

AIR MAIL NEW STYLE:

Coastal Command had an unusual assignment. From St. Mangan, Cornwall, they were to fly one thousand pounds of letters and newspapers to H.M.S. Bermuda at sea off the Azores, 900 miles away. It would be nearly three weeks before the ship reached England, and if the crew had had to wait till then they would have had no letters for a month. Twenty canisters were each loaded with 50 pounds of mail. All was ready for the Shackleton aircraft to take off.

It wasn't the easiest of missions. As the coastline receded, with a Pathe News cameraman on board, the problem was one of pinpoint navigation, a rendezvous with a ship in mid-ocean. But it was pleasing to the skipper and crew to know that the RAF were doing the Senior Service a good turn. Six hours after the take-off they sighted H.M.S. Bermuda, 150 miles north east of the Azores. A pretty good piece of flying. It only remained to open the bomb bay doors and drop the canisters as close as possible. A pinace from the 8,000-ton cruiser picked them up. And how welcome to the 750 officers and men whose ship had attended the 350th anniversary of the founding of Bermuda. The aircraft headed home - a round trip of nearly 2,000 miles. Bermuda's crew thanked coastal command for a job well done.