






Michigan by Mail: Loose Lips Sink Ships

You are a censor in World War II. Your job is to read letters that soldiers and others on the front lines of war send home to Michigan, and make sure the letters don't contain important information that enemy troops could use against the Allies.

Read each letter carefully, mark any forbidden topics, and decide whether to approve the letters or return them to sender. The outcome of the war depends on you!




<p>England, 1943 to Ypsilanti, MI Dear Sharon, It's been a difficult month. Many of my patients have suffered awfully in the bombings, and there has been little I can do for them save keep them company in their final moments. Another battleship, the Empress, has launched from the port today. I can't help but worry that none of those sailors will return safely. With gratitude for your frequent letters, Joan</p>	<p>Does this letter mention:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Troop movements?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Ship sailings?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> War equipment?</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>  
<p>France, 1944 to Jackson, MI Dearest Barbara, Golly, has it been unbearably hot here in France these past few weeks, but we have all tried to raise each other's spirits as best we can. I can't tell you anymore of what is occurring here, for the sake of security, but I expect the children are doing well and are keeping up with their schoolwork. Love, Charlie</p>	<p>Does this letter mention:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Troop movements?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Ship sailings?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> War equipment?</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>  
<p>Germany, 1945 to Marshall, MI Margaret, I write this letter with great excitement. Next Wednesday we will be attacking the German position ten miles east of our location with our force of 10,000. It will be a daring fight, but I am fully confident in our victory. Your loving husband, Robert</p>	<p>Does this letter mention:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Troop movements?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Ship sailings?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> War equipment?</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>  



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<p>England, 1943 to Flint, Michigan</p> <p>Dear Robert,</p> <p>I hope you are pretty well, and that our father's health is steady. We sure saw plenty of excitement here today with the arrival of the newly-christened HMS Empress, a battleship built by our excellent industry back home. It is nearly 500 feet long, an aircraft carrier that will be of help in the war effort here.</p> <p>Your loving brother, Will</p>	<p>Does this letter mention:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Troop movements?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Ship sailings?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> War equipment?</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p> 
<p>Italy, 1944 to Detroit, MI</p> <p>Mother,</p> <p>This summer has seen progress in our campaign here, and I believe we will have a significant amount of action in the autumn. We are soon to reach the Senio River, where there is much fighting between partisans. We have had some trouble with the ammunition train, but hopefully that will be resolved by the time we see battle.</p> <p>With love, Adam</p>	<p>Does this letter mention:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Troop movements?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Ship sailings?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> War equipment?</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p> 
<p>Belgium, 1945 to Sault St. Marie, Michigan</p> <p>Dear Polly,</p> <p>I often feel homesick here, but I admit that I am not unhappy to miss the brutal winters back in Michigan. I hope you're all doing fine and keeping warm, and that the rationing has not left you hungry. I think it's likely that I will see the States again soon.</p> <p>Love, Michael</p>	<p>Does this letter mention:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Troop movements?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Ship sailings?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> War equipment?</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p> 

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Who fought against who in WWII?

The United States were part of the Allies. They teamed up with the United Kingdom, France, Russia, and many other countries.

The Allies fought against the Axis. The Axis powers included Germany, Japan, Italy, and other countries.

What did a “censor” do?

Censors were people who read letters that soldiers wrote during WWII. They made sure the letters didn't share important information about the Allies' war plans.

Why did the United States begin to censor letters?

The Axis could capture ships, trucks, or other vehicles that carried mail. If enemies got a hold of the letters, they might read them to try to learn about plans that the Allies wanted to keep secret.

What did censoring look like?

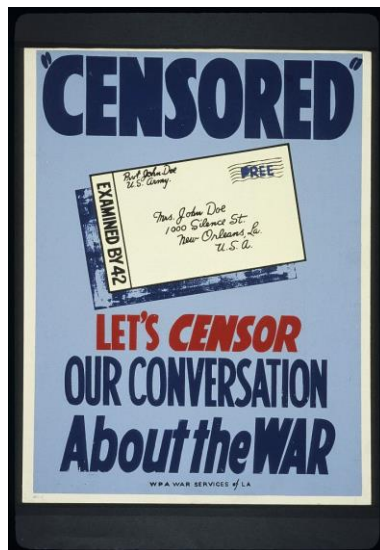
Sometimes, censors used a sharp knife to cut out information that couldn't be sent. They also might have covered information in black ink. But most of the time they would have simply kept the letter from being sent out.

How else did Americans keep secrets?

The United States government wasn't only concerned with soldiers' letters—they also warned everyday Americans not to speak about inside information. Posters like the ones below used patriotism to encourage people to keep quiet about war details.



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