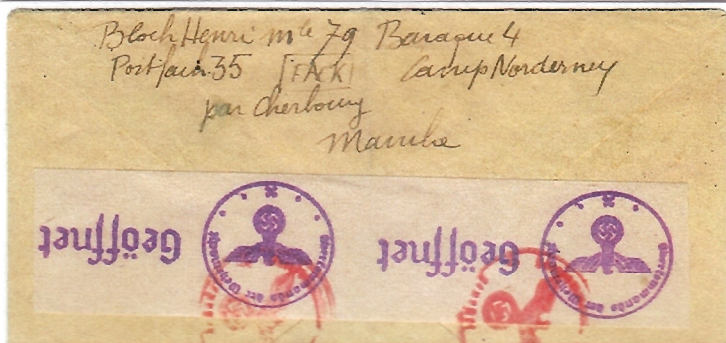


German occupation of the Channel Islands Concentration camp Norderney

During the entire duration of the war, the only part of the United Kingdom that fell to the Nazis was the [English] Channel Islands ("Norman Islands" to the German occupiers) off the coast of France — Jersey, Guernsey, Alderney, Herm, Jethou, and Sark. In January 1942 the Nazi occupiers built two concentration camps on Alderney — Sylt and Norderney.

The Nazis expelled nearly all of Alderney's resident population. In 1943 more than 800 French Jews, many married to Gentiles, were transported to the island as slave laborers. One survivor recalled their torment: "We arrived at night and disembarked. In the darkness we were forced to run the two kilometres to Camp Norderney, while the German guards continuously stabbed into our backs with their bayonets whilst also kicking us all the time. There were many men among us over seventy years of age but nobody was spared. Work, hard physical work for twelve and fourteen hours a day, every day, building the fortifications. Every day there were beatings and people's bones were broken, their arms or their legs. People died from overwork. We were starved and worked to death, so many died from total exhaustion." The French Jews were ordered back to the European mainland in May 1944, destined for the Neuengamme concentration camp. Belgian resistance fighters intercepted their transport, blew up the railway line, freed the captives, and protected them at Dixmude until liberation.



Henri Bloch's 1943 or 1944 letter to his wife at Paris is one of only 12 recorded prisoner covers from Camp Norderney, sent via Cherbourg, censored at Paris, canceled Paris Centralisateur. The surtax on the 1.50-franc + 50-centime semi-postal stamp supported *Secours National* (national relief). The origin and purpose of the EO/TR machine mark at the lower left is unknown.

