

Postal Censorship.

The communication returned in this cover constitutes a breach of the Defence of the Realm Regulations. The writer is warned to be more careful in future.

N.B.—The communication will be allowed to proceed if the passage or passages referring to *Seppelwardch* are omitted, and if it is re-posted to the addressee in the usual way.

W 1211—225 1,000 12/15 H.W.V. (P. 1914/1)
1915—22 10,000 2/15

Censored Censored

Below are some examples of letters sent by soldiers to their families back home. Not all of the letters made it back as the soldiers wrote about things the British Army did not want people back home to hear about.

The words were often ripped out or marked out in thick black lines. Reading and censoring the letters was carried out by the Army Officers.

At one point during the war the censors were reading through 375,000 letters a day!

Read the examples below and choose which ones you think would have been censored and which ones would have been allowed to be sent home.

Extracts from letters:

1. *I'm working at the back making roads for shifting the big guns.*
2. *We were ordered to make a bayonet attack on the German trenches! It was a criminal order on the part of the man who ordered it.*
3. *I got bashed up a bit. I'm well now. We were praised by the general and all, everybody said we had done well, quite a success.*
4. *My friends have been to the line, three of them were killed.*

Answers

Were they censored?

1. YES - soldiers could not mention places of military importance
2. NO - some letters did slip through the censors - this one makes negative remarks about a senior officer - perhaps the censor sympathised with this soldier!
3. NO - soldiers knew that telling their family at home that they were suffering would make them worry so they kept information about injuries cheery and upbeat.
4. YES - telling people back home about deaths would affect morale at home and make people turn against the war.

Now write some examples of your own. Ask the class whether your examples would have been sent home or been censored.

Creative Writing

1. You are a nurse caring for injured soldiers. Write a letter home describing the conditions.
2. You are a soldier in the trenches. Describe your daily life and what you miss about home.