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00.30 B.S.T. (i.e. FOR MORNING PAPERS) ON FRIDAY, FEB:20.1942.
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MAILS DELIVERED BY SKIS DURING SNOW STORM

A member of the Forces operating on skis helped the Post Office to deliver the mails during the January and February heavy snowfalls in Scotland. The deep snow on the roads made it impossible for the mail vans to get through, and this skiing expert took the letters between Banff and Turriff.

In Aberdeenshire, where the full weight of the snow storm was experienced, many villages were completely isolated. One village on the coast received its mails in the local life-boat, and another district had the mails brought by horse-drawn sledge.

On February 2 the railways in their neighbourhood being completely unusable, the troops again assisted the Post Office by establishing a motor lorry mail service between Aberdeen, Peterhead and Fraserburgh.

When the storm raged at its greatest fury the road vehicle services were suspended. One Officer in the Aberdeen Post Office who had finished an all-night duty at 7 a.m. carried two bags of mails on his back for four miles through the snow to ensure delivery in a district which otherwise would have been cut off.

There is also the story of the woman at Huntly who, although not a postwoman, was buried by the blizzard while taking round the mail. Her husband, a casual employee of the Post Office, fell ill while delivering the letters and was compelled to go home and take the remaining correspondence with him. After giving him attention his wife tried to deliver the letters. She fought the weather for two and a half miles, and was then caught in the snowdrift and parties searched and found her.

Another instance of enterprise and determination shown by Post Office workers occurred when Mr. J.B. Milne a postman of Aberdeen, fastened on a private pair of snow shoes and traversed his 18 miles round in the Craigiebuckler district. At the end of each journey he had his daily dip in the sea which he has never once missed during the last ten years.

An old woman remarked: "The papers were missing, the baker couldna mak' the road, but the postie aye comes!"

Snow was exceptionally deep at the entrance to Glen Isla. The driver of the van, in attempting to deliver the mails reached a gigantic barrier of snow. All day long, assisted by local farm servants and estate workers, the driver battled with the elements until darkness fell. Then he was obliged to extricate his van from the snow drifts on Fornethy Moor and return to Alyth. The effort to get through was repeated for the next five successive days, and on the sixth the driver managed to reach within three miles of his destination. Here he met a man on horseback who took charge of the mails for the head of the Glen.

/Near

Near Kelso snow on some of the roads was eighteen feet deep and notwithstanding this, postmen battled their way through to reach the isolated communities and bring them into postal contact with the outside world. One postman was stranded with his little red van and could proceed no further. He did not throw up the sponge; instead, he borrowed a horse from a farmer and went across fields carrying the mail bags, encountering ten foot drifts. He delivered every letter.

To reach the village of Yetholm and Morebattle, postmen waded waist deep in the snow for miles and by this means effected delivery.

An Edinburgh Post Office official went by car to make an inspection of the roads, and took with him some parcels containing perishables for the Childrens' Cottage Homes at Humbie. Within three miles of his destination the car was held up by mountainous drifts. Rather than that the children should be disappointed this officer slung the mail bags of parcels over his shoulder and walked through three miles of snow which nearly buried him.

The storms interfered not only with rail traffic but with telephones as well. Many lines ceased working: exchanges ran out of power. By labouring night and day depleted staffs managed to effect repairs and, in the majority of cases, communication was speedily restored.

Owing to the breakdown of the grid system, power plant failures were reported. Much ingenuity had to be exercised in re-charging exhausted batteries. For instance, one exchange used the output of an omnibus dynamo. By this method full telephone service was eventually restored, although all the time a complete service was given to a dozen most important subscribers.

Another place on the coast received a charging set shipped by trawler from Aberdeen by arrangement with the Naval Authorities.

GENERAL POST OFFICE.