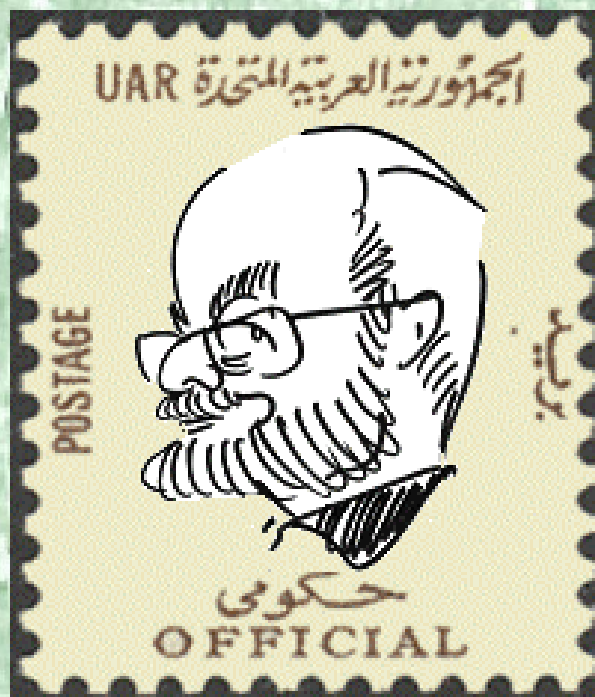


The
Quarterly Circular
of
**THE
EGYPT
STUDY CIRCLE**



Edmund Hall 1943-2017. The Tribute Issue

September Quarter 2017 -- Volume XXIII No 3 -- Whole Series No 262 -- Pages 49-72

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& Todd**
PHILATELISTS
PTS
GREGORY C.G. TODD

EGYPT.

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(الرقم ٣٩ - ٥٥٠)

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مصلحة البريديّة المصريّة


AVIS DE RÉCEPTION شلم التسليم

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مرسل لأرسالية الاتى بيانها وحي (١)

portant le N° *24489* et l'adresse de M. *L. Lofranco*
à Tripoli
بروسم جناب مرفوضو طريبيا مصر

désire savoir s'il a été reçu. يرغب الاطلاع عما اذا كانت تسلمت ام كيف

Appliquer ici un timbre-poste de 10 c.



L'avis ci-dessus désigné m'a été remis contre reçu le *11 Juin 86*
لأرسالية الموصحة اعلان تسلمت والا يصل الا لزم بتاريخ

188

Provis à être du bureau de destination

ختم المكتب
المرسل اليه اليومي

L'Employé des Postes.
مستخدم البريد

J. Tripodi

Signature.
الاتى

J. Tripodi

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Edmund Hall, R.I.P.

The Egypt Study Circle is sad to have to announce the death, on August 13, 2017, of Edmund Hall, for many years our *QC* Editor, webmaster and general guide and backbone. We have lost an excellent friend and colleague. We thought it fitting that this issue should be devoted to Edmund and the writings he left.

Meetings dates for 2017

The September meeting will be held at Stampex, at the Design Centre, Angel, Islington, from 2.30-4.30pm; the November meeting from 2-5pm in the Victory Services Club, Seymour Street, Marble Arch, London.

Sept 16, 2.30pm	Stampex	Ten Sheets	All members
Nov 4, 2pm	Services Club	Boy King	John Davis

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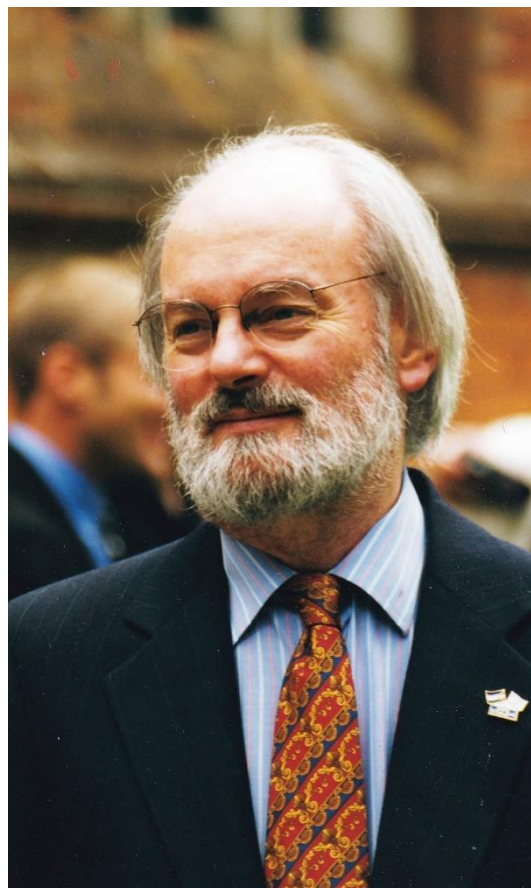


Facebook

Edmund Hall, ESC 239 (1943-2017): An Appreciation

Edmund Hall arrived a little late for one of our Study Circle meetings in early 1998, just as discussion had foundered on who might take up the vacant role of Editor of the *Quarterly Circular*. Without taking off his cap, and without even a single thought for the multiple complexities he might face beyond his computer, his scanner and his optical character recognition software, he said immediately: “I could do that!”

It was typical of the man, and typical of his life in the Circle, that he should see a problem, rise instantly to the challenge – and, despite the difficulties, make an outstanding success of it. For a collector suffering profound dyslexia, it was a brave if not even foolhardy challenge. But Edmund knew he could handle it, and with a devoted backroom team to help, he performed magnificently as Editor. Over the next 19 years he provided the Circle with a glittering succession of 76 *QCs*, far and away more than any previous incumbent in the role, and he oversaw a gradual change – it had to be gradual, to appease those unwilling to spend an extra penny on publishing – from black and white typed pages to true printing, and even more gradually, from four colour pages to a full-colour magazine that is today the envy of many other societies.



And he wrote for the *QC*, too. This was partly forced on him because the flow of members’ material has never been strong enough, but his two loves of military philately and making the stamp fit the rate provided a steady stream of articles that not only filled the magazine but also earned him merit from his colleagues in the form of the MacArthur Award for the best and most significant article of the year. Five times.

Edmund was not only print-minded, however. He it was who persuaded a doubtful and generationally-challenged group of officers that in this modern age we should have a website, and that we should spend a little money on it. Today, ten years after its official launch, it provides a constant source of new applicants, a home for the Auctions, and beyond that a massive encyclopaedia of Egyptian philately unmatched anywhere in the world, with over 3,000 pages of material, the vast majority provided by Edmund himself. Many of the military elements are illustrated with his hand-drawn depictions of men and uniforms, something he always loved to create.

Another of his brilliant conceptions was to digitise back copies of the *QC*, the *L’OP* and *Egyptian Topics* – and, a master-stroke, to gain Peter Smith’s permission to do the same with his “bible” - and to have them available on the website for all members to consult at will. A wonderful research tool.

And as a further step into the future, Edmund was one of a small team headed by Hani Sharestan who have for the past three years provided Egyptian philatelists – ESC members and non-members alike – with a Facebook page, on which ideas and illustrations can be exchanged at the press of a button or two. It has become a lively forum, with over 300 members, and again provides a steady, if so far fairly slow, source of new members. It could not have happened without Edmund’s enthusiasm.

This enthusiasm overflowed into his meeting displays, where whatever the topic – postal rates, postmarks, air mails, TPOs, stations – his presentation was always embellished with a quirky sense of humour that brought out the best and most unexpected in his material.

Edmund joined the Circle in mid 1978 at a time when such distinguished and respected collectors as MacArthur, Smith, Sears, Horesh, Grimmer and Clarke formed the committee, but Edmund soon showed his abilities by taking over from Dennis Clarke in December 1979 as Secretary/Treasurer, a role he would maintain for seven years. During this period he provided yet another innovation – the Auction. Started out as a private concern when he wished to branch out as a dealer, it was quickly taken under the Circle's wing and has flourished ever since – we are now at Number 56.

It must not be forgotten that collector of military membership of the Forces pretty well all committee in the position of President, only earlier this year. I well display he gave – almost in fascinating material from all over the world – the Far wonderful IRA covers, a ranging interest and a



Edmund receiving one of his five MacArthur Awards from John Davis

Edmund Matticott Hall was Essex, to which his parents wartime bombing. He made and mussels in Southend, to life than that and studied polymer and plastics North London University.

and eventually to textile-testing machinery before graduating into computer software. Always fascinated by maths, he took a masters degree at University College London in mathematical education. After passing with flying colours he was told by his tutor: "I'm fairly sure I've just read something very important; but I can't quite put my finger on what it is!"

Edmund was a very keen philately. During a lifetime of Postal History Society he filled and official roles, culminating from which he stepped down remember a truly astounding defiance of his illness – of "the small wars" from literally East, Africa, South America, true indication of his wide-delight to see.

born in March 1943 in Ilford, had been evacuated during an early living selling cockles but decided there must be more in the evenings for a degree in technology at what is today He moved on to adhesive tapes,

Edmund worked very hard for that degree, including popping over to my house when finally the treatise was written, "for a couple of hours to tidy up the English". He stayed the night, and it was long into the following afternoon before the text was deemed satisfactory. But Ed was a true polymath, able to converse knowledgeably and in depth about politics, history, geography and science, taking part as both speaker and interested observer at meetings of the local University of the Third Age, and thoroughly enjoyed running an infants' school in his village on retirement.

With his wife Ann and daughters Katharine and Judy, he was also an ardent traveller, visiting some truly out of the way places in his search for knowledge: not only Australia, where Judy has made her home, and Egypt several times, but also Syria, the Sahara Desert, North Korea and Libya ... as far off the beaten track as they could get! Edmund and Ann were justly famous for their hospitality, with many of the visiting greats of Egyptian philately enjoying evenings in their home in Little Chalfont over the years, the informal meetings overflowing with good cheer and good food ... just a casual gathering of like-minded people that allowed the pressures of the world to slip away.

If Edmund's split-second decision to take over the *QC* surprised many, his announcement at the September 2015 meeting that he had terminal cancer and a prognosis of only six months was an equally immediate reaction to the bad news – as was his absolute determination to fight on and not give in to the medical sentence. His courage and willpower over the ensuing period won for him and his family a further two years – and gave the Circle opportunity to come to terms with the forthcoming tragedy. He fought on with immense bravery against a series of increasingly painful chemotherapy and radiotherapy treatments, bearing it all with immense fortitude and concentrating on living as full a life as possible.

In the passing of Edmund Hall the Circle has lost an excellent researcher, a great collector, a man who has given vast amounts of his time and expertise over very many years by providing a backbone to Circle affairs, deeply connected with the whole membership not just four times a year when the *QC* appears, but with every meeting, every auction, every event. We shall miss him. Enormously. **Mike Murphy**

John Davis (ESC 213) writes: I first came across an Edmund Hall when I was a teenager and into jazz. He was a clarinet maestro who played alongside Louis Armstrong, but perhaps not quite a legend. Years later I joined the Circle and soon another Edmund Hall joined too. This one became a legend in his own lifetime and a great personal friend. While writing a book on military postal history I joined the Forces Postal History Society and again came across our Ed. I noted his progression through the ranks until he became its President and wondered what he did in his spare time. At every meeting he made me welcome in his inimitable way and I realised why he was President: he was both very popular and extremely knowledgeable.

When one considers what he did for the ESC, I really do wonder how he found the time. Not only did he take over the editorship of *QC* but he improved its presentation, its content and its quality beyond measure. Meanwhile, he set up and ran the website that must be the envy of most societies, and was auctioneer at live auctions. He was the 'backbone' of the ESC at a time when people are shying away from such commitments.

I have lost a special friend, one who always gave you the impression that you were what mattered to him. Not many people have that ability, but Ed had it in spades. I expect he was your friend too. Bless you Ed.

Anton Jansen (ESC 383) writes: Notwithstanding the life threatening judgment he received, he carried on and fulfilled a brilliant task in editing the *QC*. I know from experience how difficult it can be to run a journal, but the fact that the *QC* has continued to appear regularly, and with good content, means that you had the balls to do it. I will miss you!

Tony Cakebread (ESC Antipodean Agent), writes: At the most recent meeting of the ESC NZ Chapter in Wellington - at which we were fortunate to have everyone present: Sue Claridge; Anabright Hay, myself; Claude Poulsen and Herb Cowley - members asked that I pass on their condolences to Edmund's family on learning of the sad news of his passing.

While distance meant that few of us knew Edmund especially well, those fortunate to have attended meetings in both London (Sue, Herb and myself) and, more recently, New York (Anabright and Herb) remember Edmund's updates and addresses at those gatherings and especially his unstinting commitment to both the *Quarterly Circular* and ESC website. We can only imagine how much time and energy has been involved with both initiatives over the years and we are all very grateful to have had Edmund's willingness to take a leadership role with these important tasks that have helped provide the global glue of our organisation.

The Editor adds: When Edmund was late in printing his very first *QC*, he lamented that he had "fallen at the first hurdle". I fear that I have done the same. But it never occurred to me that I would have to carry out the production of an Edmund tribute issue. I trust he will understand with his usual grace and good humour.

Military Matters: The German Army in North Africa in WWII

Edmund Hall (ESC 239)

This article should be read in conjunction with

“The Italian Army in Egypt during World War II” in *QC 223*, December 2007, pp280-288.

Much ink has been used and many trees have died to comment on the North African campaign in WWII. From the Allied side the third Battle of El Alamein was the “end of the beginning” and its first major victory over German forces. From the Axis side, and that of many Allied military historians, the romantic myths of the Africa Korps under the legend of Rommel enthral many. As I point out in my article (*QC 223*) not all German forces were part of the Africa Korps, though most articles on the subject lump them together under the title.

Much debate has surrounded Rommel’s generalship. Some would have it that he was Germany’s best, others that his reputation is one of the myths of WWII. I can do no better than to quote from Robert M. Citino’s article in *Military History Quarterly*:

There is no more evocative phrase to emerge from World War II than “Afrika Korps”. The name conjures up a unique theatre of war, a hauntingly beautiful empty quarter where armies could roam free, liberated from towns and hills, chokepoints and blocking positions, and especially those pesky civilians. It calls forth a war of near-absolute mobility, where tanks could operate like ships at sea, “sailing” where they wished, setting out on bold voyages hundreds of miles into the deep desert, then looping around the enemy flank and emerging like pirates of old to deal devastating blows to an unsuspecting foe. Finally, it implies a dauntless hero, in this case Field Marshal Erwin Rommel, a noble commander who fought the good fight, who hated Adolf Hitler and everything he stood for, and who couldn’t have been further from our stereotype of the Nazi fanatic. Everything about the Desert Fox attracts us—the manly poses, the out-of-central-casting good looks, even the goggles perched just so. Placing Rommel and his elite Afrika Korps at the fore allows us to view the desert war as a clean fight against a morally worthy opponent. It was war, yes, but almost uniquely in World War II, it was a “war without hate”, as Rommel famously called it in his memoirs.

It’s an attractive image all around. Unfortunately, practically all of it is a fabrication. The desert was hardly a haven of beauty or romance. The fighting was a nightmare for both sides. Far from letting the respective tank fleets roam free, the desert chained them irresistibly to their supply lines, and a single failed convoy or a lost column of trucks could stop a whole offensive dead in its tracks. Contrary to the dreamed mobility of desert warfare, both sides would spend far more time in static defensive positions, often quite elaborate, than they would launching tank charges.

Yes, the reader might respond, but surely we are on firmer ground with regard to his military skill. After all, no less a figure than British prime minister Winston Churchill called him “a great general” on the floor of the House of Commons. Rommel’s daring exploits at the head of the Afrika Korps (later enlarged and renamed Panzerarmee Afrika) were exciting, to be sure, but many officers in his own army reckoned them an ultimately valueless sideshow. His disinterest in the dreary science of logistics, his love of action, his tendency to fly off to wherever the fighting was hottest - all of these qualities make for an exciting movie. Yet they are problems in a commander under modern conditions, and they all contributed materially to the disaster that ultimately befell him and his army in the desert.

Be that as it may, his derring-do and drive was in great contrast to the pathetic advance into Egypt of the Italian Marshal Rudolfo Graziani in 1940. Rommel and the Afrika Korps won some brilliant victories, including Gazala-Tobruk during May-June 1942, while Nazi propagandists made the most of the Desert Fox's triumphs. Had Hitler sent more forces to Africa in the early stages, perhaps just before the victory at Gazala in June 1942, the fall of Mersa Matruh on June 30, the panicky retreat of the British known as the "the Flap" or "Ash Wednesday", could have resulted in a German victory at the first battle of El Alamein and possibly the British abandoning Egypt. Hitler rewarded Rommel with a field marshal's baton for this victory, the youngest ever in the German army. Rommel remarked to his aides that he would have preferred an extra division. In 1941, before Rommel left Germany to take command of the Afrika Korps, Colonel General Franz Haider, chief of the German High Command, told him that preparations for Operation Barbarossa made it impossible to divert any more forces or logistical support to North Africa. Thus Rommel's mission, he was told, was not to defeat the British but to tie down the maximum number of Allied troops for as long as possible.



Initially known as "Aufklärungsstab Rommel" when he was informed of his new position on February 6, 1941, the German army in North Africa was renamed "Deutsches Afrikakorps" when Hitler announced its official formation on February 19, the original Aufklärungsstab being absorbed into the new command. At this initial stage the Afrikakorps consisted of the following elements:

Generalkommando (staff element)

The 5 Leichte-Division

And various support units among which was the 735th Field Post Office, the first to serve in North Africa

The German military gave great importance to the delivery of mail to serving troops, as an early report indicates: "delayed mail message box, including [news of] family members", could cause the soldiers "concern and (make) his duty difficult" (*German Reich Mail*, Berlin, 1940, p.11). They realised the importance of troop morale and considered contact with home vital to the cause. During the early campaigns of 1937-39, the German Wehrmacht had a military mailing system that provided free postal services within Germany. By September 3, 1939, the Feldpost military mail service was organised to include all theatres of action: postcards and letters up to 250gm, including newspapers, could be mailed free of charge by the German paramilitary and military organisations. In November 1939 packages weighing up to 1000gm were included at the nominal fee of 20Rpf.

Security was also considered greatly important, as was the concern that captured mail could be used by enemies' intelligence. To preserve the secrecy of troop movements, each unit down to a battalion (Abteilung), normally 500 to 1,000 personnel, was assigned a five-digit code as its Feldpost Nummer (FpN). By the end of 1939 letter prefixes "L" and "M" were attached in front of each FpN to units belonging to the Luftwaffe and the Kriegsmarine. Companies making up the battalion had the same FpN with letter prefixes "A" to "E" at the end of each FpN. The letter A generally signified headquarters company, the others stood for line companies. The FpN acted as the return address.

For instance, from the *German Field Post Overview* 1942, company FPNs of the 155th Panzer Grenadier Regiment of the 90th Light Division are:

Company	FeldPostNummer
Staff I. Battalion	21668 A
1st Company	21668 B
2nd Company	21668 C
3rd Company	21668 D
4th Company	21668 E

Letters were not meant to be taken into the field for fear that they could fall into enemy hands, providing vital information about units of the military force or other relevant clues about the supply situation or troop movements. Diaries were also banned and any letters had to be retrieved from fallen soldiers. I suspect that such rules were often broken as soldiers carried with them treasured letters from loved ones back home.

By 1939 40,000 such FpN numbers were in use, at the end of 1942 56,000, and in April 1943 60,000. By February 1944 the number reached 64,000. Numbers were, however, sometimes dropped, say if a battalion ceased to exist, or was then reassigned to a different unit. Numbers could change during reorganisation of a division or being sent to another theatre of war. All of this leads to problems for the postal historian, because there is nothing on the covers to indicate which unit the letter is from or its location.

Those collectors of German WWII Feldpost refer to two publications as crucial. One is the monumental work by Norbert Kannapin, *Die Deutsche Feldpostuebersicht 1939-1945*, which comes in three volumes of tiny print. Kannapin gives feldpost numbers, the units to which they were assigned, and - where known - the dates. The other work is Georg Tessin's *Verbaende und Truppen der deutschen Wehrmacht und Waffen-SS 1939-1945*. From Kannapin the Feldpost number indicates with which unit the sender had served. Then, using the unit information, one can search in Tessin's 15 volumes for more information on the unit - what division/army group it belonged to, often where it was formed and its location during specific months of service and sometimes when and where it was refitted and/or destroyed or disbanded.

Now I have Kannapin but have never seen Tessin. I do however have other sources for the makeup of German divisions. To make research more difficult, however, units were continually being reformed, amalgamated, disbanded ... so to know exactly which units were in which theatre and when is all a bit suspect. To my knowledge no one has yet made a list of those FpNs used by the Germans in North Africa and particularly when they were inside Egypt. One is dependent on a dealer or former philatelist who has done the work and described a cover's FpN. This tends to add a premium as "Africa Korps" post is eagerly sought by collectors.

What I have tried to do here is collate all available information from my own collection, other collections, auction catalogues and any articles on German Feldposts in North Africa. Such literature is sparse in English and of course most sources are in German. My minimalist German - "Wo bekomme ich eine Briefmarke" - is of little help, but with the aid of internet translation I can make a stab at it.

A few years ago Kannapin was put on the web and I have downloaded the 69 pdfs, each of some 149 pages. I have put them into a folder that allows some search possibilities but unfortunately only the units are given (without their division) and these are split across two lines, seriously hampering searching within the files. It is much easier, however, to use pdfs to search for a particular FpN number. Several websites give data on German units, some also adding information by giving the FpN. There are books in German on the Feldpost and I have used several of my books in English on the Afrika Korps that refer to the Feldpostamt in a spasmodic way. Needless to say, some of the data is contradictory. But by going back and forth between the various works I think I have managed to give meaning to the offices in use and FpNs used in North Africa.

I originally thought I might have some one or two dozen FpN numbers but my list has grown to some 200 and further digging would no doubt reveal more. My original intention was to consider the German units only within Egypt but I have touched upon the whole North Africa campaign as I suspect those interested in the subject would do. I also imagined that alongside each FpN I would give the unit and places of operation - but my list extends to eight pages [Edmund intended to place the full list on the website].

Motorised field post offices were a company within each division and would nominally comprise a Feldpost office, a heavy purpose-built truck, two light trucks and a heavy command car of 33 seats. The company

would nominally be an officer NCO and 11 men. The Feldpostamt was identical to the unit number and often other support units would have the same number i.e. in the 15th Pz many units have the number 33, including the 33rd Pioneer Battalion, 33rd Signals Battalion and 33rd motorised post office.

Where these were used I'm not sure, but most probably by the company orderly responsible for the post. These may have been further up the chain as the FpN was nearly always written by the sender on the envelope as the return address. There were also blind Feldpost stamps. Each Feldpostamt was given a Kenn number for use on registered post which I assume was posted through the main Feldpostoffice. The Kenn number was included within the postmark as well as on the registration label.



Dienststempel
Official stamp



Dienststempel
with FpN



Tagesstempel
without Kenn-Nr



Tagesstempel
with Kenn-Nr

FPO Nr	First date reference	Kenn-Nr.	Main division or army group
33	11.1.40	687-697	15th Panzer
90		985	10th Panzer
190	26.11.41	805	90 Light Afrika Div
200	10.3.42	615	90 Light Afrika Div/21st Pnz
220	15.8.42	946	Kreta Fort Div/164th Inf Div
224		946	164 Inf.Div?
334		412	164 Inf.Div?
386		538	Heeres-Gruppe Afrika
639	1.4.41	420	Heeres-Gruppe Afrika
659	6.2.42		Panzer Army Afrika
686	-.4.42		Heeres-Gruppe Afrika
735	18.2.41		21st Panzer from 5 th Light
762	10.2.42	282	Heeres-Gruppe Afrika
791		212	Panzer - AK05
999			999 Afrika Brigade
Tripoli	10.2.42		
Benghazi	10.2.42		

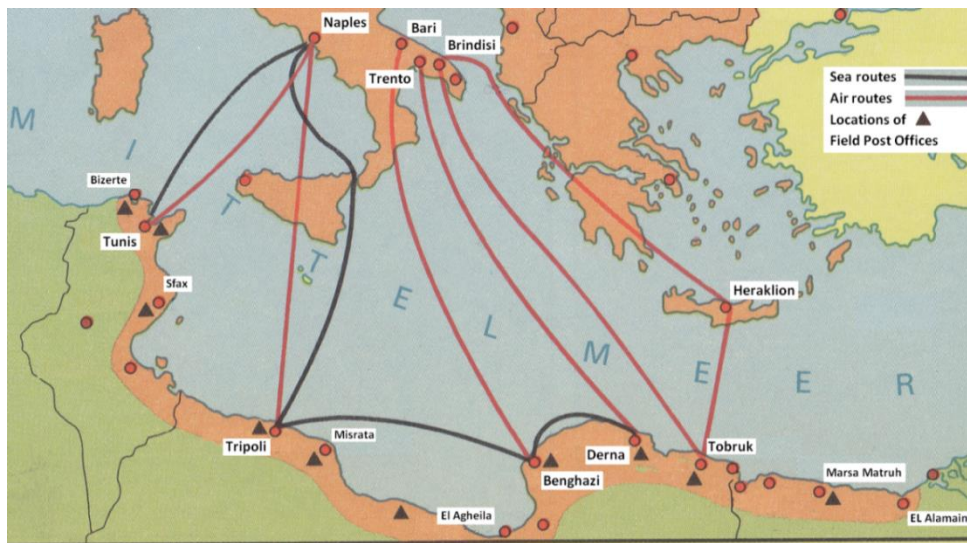
As the 15th/10th Divisions became part of Heeres-Gruppe Afrika these are used as reference but it is most likely that the Feldpostamt remained within their original divisions. FPA has two Kenn-Nrs subscribed to it for reasons I don't know. The original could have been lost, or one had been issued to another unit within the division etc. The 164 Inf Div again has two Kenn-Nr, but it could be that one was used before the division was sent to Africa. The Kenn-Nr without FpN are taken from covers that are from units in Africa at the time.

These are the FpNs I can attach to units being used in Africa.

00024	00143	00186	00406	00420	00470	00566	00819	00838	00986	01245	01257
01316	01471	01571	01723	01804	01943	02038	02039	02091	02492	02497	02600
02834	02849	03333	03152	03663	03912	04150	04151	04417	04549	04640	05277
05638	05702	6187	06249	06314	06324	06367	07055	07434	07470	07836	08200
08201	08322	08323	08669	08731	08732	08733	08744	09995	09996	10087	10385
10870	10403	11022	11066	11761	13115	13299	13300	13618	14744	14822	15089
L15106	15559	15662	15754	16115	16283	16807	L17792	17867	17892	17954	18022

18179	18255	18801	18561	18876	19106	19184	19495	19558	19584	19589	19681
19910	19981	20114	20491	21150	21658	21668	22057	23357	23763	24025	24026
25201	26032	26066	26198	26258	27868	28065	28770	29019	29320	29947	31554
32856	L31554	L32744	33399	33967	34530	34909	35067	36913	37301	37355	37552
37570	37572	37829	38252	38535	39203	39496	39671	38764	39851	39239	39992
39993	40900	40104	40800	41271	41451	41601	41864	42473	42750	43250	43402
43607	43757	43759	44777	44934	44935	45184	45293	45847	45927	45982	46410
46144	46299	46301	46381	47500	47511	47600	47623	47767	47854	47858	48049
48065	48086	48111	48188	48248	48345	48381	48494	48586	48617	48652	48870
49523	50871	51013	51389	51817	53431	53817	55134	56414	57002	58804	

Note that those with an L-prefix were Luftwaffe units; these were flak units manned by Luftwaffe personnel. Kannapin makes no reference to this additional letter.

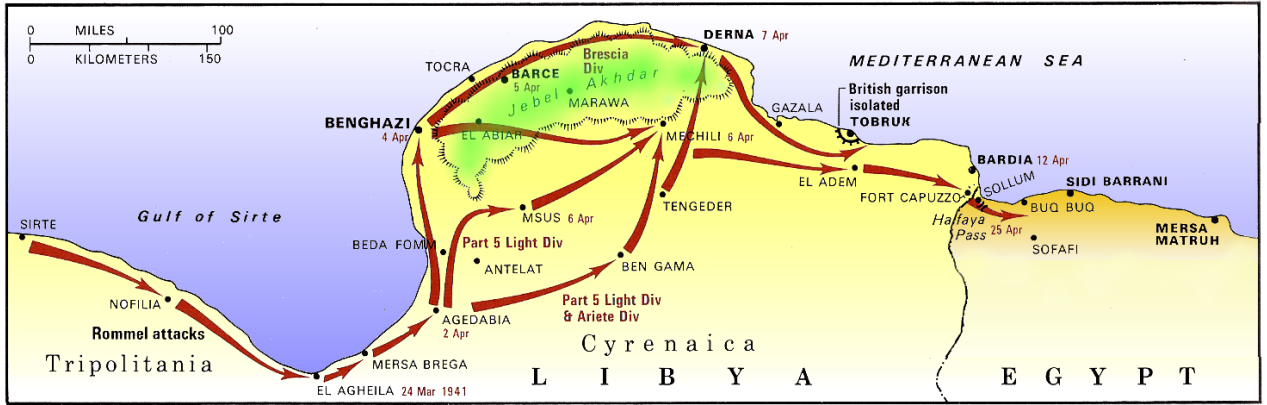


Sea and land routes were both used for the post, while in Egypt it most probably went through Derna and Benghazi. As the British established naval superiority over the Italians much mail was lost on Italian ships carrying German post. The map is after Gericke, with small modifications. He gives positions of the FPO but obviously they were changing as the battles went to and fro as nearly all of them were motorised units attached to their divisions. Interestingly, he gives the most forward FPO as Mersa Matruh, some miles behind El Alamein: most probably the FPOs were kept some distance from the fighting for security reasons.

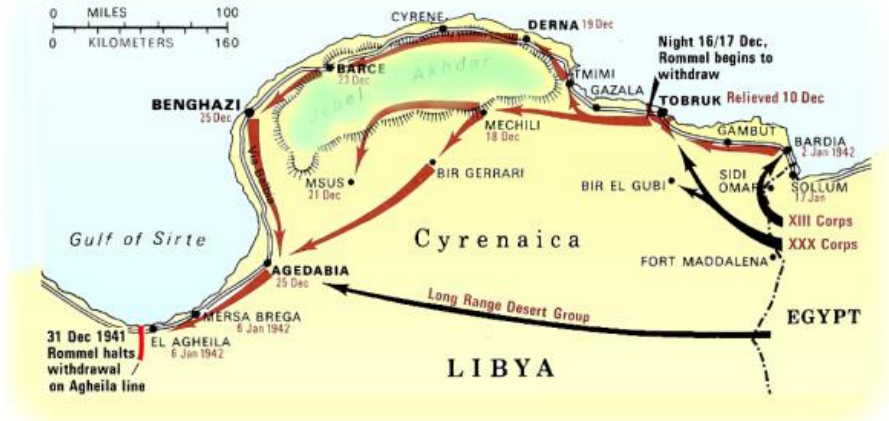


Postcard of a motorised Feldpostamt. I suspect that this is where registered mail was posted and the portly older men were post office staff, many drawn from German Post Office personnel

Summary of the battles determining when German forces were in parts of Egypt.

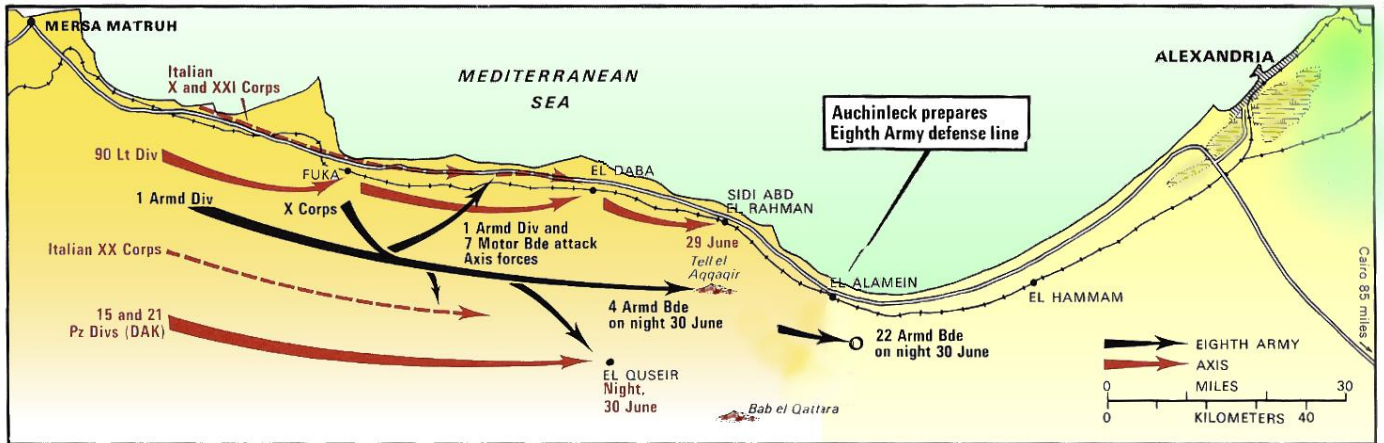


February 22 1941: Lieutenant General Rommel throws the scouting forces of 5th Light Division into the space 30 km west El Agheila. March 2: Churchill's decision to move troops from Egypt to Greece. March 15: 5th Light Division followed by the Division "Ariete". Rommel starts his advance. April 14-15: British forces pushed back to Sollum. May 16: British fall back on to the Halfaya Pass. May 26: German forces launch Operation Skorpion and move up to Halfaya Pass and take it on 27th. Tobruk stays in British hands.



November 18: beginning of the British counter-offensive (Crusader). Before dawn Eighth Army launches a surprise attack, advancing west from its base at Mersa Matruh and crossing the Libyan border near Fort Maddalena, some 50 miles (80 km) south of Sidi Omar. November 1941: Rommel retreats to El Agheila.

Main Units within Egypt. April 1941-November 1941



January 21 1942: Rommel's second offensive begins. February 4: front line established between Gazala and Bir Hakeim. May 1942: Rommel began a new attack. June 21: Tobruk captured by Axis forces, June 28: Mersa Matruh falls to Rommel. June 30: Axis forces reach El Alamein and attack Allied defences in the First Battle of El Alamein. British stop the German advance.

July 1: Auchinleck calls off offensive activities to allow Eighth Army to regroup and resupply. August 13: Alexander and Montgomery take command respectively of Middle East Command and Eighth Army. August 30: Rommel launches unsuccessful Battle of Alam el Halfa. October 23: Montgomery launches Operation Lightfoot, starting the third Battle of El Alamein. November 5: Axis lines at El Alamein broken. November 8: Operation Torch launched under command of General Eisenhower, Allied forces land in Morocco and Algeria. November 9: Sidi Barrani captured by Eighth Army. May 3 1943: Axis Powers surrender in Tunisia.

Main Units within Egypt. June 1942-October 1942



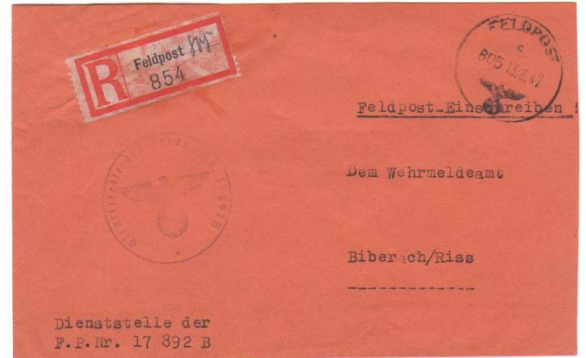
December 12, 1941 - card with dumb FpN 34909 of 2nd Company the Panzer Grenadier Regiment Africa 21st Panzer Division. Soon after retreating from Egypt.



August 12, 1942 - from Fp-Nr 27868 (13th Heavy Motor Transport column of Div Col 33 of the 15th Pz) at Alam el Halfa on the El Alamein line.



October 22, 1942 - from Fp-Nr 04417 with Kenn 805 (Co. 2 Antitank Bn 190 of 90 Light Africa Div) posted via division's FPO 90 – one day before Battle of Alamein



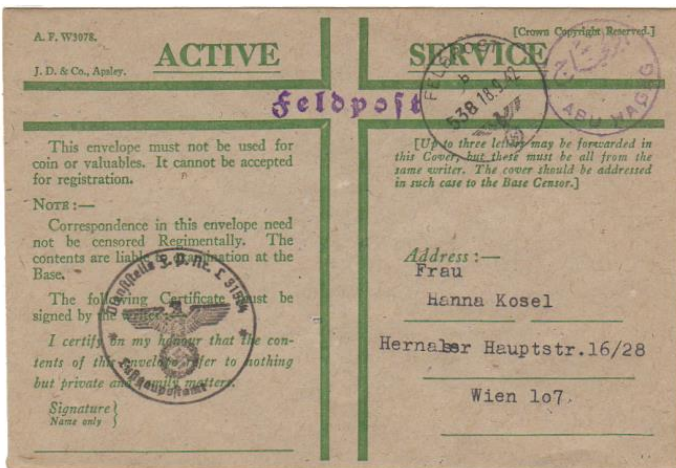
August 13, 1942 - from Fp-Nr 17892B (Co. 5 Pz. Gren Rgt. 155 of 90th Africa Div) posted via division's FPO 190. The unit was part of the force destined to attack the Alam el Halfa Ridge on August 30



August 20, 1942 - from Fp-Nr 45982 (4 Co. BH 21st Pz Div,) via the division's FPO 200, then on the El Alamein line.



September 12, 1941 - from Fp-Nr card 04640D (Co.3 Pz Gren Rgt115 of 15 Pz Div via FPO 200). The unit had just taken part in the battle of Alan Halfa Ridge, the Afriks Korps' deepest thrust



September 9, 1942 - from Fp-Nr L31554 (Regimentstab Flak-REg 102bHQ of 102 antiaircraft reg.) The L indicates Luftwaffe personnel who manned the 88 guns. Here used on liberated 'Honour card': I have similar from Adolf Kosel. At the time of posting the unit was near Abu Hagg and the Egyptian cancel was used.



Another contrived curio - from L17792 of 4 Batterie FlakRegiment 6, which served in Tunisia. The brown stamp for package mail serves no purpose.

NB: I have made no reference to the Palmstempl or Palm tree cachets. The Palm stamp applies only in Tunisia and the cachets have been extensively forged. See Die Tunispäckmarke und die Palmenstempel⁴

15th Panzer Division: Formed on 11/1/40 from the 33rd Infantry Division. Organization was complete on 15 March 1941. It contained:

15th Schutzen Brigade
 104th Schutzen Regiment
 115th Schutzen Regiment
 15th Motorcycle Battalion
 8th Panzer Regiment
 33rd Artillery Regiment
 33rd Panzerjager Battalion
 33rd Pioneer Battalion
 33rd Signals Battalion
 33rd Divisional Support units
 amongst which was the
 33rd motorized Field Post Office
 manned by an NCO and 11 men.

The division contained
 45 Pz II,
 71 Pz III
 20 Pz IV
 10 command tanks



FpA : Feldpostäm, post office box, mostly motorised.
 FpN : Feldpostnummer FpNr , unique field post office number down to battalion level. Return address.
 Kenn Nr : Kennnummer, registration number usually one per FpA.

References:

1. Kannapin, Norbert, *Die Deutsche Feldpostuebersicht 1939-1945*. Osnabrück 1980
 2. Gericke, Bodo, *Die deutsche Feldpost im Zweiten Weltkrieg*. Damstadt 1971
 3. *Arbeitsgemeinsschard Deutsche Feldpost 1939-1945 e.V.* Karl Friedlein. *Roundbrief 93* (September 2004)
 4. Kesselstatt, Franz, *Die Tunispäckmarke und die Palmenstempel*. Düsseldorf 1978.
 5. Hinrichsen, Horst, *Die deutsche Feldpost: Organisation und Ausrüstung*. Dörfler 1998.
 6. Citino, Robert M, "Overrated Rommel", *MHQ: The Quarterly Journal of Military History* 28.2 (Winter 2016), p25 (also www.historynet.com/rommels-afrika-korps.htm)
- Der Feldzug in Afrika 1941-1943* at www.afrika-korps.de
Feldgrau: The German Armed Forces 1918-1945 at www.feldgrau.com/index.html
Deutsches Afrika-Korps (DAK) at www.axishistory.com/axis-nations/
Lexicon der Wehrmacht – Deutsches Afrika-Korps at 222.lexikon-der-wehrmacht.de

Apologies!

This special issue in tribute to Edmund Hall was intended to contain all his unpublished writings... the articles he had been working on but not yet completed. In fact, however, we have found space for only several of his pieces, and more remain to be published in future issues.

We apologise also to other authors whose work has had to be held over, including particularly Ronny Van Pellecom and Mahmoud Ramadan. And we have not yet been able to find room for the July meeting report (but it is on the website).

So don't forget, please, Edmund's invariable plea: "If you don't write the articles, there will be no QC." If anything, that applies even more now than when he was Editor.

We have enough material in hand for the December issue, and for perhaps half of the March 2018 issue. After that, the cupboard is looking increasingly bare. So please take a moment to put together an article on what interests you ... long or short, all is acceptable.

Congratulations!

The Circle offers many congratulations to Atef Sarian (ESC 639), our London-based member who stunned the judges at Stampex with an astonishing five-frames display of the Second Issue which won him a thoroughly deserved Large Gold medal.

It was a first for Atef, who also won Gold at last November's exhibition, and, as a comparative newcomer to exhibiting, he was justly proud of having planned and executed the whole five frames without any professional help.

The display, which contained essays, proofs, the issued stamps and detailed their usages, was based, he said, on material he has been able to add to that originally owned by Dr William Byam, founder of the Circle.

We also congratulate our new member Ahmad Nabil (ESC 713), from Maadi, for his well-deserved Large Vermeil for his single frame on the 1926 Provisional Issue. An excellent result for a first display.

Stamps and Rates - 1933 Airmail Stamps

Edmund Hall (ESC 239)

John Sears (*QC* 243, p189) raises an interesting point concerning the long airmail set of April 1933. I can venture some ideas on the values chosen - perhaps as simple as a nice long attractive set to attract money from collectors' pockets. Certainly most of us as boys (and girls, of course) would remember the Handley Page HP42 over the Pyramids as quintessentially *the* stamp of Egypt. Perhaps the other choice for favourite might be the Boy King, as both were commonly found in used packet sets.



However I suspect the *raison d'être* of the denominations as being either of expedience or frustration. Air mail rate surcharges at the time were somewhat complex, depending on destination, almost country by country, and by the carrier used. That these rates were in a state of flux, altering by the year, made choosing values to be printed almost impossible. Especially in the years to August 1938, when these stamps were intended for use ONLY on air mail.

The expedient view is: produce a set in which any franking can be made up from as few stamps as possible. The set runs simply in steps of one up to ten, then in steps of ten to 100 and then one step up to 200. In this way only two stamps were needed to cover all possibilities up to 100 millièmes, which would include most of the possible destinations. And only three stamps (or fewer) were needed all the way to 300 millièmes, which covered all reasonable weights the world over apart from a few destinations in South America

The frustration view is pretty well the same: what values to choose? "Oh, for goodness' sake, give them the lot." But then again, those in charge at the time may have had some unfathomable reason of their own.

When I embarked on my quest to display rates by stamps used "correctly" on cover I confined it to definitive only, which has proved surprising difficult, especially as the cover must carry only definitives of the same issue. Now all good philatelic collections can be subject to mission creep and I have toyed with the idea of trying to tackle the air rates, perhaps up to World War Two, by using covers franked only with this long Pyramid issue. John's article strained, almost to breaking point, the restraint I try to impose on my collecting.



To London, 28 mills, 26 MA 37. Basic Empire rate 15 mills, air mail 13 mills (John Sears Airmails of Egypt, p62)

Still, it's an intriguing idea and I suspect that it would be an unfilled task. Covers to some destinations at this time, such as the Far East or South America, are rarely seen at all, let alone franked with only the Pyramid set.

Here I show a few covers that would be suitable candidates. I am thankful to John, who has supplied me with postal rates and related them to his excellent book: an absolute "must" for any airmail collector of Egypt and perhaps for any philatelist of Egypt. Surprisingly, only one of my covers did not conform to any rate, which can often be the case with the letter over or under franked. Two rates are fairly common, the 28 millièmes concession rate to the UK and the 33 millièmes for many European countries.

To UK, 15 mills, 4 MR 33.
 Correct surface rate but
 franked with Air Mails so
 given boxed T. But no
 postage due collected on
 arrival



To European destinations,
 33 mills, 26 NO 34
 Basic 20 mills,
 air mail 13 mills by KLM
 (p62)

I also have an illustration of the 40 mills stamp on cover to the UK with a KLM airmail sticker. 40 mills is the correct rate to UK via KLM

To Asmara, 49 mills, 16 AU 35
 Basic printed matter 4 mills,
 registration 20 mills,
 air mail (Ala Littoria)
 25 mills
 (p64)

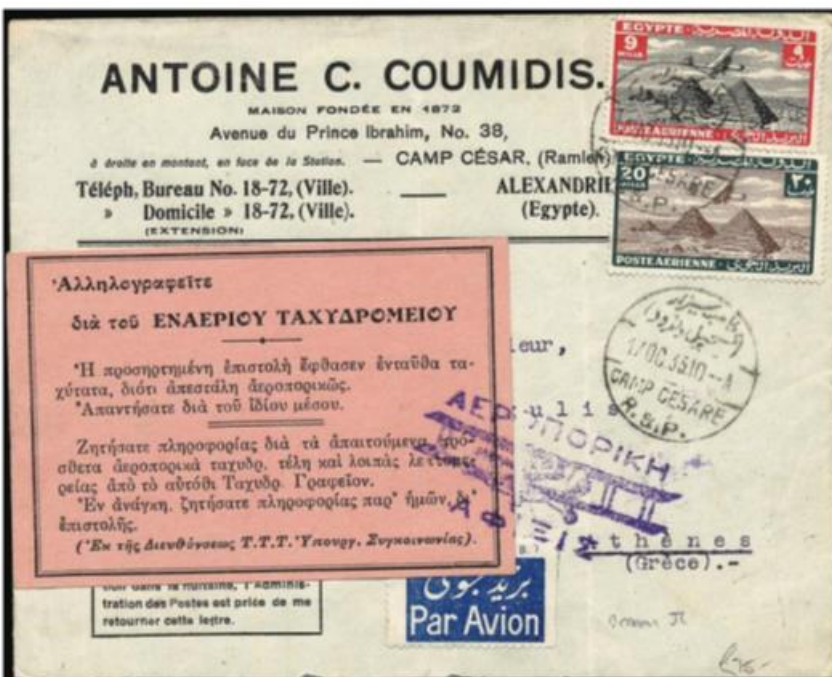




To Batavia, 90 mills,
24 OC 33
Basic 20 mills,
air mail (KLM) 70 mills
(p56)



To Geneva, 30 mills, 17 JLY 39
Basic 20 mills,
air mail (Ala Littoria) 10 mills to Rome,
then overland
(p81)



To Athens, 29 mills, 17 OC 33
Basic 20 mills,
air mail 9 mills
(p58)

To Bangkok, 99 mills, 12 DE 33
 Basic surface 4 mills
 registration 20 mills,
 air mail 75 mills
 (p60)

The great majority of FDCs were sent by
 printed matter rate



To Argentina, 12 AU 37
 Basic surface, 20 mills
 air mail 250 mills

Route: to Marseille by Imperial,
 then via Dakar, Natal (Brazil) and Rio
 by French carrier.
 But bears Marseille "air mail
 cancellation" mark and travelled
 surface, probably between
 Dakar and Natal (suggested
 by arrival mark (Sept 9)

Rate: 150 millièmes two-ocean rate
 Posted Oct 26, 1940 at Field
 Post Office 171
 Route: BOAC to Singapore; surface to
 Hong Kong; FAM 14 to San Francisco;
 USA domestic airlines to New York;
 Atlantic Clipper to Lisbon;
 BOAC to England



Italian Internees in World War Two

Edmund Hall (ESC 239)

Italy had its own diaspora between 1860 and World War I: nine million Italians emigrated for a better life. After the Unification of Italy in 1861 feudal ties were broken. Poverty was the main driving force, together with the persecution of socialists, anarchists and even atheists. After the First World War the emigration continued, diminishing only when Mussolini came to power.

Many Italians worked on the excavation of the Suez Canal, where hundreds died in its construction. Italians contributed significantly to Egypt's "modernisation" process as Egyptian rulers were aware of their skills in architecture, engineering and art. Alvise Orfanelli contributed to the birth of cinematography in Egypt, the Italian architect Pietro Avosciani planned Alexandria's Corniche, Mario Rossi designed the Omar Makram Mosque in Tahrir Square and many more added to Egyptian life with large and small businesses. There were tens of Italian schools scattered everywhere around the country, mainly in Cairo, Alexandria, Port Said, Suez, and down the Nile to Assiut.

The size of the Italian Egyptian community reached some 50,000-80,000 just before World War II, forming the country's second largest expatriate community. The Public Security Department of the Egyptian Government had begun contingency plans in 1935. While internment of the whole Italian community was not intended, a list of names had been drawn up with the possibility of siting the internment camps in the Sinai. Another concern was that "Italians here are as hot-headed and as excitable as Egyptians" so in the event of war there was a potential for rioting, and that "once Egyptian hot-heads are let loose they are not wont to pause and ask each foreigner what his nationality is". Many Italians liquidated their assets, fearing confiscation if war came.

The British declared war after the first Italian attack on the Libyan border (see *QC* 223, December 2007 pp280-288.) and, fearing sabotage and collusion, interned nearly 8,000 Italians even though many were third generation while retaining their Italian nationality. Members of the Italian community considered potential fifth columnists were speedily rounded up and interned in the Fayed-Geneifa area (* see below) on the northern and western shores of the Great Bitter Lake in the Canal Zone.

Those considered "very dangerous people" had personal property and real estate seized, workers were fired, and meetings were forbidden. All radios were confiscated and men aged between 15 and 65 were sent to internment camps. Some women considered "dangerous" were also interned.

The arrests and deportation of Italians to the internment camps fell directly under the joint command of the Egyptian Home Office and the British G.H.Q.

Major clearing centres were set up at Chatby (Fascist School), Gabbari (Quarantine), Rassafa (Alexandria), Boulak (Cairo Garibaldi School), Port Said (Governor's Palace) and Moascar, with a provisional clearing centre close to Fayed station for those Italians of Ismailia and the Canal Zone. Several of these, including Fayed, Embabeh, Boulaq and Tantah, became internment camps. A camp for women was established in Mansura.

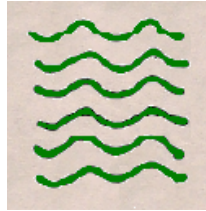
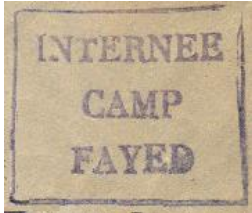
The Civil Censorship office had been established in Cairo and all mails entering and leaving the country passed through it, although the internal mails of Egypt and the Sudan were free from censorship. The mail of the Italian internees, both internal and external, was censored, and subject to the normal postage rates.

ITALIAN INTERNEE CAMP BOULACH

The camp was the Italian Giuseppe Garibaldi School in Boulak. On July 5, 1997, a bronze plaque was erected at the Italian Consulate-General in Boulak to commemorate the Italian internees.

ITALIAN INTERNEE CAMP FAYED

Three recorded cachets



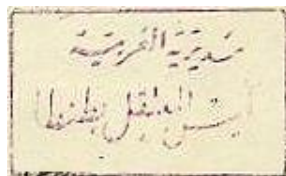
Fayed markings: Boxed INTERNEE CAMP FAYED, six wavy lines and 32mm double ring INTERNATI ITALIANI FAYED

The camp, built just west of the Fayid British camp, had a 5 kilometre perimeter with 5,500 internees divided into 21 sub camps: there was a further sub camp, known as “the black camp”, for insubordinate internees. Those held appear to have been from the professional classes and three diagonal lines in manuscript were used to distinguish mail entering the camp. Thirty-eight internees died in Fayed and ten more injured in rioting. On September 8, 1943, political pressure was imposed on internees - while relatives could send parcels of food and other necessities, rough inspection or a deliberate late delivery often rendered the gifts useless.

ITALIAN INTERNEE CAMP GENIFER

Most probably this was close to CAMP 306 GENEIFA used for PoWs.

ITALIAN INTERNMENT CAMP TANTAH



Two recorded cachets

The camp was established in the mid Delta near the Italian PoW camp at Tantah. Cachet “ITALIAN INTERNEE CAMP / TANTAH” is boxed with seriffed letters. A second cachet has the equivalent in Arabic.

ITALIAN INTERNEE CAMP/ RAMSES / CITY / EMBABEH

Has a single recorded cachet



Examples of this mail suggest that a strict censorship was maintained throughout, and where dates can be confirmed there is reason to believe that it was passed through the department with the minimum of delay. With the exception of the dumb censor mark in use at the start, the various censor markings were those in current use. It has not been established that any special mark was wholly employed on this duty.

Generally the full postage rates have been paid or postage due raised, although a certain proportion of the mail was “Free”. All outgoing mail had the internee's name and camp written on the flap of the envelope and is identified by this means.



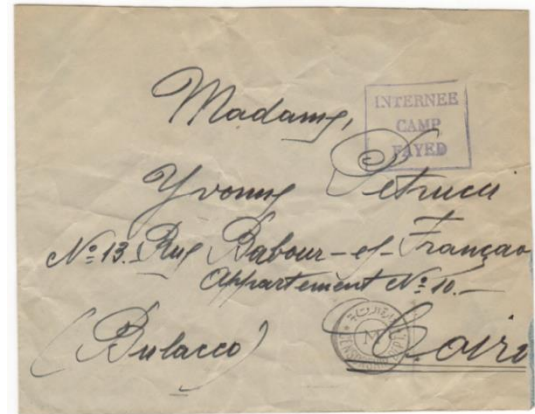
Seen on mail from Fayed and CAMP / RAMSES / CITY / EMBABEH

*Note: spellings have been given in Italian. In English Boulach > Boulac, Geneifer > Geneifa, Embabeh > Imbaba, Fayed > Fayid, Tantah > Tanta. Other alternative spellings may be found.

FAYED	Camp Number	Earliest date	Latest date	Cachets recorded	
	1	23. 7.40			
	2	25.8.42			
	3			23.1.42	6.6.43*
	4	23. 7.41			
	5	16.4.43	20. 4.43		
	6	14.2.41	20.5.44		
	7	12.4.41	15.6.43		
	9	11.8.40	?8.41	-.8.41	
	10	26. 7.41	24.12.41		
	11	22.12.40	3.10.43		
	12	22.12.41			
	13	21.8.41	12.3.43	21.8.41	
	14	29.4.41	8.11.41	9.8.41	9.5.41
	15	no date			
	17	30.7.42	30.7.43		
	19	20.3.41	3.12.42	2.7.41	26.12.41
	20	-.12.40	7.4.44		
	22	22.12.41	21.12.43		
	24	22.5.41			
CAIRO BOULACH		8.11.40	19.9.43		
TANTAH		6.1.42	9.1.42		
RELIGIOUS INTERNEE - CAMP TERSA					
EMBABEH (GIZA)	2	26.6.43	26.6.44	26.6.43	1.4.44
	3	4.10.44			
	4	24.2.44	7.6.44		
	5				
EMBABEH (Ramses City) cachet			7.6.44		
GENIFER	6	24-1-44			
	8				
	9	29-1-41	15-7-41		
	10	15-9-41			
	11	?			
DUMB CENSOR (six wavy lines)		27.10.40	21.12.42		
Three parallel lines			19. 9.43		
Rhetta (8x8 dots), in black or purple		16.4.41	16.10.43		
(6x6 "stars"), black		27.2.41	2.11.41		



Card with Fayid cachet and retta cancel



Fayid box cachet cover apparently post-free



Cover with EMBABEH cachet and boxed INTERNEES MAIL. Censored but free mailing



Card with both Tanta cachets. Correct 4mills postcard rate.



Three parallel lines on card going into Fayed camp



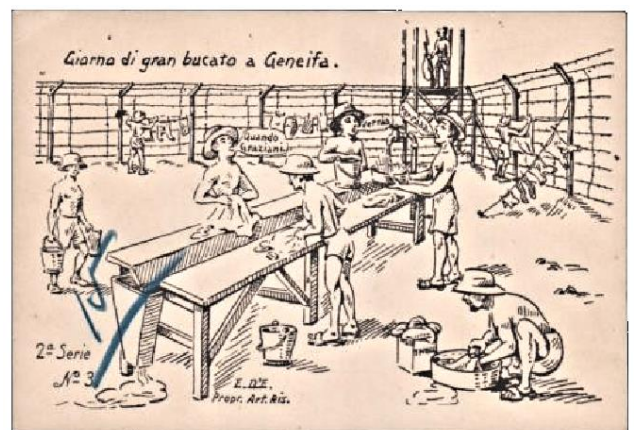
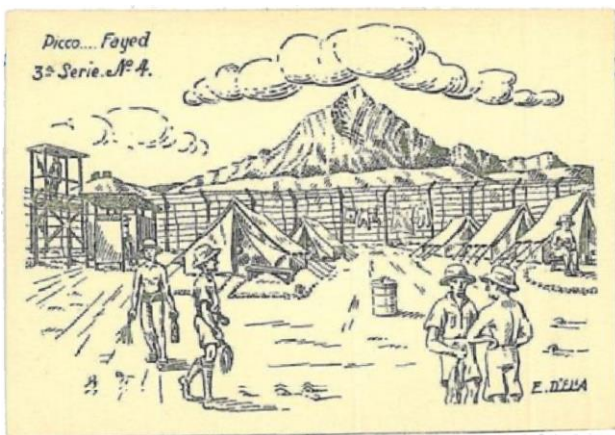
Boxed Internee Camp Fayed and five parallel lines top right Taxed 12mills, twice the internal letter rate



Manuscript FREE POSTAGE



Retta made up of crosses



Postcards in Italian of camp life. Probably made in the camps or by non-internee Italians This card the only evidence for Camp 8 at Geneifa.



CARTOLINA POSTALE one of the Italian postcards sent to Adriana Gaeta. Michele Gaeta was in Fayid camp and more than half of recorded internee mail is between the two



The card is printed for Fayid Camp 2, but all the Michele Gaeta correspondence says he is in Camp 7 Fayid.

References:

<http://www.egyptindependent.com/news/communities-egyptian-map-italy>

The Gazette, Montreal, September 27, 1935.

Egyptian Mail, Saturday July 5, 1997

F.W.Benians, "Italian Internee Mail from Egypt in WWII", *Forces Postal History Society* 139 (July-August 1976)

Giorgio Migliavacca, *Italian Prisoners of War and Internees in Africa* (2014, reprint of 1983 edition by Virgin Stamps, USA). Internee sections are identical, but does contain some new information on PoWs.

Unknown source, handout sheet (ESC or FPHS?) updates the above.

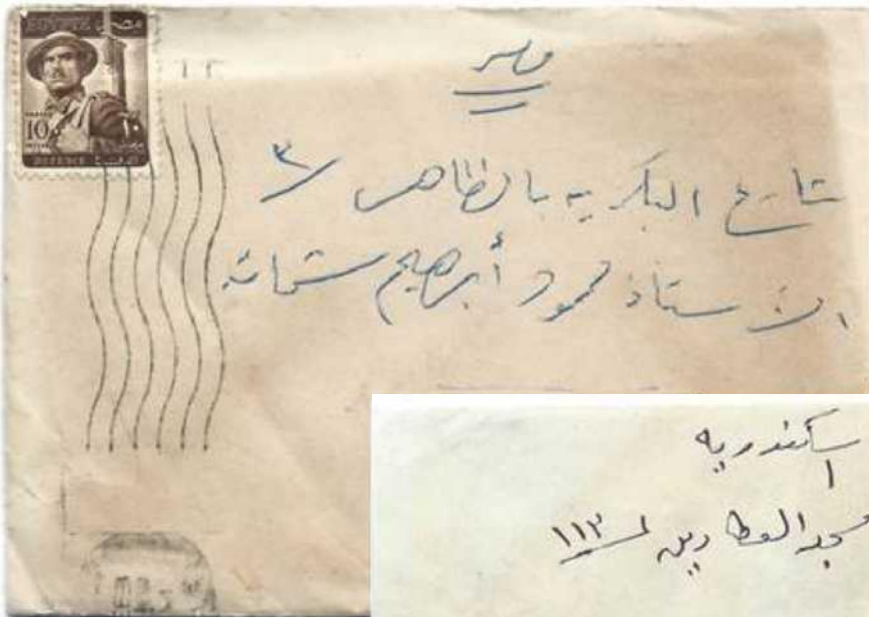
Stamps and Rates: When is a Stamp Like a London bus?

Edmund Hall (ESC 239)

The first definitive issue after the revolution which overthrew Farouk was issued on January 23, 1953: it contained a 10 millièmes stamp to cover the internal letter rate. This was reissued on August 17 the same year with a change in the wording, DEFENCE being replaced by DEFENSE: it was explained that all wording should be in French, but the 'C' spelling was English (although in fact the French version should read DÉFENSE with an acute accent). The words for Egypt and post both have the French spelling, and agriculture is spelt identically in both languages. For whatever reason, the other stamps with the same soldier design in the set, of 15, 17 and 20 millièmes, all used the 'S' spelling.



The 10 millièmes stamp was replaced by the 10 millièmes Ramses II definitive issued on October 8, 1957. So the soldier stamp did not have a particularly short run, and one would expect that it would easily be found on cover paying the standard letter rate for the period. As the 'C' stamp theoretically had a life of only seven months - I don't know whether any were withdrawn, but suspect not - on cover this should be a little more rare. And indeed so it is, although the longer-lived 'S' stamp paying the letter rate on a clean cover is not easy to find either.



*Cover with the 'C' stamp.
Unfortunately the date is
indistinct*



*Cover with 'S' spelling
dated 13.1.58*

Why a London bus? Well it comes from the saying that you may wait for ages for one, then three turn up at once. I found three covers in fairly quick succession after having looked for some time.



Strip of three to make up postage and registration 35 millièmes.
Dated 12.MA.55

NB. The cover has been marked by someone 'Defence with (C) error'.

Block of four used for 37 millièmes rate to Europe. Dated 5.AU.55



Pair used to make up 92 millièmes.
Dated 12.MA.55

All three readable dates are for 1955, which could give the impression that the stamp may have been withdrawn and then reissued in 1955. I would be interested to see any other stamps/covers with the 'C' variety and a readable date.

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Of course cheques in GBP drawn on a British bank may as usual be sent to the Treasurer, Brian Sedgley, of 6 Mulberry Way, Ashted, Surrey KT21 2FE. But as a courtesy please inform your agent if you are able to use this method.

And for those with British bank accounts a standing order is easier and better for all!

NOTE: We hate to be tough, but too much time is wasted chasing late payments. If your subscription is not received by February 28 your QC will be stopped immediately, followed by a note asking for payment in 30 days. If still not received, your membership will be terminated.