

SA FORCES IN THE BATTLE OF MADAGASCAR

A SOUTH AFRICAN PHILATELY CLUB COLLECTIVE DISPLAY



Multi-censored OAS Postage Free from APO 51 (Sakaramy, Madagascar).
Dated '11 XI 42' to Pretoria. South Africa. (Jamie Smith)

LAST UPDATED: 12/10/2020

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A Club Collective Display

Previously on the South African Philately Club (SAPC) website....

Thinking the subject was neglected, I previously proposed that SAPC members participate in building up a collective display on No. 2 Squadron SAAF's role in the United Nations' Korean War. I began by showing a few items of my own. Club members Jamie Smith, Dave Young, Jim Findlay and Cedric Roche RDPSA all contributed wonderful material and or information. As a result, the Club website now hosts what Jamie says is "probably one of the best postal history reference collections available" on the SAAF's three years in Korea (1950 - 53). So much so, that a British military publication recently expressed interest in it. (Full details later later IF anything comes of it.)

The SAPC's aim now is to do the same for the neglected Madagascan Campaign, aka the "Battle of Madagascar". If you have information on this campaign, please consider making it available to us.

South African Forces in the Battle of Madagascar (5 May – 6 November 1942)

The Madagascan Campaign was one of the little-known sideshows of WW2, especially as far as South Africans are concerned. (See the footnote to the map, next). By kicking the Italians out of Abyssinia and later slogging it out with Rommel and the Afrika Korps in ding-dong battles in the Western Desert, it was "Our Boys Up North" who won the glory - and rightly so. The Allied Victory in North Afrika took some 200,000 Axis prisoners, 110,000 more than the Russians did at Stalingrad! However, to be fair to the Soviets, they killed and wounded more Germans. They recovered 250,000 German and Romanian corpses in and around Stalingrad and inflicted some 800,000 casualties on the Germans, losing 1.1m Red Army dead, wounded, missing, or captured in the campaign to defend the city, (excluding civilian casualties). The destruction wreaked upon the German Army by the Russians was awesome. The fighting in North Africa was less vicious but took more prisoners and ultimately knocked the Italians out of the war.

The small Allied victory in Madagascar was key to that bigger Victory in North Africa. Had Madagascar remained in Vichy French hands "Our Boys Up North" may well have been defeated by a lack of supplies and ammunition. (Almost all of the 900,000 shells fired in the 1000 gun bombardment at El Alamein were 'Made in SA'.) The Germans promised the island of Madagascar to the Japanese on condition that they attacked British shipping taking these supplies to North Africa. The SA and British forces who invaded Vichy French Madagascar are the forgotten heroes of a campaign intended to keep that island from falling into Japanese hands, as seemed entirely possible at the time. Five months after it had attacked the USA at Pearl Harbour in the Pacific, Japan stepped up its long-range submarine attacks along the East and South African coastlines. Twice submarine-launched Japanese reconnaissance aircraft flew over Durban, once in May and later in July 1942. By the time the Allies invaded Vichy French Madagascar in May 1942, Japanese attacks on shipping had become a significant new threat in the western Indian Ocean.

Following his suggestion that we follow up our success with the Korean War archive by starting a Club Collective display on South African and other forces in the Madagascan Campaign, Jamie Smith has supplied the display sheets shown here in order to kick-start the process. Mike White, our member in Thailand, has submitted some items also. I have added a few bits and pieces, like the Springbok Record map, i.e. mostly bumpf and padding to 'glue' it together. We are now looking to members and others for contributions of their Madagascan Campaign postal history. If you have this material, we hope you will allow us to combine it with what we have so that we can slowly come up with an on-line display and or archive that honours the South African and British forces who participated in this campaign. Importantly, people need to understand why South Africa found itself fighting Frenchmen in Madagascar to maintain democracy during WW2, a time when the majority of South Africans did not have the vote.

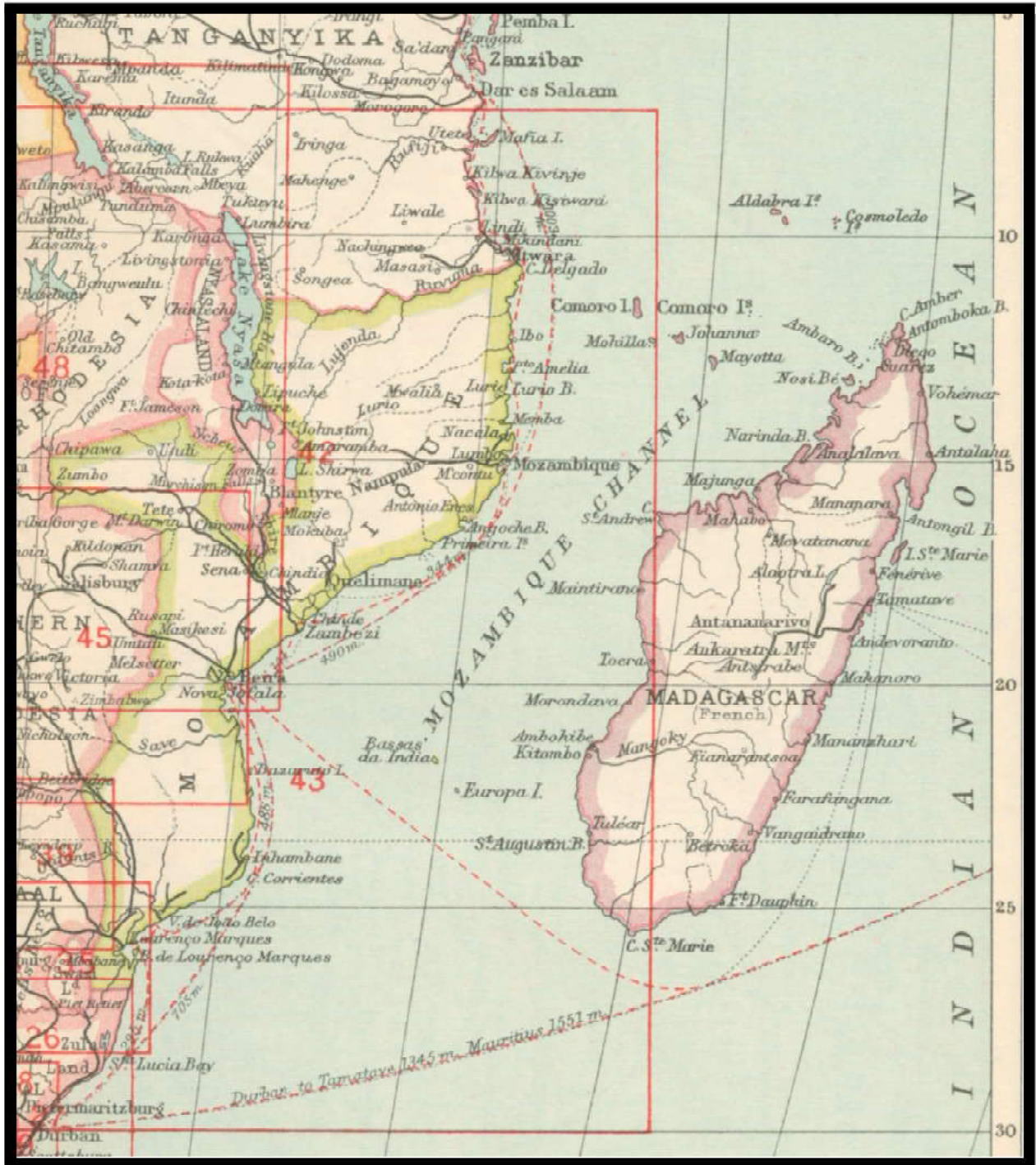
If you have an idea for other such Club Collective displays, please let me know. If you have some pieces you would like to share with the Club, please email them to me as 300 dpi JPG files. Also, if you have questions, please email me: Steve: <postmaster@southafricanphilatelyclub.com>

YOUR COMMENTS ARE ALWAYS WELCOMED.



MAP. Reduced ex. 'Springbok Record, the story of the "Orange Flash" of liberty on the battlefronts of the war against Nazi-Fascist tyranny'.

Published by the South African Legion of the British Empire Service League, (Johannesburg, 1946). This Map is the only reference to the Madagascan campaign in the entire 300+ page book, a fact that shows how unimportant some thought the campaign was. This map also shows that had the Japanese gained a foothold in Madagascar, the East African maritime supply route through the Mozambique Channel to the Allied Forces in North Africa would have been made immeasurably more dangerous and difficult.



1942. Madagascar, possessed by the Vichy French, offered to the Japanese by the Germans, seized by British and South African forces in order to secure the sea lanes to North Africa that ran around the Cape of Good Hope and up through the Mozambique Channel.



The flag of the Head of Vichy France (left); the Free French flag (right) who were kept out of the Battle of Madagascar by the British.



Flags of the Combatants in the Battle of Madagascar



The Vichy French flag.

The Vichy French Governor-General Armand Léon Annet was the Commander-in-Chief of the French forces on Madagascar. The Vichy French resisted the Allied invasion.



The Union Jack of Great Britain.

Force 121 was under the command of Major-General Robert Sturges of the Royal Marines. Rear-Admiral Edward Syfret was in command of Naval Force H and the supporting sea force which included two aircraft carriers.



The Union of South Africa flag.

The 7th South African Infantry Brigade was under the command of Brigadier G.T. Senescall, DSO, ED. The Brigade comprised the Pretoria Regiment (Lt.-Col. C. L. Engelbrecht), the First City Regiment (Lt.-Col. Noel Getliffe, DSO), the Pretoria Highlanders (Lt.-Col. Mason); an armoured car unit, A Squadron, 1st Armoured Car Commando, SA. Tank Corps (C.O. Maj. E. W. G. Vos), an artillery unit and several support units. The Brigade was entirely motorized



The Flag of the Imperial Japanese Navy.

Led by Commander Noboru Ishizaki, later Rear Admiral, the 8th Submarine Squadron (Imperial Japanese Navy) was tasked with disrupting Allied shipping in aid of Nazi Germany. Its activities started largely after the Allied invasion of Madagascar. Its seaplanes flew over Diego Suarez just after the Allied landings and its midget submarines damaged the battleship HMS Ramillies.

'État Français' (French State) was the successor of the Third Republic after the defeat of the French Army in June 1940. All but 80 French MPs voted full powers to Marshall Philippe Pétain, the hero of WW1. The French State was under German control but it attempted to maintain the fiction that it was a sovereign state with a French administration, especially for Police and Justice. Unofficially it was called 'État de Vichy' or 'Gouvernement de Vichy' and known to the Allies as 'Vichy France' after the government moved from Paris to the spa town of Vichy in the province of Bourbonnais. The Vichy regime continued to use the Tricolore flag but dropped the well known French cliché "Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité" in favour of the more fascist "Travail, Famille, Patrie" (Work, Family, Fatherland).

'France Libre' (Free France) was created by General Charles de Gaulle in London. His appeal of 18 June 1940 was the first speech made by de Gaulle after his arrival in London following the Fall of France. Broadcast to France by the radio services of the British Broadcasting Corporation, it is considered to represent the origin of the French Resistance in World War II. Vichy French and German propaganda called 'France Libre' an illegal state and presented its proponents as "terrorists". To distinguish the flag of France Libre from État Français, De Gaulle added a red Cross of Lorraine to the France Libre flag. Distant parts of the French colonial empire rallied to de Gaulle - but not Madagascar! Support from these territories allowed de Gaulle to claim the active participation of France in the Allied war effort.

The Battle of Madagascar

Madagascar is the fourth largest island in the world. At the start of WW2 it was a French possession. After France surrendered in February 1940, she was divided into a Nazi-occupied northern part and a pro-German, nominally independent Vichy French southern part. Most French colonies came under the control of Vichy France. A Free France government-in-exile led by General Charles de Gaulle continued to fight against the Axis powers as one of the Allies.

Free French forces under General de Gaulle contested some colonies. As a sign of Vichy French weakness, the Germans promised Madagascar to the Japanese provided that the Japanese Imperial Navy step up attacks against Allied shipping down the East Coast of Africa. The Germans hoped that by disrupting Allied supplies to North Africa, the British war effort would be weakened. After MI5 learned of the German offer to give Madagascar to the Japanese, Britain became concerned that the Vichy French were willing to work with both the Germans and the Japanese. In French Indo-China, the Japanese had occupied the north of the country while allowing the Vichy French to continue ruling over the south.

Always one for the bigger picture, Field Marshal Jan Smuts, the South African Prime Minister and War Cabinet member, encouraged a pre-emptive Allied occupation of Madagascar. He feared its occupation by the Japanese would be strategically devastating to the wider Allied cause, most immediately in North Africa where South Africans, New Zealanders, Austrians and Indians could potentially be cut-off from support from their homelands. By May 1942 it was obvious from the increased shipping losses along the east coast of Africa that the Japanese had begun to increase their presence in the Western Indian Ocean. They had flown a submarine-launched reconnaissance plane over Durban and sunk numerous ships off the Natal coast, five in the area of Richard's Bay alone. This serious regional escalation of the war was withheld from the South African public at the time. Indeed, few know of it today.

On 17th February, the British received intelligence that three Japanese warships were in Diego Suarez harbour. The British government requested that the SAAF fly a photo reconnaissance mission over the harbour. Two SAAF Martin Maryland bombers fitted with special long range tanks and cameras were immediately despatched to Lindi on the Tanganyikan East African coast, the nearest place for a crossing to Diego Suarez. They flew the 700 miles across the Indian Ocean, carried out the photo reconnaissance in unfavourable weather conditions and returned to Lindi. On 12th March 1942, a further photo reconnaissance was carried out at the urgent request of the British. On this occasion two specially-equipped Martin Marylands flew through tropical storms to photograph six merchant ships, a cruiser and two submarines, possibly French, in the harbour.

The reconnaissance photos suggested two developing problems for the Allies. First, that Japanese might land troops in Madagascar and second that submarines were already being resupplied there. The British decided to invade Madagascar before the Japanese could gain a further foothold on the island. The problem that they had was how to deal with the Free French, specifically General de Gaulle who believed that if he could only get the chance to speak to Vichy Frenchmen they would embrace him as the French leader and liberator that he believed he was. The British knew that De Gaulle was suspicious of the British. He saw Britannia's hand everywhere intriguing against the interests of France.

The Allied problem was how to keep de Gaulle on-side given that Britain would not support his belief that any action planned against a French colony, such as Madagascar, had to be conducted as a Free French operation under his control. Britain had a good reason to not want to follow his advice. In September 1940 an Anglo-French naval force had fought the Battle of Dakar, aka Operation Menace. In this operation, the British had agreed to work with de Gaulle. Ultimately the attempt to capture the strategic port of Dakar in French West Africa was unsuccessful. The local Vichy French were unimpressed by de Gaulle's overtures and the Allied show of strength. They determinedly forced a humiliating withdrawal on the Allies. De Gaulle's sense of failure was so strong that he even considered suicide.

Remembering the snafu that had occurred at Dakar while attempting to work with de Gaulle, Churchill and the Chiefs of Staff decided to ignore him and invade Madagascar with a powerful fleet with overwhelming air support. With the security of British shipping routes to India, Australia and Southeast Asia their main priority, the British decided to seize Madagascar in order to deny its ports to the Imperial Japanese Navy. They planned to invade northern Madagascar via Diego Suarez harbour in what would be the first Allied amphibious landing of the war. The invasion of Vichy French Madagascar was code-named "Operation Ironclad". The assumption was that once the Allied force controlled the northern part of Madagascar the Vichy French would see sense and surrender,

The SAAF presence in Lindi was beefed up. In March and April 1942, the SAAF began conducting reconnaissance flights from Lindi over Diego Suarez. No.s 32, 36 and 37 Coastal Flights were withdrawn from South African maritime patrol operations and sent to Lindi along with eleven Bristol Beauforts and six Martin Marylands for ongoing reconnaissance and close air support for the invasion. The Allied invasion flotilla comprised 46 war ships including two aircraft carriers with 82 aircraft and a battleship, "HMS Ramilles". It was supported by aircraft from AFB Zwartkop,

Pretoria, and three British and one South African brigade. The force departed Durban in great secrecy on 25 April 1942. The Allies were opposed by some French naval vessels, submarines and aircraft, as well as 8000 Vichy-French soldiers, including 6 000 locals and Senegalese troops.

PARTICIPATING SOUTH AFRICAN FORCES

7TH SA INFANTRY BRIGADE

(Brig Senescall, Officer Commanding)

1st City Regiment (Grahamstown)

Pretoria Regiment

Pretoria Highlanders

1st SA Armoured Car Commando

6th Field Regiment SA Artillery

88th Field Company SA Engineers

+ Signals, Medical etc.

The Allied amphibious force landed on the north-eastern tip of Madagascar on 5th May. Diego Suarez, the objective, (now Antsiranana), was taken two days later. Despite the casualties, the amphibious landings at Madagascar are said to have given British forces invaluable experience that they put to good use during Operation Torch in North Africa.

During the landing an air assault was carried out by the Royal Navy and Air Force. The Vichy French Air Force consisting mainly of Morane fighters and Potez bombers attacked the Allied fleet but were quickly neutralised by the

Fleet Air Arm aircraft from the two aircraft carriers. The remaining Vichy aircraft that were not destroyed were withdrawn by the French and flown south to other airfields on the island. Once the Arrachart aerodrome in Diego-Suarez had been secured on 13th May, the SAAF Air Component flew from Lindi to Arrachart. It comprised thirty-four aircraft, (6 Marylands, 11 Beaufort Bombers, 12 Lockheed Lodestars and 6 Ju 52's transports).

The French Governor-General Armand Léon Annet, was the Commander-in-Chief of the French forces on Madagascar.

He was asked to surrender; but he refused. It is claimed that French radio signals requesting Japanese assistance were intercepted by the Royal Navy. On the night of 29th May, an unidentified aircraft flew over Diego Suarez. It was thought to be French but later it was established that it came from a large, long-range Japanese submarine similar to the one that had launched two flights over Durban. On the following night at about 21:00, there were two enormous explosions in the harbour. A Japanese midget submarine had very skilfully entered the harbour; torpedoed the battleship Ramillies and a refuelling tanker, and escaped from the harbour. After this attack, the Japanese reconnaissance aircraft returned again and flew over the harbour to observe the results of the night-time attack. As far as is known, this was the only direct intervention by the Japanese in the Battle of Madagascar on behalf of the French and their German masters.

With the Vichy French unwilling to surrender immediately, the Allies were forced to plan a second campaign, Operation Stream Line Jane, intended to secure the southern half of Madagascar as well as the small island of Nossi Be. The South

African ground forces that had taken part in the initial Operation Ironclad were committed to Operation Stream Line

Jane. After some three months of preparation, the British and South African forces attacked the southern half of

Madagascar on 10th September. The SAAF supported these operations. Once Allied forces broke through into the interior to link up with forces on the coast, all serious Vichy French opposition ceased with the surrender of Governor-General Armand Annet on 5th November. Fighting ceased and an armistice was granted on 6th November. As in Syria, only a minority of the captured Vichy soldiers chose to join the Free French.

The SAAF aircraft flew a total of 401 sorties with one pilot killed in action, one killed in an accident and one succumbing to disease. Seven aircraft were lost, only one as a result of enemy action. The Allies suffered 107 killed and 280 wounded. The French lost 150 killed and 500 wounded. Madagascar would stay in Allied hands for the remainder of the war, its ports becoming crucial havens for shipping en route to India in the fight against the Japanese.

Victory in Madagascar secured the sea lanes of East Africa for the constant re-supply of Allied troops in North Africa who were fighting with their backs to the Suez Canal. Over time, General Montgomery received more men, tanks, guns, vehicles, aeroplanes, ammunition and fuel than the Germans and Italians whose supply lines crossed the much shorter distances of the Mediterranean Sea. Once victory came at El Alamein, the British forces never looked back. The forgotten Battle of Madagascar was a huge stepping stone on the long supply line to that more famous victory.

Military Cancellations of the Madagascar Campaign.

South African	A.P.O. 51. Sakaramy	23/09/42 - 3/12/42?	Militaria/Smith.
South African	A.P.O. U-51. (made in error)	05/08/43	Smith.
East African	A.P.O. 53. Diago Suarez	12/11/42 – 21/10/44.	Smith
East African	A.P.O. 54. Orangea	10/06/42 – 11/8/42.	Rossiter/Proud.
East African	A.P.O. 54. Sakaramy	12/08/42 – 2/9/42.	Rossiter/Proud.
East African	A.P.O. 54. Majunga.	10/09/42 – 24/9/42.	Rossiter/Proud.
East African	A.P.O. 54. Tananarive.	25/09/45 – 2/9/42.	Rossiter/Proud.
East African	A.P.O. 54. Antsirabe.	17/11/42 – 10/5/43.	Rossiter/Proud.
East African	A.P.O. 54. Tulear.	12/07/43 – 10/5/43.	Rossiter/Proud.
East African	A.P.O. 59. Tananarive.	16/10/42.	Smith.
East African	A.P.O. 64. Ankorika.	11/08/42 – 2/9/42.	Rossiter/Proud.
East African	A.P.O. 64. Sakaramy.	24/07/43 – 19/6/44.	Rossiter/Proud.
East African	A.P.O. 80. Tamatave.	18/11/42 – 16/7/43.	Rossiter/Proud

A History of 7 SAI Brigade Postal Detachment APO 51 Sakaramy, Madagascar (1942 - 1943)

6

7 S.A. INFANTRY BRIGADE POSTAL DETACHMENT : MADAGASCAR

The operations in Madagascar were on a comparatively small scale, and Union forces of limited strength. Means of postal communication were poor.

Capt. G. F. Green and 15 other ranks sailed from Durban on 15th June, 1942 and disembarked at Diego Saureë, Madagascar, on the 25th. They moved with 7 S.A. Brigade into camp at Sakaramy village, where they opened A.P.O. 51 on the 26th.

* *Footnote:* Letter from Officer Commanding Natal Command, dated 29 August, 1953 —
ref. A 5/1/3/5/1:—

(a) Mail Despatches ceased on 31st December, 1946.

(b) Mail re-direction service ceased on 15th February, 1947.

(c) Imperial Army and R.A.F. card section completed by 15th February, 1947.

**Continued on next page.
Extracted from 'Militaria' (1970).**

Only one room was provided for the A.P.O., which was quite inadequate but by borrowing tentage the position was eased until more spacious accommodation was found in September. Sakaramy was 15 miles from the docks at Antsirane, over exceptionally rough roads.

The first airmail to the Union left by military plane on 30th June, 1942, and this service (approximately once a fortnight) continued during July and August. On 6th October a service was inaugurated by military plane to Mombasa and thence to the Union by B.O.A.C. Flying Boat.

There was no direct service from the Union. Official mails were conveyed by Shuttle Service from Pretoria to Nairobi, and private mails by B.O.A.C. Flying Boat from Durban to Mombasa, onward transmission being by plane, Catalina Flying Boat or by sea.

Surface mails to and from the island were most irregular due to infrequent shipping, particularly when direct sailing from Durban to Diego Suarez were discontinued. Dispatches were then transhipped to Mombasa and, as an example of delay, the mail dated 16th September, 1942 from Durban was not received until 26th October.

Very poor facilities existed at Antsirane docks for dealing with mail, which had to be manhandled. Often bags had first to be loaded on to tugs and barges for conveyance to a ship in the bay, and were then hoisted on board by ropes or carried up a ladder, very few ships possessing slings. Incoming mails were cleared on the ship, sorted at Sakaramy, and distribution completed the same day, calling for long and strenuous hours by the postal staff.

Mails for troops on operations in the south of the island were sent forward by every available means — plane, ship or road convoy.

During the long slack periods between mail arrivals morale was maintained by sightseeing, sea-bathing and an occasional cinema show at Antsirane. There was keen disappointment at not being able to see any of the operations in the south. Only one A.P.O. detail had the opportunity of once proceeding with a supply convoy as far as Vohemar and Sahambava. The Detachment, with the rest of 7 S.A. Brigade, left Diego Suarez on 3rd December, 1942 and arrived back in Durban on the 7th. The Detachment was disbanded on 10th February, 1943.

*Mails to and from the Union June-November, 1942:
(approx. figures)*

	<i>Bags Received.</i>		<i>Bags Dispatched.</i>	
	<i>Air.</i>	<i>Sea.</i>	<i>Air.</i>	<i>Sea.</i>
June-July:	11	97	15	46
August:	30	1 242	7	28
September:	28	272	7	69
October:	10	662	5	86
November:	5	1 102	7	87
	84	3 375	41	316

Note: In the absence of other statistics, these figures have been extracted from War Diaries, which are not always explicit.

MADAGASCAR – MILITARY.
South African troops in Madagascar.

A.P.O. 51 (Sakaramy – Madagascar) 11/11/42.



Multi censored, O.A.S., Postage Free cover from Sakaramy – Madagascar to Pretoria with scan of reverse. Censored using East African A.P.S. cachet (The East & South A.P.S. were combined) with additional South African civilian censor's label tied by Coat of Arms 'F' (definitely Pretoria) and S.A. Military PBC 268. which could have been applied in Madagascar, East Africa or Pretoria (numbers either side of 268 have been recorded in E & NE Africa) There is also an unknown 'U' cachet which could indicate a Zanzibar censor's number (un-recorded) as 'U' was allotted to the Zanzibar censor (Note another cover in this collection with a large 'U' in circle). At the time mail shipments were erratic being by ship or Catalina flying boat to Mombasa then Nairobi – Pretoria or Mombasa – Durban (Horseshoe route) - Pretoria. At any time during the route mail could have been diverted to Zanzibar. It is also suggested that because of the Japanese threat (submarines attacking shipping, 'over flying' South African ports and attacking shipping by mini-submarine in Diego Suarez, sinking one tanker and damaging H.M.S. Ramillies) that the S.A. Government were anxious to avoid information reaching the S.A. Public.



Internet map showing position of Sakaramy.

E.A.A.P.O. 59.
Diego Suarez.
Madagascar.
20/11/42.

Red 'U'?

O.B.E. Label P.C. 90.
London - England.



PER SEA MAIL



The Morgan Crucible Company Ltd,
Battersea Church Road,
London, S.W.11.
England



R. P. CUTHBERT
BOITE POSTALE N° 58
TANANARIVE

P.C. 90

R.P. Cuthbert.
Boite Postale No. 58,
Tananarive-Madagascar.

30c. Surface from Madagascar to England.

British Military Army
Censor No. 1. Madagascar.

In May 1942. British troops invaded the Vichy French held Island of Madagascar to prevent it being used by the Japanese. The invasion was mounted from East and South Africa. K.U.T. stamps and cancellers were used.

**OPENED BY
EXAMINER 565**

ALLIED INVASION OF MADAGASCAR – MAY 1942.



E.A.A.P.O. 59.
Diego Suarez.
Madagascar.
20/11/42.

Red 'U' ?

O.B.E. Label P.C. 90.
London – England.

R.P. Cuthbert.
Boite Postale No.58.
Tananarive-Madagascar.

30c. Surface from Madagascar to England.

British Military Army
Censor No1. Madagascar.

**OPENED BY
EXAMINER 565**

In May 1942, British troops invaded the Vichy French held Island of Madagascar to prevent it being used by the Japanese. The invasion was mounted from East and South Africa. K.U.T. stamps and cancellers were used.

Copy of reverse.

ALLIED INVASION OF MADACASCAR – MAY 1942.

Use of K.U.T. Stamps by allied troops in Madagascar.



E.A.A.P.O. 53.
Deigo Suarez.
11/2/43.

Passed by
Military Censor.
E.A. No. 11/20.

20c. K.U.T. Stamp on censored 'Air Mail Letter Card' to England. Cancelled by E.A.A.P.O. 72 cancellation which was the base post office at Diego Suarez – Madagascar 6/8/42 – 22/9/45. Written by Lt. J.S. Tweedie of the 59th East African Field Company and addressed to England.



Scan of internet map showing Madagascar with Diego Suarez at most northern point.

Allied troops including, British, East and South African invaded Madagascar 5/5/42 (Operation Ironclad). At the time it was occupied by Vichy France who had been forced into collusion with the Japanese who had been promised Africa by the Germans after the war and it was feared by the Allies that they would occupy the country and use it as a base as they had with Indo-China.

MADAGASCAR – MILITARY.



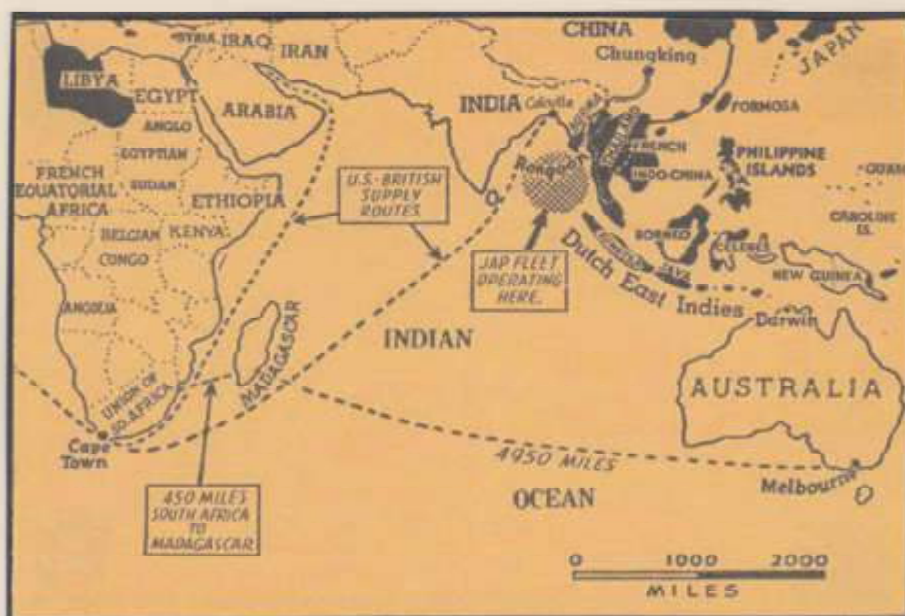
E.A.A.P.O. 53.
Deigo Suarez,
22/2/44.

P.B.M.C.
No. 1.167.

Censored 1/30c. Air Mail cover from Madagascar to England.

The A.P.O. had been originally opened by the South African Army postal authorities 26/6/42 (Using S.A.A.P.O 51), it is assumed that after they left 3/12/42 that the East African Forces with whom they had amalgamated postal arrangements, carried on the postal arrangements (for all British forces) hence the use of East African stamps.

E.A.A.P.O. 53 was used at the base post office Diego Suarez 6/8/42 - 22/9/45.



Internet map of Indian Ocean with routes and Japanese threat to same. Japanese submarines operated in the Indian Ocean attacking British shipping in Madagascar and overflying eastern South African cities. The British considered threat so great that they invaded Vichy French Madagascar.

FRENCH MADAGASCAR - TANGANYIKA - MILITARY.

French officer in P.O.W. camp 365 at Longido - Tanganyika.



French flag on player's cigarette card.

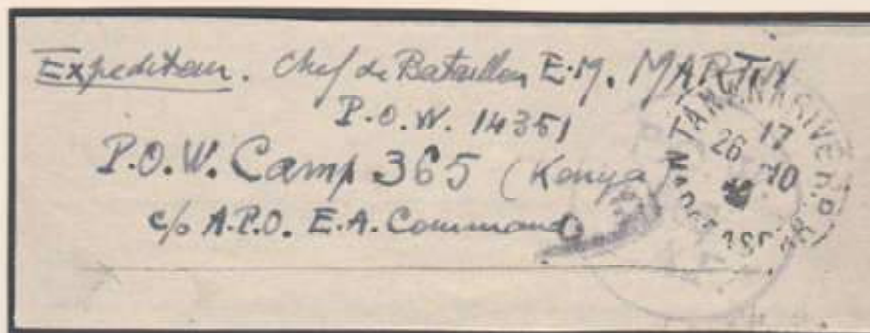
Camp 365.
Longido
Tanganyika.
5/7/43.



Censor's cache
P/W EAST
AFRICA 007.

P.O.W.
19/7/42.
E.A.C.

Censored, post free, P.O.W. entire from a French officer to his wife in Tananarive - Madagascar.
Entire made from single sheet of writing paper and numbered '5'.



Tananarive,
Madagascar.
26/10/(43).

P.O.W.
365
E.A.F.

Scan of reverse showing senders rank and address as 'Chef de Bataillon (Head of battalion) E.M. Martin P.O.W. No. 14351' at Camp 365 in Kenya. (It is believed that at time of writing the camp was at Longido in tanganyika (on Kenya border) only moving to Kenya with the same number later that same year).

Blurred French censor's cachet not shown.

Camp 365 was at Longido - Tanganyika and was found to be uninhabitable being closed in 1943 and transferred to Londiani in Kenya with the same number after the armistice with Italy 8/9/43. In other words the camp at Londiani was only opened after this letter was written (Walter G Weisbecker, 'Italian P.O.W. 1940-47').

British troops, mainly South African invaded Diego Suarez in Madagascar (Operation Ironclad) 5/5/42. and at Majunga (Operation Streamline Jane) with South & African with N. Rhodesian forces 8/8/42. The invasion was necessary because the Vichy French government were allowing German and Japanese ships including submarines to use the port at Diego Saurez, These were supplying Italian East Africa, attacking British shipping and posing an invasion threat to South Africa by the Japanese.



1942 Tananarive, Madagascar to Bethlehem, OFS via East Africa APO 59

1942 (Nov 26). Plain envelope a little travel worn to edges to Lieut. Raisseau Hiribarren, 'Free French Delegate', Bethlehem O.F.S, South Africa. Forwarded c/o Free Fighting French, Durban and further annotated Mayfair Hotel bearing Jean Laborde 1f75 & 2f25 tied Tananarive RP/Madagascar cds with EA APO 59 (27 Nov) cds of British Military forces located at Tananarive. Opened By /British Censorship label tied with violet oval British Military Administration /Passed By Censor /1 / Madagascar on reverse and with Bethlehem (14 Jan 43) transit cds. Message back in manuscript "Please do not return this, hold it until it can be delivered" in same green ink as original address. \$225.

The cover shown above was supplied to the SA Philately Club by:

**Mike White
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1942 Nossi-Be, Madagascar. Early British Administration Censorship.

1942 (Nov 19) Cover used internally and redirected to Majunga with original destination obliterated and with Majunga lightly inked through. Bearing Country Life Surcharged 50 on 65c tied Nossi-Be / Madagascar cds and with Plain provisional French style reclosing label tied violet oval BRITISH MILITARY ADMINISTRATION /PASSED BY CENSOR 111 /MADAGASCAR (CCSG BH1/111). On reverse, partial Diego Suarez (24 Nov) transit and Majunga (16 Dec) arrival cds The Vichy French forces capitulated on 6 Nov '42. Mail from this early part of the BMA is rare. \$650.00

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Circa 1942-3. Communication Officielle du Gouvernement des Etats-Unis au sujet de Madagascar. US Winged Eagle leaflet with drop down flag over chest carrying Holly & Arrows in each foot. Dropped over France with message to the People of France explaining that the invasion and occupation of Madagascar is only for the duration of the war and that the island will be returned to France after Victory.

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Au Peuple Français

Le département d'Etat a fait dans la nuit du 4 au 5 mai la communication suivante à M. Henry-Haye, Ambassadeur de Vichy à Washington. Cette même communication a été transmise au gouvernement de Vichy par l'entremise du Chargé d'Affaires américain.

LE Président des Etats-Unis a été informé que Madagascar a été occupée par les troupes britanniques.

“ Cette occupation a la pleine approbation et le plein appui du Gouvernement des Etats-Unis.

“ L'Ile de Madagascar présente pour les Nations Unies le danger précis d'être occupée ou utilisée par les puissances de l'Axe, spécialement par le Japon.

“ Une telle occupation par les puissances de l'Axe, constituerait un danger certain et grave pour les Nations Unies, dans leur lutte destinée à maintenir cette forme de civilisation à laquelle la France et les Nations Unies sont accoutumées depuis si longtemps.

“ Le gouvernement des Etats-Unis est en guerre avec les puissances de l'Axe et, s'il devient nécessaire ou désirable pour les troupes ou les bateaux américains d'utiliser Madagascar pour la cause commune, les Etats-Unis n'hésiteront pas à le faire à quelque moment que ce soit.

“ Les Etats-Unis et la Grande-Bretagne sont d'accord que Madagascar sera naturellement restituée à la France après la guerre, ou à tout moment où l'occupation de Madagascar ne serait plus d'un intérêt essentiel pour la cause commune des Nations Unies.

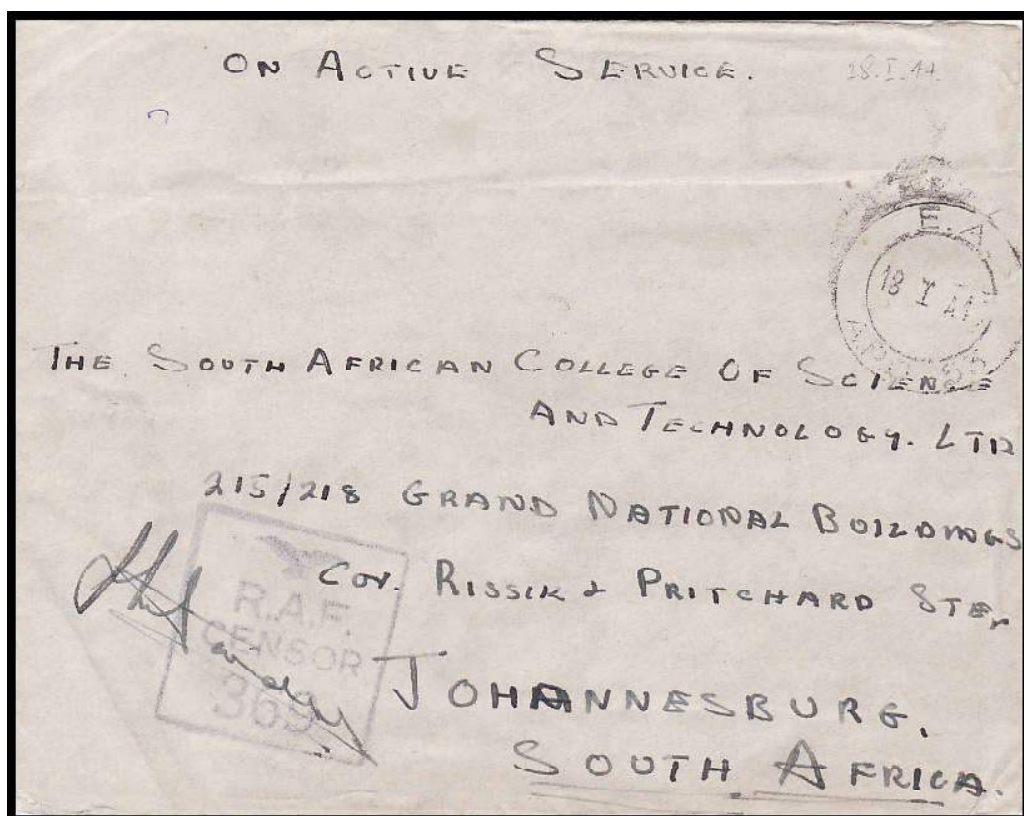
“ Etant donné le fait que les Nations Unies se considèrent comme les dépositaires pour la France de l'Ile de Madagascar, afin de la protéger contre toute attaque de l'une des puissances de l'Axe, tout acte de guerre autorisé par le gouvernement français contre le gouvernement de la Grande-Bretagne ou le gouvernement des Etats-Unis serait nécessairement considéré par le gouvernement des Etats-Unis comme une attaque contre toutes les Nations Unies.”

IMPRIMÉ POUR LE GOUVERNEMENT DES ETATS-UNIS
ET DISTRIBUÉ PAR LA R.A.F.

V 41

After the Japanese attacked Ceylon in April 1942 the British felt Madagascar, a part of Vichy France, could be a base from which the Japanese could cut Allied shipping & supply routes around the Cape of Good Hope. Britain secured the island with the French capitulating 6th November 42. The Allies, especially the USA, felt that the people of France should have their minds put to rest about the seizure of the island by Britain, hence this Air Drop leaflet.

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**1944 Plain stampless envelope with light horizontal crease to Johannesburg
'18 I' cancelled E.A. /APO 53 & with framed RAF Censor 369 (type R11).**

1944 MADAGASCAR – SOUTH AFRICA...WW2 RAF CENSOR... [20491]

RAF censors from Madagascar are not common Colley records R11/369 used 21 Sep 1943 – 15 Aug 1944 located
Diego Suarez & probably 265 Sqn, RAF
\$100.00

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POSTSCRIPT

True to its word, the USA ensured that Great Britain returned Madagascar to France. Many Madagascans did not view this as a good outcome. During the 1930s a Malagasy anti-colonial movement had begun. In 1939 trade unions and the Communist Party were dissolved by the colony's administration which opted to support the Vichy regime in 1940. After the capture of Madagascar by the Allies, the Americans dropped leaflets over France to assure its people that it would return the island to France at the conclusion of WW2. In fact, the Allies almost immediately ceded control of Madagascar to the Free French, thus making good their promise. This did not satisfy independence-minded Madagascans wanting self-government. In March

1947, Malagasy nationalists armed mainly with spears revolted against the French. They quickly won popular support in the south, central highlands and capital. Some 550 French Nationals and 1,900 pro-French supporters were killed. The French were ruthless in their response. They were able to restore order by February 1949 after some 18,000 French troops arrived. Casualties among the Madagascan civilian population vary between an estimated 11,000 to 100,000. The repression was accompanied by summary mass executions, torture, collective punishment, rape, forced regroupings and the burning of villages.

French military courts tried the military leaders of the revolt and executed 20 of them. Trials produced some 5,000 to 6,000 convictions with penalties ranging from brief imprisonment to death. The Battle of Madagascar as fought by Britain and South Africa was a civilised conflict by comparison.

MADAGASCAR.

Under Free French and with mail censored in transit by South Africa.



18.50f double censored air mail cover to Red Cross in London. Although the stamps have not been cancelled there is a faint 'G9' tying the British censor's label P.C.90' Opened by Examiner ZB/1 confirming Tananarive. The fact that the label has been crossed out while attached to the cover confirms that it is after the joint censorship period (Feb. 1943 – May 1944) and comes during the mixed control commission period (May 1944 – Sept. 1945) when censorship finished. The cover has been censored a second time in Cape Town – South Africa, the bilingual censor's label being tied by the 'Coat of Arms' cachet with the letter 'C' of Cape Town.



Scan of the reverse showing the two censor's labels. The British ZB/1 has been crossed out as the censorship staff was now from Paris. The South African U.C.8 Large bilingual label is tied with the 'Coat of Arms' 'A' cachet of Cape Town.



1944. Cover. Tananarive, Madagascar to Durban. Post-Allied Occupation.
Free French Stamps on Cover. Censor label printed on Recycled Form on Reverse.



1944. Reverse Cover.. Tananarive, Madagascar to Durban. Post-Allied Occupation.
Censor label printed on Recycled Form on Reverse.

The cover was downloaded from Sheldon Kosky's eBay store:
<https://www.ebay.co.uk/usr/1918romanov>
 Price: £14.99



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A grateful South African Philately Club thanks

Jamie Smith and Mike White

for sharing this material with us.

UPDATED 10/10/2020

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