TERRITORY of PAPUA – Fifth Rates Period 1931 - 1942

From possibly as early as 4 February 1931, the letter rate was increased to 2d.

Lee states that the letter rate within the British Empire was increased to 2d in March 1931.
However, several earlier covers are recorded.

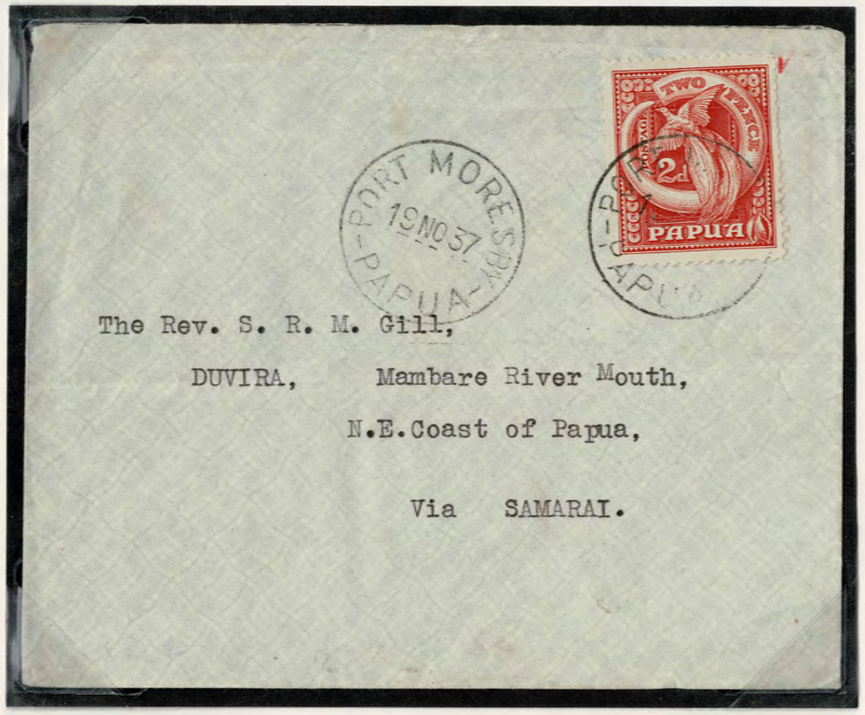
Mail within the Territory

1932, October 27, Port Moresby to Samarai,
single 2d letter rate + 3d Registration fee.

1938, October 27, Bwagaoia to Duvira, single 2d letter rate.

Letter written by a native to a friend, assisted with the franking by a missionary at Bwagaoia.

Only surviving native mail recorded thus far.



1937, November 19, Port Moresby to Duvira,
single 2d letter rate.

Archdeacon S.R.M.Gill was stationed
at the Anglican Mission, Duvira,
located near the mouth of the Mamba River.

1931, February 4, Port Moresby to Kapa Kapa,
single 2d letter rate.

Kapa Kapa was located 25 miles SE of Port Moresby
and mail service was by Police Runner.

Earliest recorded date of letter rate increase.

TERRITORY of PAPUA – Fifth Rates Period 1931 - 1942

Establishing Airmail Routes

1932, December 20, Kokoda to Salamaua, single 2d letter rate + 3d registration fee + 3d airmail fee.
Backstamped Kokoda 20.12.32 and Salamaua 20.12.32

Pioneer flight by Frank Drayton of Guinea Airways Ltd to establish the airmail route.

1935, July 22, Daru to South Australia, single 2d letter rate.

Letter initially carried to Daru by pilot Stuart Campbell, whilst delivering a Short Bros. Scion Monoplane to Oroville Dredging Company, which had gold exploration concessions along the Fly River.

1934 March, 21, Port Moresby to Townsville, single 2d letter rate + 3d airmail fee.

First direct flight to Townsville piloted by Sidney D. Marshall.

1935, November 4, Port Moresby to Daru
(via Oroville Police Camp, D'Albertis Junction, Fly River)
single 2d letter rate + 3d airmail fee.
Daru 1.12.35 handstamp applied on arrival

TERRITORY of PAPUA – Fifth Rates Period 1931 - 1942

The Archbold Scientific Expedition

BIOLOGICAL EXPLORATIONS

THE AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

CENTRAL PARK WEST AT 79TH STREET

NEW YORK, N. Y.

1938 NEW GUINEA EXPEDITION

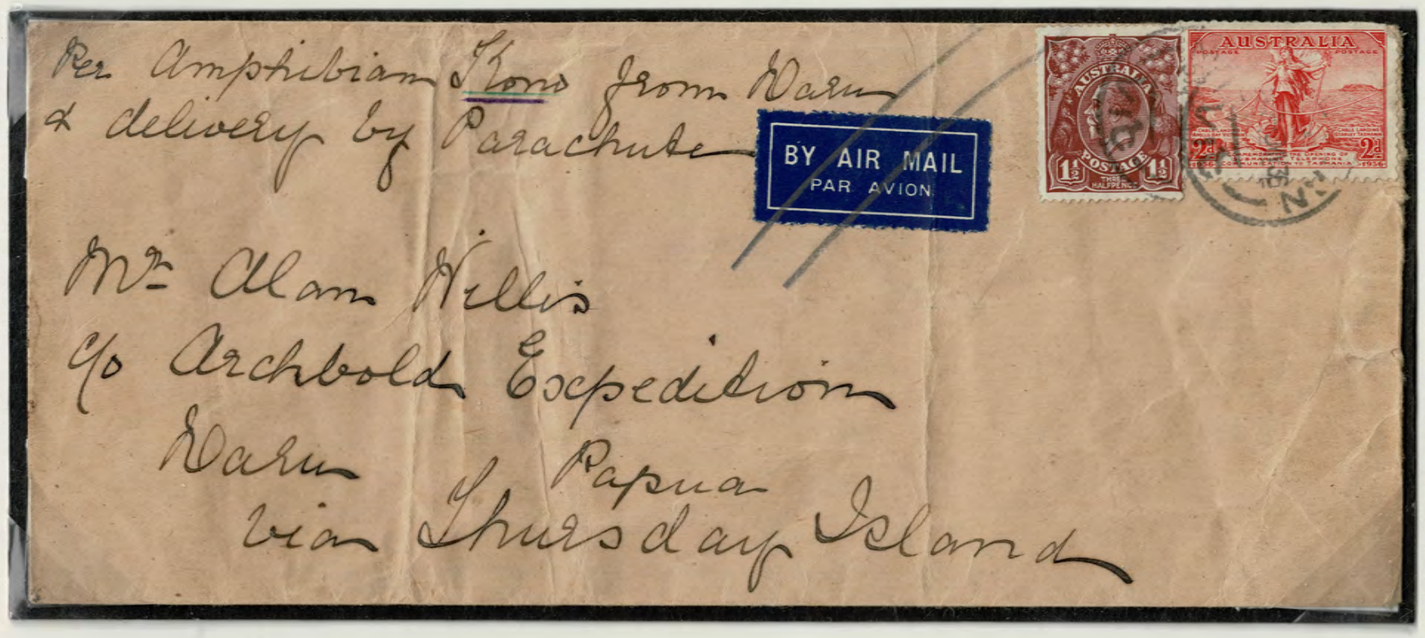
RICHARD ARCHBOLD, LEADER
A. L. RAND, ORNITHOLOGIST AND ASSISTANT LEADER
WM. B. RICHARDSON, MAMMALOGIST
L. J. BRASS, BOTANIST
RUSSELL R. ROGERS, PILOT
GERALD D. BROWN, FLIGHT ENGINEER
RAYMOND E. BOOTH, RADIO OPERATOR
HAROLD G. RAMM, RADIO OPERATOR

FIELD HEADQUARTERS:
HOLLANDIA,
NETHERLANDS NEW GUINEA

Miss. McIntosh,

1936, March 17, Port Moresby to Daru, single 2d letter rate + 3d airmail fee.
Backstamped Daru 18.3.36

Mail transferred to amphibian plane "Kono" at Daru 18.6.36, for first flight to Mount Blucher Base Camp, where mail was dropped by parachute. Endorsed on reverse: Michael J. Healy/O.I.C./18.6.36, Mt Blucher Police Camp. Signed by Richard Archbold, leader of the Expedition.



1936, May 5, Malvern, Victoria to Daru, single 2d letter rate + 3d airmail fee (underpaid 1½d) Backstamped Sydney 7.5.36
Air mail label crossed through, as insufficient postage paid, with the letter thereby travelling by ship.

At Daru, (three letters are recorded), the mail was transferred to the amphibian plane "Kono" and dropped by parachute, along with supplies on 27.6.36 to the advance party of the first Archbold Expedition, located at Mount Mabion, approx.. 10 river miles NW from the Mount Blucher Camp.

1936, May 4, Prahran, Victoria to Daru, quadruple 2d letter rate + 3d airmail fee.
Backstamped Sydney 6.5.36

Alan Willis, an Australian, was a member of the Archbold Expedition advance party. Endorsed on reverse: Michael J. Healy/O.I.C. / 27.6.36

TERRITORY of PAPUA – Fifth Rates Period 1931 - 1942

Papua followed the Australian change to airmail rates in December 1934, and other changes thereafter.

Airmails to England, Europe and the United States of America

1937, April 12, Daru to Stuttgart, Germany, single 1/9d airmail rate.
Backstamped Brisbane 20.4.37

1940, July 30, Port Moresby to Connecticut, United States of America, single 4/- per ½ oz airmail rate.
Complete OPENED BY CENSOR label wrapped around end of cover.

Once the Empire route was terminated due to WW2 on 10.6.40, the service was replaced by the slow Horseshoe route.
However TEAL had commenced a service in April 1940 between Sydney and Auckland,
to connect with the PanAm Clipper service to the USA via the Pacific, the postage being 4/- per ½ oz.

1937, December 23, Port Moresby to Issoudun, France, single 1/9d airmail rate.
Backstamped Issoudun 22.1.38

1940, July 22, Duvira to Liverpool, England, double 2d local letter rate +3d Registration fee + double 1/6d airmail rate (10d underpaid)
Backstamped Ioma 22.7.40 and Townsville 11.8.40

Using 4d Postal Stationery Registered Letter (size 4" x 9") Envelope (only 1000 printed), manuscript TAX 1/8d indicating 10d deficiency + 10d fine.

From Archdeacon S.R.M.Gill at the Anglican Mission, Duvira, the incredible jouney being up the Mamba River to Ioma by canoe, then Police runner to Kokoda, then Plane to Port Moresby, Australia and England.

TERRITORY of PAPUA – Fifth Rates Period 1931 - 1942

War-time Mail to Australia

1941, September 4, Port Moresby to Newcastle, NSW, single 1d concession letter rate + 3d airmail fee.

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY/Concession Postal Rate handstamp applied at Port Moresby.
Passed/by/Unit Censor handstamp and Officers signature applied in the field.

1942, January 5, Port Moresby to Melbourne, single 2d letter rate + ½d war surcharge.

The extra ½d was a post office surcharge, as distinct from the Australian ½d war tax, which was accounted for by the Post Office to the Treasury.

(E) 1942, May, stampless "mail bomb" letter from Rabaul, New Guinea
SERVICE OF PRISONER OF WAR handstamp as required for Prisoner of War mail.
Registration label and Opened by Censor tape applied in Melbourne.

In January 1942 the Japanese overran Rabaul, capturing all Military personnel and approximately 100 civilians. Eventually all prisoners, including missionaries, were invited to write a single sheet letter. This letter was written by Rev L.A. McArthur, Chairman of the Methodist Mission in Rabaul, and Member of the New Guinea Legislative Council.

The mail bag, along with long white streamers attached, was dropped from a Japanese plane over Port Moresby. On receipt of the delivery of approximately 400 letters in early May 1942, they were flown to Melbourne, where various censor marks were applied, and all letters were Officially Registered, to be on-forwarded to family members.

Transit datestamps of Melbourne 12.5.42 and Woodville 15.5.42 were applied to this letter. Backstamped Woodville 15.5.42, Marrabel 16.5.42, Saddleworth 16.5.42, Adelaide 18.5.42 and Wellington 19.5.42, following the letter being re-addressed several times.

On 22 June 1942 all prisoners were loaded aboard the MONTIVIDEO MARU bound for internment in Japan. On 1 July 1942, the vessel was torpedoed by the Americans, and all prisoners and crew were lost.

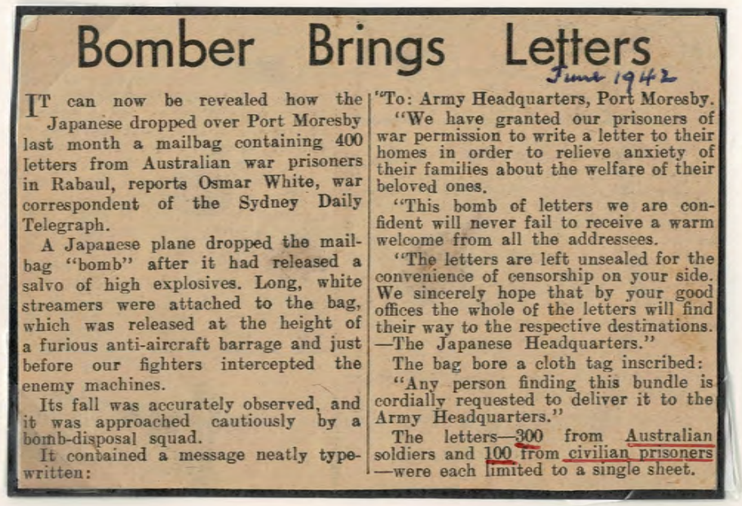
Original June 1942 "Sydney Daily Telegraph" newspaper article reporting the letter drop, which also contained the following message.

"To Army Headquarters, Port Moresby."

"We have granted our prisoners of war permission to write a letter to their homes to relieve anxiety of their families about the welfare of their beloved ones. This bomb of letters we are confident will never fail to receive a warm welcome from all the addressees."

"The letters are left unsealed for the convenience of censorship on your side. We sincerely hope that by your good offices the whole of the letters will find their way to the respective destinations."

"The Japanese Headquarters."



Bomber Brings Letters

June 1942

IT can now be revealed how the Japanese dropped over Port Moresby last month a mailbag containing 400 letters from Australian war prisoners in Rabaul, reports Osmar White, war correspondent of the Sydney Daily Telegraph.

A Japanese plane dropped the mail-bag "bomb" after it had released a salvo of high explosives. Long, white streamers were attached to the bag, which was released at the height of a furious anti-aircraft barrage and just before our fighters intercepted the enemy machines.

Its fall was accurately observed, and it was approached cautiously by a bomb-disposal squad.

It contained a message neatly type-written:

"To: Army Headquarters, Port Moresby.

"We have granted our prisoners of war permission to write a letter to their homes in order to relieve anxiety of their families about the welfare of their beloved ones.

"This bomb of letters we are confident will never fail to receive a warm welcome from all the addressees.

"The letters are left unsealed for the convenience of censorship on your side. We sincerely hope that by your good offices the whole of the letters will find their way to the respective destinations.
—The Japanese Headquarters."

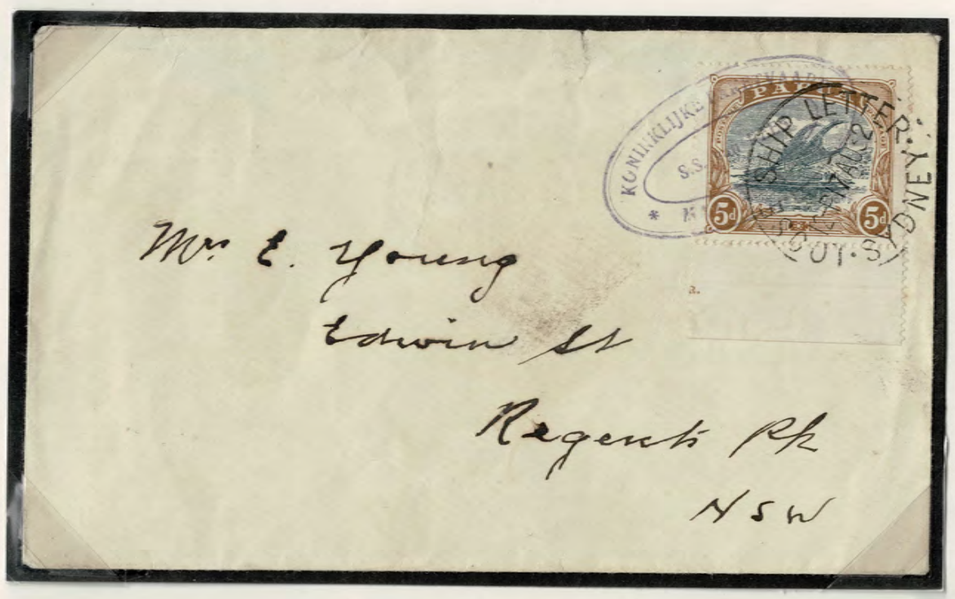
The bag bore a cloth tag inscribed:

"Any person finding this bundle is cordially requested to deliver it to the Army Headquarters."

The letters—300 from Australian soldiers and 100 from civilian prisoners—were each limited to a single sheet.

TERRITORY of PAPUA – Fifth Rates Period 1931 - 1942

Mail to Australia

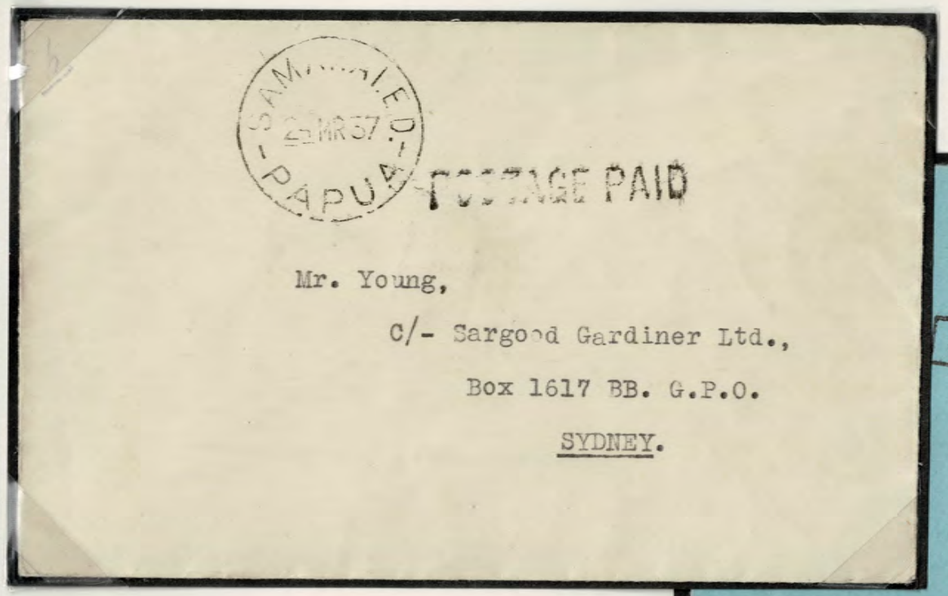


1932, August 17, posted aboard ship to Sydney, single 2d letter rate (overpaid 3d), intended to be put ashore and Registered.

S.S. van REES, KONINKLIJKE PAKETVAART, MAATSCHAPPIJ ***handstamp.***
LOOSE SHIP LETTER/SYDNEY ***arrival datestamp.***

1933, May 24 Samarai to Sydney, unstamped letter, mss TAX 4d, then mss Refused obscured by REFUSED/TO PAY/ TAX handstamp applied at Sydney. ➔

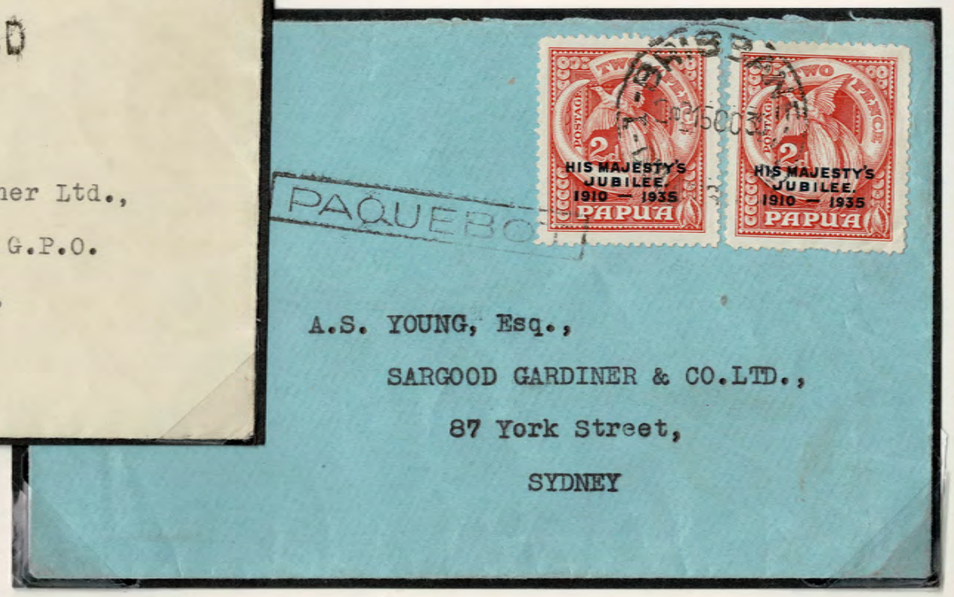
DELIVERY ROOM/GPO SYDNEY 31.5.33 and DEAD LETTER OFFICE/SYDNEY NSW 1.6.33 arrival datestamps.



(E) 1937, March 24, Samarai to Sydney, POSTAGE PAID handstamp applied at Samarai, paying postage for a bulk mailing from one sender.

Only example recorded on cover of the POSTAGE PAID Samarai handstamp.

1931, November 6, Port Moresby to South Australia, 1d newspaper rate.



1931, October 15, Port Moresby to Sydney, double 2d letter rate.
PAQUEBOT cancel applied at Brisbane on arrival

THE B.N.G. TRADING CO. LTD : PORT MORESBY : PAPUA ***imprint on cover flap.***

TERRITORY of PAPUA – Fifth Rates Period 1931 - 1942

Mail to Australia

1938, November 5, Bwagaoia to Sydney, Gold bullion parcel tag, £1/8/6 parcel rate + 3d registration fee, (2d underpaid for 5 lb gold bar).

Earliest recorded date of double ring handstamp POST OFFICE/BWAGAOIA, PAPUA

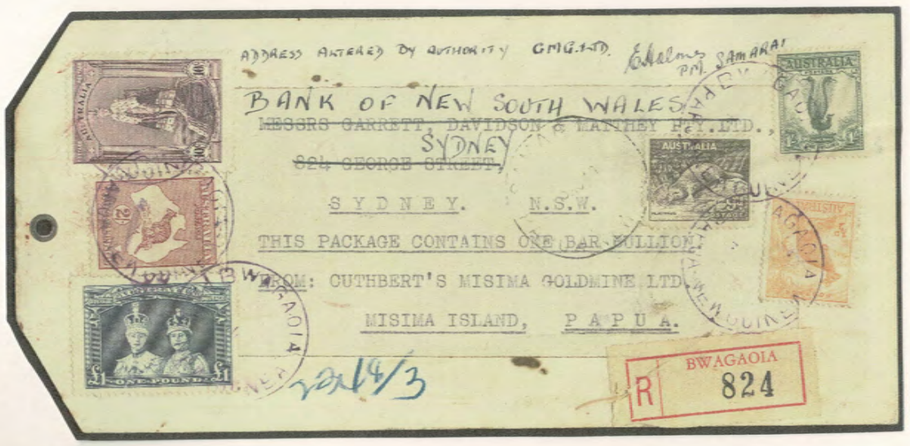
(75% scan of reverse)

Goldmines of Papua Ltd discovered gold on Misima Island in July 1935.

1941, April 16, Bwagaoia to Sydney, Gold Bullion parcel tag, unknown postage, covered by re-address label on reverse.

Cuthbert's Misima Goldmine Ltd. Commenced in September 1935, and ceased operation in April 1950 when the ore grades became uneconomical.

1934, March 20, Port Moresby to South Australia, Printed wrapper, 1d newspaper rate.



(75% scan of reverse)

1949, August 3, Bwagaoia to Sydney, reuse of Gold Bullion parcel tag, franked with Australian stamps, which were introduced when civilian post offices reopened in Papua New Guinea after WWII.

Authorised alteration of the address by Samarai Postmaster, E. Halms.

TERRITORY of PAPUA – Fifth Rates Period 1931 - 1942

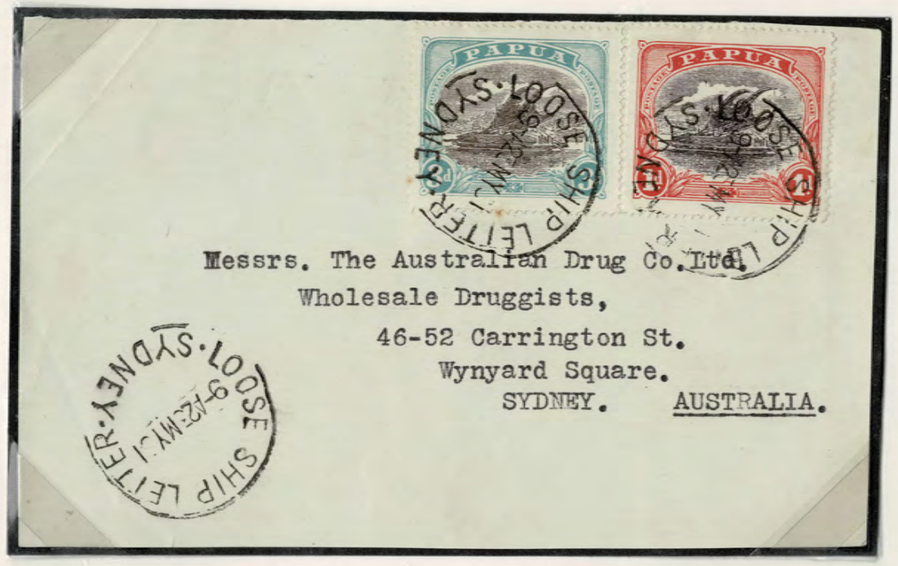
Mail to Australia

1935, August 15, Port Moresby to Sydney, double 2d letter rate + 1d late fee.

Rare TOO LATE handstamp added when the letter failed to make the intended outgoing mail.

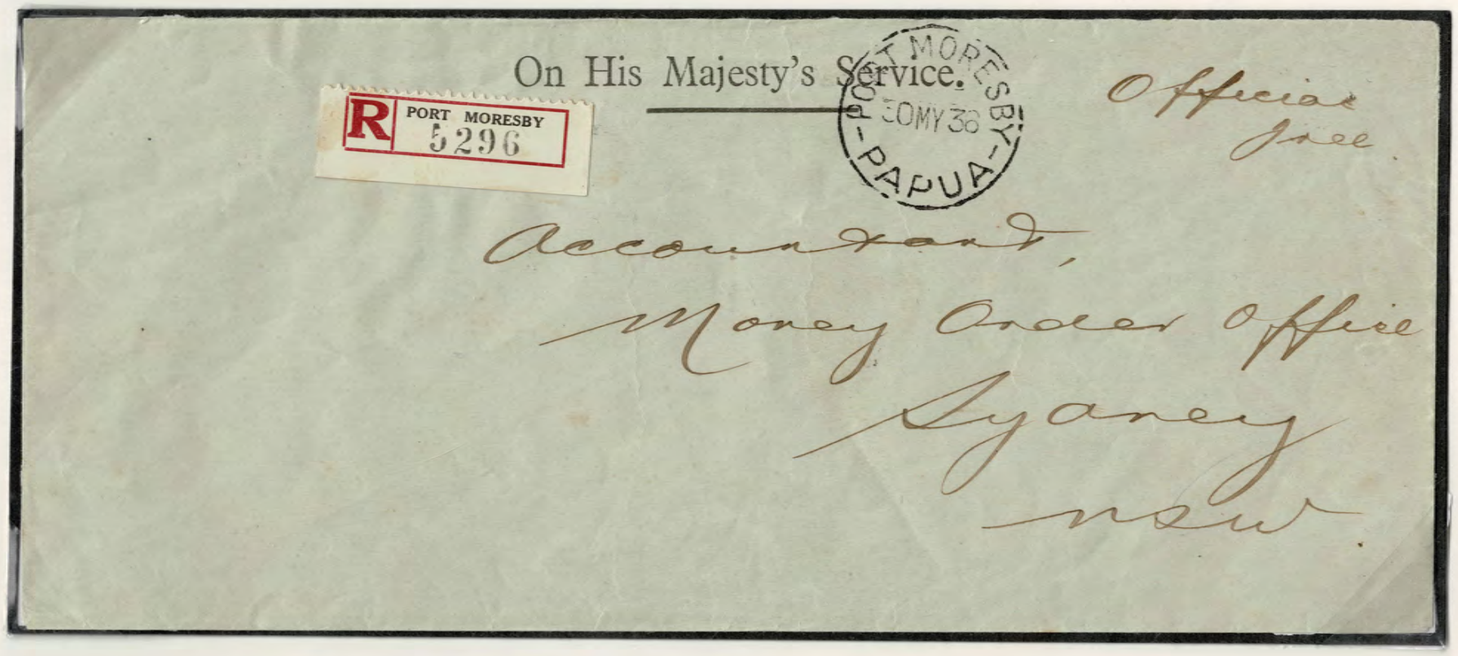
1931, February 5, Samarai to South Australia, single 2d letter rate + 3d registration fee.
Backstamped Samarai 5.2.31, Melbourne 23.2.31, Adelaide 4.2.31 and Parkside 5.2.31

Earliest recorded registered letter in this period.
Scarce first double ring POST OFFICE/SAMARAI/PAPUA handstamp,
used only in 1931, indicates post office mail.



1931, May 23, posted aboard ship, double 2d letter rate.

Loose Ship Letter 23.5.31 datestamp applied at Sydney.



1938, May 30, Port Moresby to Sydney, OHMS Official Free, + Registered mail.
Backstamped Port Moresby 30.5.38 and Sydney 11.6.38

Manuscript *Official Free* has misled the postal staff, as postage should have been affixed for sending outside the territory.
Registration was often granted free of charge on OHMS mail.