to German Command in Tornavento. 21 April 1945. Arrived on 2 May, when the German Command no longer existed. Returned to sender, arrived on 9 May. 2.50L Schedule B registered letter. Traveled during the moratorium period, 30 April to 15 May.

The city of Fiume, today Rijeka in Croatia, was taken by Yugoslav Partizan units on 3 May 1945. At the time this cover was handed over to the post office, the battle for the city was being fought, and communications were already cut.



Postmarks on reverse, detail.



Registered letter From Fiume to Tremezzo, redirected to Genova. Date: 20 April 1945. Franked 3.50L under Schedule B: 2L for heavy letter above 20 grams and 1.50L for registration. RSI period Italian censorship tape on left. Under the stamp on the right side, we can see a red censor mark, **CENZURISANO** with star, indicating the letter was intercepted and examined by the Yugoslav Partizans. Mail held by Yugoslav Partizans, if not processed as evidence of fascist affinity, was released in July 1945. This cover completed its travel at the end of July 1945.

Registered Poste Restante (PR) cover from Castelnuovo Fogliani to Pegli. Prepayment of the PR fee was mandatory for registered letters, thus franked 2.8L: 1L letter + 1.50L registration + 30c PR fee prepaid. Not asked for (NON CHIESTA), and was returned to sender (AL MITTENTE). Mailed on 20 April, back on 6 July 1945, according to the postmark on the left upper corner. RSI censorship tape and mark on the left border



Cover from Casalino to Turin. Mailed on 30 April, arrived on 15 May. 1L for Schedule B letter. Sent to a Turin firefighter, with the request to forward to another person. **Turin Fire Brigade** is known for their dedication to anti-fascist resistance. This is most likely Partisan-related mail.



Arrival mark