

WWII Propaganda Poster & V-Mail

Loose Lips Poster, 1941 and Censored V-mail, 1943



ERA

WWII

THEMES

Homefront during WWII,
Civilian War Effort

CITATIONS

Loose Lips Might Sink Ships,
Seymour R. Goff, 1941, Courtesy
of the National Archives

V-mail censored letter, 1943,
FIC.032424a, The Valentine

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- Why did the U. S. government censor letters during WWII?
- Is it okay to spy on your own citizens during war? Why or why not?

CONTEXT

Censorship of communication between members of the military and their families and friends back home was common in the beginning of the war. Officers would read the letters of enlisted men to make sure they were not giving away troop location or other important information that the enemy could use against the United States. "Loose lips sink ships" was a popular phrase used at the time as a reminder. The phrase even appeared on propaganda posters like the one above created by Seymour R. Goff in 1941.

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RICHMOND STORIES**

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Print the complete address in plain block letters in the panel below, and your return address in the space provided. Use typewriter, dark ink, or pencil. Write plainly. Very small writing is not suitable.

875295

No.



(CENSOR'S STAMP)

Miss. Elizabeth Dance,
106 East Franklin Street,
Richmond, Virginia,
U. S. A.

T/5. Williamson M. Lyle,
(Sender's name) 33123725,
Div. Hqs., A. G. Office,
9th Infantry Division, APO #9,
3 Postmaster New York, N. Y.

24 August 1943

(Date)

"Somewhere in Sicily".

Dear Elizabeth:

Seven months in Africa, and, now after an eventful but safe voyage, I have arrived in Sicily - - - that mass of mountains that rise abruptly out of the sea from every approach and continue in a rolling manner throughout the island. During this season, Sicily is hot, dry and water is scarce. The Water-peddler with his donkey is a common sight in any Sicilian town. Then, there is also the community water-point, where the women come to wash clothes and get water for their household needs - this they carry in huge earthenware jugs - and here the goats, cattle and horses are brought for a drink of that none-too-plentiful Aqua. Many of the towns seem to be barely hanging from the tops of mountains - it would seem that a mole working under the buildings would cause them to tumble. Their streets are narrow, winding, many without sidewalks, paved with cobblestones probably centuries old and sometimes so steep that your front door may be on the same level as your next door neighbor's rooftop. The buildings of stone look as if they might have been built in Century One with an addition every hundred years or so but, with never any repair to the original or subsequent "wings". Much of the beauty of these buildings lay in the hand-wrought iron of its balconies and the beautifully decorated interiors. It is rare that you see a two story house without one or more of these balconies, usually designed with flower pot holders and often containing masses of red geraniums - a colorful accent against the gray stone of the walls. A certain quaintness is added by the many shrines that are found both in the towns and rural districts of the peasants. Often these shrines are housed in niches built into the front wall of the house. The sculptors have run the gamut of their art on buildings, in parks, fountains, and even along the country roadsides. All this, gives Sicily an old world charm that will linger long in the memory of this "GI".

The past months have been filled with many interesting experiences ranging from collecting souvenirs in the native sections to being bombed by "Jerry". When next we meet, I shall be happy to tell you of many of these incidents, but -

Until then - my very best regards to Dever Road. Do write and tell me about antiques and Franklin Street and yourself.

Best of wishes,

Billy

V-MAIL

V-mail censored letter, 1943, FIC.032424a, The Valentine

Text of V-mail from Williamson M. Lyle to Elisabeth Dance written on August 4, 1943

Passed by
Signature of Army Examiner
Censor's Stamp

"Somewhere in Sicily"

Dear Elisabeth:

Seven months in Africa, and, now after an eventful but safe voyage, I have arrived in Sicily - - - that mass of mountains that rise abruptly out of the sea from every approach and continue in a rolling manner throughout the island. During this season, Sicily is hot, dry and water is scarce. The Water-peddler with his donkey is a common sight in any Sicilian town. Then, there is also the community water-point, where the women come to wash clothes and get water for their household needs -this they carry in huge earthenware jugs - and here the goats, cattle and horses are brought for a drink of that none-too-plentiful Aqua. Many of the towns seem to be barely hanging from the tops of mountains - it would seem that a solo working under the buildings would cause them to tumble. Their streets are narrow, winding, many without sidewalks, paved with cobblestones probably centuries old and sometimes so steep that your front door maybe on the same level as your next door neighbor's rooftop. The buildings of stone look as if they might have been built in Century One with an additional every hundred years or so but, with never any repair to the original or subsequent "wings". Much of the beauty of these buildings lay in the hand-wrought iron of its balconies and the beautifully decorated interiors. It is rare that you see a two story house without one or more of these balconies, usually designed with flower pot holders and often containing masses of red geraniums - a colorful accent against the gray stone of the walls. A certain quaintness is added by the many shrines that are found both in the towns and rural districts of the peasants. Often those shrines are housed in niches built into the front wall of the house. The sculptors have run the gamut of their art on buildings, in parks, fountains, and even along the country roadsides. All this, gives Sicily an old world charm that will linger long in the memory of this "GI".

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Best of wishes,
Billy

V-Mail

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