

SOUTH AFRICAN MILITARY MISSION AND THE BERLIN AIRLIFT

1946 – 1952

THE HISTORY AND POSTAL ITEMS

By

Jim Findlay

Philatelic Society of Johannesburg.

HISTORY

END OF WORLD WAR 2

- **RUSSIA ENCIRCLES BERLIN – EXPANSION OF COMMUNISM.**
- **BERLIN INHABITANTS DO NOT WANT RUSSIAN CONTROL.**
- **BERLIN DIVIDED IN TO 4 ZONES**
 - AMERICAN ZONE**
 - BRITISH ZONE**
 - FRENCH ZONE**
 - RUSSIAN ZONE**

HISTORY

- 5 JUNE 1946:

UNITED KINGDOM, UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, FRANCE AND RUSSIA SIGN THE 'ALLIED CONTROL COUNCIL' AGREEMENT.

THIS WAS TO OVERSEE THE POLITICAL AND DIPLOMATIC ISSUES FOR THE RESTORATION OF GERMANY.

- THE UNION OF SOUTH AFRICA AGREE TO ESTABLISH A MILITARY MISSION IN BERLIN.



ASSIST SOUTH AFRICAN CITIZENS IN GERMANY.



ASSIST POTENTIAL IMMIGRANTS TO SOUTH AFRICA.

HISTORY

THE UNION OF SOUTH AFRICA MILITARY MISSION IN BERLIN.

OCTOBER 1946 – ADVANCE PARTY ARRIVE IN BERLIN.

5 NOVEMBER 1946 – MAIN GROUP DEPART FROM SOUTH AFRICA.

DECEMBER 1946 – MISSION IS FUNCTIONAL IN BERLIN.

INITIAL STAFF COMPLEMENT IS 9.

STAFF COMPLEMENT INCREASED TO 12.

ADDRESS: COMMONWEALTH HOUSE, 40 JOHANNISBERGER STRASSE,
SCHMARGENDORF, BERLIN.

HISTORY

THE UNION OF SOUTH AFRICA MILITARY MISSION IN BERLIN.

MISSION COMMANDERS: **MAJ. GEN. B.F. ARMSTRONG, DSO.**
 MAJ. GEN. W.H.E. POOLE, CB, CBE, DSO.
 MAJ. D.E. PEDDLE.

APART FROM THE MISSION IN BERLIN, THERE WERE OTHER OFFICES:

HAMBURG – PASSPORT CONTROL (Department of the Interior)

FRANKFURT – POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC ADVISOR (Department of External Affairs)

HISTORY

THE UNION OF SOUTH AFRICA MILITARY MISSION IN BERLIN.

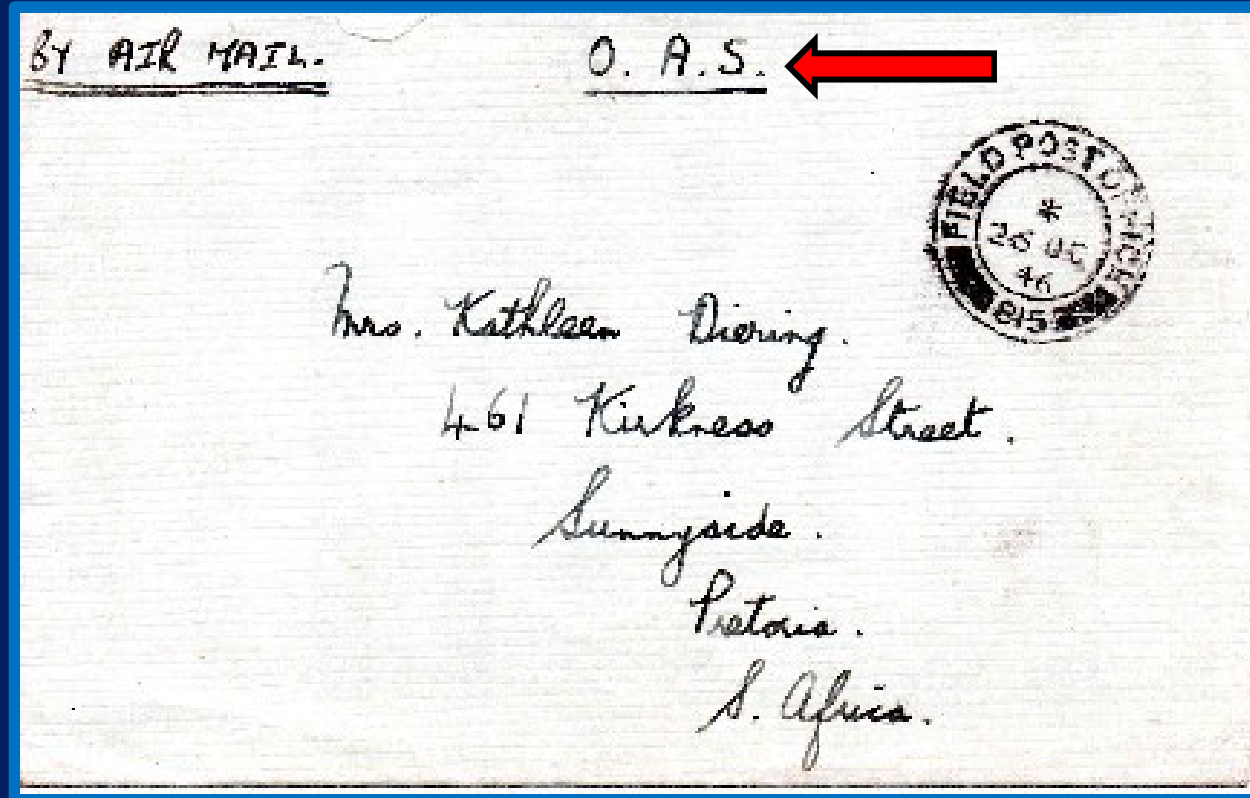
MISSION COMMANDERS: MAJ. GEN. B.F. ARMSTRONG, DSO.
 MAJ. GEN. W.H.E. POOLE, CB, CBE, DSO.
 MAJ. D.E. PEDDLE.

**REPORT TO CHIEF OF GENERAL STAFF, DEFENCE HEADQUARTERS, PRETORIA.
ALSO DEPARTMENTS OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS AND EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.**

CORRESPONDENCE: DIPLOMATIC MAIL POUCH.

A COVER FROM THE ADVANCE PARTY

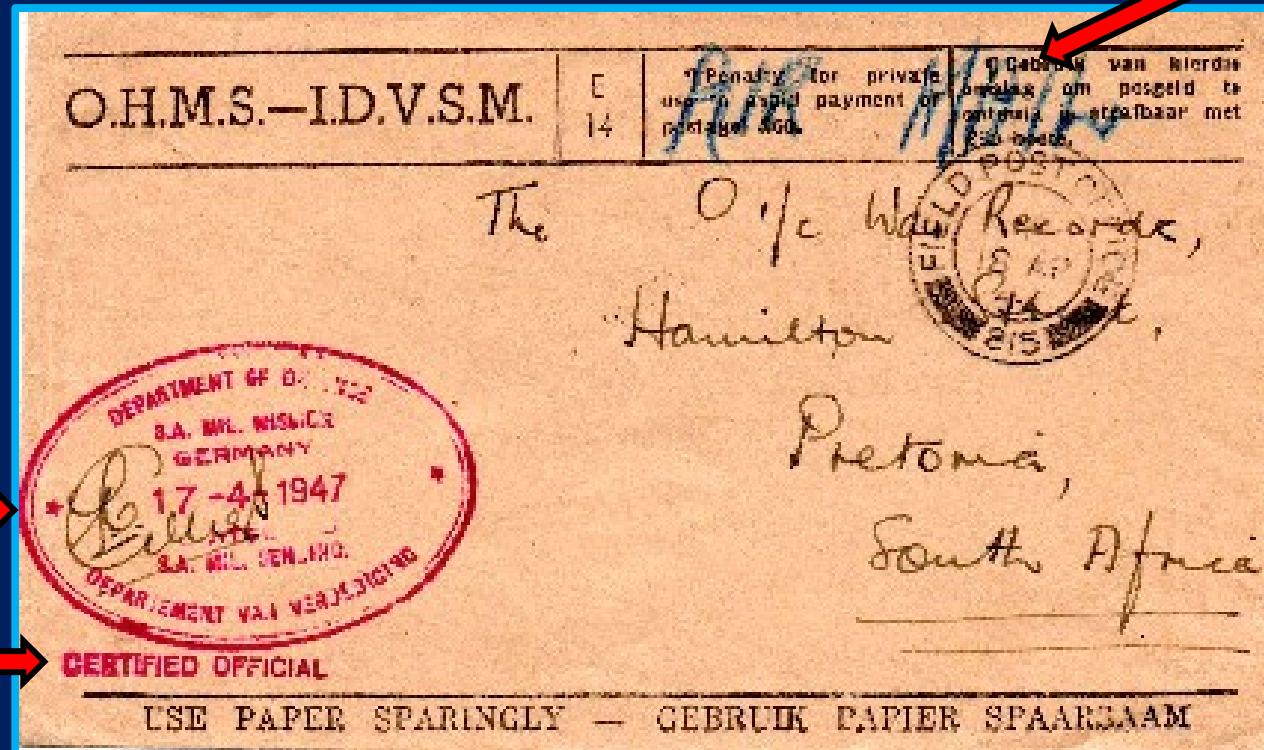
- 26 OCTOBER 1946.
- FROM FIELD POST OFFICE 815, BERLIN, TO PRETORIA.



A COVER FROM THE MILITARY MISSION STAFF

- 17 APRIL 1947.
- FROM FIELD POST OFFICE 815, BERLIN, TO PRETORIA.

DEPARTMENT OF
DEFENCE CACHET



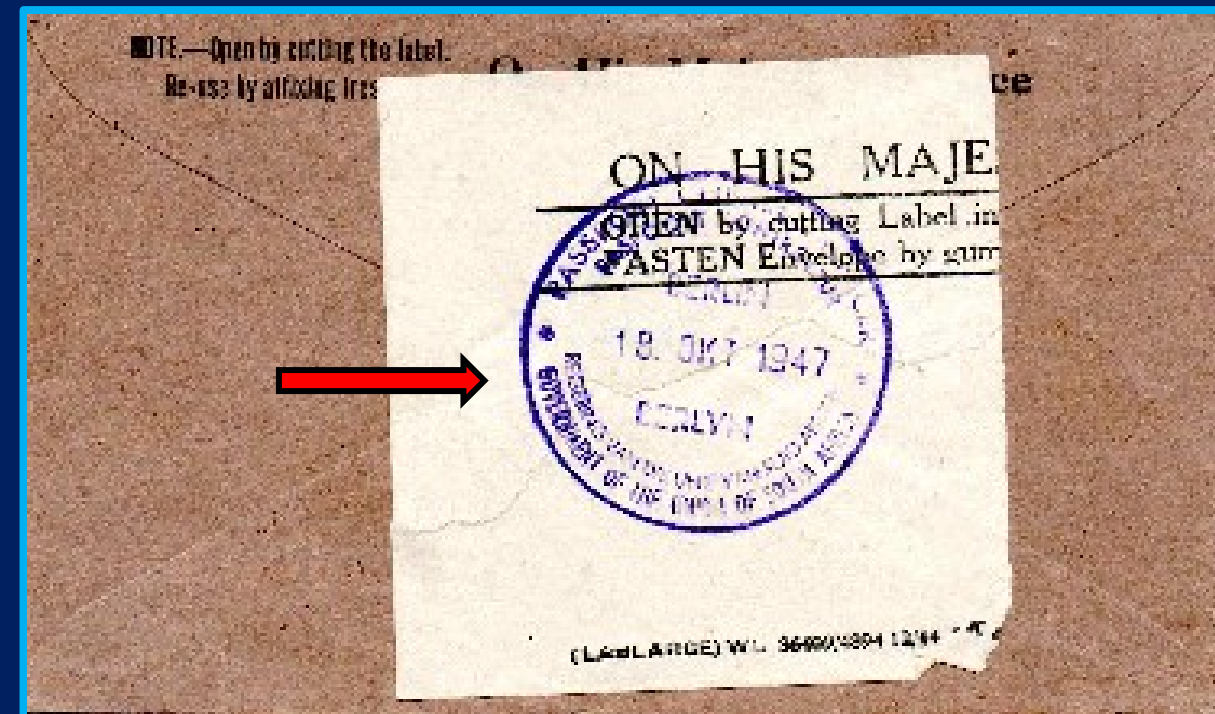
A COVER FROM THE MILITARY MISSION STAFF

- 25 NOVEMBER 1947.
- FROM FIELD POST OFFICE 737, BERLIN, TO PRETORIA.



A COVER FROM THE PASSPORT CONTROL OFFICER

- 20 OCTOBER 1947.
- FROM FIELD POST OFFICE 737, BERLIN, TO BLOEMFONTEIN.
- Cachet: PASSPORT CONTROL OFFICER / BERLIN / 18 OKT 1947 / UNION OF SOUTH AFRICA.

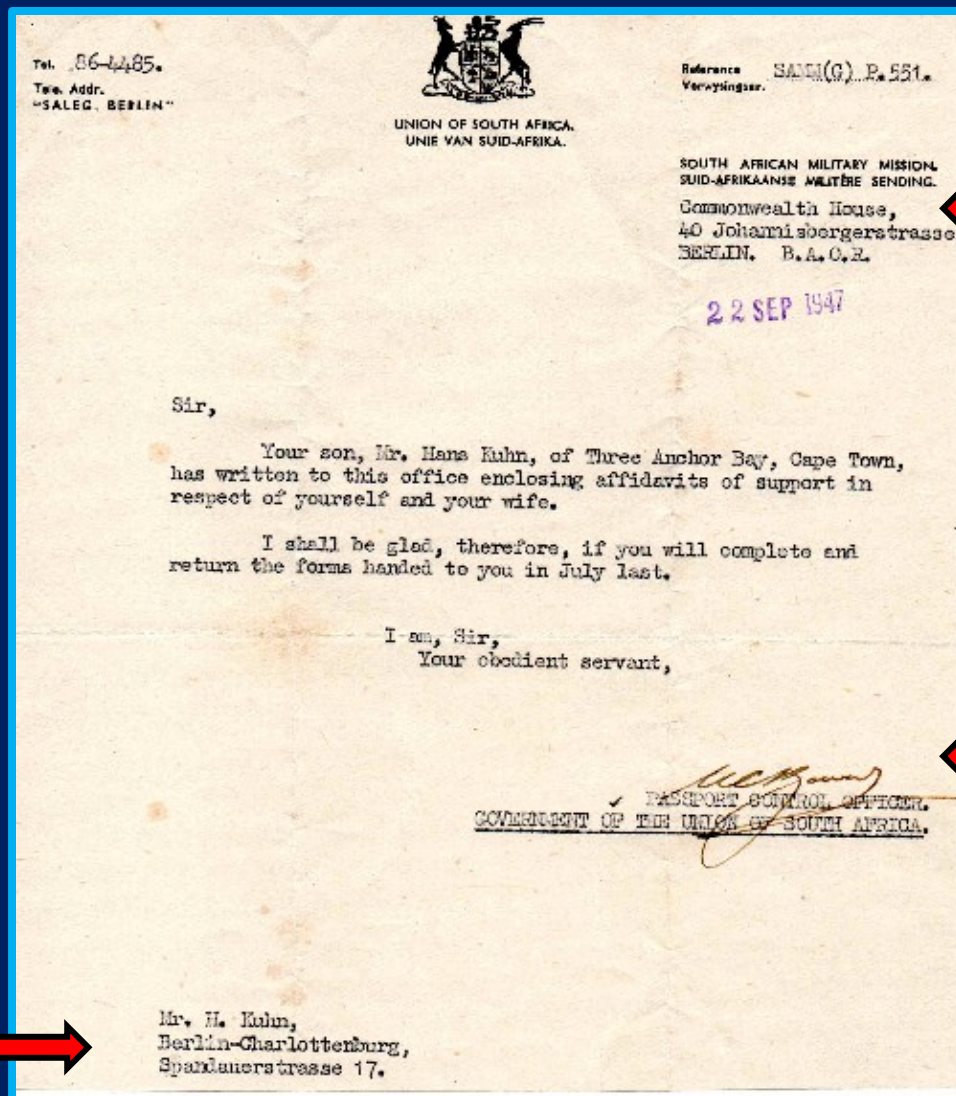


A LETTER FROM THE MILITARY MISSION

- **22 SEPTEMBER 1947.**
- **FROM: PASSPORT CONTROL OFFICER, SOUTH AFRICAN MILITARY MISSION, BERLIN.**
- **TO: Mr. HANS KUHN Snr. (CHARLOTTENBURG) REGARDING IMMIGRATION TO SOUTH AFRICA.**
- **Mr. HANS KUHN Snr. COULD NOT READ ENGLISH AND HAD NOT REPLIED TO PREVIOUS CORRESPONDENCE.**
- **HIS SON, Mr. HANS KUHN Jnr. IN CAPE TOWN, WROTE TO THE MISSION ON BEHALF OF HIS FATHER AND SUPPLIED THE NECESSARY DOCUMENTS.**
- **THIS LETTER REQUESTS Mr. HANS KUHN Snr. TO COMPLETE THE NECESSARY FORMS.**

A LETTER TO HANS KUHN Snr. FROM THE MILITARY MISSION

• 22 SEPTEMBER 1947.



MISSION ADDRESS

SIGNED BY Mrs. G.E. BOWERS

SECRETARY

HUSBAND, Passport Control Officer, Hamburg.

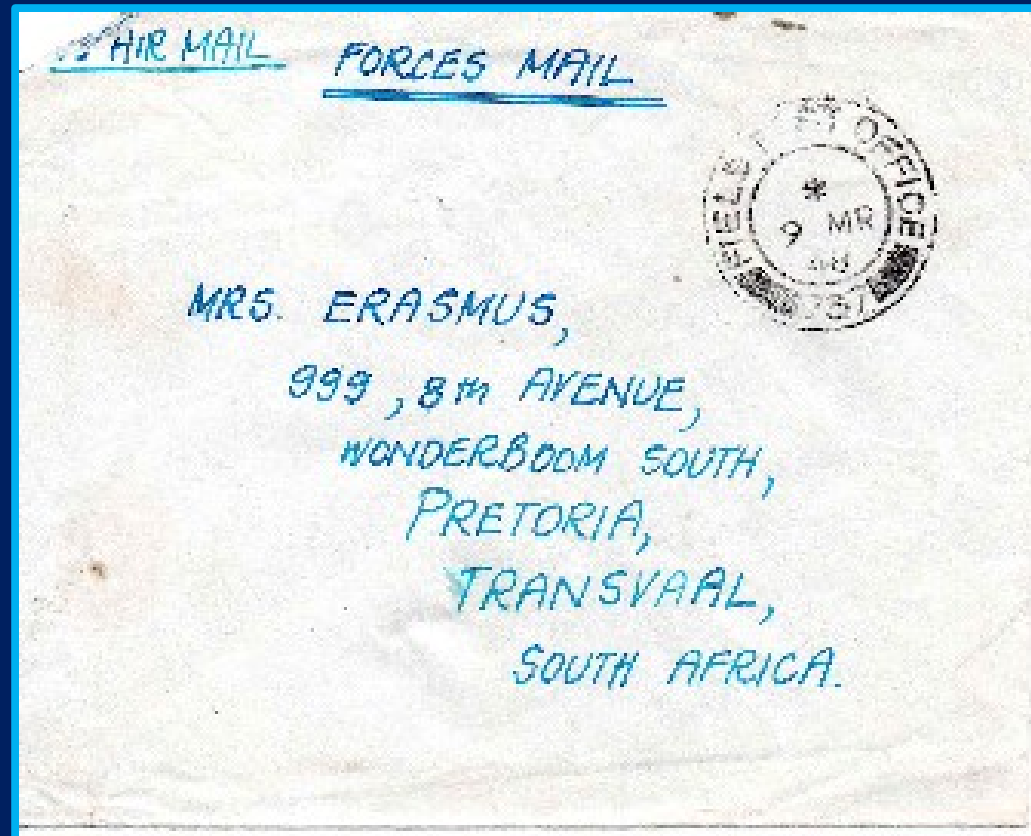
This letter was given to Jim Findlay by Charles Kuhn, Grandson of Hans Kuhn

Mr. H. KUHN ADDRESS

Snr.

MARCH 1948 – POSTAGE FREE MAIL

- 9 MARCH 1948
- FROM FIELD POST OFFICE 737, BERLIN, TO PRETORIA.



HISTORY

25 MARCH 1948

RUSSIA ANNOUNCES THAT ROAD AND RAIL ACCESS TO BERLIN WILL BE STOPPED ON 1 APRIL 1948.

 **ONLY MEANS OF SUPPORT AND SUPPLY TO CITIZENS IN BERLIN WAS BY AIR.**

“BERLIN AIRLIFT” – ‘OPERATION PLAINFARE’.

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“BERLIN AIRLIFT” – ‘OPERATION PLAINFARE’.

FROM 24 JUNE 1948 TO 12 MAY 1949 

ROAD AND RAIL RESTRICTIONS LIFTED

FINAL FLIGHT ON 30 SEPTEMBER 1949.

‘OPERATION PLAINFARE’

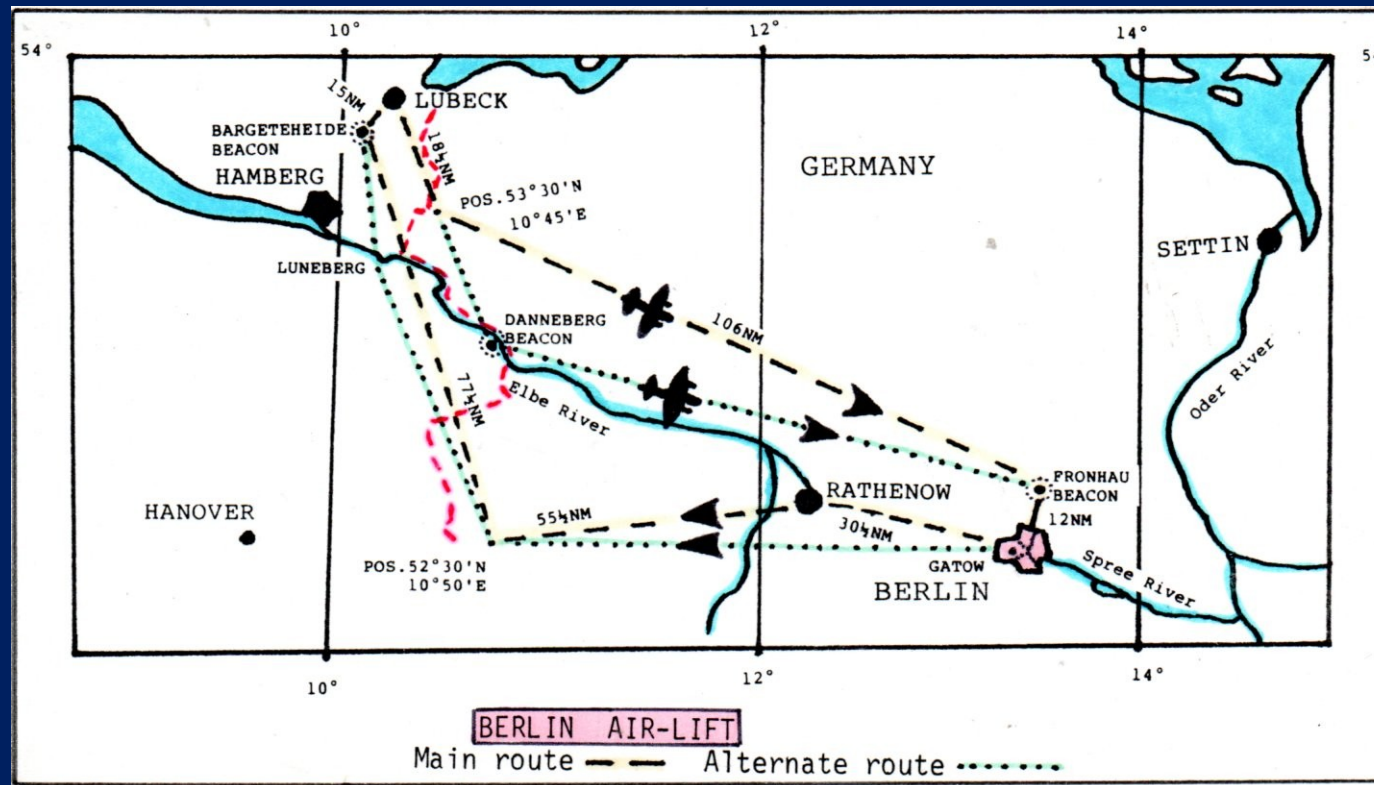
1 SEPTEMBER 1948

**SOUTH AFRICAN PARLIAMENT APPROVES 10 x AIR CREWS FOR “BERLIN AIRLIFT”.
[NO GROUND CREW WERE REQUIRED].**

AIR CREW	2 x PILOTS
	1 x NAVIGATOR
	1 x WIRELESS OPERATOR
	1 x FLIGHT ENGINEER
AIRCRAFT	DAKOTA C-47 (+ others)

24 (COMMONWEALTH) SQUADRON, 46 GROUP, R.A.F. TRANSPORT COMMAND.

'OPERATION PLAINFARE'



'OPERATION PLAINFARE' PERIOD

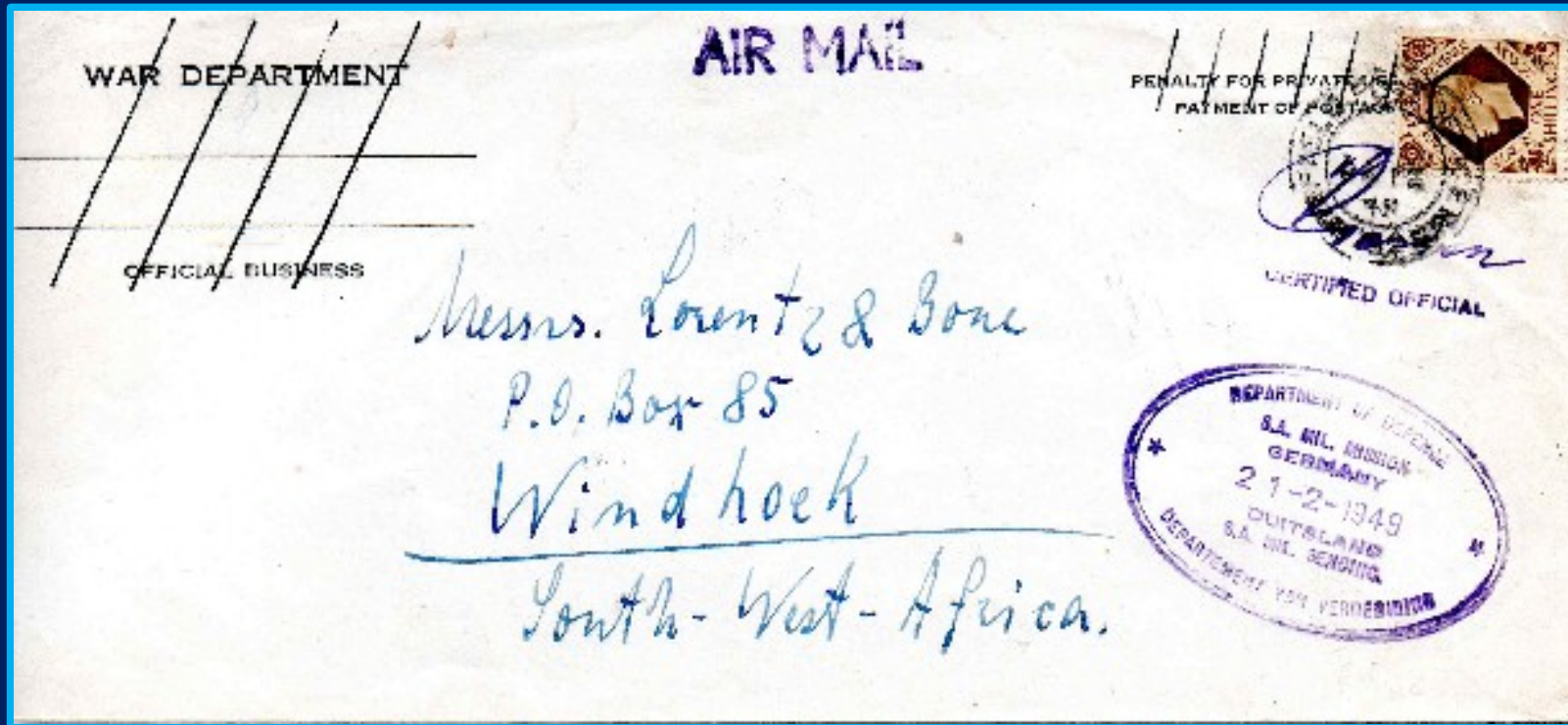
21 FEBRUARY 1949

FIELD POST OFFICE 752, HAMBURG. (June 1947 to June 1949).

HAMBURG PASSPORT CONTROL OFFICE.

TO SOUTH WEST AFRICA

POSTAGE PAID



'OPERATION PLAINFARE' PERIOD

23 SEPTEMBER 1949

FIELD POST OFFICE 308, HAMBURG. (May 1947 to 20 September 1951).

ex HAMBURG PASSPORT CONTROL OFFICE.

PRIVATE MAIL.



POSTAGE PAID

‘OPERATION PLAINFARE’ PERIOD

MAJ. GEN. ARMSTRONG WITH SOUTH AFRICAN PILOTS.

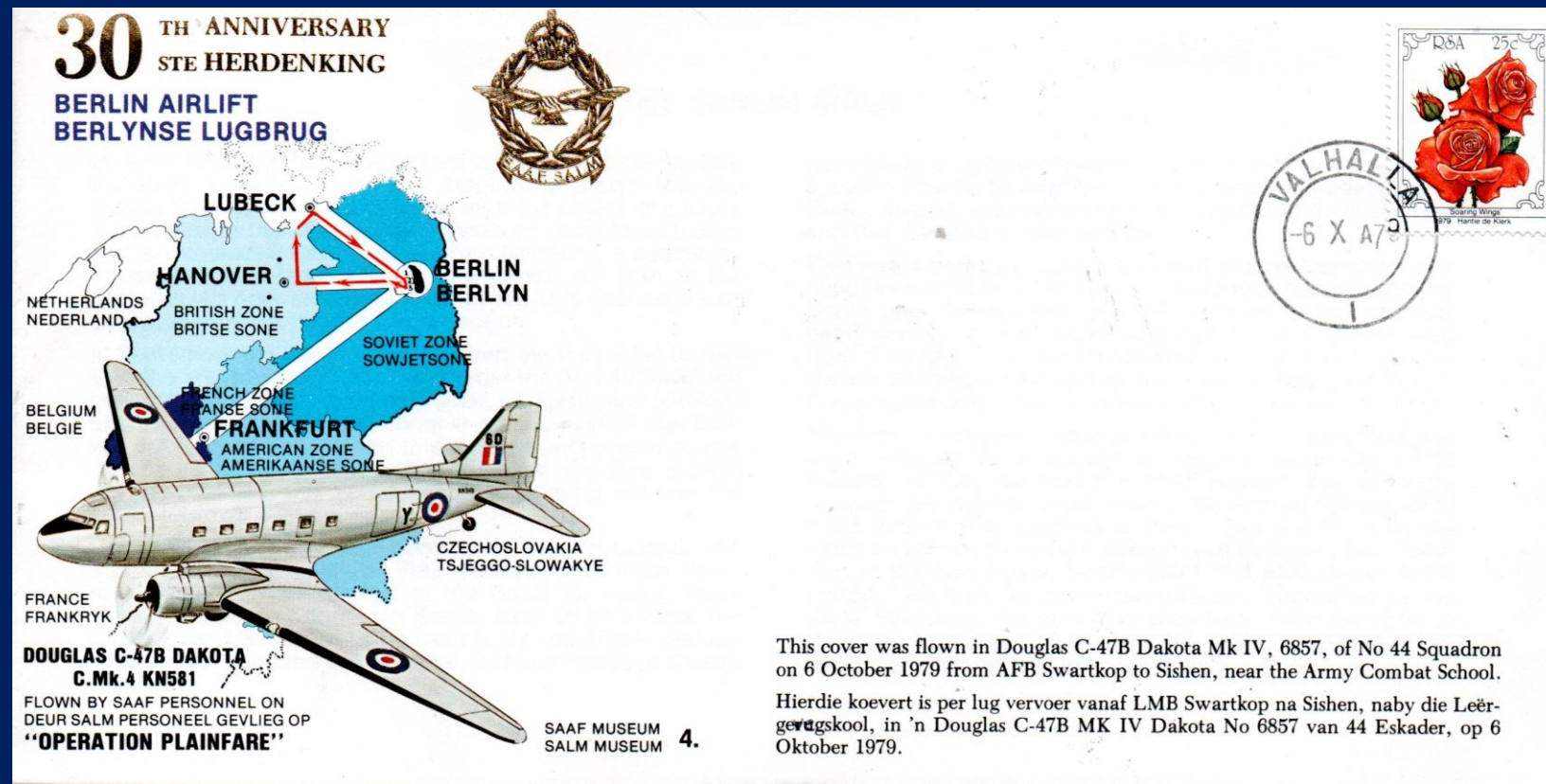


‘OPERATION PLAINFARE’ PERIOD

**R.A.F. DAKOTA C-47 AIRCRAFT AT LUBECK AIR BASE.
FLIGHTS EVERY 90 SECONDS FROM LUBECK TO GATOW AIR BASE, BERLIN, AND
RETURN.**



'OPERATION PLAINFARE'



THE SOUTH AFRICAN MILITARY MISSION IN BERLIN.

- **FROM: OCTOBER 1946. TO: 28 FEBRUARY 1952.**
 - **STAFF COMPLEMENT: 12 TO 15 PER TOUR OF DUTY.**
 - FIRST GROUP: OCTOBER 1946 TO JULY 1948.**
 - SECOND GROUP: JULY 1948 TO AUGUST 1951.**
 - THIRD GROUP: AUGUST 1951 TO 28 FEBRUARY 1952.**
 - **SOUTH AFRICAN AIRFORCE: 52 and 38 PER TOUR OF DUTY.**
 - FIRST GROUP: 21 SEPTEMBER 1948 TO 7 APRIL 1949.**
 - SECOND GROUP: APRIL TO AUGUST 1949.**
- S.A.A.F. FLEW 2 500 SORTIES – DELIVERED 8 333 TONS OF SUPPLIES.**

THE SOUTH AFRICAN MILITARY MISSION IN BERLIN.

- **FROM: OCTOBER 1946. TO: 28 FEBRUARY 1952.**
- **TOTAL MISSION STAFF COMPLEMENT: 45 - 50.**
- **TOTAL SOUTH AFRICAN AIRFORCE STAFF: 88-90.**
- **POSTAL ITEMS: MOSTLY BY DIPLOMATIC POUCH MAIL.
FEW PEOPLE INVOLVED.
SCARCE.**

THE SOUTH AFRICAN MILITARY MISSION IN BERLIN.

THE END