



1940 Tristan Da Cunha to London via Gibraltar

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The ship HMS Queen of Bermuda anchored off Tristan Da Cunha on 24th August 1940 in order to repatriate Rev. Wilde to the UK via Gibraltar. He was asked to embark as quickly as possible. As there was not much time for the Reverend to prepare any covers on Tristan Da Cunha, the clergyman removed the Tristan Da Cunha Type V handstamp when he embarked. Once on board the warship, he struck a few covers (of which only four are known) with the handstamp, which were then censored by the censor officer of the HMS Queen of Bermuda, Lt. L. A. Sylvester, who signed the tombstone censor marking with "L.A.S." and added a one line date handstamp "AUG 24 1940" in red ink.

It took almost a year for HMS Queen of Bermuda to reach Gibraltar as she was patrolling in the Atlantic, hence the handwritten "delayed by enemy action" on the top left. When the ship eventually reached Gibraltar, Rev. Wilde disembarked and re-posted the letter. It was registered, a Gibraltar 2/- stamp applied and sent by airmail to the U.K., probably going by RAF seaplane via Lisbon and Plymouth, as Gibraltar had no airport in 1940.



Figure 34. Reverse - note the dates in the FPO CDS.

Launched at the end of August 1932, the Queen of Bermuda was requisitioned by the UK Government at the end of August 1939, armed and renamed H.M.S. Queen of Bermuda, designation F73. During a second refit in 1940 one of the funnels was removed.



Figure 35. The Queen of Bermuda in October 1939...



Figure 36. ...and in 1942, after the 1940 refit.



Figure 33. Example of the Imperial Censor type 2D

It is thought that Rev. Wilde was accommodated at Government House when he arrived, so the cover was censored there. A special handstamp (type F4) was used on mail from the Governor's staff. Four covers are known with dates between October 1941 and March 1942 with the Imperial Censor British type 2D and code/censor numbers P.65 and P.67. This item is P.66.

A clearer example of the censor mark showing P.98 is shown on the right.



Figure 32. Cover with Tristan Da Cunha Type V handstamp and tombstone censor signed "RAS" aboard HMS Queen of Bermuda. Notice to the right of the manuscript 780 the additional British censor in transit Gibraltar FPO 475, 19 AUG 1941 and, at the top left, handwritten "delayed by enemy action".

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<https://www.hahnstamps.com/miscellaneous-ww2-2.html>