

## Major-General Sir John Francis BURN-MURDOCH, K.C.V.O.; C.B.; C.M.G.; C.B.E.

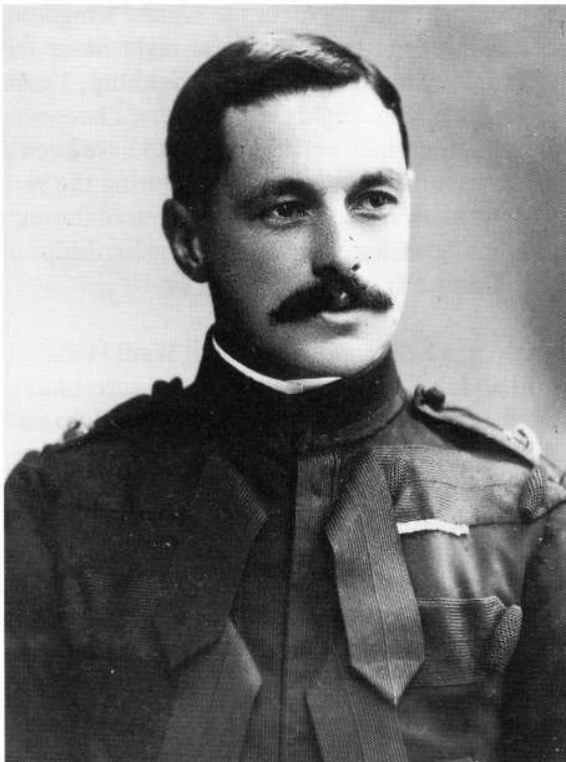
KCVO Knight Commander, The Royal Victorian Order, 1925  
CB Companion, The Most Honourable Order of the Bath, 1900  
CMG Companion, The Most Distinguished Order of St Michael and St George, 1918  
CBE Commander, The Most Excellent Order of the British Empire, 1919

Colonel Royal Dragoons, 1919-1931; born, Cambridge, 26 March 1859; eldest son of late Rev. Canon Burn-Murdoch; married 1909, Alice, youngest daughter of late John Burn-Murdoch of Gartencaber, Perthshire. Education: Eton. Joined Royal Dragoons, 1878; served Nile Expedition, 1884-1885; action of Abu Klea; commanded detachment of Camel Corps at El Gubat (medal, two clasps, Khedive star); Adjutant, Royal Dragoons, 1886-1888; passed through Staff College, 1889; Brigade-Major of Cavalry Horse Guards, 1890-91; Brigade-Major Cavalry Brigade, Aldershot, 1891-1894; commanded the Egyptian Cavalry, 1894-1895; 4<sup>th</sup> class Osmanieh; served in the Dongola Expedition under Sir Herbert Kitchener, 1896; commander the Egyptian Cavalry in the action at Akasheh, 1 May; commanded the Desert Column at battle of Firket, 7 June, and the mounted troops in the pursuit which followed; also at the capture of Suada; the engagement at Haffir and at the capture of Dongola (despatches, Brevet of Lieutenant-Colonel, Khedive medal with two clasps); commanded 1<sup>st</sup> Royal Dragoons, South Africa, 1899-1901, including battles of Colenso, Spion Kop, Vaal Krantz; Brigadier-General in command of 1<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Brigade, 1900-1901; present relief of Ladysmith, etc. (despatches six times, Queen's medal 5 clasps, King's medal 2 clasps, C.B.); Brevet-Colonel, 1902; Brigadier-General on Staff, commanded Newcastle (Natal) Sub-district South Africa, 1901-1902; Brigadier-General commanding Standerton District, and Inspector of Cavalry Regiments in Transvaal Colony; command of 1<sup>st</sup> Royal Dragoons, 1898-1902; commanding troops at Standardton, 1902-1904; at Potchefstroom, , 1904-1906; Brigade Commander Eastern Mounted Brigade, 1908-1912; retired 1912; employed recruiting, Sep. 1914; Commandant Remount Depot, December 1914; Commander Notts and Derby Mounted Brigade, 1915; a Mounted Division, 1915-1918; Temporary Major-General, 1916 (despatches); Staff Officer Volunteer Services, Northern Command, 1918-1919; D. L. Nottinghamshire. *Address:* The Manor House, Normanton-on-Soar,

Loughborough.

(Died 21 January 1931)

Adapted from *Who Was Who, 1929-1940*, p. 192



## THE RECONQUEST OF THE SUDAN — 1896 DONGOLA EXPEDITION

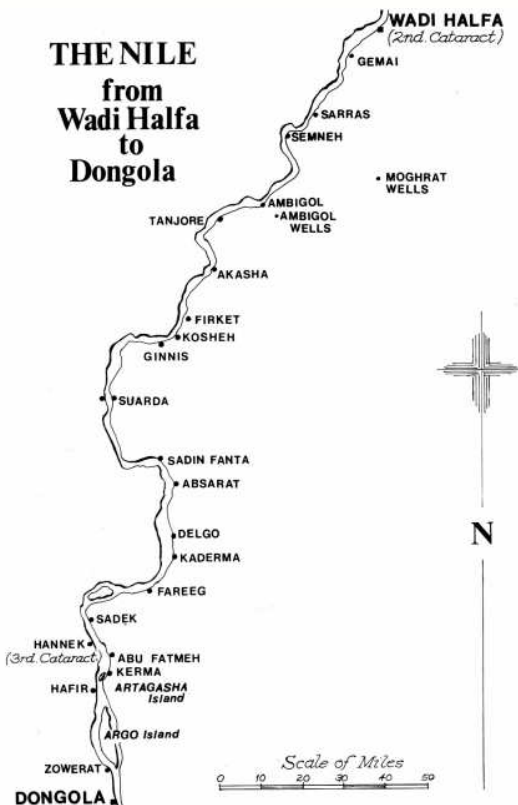
In mid-March, 1896, the reconquest of Sudan to avenge the death of Charles Gordon commenced. The Egyptian Army, assisted by some British units, crossed the frontier to recapture Dongola province. As the forces went up the Nile, the railway was rebuilt following the general course of the river towards Kosheh. A number of engagements were fought by the time the town of Dongola was captured in late September. The forces then paused until January 1897.

Generally, campaign mail was carried by camel and mule and sometimes railway to Wadi-Halfa or Wadi-Halfa Camp where it was postmarked and sent onward by railway and steamer to Alexandria for dispatch overseas. Postage for officers' mail was ten milliemes (one piastre) or 2 1/2d. per half ounce. The concession rate for enlisted personnel was 5 milliemes or 1d. However, letters from Sudan were normally sent without stamps and had to be endorsed to the effect the stamps were not available and that the soldier was on active service; the recipient paid the postage without a postage due penalty.

This section starts out with a series of covers from the archive of John Francis Burn-Murdoch, commander of the Egyptian cavalry. They show his progress up the Nile from the start of the campaign through the capture of Dongola and his return to Cairo in October. Letter excerpts are from the letter found in the cover, copied from the original held in the National Army Museum, London, or from notes to the archive held by the exhibitor. These Burn-Murdoch covers are followed by those from other members of the expedition.

Cairo to Hyeres, France  
21 II 96

BURN-MURDOCH ARCHIVE N° 35



Letter to JFBM's mother stating "I start for Halfa tonight to have a look at the squadron on the frontier." The cover is backstamped **HYERES 28 FEVR 96 VAR.**

## RECONQUEST OF THE SUDAN – 1996 DONGOLA EXPEDITION

Letter from Major John Francis Burn-Murdoch, Egyptian Army, to his Mother at Hyeres, France

Abbassiah,  
Cairo  
21-2-96

*My dear Mama*

*I start for Halfa tonight to have a look at the squadron on the frontier. I shall miss the races here and several dances. The former lam every bit for – about the latter I do not care much.*

*The Cairo polo tournament came off this week, The Boys again won very easily. I am now trying to sell some of the ponies. Brands, the one which hurt his shoulder, is getting all right again now but I have I fear missed the chance of selling him.*

*I hope to get a letter from you after your arrival at Hyeres but now it is too late. I hope you got my last letter there all right.*

*I am looking forward very much to my trip up the Nile.*

*With much love,*

*I remain your affec son,*

*Frank*

The original letter is in the Burn-Murdoch Archives at the National Army Museum, London;. It belongs to cover No. 35.

## THE RECONQUEST OF THE SUDAN — 1896 DONGOLA EXPEDITION

BURN-MURDOCH ARCHIVE N<sup>o</sup>. 36 & N<sup>o</sup>. 37

One Piastre Officer's Letter

GUERGA, EGYPT to ENGLAND

16 III 96

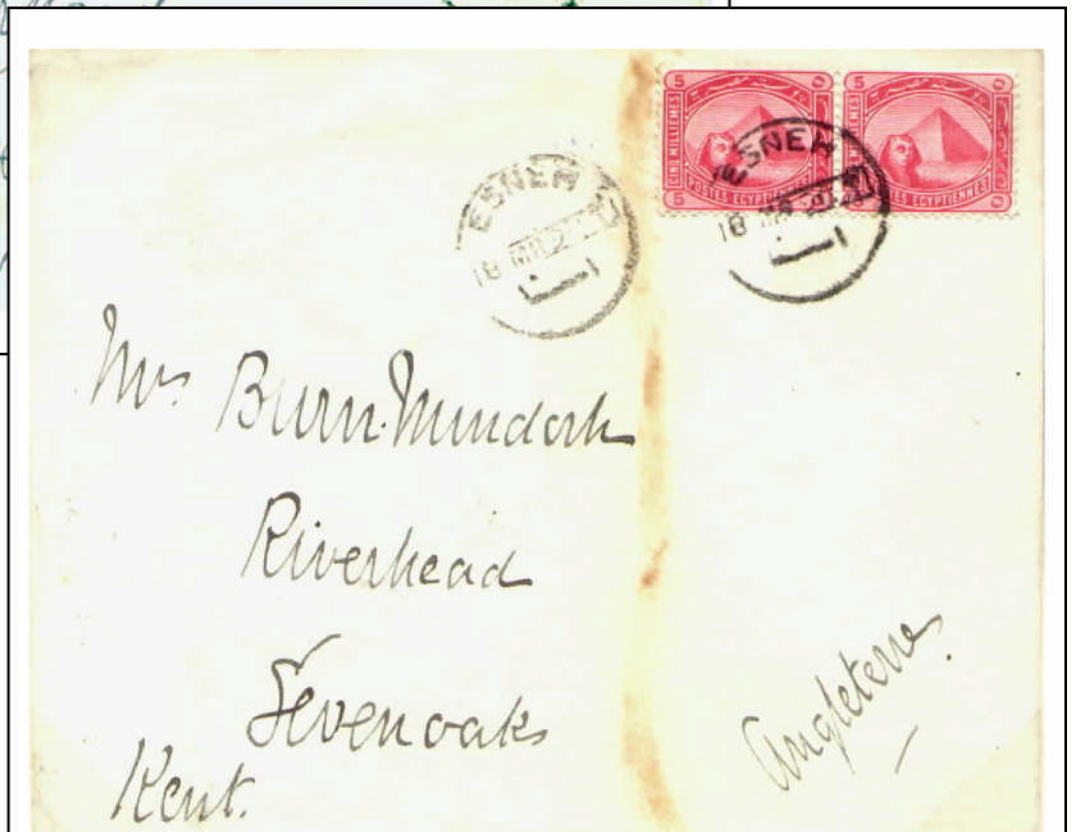
ESNEH, EGYPT to ENGLAND

18 III 96

Burn-Murdoch left his base at Abbassia Barracks, Cairo, for the Sudan in early March. At the time he held the rank of Kaimakan, the equivalent of a Lieutenant Colonel in the British Army. The top cover is postmarked **GUERGA 16**

**III 96** and backstamped **ALEXANDRIE 17 III 96** and **SEVENOAKS 11 PM MR 25 96**. Guerga is a district capital located up the Nile some 312 miles from Cairo.

The bottom cover is postmarked **ESNEH 18 III 96** and backstamped **ALEXANDRIE 20 III 96** and **SEVENOAKS 11 PM MR 26 96**. Esneh, a village served by the Nile river steamers and the railway, is approximately 450 miles from Cairo.



## THE RECONQUEST OF THE SUDAN — 1896 DONGOLA EXPEDITION

BURN-MURDOCH ARCHIVE N° 38 & N° 39

One Piastre Officer's Letter

ASSOUAN-GUERGA T.P.O. to FRANCE  
CHALLAL-WADI HALFA T.P.O. to FRANCE

19 III 96  
22 III 96

Top cover: The Assouan-Guerga travelling post office c.d.s was used on the Nile River steamers from around September 1893 to September 1897. This cover was most likely posted somewhere between Esneh and Assouan. It is backstamped **ALEXANDRIE 22 III 96** and **HYERES 8<sup>E</sup> 29 MARS 96 VAR.**

Bottom cover: The Challal-Wadi Halfa traveling post office date stamp was in use from 1889 to about July 1898. Challal was the terminus for the upper Egyptian railway service as at that point the Nile River again become navigable. It is 241 miles from Challal to Wadi Halfa. The cover is backstamped **ASSOUAN 24 III 96**, **ALEXANDRIE 27 III 96**, **MARSEILLES 16<sup>E</sup> — AVRIL 96 DEPART**, and **HYERES 4<sup>E</sup> 2 AVRIL 96 VAR.**



# THE RECONQUEST OF THE SUDAN — 1896 DONGOLA EXPEDITION

BURN-MURDOCH ARCHIVE N°40 & N°41

One Piastre Officer's Letter

WADI HALFA to ENGLAND

10 IV 96

ASSOUAN to ENGLAND

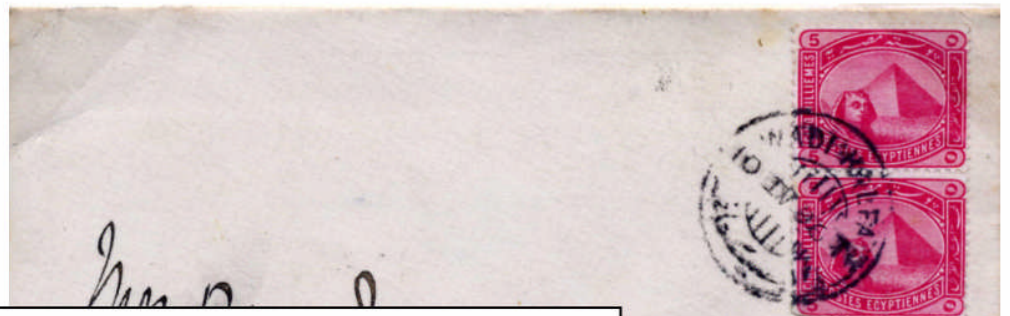
10 V 96

Top cover: Wadi Halfa, the base for the campaign against the Mahdists, had "Stores, workshops, barracks, tents, Greek shops, cafés and doubtless at least one House (or mud hut) of Joy..."<sup>1</sup> The soldiers called the place *Bloody Hell-Fire!* This cover is backstamped *ALEXANDRIE 17IV96* and *SEVENOAKS 11 PMAP23 96*.

Bottom cover: This cover is backstamped *SEVENOAKS 11 PM MY 21 96*. On May 1, an Egyptian cavalry patrol under Burn Murdoch's command met up with some Dervish horsemen. In the ensuing firefight two Egyptians were killed and a Sudanese infantryman died of sunstroke.

The letter was written from Sarras.

*This will be dry & uninteresting. Shall be here for at least 8 days as Hunter<sup>2</sup> will not be back till then. I have a comfortable tent here. On the march we sleep out, not much hardship in this climate, but one wants shade in the daytime.*



This letter was written from Halfa.

*I was sent up here from Sarras & came in here yesterday. I found there was so much to do that I could not get away by the morning train so shall remain till tomorrow..... Benson has turned up here to be attached to the*

*Intelligence Dept., & be finally with the gun-boats being built. I hear the reporters who are kept here & not allowed to go up to the front have sent home some wonderful pictures & accounts of my fight the other day. You may put them down as all lies. None of them were there & we were a little too busy to make pictures. ... The post boat has just arrived. I shall get my letters early tomorrow morning when I get back to Sarras. None of my diary of course must be published in any paper, but do not mind friends seeing it*

<sup>1</sup> See Henry Keown-Boyd, p. 156.

<sup>2</sup> General Sir Archibald Hunter, DSO, was commander of The River Column and Burn-Murdoch the commander of The Desert Column.

## RECONQUEST OF THE SUDAN – 1996 DONGOLA EXPEDITION

Letter from Major John Francis Burn-Murdoch, Egyptian Army, to his Mother in England

*Sarras*  
9-4-96

My dear Mama

Just a line to tell you that I am very fit and that I got back to this from Akasha on Tuesday & had to run into Halfa by train. I have been acting as senior staff officer to Colonel Hunter who commands south of Sarras & have not had a minute to spare. I asked Watson, the Sirdar's A.D.C. to drop you a line to say I was all right.

I shall be relieved from this billet tomorrow and go back to the cavalry. 5 squadrons are now here.

I do hope the wedding will go off all right. Give Beatrice my love when you write. I shall write to her on Saturday.

I have written to different shops for any things I want. Please send me one or two watch chains with a fairly large spring lock at each end for my watch and knife.

Very much love,

Your affec son,

*Frank*

The original letter is in the Burn-Murdoch Archives at the National Army Museum, London;. It may have been included in cover No. 40 as a second letter..

## THE RECONQUEST OF THE SUDAN—1896 DONGOLA EXPEDITION

BURN-MURDOCH ARCHIVE N<sup>o</sup>. 42

Officer's Unpaid Letter

Endorsed: *On Active Service No Stamps Available. J. F. Burn-Murdoch, Kaim. Comg. E. Cavry.*  
Via CAIRO to ENGLAND

15 V 96

Some mail from the forces gathering at the front at Sarras and Akasha did not receive a datestamp of origin. The

cover was probably written around May 10<sup>th</sup> while at Sarras. It is properly marked with the **TIT** indicating postage of 21/2d. to be collected. The cover is backstamped **CAIRE A 15 V 96 T2** and **SEVENOAKS 4 PM MY 22 96**.



The summary of the Burn-Murdoch archive does not have information concerning the letter from this cover. He sent sections of a diary to his parents from time to time covering the period 14 March to 20 October 1896. They would transcribe his pages into a permanent diary that is now in the National Army Museum. Perhaps this cover contained some of these diary pages.

THE RECONQUEST OF THE  
SUDAN  
1896 DONGOLA EXPEDITION

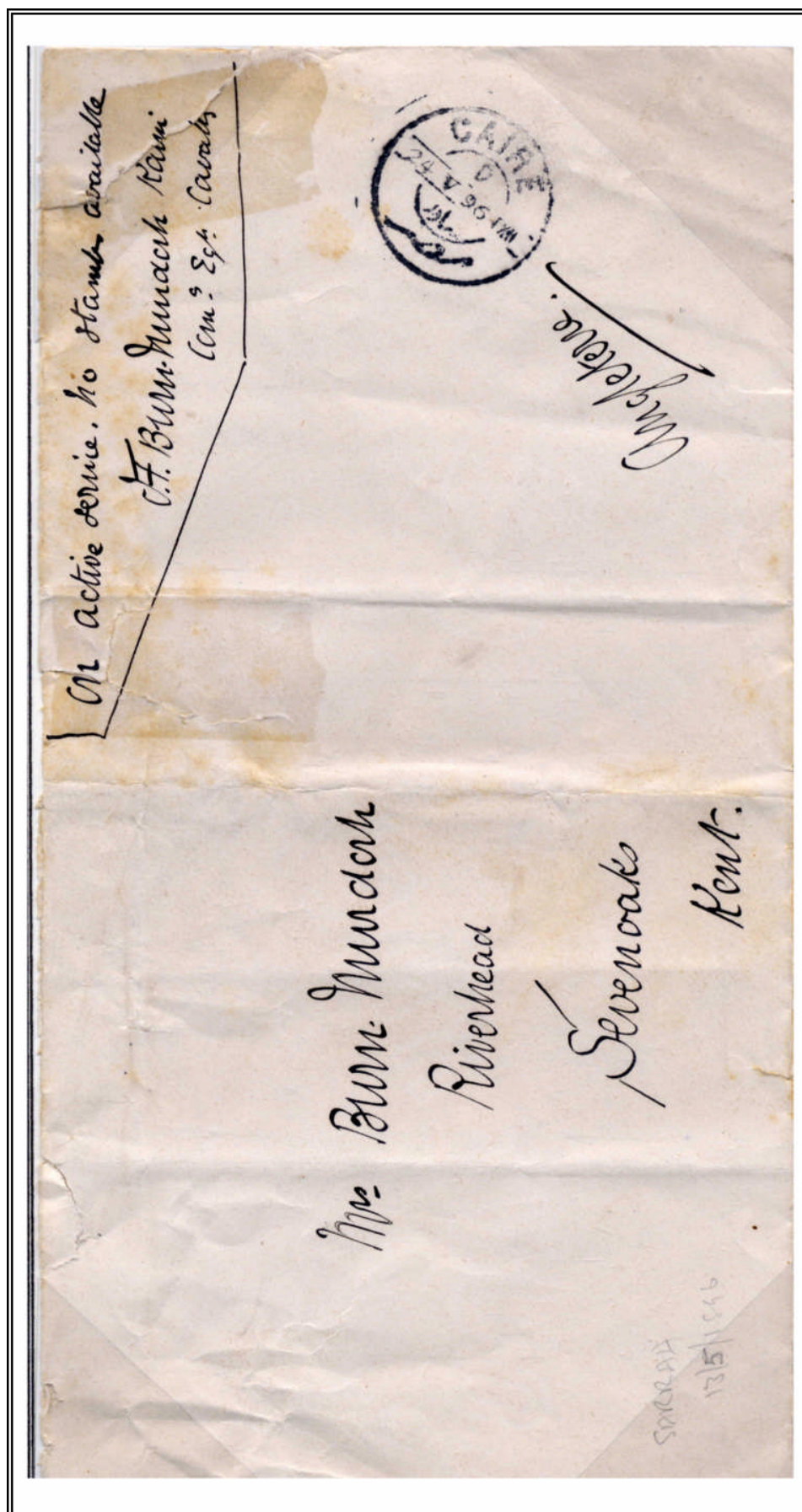
BURN-MURDOCH ARCHIVE

[No. 43]

Officer's Unpaid Letter  
Endorsed: *On Active Service*  
*No Stamps Available.*  
*J. F. Burn-Murdoch,*  
*Kaim. Comg. E. Cavry.*

Via CAIRO to ENGLAND 24 V 96

The cover doesn't have a date stamp of origin, a T marking and the amount to be collected. It appears to have arrived without a charge being collected. The cover is cancelled CAIRE D 24 V 96 TXII and stamped **SEVENOAKS MU1** 96..



THE RECONQUEST OF THE  
SUDAN  
1896 DONGOLA EXPEDITION  
BURN-MURDOCH ARCHIVE N° 44

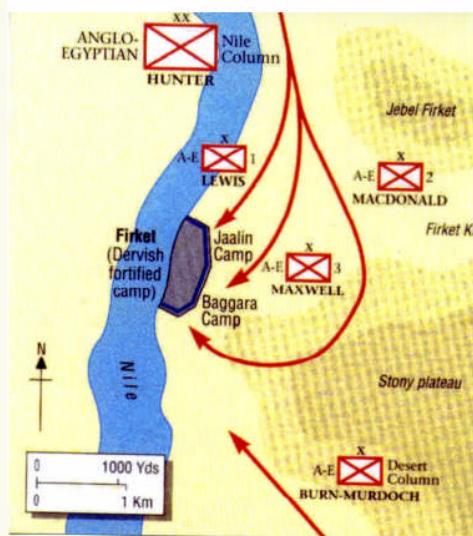
Unpaid Officer's Letter Endorsed:  
On Active Service  
No Stamps Available.  
J. F. Burn-Murdoch, Kaim. Comg. E.  
Cavry. Akasha 3.6.96

WADI HALFA CAMP to ENGLAND  
7 JU 96

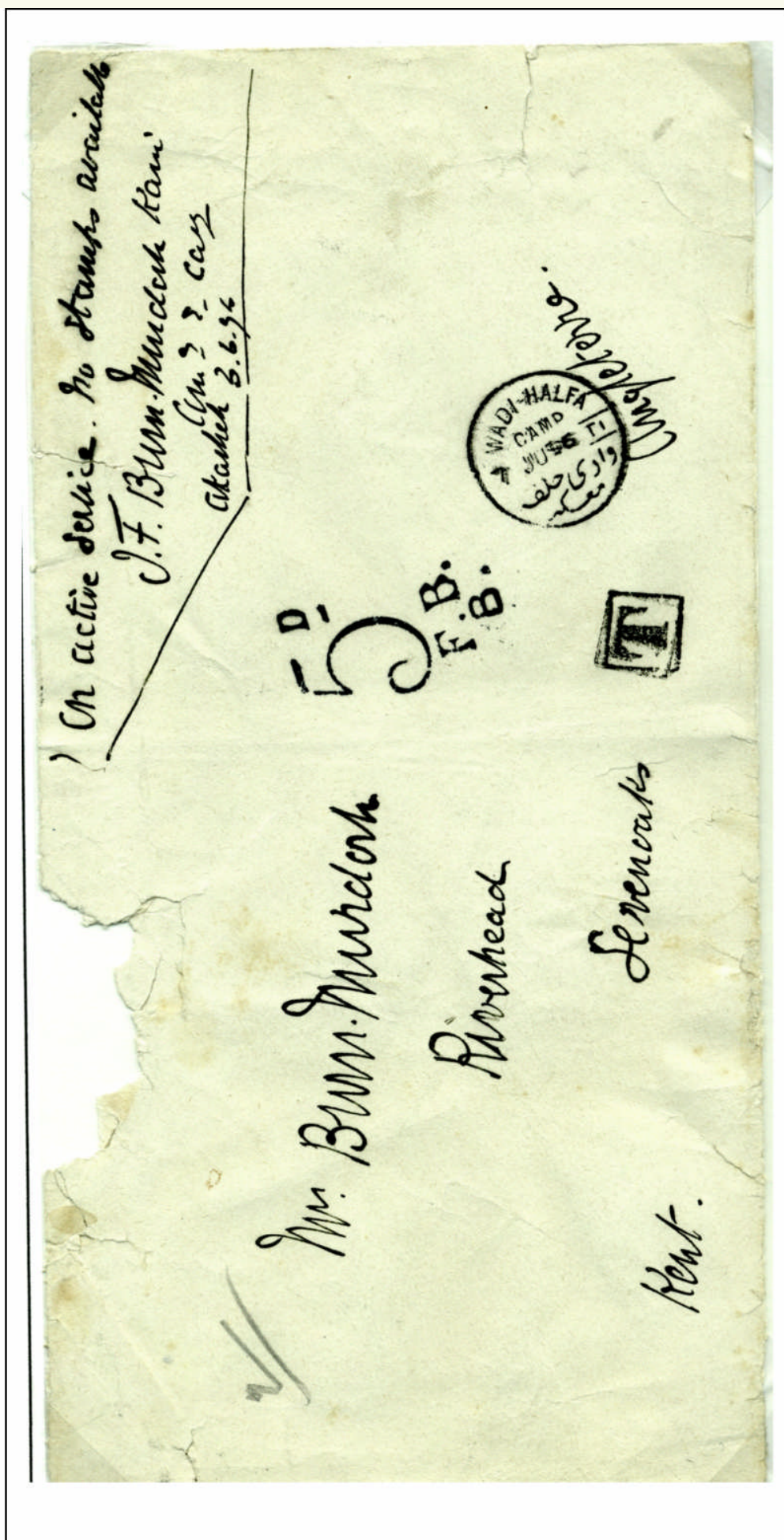
More than likely this envelope contained  
pages for B-M's diary thus accounting for the  
5d. postage due.

Written on June 3 at Akasha, the cover is  
cancelled **WADI-HALFA CAMP 7 JU**  
96, the date of the Battle of Firket. It bears  
the backstamps of **CAIRE A 14 VI 96**  
and **SEVENOAKS 10:30 AM JU 22**  
96.

J.F. B-M commanded the Desert Column of  
some 2,000 men of the Egyptian Army. It  
was comprised of cavalry, camel corps,  
horse artillery, and Maxim machine guns.  
Attacking at dawn in conjunction with The  
River Column under General Archibald  
Hunter, it routed the Dervish forces by 7:30  
AM.



Source: Donald Featherston, *OMDURMAN 189*  
Military, 1993, p. 30.



## THE RECONQUEST OF THE SUDAN—1896 DONGOLA EXPEDITION

BURN-MURDOCH ARCHIVE N°45

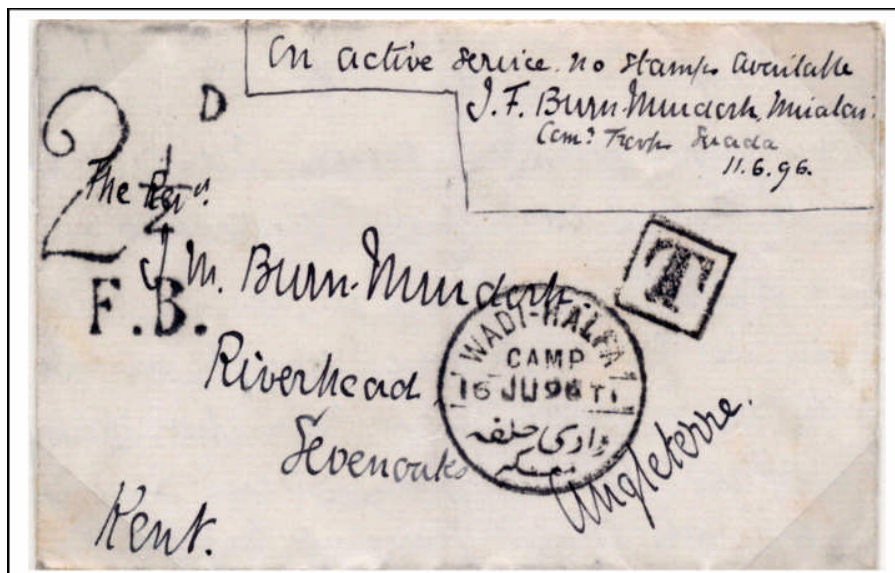
Officer's Unpaid Letter

Endorsed: *On Active Service No Stamps Available. J. F. Burn-Murdoch, Miralai. Comg. Troops Suada<sup>3</sup>.*

WADI-HALFA CAMP to ENGLAND

16 JU 96

The cover, a "Webster's Express Tablet" letter sheet, is backstamped SEVENOAKS 6:45 PM JY 1 96. Burn-Murdoch just received a promotion to Miralai at Firket, equivalent to a full Colonel. In May the Sirdar delayed promoting him until he met with the enemy.



Hamudas House, Suada.<sup>4</sup> 11.6.96

*My dear Papa. I sent off my diary yesterday. I do not know what view may be taken of our work here at home. They made me a Miralai on the Field but that does me no good though it was a great compliment & kind of the Sirdar. Could you see Sir Evelyn Wood privately. A Brevet now would help me a lot in view of further operations. My men did splendidly and I have the greatest confidence in them. They will charge home and are only too keen to go. I have written today to Charlie Tennant to ask him to interest Sir W. Marriott in my favour, his father in Law's interest with Lord Huntingdon would help, I am sure and I know Lord Wolseley & Sir Redvers Butler would help me if they could. This is the best place I have been in for some time. I have now made it safe and I am most comfortable. I am at present in command of 2 Squadrons, 2 Batteries 2 Battalions and only wish they would come on to attack me but I fear the nearest sound Dervish is 40 miles off.*

Yraffec son, Frank

<sup>3</sup> This should be Suarda, a village about 25 miles up the Nile from Firket.

<sup>4</sup> Emir Hammuda was one of the Dervish commanders killed at Firket.

THE RECONQUEST OF  
THE SUDAN  
1896 DONGOLA  
EXPEDITION

BURN-MURDOCH ARCHIVE  
[No. 46]

Double-weight Officer's  
Unpaid Letter Endorsed: *On  
Active Service*  
*No Stamps Available.*  
*J. F. Burn-Murdoch, Miralai.*  
*Comg. Suada [sic] 11.6.96*

WADI HALFA CAMP to  
ENGLAND 21 JU 96

Charged 5d. on delivery, the  
cover is backstamped *CAIRE A*  
*30 VI*

96 and *SEVENOAKS 4:00 PM*  
*JY 7 96*. No letter was mentioned  
in the archive records so this could  
have been properly charged.



# THE RECONQUEST OF THE SUDAN—1896 DONGOLA EXPEDITION

BURN-MURDOCH ARCHIVE [Nº47]

Officer's Unpaid Letter

Endorsed: *On Active Service No Stamps Available. J. F. Burn-Murdoch. Comg. Suada Kaim*

Note: Burn-Murdoch had already been promoted to Miralai!

WADI-HALFA CAMP to ENGLAND

20 JU 96

The cover is backstamped ASSOUAN 22 VI 96, ALEXANDRIE 26 VI 96 TIII, OY LONDON JY 2 96 and SEVENOAKS 4:00 PM JY2 96.



*Suada. 16. 6. 96*

*My dear Papa*

*Just a line to say the [that] Mr. Gwynne, Reuters Agent, has been good enough to say that he will arrange to have all the Reuters telegrams sent to you free.*

*All well here. Am very fit.*

*Yr. Affec. Son,*

*Frank*

# THE RECONQUEST OF THE SUDAN—1896 DONGOLA EXPEDITION

BURN-MURDOCH ARCHIVE No. 48

Officer's Unpaid Letter

Endorsed: *On Active Service No Stamps Available. J. F. Burn-Murdoch, Miralai. Comg. Suada*

WADI-HALFA CAMP to ENGLAND

4 JL 96

Written on Army Form C. 398, the cover is backstamped **CAIRE A 12 JL 96** and **SEVENOAKS 6:45 PM JY 20 96**. It bears the appropriate postage due markings.

No.	Date	29/6/96
From	To	
Place	Place	
Despatch	h. m. M	Receipt h. m. M

*My dear Papa*  
*Just a line to tell you that all goes well here. It is now somewhat dull. We are bound to wait now till the Nile rises and very slowly it seems to be coming up. I got your letter yesterday written in London after you had seen the Times of Tuesday the 9th. I should like my allowance put into the Bank of Scotland.*

Army Form C. 398

*In active service - No Stamps Available.*

Despatched h. m. M. *J. F. Burn-Murdoch*  
 Received h. m. M. *Miralai*  
 Signature of Receiver } *2* Speed. *2*

To: *Rev. J. M. Burn-Murdoch*  
*Riverhead, Sevenoaks*  
*Angleterre.*

**CAIRE A 12 JL 96**  
**SEVENOAKS 6:45 PM JY 20 96**

This envelope to be returned to bearer.

My dear Papa, Just a line to tell you that all goes well here. It is now somewhat dull. We are bound to wait now till the Nile rises and very slowly it seems to be coming up. I got your letter yesterday, written in London after you had seen the Times of Tuesday the 9th. I should like my allowance put into the Bank of Scotland. There is some money which must be paid to the Humber Cycle Company before the 1st of October to make up some allotment when the shares were redistributed. Would you pay this for me? I think you had the papers about it, at any rate I have nothing here. Thanks for taking up for me the share in the Orient Co. I received 6 numbers of Pearsons Magazine full of teaching. Thanks, I want books badly. I have never yet heard if Bourne has got a foal or not. I fear now it cannot be the case. No news here of an autumn British Campaign. I got the Globe you sent. It is probable that Greatrex has been sent back but not as 2nd in Command.

son Frank

With much love, yr affec

## THE RECONQUEST OF THE SUDAN—1896 DONGOLA EXPEDITION

BURN-MURDOCH ARCHIVE N°49

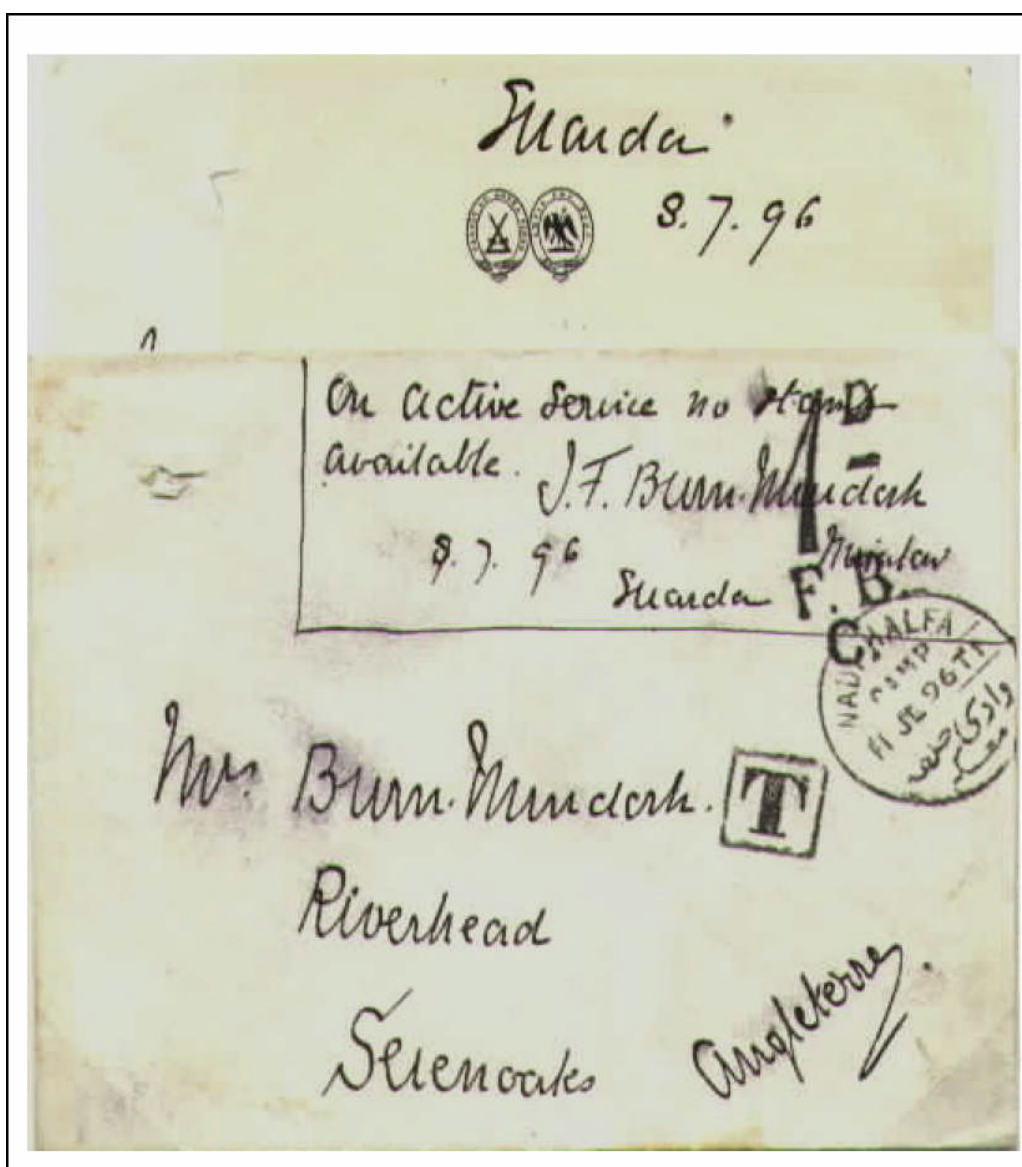
Officer's Unpaid Letter

Endorsed: *On Active Service No Stamps Available. J. F. Burn -Murdoch. Miralai 8.7.96 Suarda*

WADI-HALFA CAMP to ENGLAND

11 JL 96

This cover, incorrectly charged the soldier's rate of 1d., is backstamped SEVENOAKS 6:45 PM JY 28 96.



Suarda. 8. 7. 96 My dear Mamma, Just a line to catch the Mail to tell you that I am all right & fit & well. I leave this early tomorrow morning. Benson is better but not yet fit enough to move. It is only a simple go of fever. I shall go through to Kosheh where the Hd. Quarters are in one day and next day probably on to Okhmeh. With much love to you all, I remain yr. Affec. Son Frank I enclose ten pages diary.

# THE RECONQUEST OF THE SUDAN—1896 DONGOLA EXPEDITION

BURN-MURDOCH ARCHIVE [Nº 50]

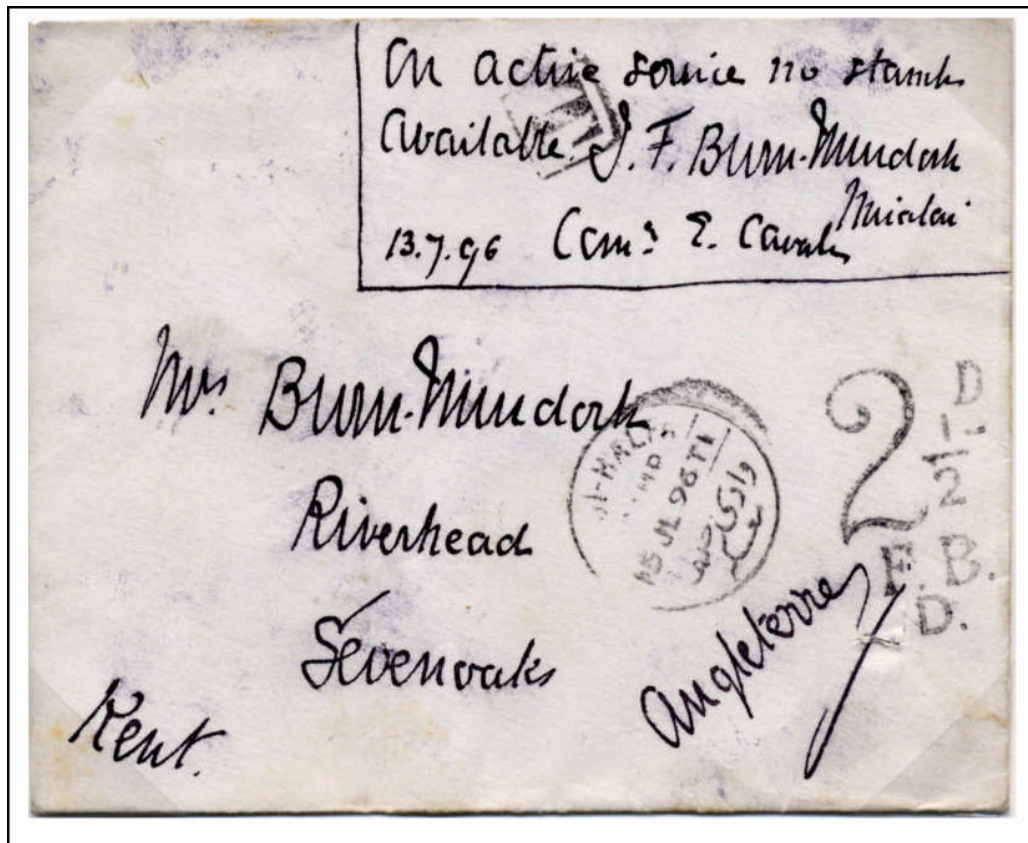
Officer's Unpaid Letter

Endorsed: On Active Service No Stamps Available. J. F. Burn-Murdoch. Miralai 13.7.96 Comg. E. Cavalry

WADI-HALFA CAMP to ENGLAND

15 JL 96

This cover, correctly charged 21/2d. upon receipt, is backstamped SEVENOAKS 4:00 PM JY 28 96.



Ambigol. 13 7 96

My dear Mamma,

Just a line to say that I arrived here al right yesterday after a very nice journey though it was a little lonely. I had a nice quiet day at the Hd. Quarter Camp on the way.

I found 5 squadrons here all well also Horse Artillery & Camel Corps. They however are not staying here but are going on to Sarras. I have had more of this place than any other. The things you sent by McMahon arrived al right. The cake from Buzzards has not yet come. Post is the only way to send things.

Much love, yrafec son, Frank

## THE RECONQUEST OF THE SUDAN—1896 DONGOLA EXPEDITION

BURN-MURDOCH ARCHIVE [Nº 51]

Officer's Unpaid Letter

Endorsed: *On Active Service No Stamps Available. J. F. Burn-Murdoch. Miralai Comg. Cavalry 16.7.96*

WADI-HALFA CAMP to ENGLAND

18 JL 96

This cover charged 21/2d. upon receipt is backstamped *CAIRE A 24 JL 96* and *SEVENOAKS 3:15 AM JY 31 96*.



Copy of letter to his Mother originally included in this cover.

*Ambigol. 16.7.96*

*I hope the above diary will reach you al right. I am very fit and well as are al the British Officers here. I had a letter from Beatrice yesterday, also one from Maggie Parker asking me to be Godfather to her boy which of course I shall be glad to do. Would you ask the Governor to put £10 of my money in the Post Office Savings Bank in his name, which will accumulate for him. I have just written to Minnie to wish her many happy returns of the day. It ought to arrive on or about her birthday.*

*I remain, Yr. Affec. Son, Frank*

## THE RECONQUEST OF THE SUDAN — 1896 DONGOLA EXPEDITION

BURN-MURDOCH ARCHIVE N<sup>o</sup> 52

Officer's Unpaid Letter

Endorsed: On Active Service No Stamps Available. J. F. Burn-Murdoch. Miralai Comg. E.C. 30/7/96

WADI-HALFA CAMP to ENGLAND

1 AO 96

This cover, correctly charged 21/2d upon receipt, is backstamped CHALLAL WADI HALFA 1 VIII 96, ASSOUAN 3 VIII 96 T1, ALEXANDRIEA 7VIII 96 TIII, and SEVENOAKS 3:15 AMAU 141 96.



Sarras. 30/7/96

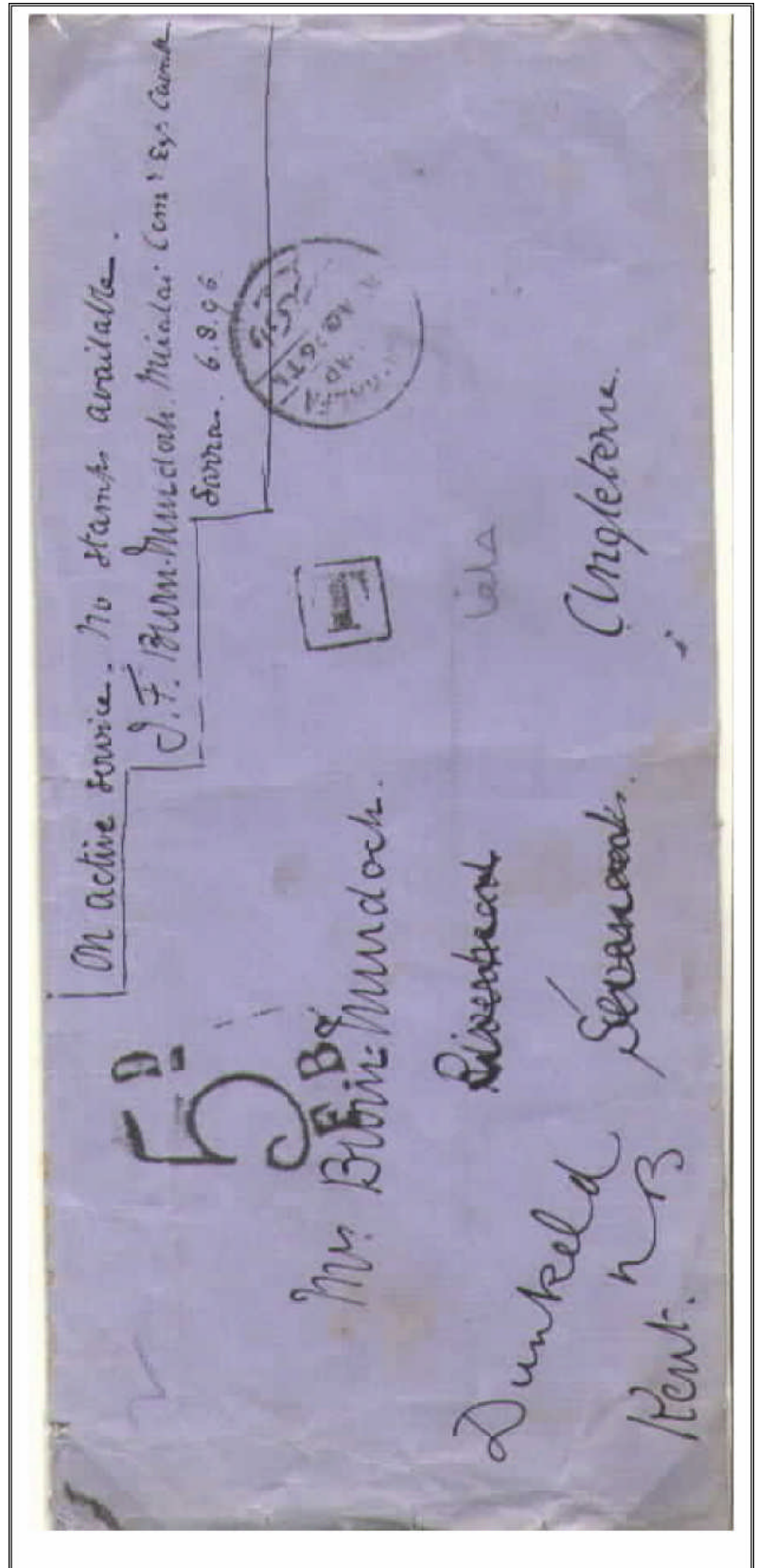
My dear Mamma, Here I am still at Sarras and very much tired of it but fit & well. I shan't send you the diary this week as there is absolutely nothing in it. Each day is the same as the last and no chance of a move. For some weeks none of the Steamers have passed this. Yet for some time we must sit still. I have a good double fly tent in a nice airy position as they go in this country. The thermometer rarely goes up in it above 110° which is less than we had in May. McMahon is with me all well as are also Broadwood, Legge Peyton, Persse & a Vety. Surgeon named Smith.

We have lost some men by Cholera but I hope have got to the end of it now. We have several cases recovering and the last cases have been light, which is a very good sign. As the Nile rises we hope that it will disappear.

Please tell the Governor that I think that there is nothing to be done re promotion; unless recommended from here nothing can be done - and I fancy no despatch has as yet been sent in by the Sirdar. All will come right in the end. The filly should be called 'Baggarieh' which is the feminine of Baggara. I hope that she is growing and that she has plenty of bone, which means that I hope that her legs are not too pretty & thin.

I am so glad to hear that Uncle Archie is to go to Browsholme for the 12th. I do hope that they will have good sport-

With much love, Yr affec son, Frank



# THE RECONQUEST OF THE SUDAN — 1896 DONGOLA EXPEDITION

BURN-MURDOCH ARCHIVE N°54

Officer's Unpaid Letter

Endorsed: *On Active Service No Stamps Available. J. F. Burn-Murdoch, Miralai  
Comg. Egt Cavalry. Sarras 11.8/96*

WADI-HALFA CAMP to ENGLAND

12 AO 96

This cover, correctly charged 21/2d upon receipt, is backstamped *DUNKELD B AU 27 96 118*.



The enclosed letter reads:

Sarras. 11 .8.96

My dear Papa,

I am particularly glad that you did not write to the "Times". Nothing is further from my views. They probably have my official report at the W. Office. There is no use mincing matters: one squadron did not behave as it should have done but the situation was saved by the other two.

The military rank of "Miralai" does not carry with it the civilian title of Pasha. What difference it makes either way I do not see.

The weather is still nasty here but we have had no more cholera.

We have never had a fight with the Dervishes yet which has not been reported to the Khalifa as a victory for them. Wingate's history of the Squadron shows this very clearly. For this reason the Khalifa always employs his own postmen who give him the true news whatever the letters he carries may say. I don't expect to move on for some little time yet. We are all very well here.

Yr affec. Son,

Frank

## THE RECONQUEST OF THE SUDAN — 1896 DONGOLA EXPEDITION

BURN-MURDOCH ARCHIVE No . 55

### *Double-weight Officer's Unpaid Letter*

*Endorsed:* On Active Service No Stamps Available. J. F. Burn-Murdoch, Miralai. Comg. Egt. Cavalry Sarras 13.8.96

WADI HALFA CAMP to ENGLAND 14 AO 96

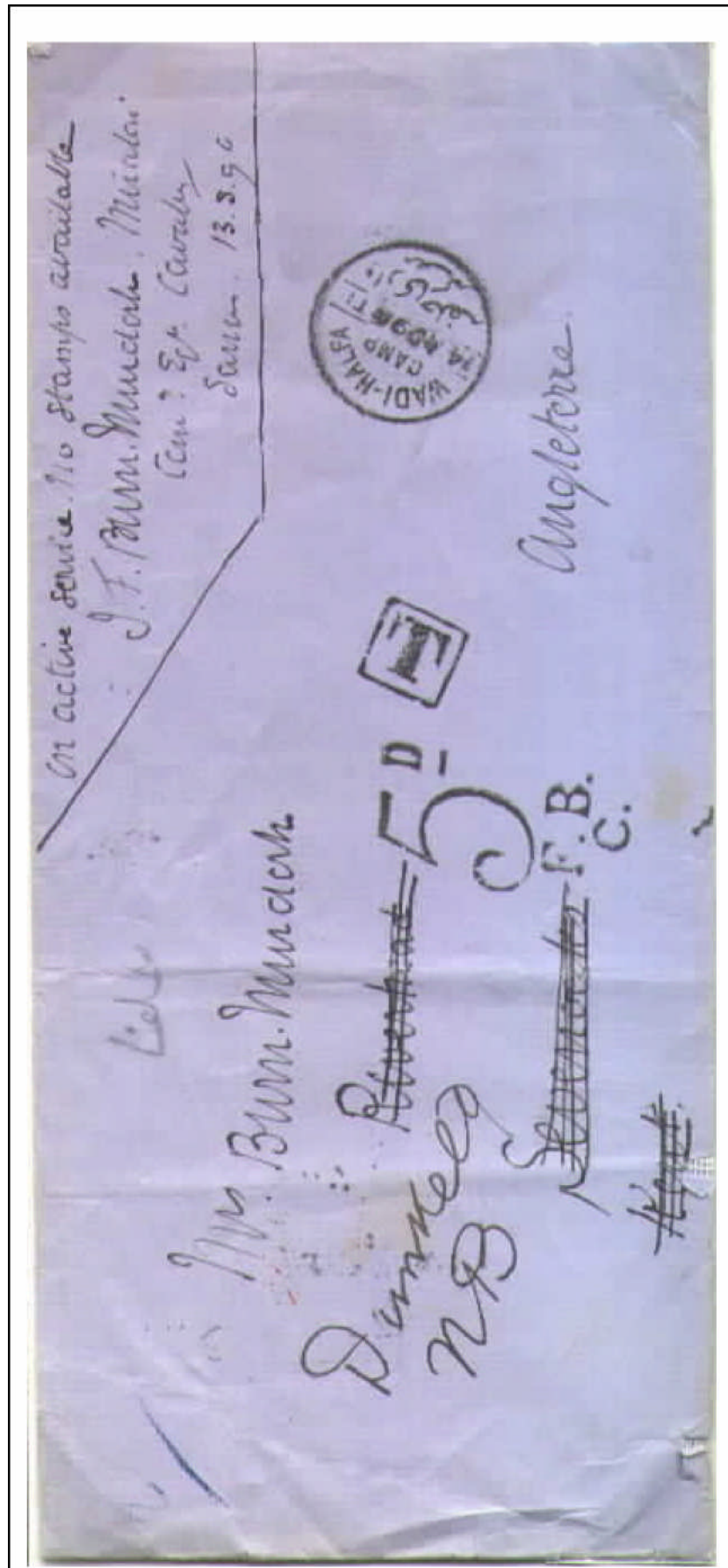
Postage due markings with the boxed T and the <sup>5D</sup> F.B.C. handstamp correctly applied. The cover is backstamped CAIRE A 21 VIII 96 T2, LONDON NH AU 27 96, SEVENOAKS 4 PM AU 27 96, and DUNKELDA AU29 96 118

Sarras.  
13.8.96

My dear Mamma,  
Though you will probably be in Scotland when this letter arrives yet I think I had better write to Riverhead as it is safer. We have had no cholera now for nearly two weeks so may be said to be clear of it. On the whole we have got through it very wel. Beatrice's photograph arrived yesterday. It is very good. On looking at it I find I must cutoff the cardboard edges as I have only two camels to carry my kit- I am sending you two very dull sheets of diary.

With much love,  
yr. affec. son,  
Frank

Two books "The Chaplain of the Fleet" & "By Order of the Czar" arrived, for which many thanks.  
Yr affec. Son, Frank



# THE RECONQUEST OF THE SUDAN

## 1896 DONGOLA EXPEDITION

BURN-MURDOCH ARCHIVE [Nº. 56]

Officer's Unpaid Letter Endorsed: *On Active Service No Stamps Available. J. F. Burn-Murdoch, Miralai. Comg. Egt. Cavalry Sakamatto*

WADI HALFA CAMP to ENGLAND 30 AO 96

Postage due markings with the boxed T and the 5<sup>D</sup> F.B. handstamp applied. The cover and its contents weigh less than 1/2 an ounce and so it should have been charged only 21/2d. Note also the purple handstamp "CHARGE NOT PAID F.B. N.. 1.." The cover is backstamped *CAIRE A 4 IX 96 T2, LONDON D X 10 SP 96, SEVENOAKS 11 PM SP 10 96, SEVENOAKS 10.30 AM SP 11 96*, and *DUNKELDA SP 1396 118*

On August 23 the Army resumed the advance towards Dongola.

The enclosed letter reads:

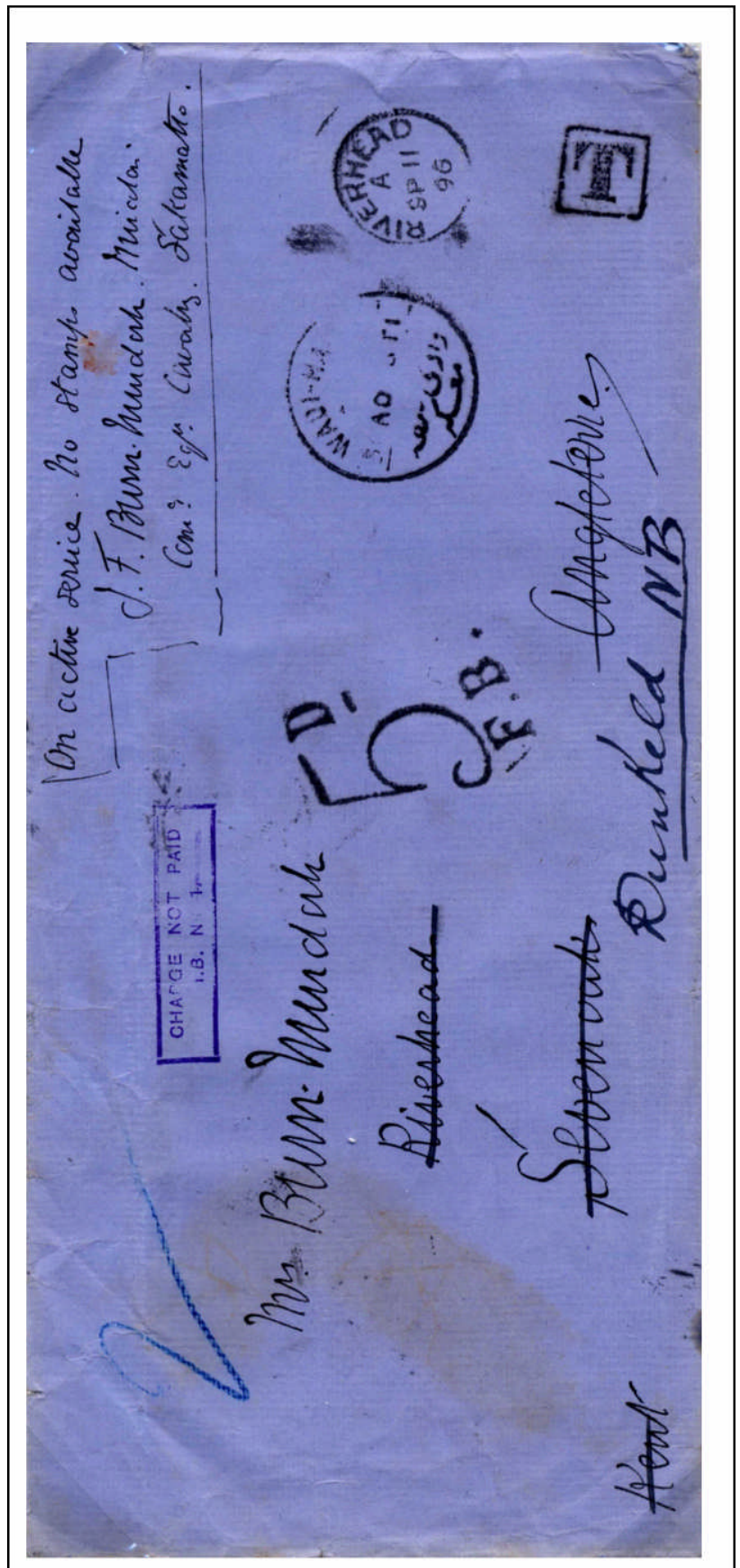
*Sakamatto.*

*26.8.96*

*Here we are blocked again because they can't get forage up. But this time it is more trying because other troops have gone on. I do hope we shall get a chance. Last night we had a desperate gale which made us most uncomfortable for the time but did no real harm.*

My servants did excellently well & none of the horses broke away, but everything is damp & horrid today. We are all of us very fit and well in spite of it all.

Would you ask the Governor to pay Gasking's bill which has blown away in the gale & also an allotment due to Humber Co. before October. I enclose some diary. With much love, I remain Yr affec. Son, Frank

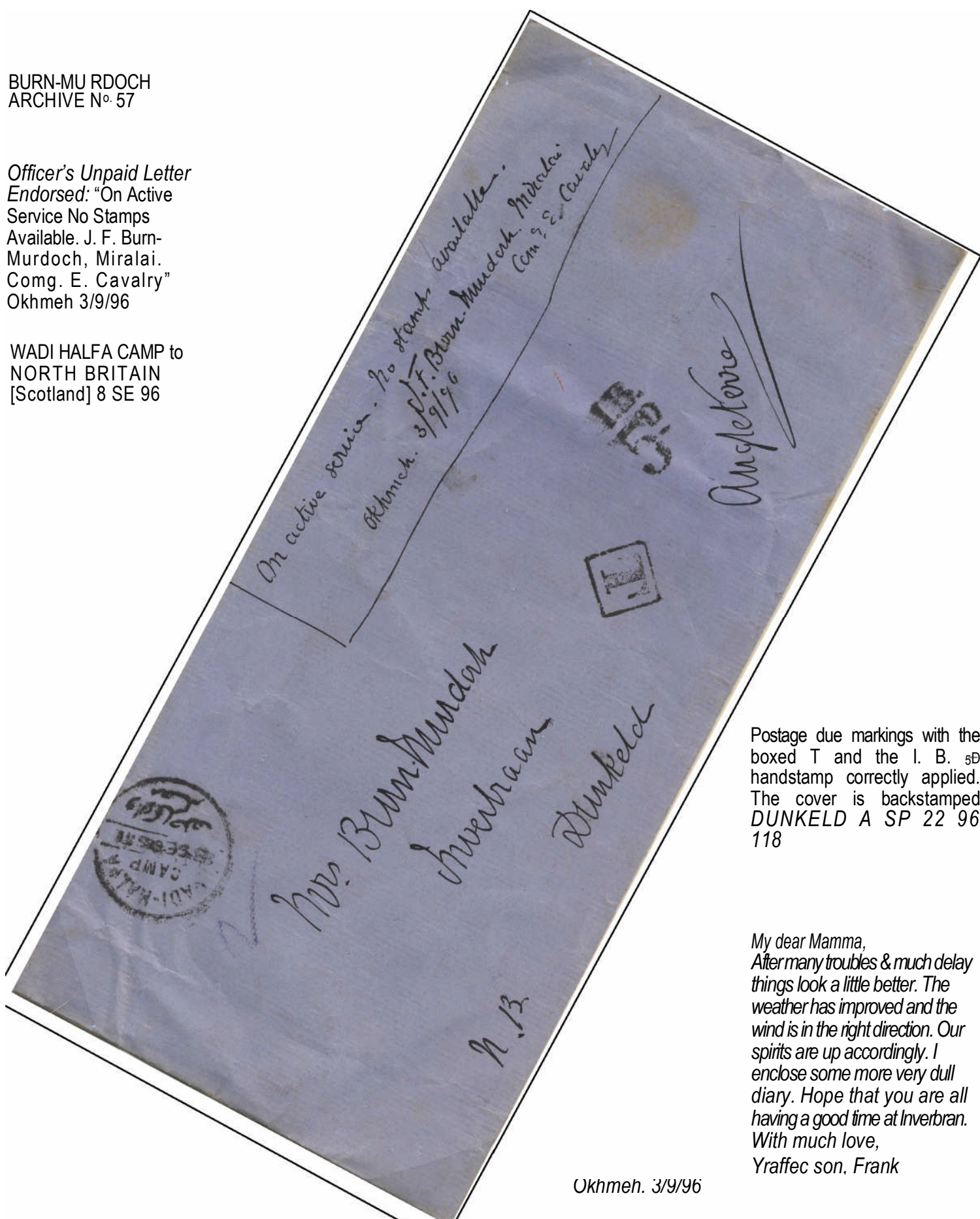


## THE RECONQUEST OF THE SUDAN — 1896 DONGOLA EXPEDITION

BURN-MURDOCH  
ARCHIVE N<sup>o</sup> 57

*Officer's Unpaid Letter*  
Endorsed: "On Active  
Service No Stamps  
Available. J. F. Burn-  
Murdoch, Miralai.  
Comg. E. Cavalry"  
Okhmeh 3/9/96

WADI HALFA CAMP to  
NORTH BRITAIN  
[Scotland] 8 SE 96



Postage due markings with the boxed T and the I. B. 5D handstamp correctly applied. The cover is backstamped DUNKELD A SP 22 96 118

My dear Mamma,  
After many troubles & much delay  
things look a little better. The  
weather has improved and the  
wind is in the right direction. Our  
spirits are up accordingly. I  
enclose some more very dull  
diary. Hope that you are all  
having a good time at Inverbrann.  
With much love,  
Yraffec son, Frank

Okhmeh. 3/9/96

## THE RECONQUEST OF THE SUDAN — 1896 DONGOLA CAMPAIGN

BURN-MURDOCH ARCHIVE No. 58

Single-weight Officer's Unpaid Letter

WADI HALFA CAMP to NORTH BRITAIN  
(Scotland 12 SE 96)

Postage due markings with the boxed **T** and the 21/2<sup>D</sup> F.B.  
handstamp correctly applied. The cover is backstamped **CAIRE**  
A 18 IX 96 TI and **DUNKELD B SP 25 96 118**.

At an encampment prior to arriving at Fereig, the following  
letter was written.

Koseh

9/9/96

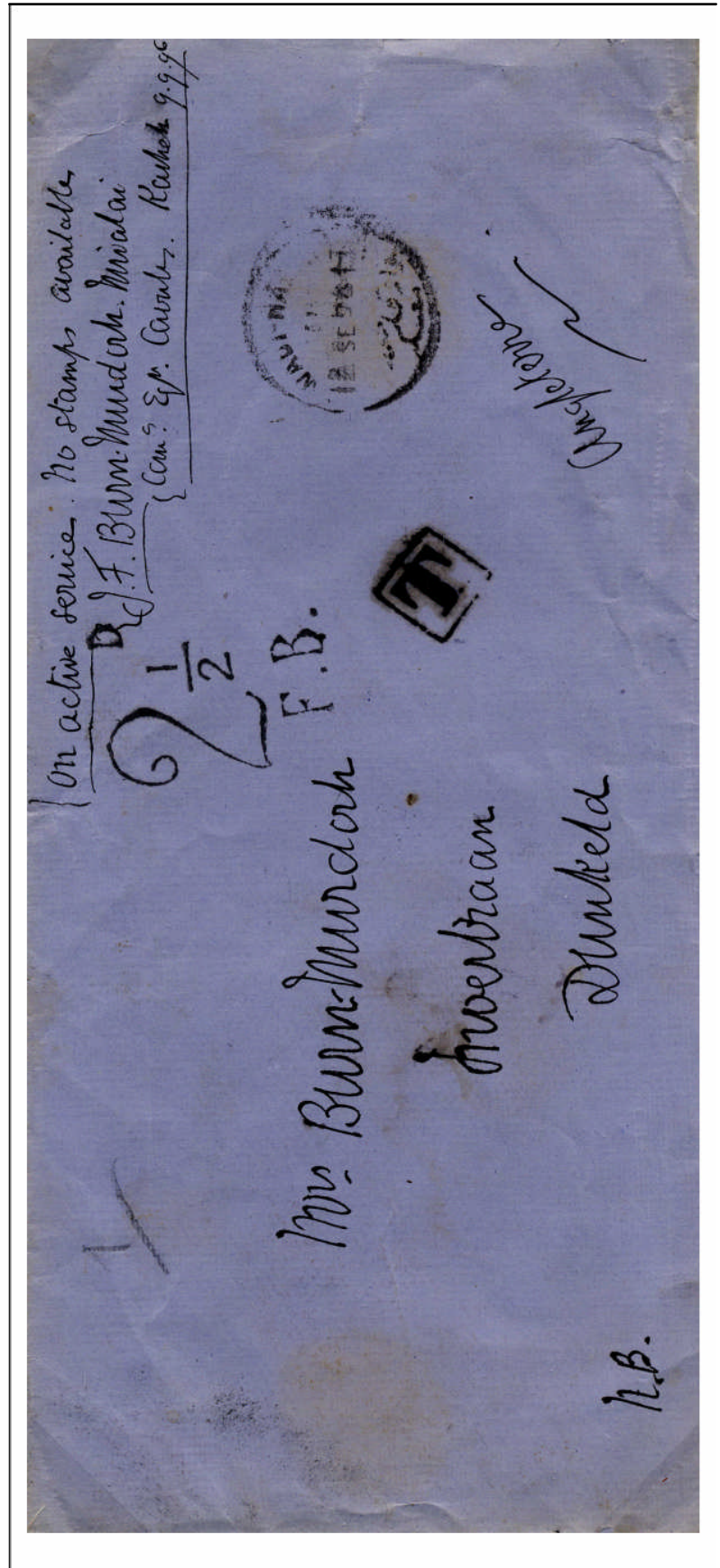
My dear Mamma,

I am off tomorrow for the South, so I am sending  
you what there is of the diary before I start.

The Railway is now working all right again and  
there is no reason why the general advance should not  
begin in a day or two. The new steamer is nearly finished. A  
couple or three days ought to put it to rights.

The weather now for the last four days has been  
perfect with nice cool nights, so we have been able to do  
better in the sleeping way and in consequence we are all  
very well. I fear that I shall miss the next mail.

With much love, I remain,  
your affec- Son, Frank.



# THE RECONQUEST OF THE SUDAN — 1896 DONGOLA EXPEDITION

BURN-MURDOCH ARCHIVE [No . 59]

Single-weight Officer's Unpaid Letter Endorsed:  
"On Active Service No Stamps Available. J. F.  
Burn-Murdoch, Miralai. Comg. Egt. Cavalry  
Fereig 16/9/96"

WADI HALFA CAMP to DUNKELD, ENGLAND  
and forwarded to SEVENOAKS, KENT 21 SE 96

Postage due markings with the boxed T marking and the  
21/2<sup>D</sup>.F.B. handstamp correctly applied. The cover is  
backstamped **DUNKELD** AOC 596118 and **SEVENOAKS** 10:30  
A.M. OC 6 96.

The troops build up at Fereig prior to advancing on  
Dongola.

The following letter is written on the back of telegraph form  
832 of the Egyptian Administration des Télégraphes.

Fereig  
16/9/96

My dear Mamma,  
Just a line to keep you going as I may not be able to write  
for some time. We have an enormous army here and more  
in a few days. I yesterday did a long patrol across the bend of  
the River to a place called Shetab-el-Meyer, south of  
Sadek. I met a few Dervishes. One of my patrols met nine  
& accounted for six. I was never better in my life.  
I remain,

Yr affec son, Frank  
Your letter of 27th Aug. received.



# THE RECONQUEST OF THE SUDAN — 1896 DONGOLA CAMPAIGN

BURN-MURDOCH ARCHIVE No. 60

Officer's Unpaid Letter Endorsed: "On Active Service No Stamps Available. J.F. Burn-Murdoch, Comg. E.C. Dongola 25/9/96"

WADI HALFA CAMP to SEVENOAKS, KENT,  
ENGLAND 8 OC 96

5<sup>d</sup>.F.B. handstamp and the T marking are properly applied and postage was collected upon delivery of the letter. The cover is backstamped CAIRE A 13 X 96 T1 and SEVENOAKS 4 P.M. OC 21 96.

On September 18<sup>th</sup> British steamboats bombarded the Mahdists at Hafir, about 27 miles below Dongola, and then continued on to Dongola. Hafir was abandoned during the night of September 19/20. On September 23 Dongola was captured without a fight.

The following letter was written on the 25<sup>th</sup> at Dongola.

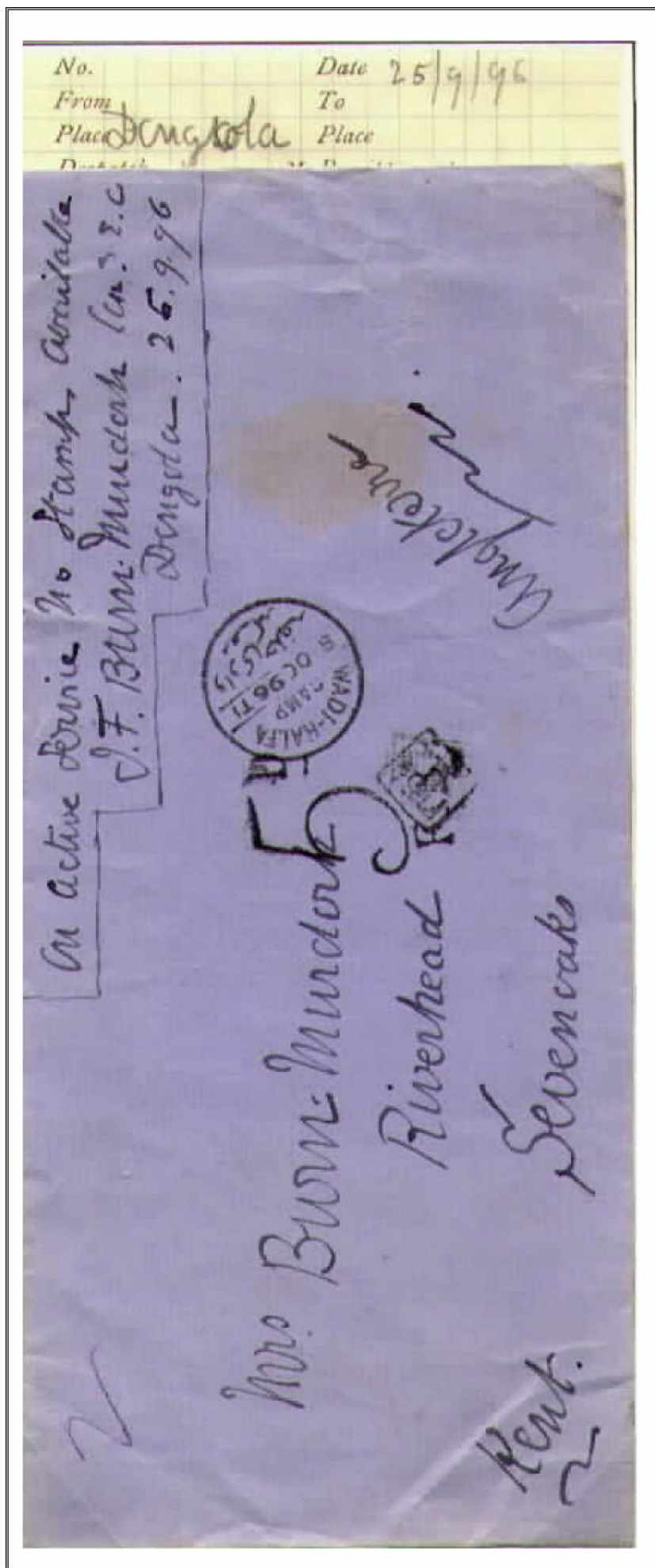
Dongola 25/9/96

My dear Mamma,

I am sending you my diary, which contains a very hurried and inadequate account of the last few days. They have been full of incidents and most interesting.

We are now in a nice camp & my tent has just arrived so we are all right. I suppose that before very long I shall be on my way home, but I have much to do & to arrange before I can get away. I am very fit and well, I remain,

Yraffec son, Frank



## BURN-MURDOCH ARCHIVE [No. 61]

WADI HALFA CAMP to SEVENOAKS, KENT,  
ENGLAND 8 OC 96

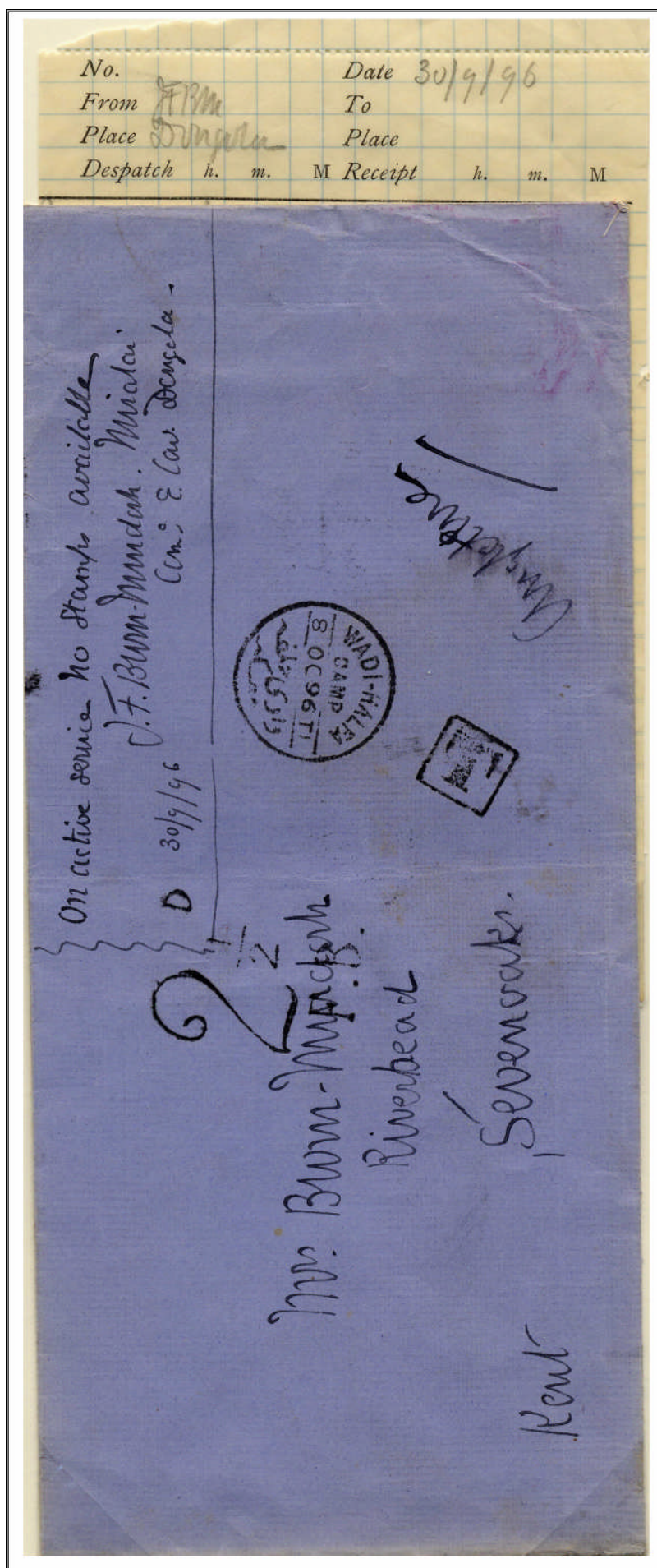
Kitchener, the Commander-in-Chief or Sirdar of the Egyptian Army, the Khedive and the British Government were most pleased and impressed with the capture of over 450 miles of the Nile at relatively little financial cost and with fewer than 170 casualties.

*Dongola 30/9/96*

*My dear Mamma,*

I fear that my account of the latter part of the Campaign has been very vague indeed, but I can't help it. We have had a desperately dull time in the last week. I hope that things will be arranged before long and that I shall be able to start for Cairo. Am very well.

Much love. Yraffec son, Frank  
Please send the cheque to Cox.



THE RECONQUEST OF THE SUDAN —  
1896 DONGOLA CAMPAIGN

BURN-MURDOCH ARCHIVE N<sup>o</sup>. 62

Double-weight Officer's Letter  
Two Piastre foreign letter rate.

CAIRO to SEVENOAKS, KENT, ENGLAND  
21 OC 96

The red wax seal on the flap of the cover.



After the Dongola Campaign, Burn-Murdoch was sent back to Cairo to await further posting in England. He was succeeded in command of the Egyptian cavalry by Robert George Broadwood. The following is from the letter originally enclosed in the envelope.

Cairo 21/10/96

My dear Mamma,

*As you will have heard from the wire, which I sent yesterday, I arrived here very fit and well yesterday morning.*

*It seems now that I am back in my home here as if I have only been away a week. Martin has looked after everything in a most excellent manner. I am going down to the War Office this morning to find out what my orders are. I expect to have to go home soon but I do not want to start for some little time. There is much to be done and arranged here and I do not wish to leave things in anything but good working order. I have also to sell my household goods and my horses which have not as yet arrived from Dongola. I hope they will be in tomorrow or the next day at the latest.*

*I fear that I have missed many letters as they have been sent up to Dongola and missed me on the way. With very much love I remain your affec- Son,  
Frank.*

*Diary closed.*



## **Funerals and Memorial Services**

**Monday, Jan 26, 1931**

### **Major-General Sir John BURN-MURDOCH**

The King was represented by Colonel R.G.Earle, A.D.C., at the funeral of Major-General Sir John Burn-Murdoch, which took place at Normanton on Soar, Loughborough, on Saturday.

The officiating clergy were Bishop Southwell, the Rev, H.B. Hamilton, Canon H.B.Lee, the Rev. J.P.Hales, and the Rev. J.Hamilton.

The family mourners included:- Lady Burn-Murdoch (widow), Mrs.Hannah Cowles (sister-in-law), Mr.Cowles, Dr.T.M.Burn-Murdoch (brother-in-law), Mrs.Forsyth, Mr.Alexander Burn-Murdoch, Colonel John Parker (brother-in-law), Mr. Robert Parker, Captain B.Lewis, R.N.,Mr. and Mrs. Francis Burn Callander, Colonel and Mrs. Kenneth Bruce, Professor W.de Burgh, and Mrs. Tunstall Ouseburn.

Among others present were :-

The Duke of Portland, General Sir Edward and Lady le Marchant, General Sir Beauvoir de Lisle, Colonel Bruce, Lord and Lady Belper, Lord Crawshaw, Lord Basing, Brigadier Hodgson, General John Vaughan, Major A.E.Burnsby and Sir Harold Nutting (Joint Masters of the Quorn) Captain Robinson, the Earl of Lanesbrough Sir Arthur Blake,Earl and Countess Ferrers, Sir Cecil and Lady Paget, Colonel P.R.Clifton, Major H.O.Peacock, Colonel W.S.N.Toller, Major and Mrs.Baines Sir Lambert and Lady Ward, Major A.L.Ashwell (secretary to the Nottingham Territorial Association)Colonel Burns Hartopp[?], Lieutenant-Colonel Everard de Lisle, the Hon.Mrs.Tennant, Dr.T.Milburn, Mr. and Mrs. Chas. Booth, Mr.J.B.Tidmas, Mr. and Mrs. C.H.Martin, Dr. Bedford, Mrs. Crooks and Miss Bright (British Red Cross Society Nottingham Branch) Mrs. Cradock, Mr. Lawrence Kimball, Captain H.Slater (organizing secretary of the East Midland Area Council. British Legion),Mr. H.Petrie (treasurer of the East Midland Area Council. British Legion), Captain J.Stenson Turner and Mr. A.W.Hanson (Whitwick British Legion), Mr. S.E.Perry (chairman of the East Midlands Area), Mr.H.Baggaley (National Executive Council. British Legion),Commander A.G.Royce, R.N. (Notts County British Legion), Mr.J.Harper, Mr.C.B.Young (Clerk to the Notts Petty Sessional Division), Mr. W.H.Marsh (Loughborough Farmers Union), Messrs. H.Gore Browne and J.Burrows (Loughborough Agricultural Association), Mr. M.T.Woolley, Mr. H.Wood, Mr. Ezra Draper, Mr. Harry Dutton, Messrs D.Rimmer and J.W.Pidcock (Plumtree and District British Legion), Major Heygate, Captain Abbott Robinson, Mr. K.Tweedale Beeby (Clerk to the Justices for Notts), Colonel Lemon (Chief Constable of Notts), Mr. R.J.Smith (Deputy Chief Constable of Notts), the Ven. W.J.Coneybeare, Messrs F.W.P.Simpson and Norman Bailey (Loughborough Boat Club), Colonel Sir Lancelot Rolleston, and Lieutenant L.C.Brewill (Robin Hoods).

Members of the Royal Dragoons Comrades' Club were present, as well as a squad from the Leicestershire Yeomanry (Prince Albert's Own). Last Post and Reveille were sounded.

***From THE TIMES (London)***