Communications

The Postal Museum

Royal Mail

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©The Postal Museum 2010-0423/2 'Human Ladder for telephone'
In the First World War, Post Office engineers were trained to set up, maintain and operate telephones on the front line. This hand-coloured lantern slide shows two soldiers, one standing on the others shoulders attempting to use a telephone on the front.

POST OFFICE CIRCULAR.

TUESDAY, 11 AUGUST, 1914.
No. 2174.

War News on Sundays.

The Postmaster General has undertaken to forward on Sunday mornings from the Central Telegraph Office, London, to every Telegraph Office which is open, the latest news from the seat of war received from the Official Press Bureau.

The messages must be written out plainly in a bold hand on "flimsies" and exhibited in the window or in some other position where they can be easily read by the public. They will be headed "Official War News."

Telegraph Offices which collect but do not deliver telegrams may obtain these messages on application to their Head Office.

The news will also be sent to the larger Telephone Exchanges and the messages may be telephoned thence to any subscriber or caller on demand.

Remittances of Gold Coin in the hands of Postmasters and Sub-Postmasters.

With reference to the notice in the Special Post Office Circular of the 7th August, No. 2172, Postmasters must continue to remit all Gold coming into their hands to their Metropolitan Office of Account, and Sub-Postmasters must also continue to remit the Gold in their hands to their Head-Postmaster.

London Sub-Postmasters should however remit their gold direct to the Cashier, G.P.O., London, and not to their Head Postmaster.

Parcels addressed to H.M. Ships in Home Waters or to H.M. Troops serving in British Islands.

No charge for redirection should hereafter be raised in respect of any parcel addressed as described above, and if any charge has been raised prior to receipt it should be waived on delivery.

Unpaid or Shortpaid Letters from His Majesty's Ships.

Such letters, unless addressed to places abroad, should for the present be surcharged at the single and not at the double inland rate of postage.

Unpaid or Shortpaid Letters from H.M. Troops, whether serving in the British Islands or elsewhere.

Such letters, unless addressed to places abroad, should for the present be surcharged at the single Inland rate only. They are to be so surcharged, whether or not marked "On active service—no postage stamps available."

This circular was sent via telegram at the outbreak of the war. It gives instructions for sending letters and parcels to the front line.

©The Postal Museum 2011-0511/02 Belgian Pigeon Post in Flanders
Carrier pigeons were used to carry messages to and from the front line where telephone lines did not exist. The army used about 100,000 pigeons and only two percent of birds failed to return. This black and white lantern slide shows pigeon handlers in Flanders, Belgium.

©The Postal Museum 2010-0423/5 Soldiers send messages by Morse code.
Morse code was used to deliver important messages in code during the First World War. It uses electrical signals to send messages based on short and long sounds or flashes of light that represent letters of the alphabet. This hand-coloured lantern slide shows British and French soldiers sending Morse code messages.

GOVERNMENT PIGEON SERVICE.

(This message must be delivered forthwith to the nearest Postal Telegraph Office.)

From	Date	Time	Lat.
Killdeer	4	9.50	6 miles
			Long. E.N.E. from Tyne

Code 62185)   (1678) (0542)

Owner   Jeary Jarrow on Tyne   Ring No. H 14 BNP 910

Carrier pigeons were used to carry secret messages during the First World War. The birds were dropped by parachute. Agents collected the pigeons and looked after them until they had secret information to send home.

ACTIVITY ALERT