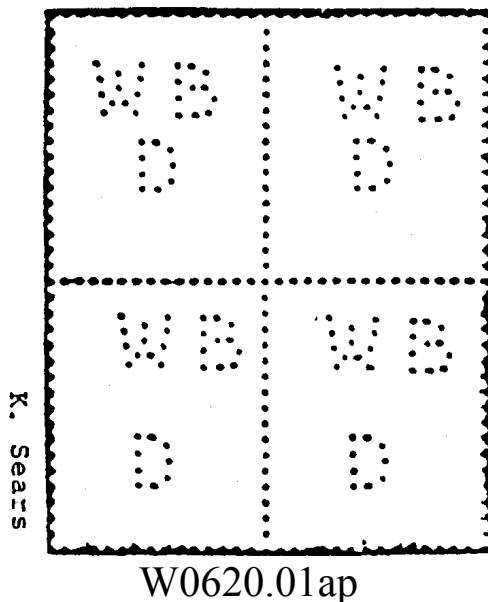
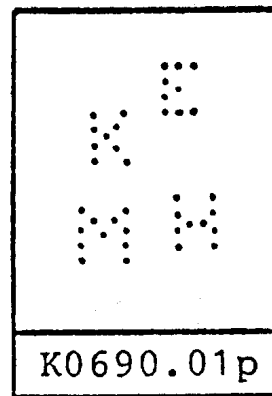
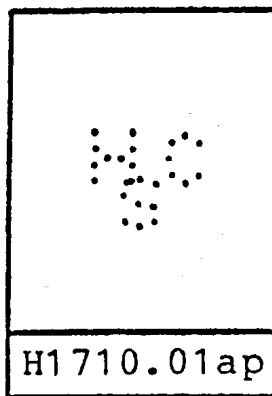
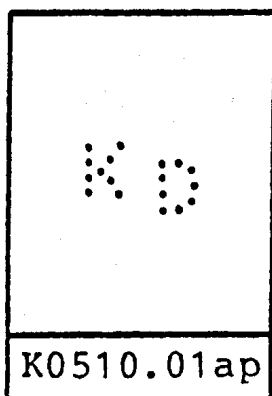


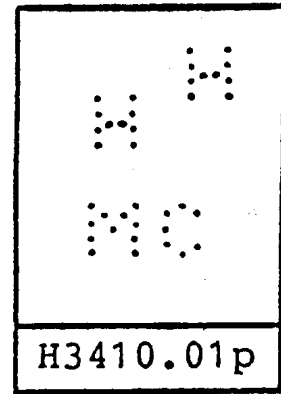
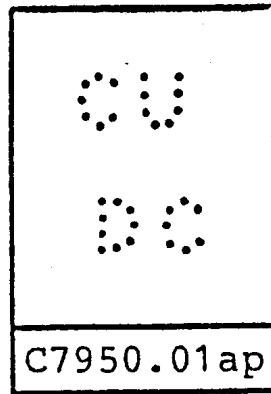
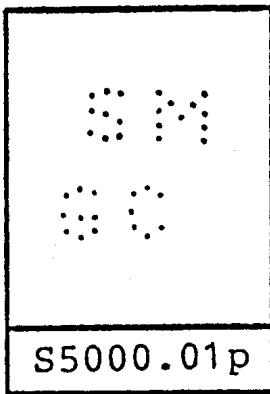
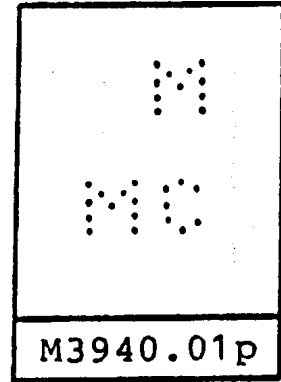
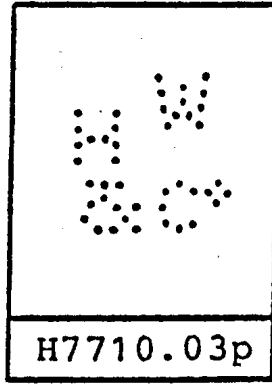
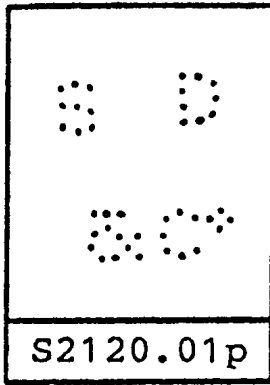
The existence of this small group of perfins was first suspected by the late Mr. K. Rymer-Young, and later confirmed by him through enquiries made of Slopers.



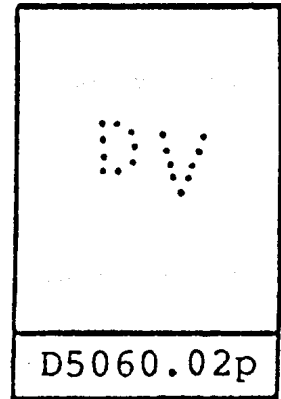
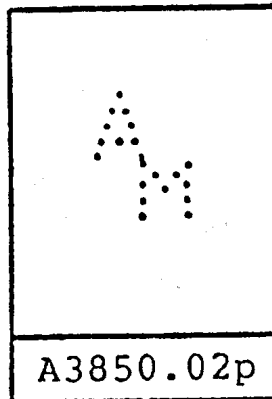
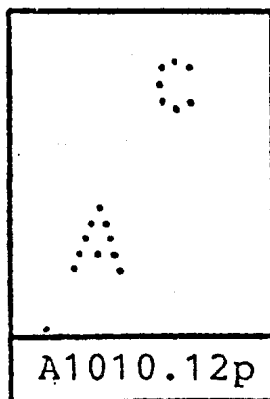
When Slopers works were blitzed during an air raid on London in May 1941, it must be assumed that many, if not all, of their dies were destroyed. Given the prevailing wartime conditions, a reasonable short-term solution was to improvise using single letter dies. In this way patterns involving combinations of letters could still be produced by passing the sheets of stamps several times through the perforating machines, each pass using a different letter. Inevitably, due to the very nature of this manual process, poor alignment and uneven spacing of the letters resulted, and in extreme cases the letters even overlapped.



In an attempt to speed up the process, single dies were made of common letter combinations. The most obvious of these was &C°, but many others are readily identifiable due to the constant alignment of pairs of letters. On occasions two sets of these pairs of letters were used to produce a four letter perfin.

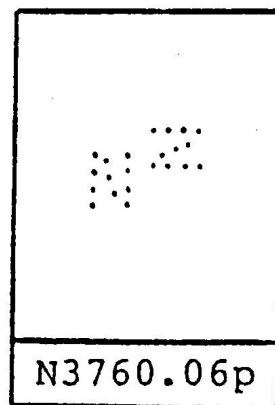
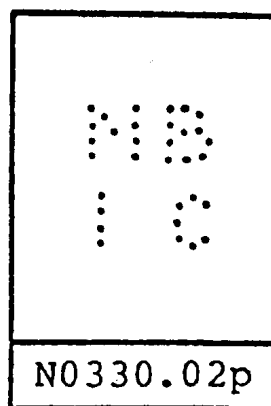
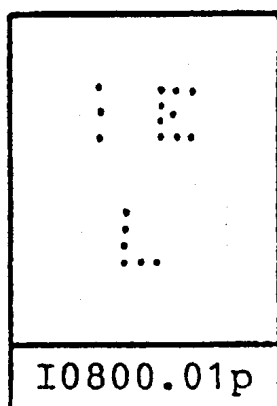


The vast majority of letters used were of the standard 4 hole type, but other larger letters were also used in combination with the smaller ones, notably 'A' and 'V'.



Two other devices may also have been used during this period to save the cost and delay in producing new dies - these are:-

- (a) deliberate pin removal to convert one letter into another,



- (b) the use of a letter in a new orientation.

A good indication of a Wartime Provisional perfin is the misalignment of letters, but additional confirmation is the actual stamp issues involved. At the time the works suffered damage the current postage stamps were the King George VI dark colours. Very shortly afterwards though, the lower values to 3d had their colours lightened as a wartime economy. These new shades were introduced progressively between the 21st July 1941 and the 28th September 1942. The majority of these in their turn were replaced by changed colours on 3 May 1951. Earlier chroniclers have indicated a relatively short life for these Wartime Provisionals. I have noted dates well into 1947 but have never seen an example on the changed colour issue of 1951.

Further study of this interesting group of perfins is required to catalogue more accurately the 'dies' involved. Collectors of these perfins are invited to send to the author photocopies of their holdings together with any supporting information such as issues, postmarks and legible dates.