

ALLIED OCCUPATION OF THE FORMER GERMAN COLONIES 1914 - 1922

When the First World War broke out in August 1914, Germany had ten colonies spread around in Africa, on the Chinese mainland and in the Pacific. The Allies considered it important to capture these territories, both for political reasons and to deny the Germans bases for potential aggressive action. In particular, they were concerned about the long-range radio stations which could give instructions to the commerce raiders on the high seas. As a result, plans were drawn up for the invasion of these territories. The results were mixed, with no real resistance in the Pacific colonies, a few months for Kiauchau and Togo, and a year or more for the Cameroons and South West Africa. Only in East Africa were the Germans able to continue their military activity throughout the entire war, albeit on a guerrilla basis in 1917 and 1918, thus tying down up to 100,000 or more Allied troops needed on other fronts.

This exhibit tells the story of the Allied activity in the colonies through contemporary postal material, starting with first attacks and continuing through the occupation and immediate postwar periods, including the disposition of the colonies by the Peace Commission. The exhibit is laid out geographically, starting with Togo and moving eastward to the Cameroons, German South West Africa and German East Africa, before going along Asia to Kiauchau and then across the Pacific. Within each colony, the material is organized by occupying contingent, with the most important shown first. Within the contingents, the pages are essentially chronological, generally with military mail shown first, followed by covers franked with the stamps used during the occupation, postal stationery, and special usages, including official and POW mail. East Africa is the largest section because the campaign lasted the longest and was the most complicated, involving troops from four Allied countries as well as sub-groups, such as the naval occupation of Mafia, Nyasaland Field Force and Lake Tanganyika Flotilla.



This military cover was mailed early in the war within South Africa, from Capetown to Port Elizabeth. It bears an unusual cachet inscribed "German War/O.C. (Officer Commanding) Prince Alfred's Guard/Official Free." This use of "German War" is the only such reference seen by the exhibitor from any Allied country. It served both as an endorsement of free postage and as an indication that the letter had been censored. Only a few examples of this marking are recorded.

TOGO

FRENCH OCCUPATION

The Allies moved against the German colonies almost immediately after the declaration of war. In West Africa, there was little resistance as the British moved into Togo from Gold Coast and the French from Dahomey. The capital of Lome fell to the British on 6 August 1914, and the French captured Anecho and Sansane-Mangu on the 8th. The final surrender of the Germans took place at Kamina on 27 August 1914, with the Allies dividing the colony for administrative purposes -- the French taking the eastern portion based on Anecho.

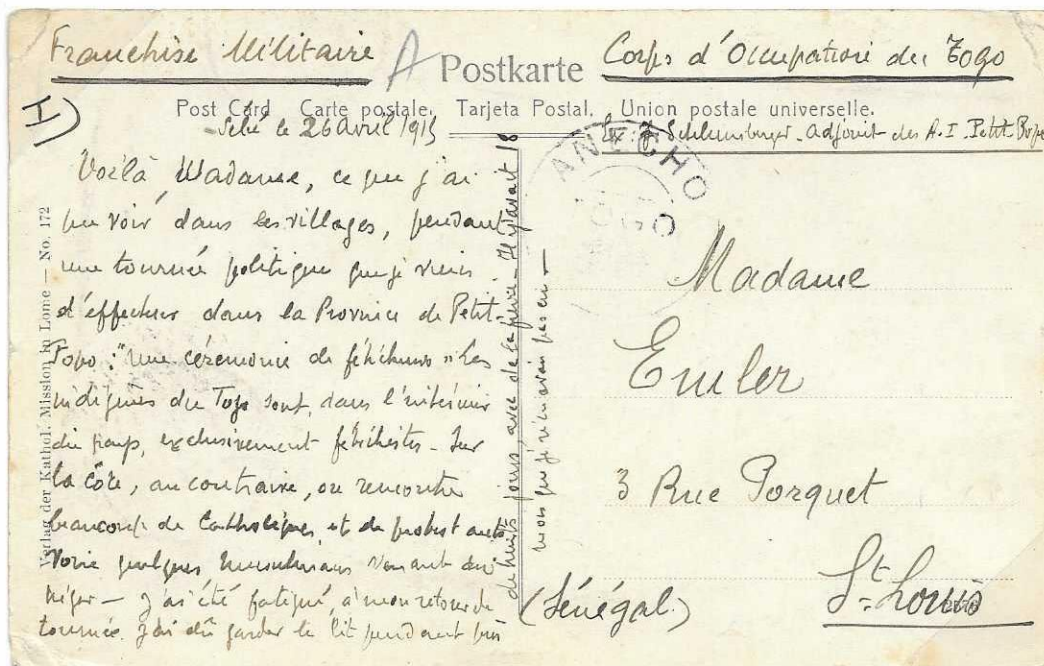
Anecho
22 August 1914
21 December 1914



No military post offices operated in Togo, but the old German postmarks continued in use in the civil offices at least into 1919. A variety of franking was permitted, including unoverprinted German Togo and French Dahomey issues as well as the same overprinted "Occupation franco-anglaise."

TOGO
French Occupation

Anecho
26 April 1915
7 June 1915

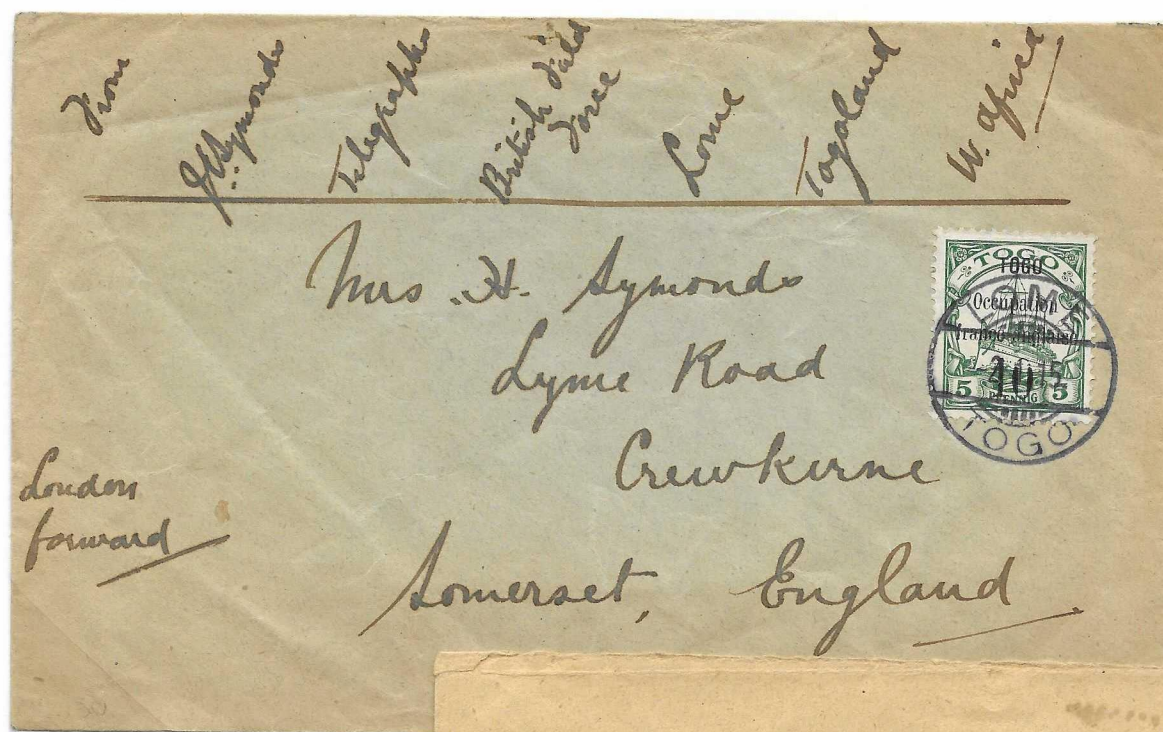


During the occupation period, mail from the troops could be sent free with a proper endorsement in manuscript or applied by cachet. Lower card shows the highly elusive unit cachet (of which five or six examples are recorded) inscribed "Military Commandant/French Troops/of Occupation of Togo."

TOGO
French Occupation

Atakpame
17 November 1914

Lome
2 September 1915



The first issue for occupied Togo came in October 1914 and consisted of overprints on German stamps with the inscription "Occupation/franco-anglais" and surcharged in French currency. Most of these overprints were printed in very limited quantities.

TOGO
French Occupation

Atakpame
11 December 1916

Anecho
2 October 1915

Lome
13 December 1916



In addition to overprinting the German stamps, postal cards were so treated. In addition, stamps of Dahomey were also valid, being used to pay the registration fee on two of the cards shown above.

TOGO
French Occupation

Anecho
7 July 1915

Atakpame
21 August 1916



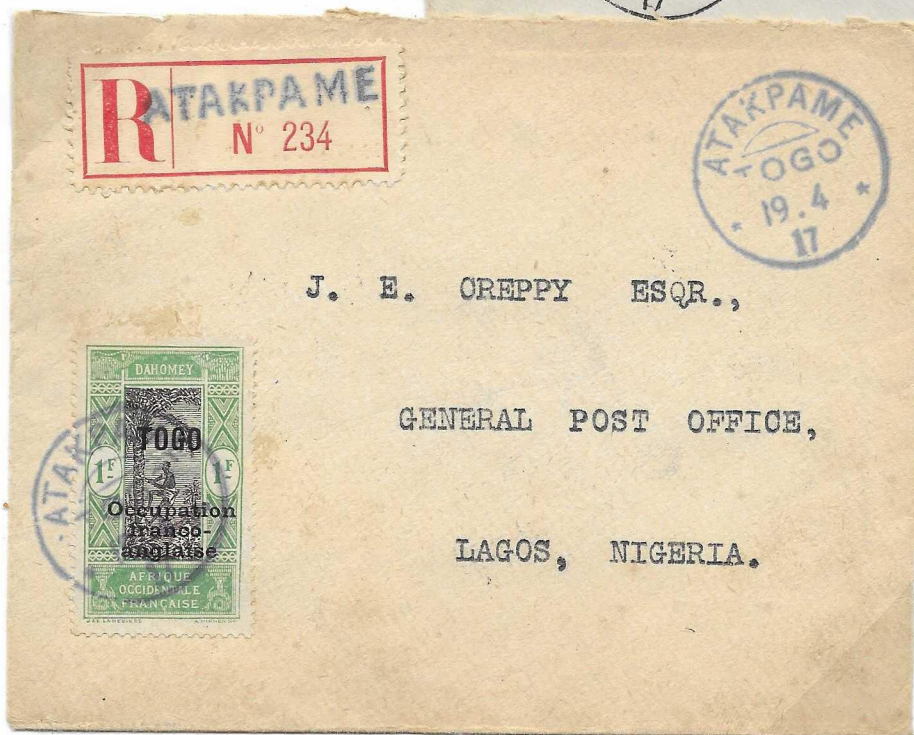
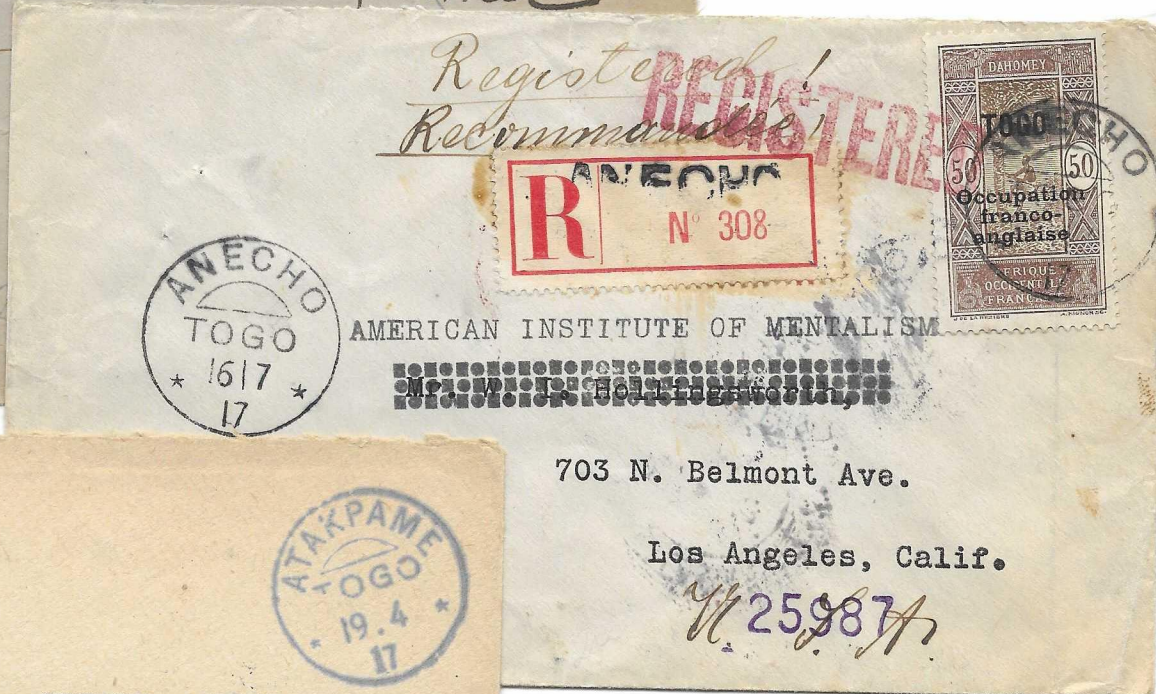
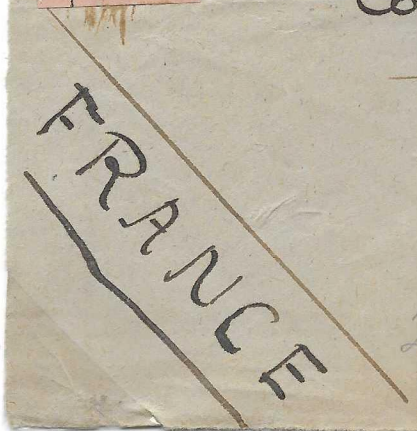
Unoverprinted stamps of Dahomey were accepted for payment of postage during the occupation period, as attested by their use on registered letters to England and France as shown above.

TOGO
French Occupation

Atakpame
19 April 1917

Anecho
16 July 1917

Palime
21 November 1920



As the overprinted German Togo stamps became depleted, overprints reading "Togo/Occupation/franco-/anglais" were made on Dahomey stamps and issued in 1916.

TOGO
French Occupation

Anecho
4 September 1918



ANECHO
N° 238

Monsieur



ANECHO
N° 237

Monsieur

D. Grecht

à Bale (Suisse)

Turkheimstr. 17.



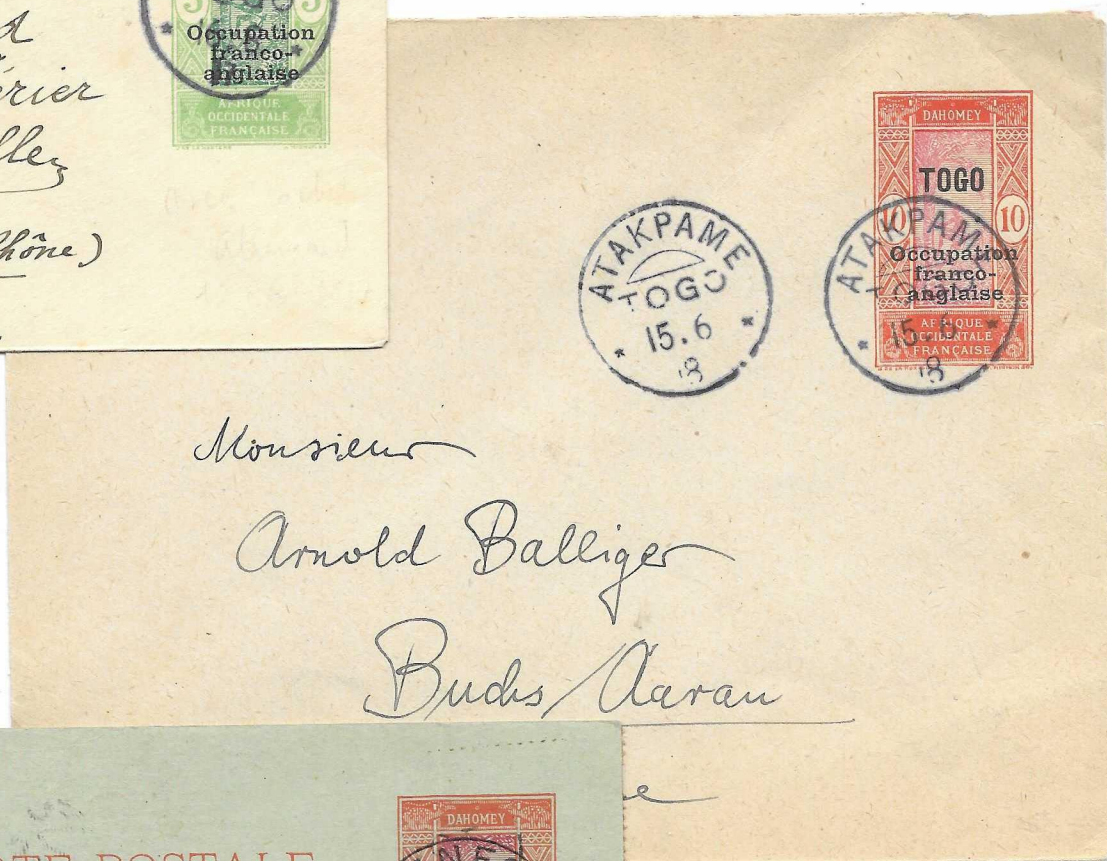
Recommandée Express

The complete current set of Dahomey was overprinted for use in Togo, but there was no commercial need for high values. As a result, they are only seen used on philatelic covers. The above examples were sent registered to Switzerland; they have transit markings of Porto-Novo, Grand-Popo and Cotonou (all in Dahomey) plus Basel receiving mark.

TOGO
French Occupation

Atakpame
16 August 1917
15 June 1918

Anecho
20 February 1918



In addition to stamps, postal stationery of Dahomey was also overprinted for Togo, including the 5 centimes printed matter envelope and 10 centimes postal card. In the latter case, additional postage was applied on the reverse to pay the registration fee to Switzerland.

TOGO
French Occupation

Anecho
6 January 1917

Official Mail

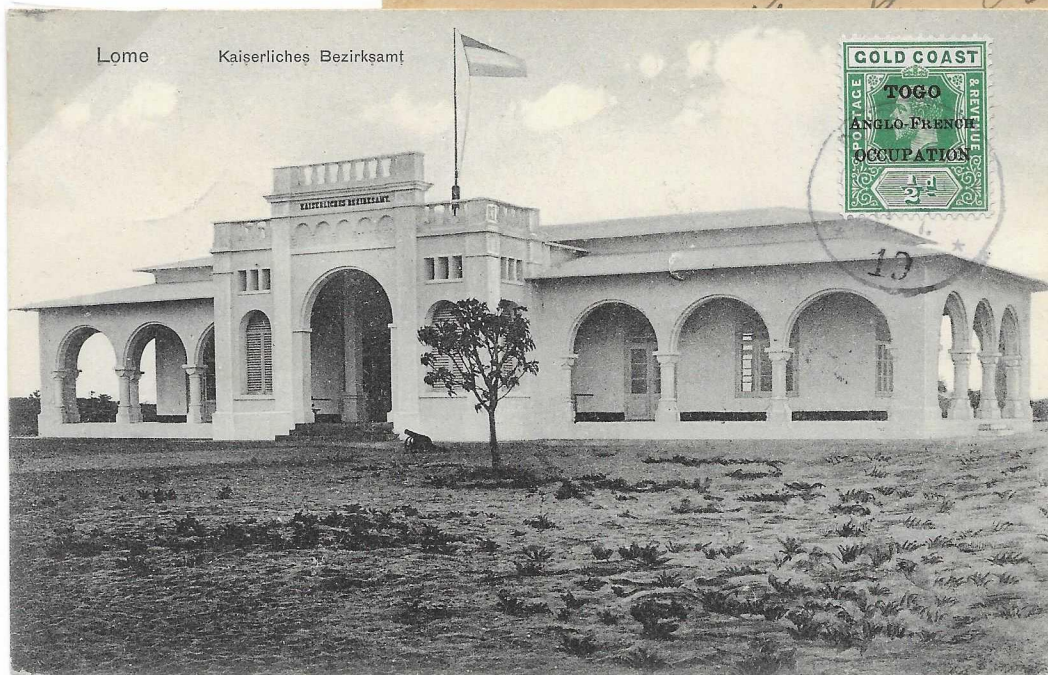


This is the only example of official mail from Togo during the occupation period seen by exhibitor. It was sent from Anecho to a representative of the French Niger Company in Lome, where it was received on 8 January. It bears the cachet of the "Commissioner of the Republic of France/Colony of Togo" which allowed it to be sent unfranked. The French part of Togo later became a mandated territory under the League of Nations.

TOGO
BRITISH OCCUPATION

Lome
9 September 1914
13 October 1914

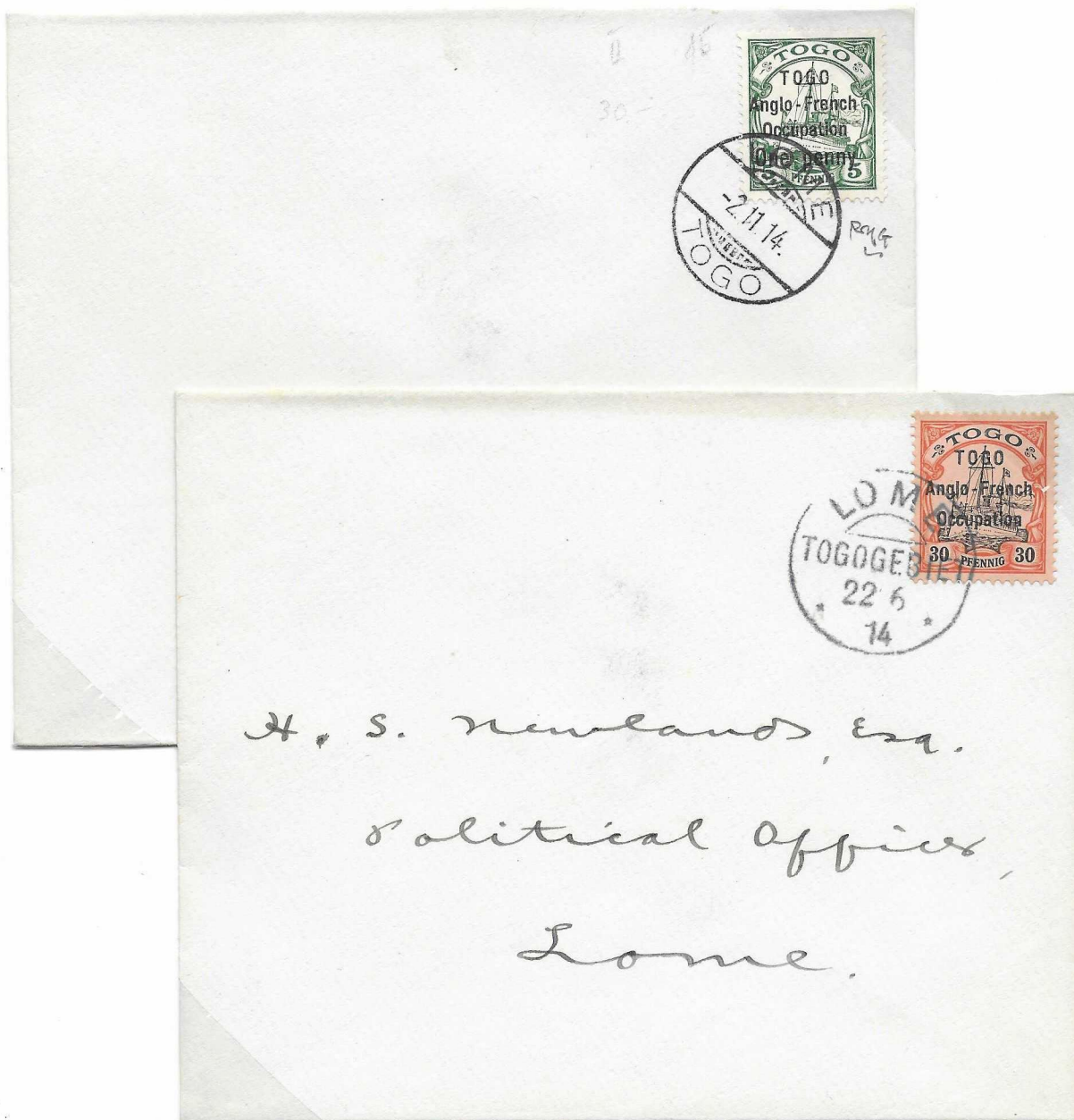
Noepe
9 July 1919



Like the French, the British did not operate military post offices in Togo, but sent mail through the former German civil post offices using the old German postmarks at least into 1919. A variety of franking was permitted, including unoverprinted Gold Coast issues as well as the same stamps overprinted "Togo/Anglo-French/Occupation."

TOGO
British Occupation

Lome
26 September 1914
2 November 1914

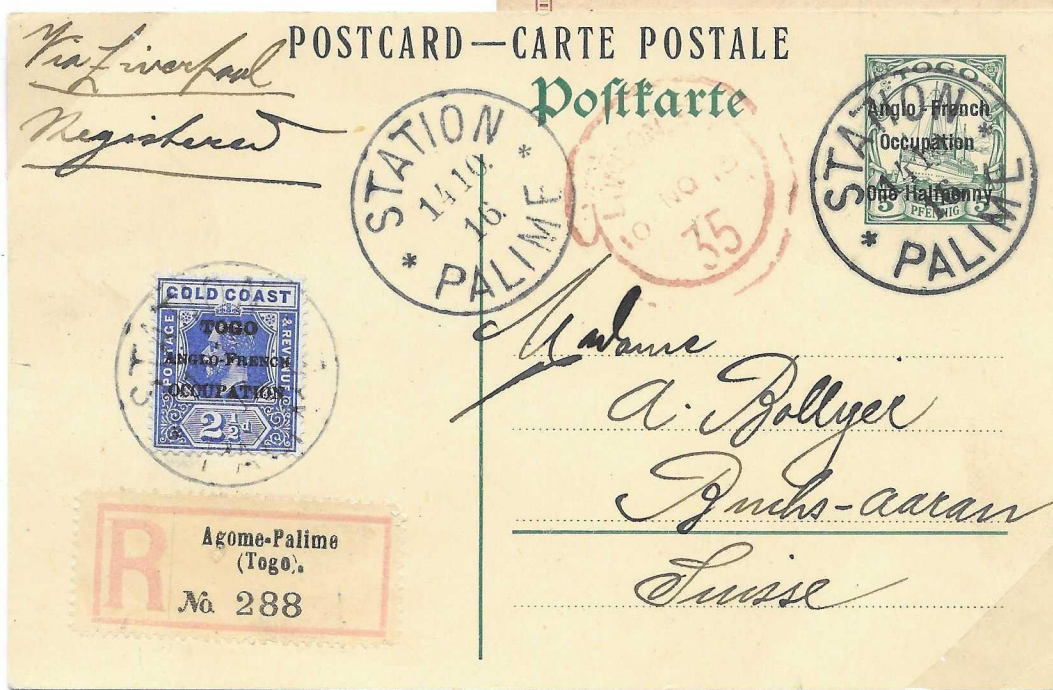
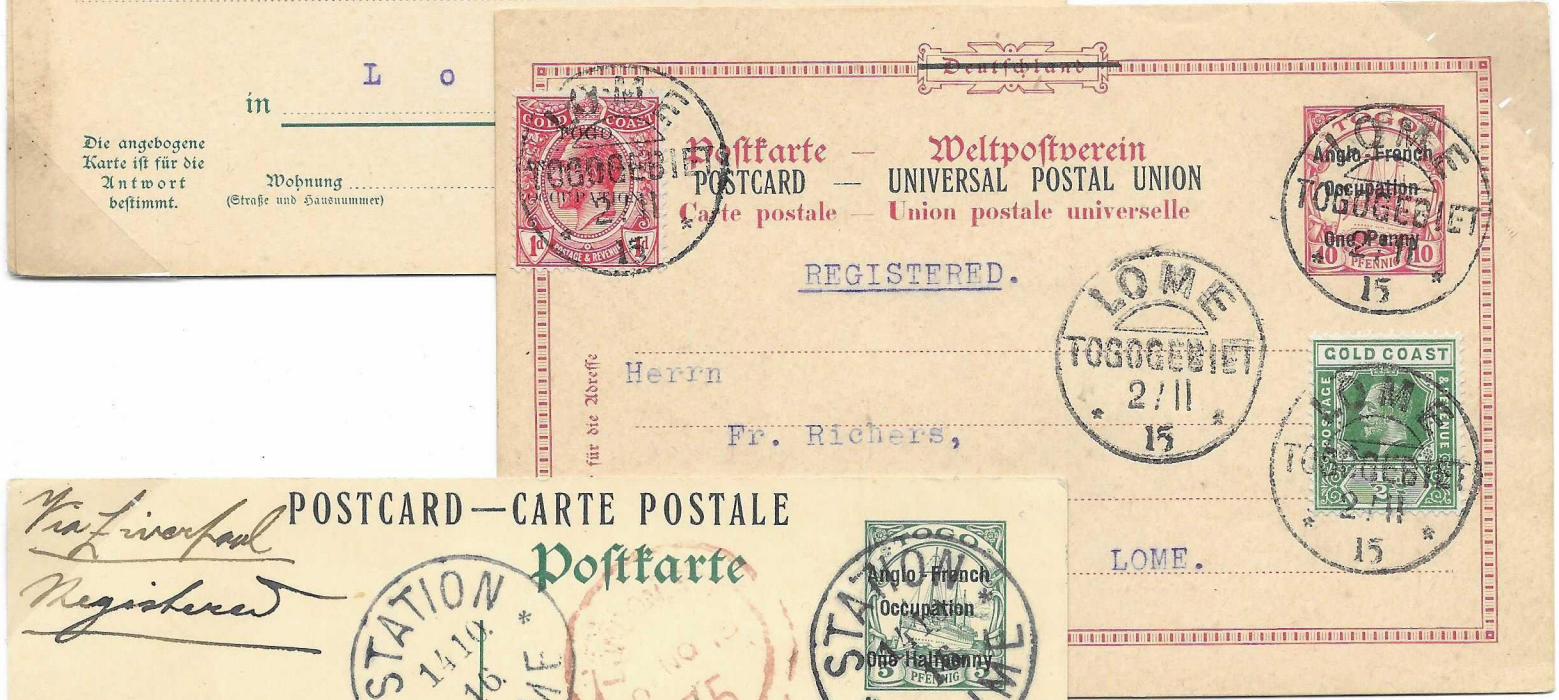


In order to utilize the small quantities of German stamps that were found in the post offices, a decision was made in September 1914 to overprint these with "TOGO/Anglo-French/Occupation." However, very few were actually used since communications with traditional correspondents in Germany were cut off. Thus, finding them on covers is a significant achievement. The envelopes shown above were presumably prepared by a philatelist in the occupation forces as they are embossed with a crest and "Governor/Gold Coast" on the reverse.

TOGO
British Occupation

Lome
26 August 1915
2 November 1915

Palime
14 October 1916



Quantities of German postal cards were also found in the post offices and overprinted with "TOGO/Anglo-French/Occupation" and surcharged in British currency. These issues could be used in that format or in combination with overprinted and unoverprinted Gold Coast stamps.

TOGO
British Occupation

Lome
29 July 1915

Noepe
11 December 1915

Palime
14 January 1916

*Ho Togo
Jan 13-16*

R HQ(TOGO)
N^o 504



M. Miss E. Brooks

~~Deutsch-Südamerikanische
Telegraphengesellschaft, A. G.~~
Station Lome.

R Lome (Togo)
N^o 945



England

Ewen's Colonial Stamp Market,

30 + 32, Palace Square,

Norwood

London. S. E

England.

The supply of German stamps eventually ran out, so in May 1915 the authorities issued overprints on Gold Coast definitives reading "Togo/Anglo-French/Occupation." The upper cover was sent registered from Ho to England on 13 January 1916 but there was no postmark available there, so the stamps were cancelled in Palime the following day.

TOGO
British Occupation

Lome
6 May 1916
5 June 1916
17 June 1919



Although the entire set of Gold Coast definitives was overprinted, there was no commercial use of the high values. As a result, the only examples that exist on cover were created by enterprising philatelists. These stamps remained in use until the early 1920s when the area occupied by the British was annexed to the Gold Coast.

TOGO
British Occupation

Lome
8 February 1917
24 February 1917
14 April 1920

POST  CARD

GOLD COAST

THE ADDRESS ONLY TO BE WRITTEN ON THIS SIDE.



UNION POSTALE UNIVERSELLE
GOLD COAST (CÔTE D'OR)

POST CARD  CARTE POSTALE

THE ADDRESS ONLY TO BE WRITTEN ON THIS SIDE.



REGISTERED LETTER

THIS LETTER MUST BE GIVEN TO AN OFFICER OF THE
TO BE REGISTERED, AND A RECEIPT OBTAINED
THE ADDRESS MUST BE WRITTEN ON



Mrs. Findlater,

18 Viewforth Terrace,

Edinburgh,

Scotland.



FEE PAID.

In addition to the stamps, Gold Coast postal stationery was overprinted for use in Togo. Note that the overprinted registered letter shown above sent to Scotland is possibly the discovery copy actually used, as the Higgins & Gage catalogue states that "It is not known if these exist other than 'Specimen' copies."

ROBERT M. GIBBS

PHILATELIST
NAPA CALIFORNIA

10th September 2007

Certificate No. 07-474

TOGO: 1914 30pf. Black and Orange on buff of German Togo overprinted Togo Anglo-French Occupation 3mm. spacing showing minor variety "e of French defective at upper right" (position 23 of Gibbs Setting 1), SG H 6, Gibbs 6, tied to cover with embossed seal of the Gold Coast Governor's office on the back flap by Lome Togogebiet cancellation of 22/6 14 is in my opinion genuine.

The cancellation features a scarce and interesting date error which was reported in the Ewens Weekly Stamp News issue of 30th January 1915. The newspaper reported that letters posted on the 12th and 22nd of September 1914 showed the month as 6 instead of 9, the date slug most probably inverted by mistake.

Photograph on back.

Ry Gibbs