

GREENLAND MAIL DURING WORLD WAR II

In April 1940 the Germans took over Denmark, ending the prewar arrangement where all mail from Greenland had been carried by Royal Greenland Trading Company ships to Copenhagen.

Local authorities in Greenland moved rapidly to improvise new routes delivering mail within Greenland and carrying mail to the home country via the neutral U.S. and across the Atlantic. Foreign mail to the free world was sent via the U.S. or Canada to its destination.

Mail within Greenland

Internal mail was delivered primarily by sled. Mail routes between settlements on the West Coast of the island remained the same during the war. Since no shipping was involved mail was delivered year round.

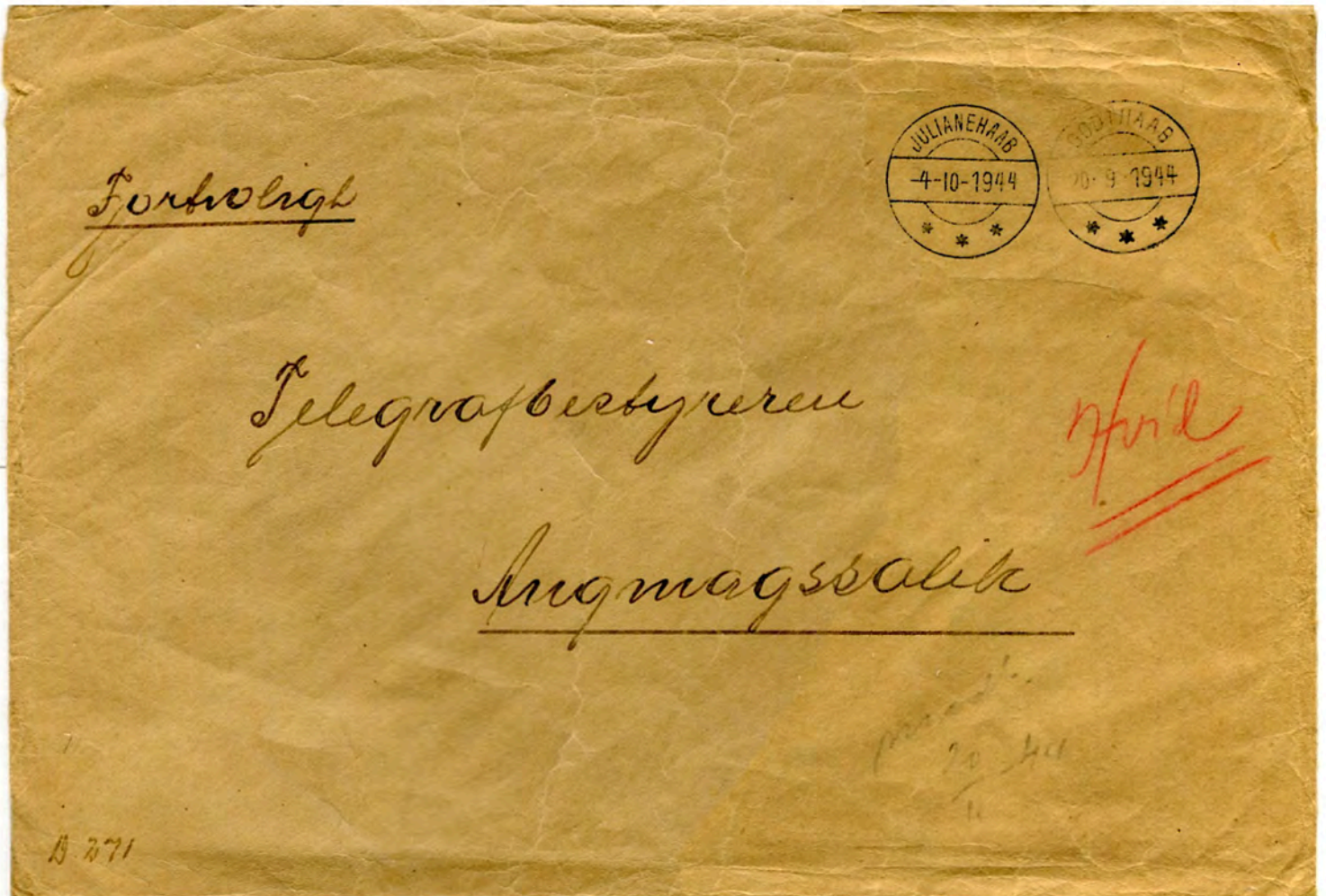


Mail between two West Coast settlements - Free postage within Greenland - 1944.

Patriotic charity label on Christmas mail delivered during December.

Wartime route for mail sent from one coast to the other

During the war a sled route was opened via Julianehaab 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 - Free postage - 1944.

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

Company ships stopped sailing to Greenland when Germany occupied Denmark in April 1940, so mail for Denmark was sent via the neutral U.S.



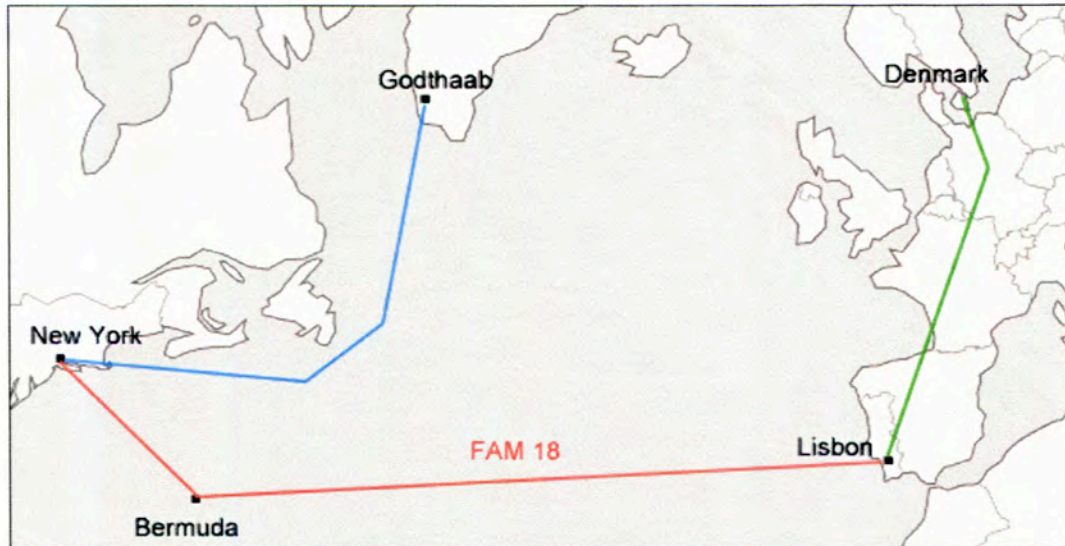
Via the United States and across the Atlantic by sea - 20ø letter - 1941.



Danish censor tape on back.

Air mail service from Greenland to Denmark

Starting in mid-1940, air mail was carried by sea to New York, by air on FAM 18 to Lisbon, and by air through Germany to Denmark.



"Winter Letter" sent to Denmark in January 1941 - 20ø letter, 85ø air surcharge.

The new route provided the first regular Greenland air mail service as well as the first winter deliveries to Denmark.

Air mail to Denmark in 1941

Air service to German-occupied Denmark continued until the U.S. entered the war in December.

By ship to U.S., by air to Europe - 20ø letter, 85ø air surcharge - 1941.
Scarce use at Ritenbenk (Population 119 in 1938).

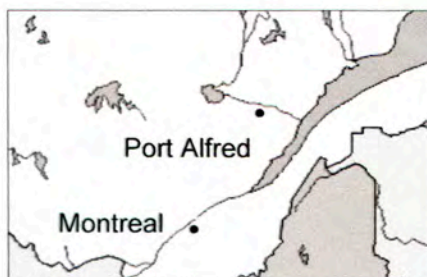


Cryolite ship *Julius Thomson* delivered the mail to Philadelphia 11 November 1941.
Marked "PAQUEBOT" when the ship's crewman handed the mail to the U.S. postmaster.

Paquebot markings were used on this voyage only.

Mail to Denmark routed through Canada in error

Letter carried by ship from Ivigtut to Port Alfred, Quebec.



Canada postage added in Port Alfred - 10¢ rate for air in Canada, surface across the Atlantic, air in Europe - Postmarked Port Alfred 30 November 1940.

Canada was at war and did not exchange mail with German occupied Denmark. The letter was sent through diplomatic channels to the neutral U.S. for air delivery to Europe.

U.S. accepted the Greenland stamps for air all the way - 20ø surface, 85ø air surcharge.

Ottawa Censor C11, Danish censor on arrival in Copenhagen.

Eight examples known to this exhibitor.

Mail confiscated by British censors at Bermuda

Letters containing items of value, including postage stamps, were held as war prizes and were sold at auction after the war.



Routed via U.S. and across Atlantic to Denmark, 15ø letter, 25ø registration.



Scan of front

Held in Bermuda until 1950 - Grey marking "Released by Prize Court."

Confiscated mail of philatelic value was sold in a series of auctions in Bermuda after the War.

The grey "released" marking was used in June 1950.

End of wartime mail service to Denmark

In December 1941, U.S. mail service to axis-occupied Europe was suspended for the duration of the war. This stopped the mail service from Greenland to Denmark, since no other route was available.



Returned to Greenland by U.S. Post Office - Service to Denmark was suspended.

Mailed 24 November, reached the U.S. after the War began 8 December 1941.

Held in the U.S., censored, and sent back to Greenland after April 1942.



Mail to Foreign Countries

By ship to North America

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



EXAMINED BY
C. 248

Canadian censor at
Ottawa

Letter routed via Canada to U.S. - 30ø foreign letter - 1941.



Printed Matter to U.S. - 5ø reduced rate - 1942.

U.S. mail routed via Canada

IN REPLY REFER TO
FILE NO. 000
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.



Canada postage added at Port Alfred - 3¢ letter rate to U.S. - postmarked Port Alfred 31 October 1940.

Greenland stamps paid full postage - 30ø foreign letter.

Three examples known to this exhibitor.

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 - 1940.



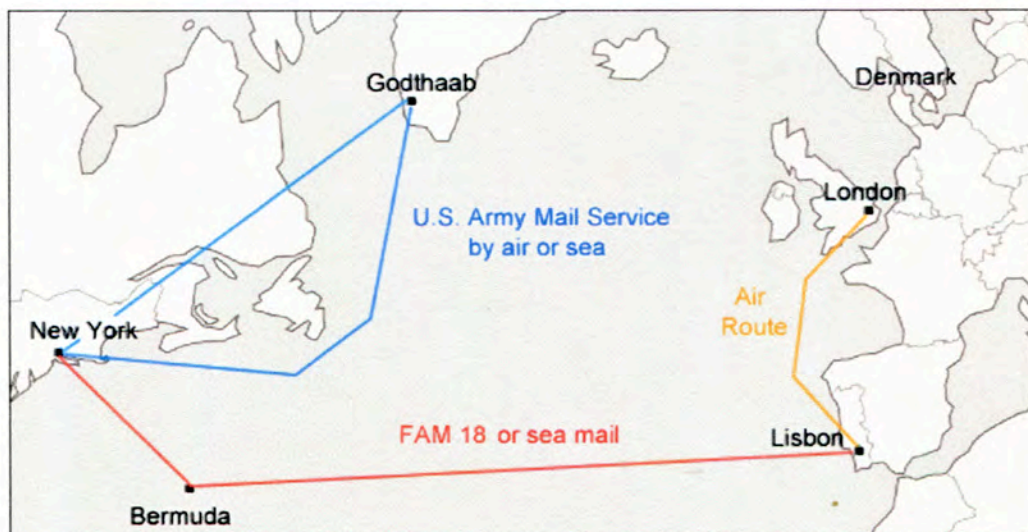
Oval marking applied to mail processed on board.

Greenland foreign mail handled by U.S. Army Mail Service

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



Wartime letter to Britain - 30ø foreign letter - U.S. Army Post Office censor 1215 in Greenland - 1943.



The route to Britain for both air and sea mail was New York - Lisbon - London.

Greenland Registered mail handled by U.S. Army Mail Service

Registered foreign mail entered the Army Mail Service registry system before being passed on to the civilian registered mails at New York.



Processed by the Greenland, U.S. Army, and U.S. civilian registered mail systems - 30ø letter to U.S., 30ø registration - 1943.

U.S. Army and civilian registry postmarks

Entered the Army registered mail system at APO 615 (Ivigut).

Treated as arriving foreign mail in New York.

Sent to the Danish Ambassador to the U.S.

No censor because official mail.



Delivery resolved after the War ended

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



Angmagssalik - England - Godthaab - Berlin - Julianchaab - 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 (back stamp is under German censor tape)
3.	1940	England	Sent to "GREENLAND" even though the return address, c/o Grønlands Stryelse, was in Copenhagen
4.	1941	Godthaab	Arrived 19 Jun. Returned to "DENMARK" before 8 Dec.
5.	1941	Berlin	Censored at Berlin.
6.	1942	Julialehaab	Arrived 10 Feb, being sent back to Greenland for reasons unknown.
7.	1942	Greenland	Held in Greenland. No service to Denmark Dec 1941 to Jun 1945.
8.	1945	Greenland	"Returned to Copenhagen August 2 1945" noted in red crayon.
9.	1945	Copenhagen	Postwar Danish censor 439 opened letter on arrival.

9.

6.

5.

8.



4.
3.

Scan 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 here comes a greeting has left this year, but I trust from Angmagssalik in East-Greenland! this will reach you alright next summer. I am sure. 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

Auntie Karen

Enclosed letter from "Auntie Karen."

German censor 2586

Resumption of Service to Denmark

Prewar route via U.S. resumed May and June 1945

At first mail was sent through the United States. Service from the U.S. to Denmark, including mail from Greenland, was resumed by classes of mail.

Class	Resumed
Non-illustrated post cards	31 May 1945
Surface letter	15 June 1945
Air mail	21 June 1945
Registration	29 June 1945



Letter to Denmark mailed 15 May, before U.S. service to Denmark was resumed. Postage 20ø UPU letter plus 2 x 85ø per five grams for transatlantic air mail.

Greenland accepted mail to Europe after the war ended 8 May 1945. The U.S. Army Postal Service flew this letter to New York, where it arrived in late May.

Letter delivery from the U.S. to Denmark was not resumed until 15 June 1945, so the item was RETURNED TO SENDER from New York to Greenland.

Epilog: Soon after the War domestic and international mail delivery returned to prewar methods, but the groundwork had been laid for modernized service within Greenland and for direct airmail service to Europe and North America starting in 1954.