

EGYPT STUDY CIRCLE.

THE QUARTERLY CIRCULAR.

Vol. V. Nos. 7 & 8. 1960. (Whole Series, Nos. 55 & 56.)

CONTENTS.

Changes of address Earliest recorded date for type 1, c.d.s. required. Back numbers of the "Q.C." required.	}	Page 72.
Postal Notices.		
Postal arrangements for British Forces. 31 Aug. 1882.	-	73.
Money order arrangements. October 1882.	-	74.
July Circle meeting.	-	75.
Corrections to "Q.C." Vol. V. Nos. 4, 5 & 6.	-	76.
Notes on the "Retta" cancellations of Egypt.	-	77 - 80.
Circular Datestamps of the M.P.O's during the postal concession period. Minett & Firebrace.	-	81 - 90
Some facts about the Egyptian P.O. in Harar. by Lars Alund.	-	90 - 92.

THE QUARTERLY CIRCULAR.

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Vol. V. Nos. 7 & 8. Page 72. 1960. Whole Series, Nos. 55/56.

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CHANGES OF ADDRESS.

- No. 98. Larry Vincent, 3132, Arrowhead Drive, Lexington, Kentucky, U.S.A.  
98. Leslie Bowyer, 33, Mellor Crescent, Knutsford, Cheshire.  
105. Justice Lars Alund, L.L.D., 33, Leksandsvägen, Bromma, Sweden.

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EARLIEST RECORDED DATE FOR TYPE I. c.d.s. REQUIRED.

The earliest recorded date for a Type I c.d.s. CANCELLING AN ADHESIVE i.e. during January 1866 is required.  
Will members having such material please send particulars to the Editor ?

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BACK NUMBERS OF THE " Q.C. " required for the Record.

The Deputy Keeper of the philatelic record, Mr. Chas. W. Minett, would be glad if members having spare copies of any of the following would send the same to him for use in connection with the Record.

"Q.C.". Vols I to IV.

"L.O.P." Nos. 1 to 76, inclusive.

Cut out articles on Egypt from various magazines.

Illustrated auction catalogues.

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# EGYPT.

## Postal Arrangements for British Forces.

FOR the convenience of Her Majesty's Forces serving in Egypt, the Postmaster-General has established an Army Post Office, which will undertake all duties connected with the receipt and despatch of Mails, the sale of Postage Stamps, and the issue and payment of Money Orders and Postal Orders.

Mails for the Forces in Egypt will be made up in London three times a week, viz. :—

- On Monday Evenings.
- On Wednesday Mornings.
- On Friday Evenings.

The rates of Postage will be as follows :—

Letters - - - - -	2½d. per ½ oz.
Post Cards - - - - -	1d. each.
Newspapers - - - - -	½d. each not exceeding 2 oz. in weight, and ½d. for every additional 2 oz.
Printed Papers and Books -	

But, in exception to the above rate on letters, those addressed to or sent by Non-commissioned Officers, Soldiers, and Seamen in Her Majesty's Service, will be privileged to pass for a postage of one penny each, provided the letters do not exceed half an ounce in weight. To enjoy this privilege the senders must, in all cases, comply with the regulations specially applicable to such letters,—as detailed in the Post Office Guide.

Money Orders and Postal Orders will be issued at the same rates of commission as Inland Money Orders and Postal Orders.

By Command of the Postmaster General.

GENERAL POST OFFICE  
11 August, 1882.

No.



# EGYPT

## Money Order Arrangements consequent on the withdrawal of the Army Post Office

THE Army Post Office having been withdrawn from Egypt, Money Orders issued in favour of Officers, Soldiers, and Seamen, serving in the Army of occupation, or in the Fleet, will henceforward be payable through the Egyptian Post Office, and will therefore be subject to the rate of Commission ordinarily charged for Orders payable in Egypt, viz. :—

	<i>s.</i>	<i>d.</i>
For sums not exceeding £2 - - - - -	0	9
“ “ above £2, and not exceeding £5 - - -	1	6
“ “ “ £5 “ “ £7 - - -	2	3
“ “ “ £7 “ “ £10 - - -	3	0

The issue of Postal Orders for transmission to Officers, Soldiers, and Seamen, serving in Egypt, is necessarily discontinued, as no arrangements exist for cashing them at the Egyptian Post Office.

By Command of the Postmaster General.

GENERAL POST OFFICE  
October, 1882.

JULY CIRCLE MEETING. REPORT BY CHAS. W. MINETT.

At the Circle meeting held on Monday, 18th. July, 1960 the forged overprints on Egyptian adhesives, from 1879 to 1922, were studied.

1. The provisional issue of 1879, - 5 and 10 paras on  $2\frac{1}{4}$  piastres.
    - (a) No forgeries of the normal overprint were recorded.
    - (b) Forgeries of the inverted overprints are dangerous and specimens were examined.
  2. The "Official" issue of 1913. The "O.H.H.S." (in inverted commas) is a rejected trial printing.
    - (a) A strip of three used has been seen in Cairo.
    - (b) Only one inverted used copy is known, on an O.H.H.S. cover. (Byam)
    - (c) No mint examples have been recorded.
    - (d) No forgeries have been recorded.
  3. The same issue but without inverted commas.
    - (a) No forgeries of the normal overprint were reported.
    - (b) Three types of forgeries of the inverted overprint are recognisable, one is crude, the others are dangerous.
  4. The provisional issue of 1915. 2 mills on 3 mills (Ras el Tin).
    - (a) The overprint, which may be described roughly as "sideways" is a trial overprint.
    - (b) No forgeries of the normal overprint were reported.
  5. The provisional issue of 1926. 15 mills on 200 mills (Agriculture).
    - (a) No forgeries of the normal overprint were reported.
    - (b) One sheet of the double overprint was found in Alexandria.
    - (c) Forgeries of the double overprint exist and differences were noted.
  6. The Port Fuad issue of 1926.
    - (a) Genuine overprints were lithographed.
    - (b) Forged overprints were typographed and one dangerous type exists. Other known forgeries are very crude.
  7. The Crown overprints of 1922 - 23.
    - (a) Type I. (lithographed in London) The 100 and 200 mills have been forged typographically, the overprint being set at an angle different from that of the genuine.
    - (b) Type I. Inverted overprints on the 100 mills on single watermarked paper were prepared by P.M.G. Borton Pasha.
    - (c) Type III. (stereotyped in groups in January 1923). The 1 mill with single watermarked paper was overprinted by a retired official (25 normal and 5 inverted examples are recorded.)
-

CORRECTIONS TO " Q. C. " Vol. V. Nos. 4, 5 and 6.

Vol. V. No. 4.

Corrigenda to " Notes on the Posts of the British Forces in Egypt,  
1801 to 1956 )

- Page 40. Line 2. Omit word " For "  
Last line. For "(107th Foot) " read " ( 35th Foot )"
- 42. " The Early Twentieth Century " - Against date " 19.12.0 " omit "(B/S)"
- 43. Last para but one - For "Lazare Ho " read " Lazaretto" and for "Inex"  
read " Mex " .
- 44. Penultimate para, (a) line 2, for " were in use " read " were issued  
for use " .
- 45. Para (d) ABUQIR. Omit " ( Recorded used on 20.3.37 and 19.9.38 by  
Rawson )" .
- 46. After " (c) " add new title " World War II, 1939 - 1945 " .  
At end of para following " Japan surrendered " add " and  
Parcels, etc. " to " for Air Mail " .
- 47. (a) Amend " Port Said / Naval Censor " p.b." to read " P.13.
- 47. Para (a) AMRIA-MARIUT. The date should read 3.1.40 and the line should  
be inserted above, between MARSA MATRUH and ABU QIR.  
PORT SAID. Amend " p.b. " after "Naval Censor" to read " P. 13. "
- Para (c) Omit " ABU QIR. 6.?.40. (Rawson).
- Para (b) Add " \* " after dates 8.8.40 and 3.8.43.
- Para (d) Add " \* - An (\*) denotes usage after the Italian intervention.

Vols V. Nos 5 & 6.

- Page 60. Bottom line. " Society of Postal Historians " ( not Postal History  
Society )
- 63. Penultimate para. - line 3. for " 1932 " read " 1936 " .

NOTES ON THE " RETTA " CANCELLATIONS OF EGYPT.

At the Circle meeting, held on the 20th February, 1959, the usages of Retta cancellations during the present century were discussed.

1. For comparative purposes examples of the original Retta ( Seymour Blomfield's type B.1. ) used on the earliest issues of Egypt were inspected. This Retta, consisting of a rhombus of 81 diamond shaped dots, is usually well defined on the 1st, 2nd and 3rd. issues but becomes heavier and somewhat blurred on the issue of 1879 whilst examples on the issues of 1884 and 1888 tend to have less defined corners, the obtuse angles in particular becoming rounded off.

In an even more distorted shape this Retta saw occasional use during the earlier years of the present century and it is believed that it was employed as an obliteration on adhesive stamps which had missed being cancelled at their offices of origin. One cover, sent in by Professor Smith, was franked by a 2 P.T./ 25 centimes " Sower " type of the French P.O. in Syria. It was from a business house in Beyrout to another in Alexandria. The adhesive was cancelled by the Retta and the reverse of the cover bears the transit mark of Port Said and arrival mark of Alexandria, both are dated 1st April 1921.

The question as to whether the Retta was normally used on incoming sea mails is discredited since Port Said is known to have had at least two " Paquebot " handstamps in use about this time. Suez and Port Taufig also had their " Paquebot " handstamps although it must be admitted that so far we have no record that Alexandria had one prior to 1924.

2. A second type of Retta, also dating from the last century, is rectangular in shape, measures about 14 X 10.5 m/m. and is formed of diagonal rows of square dots totalling about 224 ( approx. 16 X 14 ). It is recorded used on adhesives of the 1888 issue and postage due issues of 1889 and 1902 and has been recorded used on the 1914 issue by M. Gabriel Boulad ( L.O.P. July, 1953 ) One cover recorded bears the Retta cancelling a 1 P.T. ultramarine of 1884 from Omdurman ( 28.V.99 ) to Hampshire. Three boxed " T " marks have been struck out in pencil ( Rawson ).
- 3-5. M. Boulad also illustrates two 9 X 9 framed Rettas and a larger unframed one with 9 X 9 large dots and says that they are known on the 1914 and subsequent issues. The use of one of the former, a clearly framed type with rounded angles, was illustrated by H. Mohanny Eid in L.O.P. of January, 1955 and appears to have been used to cancel a refused adhesive at Ismailia in 1932. Further examples of this one on the 1933 air mail issue and on the 1936 Agricultural Exhibition 20 mills stamp, but no covers, were produced at the meeting.
5. The larger unframed one with 9 X 9 dots we have recorded used on the 1927 Fuad issue ( Ward ).
6. There is another large unframed one with 9 X 9 very large dots which M. Boulad says was used in 1927, certainly it is illustrated in his article on " Mixed Frankings of Modern Times " ( L.O.P. April 1952 ) cancelling unaccepted adhesives in 1939.
7. Contemporaneously with the clearly framed 9 X 9 Retta was an unframed one with 10 X 10 dots and this has been found used on copies of the 1927 Fuad issue. An airmail cover to England is recorded with this Retta

cancelling a 5 m. & a 10 m. air mail of the 1933 issue, unfortunately there is no date on this cover which appears to be pre World War II, since it bears no war time censor mark. The rate indicates that it was sent by surface mail, (Minett).

- 8-10. During the period of concessional mail for British Troops four types of retta were used by the British M.P.O.s ( or unit postal clerks when mail was sent through certain civil offices ), between 1932 and 1936, to cancel the N.A.A.F.I. seals. All were framed and had either 17 X 15, 15 X 15, 10 X 9, or 9 X 9 dots. it is thought that they were not used on civil mail even after they ceased to perform the function for which they had been made and issued. They are being dealt with in detail in the Study of British Mails in Egypt.
11. During the early years of World War II what appears to be the first retta in its distorted shape seems to have been resurrected and used ( possibly at Alexandria ) on British Naval mail. Three covers bearing, in red or blue, the British Naval double-framed oval censor mark " Passed by / 28 / Naval censor " were shown at the meeting. The first is franked with 4 X 10 Fuad Army Post stamps cancelled by the retta but bearing no other postal marking ( Minett ), The second, also to England, bears 4 X 10 m. Farouk Army Post stamps cancelled by the retta and the London " Received from / H.M.Ships " arrival mark of 21.2.40 (Minett). The third, addressed to Australia, bears 4 X 10 Farouk Army Post stamps cancelled by the retta. On the stamps also is an undated circular British " Received from / H.M.Ships " arrival mark ( Smith ).
- 12.(a) A distinctive retta consisting of 5X5 large dots was also used on British Naval mail in the early years of the war. Two covers to England from a British A-B, each bearing 4 X 10 Farouk Army Post stamps have been cancelled by this retta, one cover has the adhesives stamped in addition with the British undated circular " Received from / H.M.Ships " arrival mark. Both have boxed " Passed by / (number) / Naval censor " cachets in red, one being numbered 4862 and the other 9257 ( Firbace ).

It is of interest to note that a commercial cover with a 6 m. Investiture stamp cancelled by a c.d.s. of Port Said/u dated 6 DE. 40 to Cairo bears the red British Naval censor mark just referred to with the same number 9257 (Gilbert). The inference is therefore that this particular retta belongs to Port Said.

- (b) However it is found also cancelling a 6 m. Investiture stamp on another cover to a civilian addressee at Port Said, it is from No. 19 Italian Internee camp at Geneifa ( by the Bitter Lakes ) and has been opened by the Egyptian Civil censor and bears his violet unnumbered cachet, in addition it is backstamped with a " Facteurs / Port Said " and a " Port Said / Traffic/D" c.d.s. of 25 AP.42 (Byam)

13. A 10 X 10 unframed retta which may be that already referred to ( see para 7 ) but in a dirtier state appears to have been used as a cancellor during war time for a number of purposes and details of a number of covers follow :-
- (a) An airmail cover to Scotland bearing 9 X 5m Investiture stamps has been opened and re-sealed by the Egyptian Civil censor's label and bears his violet circular handstamp, No. 53. (Minett).
- (b) A cover to London bearing a 15 m Investiture stamp and a 30 mil Airmail stamp has been opened and re-sealed by the Egyptian Civil censor's label and bears his violet circular handstamp No. 9. It is backstamped with



the Cairo machine mark dated 26th March 1940. (Minett).

- (c) An air mail cover to Pembroke Dock bearing 3 X 15m Investiture stamps and the Cairo machine type censor mark in black was unopened, the adhesives are cancelled by the retta in violet (Minett).
- (d) An air mail envelope to India franked with a 5m and 2 X 6m Investiture stamps was unopened in Egypt but bears the violet circular censor mark No. 1. The words "Air Mail" etc., printed on the envelope have been cancelled in pencil. On the reverse is the Cairo machine mark dated 1 Oct. 1940 and the Secunderabad arrival mark of 7th Mar. 1941. The Retta may be the 9 X 9 framed one and not the 10 X 10 unframed one (Smith).
- (e) A letter franked with single 1m and 5m Investiture stamps sent from the Italian Internees Camp No. 4 at Fayed to Cairo bears an oval civil censorship cachet in violet and is backstamped with the Cairo civil machine mark dated 17th March 1941 (Gilbert).
- (f) A letter similarly franked addressed to "Signora C. Martini" in Cairo has been opened and then sealed by the Egyptian civil censor No. 59. It bears also a Cairo machine backstamp but unfortunately the date has failed to register (Gilbert).
- (g) Part of the front of a package bears a 2m+2 X 10m Investiture stamps and is addressed to the International Red Cross at Geneva. It bears a violet framed cachet "P/W MIDDLE / EAST 062" (Smith)
- (h) A cover bearing 2 X 5d. G.B. stamps addressed to the U.S.A., bears a framed cachet "CENSURED" (in emerald) and has been opened and re-sealed by the Egyptian Civil Censor who applied his No. 25 in violet. In manuscript there is "By Air Mail" but this has been cancelled in pencil. On the reverse the censorship label has been tied with a circular civil censorship mark No. 96 (in black) and there is the Cairo civil machine mark of 7th July, 1944. In emerald there is the cachet "Le Commissaire de 2<sup>e</sup> classe L.H. BRUN/Commissaire/de l'Unité Marine Egypte". It has been opened and re-sealed again in America (Minett)
- (i) An envelope of the B.I.S.N.Co., Ltd., franked with 2 X 5d. G.B. stamps is addressed to "Monsieur le Capitaine, chargé de la Poste Navale, Alger". It is from "Mr. Achard, Commandant le M/V Eridan, Navy House, Port Said" and bears a circular unnumbered civil censor mark (in violet). It has been opened by the Egyptian Civil Censor and re-sealed, the label being tied on the reverse by the circular civil censorship mark No. 96 (in black). It also bears an airmail label which has been scored out in pencil after censorship (Minett).

14. Towards the end of the war a framed Retta with 15 X 15 dots was used to obliterate adhesives which otherwise had escaped being cancelled. A war-time example dated 14/12/44 (Smith) and a post-war cover dated 19/10/45 (Minett) clearly illustrate this usage.

15. Wartime civil censorship ceased about the end of August 1945 but early in the summer of 1948 the Egyptians re-introduced it and the following undated covers are recorded with the new censorship mark:-

- (a) An air mail cover franked with 47 mills (of the 1944 Farouk issue) to Eire is cancelled by a framed retta with 9 X 9 diamond shaped dots (heavy in appearance and seemingly identical with that used on British Forces mail between 1932 and 1936 (Minett)).

- (b) An air mail cover (of the "B.I." Line) to England similarly franked and cancelled but this time the retta and censor mark are in greenish-blue (Minett).
- (c) This, or a similar, Retta was reported in "Stamp Collecting" 6/10/49 as having been used on mail put ashore from the S.S. "Mooltan", on 4/9/48, and from the S.S. "Kaipaki".
16. (a) From about the time of the re-introduction of Egyptian civil censorship in 1948 the 15 X 15 retta ( see para 14) appears as the only canceller on air mail covers to the U.S.A. (rate 44 mills, Smith & Minett) and Great Britain ( rate 37 mills, Minett) and on surface mail to G.B. (rate 17 mills, Minett).
- (b) In addition it has a "Paquebot" application since a 2<sup>nd</sup> d. G.B., U.P.U., stamp of 1949 cancelled by it franks a censored cover to England. ( C.W. Ward of the "T.P.O. & Seapost Society " to whom it was sent originally states that it was put ashore at Port Said from the S.S. "Orion" en route for Australia (Minett)
- (c) It was also reported by Mr. Hamlin (of the T.P.O. & Seapost Society) in "Stamp Collecting" (6/10/49) as having been used on mail put ashore from H.M.T. "Asturias" on 3/11/48 and from S.S. "Carthage" on 14/4/49.
- (d) It is known also in greenish-blue (together with similarly coloured censor marks) in 1949, one of three air mail covers to China and G.B., having been postmarked on arrival on 17.3.49 (Minett) after being put ashore from the P. & O. "Strathaird" en route for Australia (m/s on back).
17. From the foregoing it may be seen that the Retta has been used - always as a cancellation - for the following purposes during the present century-
- (a) To cancel adhesives which otherwise have escaped cancellation. (paras 1 & 14)
- (b) To cancel unaccepted adhesives. (paras. 3 - 5 & 6)
- (c) To cancel adhesives on certain surface and "Paquebot" mail. paras. 7, 13d, 15c, 16b,c & d).
- (d) To cancel the N.A.A.F.I. seals used on British Forces mail between 1932 and 1936. (paras. 8 - 10).
- (e) To cancel adhesives on certain air mail letters. (paras 13, a, b & c, 15 a & b & 16 a.)
- (f) To cancel adhesives on British Naval mail. (paras 11 & 12 a.)
- (g) To cancel adhesives on Italian Internoe Camp mail. (paras. 12 b & 13c&f)
- (h) To cancel adhesives on P.O.W. mail. (para. 13 g)
- (i) To cancel adhesives on surface mail, possibly from the French Fleet interned at Alexandria after the fall of France. ( paras. 13 h & i)
- NOTE. The Circle would be grateful if some member would undertake to carry on this Study from here.

CIRCULAR DATESTAMPS of the MILITARY POST OFFICES

during the

POSTAL CONCESSION PERIOD (pre-censorship), 1932-1939.

by CHARLES MINETT and JOHN FIREBRACE.

INTRODUCTION.

We begin by referring to the "Notes on the Posts of the British Forces in Egypt ( 1801 to 1956 )" published in the Q.C. Vol. V. No. 4. and we now attempt to deal in more detail with paragraph (d) on pages 45 and 46, namely the Circular Datestamps of the Military Post Offices which were in existence during the Postal Concession Period from 1st. Nov., 1932 up to the beginning of military postal censorship which followed the Declaration of War on Germany on 3rd. September, 1939.

The latest recorded uncensored cover from a military post office is from Cairo Fig. 147 and is dated 16th September, 1939 (Firebrace). Covers of an earlier date however are known with censor marks and the study of censored covers from named post offices ( as opposed to numbered field post offices) is being carried out at the present time, and will be printed in due course. The earliest cover bearing a British Military Censor so far recorded is from Marsa Matruh Civil Post Office and is dated 10th Sept., 1939 (Firebrace); Egyptian civil censor marks exist from 4th Sept., 1939 (Minett).

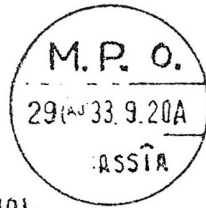
During the period under review, from 1932 to 1939, eight ( or with MPO Abbassia, q.v., nine) Military Post Offices with their own datestamp or datestamps were open and these datestamps were of course used both with the Crowned Circle handstamps and to cancel the Army Post adhesives. Each M.P.O. used variations of a standard type of datestamp believed to have been made in Egypt. In the centre appeared the date between horizontal bars; above the date were the letters "M.P.O." and below the date the M.P.O. name. Both the letters "M.P.O." and the M.P.O. name are found "straight" (e.g. Figs 111 and 121) and "curved" (Figs. 141 and 145) or "straight" and "curved" together, (Figs. 161 and 163). Alexandria, in addition used a special distinctive datestamp commonly known as and hereafter referred to as the "Barrel" type (Fig.131).

Every datestamp is illustrated for easier visual identification. Provisional numbers have been allotted to them so that further discoveries can be inserted, possibly in numerical and date order. ( Two new types and innumerable dates have been recorded since the first draft).

M.P.O. ABBASSIA.

On the inauguration of the Postal Concession a post box for Concession Mail was placed in the Military Post Office at Abbassia, but during the period up to the disbandment of M.P.O. Abbassia on 1st Feb., 1935, no example of a cover with the M.P.O. datestamp on the front has been recorded. It is probable, therefore, that M.P.O., Cairo datestamped all the mail posted at M.P.O. Abbassia before its disbandment just as it did for certain afterwards. M.P.O. Abbassia was situated about two miles from M.P.O. Cairo.

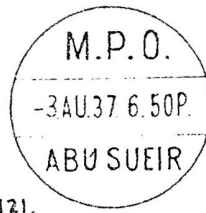
Only one example of the M.P.O. Abbassia datestamp has been recorded and that an incomplete strike in Leslie's collection.



101.



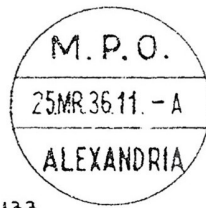
111.



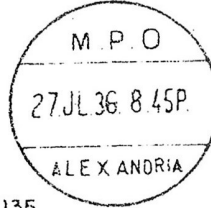
121.



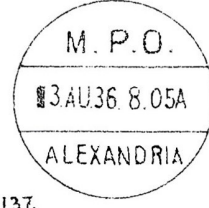
131.



133.



135.



137.



141.



142.



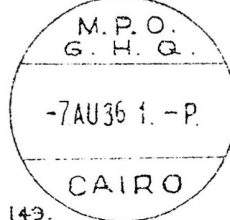
143.



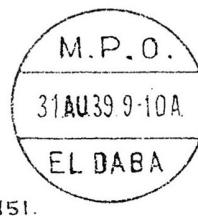
145.



147.



149.



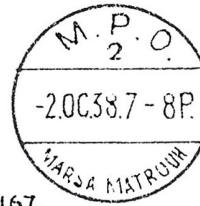
151.



161.



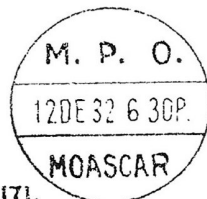
163.



167.



169.



171.



173.



181.

The illustration (Fig. 101) is an exact copy of this strike and the cover on which it is found originated in Cairo, Crowned Circle 5, dated 21st Aug., 1933 and was addressed to London. Here it was returned to Egypt, being forwarded to R.A.O.C. Abbassia, receiving en route an M.P.O. Cairo datestamp on 28th Aug., 1933 and the M.P.O. Abbassia datestamp on 29th Aug., 1933, both being struck on the reverse.

Unless and until the M.P.O. Abbassia datestamp is found as a datestamp of origin struck on the face of a cover, we do not wish to classify it with the other M.P.O. datestamps discussed herein. It is of interest that the datestamps of M.P.O. Cairo are recorded on incoming mail only, up to 1932 and those of Alexandria similarly up to 1935. M.P.O. Abbassia should, we believe be classified with these usages on the evidence of material known to us at present.

M.P.O. ABU QIR.

M.P.O. Abu Qir was for the use of the Royal Air Force Depot at Abu Qir, and was opened on 1st March 1936 and was closed on 24th January 1937, after which date letters were dealt with by Abu Qir Civil Post Office and received the civil datestamp. Unlike in the early days of the Concession Period, Mamura civil post office does not appear to have been used.

Sometime around Christmas 1936, between 15th and 29th December according to recorded covers, a break occurred in the circumference of the datestamp under the "Q" of Abu Qir. Covers are known datestamped 15th January 1936 which is, of course, and "impossible" date but as they also bear the "break under Q" they should almost certainly be dated 15th January 1937, that is to say the final slug of the date was wrongly inserted.

M.P.O. ABU SUEIR.

M.P.O. Abu Sueir was also for the use of the R.A.F., principally No. 4 Flying Training School and was opened on 1st March 1936, the post office being situated on the R.A.F. Station. Cancellations are found in black up to 1st Dec. 1936 and the M.P.O. is recorded by Seymour Thompson writing in 1939, as closing in this year. From 3rd. August 1937 however covers are again found, this time with the datestamp struck in blue (or greenish blue) up to the beginning of 1939 and later during censorship.

Some covers were routed through Abu Sueir civil post office and thence by train to Alexandria where if they had not already received a t.p.o. datestamp en route, they obtained the Alexandria civil datestamp in addition to the Abu Sueir civil departure datestamp.

	<u>Earliest date.</u>	<u>Latest date.</u>
via Abu Sueir civil and with Abu Qir-Alexandria t.p.o.	27th March 1936.	
via Abu Sueir civil and with Alexandria civil	29th August 1936.	31 Mar 1938.

M.P.O. ALEXANDRIA.

M.P.O. Alexandria is first recorded using a "Barrel" datestamp in 1897 (Peter Smith and Rawson) and covers bearing this type of datestamp are known at intervals until 18th April 1919 (Binett), following which date no example is recorded for 16 years, sometime during which period M.P.O. Alexandria presumably closed.

It reopened, however, on 1st Nov. 1935 at the time of the Italo-Abyssinian affair with a further version of the "barrel" datestamp (Fig. 131) used now as a

cancellation and also a version of the standard type (Fig. 133). From recorded covers it would appear that both these types gave way to two other versions of the standard type (Figs. 135 and 137) in July 1936.

M.P.O. Alexandria closed down on 24th Jan. 1937 and military mail was routed through the Egyptian civil post office.

#### M.P.O. CAIRO.

A military post office was open in the General Post Office, Cairo as long ago as 1897. Here also a "Barrel" datestamp was used at this date, 25th July 1897 (Gilbert) and an M.P.O. cancellation of the standard type is recorded in 1930 (Revell). M.P.O. Cairo was, therefore, already open at the beginning of the Postal Concession Period and was the only military post office then open. Cairo had replaced Alexandria as the Base Army Post Office during World War I.

M.P.O. Cairo served all troops in and around Cairo including the Cavalry Brigade areas and Headquarters Middle East, and the R.A.F. Units at Helouan and Heliopolis. Cairo had the most prolific output of letters of the military post offices and five different datestamps (Figs. 141 to 147) are easily identified and were in regular use though not all at the same time. Two and possibly three of these types continued in use after the introduction of censorship the earliest censored cover being dated 10th Oct. 1939. (Firebrace)

#### M.P.O. EL DABA.

El Daba was a small village about one hundred miles to the west of Alexandria and is on the railway, which in 1939, ended at Bersa Matruh, a further eighty miles westward. The rail head was at Fuka, about halfway between Bersa Matruh and El Daba on the Survey of Egypt map of 1933 and it remained there until 1936. (Fuka will be mentioned again when civil datestamps are considered).

It is not known when a Military Post Office was established but a barracks existed there according to this same survey, presumably used by the Egyptian Army.

Two examples only of the datestamp have been recorded, one cover and a pair on piece. El Daba cancellations are the scarcest of the M.P.O. cancellations of this period. No covers are recorded during censorship.

#### M.P.O. MERSA MATRUH.

An airfield, possibly from World War I existed at least as early as 1933 and also one at Sollum on the Egyptian-Libyan Frontier. The port of Mersa Matruh was operated as Royal Naval Station sometime between September 1935 and July 1936 while events were taking place which led to the Italian conquest of Abyssinia.

A military sub-office without its own datestamp and of course with no Crowned Circle handstamp was opened in November 1935 and this was raised to a Military Post Office with its own datestamp on 1st March 1936. It closed on 30th October 1936, the latest recorded date being 17th Sept. 1936. (Fig. 163).

In September 1938, H.Q. British Troops in Egypt assembled a Mobile Force comprising units forming the Cairo Cavalry Brigade which operated in the desert around Mersa Matruh. It was withdrawn the following month and as the 7th Armoured Division returned to the desert in March 1939 for training.

In 1938 this M.P.O. appears to have been re-opened using a datestamp numbered "2" and with the spelling altered to MARS MATRUH (2nd. October 1938, recorded - Fig. 167).

In August 1939 the 7th Armoured Division again went into the Western Desert returning to Cairo in December 1939 - the Italians having at this stage refrained from entering the war.

A further datestamp, numbered "1" and with the spelling as in number "2" is now recorded from 4th March 1939 (Fig. 169). No covers are recorded during censorship.

The two periods of use of these Mersa Matruh datestamps are distinguished by the symbols (i) and (ii) in the summary which follows.

#### M.P.O. MOASCAR.

This Military Post Office was established on the first day of the Postal Concession Period on 1st November 1932 when only M.P.O. Cairo was in existence. It was established for the use of the Army in Moascar and the Royal Air Force at Ismailia.

The first datestamp (Fig. 171) had the "O" widely separated from the "P" in "M.P.O." and is thus easily distinguished. The latest recorded date of its very short life is 16th January 1933 which is two days before Crowned Circle handstamp No. 7, which had been issued to M.P.O. Moascar is last recorded (Byam) having disappeared, allegedly down a well. A letter in Byam's possession from Colonel Comyn who was then on the Staff in Egypt states that Crowned Circle handstamp No. 7 was reported "mislaid" on 6th March 1933. The fate of these two handstamps may well be very closely connected, since the earliest date so far recorded for the alternative or replacement datestamp is 10th April 1933 (Finnett).

During 1939 letters addressed to England have been recorded routed via Alexandria civil post office. One, datestamped M.P.O. Moascar on 5th January 1939, passed through Alexandria civil post office on 6th January and another cover dated 15th July 1939 was backstamped with an Alexandria civil post office datestamp on a date which is probably that of the following day.

#### M.P.O. PORT SAID.

This Military Post Office was opened on 1st March 1936 and was situated probably at Navy House for the use of both naval and military personnel in Port Said.

Few covers have been recorded and many of those that have appear to be at least semi-philatelic. The latest recorded date is 1st December 1936 and it may well be, therefore, that the M.P.O. was closed on 24th January 1937, at the same time as the M.P.O.'s at Abu Qir and Alexandria.

#### MILITARY POST OFFICES AT CAIRO AND MOASCAR.

During the currency of the M.P.O. datestamps which we are considering and towards the end of the life of the Military Seals, it was decided to make certain moves of the Crowned Circle numbered handstamps.

For reasons which we have so far been unable to discover and on dates which we have not been able to pin point, the following moves took place :-

Crowned Circle Nos. 1 & 8 from M.P.O. Moascar to M.P.O. Cairo.

Crowned Circle Nos. 4 & 23 from M.P.O. Cairo to M.P.O. Moascar.

Crowned Circle No. 1 is last recorded in Moascar on 15th June 1935 (ex-Hinde)

and Crowned Circle 8 last recorded on 14th April 1935 (Ward notes, ex Grylls, and Parker). No Gairodates have been seen other than on covers prepared to order dates 15th March 1936, the last day on which the military seals were allowed to be used and these handstamps may therefore have been withdrawn to reserve.

Crowned Circle No. 4 is last recorded in Cairo on 19th March 1934 (Ward notes, ex Grylls) and first recorded in Moascar on 7th Sept. 1935 (recorded). Crowned Circle No. 23 is last known in Cairo on 29th May 1935 (Leslie) and the first known date for Moascar is 26th July 1935 (Ward notes, ex Grylls).

The assistance is requested of members who are able to throw further light on these handstamp moves or who have covers which close the gaps revealed here in dates.

#### SUMMARY.

We now set out in tabular form all the information which we have so far been able to record of these circular dates handstamps and we are aware that the presentation, especially with regard to dates, is by no means complete.

#### LIFE OF THE M.P.O's.

The date of the opening or re-opening of six of the eight M.P.O's is known. Two were closed in 1937, one probably closed about the same time and three were still in use during censorship. The two dates known for El Daba are shown as the earliest and latest dates and both periods of use of Mersa Matruh are shown.

<u>MILITARY POST OFFICE.</u>	<u>DATE OF OPENING OR EARLIEST DATE.</u>	<u>DATE OF CLOSING. LATEST DATE OR LATEST UNCENSORED COVER.</u>
Abu Qir	Opened 1 March 1936.	Closed 24 Jan. 1937.
ABU SUEIR	Opened 1 March 1936.	Latest uncensored 31 March 1938.
ALEXANDRIA	Reopened 1 Nov. 1935.	Closed 24 Jan. 1937.
CAIRO	Already open, 1 Nov. 1932.	Latest uncensored 16 Sept. 1939.
EL DABA	Earliest date, 5 Aug. 1939.	Latest date, 31 Aug. 1939.
MERSA MATRUH (I)	Opened 1 March, 1936.	Closed 30 Oct. 1936.
(II)	Earliest date, 2 Oct. 1938.	Latest date, 21 Sep. 1939.
MOASCAR	Opened 1 Nov. 1932.	Latest uncensored 28 Aug. 1939.
PORT SAID	Opened 1 March 1936.	Latest date. 1 Dec. 1936.

Abu Sueir is spelled "Abu Suwer" in civil datestamps of this period and the alteration of the spelling of Mersa Matruh on the introduction of the numbered datestamps has been noted above. We use the above spellings throughout.

#### DESCRIPTION OF THE DATESTAMPS.

Twenty different datestamps have been recorded from the eight M.P.O's.



These are all illustrated as Figs. 111 to 181. Basic measurements of diameter, distance between date bars and the length of the letters "M.P.O." including the final stop, are given. Measurements are in millimetres. Layout refers to the setting out of M.P.O. and the place name.

<u>FIG.</u>	<u>MILITARY POST OFFICE</u> <u>WORDING.</u>	<u>LAYOUT.</u>	<u>DIAMETER.</u>	<u>DATE</u> <u>BAR.</u>	<u>M.P.O.</u>
111	M.P.O. ABU QIR	Straight/Straight	27.5	9	14
121	M.P.O. ABU SUEIR	Straight/Straight	27	8	14
131	M.P.O. ALEXANDRIA	Curved/Curved	28.5	7.5	Barrel
133	-	Straight/Straight	27	7	16
135	-	Straight/Straight	27.5	12	12
137	-	Straight/Straight	27	9	14.5
141	M.P.O. CAIRO	Curved/Curved	26.5	8	14
142	-	Straight/Straight	28.5	10	17
143	-	Straight/Straight	26.5	8	16
145	-	Curved/Curved	28	8.5	13
147	-	Straight/Straight	29	12	18
149	M.P.O. G.H.Q. CAIRO.	Straight/Straight	30	13	13.5
151	M.P.O. EL DABA	Straight/Straight	26	9	15
161	M.P.O. MERSA MATRUH	Straight/Curved	26.5	10	14.5
163	-	Straight/Curved	27	8	15
167	M.P.O. 2 MARSAS MATRUH	Curved/Curved	26.5	10	14
169	M.P.O. 1 MARSAS MATRUH	Curved/Curved	26	9	13.5
171	M.P.O. MOASCAR	Straight/Straight	26.5	7.5	18.5
173	-	Straight/Straight	26.5	7.5	16.5
181	M.P.O. PORT SAID	Straight/Straight	26.5	10	14

Measurements are not given below a half millimetre and are in some cases slightly biased toward the contrasts of datestamps which at first glance may look similar.

M.P.O. Alexandria, Fig. 135 has no stop after "O".

#### LIFE OF THE DATESTAMPS.

The circular datestamps are found struck in black, violet, red and blue. Dirty

Looking handstamps are recorded as black. The following table shows, in each colour, the earliest date struck and the latest date of covers before the introduction of censorship. Dated pieces, which cannot show either pre-censorship or censorship use, are ignored.

<u>MILITARY POST OFFICE</u>	<u>FIG.</u>	<u>EARLIEST DATE</u>	<u>OWNER</u>	<u>LATEST DATE.</u>	<u>OWNER</u>	<u>NOTES</u>
<u>Struck in black.</u>						
M.P.O. ABU <del>EL</del> <sup>QIR</sup>	111	1 Mar 1936	Minett	24 Jan 1937	Gilbert	
M.P.O. ABU SUEIR	121	1 Mar 1936	Firebrace	1 Dec. 1936	Firebrace	
M.P.O. ALEXANDRIA	131	22 Nov 1935	Firebrace	11 Sep 1936	Firebrace	
-	133	13 Nov 1935	recorded	13 July 1936	Firebrace	
-	135	7 July 1936	Minett	20 July 1936	Firebrace	A
-	137	21 July 1936	Firebrace	18 Dec 1936	Minett	
M.P.O. CAIRO	141	1 Nov 1932	Minett	June 1938	Minett	
-	142	1 Nov 1932	Firebrace	28 Mar 1937	Potter	
-	143	17 Dec 1932	Revell	8 Sep 1935	Firebrace	
-	145	26 Apr 1937	Minett	13 Jan 1939	recorded	
-	147	10 Dec 1938	Firebrace	16 Sep 1939	Firebrace	B
M.P.O. EL DABA	151	5 Aug 1939	Firebrace	31 Aug 1939	Revell	
M.P.O. MERSA MATRUH.	161	3 Mar 1936	Firebrace	29 Mar 1936	Firebrace	
-	163	14 Mar 1936	Minett	17 Sep 1936	Firebrace	
- No. 2.	167	2 Oct 1938	recorded			
- No. 1.	169	4 Mar 1939	Firebrace	21 Sep 1939	Revell	
M.P.O. MOASCAR	171	11 Nov 1932	Turton	16 Jan 1933	Minett	
-	173	10 Apr 1933	Minett	28 Aug 1939	Firebrace	
M.P.O. PORT SAID.	181	1 Mar 1936	Firebrace	1 Dec 1936	Firebrace	
<u>Struck in violet.</u>						
M.P.O. ABU QIR	111	1 Mar 1936	Firebrace			
M.P.O. ALEXANDRIA.	131	30 May 1936	Firebrace	1 June 1936	Firebrace	
M.P.O. CAIRO	141	7 May 1935	Leslie			
-	143	16 Dec 1932	Firebrace	8 May 1935	Firebrace	
MERSA MATRUH	161	1 Mar 1936	Firebrace	28 Mar 1936	recorded	

<u>MILITARY POST OFFICE</u>	<u>FIG.</u>	<u>EARLIEST DATE</u>	<u>OWNER</u>	<u>LATEST DATE</u>	<u>OWNER</u>	<u>NOTES</u>
MOASCAR	171	8 Nov 1932	ex-Hinde	24 Nov 1932	Byam	
-	173	18 Mar 1933	Firebrace	15 Dec 1935	Firebrace	
<u>struck in Red.</u>						
M.P.O. ABU QIR	111	26 Nov 1936	Firebrace			C
M.P.O. ALEXANDRIA.	131	24 Nov 1936	Firebrace			
M.P.O. CAIRO	149	7 Aug 1936	Firebrace			D
M.P.O. MOASCAR	173	24 Sep 1933	Leslie			
<u>struck in blue.</u>						
M.P.O. ABU SUEIR	121	3 Aug 1937	Minett	31 Mar 1938	Firebrace	

NOTES.

- A - Backstamp on local letter addressed to A.R.A.S.C. Officer and thrice forwarded.
- B - The earliest recorded date with censor is 10 Sep 1939
- C - Backstamp on letter from British F.P.O. 16, Palestine.
- D - Impression struck on cover which was not even addressed.

CONCLUSION.

Four datestamps appear to have had a very short life and covers must be considered scarce or even rare.

M.P.O. Alexandria Fig. 135. 7 July 1936 - 20 July 1936  
M.P.O. EL Daba 151 5 Aug 1939 - 21 Aug 1939  
M.P.O. Mersa Matruh 161 1 Mar 1936 - 29 Mar 1936  
M.P.O. Moascar 171 8 Nov 1932 - 16 Jan 1933

Only one impression is known of Cairo Fig. 149 and Mersa Matruh Fig. 167. Two examples are known of El Daba Fig. 151 and Alexandria Fig. 135 boasts three

The date bracket of Moascar Fig. 171 will probably be enlarged if the "mislaid" date of Crowned Circle handstamp No. 7 reported by letter from Egypt is confirmed by further covers.

We wish to express our thanks to those who have so kindly lent material for recording and those who have contributed information which has been incorporated above. Owners of covers bearing earliest and latest dates, or other covers mentioned, belonging to members of E.S.C., O.P.A.L., or F.P.H.S. have been named. All other dates mentioned have been seen and recorded by one of us and are designated by the word "recorded" except as otherwise stated. Owners of recorded covers are asked to check their dates.

Information adding to our knowledge of this subject is still required and there is obviously much to be garnered from members' collections. It would be appreciated if covers revealing additional dates or information could be sent, for recording, to C. W. Minnett, Assistant Keeper of the Philatelic Record, Egypt Study Circle, "Fairmead", Bridgefield Road, Tankerton, Kent.

Also required are covers of this period from named post offices bearing date stamps of the Egyptian Civil Post and also covers from named (as opposed to "numbered" ) post offices with military or civil post offices datestamps and which have been censored. The following information on each cover is required :-

Post Office - Civil or Military, wording, type, colour and date.

Postal Rate - of cover, with dates of arrival or forwarding c.d.s.

Censor - Type (sketch) No. and colour, and name of censoring officer.

Location Unit - Whereabouts of sender and unit.

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SOME NEW FACTS ABOUT THE EGYPTIAN POST IN HARAR.

by Lars Alund.

In the -70's the province of Harar (now part of Ethiopia) was occupied by the Egyptians and it belonged to Egypt up to 1885. It has been stated that the Egyptian authorities organised a postal system and that Egyptian stamps were used at least from 1881 to April 26th, 1885, when the province was evacuated by the Egyptians and the postal service became totally disorganised. Very little is known about the post in Harar from 1885 to 1898, when the Ethiopian postal system in Harar was established by Swiss advisers to the Emperor Menelik II.

By chance I have got to know an old Swiss gentleman, Michel by name, who was appointed postmaster in Harar in 1901 and who then lived there for several years. He told me that even after April 1885 a certain internal postal service was carried on by a former Egyptian post-office clerk, who remained in Harar after the withdrawal of the Egyptian troops until the town was occupied by Menelik in 1887. This clerk continued to frank the letters with the remaining Egyptian stamps and as obliterator he used a type, probably used by the Catholic mission in Harar. The obliterator is shaped as a Maltese cross, formed by parallel lines and with dots in the corners between the legs of the cross. It bears no date. At a philatelic exhibition I have seen some stampless covers from Ethiopia, marked with strikes from an obliterator of the same type. When the Egyptian post clerk fled from Harar in 1887 just before the arrival of Menelik's troops he is said to have deposited the obliterator with the French mission bishop Mgr Thaurin.

Thanks to Mr. Michel I have also seen some covers from 1886, posted in Harar and bearing Egyptian stamps with the Maltese cross cancellation. The story behind this might be of a certain interest.

The famous French poet Rimbaud settled down in Harar in 1880. First he was employed by a merchant house in Aden, acting as their agent in the province, buying hides, ivory and coffee. Later on, probably in 1886, Rimbaud negotiated with three foreign advisers to Menelik, named Chefneux, Savoure and Ilg, and his



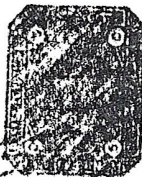
Monsieur

M. J. Savonnie  
cany.

Diaka - Boba

A. IMBACU

H.  
20/XII 86 A.R.



Monsieur

J. J. & J. J.  
c. M. J. Savonnie

Andollo.

A. IMBACU

H.  
5/I 86 A.R.

connections with these gentlemen went on up to 1896. A daughter to Mr. Chefneux's is still alive, and when asked to investigate carefully the correspondence of her late father she found four covers from Rimbaud. All these covers, which are addressed to Mr. Saviouré or a person in his camp, bear Egyptian stamps with the Maltese cross obliteration in blue. On their backs they have the name of Rimbaud together with a handwritten date. The dates run from January to December 1886. One of the covers, dated January 5th, 1886, is franked with the brown 5 para stamp from 1879, two of them, dated December 20th 1886, bear the 10 para green from 1884, and on the fourth cover the grey 5 piaster stamp from 1884 is to be seen. This last cover with the date of April 10th, 1886, is the only one I was able to secure for my collection but I have had photographs made of two of the remaining covers. The photos are produced on the previous page.

I might add that I have also seen some contemporaneous stampless covers from Harar with the same cross cancellation and with the impression of three or four Ethiopian coins in blue, evidently showing the postage paid.

With these facts it will be seen that Egyptian stamps were used in Harar also later than April 26th, 1885, although there was no official postal service from the Egyptians after that date. At least the now discovered documents seem to be of a certain historical interest.

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