



## **Mail screening matters: 2014 UK parcel bombs**

*Parcel and letter bombs were used by the IRA during the group's terror campaigns in the 1970s. But, decades later, organisations are still at risk of receiving dangerous mail with the same tactics; and the IRA isn't the only potential culprit.*

*The Centre for the Protection of National Infrastructure (CPNI) has launched a campaign to highlight the importance of mail security. Malicious mail has the potential to be very disruptive, which was the case in 2014 when a series of parcel bombs were sent to military careers offices across England.*

In February 2014, a group claiming to be the IRA delivered parcel bombs over the course of a week to several British Armed Forces Careers Offices. The first set of packages were sent to branches in Reading and Kent, followed by a second batch to Oxford, Brighton, Canterbury, and a shopping centre in Slough.

Media reports indicated that after the package's delivery, the shopping centre had to be temporarily evacuated, and bomb disposal units from the Ministry of Defence were called in. After the packages were made safe, they were forensically examined. The small, crude devices were contained within envelopes addressed by hand, and a number of them featured Dublin postmarks.

None of the devices were particularly sophisticated, and none of them detonated. On another day however it could have been a different story. Following the attack, screening procedures for mail sent to armed forces offices were reviewed to help prevent future incidents.

*CPNI encourage organisations to consider their own mail screening and security practices. CPNI's "Mail Screening Matters" campaign provides tools and resources to increase awareness around postal security and help reduce the risk and impact of suspicious mail. Search for more information on mail screening and security at [www.cpni.gov.uk](http://www.cpni.gov.uk)*