

THE QUARTERLY CIRCULAR

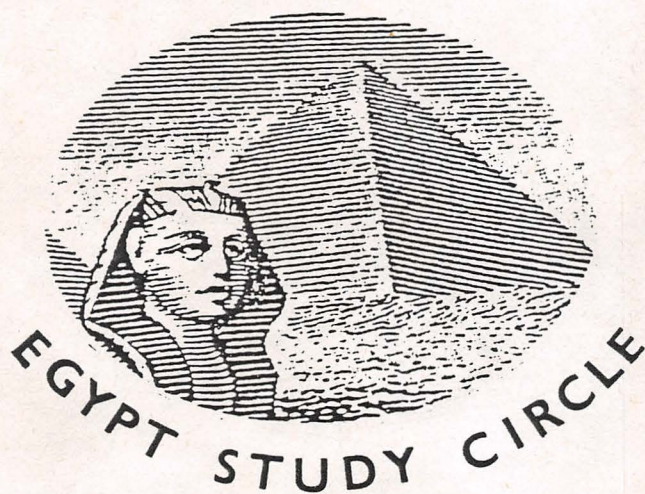


Vermeil
Medal
1982

Volume XI Number 8

December 1982

Whole Series 124



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Next Meetings

To be held at "The Peacock"
Maiden Lane, London W.C.

- | | | |
|---------|--------------------------------|--|
| 1983 | | |
| Feb. 12 | POSTAL STATIONERY | - D.H.Clarke |
| April 9 | TEN SHEETS PER MEMBER | - all to bring & display - or 50p fine |
| June 11 | PROVINCIAL MEETING, BIRMINGHAM | - subject to be chosen by organiser |

EGYPT STUDY CIRCLE - THE QUARTERLY CIRCULARVolume XI Number 8 Dec 1982 Whole Series Number 124

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S U B S C R I P T I O N S t o E S C - P o l i c y

At recent meetings of the Circle, and of the Committee, there have been discussions as to policy regarding our Library and additions to it. A number of worthwhile books which have been published in recent years have gone out of print and their second-hand value has appreciated considerably. The former budget for library additions has been much too small to allow the Librarian to acquire good books when currently available. It was therefore agreed that the library budget for 1983 onwards should be substantially increased, and that book purchase should be expanded.

The borrowing of books has, regrettably but for obvious reasons, to be restricted to U.K. members. It is only fair, therefore, that the cost of the library should fall on U.K. members only. This library cost element, plus some catching-up with inflation, means that U.K. members will be asked to pay an extra £2, thus making the 1983 U.K. subscription £ 8.

For Overseas members, the 1983 subscription remains at £ 6 payable by draft on a London bank, please. It may be possible to offer airmail despatch of The Q.C. to Overseas members - if you are interested in this, will you please write to our Chairman, John Sears, 496 Uxbridge Road, Hatch End, Pinner, Middlesex, HA5 4SL, England.

E D I T O R I A L

In November 1982, there was held in Milan the world's first International Philatelic Literature Exhibition.

The Q.C. of Egypt Study Circle was entered in this exhibition, and gained a Vermail Medal. Congratulations on this achievement are due to all who have contributed, especially those members whose research has led to the publishing of substantial articles. Not least to contribute is Ken Davis (ESC 148) whose ability to have the text pages printed at the cost of materials only means that The Q.C. is much larger than we could otherwise afford.

REPORT OF ESC MEETING

Meeting held on 16 October 1982 at 'The Peacock', Maiden Lane, London WC2

Attendance: Mr J. Sears (Chairman) and Messrs E.Blackburn, F.W.Benians, D.H.Clarke, D.J.Davies, C.E.H.Defriez, P.Grech, G.P.Green, E.Grey, JAGrimmer, E.Hall and J.S.Horesh.

The Chairman especially welcomed Mr Blackburn, from Sheffield, a member of 3 years' standing, whose first meeting attended was the provincial meeting in Birmingham this year.

Mr E. Hall, Secretary of ESC, reported applications for membership from Mr A. Chisholm of New Zealand, and Mr Adams of Exeter. These were approved. The rate of subscriptions was then discussed and was then agreed to be referred to the next meeting of the Committee.

Mr J.A.Grimmer regretted that photographs taken during a recent visit to the UK of our President, Professor Peter Smith, did not produce acceptable illustrations with the Xerographic base as used for The Q.C.

Mr F.W.Benians gave a display on the I.E.F. 1914/20 and mentioned that this would be written up later as an article for The Q.C.

REPORT OF ESC MEETING

Meeting held on 11 December 1982 at 'The Peacock', Maiden Lane, London WC2

Attendance: Mr J. Sears (Chairman) and Messrs W.C.Andrews, F.W.Benians, D.H.Clarke, D.J.Davis, C.E.H.Defriez, C.E.Grey, J.S.Horesh, J.M.Murphy and P.E.Whetter.

Before introducing the main topic of the afternoon, the Chairman welcomed Mr John Revell who attended as the guest of Jim Benians, saying that he hoped that Mr Revell would enjoy the meeting, and would be coming again in the future as a member once more.

The meeting was devoted to the Air Mail study, and led by John Davis and John Sears. Mr Davis commenced by showing his general Air Mail of Egypt collection which included Zeppelin covers, as well as the stamps and varieties.

Mr Sears followed by showing a number of sheets with covers depicting the various strikes of Cairo Airport from Heliopolis 1910 to the present day; then a number of covers bearing the various cachets and vignettes. The display concluded with covers of Air Mail markings, and examples of letters where the carriage by Air Mail had been refused.

Other members had brought their own material all of which contributed to a successful afternoon. (J.S.)

MEMBERSHIP MATTERSChange of Address

Mr J. M. Murphy (ESC 240)

61 Pope's Avenue, Strawberry Hill, Twickenham
Middlesex TW2 5TD

The Q.C. - contributions carried forward. The Editor regrets that space considerations have made it necessary to carry forward Mr Defriez' New Issue pages, a listing of Expert Committee Certificates, comment by Mr J.A.Firebrace on WW1 censored pieces clandestinely produced and Mr Benians' Library - Recent Acquisitions supplement. All will appear in the March issue.

THE MILITARY USE of the CIVIL POST OFFICES in EGYPT, 1914 - 1916

by J. A. FIREBRACE (ESC 71) and F. W. BENIANS (ESC 123)

(Continued from The Q.C., Number 7 of Volume XI)

SECTION 5 MILITARY CACHETS (Continued)

Unframed, three lines

Type IV a

21 OC 15 Bulkeley 15 x 57 blue NEW ZEALAND CONVALESCENT HOME /
ADMEN VILLA / SABA PASHA, ALEXANDRIA
Free O.H.M.S. within Egypt
Signed by Lady Godley

In April 1915, Lady Godley opened this Convalescent Home, which was closed in January, 1916.

28 OC 15 Cairo 14 x 49 grey REST CAMP / CAVALRY BARRACKS /
ABBASSIA
Free "On Active Service" to England

1 No 15 Cairo 35 x 20 violet No. 2 G.H. / (Red Cross) / A.I.E.F.
Free "On Active Service to Australia

On 25 Jan: 1915, 2 General Hospital, Australian Imperial Expeditionary Force, was erected at Mena to serve 1 Australian Division.

Section 5. Military Cachets - Unframed, two lines: Type IV a i

20 OC 15 Alexandria 7 x 38 black BASE CASHIER / MED. EXP. FORCE
Free O.H.M.S. within Alexandria

Another cachet exists with 'Base Cashier' in lower case

21 OC 15 Port 10 x 46 violet On Active Service / Hospital Ship "Loyalty"
Tawfiq Postage Free to England
Passed by Censor, Indian Expeditionary Force 65

On 2 Oct: 1914 began service as a Hospital Ship until 30 Nov: 1918

16 NO 15 Cairo 8 x 64 violet "B" COMPANY / 2/8th BATTN. MIDDLESEX REGT
Free "On Active Service" to England
On "Y.M.C.A. with H.M. M.E.F." envelope

On 9 Sep: 1915, this battalion was using a manuscript identification. (see above)

Section 5. Military Cachets - Unframed, one line: Type IV a ii

1 OC 15 Cairo 2 x 54 black SENIOR CANADIAN CHAPLAIN
1/2d. postal stationery postcard, uncanceled to Alexandria with ON ACTIVE SERVICE handstamp
From "5 Canadian Stationary Hospital, Abbassia, Cairo"

On 12 Aug: 1915, this hospital was established in the Cavalry Barracks, Abbassia, until going to France in March 1916.

/ Continued . . .

Military Use of Civil P.O.'s, 1914/16 - Military Cachets Type IV a ii Cont'd

12 NO 15 Heliopolis 3 x 51 violet 10th Regt. 3rd L.H.Bgde.
Br. Camp Free "On Active Service" to Western
Australia

10 Light Horse Regiment was raised in
Western Australia and in March 1915, 3 Light Horse
Brigade reached Egypt.

18 NO 15 Cairo 4 x 64 red 2/8th D.C.O. (Middlesex Regt.)
Postage free to England
signed "H.R.Cross, 2/Lt."

On 16 Nov: 1915, a two-line cachet for this battalion
was in use by "B" Company (see above).

Section 5. Military Cachets - With provision for signature, four lines,
Type V a

24 JY 15 Cairo 18 x 69 violet Capt. A.E. / Comd'g 4th Signal Troop
(Engr's) / 4th Aus. L.H. Bde.
/ A.I.F.
"On Active Service. No stamps available"
Postcard postage free to England
Cachet struck on view side, and signed.

During May 1915, 4 Australian Light Horse Brigade
began to leave Australia.

Section 5. as preceding, but: three lines. Type V b

29 MY 15 Heliopolis 13 x 39 violet MAJOR / CHIEF CENSOR / I.E. FORCE
Signed J.G. Hennessy
"Indian Expy Force 'E.' Free "
To India with PASSED / Chief Censor /
MILITARY (Ind 10)

By 2 Dec: 1914, Indian Censor Marks were in use.

25 SE 15 Cairo 12 x 51 violet Major, R.A.M.C. / Comdt. Convalescent
Depot / Citadel, Cairo
Free "On Service" to England
from "Tpr ?, C L Y (R R) Convalescent
Depot, The Citadel Hospital, Cairo, Egypt"

Since before 1914, the Citadel Hospital had been used
by British troops.

In April 1915, The City of London Yeomanry (Rough Riders)
sailed for Egypt and in Aug: landed on Gallipoli,
dismounted.

Section 5. Military Cachets - With provision for signature, two lines,
Type V c

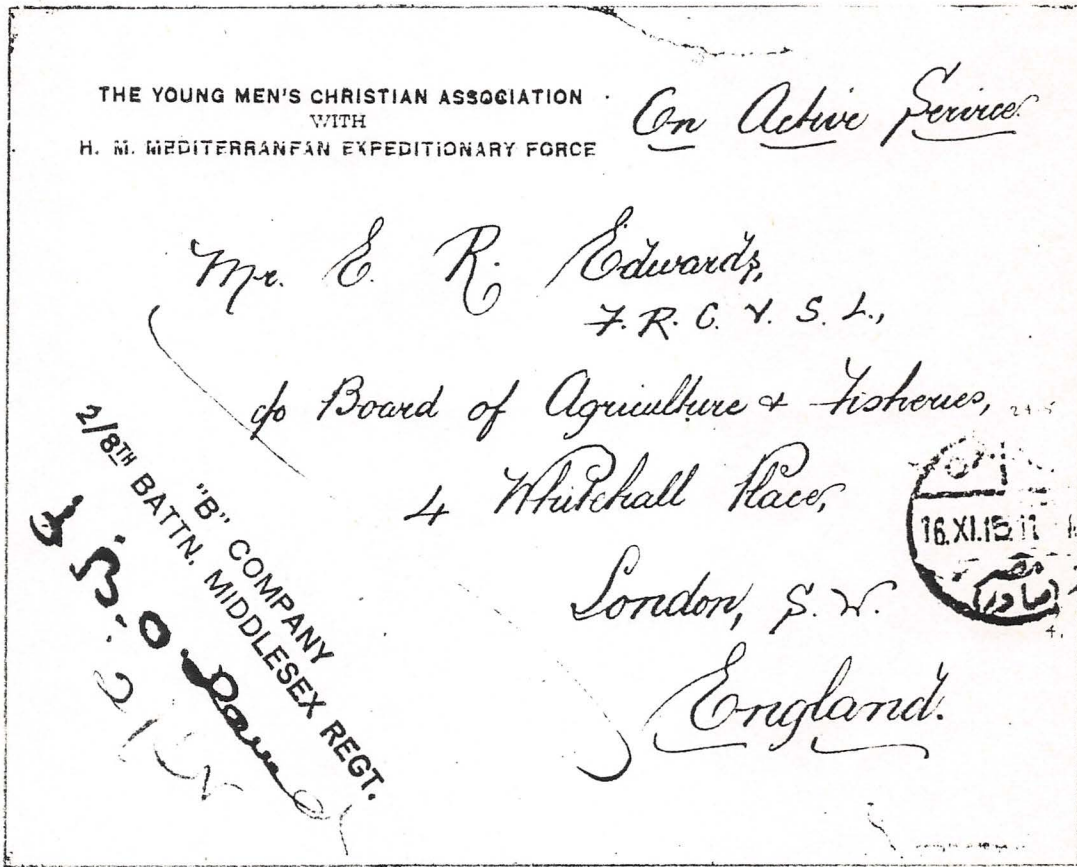
9 FE 15 Port Said 6 x 53 violet MAJOR / COMMANDING 5TH LANCS.
BATTERY, R.F.A.
5 mills post card to England
Passed by Censor, Indian Expeditionary
Force 71

The 5th (Church) Battery formed part of the 1st Royal
Field Artillery Brigade, (Blackburn)

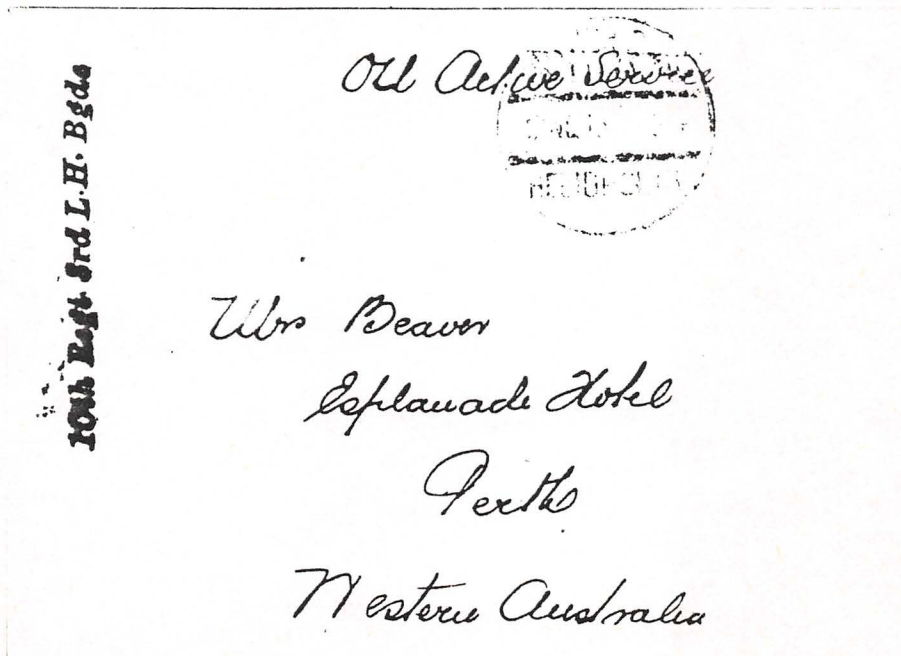
Military Use of Civil Post Offices 1914/16

Cover illustrating two features

Section 5, Type IV a ii - Cachet Unframed, two lines
- and - Section 6: Stationery (Welfare)



Illustrating Section 5, Type IV a ii
Military Cachet - Unframed, one line



Military Use of Civil P.O.'s, 1914/16 - Military Cachets Type V c Continued

2 AU 15 Cairo 16 x 45 violet Red Cross Hospital, Giza / Major, R.A.M.C.
Signed by initials between lines
Postage free to England

On 25 May 1915, The British Red Cross Society opened a hospital in the Saidieh Government School Building, Giza

9 SE 15 Cairo 8 x 51 violet CAPTAIN / COMDG. MIL. POLICE. Eg.
Signed H.A.Palmer
Postage free to England

Section 5. Military Cachets - With Officer's name, four lines,
Type VI a

26 JY 15 Cairo 24 x 30 violet H.Maggs / Colonel / O.C.Mil.Hosp. /
Citadel, Cairo
Signature in facsimile
Free "On Active Service" to England

The personal cachet of the Officer Commanding this hospital used by British troops since before the war.

2 JA 16 Cairo 19 x 38 black A.F.MacCallan / O.C. / P.H.D. HOSPITALS
/ GIZA
Name typeset
Privilege Envelope to England

Probably Public Health Department Hospitals.

16 MR 16 Cairo 21 x 69 violet Hugh M. Chasseaud / Major, R.A.M.C. /
Officer i/c Palace Convalescent Hospital
/ Boulac El Dacrour, Cairo
Signature in facsimile
Free "On Active Service" to England

A Convalescent Depot established in the Palace Hotel.

Section 6. Stationery Regimental Crested

2 DE 14 Cairo 24 x 25 blue
embossed MILITARY POLICE beneath G.V.R. and Crown
5 mills postage to England
OPENED BY / CENSOR / 225 Label applied
in England

8 SE 15 Cairo 24 x 27 blue
embossed DUKE OF CAMBRIDGE'S OWN MIDDX. REG^T. /
8TH BATT^N.
Within a wreath surmounting "SOUTH AFRICA
1900-02"
5 mills postage to England

This battalion has already been noted using manuscript identification and cachets.

Section 6. Stationery Patriotic

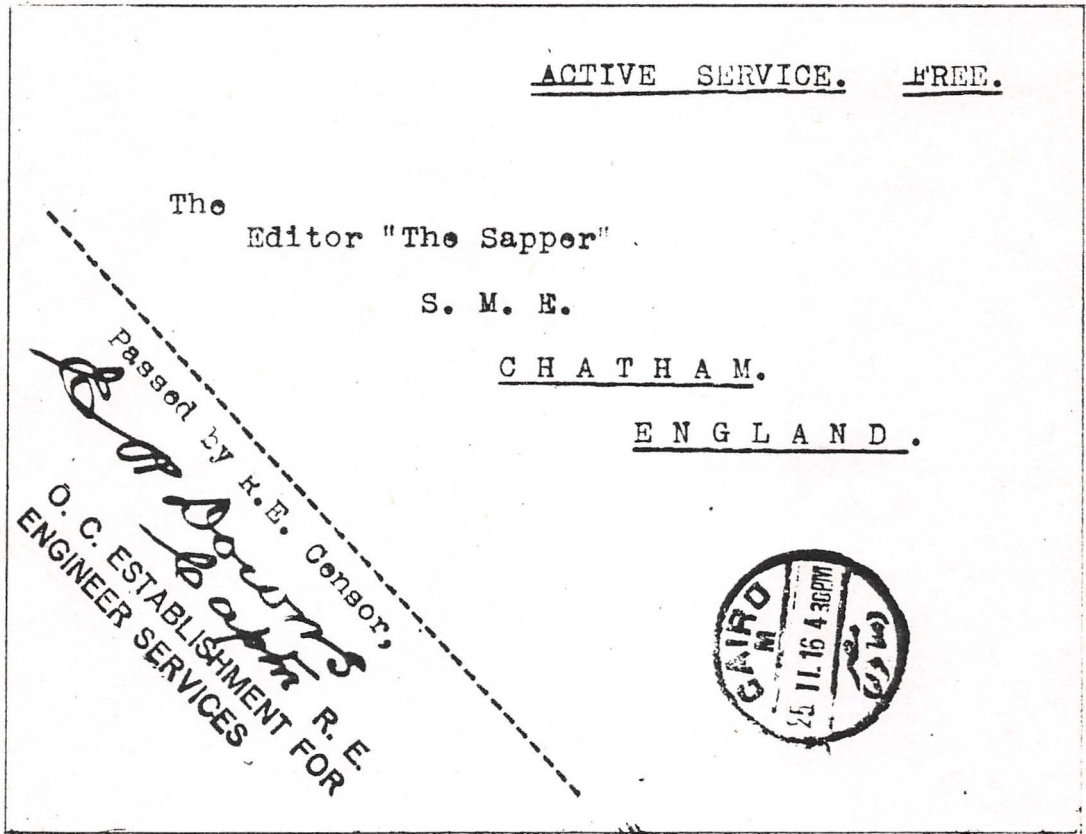
29 MR 15 Heliopolis 18 x 71 coloured AUSTRALIAN AND NEW ZEALAND /
Mil. Camp EXPEDITIONARY FORCES / CAIRO 1914-15
Aerodrome
A Christmas and New Year post card showing an Infantryman
between holly and mistletoe surmounted by motto and flags.
5 mills post card to England
"Sergeant H. Upjohn, 13th Batt. 4 Bde. A.I.F. Egypt"

/ Continued . . .

Military Use of Civil Post Offices 1914/16

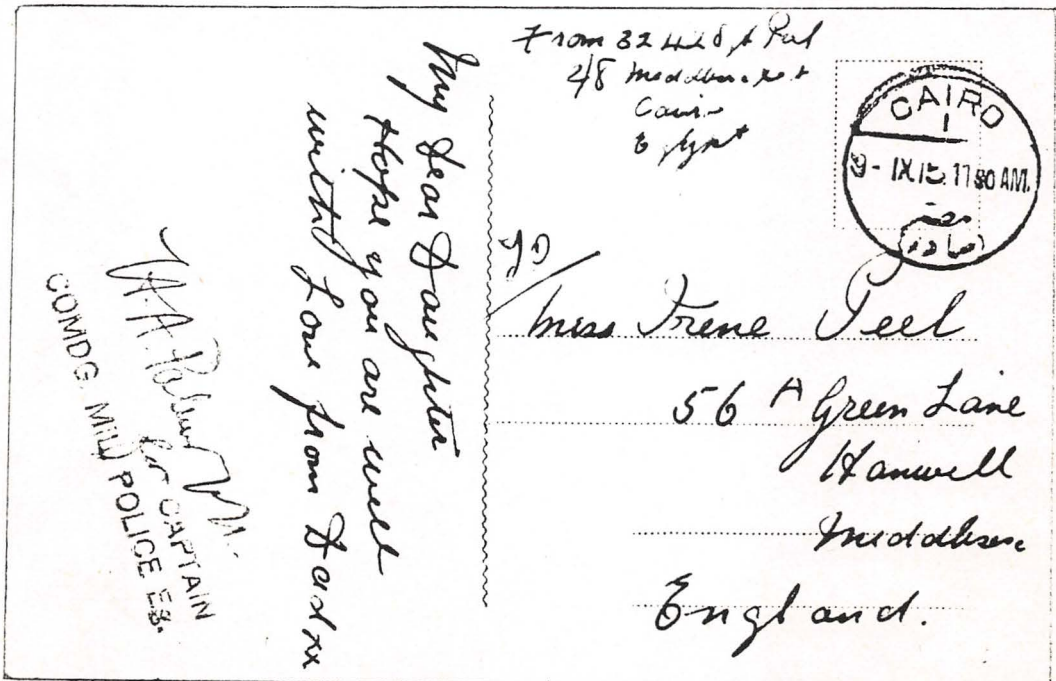
Cover illustrating Section 5, Type V

Military Cachet with provision for signature: four lines



Cover illustrating Section 5, Type V c

Military Cachet with provision for signature, two lines



Military Use of Civil P.O.'s, 1914/16 - Section 6 - Stationery, Patriotic - Ctd

23 JU 15 Heliopolis 8 x 89 blue AUSTRALIAN IMPERIAL EXPEDITIONARY FORCE
Mil. Camp / "5th Brigade / Recreation Tent"
Aerodrome and five other lines
Union Flag 24 x 29
5 mills postage to Australia

21 OC 15 Alexandria 18 x 67 coloured On Active Service / CHURCH ARMY
RECREATION TENT.
Crossed Flags 35 x 50
5 mills (uncancelled) to England

Section 6. Stationery Welfare

22 MR 15 Cairo 17 x 42 black CAIRO / YOUNG MENS CHRISTIAN /
ASSOCIATION / ARMY BRANCH
5 mills postage to England

25 AP 15 Cairo 84 x 36 black ADELAIDE / Y.M.C.A. / ARMY /
DEPARTMENT / WITH THE / AUSTRALIAN
/ IMPERIAL / FORCES.
"On Active Service. No stamps available"
Postage free to Australia

11 NO 15 Cairo 9 x 69 black THE YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION /
WITH / H.M. MEDITERRANEAN EXPEDITIONARY
FORCE
Free "On Active Service" to England
With "B" Company / 2/8th BATTN.
MIDDLESEX REGT. cachet

Section 6. Stationery Official

4 JY 15 Alexandria Field Service Post Card: A.F.A. 2042
printed 5/15 W & Co.

7 AU 15 Bulkeley Privilege Envelope. AFN 3078.
Honour certificate on reverse.

P O S T A L R A T E S

We have been unable to find out what instructions were in force with regard to the payment of postage home to Britain on postcards and letters. The only positive fact is that mail posted unpaid was only to be charged - if charged at all - on delivery at single rate and not double rate.

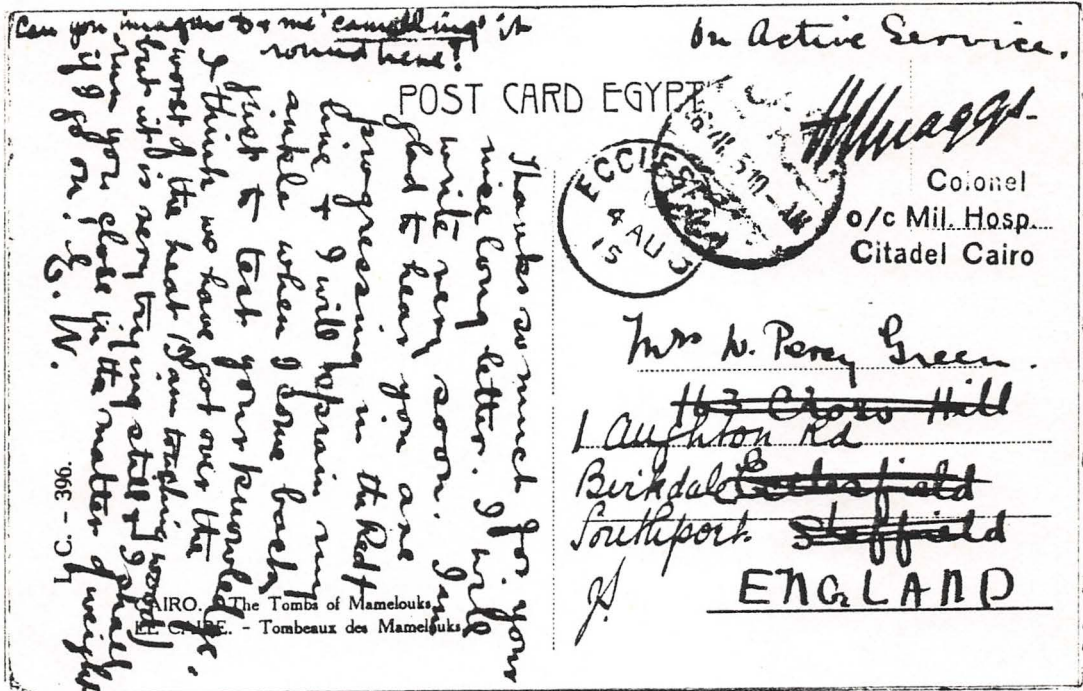
We know the rates for British Forces overseas where the Army Postal Service operated and they were: From 12 August 1914, 1d. per ounce and from 31 August 1914, postage free up to four ounces.

In colonies or other territories where British troops overseas were not in Expeditionary Forces it was up to the colony or other territory to decide whether mail was to be free of postage and, if not, civilian rates would apply. The rates for Egypt were: 4 mills per (single) pst card and 5 mills per letter up to 20 grammes.

It would appear that interpretation and practice differed between the four countries to send the majority of troops to Egypt and we can comment on each country individually. These comments apply to all mail sent and not only to mail sent through the Egyptian civil post office.

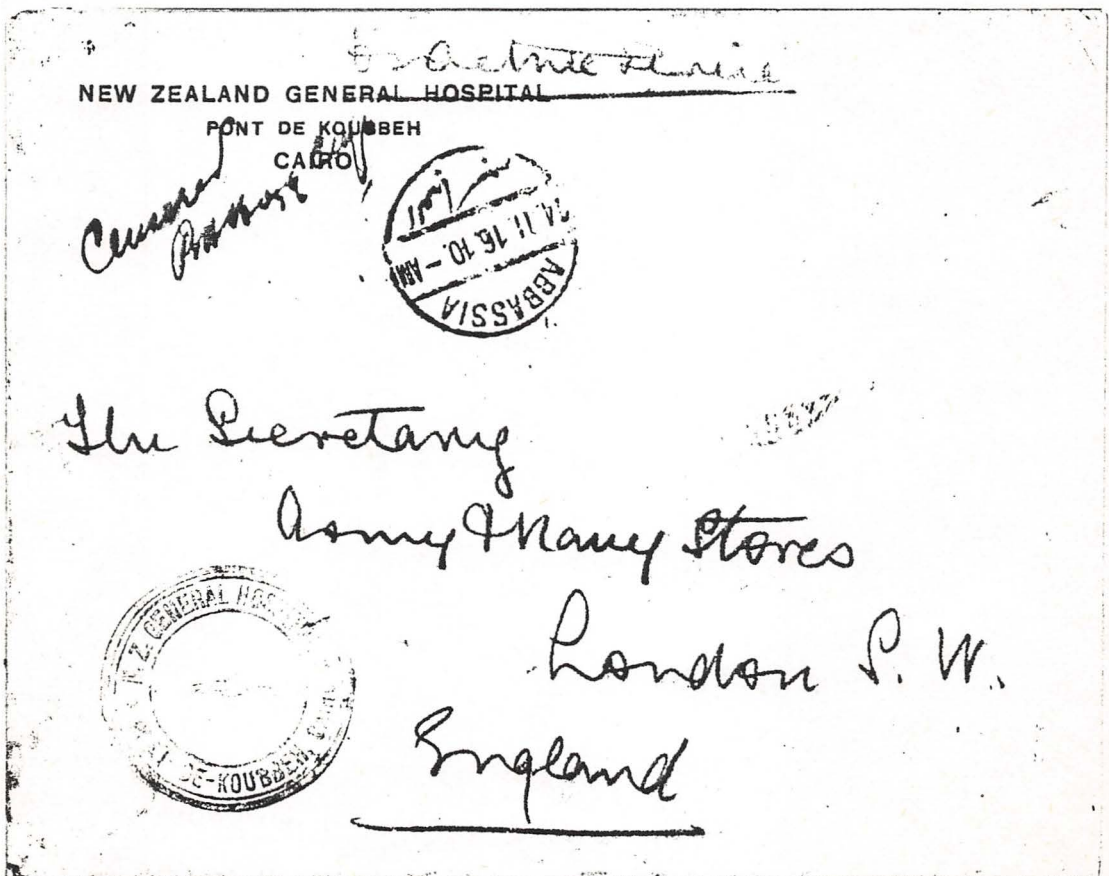
/ Continued . . .

Post Card illustrating Section 5, Type VI a
Military Cachet with Officer's name, four lines



Cover illustrating two features :-

Section 5, Type II a - Military Cachet with double circle
- and - Section 6 : Stationery (Welfare)



Military Use of Civil P.O.'s, 1914/16 - Postal Rates - ContinuedBritain

It is hard to argue that in August 1914 troops from Britain were an Expeditionary Force since they or their predecessors had been in Egypt for 32 years. The argument might be valid on the creation of the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force base at the end of March 1915.

In October 1914, a letter addressed to England was posted unstamped at Port Taufiq written by "Pte. G. Bowring, D. Coy. 7 Hants. On Active Service" and endorsed "Harold Marshall, Capt. Comdg. D Coy. 7 Hants". 1d. postage due was collected at Bournemouth on 10 November 1914. This is the only example which we have recorded of postage due being collected.

On 14 November 1914 a postcard from Suez endorsed "1st H.C.B. R.F.A. 3rd Sussex Batt" was delivered without charge as were further cards dated 8 February and 16 March 1915, with similar military endorsements.

Between May and August 1915, four postcards, one each from Abbassia, Alexandria, Bacos and Ibrahimia, Ramleh were handstamped T in Egypt but this was obliterated in London and no postage due was charged.

On the other hand, the earliest use of the 4 mills postcard which we have recorded was on 3 October 1914, from Abbassia and of the 5 mills letter rate was on 16 October from British Barracks, Cairo, both from members of newly arrived Yeomanry regiments.

There was a strong probability, therefore, that letters posted unstamped, preferably with some form of military endorsement, would reach Britain safely and would be delivered without charge. We would, however, like to see some official statement or authority.

Australia

In the Australian Postal Guide for November 1914 there appears the following : "Imperial Forces. When stamps are available, all letters will be prepaid. When no stamps are obtainable letters will be endorsed 'Stamps not available. On Service with A.I.F.' Those posted unpaid will be charged on delivery. King's Regulations provide that letters posted at the front, if endorsed as above, will be delivered on payment of deficient postage only." I.e. at single rate.

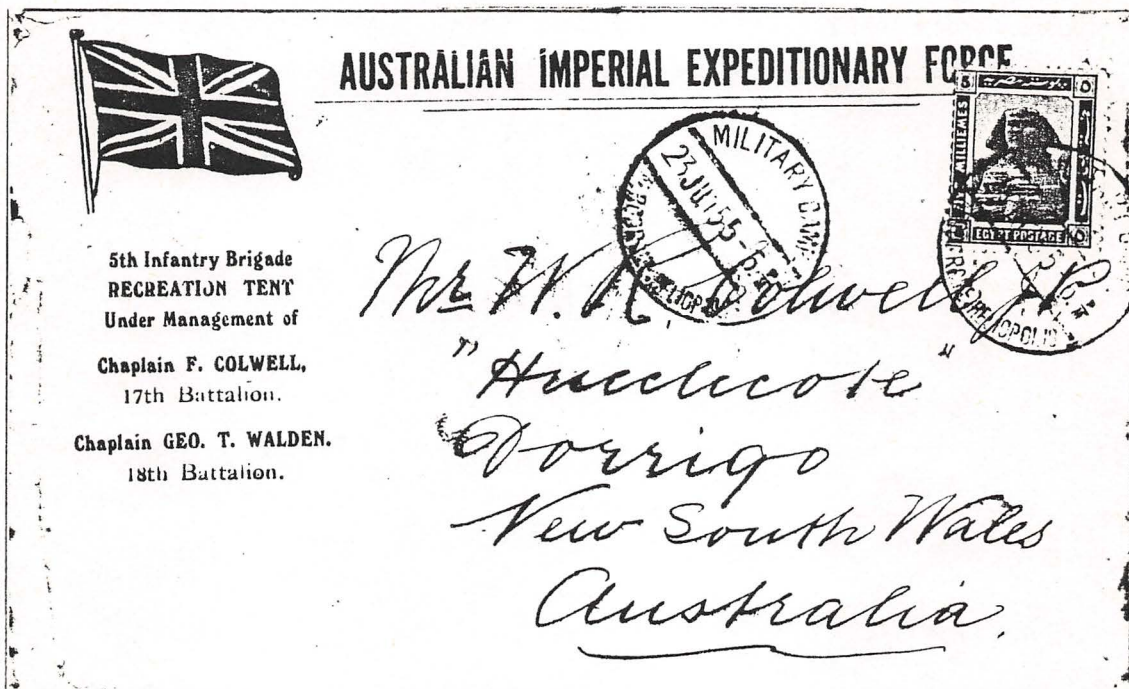
In the Postal Guide Supplement for February 1915 there appears : "Reference notification in November 1914, arrangements have been made with London P.O. for letters from A.I.F., unpaid or insufficiently paid, to be delivered free of charge. This applies to letters from troops On Active Service from all parts of the British Empire."

From the time the first troops landed in Egypt, therefore, postcards and letters should have been franked with Egyptian adhesives at the 4 mills and 5 mills rate respectively or, if posted unpaid, should have been charged at single rate on delivery. From the date of the publication of the February Supplement, letters need not have been prepaid and would have been delivered free.

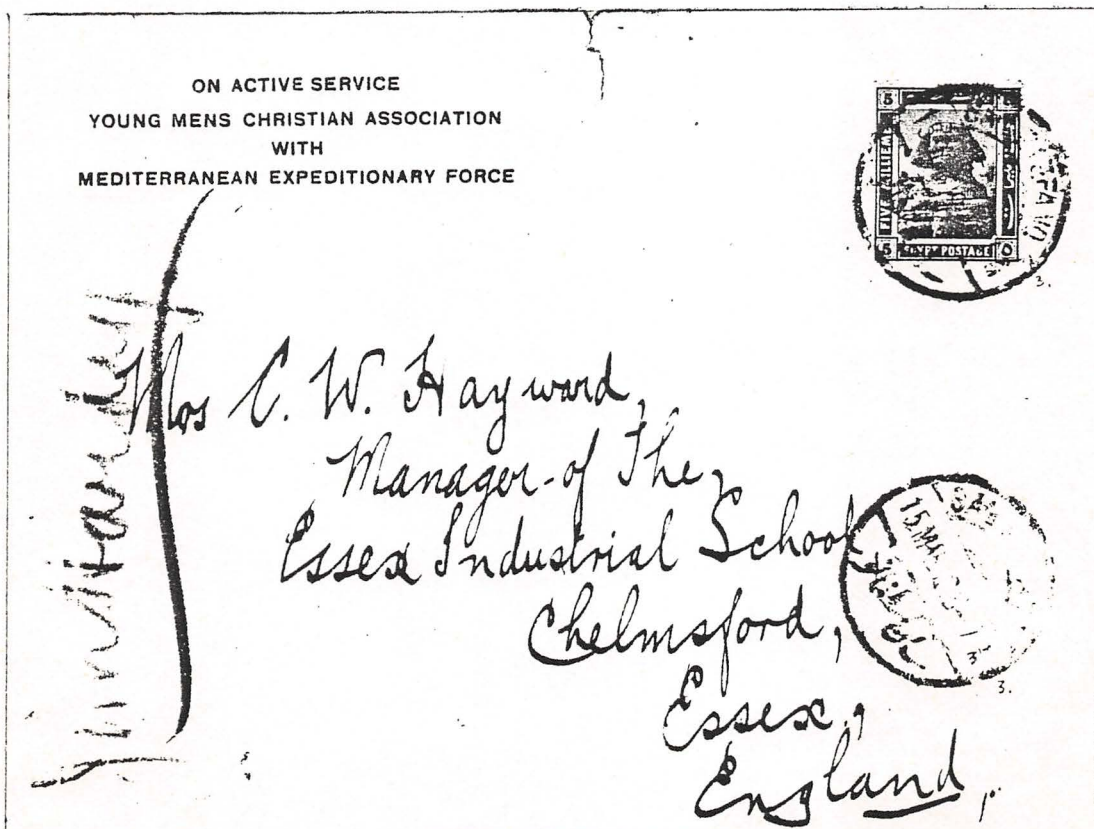
New Zealand

The "Postage Stamps of New Zealand", Volume III, states : "At first, concessions were not granted and the Egyptian authorities stipulated that their postage stamps should be used," and the 4 mills and 5 mills rates are then quoted. Then "The inscription 'No stamps available' was endorsed on mail matter when units were operating in Egyptian territory where there were no postal facilities." We presume that this means Egyptian civil post offices.

Cover illustrating Section 6 - Stationery - Patriotic



Cover illustrating Section 6 - Stationery - Welfare



Military Use of Civil P.O.'s, 1914/16 - Postal Rates - ContinuedNew Zealand, continued

The next paragraph reads "From May 24, 1915, British Colonial and Indian Troops were allowed to send ordinary correspondence addressed to their respective countries free of postage." The New Zealanders, therefore, were supposed to pay to send their letters home for about three months after the Australians were sending their letters free ?

India

We have been unsuccessful in finding any authority to quote.

Earliest letters, from November 1914, addressed to Britain were generally franked by the Indian one anna overprinted I.E.F. adhesive and are known regularly so used at least up to February 1915. From early January 1915, unstamped letters to India were regularly sent and were not charged on receipt. Letters from Indian Forces franked by Egyptian adhesives appear to be very scarce.

C O N C L U S I O N

We have set out in some detail the various aspects of military postal history when collected from as narrow a base as the use of the Egyptian civil post and we hope that those not previously interested in this subject will find that some part at least of this study has been of interest to them.

Almost all the aspects of this study continued well into the period when the great majority of mail was handled by the Army Postal Services. Some establishments always used civil post offices and an increasing percentage of military mail relied on civilian channels as the Army and Field Post Offices were withdrawn in 1919 and 1920.

We wish to enlarge and complete the studies which are derived from this study and the filling out of what we have written above and wish to do in the future will depend to a large extent on the recording of their material which members and others place at our disposal. Success of projects such as this lies at the feet of contributors as much as of compilers.

We ask therefore for as much information as possible to be given in the form of the various "entries" above and in particular of items which should be in this study but of which we are at present unaware. To those who have access to photo-copying machines we shall be extremely grateful, especially where handstruck markings or printed matter is concerned.

A C K N O W L E D G E M E N T S

We wish to thank Leslie Bowyer and Bob Emery for having kindly placed their important collections at our disposal.

B I B L I O G R A P H Y

- Postal History of the Australian Forces, 1914-1918
 Harry S. Porter, M.C., F.R.P.S.,L. London Philatelist, Oct-Dec 1954
- The Postage Stamps of New Zealand, Volume III
 R.J.G.Collins, F.R.P.S.N.Z. and C.W.Watts, F.R.P.S.N.Z.
 The Royal Philatelic Society of New Zealand 1955
- Quarterly Circular. June 1973 and Sep: 1975
- J.S.Horesh, Letter, 8 Dec: 1975
- The Postal History of the British Army in World War I
 Alistair Kennedy and George Crabb, 1977

J. A. Firebrace (ESC 71)
 F. W. Benians (ESC 123)

A VOYAGE BOTH PICTURESQUE AND POSTALLY SIGNIFICANT

in the ISTHMUS of SUEZ

During the Works of Excavation of the Canal, up to 1871

TO

EL GISR (Arabic: 'the Threshold') at about 71.5 Kilometres

AND TO

CHANTIER VI at about 75 Kilometres

(Distances calculated from Port Said towards the south)

- * Text and illustrations by M. RIOU "Itinéraire de l'Isthme" aux Bureaux de l'Illustration, rue Richelieu 6, Paris, 1869. Format 20 x 26 cm.
- * Postal Information by Jean BOULAD d'HUMIÈRES, FRPS, L, Membre Correspondant de L'Académie de Philatelie, Paris.

Of all the Post Offices which were opened by the Egyptian postal authority in the Suez Canal zone, only four still exist : Port Said, Kantara, Ismailia and Suez. All the others, which were opened on Thursday 16th August 1868, ceased to exist on the closing of their corresponding encampments, as the continuance of these was no longer justified.

Among these former offices, there were two which were very close, one to the other: EL GISR and CHANTIER VI. These are, furthermore, the ones which have left behind the largest number of 'postal souvenirs' produced by their relatively more important European population. These two encampments, very close to each other, were, so to speak, complementary one to the other.

Between El Ferdan and the future Lake Timsah - approximately from Km 60 to Km 75 - there was a 'mountain' extending for a length of about 15 kilometres at 18 to 20 metres above sea level, which the maritime canal needed to cross in order to bring the water of the Mediterranean into the vast natural depression, which was several metres below sea level, called by everybody there 'Lake Timsah'. This was 'le seuil d'el Gisir' - the threshold of El Gisir.

It was on this 'high plateau' that the works of bank-construction and dredging were the longest and the most difficult. These works were carried out by several enterprises of very great effort. It was a question of raising, across these 15 kilometres of length, a mass of eight or nine million cubic metres of gravel, and of constructing the banks, 19 metres in height, with sandy material having extreme crumbliness, thus producing periodically fearsome collapses. Moreover, it was necessary to excavate eight metres of depth for the canal proper, making a total height for the banks of 27 metres in all.

These works had been commenced in March 1862 at Kilometre 60.5, to end on 18th November 1862 at Kilometre 75.4, say ten months later, with the arrival of the waters of the Mediterranean in Lake Timsah.

The completion of the work on the maritime canal and its approaches, and the traversing of the plateau of El Gisir, were crowned by a visit by the Viceroy on 31st January 1868 (figure 1).

/ Continued . . .



Visite du vice-roi d'Égypte aux travaux du canal.

Figure 1 Visit by the Viceroy of Egypt to the works on the Canal, 1868

In the trench of El Gizr, 18 - 20 metres deep. On left, the Viceroy's chalet on the height. Below, at right, the landing-stage of the postal vessels which provided the service between Port Said and Ismailia

ISTHMUS of SUEZ - A 'Picturesque and Postal' Voyage - Continued

To get to the end of this very important work more easily and more quickly, six Work Camps (Chantiers) were set up and situated at intervals from El Ferdan to Lake Timsah; these were numbered I to VI, five on the African (western) bank (Numbers 1, 2, 3, 5 & 6) and one, Number 4, on the Asian (eastern) bank. These are indicated on the map reproduced (Figure 2).

It was necessary to have 25,000 Egyptian workers, led by 1,500 Europeans, to carry out these works.

A veritable town was built on the plateau of EL GISR, which gathered a numerous population of labourers and traders. The vast encampment was composed of dwellings of the engineers and the workers, as well as a catholic church and a mosque, surrounded by the shops which the traders had come to establish there.

The Chief Engineer of the 'Division of El Gisir' was M. Gioia, an Italian engineer who had qualified at the Academy of Turin, entered the service of the Suez Canal Company in April 1861, and had been named in 1867 as chief of the division of El Gisir. He directed the work of enlarging and deepening the trench of El Gisir until the opening of the Canal in November 1869.

" M. Gioia has succeeded in creating a marvellous cottage on one of the hardest points is this most desolate country. The four rooms which comprise it reveal, in their furnishing, the purest of good taste. The verandah of carved wood which runs the length of the front, the little pool with its fountain babbling away, which gives a freshness to the palm trees, to the willows, to the tamarind trees, to the cactus and to the eucalyptus of the garden, the aviary in which chatter birds of rich and glimmering colours; all this subtle blending of natural things with the products of civilisation makes you comprehend the transformation which a man of good taste was able to impose on the most rebellious and wild nature. This metamorphosis is so astonishing that the villa of the manager of El Gisir is a little marvel which every visitor to the isthmus is careful not to overlook. " (Figure 3).

*
* *

Extending across two Chantiers V and VI, dominating the depression of Timsah, was the most important hospital in the isthmus, composed of several hospital wards, each having dozens of beds, with notably a residential building for the Europeans and one for the Egyptians.

After the inauguration of the maritime canal in November 1869, only the hospital was to continue. In 1888 it was confided to the care of the religious house of St Vincent of Paul, and was extended and modernised between 1896 and 1900. It was renamed "Hopital St. Vicent" (St Vincent's Hospital) but was better known to the Egyptian personnel of the Suez Canal Company under the name of "nemro setta" (Italian: number six) because of its location on Chantier VI, the last surviving of the six Work Camps created on this plateau. Even by 1956, this popular and easy appellation had not been changed.

On this vast plateau, dominating the lake, there was a comfortable and elegant chalet which was built for the Vicaroy where he could stay when entertaining on the rare visits which he made to this region. Later on it was annexed to L'Hopital St. Vincent.

At the foot of this plateau, at the location of Chantier VI, could be found the hutments (offices, workshops and warehouses) of the undertaking responsible for the works (Figure 4).

It was the stopping place of the post-boats of the Suez Canal Company, which circulated between Port Said and Ismailia. In May 1867 there were two journeys daily, one at 6.30 a.m. and the other at 3.30 p.m.

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* *

/ Continued . . .

ISTHMUS of SUEZ - A 'PICTURESQUE AND POSTAL' VOYAGE

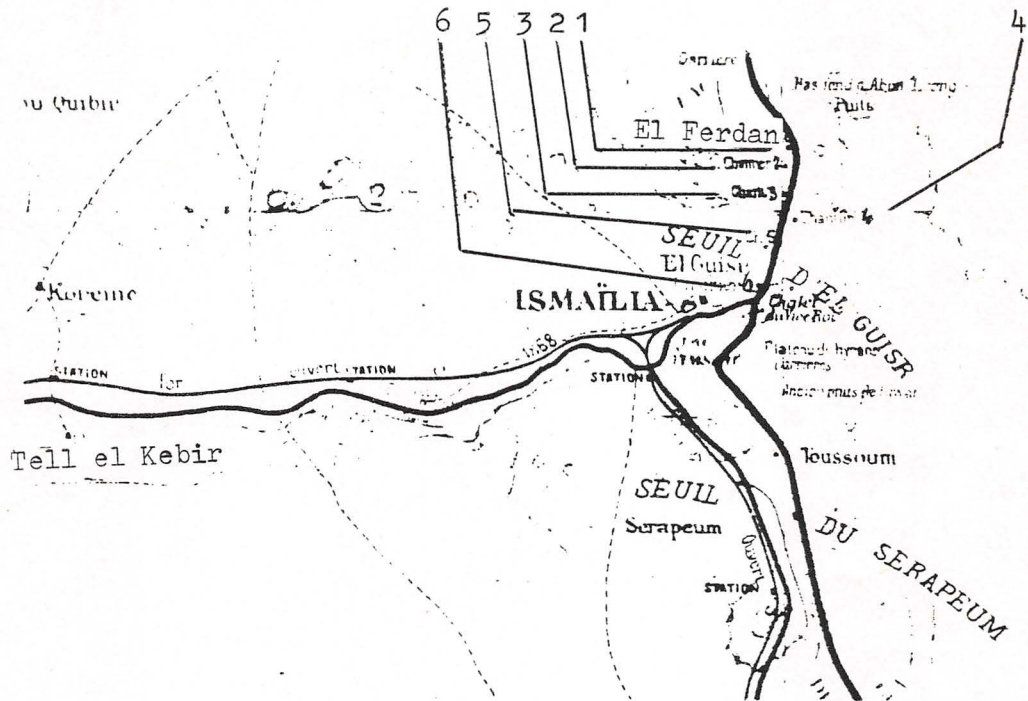


Figure 2. Extract from a map of the Suez Canal

The references to the six Chantiers can be discerned, between El Ferdan and Ismailia, on the Seuil d'el Gisir

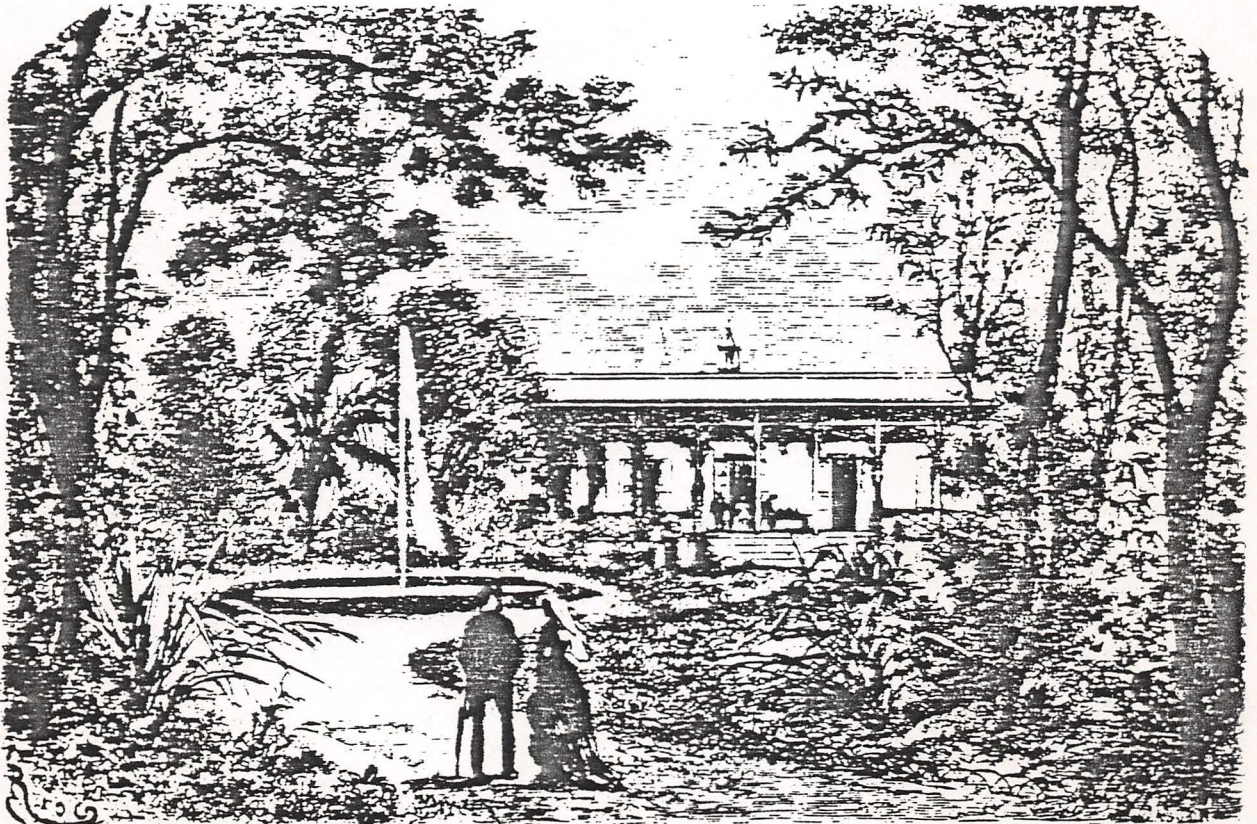


Figure 3. The house of the Italian engineer, M. Gioia, Head of the Division of El Gisir. Clearly shown are the verandah running the length of the front, the little pool with its fountain surrounded by a varied and luxuriant vegetation.



Figure 4

CANAL MARITIME DE SUEZ. — Entrée du canal maritime dans le lac Timsah ; vue prise du lac.
Chantier du vice-roi.

Chantier N° 6.

Rive Asie.

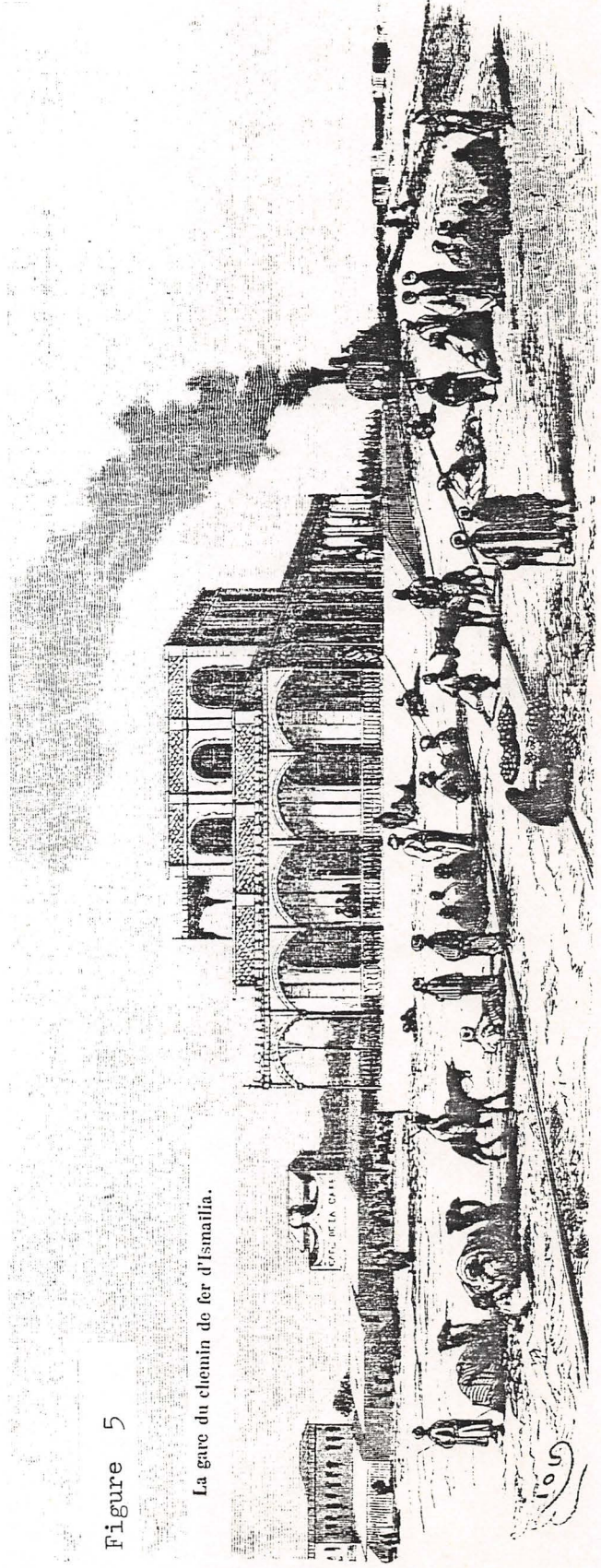


Figure 5

La gare du chemin de fer d'Ismailia.

ISTHMUS of SUEZ - A 'Picturesque and Postal' Voyage - Continued

Amid the turmoil of the construction works, mail from the Canal Company, from its contractors spread along the length of the isthmus, from its personnel and from the business people established in the different towns and encampments, continued to flow. Mail was forwarded regularly by the Company's postal service to Zagazig principally, and to Suez occasionally, these being the two postal centres nearest the isthmus, also then being the two railway termini for the lines from Alexandria and Cairo.

As soon as the railway line had been extended from Zagazig to Ismailia on 1st July 1868, and from Ismailia to Suez on 15th August 1868, (figure 5), the Egyptian Government Post started opening Post Offices in the isthmus, displacing those of the Suez Canal Company.

The first of these was set up in Ismailia on 1st July 1868 in Place Champollion, not far from the station; a marble slab positioned at the entrance recorded its opening. In 1957 this office was still in the same place.

A little later on, postal agencies were opened throughout the length of the canal from Port Said to Suez. As from 16th August 1868 the offices at EL GISR and CHANTIER VI, among others, were taken over. As from this date, only the postage stamps of Egypt, of the 1867 issue, were recognised for franking mail originating from the Canal.

El Gisir used the postmarks provided by the Government postal administration, but Chantier VI used a cachet for the "Service de la poste et du telegraphe de la Compagnie" which had been ordered, with several others, for its telegraphic service. It was because this encampment, together with its Post Office, needed to be closed soon that the Government postal administration used this abnormal datestamp.

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* *

To complete this visit to EL GISR and to CHANTIER VI there are shown below, for each of the two post offices, reproductions of the different cancellations used successively, with an indication of the first and last dates of use, as known to date.

This list is supplemented by reproductions of several entire letters which originated from these offices. They are all very rare and often unique.

Subject to an indication to the contrary, the strikes are in black.

EL GISR - Office opened 16 April 1868, closed in 1871



Type II - 2 27 mm, in black
Recorded from 29 SETT 68 to 2 LUGL 69



Manuscript : " . . . lic 69 El Gisir, on 1 piastre
Needed because of accidental damage to the date stamp.



Type III - 2.5 22-23 mm, in black
Recorded from 13 DICE 1869 to 1 GEN 1871

ISTHMUS of SUEZ - A 'Picturesque and Postal' Voyage

CHANTIER VI - Office opened 16 August 1868 and closed towards the end of 1870.



21 - 22 mm in black
Seen from ? SEPT 68 to 18 DEC 68

*Ch. VI
19/1/69*

Manuscript on 10 paras - 1 example reported

*Chantier VI
31/1/69*

Manuscript on 1 piastre - 1 example reported

*Chantier VI
16/2/69*

Manuscript on 10 paras - 5 examples reported

*Chant VI
16/2/69*

Manuscript on 10 paras - 3 examples reported



21 - 22 mm in black
Seen from 5 MARS 69 to 27 MAI 69

*Ch. VI
24/6/69*

Manuscript on 1 piastre - 2 examples reported
" " " " 13 / 6 / 69 - 1 example reported



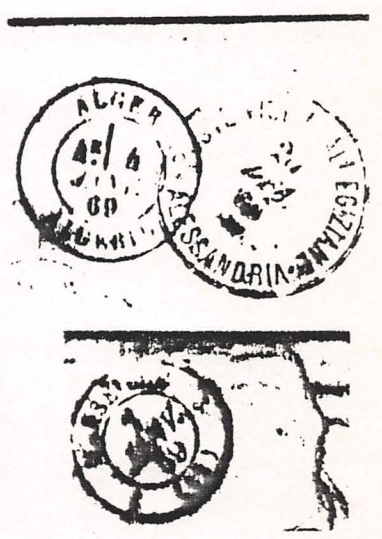
21 - 22 mm in blue
Seen from 2 JUIL 69 to 23 JUIL 70

The manuscript cancellations are very probably due to the datestamps being out of use because of accidental damage.



Letter sent from EL GISR 29 September 1868; by the Egyptian post to Alexandria, and to eventual destination of Algiers by the French Post, backstamped 2 October 1868. (Collection: Peter Smith, Ann Arbor, USA)

Backstamps



Letter from EL Gizr 25 December 1868 ('25' inverted), sent by Egyptian Post as far as Alexandria (backstamps of Ismailia on 25 December and Alexandria on 26 December). By the French Post to final destination of Algiers, where it appeared on 4 January 1869 after having transited through Marseilles on 2 January 1869 (datestamp on front), and through the French Post Office in Alexandria on 27 December 1868 (backstamp). The frankings are in order.

(Collection P. Foster, Valence, France)



Front of a letter sent from EL GHIRS on 13 December 1869, to its destination, Port Said (Collection: Peter Feltus, USA)



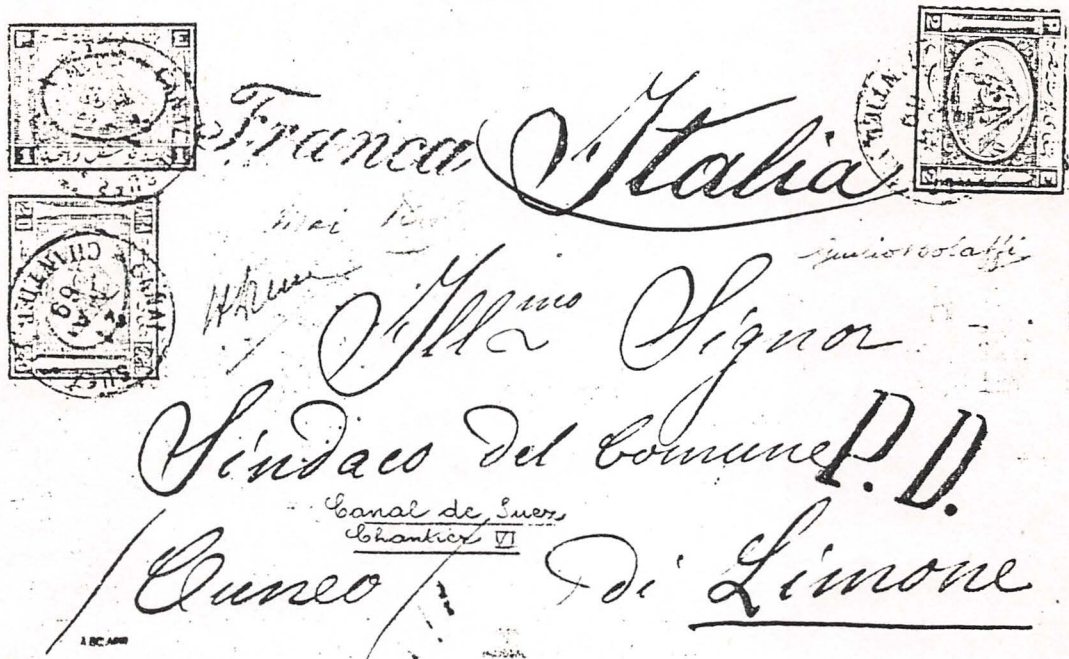
Signe
L. L. Mauvoigts
Port-Said.

Letter sent from EL GHIR on 8 June 1869, by the Egyptian Post as far as Alexandria (backstamped at Ismailia on 8 June and at Alexandria on 9 June 1869). Then by the French post to the destination at Vernon sur Brenne, France, where it arrived on 19 June 1869 after passing through Alexandria on 9 June 1869 (datestamp on front) and Paris on 19 June 1869. The frankings are normal.

(Author's collection)

ISTHMUS of SUEZ - A 'PICTURESQUE AND POSTAL' VOYAGE

The only known entire letters originating from Chantier VI. The Chantier marks have been retouched for printing.



Letter from CHANTIER VI 21 May 1869 to Italy. It is franked exclusively with Egyptian stamps of the 1867 issue (20 para, 1 & 2 pi) as authorised by the Postal Convention of 1st October 1868 between Egypt and Austria-Hungary, being $1\frac{1}{2}$ pi for postage and 1 pi for registration. As the Chantier VI Office was unable to deal with registered letters, it was forwarded as unregistered. The cachets "Franca" and "P.D." of the Egyptian and Austrian posts indicate that this item was paid up to destination, Cuneo di Limone, in Italy, then in the Austrian Empire. (Collection E. Antonini, Geneva)



Letter sent from CHANTIER VI on 27 May 1869 by the Egyptian post to Alexandria (datestamps of Ismailia on 27 May and Alexandria on 28 May 1869; "REGIE POSTE EGIZIANE" on back) to Digouin, France, by the French post. It arrived on 5 June 1869 after passing through Alexandria on 29 May (datestamp on front) and Marseilles on 4 June 1869 (backstamp). The frankings are normal.

(Collection P. Foster, Valence, France)

U P D A T A

These three submission all from Mr Ted Blackburn (ESC 244) :-

Cover franked with three 1 pi. adhesives with RACCOMANDATO Type Reg-6, cancelled at BENI-MAZAR on 30.1.82 - an earlier date than shown in Study VI

Second Issue 1 pi. adhesive cancelled Type III-2.5n FESCNE 30.7.70 - an earlier date than shown in Study VI.

'FOUND OPEN' Label (1908 issue) cancelled COOK'S POST OFFICE CAIRO / CASH type H.TC 6 dated 8-VI 23 (Earliest date - see illustration).

- - - -

MARITIME CANCELLATIONS ON 1927 FUAD ISSUE - P.E.Whetter (ESC 133)

I refer to The Q.C. for March 1981 (pages 13-17) and September 1981 (page 77).

My thanks to Lars Alund for the further information he has provided. Another visit to Lloyds Register of Shipping has confirmed the existence of the 'ERITREA' as part of the Lloyd Triestino fleet. Built in 1918, of 2,517 tons, this vessel was eventually sunk by enemy action in 1943. The 'RETTUNO' also owned by Lloyd Triestino was a small ship - 407 tons - built in 1921, and appears to have been in service at least until 1946. I am still trying to find out what happened to it eventually.

I am now able to add a further ship to the list - the 'PALESTINA' (see illustration of Postcard dated 8-4-36). This vessel - 7,039 tons, was built in 1916 and until 1935 was known as the 'AMAZZONIA'. Owned by Lloyd Triestino, she was finally sunk by enemy action in October 1943.

* The Editor's apologies for lateness in publishing this note from Pip Whetter.

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O V E R P R I N T " O c t o b e r 1 9 5 4 " - C.F.Hass (ESC 181)

One of the things that I have wanted to do is to make a reply to Lucien Toutounji's note concerning the 6m Republican "tourist view" postal card with an "overprint" of "October 1954" (The Q.C., number 122 for June 1982, page 164).

My first contact with this overprint came in the form of a copy of the 30-mills green Farouk registered (Higgins & Gage number C10) with a 35-mills violet mosque stamp pasted atop the original vignette. The envelope was sold at post offices, in this format, after the revolution, and I had several copies before I acquired this one example which bore a handstamped overprint consisting of what appeared to be an Arabic word and a year. Due to the poorly struck nature of the handstamp, it was indecipherable. In the Gibbons auction in which I purchased it, it was described as a "SPECIMEN".

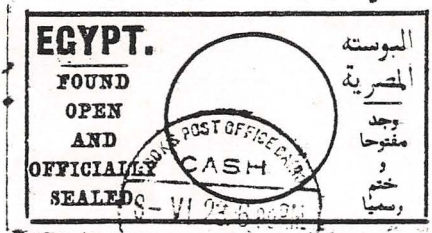
This summer, during my time in Cairo, I saw on a wall of the Postal Museum a framed grouping of postage stamps representing the issues that were apparently available at post offices at the time of the first issue of republican stamps. Included were regular issues, postage dues, the two "delta barrage" airs without Farouk, as well as several postal stationery items, including the afore-mentioned registered envelope, the 6-mills card mentioned by Lucien Toutounji, the 4-mills "farmer" envelope and the 10-mills "defense" stamp posted atop the original vignette. I cannot recall if there were any official stamps in the group. There were no "bar"-overprinted stamps represented.

/ Continued . . .

UPDATA

Proprietary Post Office cancel on 'Found Open' label

Early date →

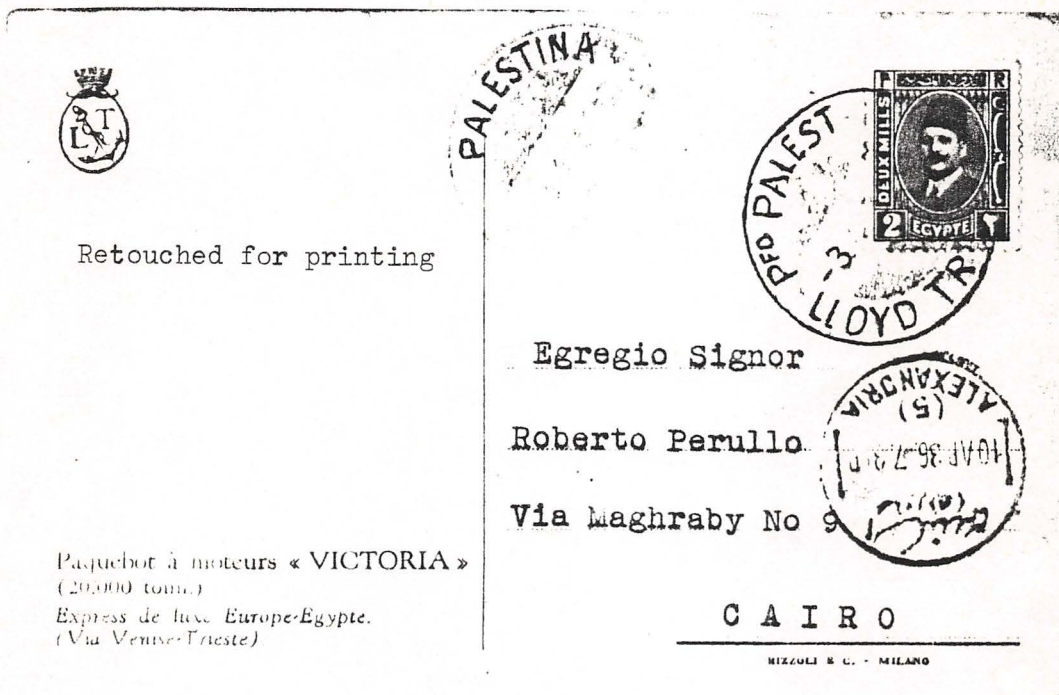


MARITIME CANCEL ON

1927 FUAD

New known ship

'PALESTINA'



QUESTION TIME 49

ABU TIÐ with inverted 'G'

(Retouched for printing)



*Miss Craun Roberts
15. Ouslow Gardens
London, S.
England*



Retouched for printing

Overprint "October 1954" - Continued

In each case, the stamp or stationery item had received the aforementioned hand-stamp, and the entire group was displayed in the manner that one would see in a philatelic sales office, or a post office with a philatelic sales counter.

When I requested to be allowed to climb a ladder to more closely view the display, I was refused permission. The frame was mounted quite high up on the east wall of the museum, and the handstamp was not legible, given the distance and the poor lighting conditions. I did, however, recognize it as the same handstamp that appears on my registered envelope.

Given the fact that Mr Toutounji has a 6-mills card with the handstamp, of which, thanks to him, we now know the translation, and I have the registered envelope, it appears that there must have been one other display (or possibly more) like the one in the Museum, and that that display was broken up, some of the pieces now being in philatelic hands.

The purpose of the handstamped "October 1954" was apparently that of a "specimen" overprint, allowing the items to be displayed to the public, but invalidating them for postage, as a discouragement to theft. It would be interesting to know if any other pieces are to be found in private hands.

An interesting sidelight on the situation of pasting republican stamps atop the Farouk portraits on the 10-mills letter sheet and the 30-mills registered envelope is the fact that in each case the portrait was first obliterated by the application of a large rubber-stamped "X", the postage stamps then being affixed atop the "X". This is yet another chapter in the saga of the "bar" overprint study, and an intriguing one at that! I have not yet seen any used examples of either of the two stationery items. If any have survived, they must be of great rarity. The unused examples of the registered envelope are quite scarce, and I have seen only one example of the letter sheet in a collection. Both deserve catalogue status, as the "X" underprint will easily distinguish between the real thing and an ordinary envelope with stamp pasted atop the vignette.

I regret that my example of the handstamp is so poorly struck that to make a photograph of it would be a useless exercise.

Charles F. Hass (ESC 181)

* * Will Members please report examples of these postal stationery specimens in their collections, or seen at auctions, etc.

Q U E S T I O N T I M E - N e w Q u e s t i o n

Q. Time 49 Question posed by E. Blackburn (ESC 244)

ABU TIG datestamp with 'G' inverted

I have a 5-mills postal stationery cover cancelled 16. 4. 14 at ABU TIG which has the 'G' of 'TIG' inverted. (See illustration, which has been retouched for printing - Editor).

Has this previously been reported, and was it subsequently corrected ?

MILITARY USE OF CIVIL POST OFFICES 1914/16 (J.A.Firebrace & F.W.Benians)

Mr John Firebrace writes to report having already received one or two very good batches of data relevant to this study. However, he is hoping for a great deal more. This material is neither scarce nor expensive and every collector of Egypt must have something !

Q. Time 10 "Thanks to British Navy" Labels" - Question originally put in The Q.C. for June 1979 by P.R.Bertram

Mr J.S.Horesh (ESC 118) writes: "Referring to Q.C. Nos 110, 111 and 112, members may be interested to know that a whole booklet was offered in R. Lowe's sale of 7th October 1982. The date ascribed was '1942 (?)' and the booklet was said to contain 10 panes (4 x 5) but it in fact contained 9 panes as 1 had been removed but the top selvedge remained. Some stamps were partially severed in 1 pane but otherwise the booklet, in grey covers, was in good condition. The booklet was Lot 21 in the 'Cinderella' section of the sale and was accompanied by proofs of the complete pane on white and yellow card. No estimate was given and the lot realised £ 38. "

Q. Time 32 "Flaws on 1915 Official (Litho) Overprint" - Question put in The Q.C. for Sept 1981, No. 119, by Dr S. Luitse (ESC 232)

Mr P.E.Whetter (ESC 133) writes: " The varieties to which Dr Luitse draws attention are known but I have not seen them listed in detail. D. McNeille wrote about this stamp in L.O.P. No. 28 (page 59) and the following are a few of the comments he made :-

" The sheets, two panes of 100 one above the other, were overprinted without removal of the margins. One drawing appears to have been reproduced on the printing stones (Of 200) as I have not been able to find any recurring varieties. The non-recurring varieties on the 5-mill value are Angle Lines in N.W. and N.E. corners . . . I have an upper pane of 100 with Control 3 on which there is a large spot of ink in the centre of each 'O' on Nos. 1 to 11 and 20 and a spot above the 'O' on No. 1. On the upper pane many stamps are found with a smudge of ink in the centre of the 'O' which in later printings becomes a shiny mass of ink. There are many other varieties but those above (I have not mentioned all of them) are the most prominent.'

I have in my own collection complete sheets (i.e. two panes of 100) of Plates 1, 2 and 3 and perhaps one day I shall find time to examine them in detail and report my findings. The upper pane of my Plate 3 has nearly all the varieties listed by Dr Luitse."

Q. Time 45 "Interpostal Seal on Cover" - Question put in Q.C. 123 for Sept 1982, by Mr E. Blackburn (ESC 244) who himself writes further in regard to this :-

" Further to the question I instigated you may recall that at the Birmingham Meeting I drew attention to a very faint double rectangle datestamp in blue on the reverse of the cover. Now that I have a copy of Chirchini, I realise that the mark is very similar to those illustrated on page 152 and if all the marks on that page are varieties of 'Advice of Receipt' then it would seem likely that the two halves of an Interpostal Seal were used to attach the relevant form to the cover."

Q. Time 46 "Rural Service - Locations" - Question put in Q.C. 123 for September 1982, by Mr E. Blackburn (ESC 244)

Mr J.M.Murphy (ESC 240) writes: " I was interested to read this Question since it links with work I have been doing on locating the post offices of Egypt and their respective likely occurrences in post-marks, based on the 1897 Census, which I find well documented.

I find I can pinpoint the route of this cover fairly well, thanks to the help of the 1929 Survey of Egypt 1:100,000 Atlas, but I am afraid there are a couple of misreadings - the Rural Service handstamp reads in Arabic "Hamul and Kom el-Ahmar" and the left-hand transit stamp on the back reads in Arabic "Hamul" rather than "Hamiq".

Shubra Zingi had a population of 3,930 (4,150 with one dependent village) in 1897, and is described as being 1 hour and 15 minutes' walking distance from Minuf. In fact it lies directly east of Minuf, at the end of a minor road from the main road between Chibin el-Kom and el-Bagur.

Kom el-Ahmar ("the red mound" or "hill") was a popular place name. In 1929 there were 13 places called Kom el-Ahmar in Egypt (five fewer than 30 years before) but only one of them is in Minufiyeh, fractionally closer to Minuf than is Shubra Zingi. Population in 1897 was 657, too small to have dependencies.

Hamul 8km (i.e. 5 miles and again about 75 minutes' walking time) from Minuf, had an 1897 population of 3,850 (4,130 with three dependent villages), a third class post office (i.e. open to ordinary, registered and official correspondence, and to ordinary parcels) and a telegraph office. It was clearly the main postal centre for the immediate area, although later Sirs el-Laiyana also had a post office.

It seems that the cover the subject of Q. Time 46 was sent from Shubra Zingi by foot to tiny Kom el-Ahmar, where it joined the Rural (boat) Service on either the main (navigable) Bagariya Canal or its northern off-shoot, the el-Diwan Canal, for the Kom el-Ahmar - Hamul journey. At Hamul it joined the 66-mile Tanta - Barrage (for Cairo) branch rail line which passed through Tanta - Chibin - Minuf - Ashmunein to Barrage, and was picked up by the main-line Alexandria - Cairo train at the Delta Barrage.

On the accompanying sketch map (1cm = 1km) I have omitted most roads, but can find none on the map to cover the triangle of Kom el-Ahmar, Hamul and Minuf, and also the Nile branches which fill much of the lower half. Later (from 1929) access to Shubra Zingi may have been eased by the Benha - Minuf branch rail line of 15 miles, but at this stage it seems that the first part of the letter's journey must have been by canal.

J.M.Murphy (ESC 240)

