

TREASURES IN THE 8 ANNA FORCES AIRMAIL ENVELOPE

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The 8 Annas airmail envelope issued specially for Forces Correspondence Only, appeared in 1942, during WWII. The 8a postage was meant to be used only for Britain. The first issue in Deep Blue and Violet on fine Pink paper is generally much scarcer than the later on toned white papers (with a few exceptions).

The printing on Pink paper was near to perfect in terms of the strength and positioning of the two impressions, Violet (the stamp) and Deep Blue (the airmail label and the text). Tolerable, the shade of the paper, Rosy-Pink, Pink and Salmon-Pink, are certainly worth the categorisation in the study. The stamp may also appear different in violets but it is due the variation of the pink that adds a certain tinge to the violet.

The Pink envelope was printed on watermarked paper, and like the contemporary 14a public airmail envelope the watermark usually appeared anywhere in the envelope and rarely escaped it in the cutting. Here in the 8a Forces Airmail envelope the water is an outlined capital "SILVER KING / BOND" contained between two circles like a postmark. The size of the watermark is 71x74mm. So it is not a perfect round. It appears on the formed envelope tilted to right on an axis of 45°.

Here at right shows a diagram of a presumed arrangement of the placing of watermark in the mother sheet, and the envelopes cut out of it. Now when the flaps are folded and the envelope formed, the watermark that is upright on the front side may appear inverted on the upper and lower flap. This is quite obvious but also confusing when one has to take in consideration the tilt of the normal watermark.

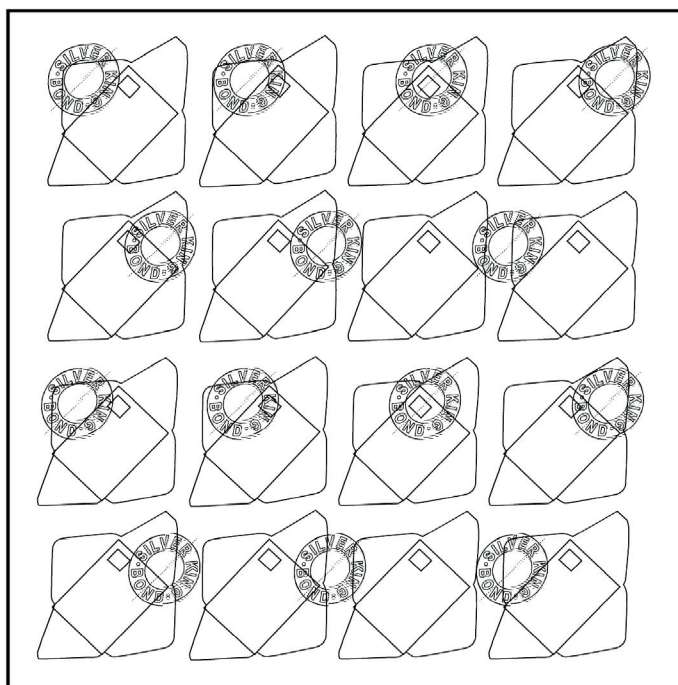


Fig. 1 Position in the mother sheet



Fig. 2 Normal Position in the envelope

2nd Printing (Pink Envelope)

A second printing also exists with the address text and lines removed, to be used by forces throughout India, and the top text reading in the 2nd line as 'FROM H. M. FORCES ONLY' instead of 'H. M. FORCES ONLY'. The word 'TO' appears at the end of top line in the 1st Printing.

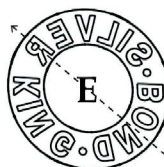
U P R I G H T



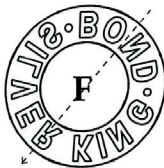
Front / Side Flaps	Top & Bottom Flaps
Upright A	Upright C
Sideways B	Sideways D
Inverted C	Inverted A
Sideways inverted D	Sideways inverted B



R E V E R S E



Front / Side Flaps	Top & Bottom Flaps
Reverse E	Reverse G
Reverse Sideways F	Reverse Sideways H
Reverse Inverted G	Reverse Inverted E
Reverse Sideways inverted H	Reverse Sideways inverted F



CONSTANT / UNCONSTANT VARIETIES
(PINK ENVELOPE)

1. 'E' of 'OUNCE' slightly Fuzzy (Type 1)
2. 'E' of 'OUNCE' Fuzzy Doubling (Type 2)
3. 'E' of 'OUNCE' Doubled (Type 3)
4. Airmail label over-inked (notably in 'PAR AVION') Type A
- 4a. Airmail label over-inked (notably in 'PAR AVION') Type B



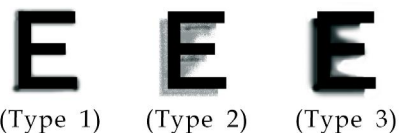
(Type A)



(Type B)

Watermark Varieties

Watermark varieties can be studied by the above chart of Type A to H. Watermark inverted C or Reverse Inverted E (looking into front or side flaps) has not been seen. The Double (part) Watermark variety (Wtmk I) is Very Rare and possibly occurred due to miscutting of envelope in Row 4, E 3, 4, 5. The 'No watermark' variety has been seen but is extremely rare! (Wtmk J).



(Type 1)

(Type 2)

(Type 3)

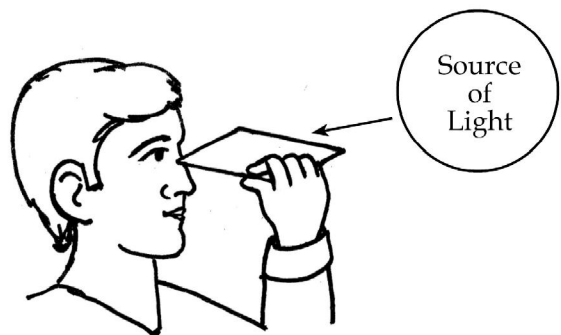
First Printing	Pink Paper	Wtmk A	Wtmk B	Wtmk D	Wtmk E	Wtmk F	Wtmk H	Wtmk I	Wtmk J
		10%	50%	30%	2%	2%	1%	Rare	Rare

The White Envelope

The same envelope continued into forties, printed now on unwatermarked, stone coloured paper. In this **(2nd Printing)** the paper is somewhat coarse, and has the appearance of modern day newsprint paper, with tiny straw bits frequently seen over the surface. Later the paper became more toned and rough, and the tiny straw bits spread all over surface. This is the **3rd Printing** and the most common of them all.

PAPER OF THE WHITE ENVELOPES:

The paper used for the white envelopes, is smooth on one side and slightly rougher on the other. The smooth side was supposed to be the outer but neglection lead to many envelopes being formed the reverse way - rough on the outer side and smooth inside. Infact the '**rougher outer surface**' is quite common and the '**smooth outer surface**' is very scarce in the 2nd and 3rd Printings. But for 4th and 5th Printings it is totally reversed. The rough surface shows a cloth-like texture and can be seen if brought to eye level, slightly tilted along the direction of the light.



CONSTANT / UNCONSTANT VARIETIES: (TONED ENVELOPE - 2nd Printing)

5. Thick & Fuzzy 'A' in 'AVION' @
6. Broken 'N' of 'INDIA' and dot at left*
7. Broken 'N' of 'INDIA' (no dot)*
8. Dot on top side of airmail label, and blue flaw on 'O' of 'SECTION'*
9. Flaw after 'E' of 'POSTAGE'***
10. Line under 'S' and flaw under 'AG' (INDIA POSTAGE)***
11. Flaw & line after 'E' of 'POSTAGE', and Damaged 'N' in 'AVION' (label)
12. Flaw (no line) after 'E' of 'POSTAGE', and Damaged 'N' in 'AVION' (label)
13. Dot on 'N' of 'AVION' (label), Top text weak, doubled from right, ***
14. Flaw between 'PO' of 'POSTAGE', Weak top text, doubled at right.
15. Dot over 'O' and Flaws after 'E', Crooked frame in left value, Stop after 'AS' (right value).
16. Crooked frame in left value (stamp printed in Dull Slate-violet)
17. Flaws above 'S' and 'AG' ^
18. Flaws above 'G' ^
19. Dot between 'OS', beside '8' and in NE Corner (right value). Damaged 'N' (AVION)^
20. Flaws over 'P', between 'TA' & 'E' of 'POSTAGE', dot between 'AS' (left value). Damaged 'N' (AVION)^
21. Flaw over 2nd 'I' of 'INDIA', and Damaged 'N' in 'AVION' (label) ^
22. Flaw beside 'E' (same as 12), beside '8' (right value) and Damaged 'N' in 'AVION' (label)
- 22A. Large flaw at left of 'I' in 'INDIA'.
- 22B. Dark and over-inked impresion of stamp.
- 22C. Dark Blue (label and text) Doubled!

@ In addition the same envelope shows: Broken address lines.

* In addition the same envelope shows: Broken 2nd 'O' in 'CORRESPONDENCE' (top text), Dot in lower left corner of airmail label, Broken address lines.

** In addition the same envelope shows: Broken 2nd 'O' in 'CORRESPONDENCE' (top text), Broken address lines.

*** In addition the same envelope shows: Weak text strengthened in right half by doubling, and is printed on reversed paper.

*** Litho set-off of label inside.

^ Envelope printed on reversed paper

ILLUSTRATIONS OF VARIETIES (Toned Envelope - 2nd Printing)



5



6



7



8



8



9



10



11



12



11



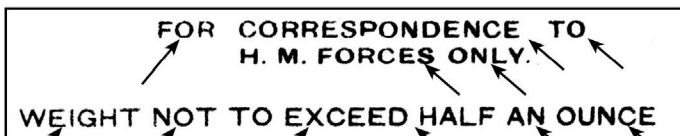
12



13

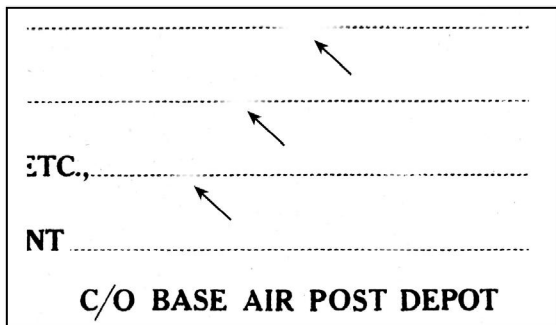


2nd 'O' of 'CORRESPONDENCE'

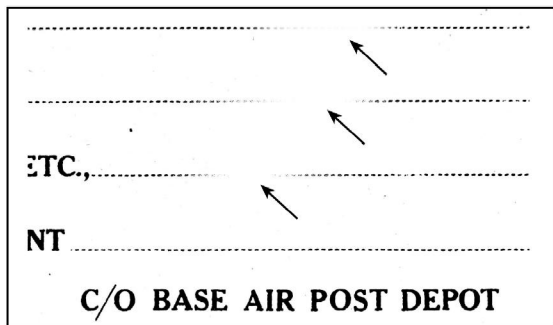


Weak lettering***

Lettering strengthened by doubling***



Address lines broken@



Address lines broken * **



14



15



15/16



15



17



18



19



19



19



19



20



20



21



21



22



22A/29C

CONSTANT / UNCONSTANT VARIETIES:
(Toned Coarse Envelope - 3rd Printing)

TYPE 1: Broken 2nd 'O' in 'CORRESPONDENCE' (top text), Broken address lines.

- 23. Top serif of 'N' elongated, Flaw on 'E' of 'POSTAGE' Dot on 'M' of 'MAIL'.
- 24. Break in Frame over 'MAIL', Flaw beside '8' (right value).
- 25. Flaw after 'E' of 'POSTAGE', Flaw over '8' (left value).
- 26. Broken 'N' and Dot in lower left corner frame of airmail label.
- 27. Broken 'N', Dot between 'AS' and Dot in lower left corner frame of airmail label.
- 28. Elongated serif of 'N' and 'E', Dot beside '8' (left value) and Dot in lower left corner frame of label.
- 29. Top serif of 'N' elongated, Thick 'A' in 'PAR', and Dot in lower left corner frame of airmail label.
- 29A. Thick & Fuzzy 'A' in 'AVION' @ (Same as 5)
- 29B. Large flaw above '8' (left value).
- 29C. Large flaw at left of 'T' in 'INDIA'. (Same as 22A)
- 29D. Swelled colourless frame in right value.
- 29E. Outer frameline of right value broken in NE corner
- 29D. Swelled colourless frame in right value.

TYPE 2: Thick Top Text

- 30. Flaw on frameline (left value) and Damaged 'N' in AVION'
- 31. Flaw over 'AG' and Damaged 'N' in AVION'

TYPE 3: Top text partially strengthened by doubling from right side.

- 32. Dot between 'AS' in both values, Line in frameline below 'V' of 'AVION'
- 33. Dot above '8' (left value) and Dot beside '8' (right value) and (Litho set-off of airmail label)
- 34. Stop after 'E' of 'POSTAGE' and (Litho set-off of airmail label)



23, 28, 29



23



24



24



25



25



26



26/29



27



28



28



29E



29F



30



30



30/31



30



31



32



32



32



33



33



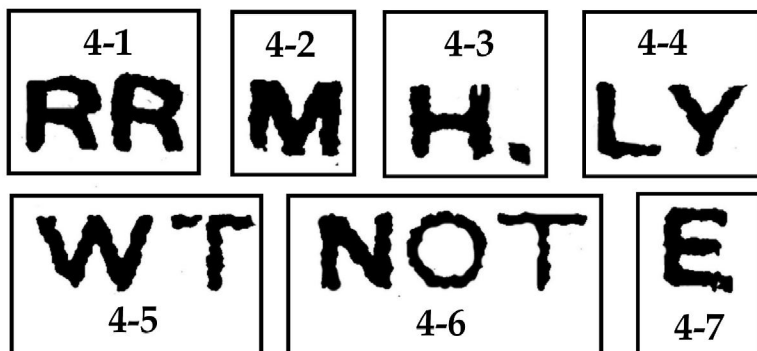
34

TONED COARSE ENVELOPE - 4th Printing

This is the Rarest of all the five printings. The label and text is in blue instead of dark blue. All the text including the top was in fine strong state, unweakened, undoubled. The stamp though was fearly weak, in terms of the finer details. The finer outlines around value and country name tablets tend to diminish. The formation of the envelope was poor and examples with stamp appearing deviated from the normal position were encountered. The Paper is much like in the 2nd Printing, but slightly more toned. No varieties have been seen in the 4th printing. The envelope was supplied without butter paper slips under flaps.

TONED COARSE ENVELOPE 5th Printing

This is the Printing showing no central text (address lines) expanding its use from anywhere in India and not particularly from Karachi. Supplied without butter paper slips under flaps. The shades of the label and text vary between Dark blue and Deep blue and the imprinted stamp from violet to Lilac. Such a printing, reading the 2nd line as 'FROM H. M. FORCES ONLY' was also issued in the Pink envelope.



The text is known in three distinctive sub varieties; a) Strong b) Weak and c) Very Weak. A variety of crooked and Damaged letters has also been seen, showing Pressed & spiked 'RR' in 'CORRESPONDENCE' (4-1), Short left leg of 'M' in 'FROM' (4-2), Tapered leg of 'H' and dot in 'H.M.' (4-3), Open 'L' and tilted 'Y' in 'ONLY' (4-4), Shaved 'W' and Sliced 'T' in 'WEIGHT' (4-5), Retouched 'N' in 'NOT' (4-6) and elongated & dropping bars of 'E' in 'OUNCE' (4-7).

RELATIVE SCARCITY OF WHITE PRINTINGS

Printing	Paper	Smooth Outer Surface	Rough Outer Surface
2nd Printing	Toned Fine Paper	97%	3%
3rd Printing	Toned Rough Paper	85%	15%
4th Printing	Toned Rough Paper	30%	70%
5th Printing	Toned Rough Paper	15%	85%



1



2



3

THE WRAPPING BANDS

The earlier (pink envelopes) were banded in packets of 16 with band types 1-3 (left). These exist printed on brown laid paper, normally horizontally laid (1) and rarely vertically laid.

Later (white envelope) band showed larger lettering in text and were printed on thickish pale buff laid paper (2-3) initially as type 2 (with square corner of frame) and later with type 3 (showing rounded corners of frame). There exist many typographic varieties which certainly require another article.