

NEW AIRGRAPH SERVICE

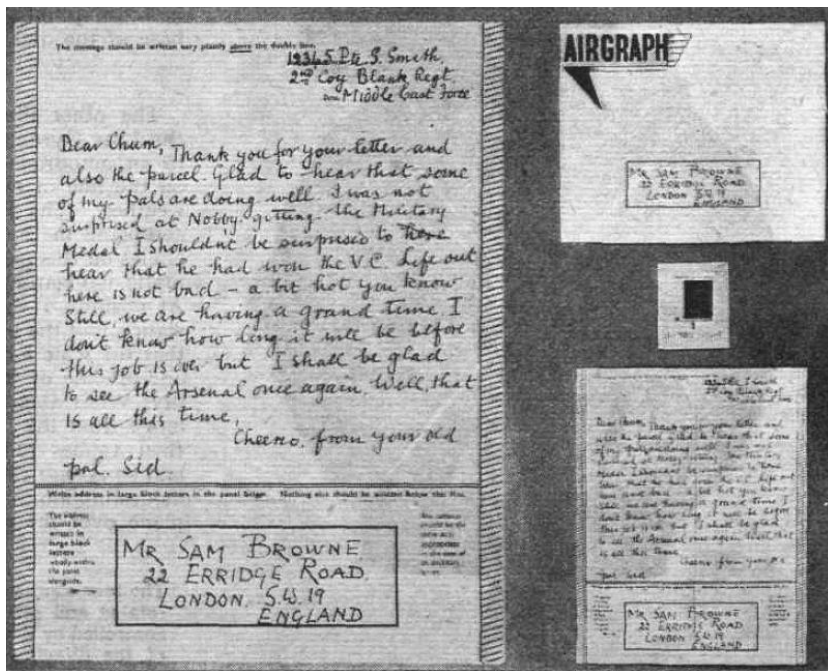
Photographic System Will Expedite Middle East Mail

LIKE most clever ideas, the new "Airgraph" system of sending letters between this country and the Forces in J the Middle East, which was announced in last week's issue of Flight, is a delightfully simple one. It saves days in transit time and costs the sender only a fraction of the expense of ordinary air-mail. Briefly, the sender writes the message on a social form which is photographed on a film negative measuring only 1/2in. by 5/8in. from which a readable enlargement is reproduced at the other end.

As 4,500 of these tiny negatives weigh only one pound as against the 1½ cwt. which would be the weight of an equivalent number of ordinary letters. the saving in weight and space for transit by air will be appreciated. By virtue of this saving the fighting man in the Middle East and his family and friends at home will be able to correspond at the cost of 3d. per letter. Moreover the time taken for the letter to reach its recipient will be less than a fortnight, where as ordinary air-mail letters owing to their weight, have to be carried part of the way by sea and thus take very much longer.

The homeward Airgraph Service will begin almost at once and a similar out-ward service from this country to the Middle East will follow as soon as certain technical arrangements can be completed. The service is, of course, supplementary to the normal postal service and it admittedly has two slight disadvantages—it is not entirely private and it imposes a limit on the length of the letter sent. But in practice these snags are more apparent than real. It is true that an Airgraph letter cannot be sent ail the way in a sealed envelope, but it is delivered sealed to the recipient, and it can obviously be taken for granted that the postal staff who photograph and reproduce the letters will have no Personal interest in their contents nor time in which to notice them.

As regards the limit on letter length the form on which the sender writes the message measures 11in. by 8in. (including the margin for the recipient's address) and quite a lot can be said in this space. Incidentally the enlargement received at the other end measures 5in. by 4in. which, unless the sender were to write his original letter in an extremely tiny hand in order to cram in an abnormal amount of matter, will be found to be quite big enough for easy reading.



This system of cheapening and expediting postal communication between the Middle East Forces and the home country is the first of its kind in the world and has been evolved by the Post Office in co-operation with a well-known photography firm who have sent an expert out to the Middle East to supervise that end of the undertaking. The Airgraph Service has the full co-operative support of the Admiralty, War Office and Air Ministry who welcome its introduction as a solution to the problem of the long time previously taken by ordinary letters to and from this theatre of war.

This picture shows the comparative sizes of the original letter and the recipient's copy in relation to the film negative actually sent by air.