



CLIO II: Creating History in New Media

Spencer Roberts

April 8, 2013

# DESIGN RATIONALE

Leisure at War describes and shows some of the ways in which soldiers stationed in England during World War Two used their furlough time for recreation and entertainment.

The primary method of communication between soldiers and home was through written letters, often using V---Mail forms that folded to serve as both letter and envelope. All correspondence was carefully censored by commanding officers and stamped with approval before being sent to the United States or Canada.

Occasionally, soldiers were able to take photographs with their personal cameras and send them back to family or friends. In the late 1930s and 1940s, cameras were becoming more popular, but photographers still required special equipment to develop their film. Each photograph sent home represented time and effort that the soldier spent preparing his equipment and processing the film.

The layout and colour scheme for the website are based on the standard V---Mail form and common air mail envelopes used during wartime. Although the content of each page will change as the user scrolls, the header, footer, and borders will always be present, reminding the user that the content is thoughtfully and carefully prepared and censored. All of the colours are muted in accordance with the age of the original content, which has faded.

The Google fonts used on the site all mimic a typewriter, with varying degrees of legibility. In the header and navigation, which do not require long reading times, Special Elite provides a worn-out typewriter aesthetic. In the body of the site, Cutive Mono replicates a typewriter style, but remains easy to read in large blocks. In some places, Gills Sans Bold provides an anachronistic substitute for the unique type used on government mail forms.

Censor stamps appear throughout the site to reinforce the sense that soldiers were constantly negotiating authority while writing letters and taking photographs.

The logotype for this website uses the colour palette for the site, but has been darkened. It combines an image of a Kodak Retina I camera, typewriter-style font, and Morse code equivalencies to reinforce the themes of photography, letter-writing, and military communications.

Leisure at War creates an immersive experience for users that replicates the sights and forms of interaction that were typical for soldiers and loved ones at home.

HAVE YOU FILLED IN COMPLETE  
ADDRESS AT TOP?

REPLY BY  
V---MAIL

HAVE YOU FILLED IN COMPLETE  
ADDRESS AT TOP?



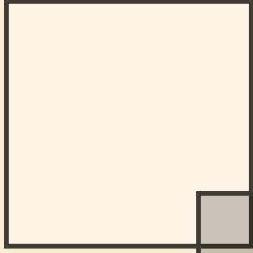
L E I S U R E

PASSED BY

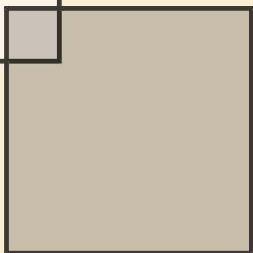
U S ARMY EXAMINER

SB168 AT

W A R



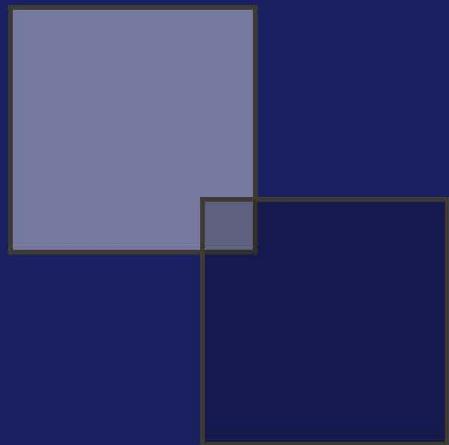
**40% white**



**20% black**

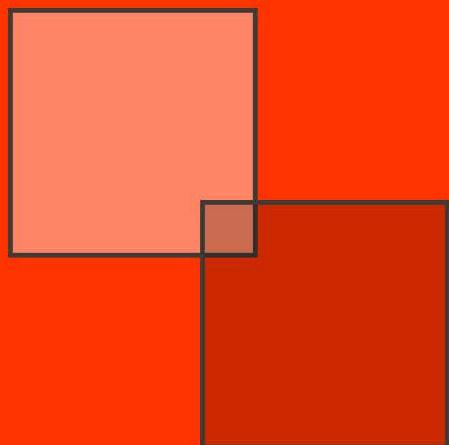
**fceed5**

**rgb (252, 238, 213)**



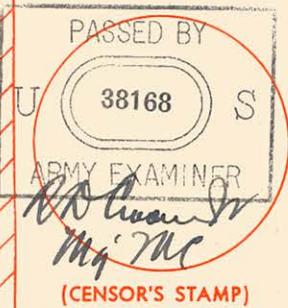
**lb2lb2**

**rgb (27, 33, 98)**



**ff3400**

**rgb (255, 52, 0)**



TO:

# LEISURE AT WAR

SEE INSTRUCTION NO. 2

FROM

Navigation

Home

About the Project

Letters from War

Soldiers on Leave

(Sender's complete address above)

## Americans in Britain

During World War Two, American soldiers flooded into Britain to prepare for departure to the continent, to maintain supply networks, to fly missions from airbases along the coast, and numerous other activities that occupied soldiers during wartime. If soldiers were stationed in Britain long enough, they would be able to take their leave, usually on weekends, to explore the countryside and experience the local culture in England, Wales, and Scotland.

For men who were accustomed to living in the United States, Britain was a mix of sights and activities that were simultaneously familiar and strange. The need for manpower in the war against Germany meant that American men were entering the country in large numbers for the first time in U.S. history.

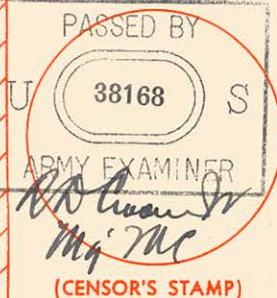
I've never seen such changeable weather as that which we have to put up with here. As the captain told us when we first arrived, "When you can see the hills, it's going to rain. When you can't see the hills, it's raining." There's more truth than fiction in that statement.

- PFC John Waller, June 3, 1944

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## Letters from War

John C. Waller was born in Buffalo, New York, on March 24th, [1923]. In 1942, he volunteered for service. Although he hoped to serve in the Air Force, he was enlisted in the United States Army and was placed in the 717th Railway Battalion, which was activated on December 1, 1943.

During his time in the army, Waller exchanged letters with a woman he had met before the war. Geraldine Rowbottom was a Canadian bank teller from Sarnia, Ontario. Although Waller's letters suggest that they had some difficulties early on, they developed a strong relationship while Waller was posted in England.

While overseas, Waller took up photography as a hobby, occasionally sending the photos back to Geraldine in Canada. When he travelled throughout England on leave, Waller photographed the locations he visited, and wrote about his experiences.



June 3, 1944

Dear Jerry,

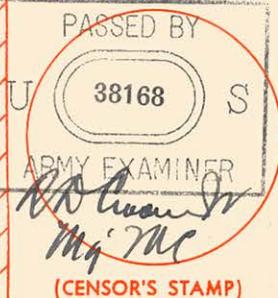
This reminds me of that song, 'When You're a Long, Long Way from Home' or words to that effect. It certainly is true enough in my case.

I've had an uneventful crossing, but it sure was monotonous after

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## Soldiers on Leave

The Central Pier at Blackpool, circa 1944.  
Taken by John C. Waller with his personal camera.



Westminster Abbey with cars and pedestrians in the foreground, circa 1944.  
Taken by John C. Waller with his personal camera.

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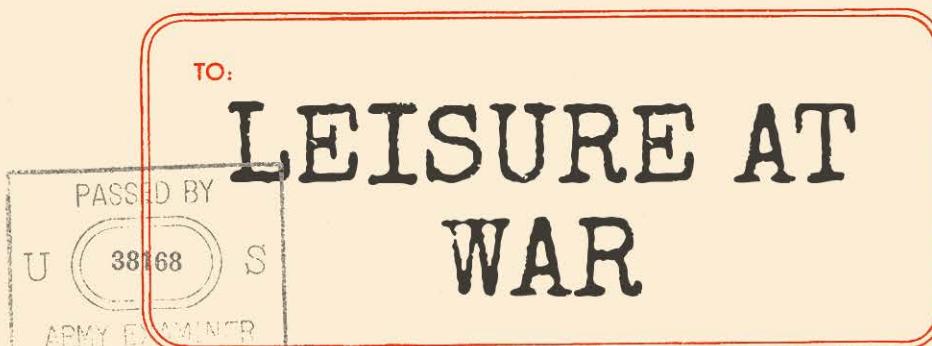
REPLY BY  
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<a href="#">Home</a>
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<a href="#">Letters from War</a>
<a href="#">Soldiers at War</a>



V ....— MAIL



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HERE

FOLD

HERE

#### ABOUT THE PROJECT

- (1) This project was designed during the winter semester of 2013 in accordance with the requirements of HIST 697: Creating History in New Media.
- (2) Please enjoy the site and feel free to send comments to [spencer\[at\]swroberts.ca](mailto:spencer[at]swroberts.ca)
- (3) The content of this site was generously donated by Lisa Daamen, who found the original letters in her attic.

FROM: *John C. Walker*  
Co. B-7174 RY OPR 154  
APS 134 - 9 AM NY & ST

ONTARIO  
10 AM  
DEC 2  
1944  
U.S. AIR MAIL SERVICE



REGULAR MAIL  
— FROM V... — MAIL

TO:

Miss G. Rowbottom  
249 Kathleen Ave.  
Sarnia, Ontario  
Canada

PASSED BY	
U	38168
S	
ARMY EXAMINER	

*W. W. Hooper  
my TMC*

FOLD

HERE

FOLD

HERE

V-Mail service provides a most rapid means of communication. If addressed to a place where photographing service is not available the original letter will be dispatched by the most expeditious means.

#### INSTRUCTIONS

- (1) Write the entire message plainly on the other side within marginal lines.
- (2) Print the name and address in the two spaces provided. Addresses of members of the Armed Forces should show full name, complete military or naval address, including grade or rank, serial number, unit to which assigned or attached and army post office in care of the appropriate postmaster or appropriate fleet post office.
- (3) Fold, seal, and deposit in any post office letter drop or street letter box.
- (4) Enclosures must not be placed in this envelope.
- (5) V-Mail letters may be sent free of postage by members of the Armed Forces. When sent by others postage must be prepaid at domestic rates (3c ordinary mail, 6c if domestic air mail service is desired when mailed in the U. S.)

1st Lt John C Waller 92028154  
Co. B - 717th Regt. Opr. Bn.  
APO 511-4 PM  
N.Y.C.

VIA AIR MAIL



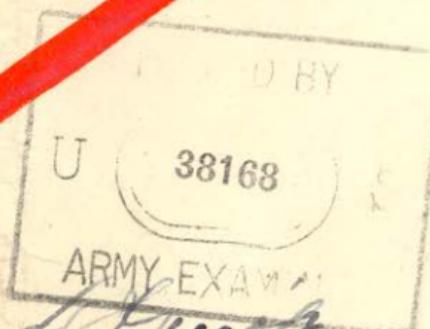
Miss S. Rowbottom

253 Kathleen Ave.

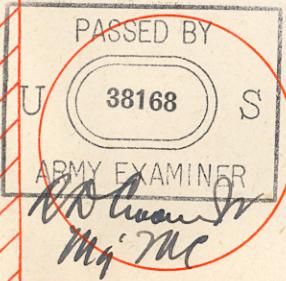
Sarnia

Ontario

Canada



Print the complete address in plain letters in the panel below, and your return address in the space provided on the right. Use typewriter, dark ink, or dark pencil. Faint or small writing is not suitable for photographing.



(CENSOR'S STAMP)

TO:

Miss G. Rowbottom  
249 Kathleen Ave.  
Sarnia, Ontario  
Canada

FROM

42028154  
PER JOHN C. WALLER  
CO. B - 717<sup>th</sup> RY. OPR. BN.  
APO 134 - 90PM. N.Y.C.

SEE INSTRUCTION NO. 2

(Sender's complete address above)

Dear Geraldine,

Dec. 1, 1944

Apparently my mail is taking the long way around again, at least I haven't had any for two weeks. We've been busy as bees lately. We never know when we go to bed where we'll wake up as we've been pulling out on runs in the middle of the nite lately. We've had seven runs in the last six days - one was an all nite affair. They are the kind that tire you out. I'm sitting now all alone in a ward car listening to records I'm selecting and playing through the radio. At present I'm listening to Harry James playing appropriate don't you think. I've found that the first year in the army is the hardest. After that you just coast along and take what comes. There's nothing new to bother you. I imagine you'll receive this letter about Rudes time so I hope you have a very happy one. Don't eat too much though - you mustn't forget your girlish figure you know. My sister is on a permanent diet. My how women suffer. Isk, tak! Well Guy, my favorite, Lombardo is playing Goodnite sweetheart now so I'll conform hoping you are well and don't work too hard. Cheery & sunny

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