

Netherlands behind bars: The story of the 1940 German occupation issue



Sequence of events

- **April 1, 1940. New Queen Wilhelmina Definitive Stamps Issued.**
- **May 10, 1940. Germany Invades the Netherlands. Dutch Officials and Royal Family Escape to Great Britain and Establish a Hostile Government in Exile.**
- **May 14, 1940. The Netherlands Surrender to the Germans.**
- **October 1, 1940. German Occupation Authorities Release Guilloche Overprint. Sales of Queen Wilhelmina Stamps Cease on October 11, 1940.**
- **April 1, 1941 Guilloche Overprints Replaced with Reprint of Lebeau's Flying Dove Definitives.**
- **March 31, 1944. Guilloche Overprints No Longer Valid.**
- **May 5, 1945. Netherlands Completely Liberated After Final German Surrender.**

Every stamp is a sign that sends a message

- **Required message elements:**
 - **Name of country and denomination**
- **Optional message elements:**
 - **Pictorial vignette (symbol, prominent figure, historic event, cultural artifact, flora, fauna, etc.)**



1924 Numeral
Definitive

What should the occupation overprint look like?



April 1, 1940 new Queen Wilhelmina definitives issued



Poland Marshal Smigly-Rydz overprint issued by German Occupiers in 1940

The guilloche overprints

- *Guilloche* refers to an architectural ornamentation, often in metal, that resembles braided or intertwined ribbons.



The guilloche transformed

SIGN ➔ **MESSAGE** ➔ **SYMBOL**

- During the occupation the Dutch referred to the guilloche stamps as “traliezegels” or stamps with prison bars. Hence the term the *Netherlands Behind Bars* issue. The stamp became a symbol of oppression.



- The German authorities quickly became aware of the negative connotation associated with the stamps. Use of the term was not allowed in the philatelic press.

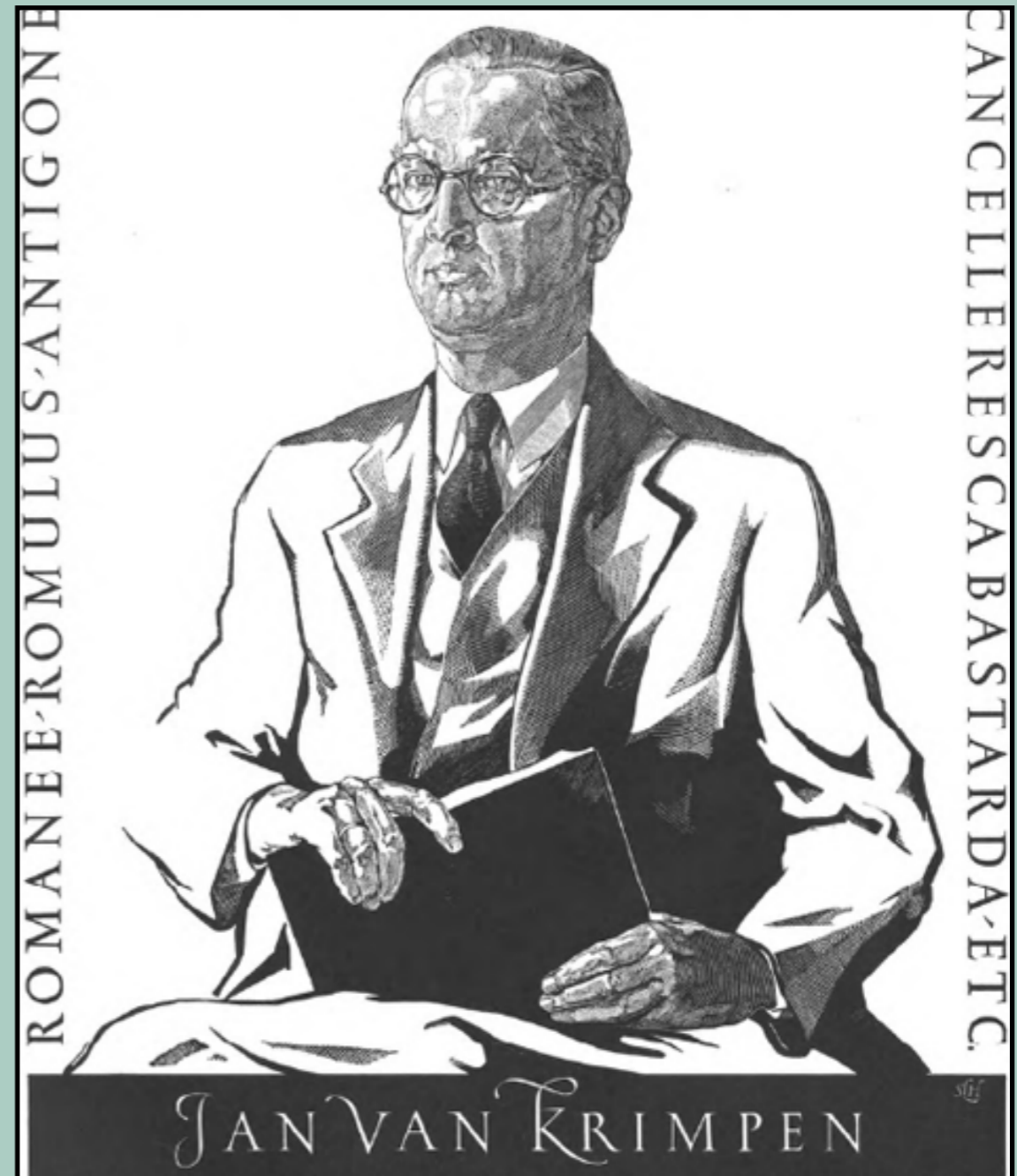


From queen to guilloche



Guilloche overprint designer

- Jan van Krimpen was a highly regarded typographer who was first employed by the Netherlands PTT in 1923 to design the lettering on various postage stamps.



Chris Lebeau and the flying dove numeral definitive: The irony of the guilloche overprints

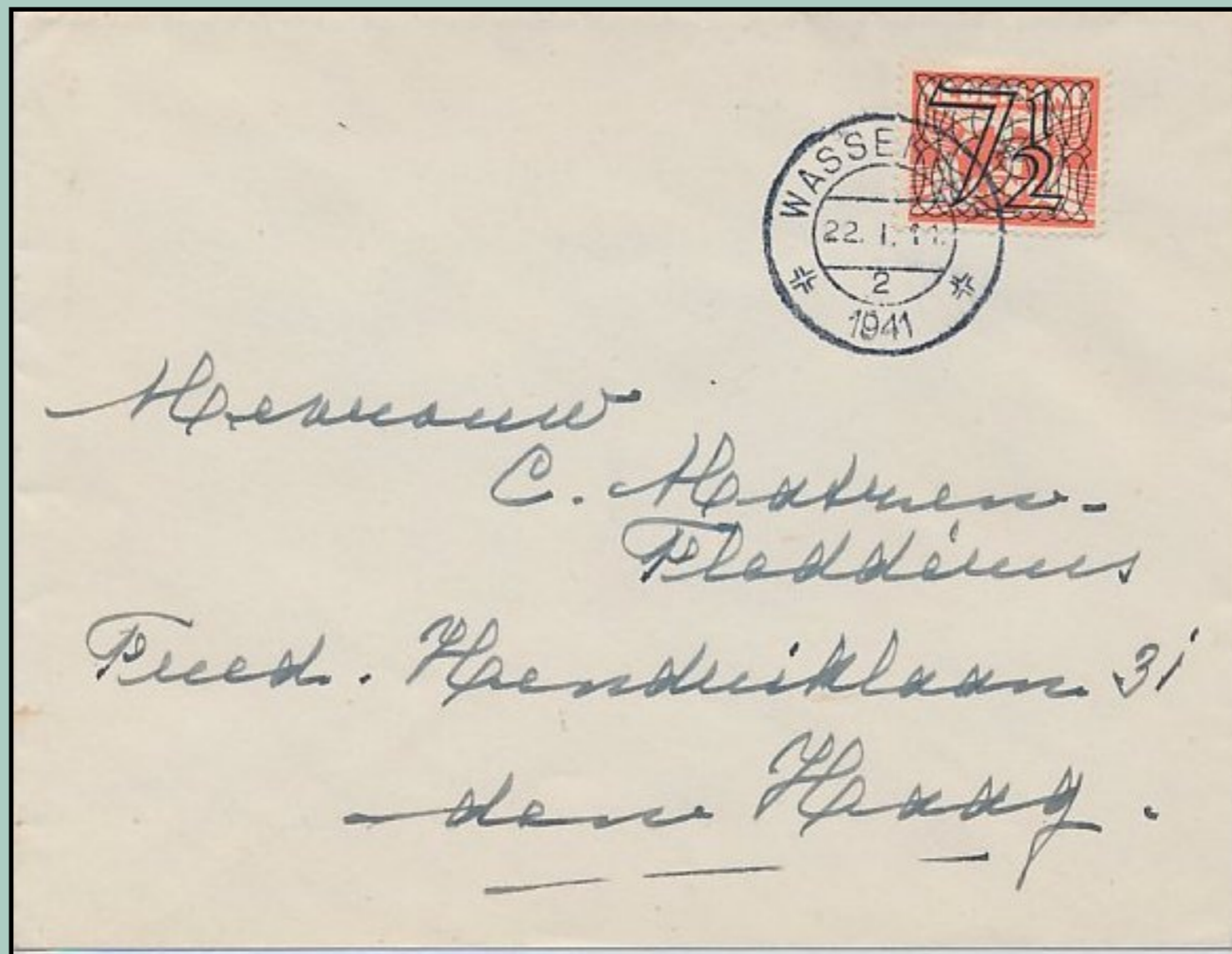


The postal uses of the guilloche overprints

- **Domestic Mail: Local and Out of Town**
- **International Surface Mail: Letters, Post Cards, Special Services**
- **International Airmail**
- **Censored Mail**
- **Miscellaneous Uses**

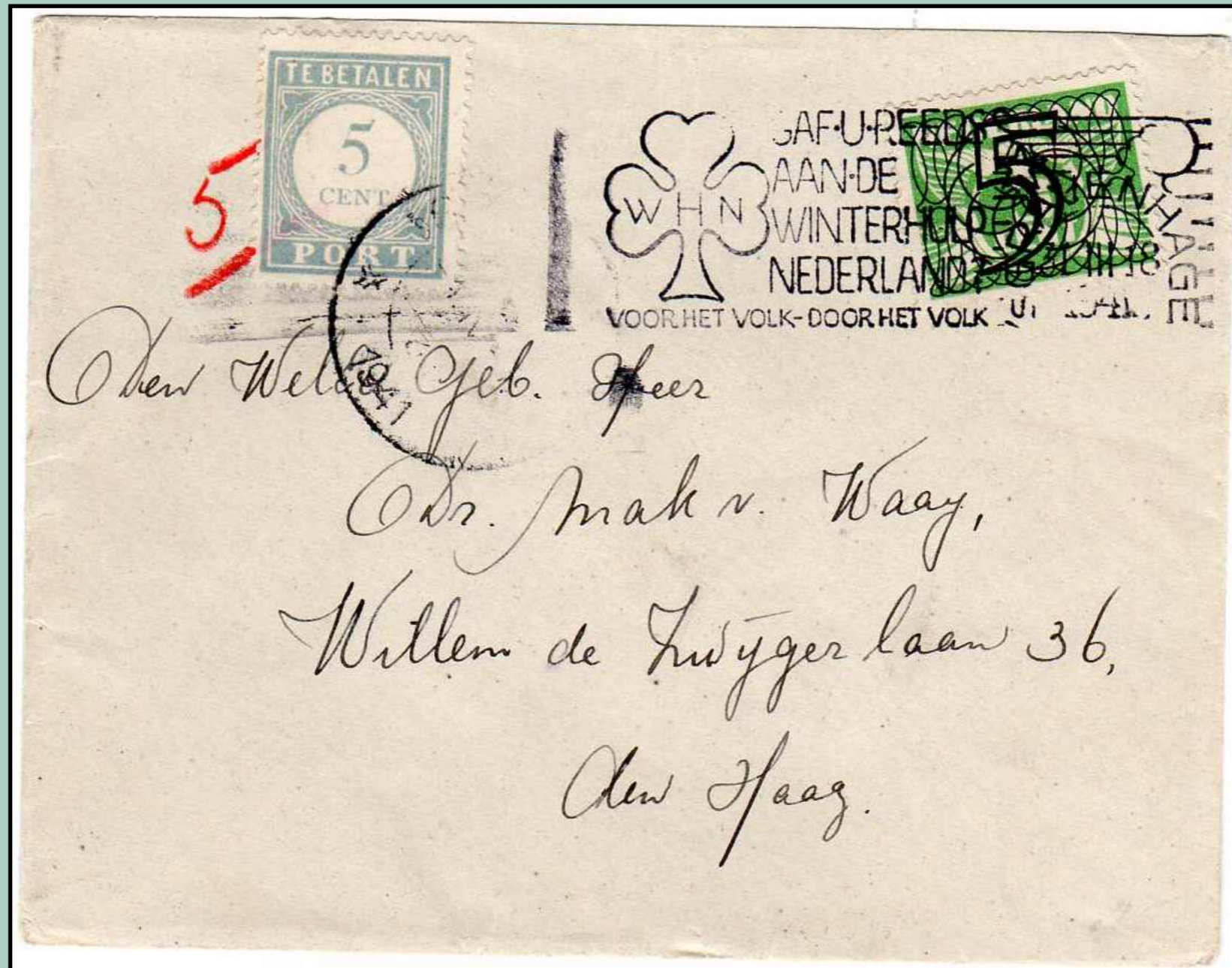
Domestic inter-city mail

- Standard postage fee for 5 gram first weight class letter.



Domestic local mail

- A local letter incorrectly assessed with postage due

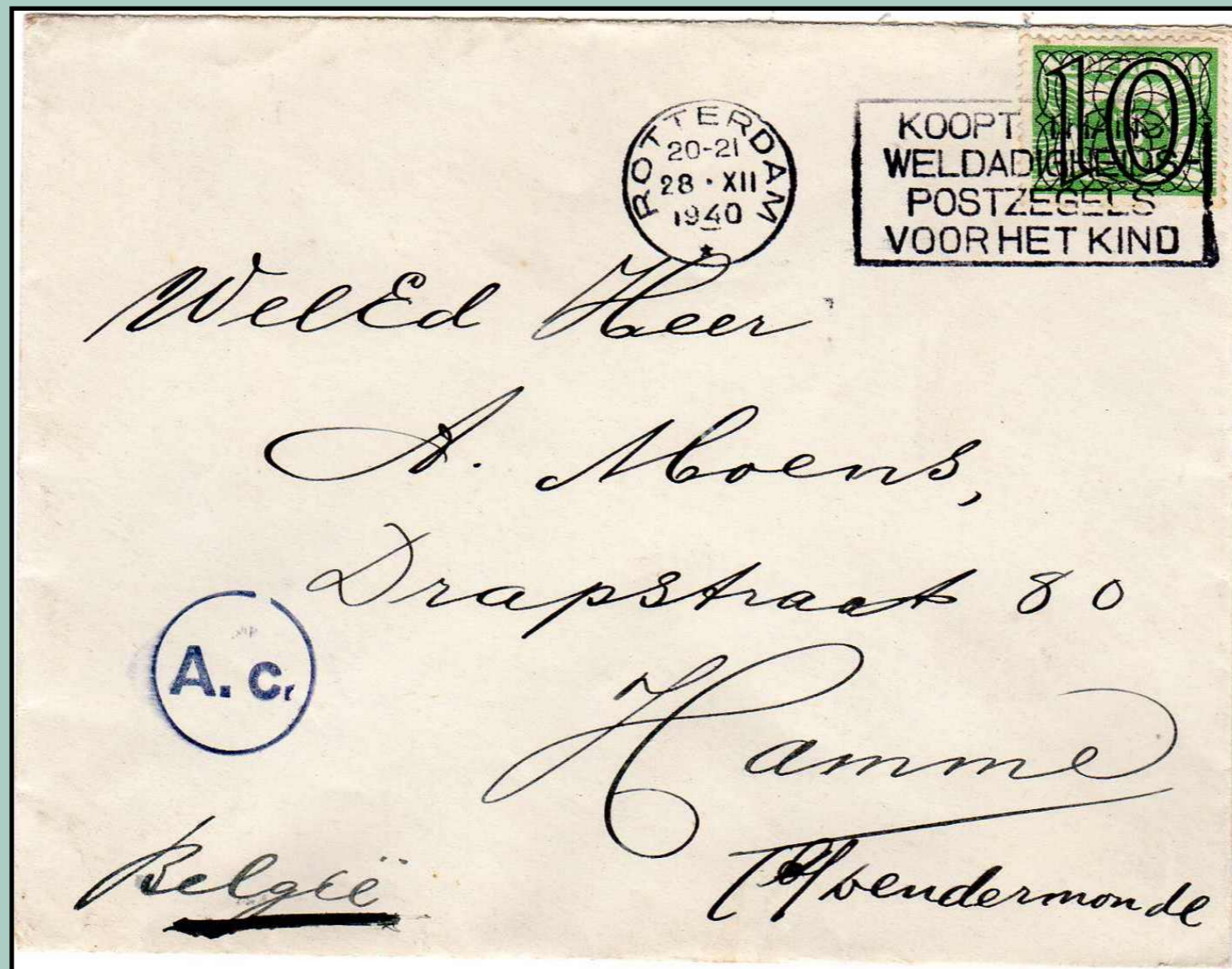


International surface mail



International surface mail

- Special rates to Belgium



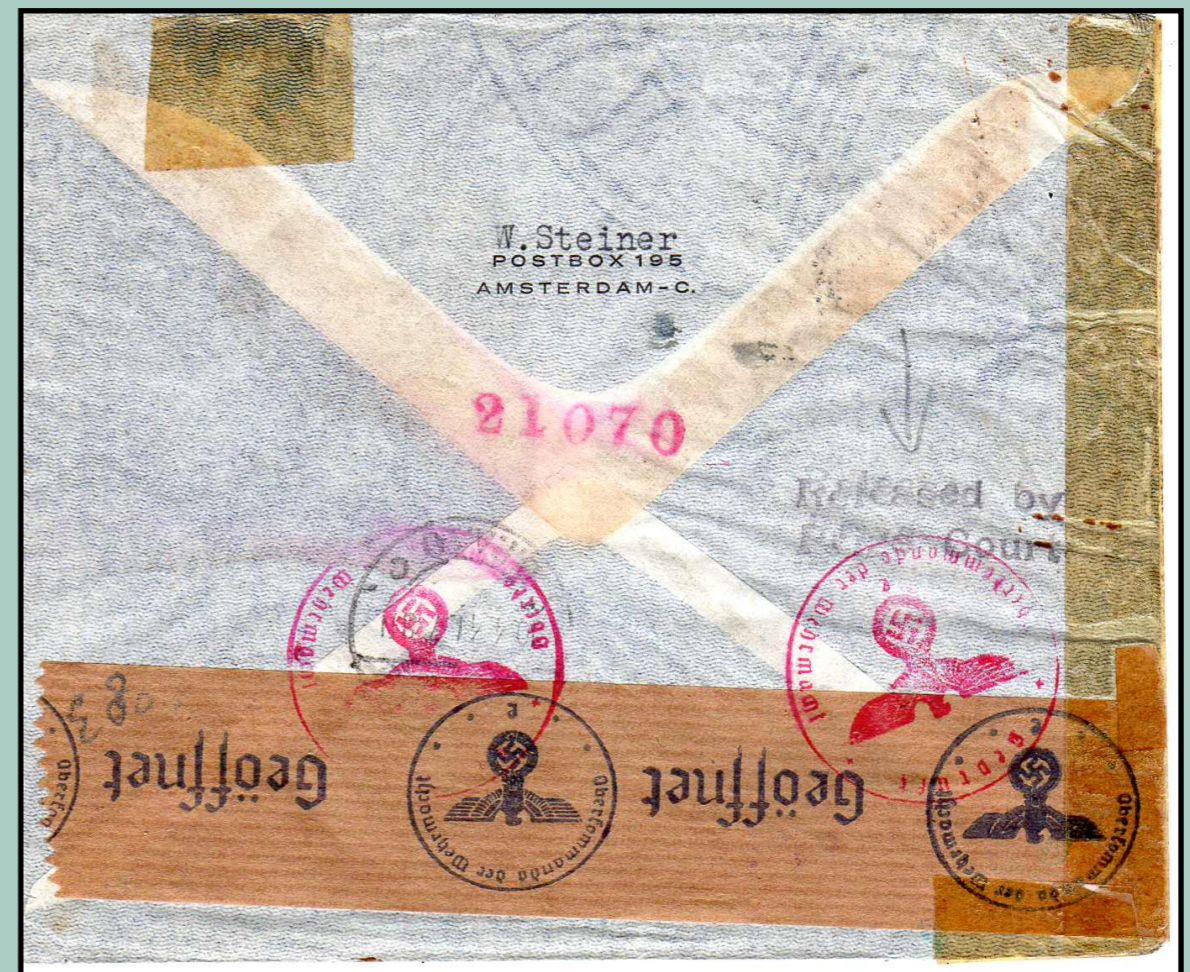
International surface mail

- Post card to Italy with double censor



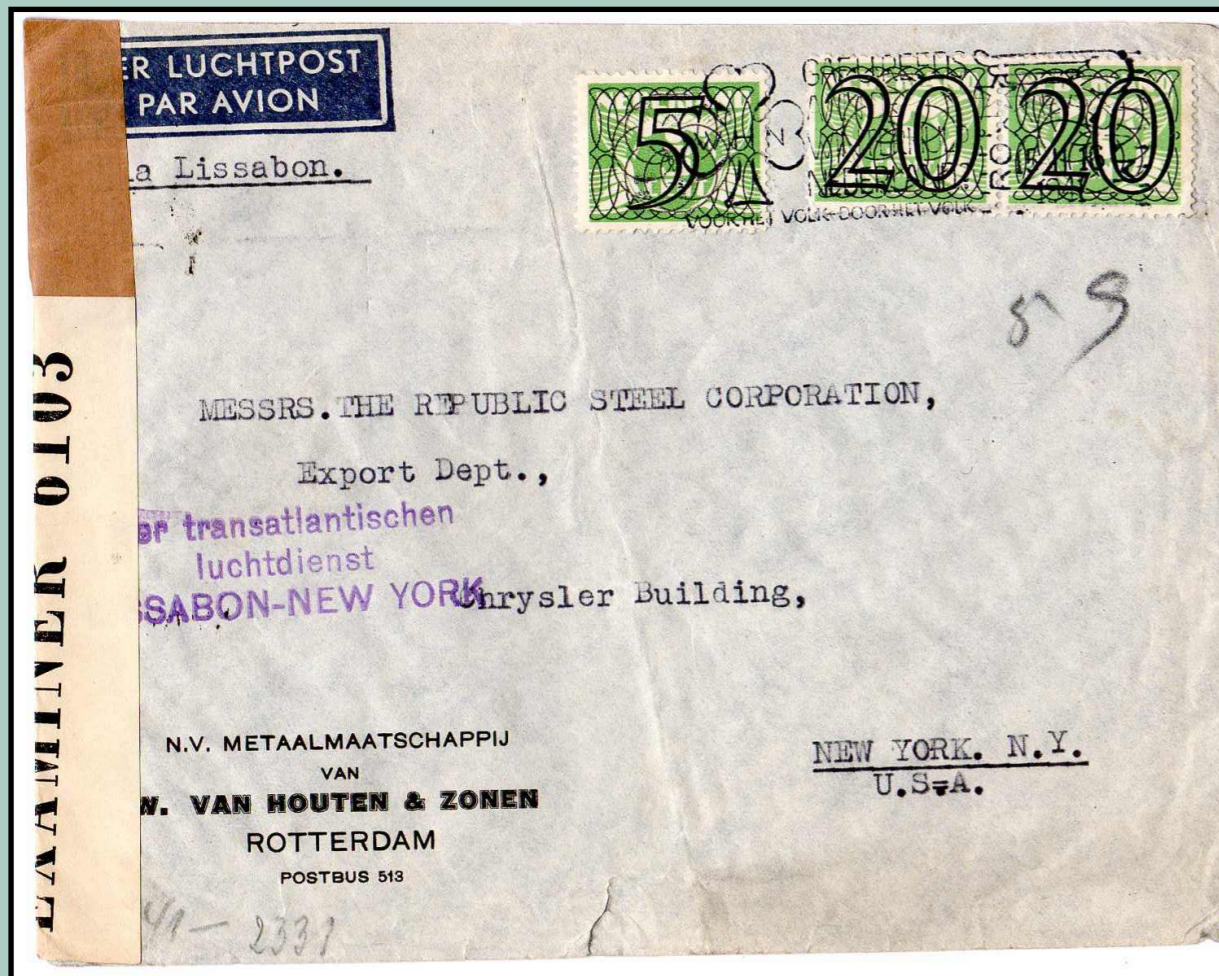
International airmail

Prize Court inspection



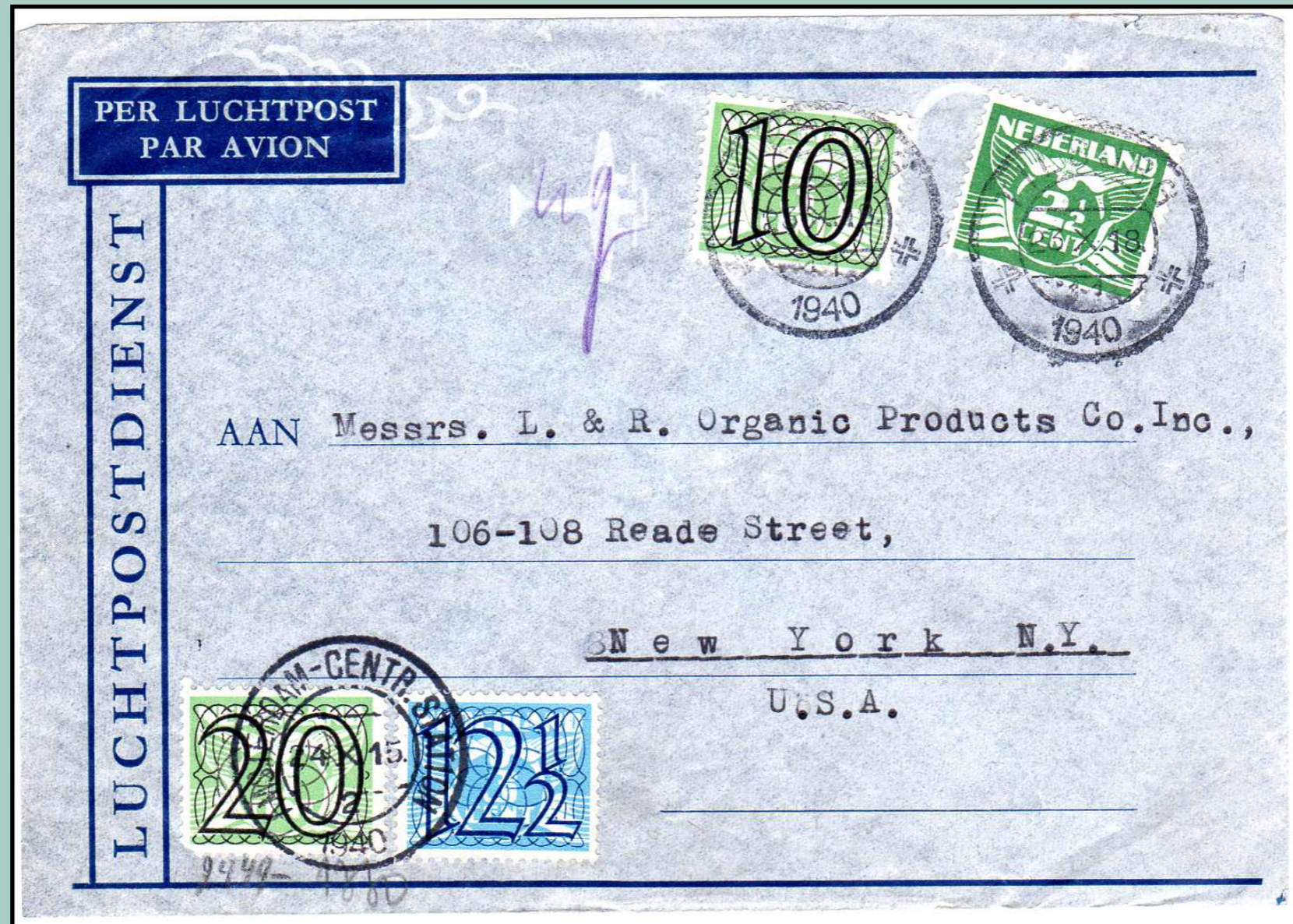
International airmail

The Bermuda censors



International airmail

Insufficient postage

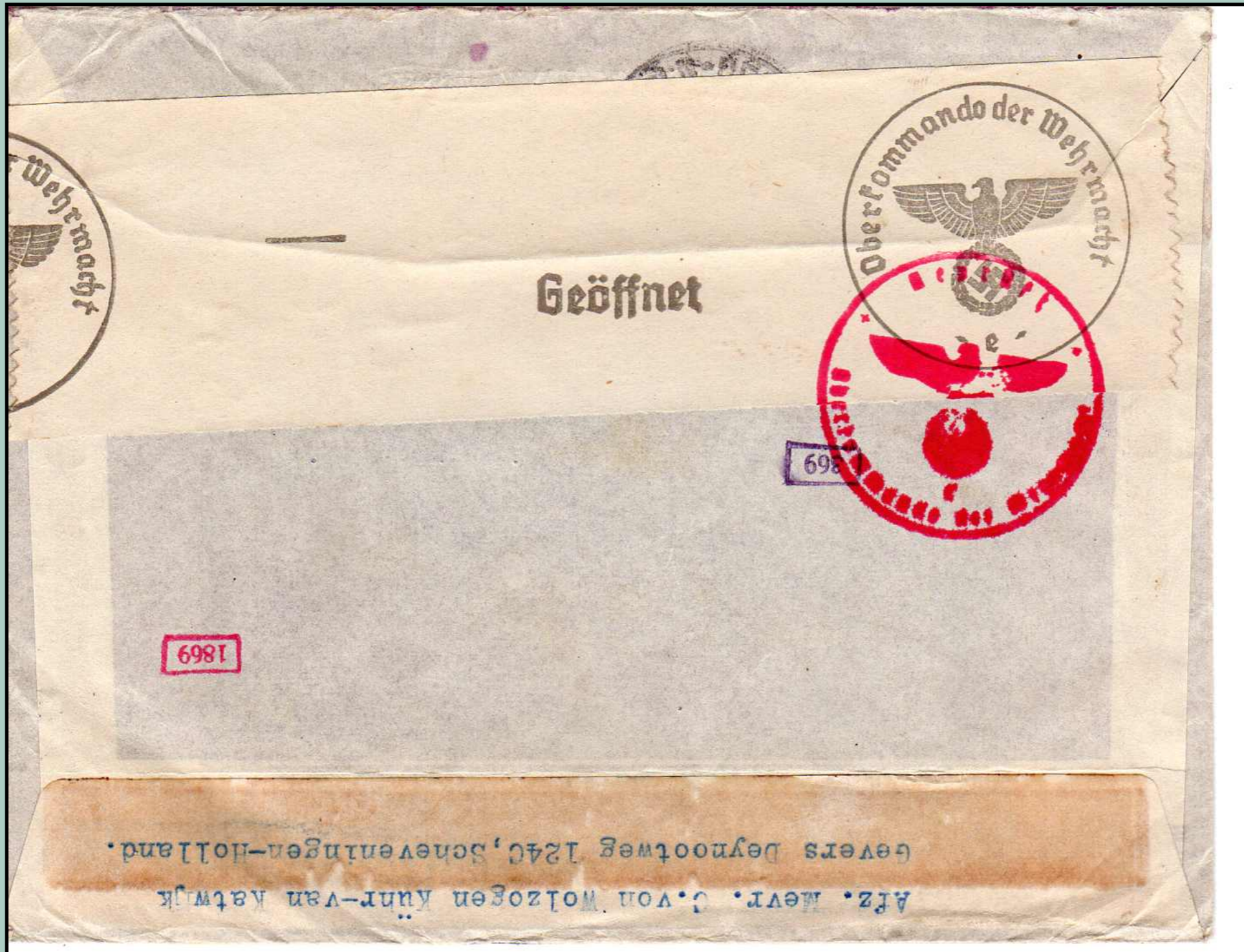


Authorization to pick up mail

- A quarterly fee of 2.5 guilders was charged to agents to pick up mail at large city post offices. The agents could represent individuals or companies.



German censor markings



The guilloche replacements



An expanded set (13) of the original gull stamp designs was released on April 1, 1941.

The return of the guilloche numeral

- In 1946-1947 the first of Jan van Krimpen's newly designed numeral stamps was released thus replacing Lebeau's flying dove numerals.

