

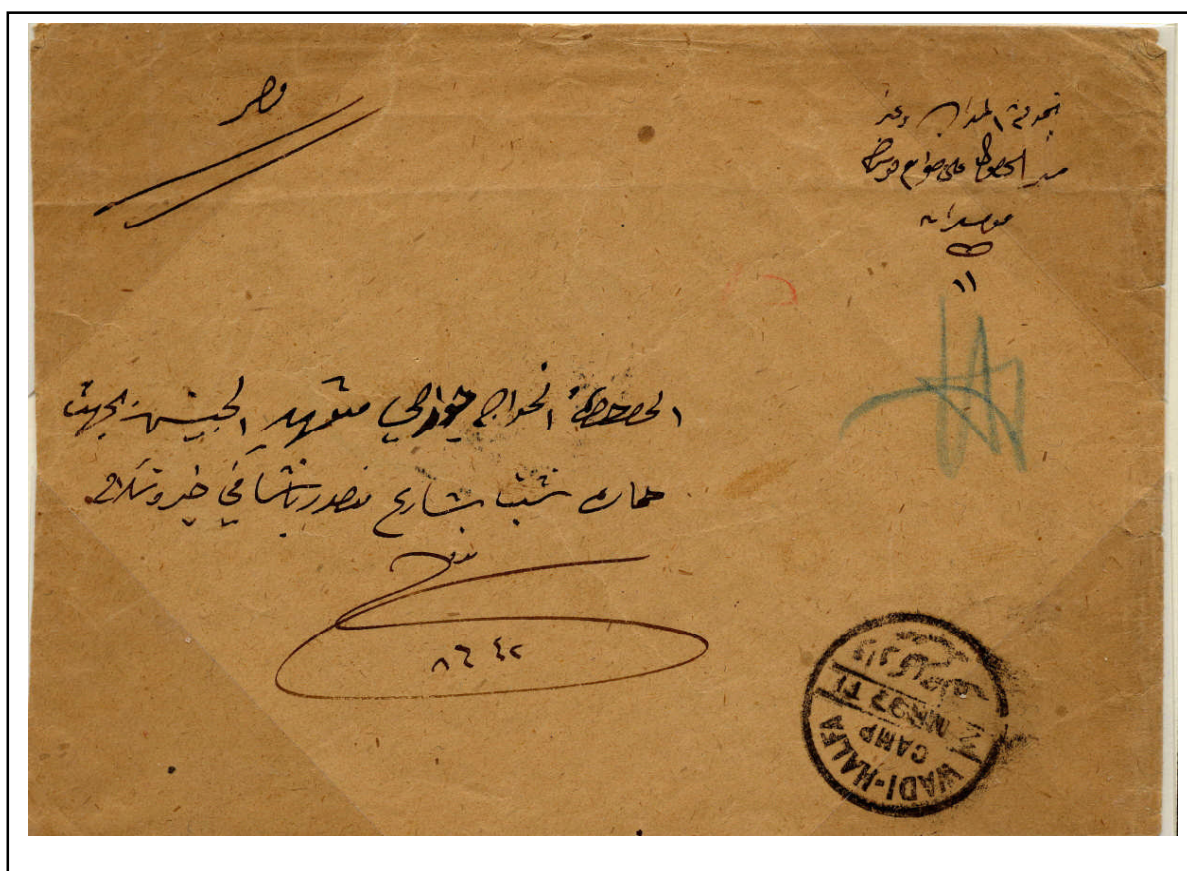
## THE RECONQUEST OF THE SUDAN — 1897 - 1898 NILE EXPEDITION

Construction of a railway between Wadi-Halfa and Abu Hamed began in January 1897. In late July, with the railway half completed, a force set out from Merowe on the Nile for Abu Hamed which fell on August 7<sup>th</sup>. The army continued up the Nile, taking Berber at month's end and soon reaching the confluence of the Nile and Atbara Rivers. On January 1, 1898, additional British reinforcements were requested. Railway construction continued, reaching Fort Atbara in July. The army awaited reinforcements and a rising Nile until mid-August when the move to Khartoum started. The armies reached Omdurman across the river from Khartoum on September 1<sup>st</sup>. At dawn the next day the battle began and by early afternoon the Anglo-Egyptian armies had triumphed and avenged Gordon.

This section includes: • postcard cancelled with the Egyptian Army oval date stamp at Abu Hamed; • a cover from the Nile Expeditionary Force at Berber to the Malakand Field Force in India; • a stampless cover postmarked Halfa 27 IV 98 damaged in a collision on the Nile a few days later; and • a soldier's letter with Travelling Post Office c.d.s. (May 1898).

WADI-HALFA CAMP, SUDAN to CAIRO

2 MR 97



### Egyptian Officer's Unpaid Letter — Endorsed: *Field Service Stamps Unobtainable*<sup>1</sup>

The regular postage rate was five millimes for letters going to Egypt but the rate for enlisted personnel at the front was three millimes. Endorsed in the upper right, the cover is backstamped with the circular date stamp. **CAIRE 9 III 97**. To the left of the c.d.s. are Arabic talismanic numerals ٨ ٦ ٤ ٢ — (8 6 4 2) — signifying that the sender hopes for safe delivery of the letter.

<sup>1</sup> Translation provided by the American Philatelic Society, September 2002.

## THE RECONQUEST OF SUDAN — 1897 NILE EXPEDITION

1 Piastre Officer's Letter

WADI HALFA CAMP to ENGLAND

22 MR 97

One piastre postal stationery envelope cancelled at **WADI-HALFA CAMP 22 MR 97** with backstamp from **CAIRE 26 III 97** and the arrival marking on the front of **MONKTON AP 4 97**. The cover was forwarded to London, thus the c.d.s. on the back of **LONDON AP 5 97**.





## THE RECONQUEST OF SUDAN — 1897 NILE EXPEDITION

### Officer's Letter

WADI HALFA CAMP to ENGLAND

3 AP 97

Registered letter franked with stamps of the first issue of Sudan. These Egyptian stamps overprinted Sudan in Arabic and French (SOUDAN) were issued 1 March 1897. The rate was 1 piastre for the letter and another 1 piastre for registration. The cover is cancelled **WADI-HALFA CAMP 3 AP 97** and there is the Egyptian registration cachet at the lower right and the **REGISTERED CHARING CROSS 16 AP 97** datestamp. Backstamps include **WADI HALFA CAMP 3 AP 97**, **ALEXANDRIE 9 IV 97**, **LONDON S.W. AP 15 97**, and **REGISTERED 7 AP 17 97 S.W.D.O.** The cover was forwarded from the United Services Club to St. Georges Square, SW.



Reverse of cover reduced to 65% of original

Sir Frederick Charles Arthur Stephenson, Colonel of the Coldstream Guards, commanded the Egyptian Frontier Force (Army of Occupation) in 1885-1887.

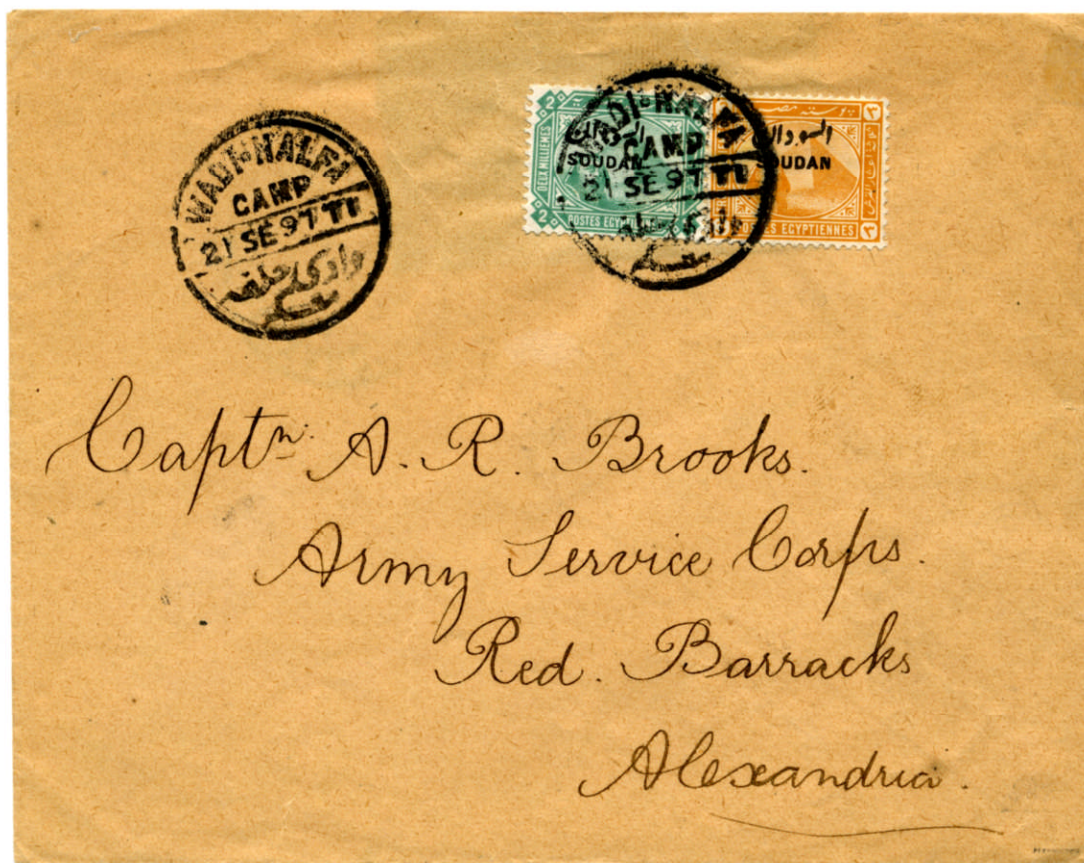
## THE RECONQUEST OF SUDAN — 1897 NILE EXPEDITION

Five Milliemes Internal Letter Rate

HALFA to ALEXANDRIA, EGYPT  
WADI-HALFA CAMP to ALEXANDRIA, EGYPT

22 VII 97  
21 SE 97

These stamps overprinted **SUDAN**, issued March 1, 1897, were used for correspondence posted at the Camp Post Office, Wadi-Halfa, and at places south of Halfa. The top cover is backstamped **ALEXANDRIE A 27 VII 97** and **MILITARY POST OFFICE ALEXANDRIA 27 VII 97**. The bottom cover has similar backstamps of 26 IX 97.



Quartermaster Alfred R. Brooks, Army Service Corps, was Secretary of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. He served in the ranks during the Zulu War 1879 and the Egyptian War 1882 where he was present at the Battle of Tel-el-Kebir. He was promoted to Quartermaster on the Commissariat and Transport Staff on 10 January 1883, to Honorary Captain on 10 January 1893, and to Honorary Major 18 October 1902.



## THE RECONQUEST OF SUDAN — 1897 NILE EXPEDITION

Unpaid Officer's Letter — Endorsed: *Posted at Berber Sudan, No Stamps Available*

HALFA to ALDERSHOT, ENGLAND

18 IX 97

Stampless cover posted at Berber a couple of weeks after its capture and probably prior to the receipt of a datestamp. It was postmarked at the first postal facility at Halfa and then sent to Cairo (backstamp **CAIRE A 24 IX 97**) on its way to England.



Major General Hon. Sir Reginald Arthus James Talbot (1841 – 1929) had both a distinguished political and military career. He sat as an M. P. for Stafford (1869 – 74). He also served in the Zulu War (1879); in the Egyptian War (1882); and in the Nile Expedition (1884 – 85), where he was mentioned in dispatches. Later he was Military Attache in Paris (1889 – 1895); in command of the Cavalry Brigade at Aldershot (1896 – 1899); and commanded the Army of Occupation in Egypt (1899 – 1903). His final tour of duty was as Governor of Victoria, Australia (1904 – 08).



# THE RECONQUEST OF THE SUDAN — 1897 DONGOLA EXPEDITION

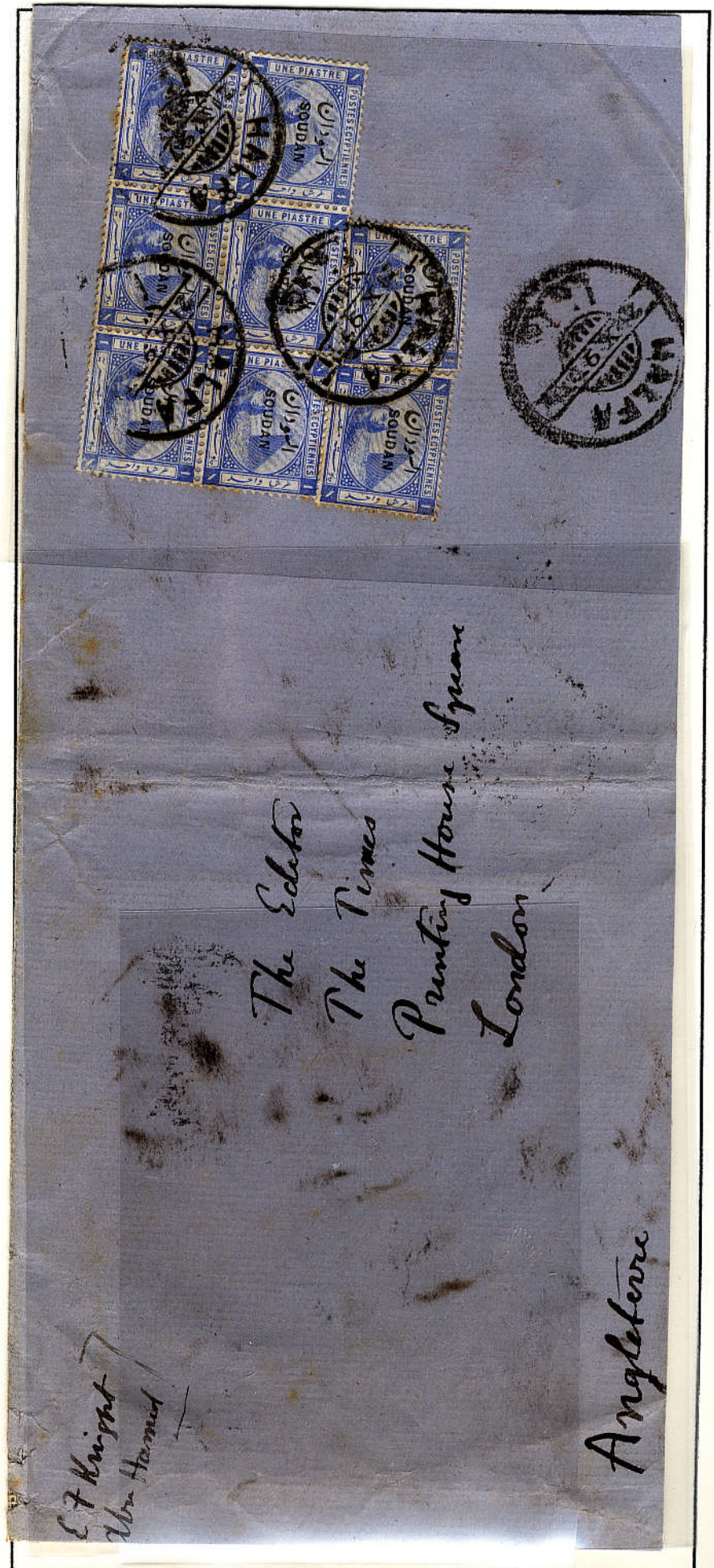
Endorsed:

**E. F. Knight Abu Hamed**

Via HALFA to ENGLAND 21 X 97

The cover probably contained editorial material, thus accounting for the 8 piastre franking; the basic letter rate was 1 piastre. It is backstamped **CAIRE 26 X 97** and **LONDON NO 3 97**.

**EDWARD FREDERICK KNIGHT**, an Englishman, was born in 1852, took a degree at Cambridge, and thereafter pursued a distinguished career in journalism, principally as correspondent in various parts of the world for the *Morning Post* and *The Times*. He was also the author of some 20 books including several on yachting. Described variously as 'a solid, well-balanced man' and 'adventurous in an unassuming way', he was the quintessence of Victorian intrepidity. During the 1870 Franco-Prussian war, he attached himself to a front-line French military unit; 1878 saw him plodding on foot around Albania and Montenegro (20 years later he was back in the Balkans, for the war between Greece and Turkey). Representing the *Morning Post*, he toured the world in company with the Duke and Duchess of Cornwall, and in the spring of 1891 left for the desolate and rebel-infested mountains of Kashmir, on this occasion as correspondent for *The Times*. He covered Kitchener's Soudan Expedition, the Spanish-American war in Cuba, the French expedition against Madagascar, the Anglo-Boer war and the Russo-Japanese conflict of 1904. He was severely wounded in South Africa in an engagement during which he misinterpreted what he took to be a Boer surrender signal and subsequently had his right arm amputated. In 1894 he had visited the new territory of Rhodesia and his assessment of the country, presented in a series of articles written for *The Times*, later appeared in book form under the title of *Rhodesia of Today*. After a lengthy retirement, Knight died in 1925.





## THE RECONQUEST OF SUDAN — 1897 NILE EXPEDITION

### Postcards on Army Business

HALFA to CAIRO, EGYPT

12 XI 97

A pair of five milliemes Egyptian post cards overprinted SOUDAN sent from Halfa to Kaimakam (Lieutenant-Colonel) William Evelyn O'Leary of the Egyptian Army, the Financial Secretary to the Sirdar. The message reads: *Instructions have been carried out.* The inland post card rate was three milliemes but apparently the sender used whatever was at hand.



William O'Leary was commissioned a Second-Lieutenant on 22 January 1881 in the Royal Irish Rifles. He was attached to the Egyptian Army from 13 April 1894 to 3 March 1900. He served in the Dongola Campaign including the engagement at Firket and the operations at Hafir, and the operations of 1897-98. He received the 4<sup>th</sup> Class of the Osmanieh, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Class of the Medjidie, the British Sudan Medal, and the Khedive's Medal with two Clasps.

## THE RECONQUEST OF THE SUDAN — 1897 NILE EXPEDITION

### 1 Piastre Officer's Letter

BERBER, SUDAN to ENGLAND

About 19 XI 97

Egyptian irregular camelmén occupied Berber on August 31, 1897, with Egyptian troops arriving within the week. Shortly afterwards the post office opened. The datestamp canceling this overprinted 1 piastre postal stationery cover is probably the earliest known.<sup>2</sup> Note that it has the name of the town but the date line is blank. The cover is backstamped **HALFA 21 XI 97**, **CAIRE 1 XII 97**, and **PORTSMOUTH 7:45AM DE 9 97**.



The cover is addressed to John Francis Murray-Aynsley who entered the Royal Navy as a Cadet on 15 July 1879, promoted to Midshipman, 22 July 1881, Sub-Lieutenant, 27 October 1885, and Lieutenant, 27 April 1886. He was present on H.M.S. Alexandra at the bombardment of Alexandria, 11 July 1882, and during the Egyptian war (Egyptian Medal with Alexandria Clasp, Khedive's Bronze Star). He received command of the *Kite*, a twin-screw gun-boat, 3<sup>rd</sup> class. Its home port was Portsmouth and was a tender to H.M.S. Excellent, a gunnery training ship.

<sup>2</sup> Stagg, E. C. W., *Sudan, The Postal Markings 1867-1970*, The Royal Philatelic Society, London, 1974, page 24.



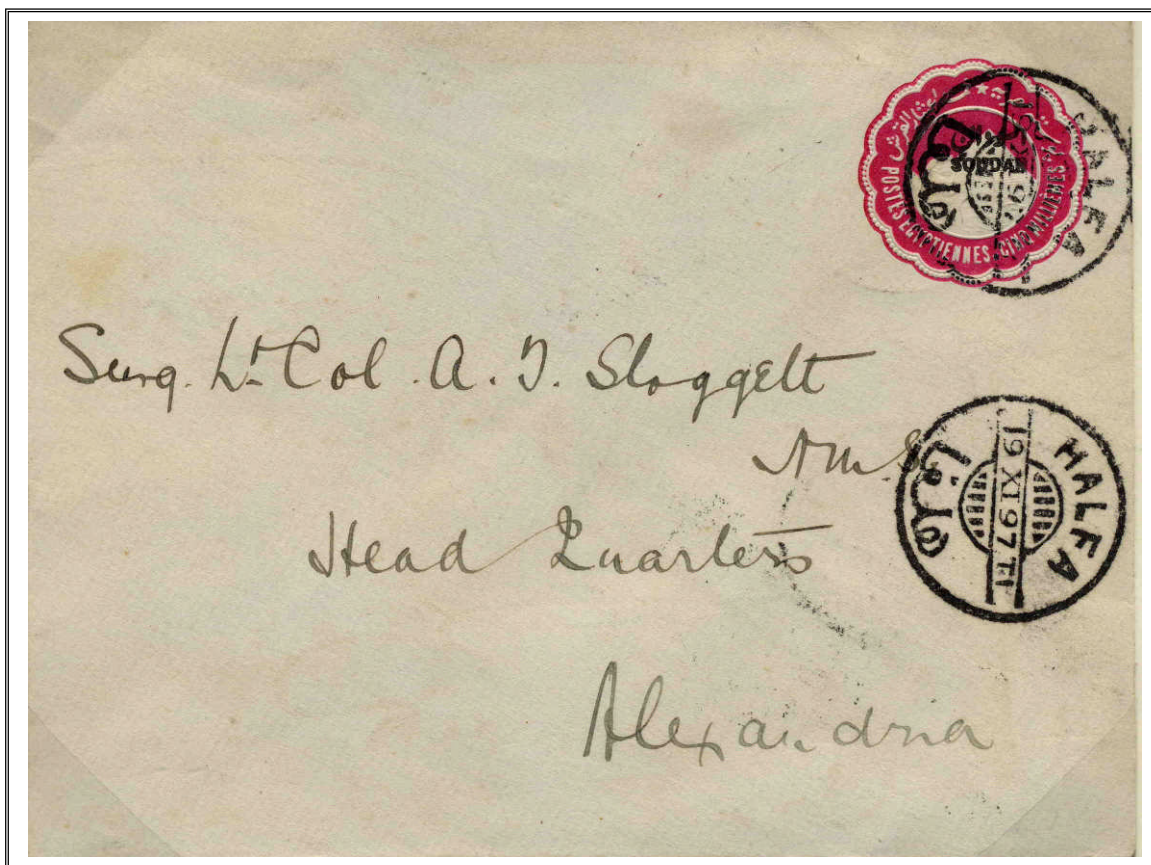
# THE RECONQUEST OF SUDAN — 1897 NILE EXPEDITION

## Five Milliemes Internal Letter

HALFA to ALEXANDRIA, EGYPT

19 XI 97

Five milliemes postal stationery envelope issued March 1, 1897 overprinted **SOUDAN** paying the letter rate within Egypt and the Sudan. The stamp is cancelled with the **HALFA** c.d.s. which was used at Wadi-Halfa from 1897 to 1899. The cover is backstamped **ALEXANDRIE A 26 XI 97** and **MILITARY POST OFFICE ALEXANDRIA 26 XI 97**. This is a fairly early date for the named barrel-type military c.d.s.<sup>3</sup>



<sup>3</sup> The earliest recorded date is 22 July 1897 according to "The Named Military Datestamps Used in Egypt, 1895-1920," J.A. Firebrace and F. W Benians, *The Quarterly Circular*, Vol. XI, No. 3, September 1981, pages 57-65.

# THE RECONQUEST OF SUDAN — 1897 NILE EXPEDITION

## Five Milliemes Post Card

ABU HAMED to ENGLAND

1 DEC 97

Five milliemes post card overprinted **SUDAN** paying the rate between Sudan and England. The card is cancelled with the large double oval **WAR DEPARTMENT EGYPTIAN ARMY ABU HAMED DEC 1 1897**, an unusual use. It also has the transit and arrival markings of **HALFA 2 XII 97**, **CAIRE 10 XII 97**, and **KINGSTON ON THAMES DE 17 97**. On November 1, 1897, the railroad reached Abu Hamed, some three months after its capture.



The message on the back of the card reads:

Abu Hamed  
Dec 1<sup>st</sup>/97

*We arrived Sudan this week. Many thanks. Am expecting to start off to Berber any day now. You needn't alter address on letters until you hear that I am there; they will be forwarded all right. Its time almost I wished you a Merry Christmas – so I do in case a letter doesn't reach you before then, same to you all at no 2.*

*Yrs, H. E. Hill-Smith*

Henry Ernest Hill-Smith of the Royal Army Medical Corps was commissioned on 27 July 1887 and served with the Egyptian Army from 1896 to his death in 1901. He participated in the Dongola campaign in 1896, the Nile River Campaign of 1897-98, and at Fashoda in 1898. He received the Order of the Mejidie, among others, and was thrice mentioned in dispatches.



## THE RECONQUEST OF THE SUDAN — 1898 NILE EXPEDITION

Five Milliemes Inland Letter Rate for Officers and Civilians

BERBER, SUDAN to CAIRO, EGYPT

3 JA 98

The second type of date stamp used at Berber was similar to the preceding except that this one now has the date line in the upper half while the lower part is blank. Stagg writes that examples of this c.d.s. are known between January and September 1898 while Proud states use from 12 December 1897 to 16 June 1898.<sup>4</sup> In any case this January 3<sup>rd</sup> cover is an early use. The cover is backstamped **WADI-HALFA 10 JA 98** and **CIARE 18 / 98**.



Berber was a garrison town with few civilians except for camp followers and those involved with supplying the troops. The cover, perhaps from a civilian, is addressed:

**MASR [CAIRO] Sami Street**

*The late Hassan Bak Hosni's house*

My respectable brother Ali Alwee located in the house mentioned above

*In peace and harmony*

8642<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Proud, Edward B., *The Postal History of Sudan*, Proud-Bailey Co. Ltd., Heathfield, England, 2006, page 144.

<sup>5</sup> Translated by American Philatelic Society's translation service, August 2002.

## THE RECONQUEST OF THE SUDAN—1898 NILE EXPEDITION

### Officer's Letter Mailed En Route to Egypt

BRINDISI, ITALY to ENGLAND

3 | 98

The letter enclosed in this cover was written by Major Arthur E. Sandbach on January 2, 1898 while on board the P & O Express approaching Brindisi, where it was mailed and postmarked the next day. It is backstamped **OSWESTRY 2.PM JA 6 98**. Addressed to Sandbach's mother, it contained mostly general chit chat as "...At present we are quite in the dark as to what we are going to do: we shall know more in Cairo."



Just after finishing the Staff College course in mid-December 1897, Sandbach was ordered to Egypt. He left England on December 31 and spent the next eleven months in various positions including Commandant of Wadi Halfa. He also served at the front, being present at the battle of Omdurman. Sandbach was mentioned in dispatches and was awarded a lieutenant-colonelcy on 16 November 1898.



## THE RECONQUEST OF THE SUDAN — 1898 NILE EXPEDITION

BRINDISI, ITALY to ENGLAND

3198

The enclosed letter was written by Major Arthur Edmund Sandbach to his mother.

P & O Express  
Approaching Brindisi

Sunday 2 Jan. 1898

My dear Mother:

*It was a bit of a hustle in London but so far all has gone well. Henry is with me and my other travelling companions for Egyptian Army are Major Talbot, RE, W. Lambton, Coldstream Gds, A. Blair (just p. S.C.) Pechell, 60<sup>th</sup> Rifles, whom I knew at Rawalpindi, and Maj. Endie, Rifle Brigade: all nice fellows.*

*At present we are quite in the dark, as to what we are going to do: we shall know more in Cairo.*

*I lunched on Friday with the Dowager in St. James Square. She said she admired your bravery and enquired after all at Bryn Gwyn,*

*Colonel George Gough came to Victoria Station to see us off and asked me to write to him from time to time, as to what was going on.*

*I had time to call on Mrs. Russell Rodd,. She is mother to the first secretary of our legation in Cairo, and on the ?? I saw Jack Maddocks afterwards at the club. He is, I think, very sorry not to be coming out to the Egyptian Army but had not quite decided to stick to Uganda for another two years. Then I hope for his sake that he will go to Staff College. It is the way to get on in these days.*

*As Wolesley says, "Unless one has given up some time to the lady of his affection, he is useless in the bigger ... of the Army: however brilliant his career in the junior forces [?] may have been."*

*Tell Mary I have the Egyptian essay with me. I had no opportunity of speaking about John in London. By his own account, he should have no difficulty in finding peace.*

*It is quite warm, now we are on the south side of the Alps and the sun and blue sky are charming.*

*I have just written a line to Sam O'Kelly [?] but the ?????*

*I hope that Margery will enjoy the Newton Wuxham Balls: Thank her for telegram from Newton. [next few lines are unclear]*

*Affectionately yours,*

*Arthur E. Sandbach*

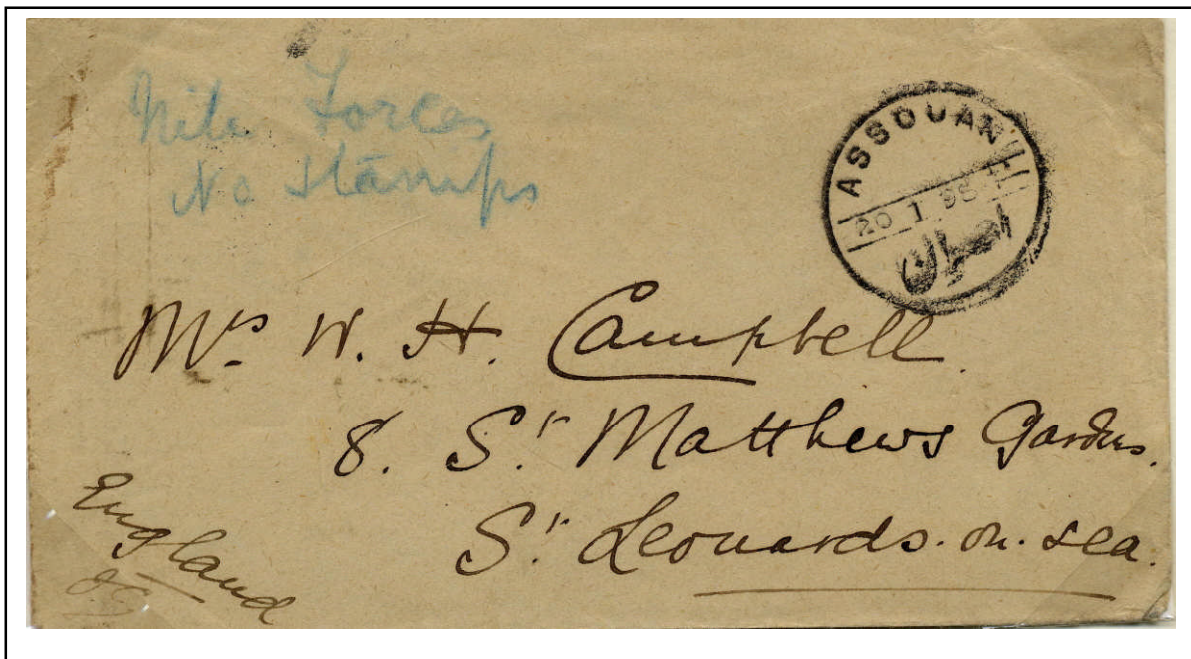
## THE RECONQUEST OF THE SUDAN — 1898 NILE EXPEDITION

Officer's Unpaid Letter — Endorsed in blue crayon: *Nile Forces No Stamps*

ASSOUAN, EGYPT to ENGLAND

20 | 98

This cover, posted at Assouan, doesn't have the usual T marking or any indication of the amount of postage due (2½ d). It is backstamped **ALEXANDRIA 25 | 98** and **ST. LEONARDS ON SEA 4:45 PM FE 1 98**.



In January 1898 additional British troops from Cairo and Malta were sent into Sudan to form the British Brigade. The soldiers utilized the Egyptian post offices along the way.



## THE RECONQUEST OF THE SUDAN — 1898 NILE EXPEDITION

1 Piastre Officer's Letter

MEROWI to ENGLAND

28 | 98

This cover shows a fairly early use of the MEROWI c.d.s. The earliest recorded date is 8 January 1898. Merowi was captured on 29 July 1897. The cover is backstamped **HALFA 5 II 98**, **CAIRE** (date unclear), and **OSWESTRY FE 23 98**.



The enclosed letter to his mother from Sandbach is four pages and describes many topics including the administrative set-up of Sudan, British officers in the area, etc., etc., and etc.



xTHE RECONQUEST OF THE SUDAN — 1898 NILE EXPEDITION

MEROWI to ENGLAND

Letter to Sandbach's mother

27 Jan 98

Merawi.

Thursday 27/Jan/98.

My dear Mother.

The mail is just in, and brings me your letter of 5/Jan. Many thanks for enclosures.

- (1) Keep Camberley Stabling receipts.
- (2) If Watson says bill for repairs to dog cart is right, ask Mary to pay, & charge against me.
- (3) Keep all Masonic notices, unless you think they require an answer. Some may come from Masonic Boys Institution for which I am Steward at Festival in July '98. Please send on these to Captain E. S. Heard. Staff College. Camberley. Who has promised to act for me.

(4) Bill Leachman. please keep. I don't think I owe him anything. The Chatham letter was from Hunter. Weston R.R. who has just gone to Staff College, but of course now wants to come out here!!

The morning Post cutting, I gather, is from Jack. I don't quite understand about the 'draft of exchange', unless it is money from Jamaica. Perhaps Aunt Kate will now have the drafts sent over again in her own name. Henry Sandbach was a most useful companion on the journey and in Cairo. He gave me in Cairo anything of his wardrobe that I wanted, including a most useful warm camel hair coat. Now I expect he and his sisters are at Assuan, if they have carried out their programmes. See you say Henry Bentinck and Alma are in Egypt too. I hope the Dowager duchess wrote to you: she promised me she would, because I lunched there the day I left London. The luggage cart is my present to Aunt Kate, and I hope she will like it. I feel sure it is a good purchase: whenever Mary can find another animal for her to ride, and to go when required in the luggage cart, I will make her a present of it. Jack must get one for her someday. I fear that I cannot agree with Mr Thomas at all in his view of his Bishop, but it is idle for me to comment at this distance. Let us hope and trust that the sore will be healed by time and tolerance on both sides. The difference between income tax of £130s and of £700 from Foreign Possessions



## THE RECONQUEST OF THE SUDAN — 1898 NILE EXPEDITION

MEROWI to ENGLAND

27 Jan 98

The enclosed letter was written by Major Arthur Edmund Sandbach to his mother.

Merowi  
Thursday 27 Jan/98

My dear Mother.

*The mail is just in, and brings me your letter of 5 Jan. Many thanks for enclosures.*

- (1) *keep Camberly Staffing receipts.*
- (2) *If Watson ... bill for repair to dog cart ....ask ... to pay & charge against me.*
- (3) *Keep all Masonic notices unless you think they require an answer. Some may come from Masonic Boys Institution for which I am steward at festival in July '98. Please send on these to Captain E. S. Heard, Staff College, Camberly. He has promised to act for me.*
- (4) *Bill Duchass. Please keep. I don't think I owe him anything.*

*The Chatham letter was from Hunter Weston R.E. who has just gone to Staff College but of course now wants to come out here!!*

*The Morning Post cutting I gather is from Jack.*

*I don't quite understand about the "Draft of Exchange" unless it is money from Jamaica. Perhaps Aunt Kate will have the Drafts sent to me again in her own name. Henry Sandbach was a most useful companion on the journey and in Cairo. He gave me in Cairo anything of his ward to be that I wanted, including a useful warm camel hair coat. Now I expect he and his sister are at Assuan, if they have carried out their programmes. I hear you say Henry Bentinik and Alicia are in Egypt too. I hope the Dowager Lady Wy?? Wrote to you: she promised me she would because I lunched there the day I left London. The luggage cart is my present to Aunt Kate and I hope she will like it. I felt sure it is a good purchase. Whenever Margy can find an animal for her to ride, and to go when required in the luggage cart, I will make her a present of it.. Jack must get one for her someday. I felt that I cannot agree with Mr. Thomas at all in his view of his Bishop, but it is idle for me to comment at this distance. Let us hope and trust that the sore will be healed by time and tolerance on both sides. The difference between income tax on £1300 and on £700 from Foreign Possessions will no doubt be refunded in due course. I sent Busha instructions about it from London.*

*Now about my life here.*

*Well Garsia A.S.C. and I arrived last Friday just a week and I took over my duties as D.A.A.G. Dongola District with Headquarters here at Merowi from a Major Tudway.*

*He is a Bd Major and commands the Camel Corps & started next day with 200 men on patrol to Gjakdul Wells in the Bayuda Desert, where we have a post held by the friendlies, Maj General Rundle is a particularly nice man. He was in the same batch as Martin at Woolwich. He is really Adjutant General of the Egyptian Army, and is only temporarily commanding this District.*

*Whenever an advance takes place from Berber, he will at once rejoin the Sirdar, and will, I hope, take me off with him to the Sirdar's staff.*

*The Sudan is now divided for purposes of Government into 3 Districts. (1) Berber under Maj Genl Hunter, (2) Dongola under Maj Genl Rundle, and (3) Nubia with Headquarters Halfa under Jack Maxwell.*

*The Military Commander is also for the present head of the Civil Government so that a great deal of work passes through his hands. I am only his Military Staff Officer. Major Talbot (Hon ...) R.E. arrives here in 2 days' time as Intelligence Officer & will also be Staff Officer for the Civil side. At the present I am living with the Regiment in mess here, but when Talbot arrives, probably the General Talbot and I will mess together. My two horses arrive here from Cairo with Talbot, and also all my baggage sent by the SS China arrived by sea, which reached Cairo a week after me.*

*At first I was in a tent but have since moved into a room in the General's house which is far more comfortable, as the sand storms are something terrible. The General himself lives on a launch which is kept here for his use. There are not many British officers here in this place. Birnburg (?) and Boton with 14<sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalion. Stewart R.A. with a battery of artillery. Tudway, Hopkinson and Green-Wilkinson with the Camel Corps, Fraga a major in the A.S.C. and a Surgeon Captain Whiston make up the lot.*

*Green-Wilkinson I knew in the Rifle Brigade in Burmah. Stewart was in Silsit (?) from '93 to '95 after me & was at the relief of Chitral with Kelly's Chura (?) from Silsit(?). We have many friends in common including AC Durand and Robertson.*

*Today has been my first heavy day's work as there are reports of an included Dervish raid on our Arab posts and some of the Camel Corps are to march down to Korti tomorrow and the gunboat there is to patrol the river with British troops on board, all orders for which pass through my hands.. The General talks of going himself down to Korti soon, and I shall go with him probably.*

*As to the immediate future of the campaign, I know nothing; but no advance from Berber is possible till the railway is through from Abu Hamed, and that will not be till April at any rate. I have a letter from Douglas Haig 7<sup>th</sup> Hussars, who shared my stables at the Staff College, by this mail. He wants to come out here, and I heard at Halfa that the Sirdar had asked for him, so he will not be long on the way!!*

*I don't know why the war office sh? Second me as a Captain, because they know of my promotion, but War Office methods are slow. There is plenty of game here and I wish I had a gun with me instead of its being on its way to Cairo,*

*I had a new stock put to Martin's Paradox gun by Holland. They were to send it out to me here with my Henry Express rifle, They get quail, goose, teal, gazelle, histaro, moufflon, all in the neighbourhood of 10 miles.*

*I have asked for a good many things in my previous letters & cannot think of anything more just at present. I see by Reuters Telegrams there has been a riot in Algiers but I trust Sam & Kitty have not been affected by it. Send my news on to them, please.*

*If all goes well I shall be home for a time at Xmas. I am longing to hear where solitude is. Mary must give me full details of how the stable goes on. Has Aunt Kate gone over the Cook troubles yet? I hope Aunt Ina has a good journey home when she went back to India and is not so troubled with sleepless nights. What have you done now with the glass table of mementoes? It is very interesting watching the course of events out here as they develop and comparing them with my conclusions in the Staff College paper.*

*It is getting late, I must to bed now. So with best love toall, goodbye for the present. Mind you send on Sophy my news.*

*Your aff son,  
Arthus Sandbach*



## THE RECONQUEST OF THE SUDAN — 1898 NILE EXPEDITION

### 1 Piastre Officer's Letter Envelope

BERBER to SOUTHSEA, ENGLAND

1 FE 98

This is the second type of datestamp used at Berber with the date across the center and a blank bottom half. The cover is backstamped **HALFA 8 II 98**, **CAIRE ? II 98**, and **PORTSMOUTH FE 23 98**.

The letter, written at Atbara Camp on January. 25<sup>th</sup>, 1898, by William Spottiswoode Sparkes, commanding officer of the 4<sup>th</sup> Egyptian Battalion, tells of his 244-mile march across the desert from Suakin in 15 days with 3 days of rest. This desert trek was the first for Europeans since the fall of Sudan.



William Spottiswoode Sparkes (1862-1906) was commissioned a lieutenant in The Welsh Regiment on 12 October 1881; captain, 5 November 1888; major, 18 November 1896; lieutenant colonel, 16 November 1898, and colonel 29 November 1900. He served in the Egyptian Army from 2 March 1894 until his death on active service 4 July 1906. His final Egyptian Army rank was Lewa (major general, Pasha).

He served with the Dongola Expeditionary Force in 1896 in command of the 4<sup>th</sup> Egyptian Battalion including the engagement at Firket and the operations at Hafir (mentioned in dispatches, Brevet of Major, Khedive's Medal with 2 Clasps). Sparkes served in the Nile Expedition in 1897 (Clasp to Khedive's Medal); and in 1898 including the battles of Atbara and Khartoum (twice mentioned in dispatches, Brevet of Lieutenant Colonel, 4<sup>th</sup> Class Osmaniah, British Medal, and two Clasps to the Khedive's Medal.)

## THE RECONQUEST OF THE SUDAN — 1898 NILE EXPEDITION

BERBER to SOUTHSEA, ENGLAND

1 FE 98

Letter from by William Spottiswoode Sparkes, commanding officer of the 4<sup>th</sup> Egyptian Battalion to a Miss Davidson.

Atbara Camp  
Soudan  
Jany. 25th, 1898

*My dear Miss Davidson*

*So many thanks for your kind thoughts of candies and that pretty Xmas card. It is very pleasant for an unfortunate exile to find he is not forgotten by old friends.*

*I brought my Battalion across the Desert from Suakin to Berber just after Xmas and we made a very good march, doing the whole distance, 244 miles, in 15 days out of which we rested 3, so actual marching was only 12 days, an average of just over 20 miles a day. We only stayed 3 days in Berber and then we came on here which is the most advanced post we have. It is at the junction of the River Atbara with the Nile. There is an entrenched army and altogether some 3,000 men & 4 gunboats. We are constantly patrolling and have already had one brush with the Dervishes of which we got considerably the best. I don't quite know what is going to happen, but with the British coming up we all hope for an advance within a month, but its doubtful I fear. There isn't much chance of leave for any of us until we get Khartoum. So you may guess we are all pretty anxious to be there. I do hope you and all your family are well. My best to you all. I was so sorry not to have seen any one when home last May but my time was so short I went nowhere.*

*Ever yours sincerely,  
W. S. Soarkes*



Extract from Nile Field Force Orders.



x x x x x x x  
4. "The following appointments have been made on H.Q. the Dirdar's Staff.

Captain Ois H.S. Rawlinson, Bvt. Coldstream Guards, to be D.A.G. for "A" duties.

Captain G.E. Bernard, A.S.B., to be D.A.G. for "B" duties.

x x x x x  
By order  
H. Rawlinson Capt. D.A.G.  
Khalfa  
24.1.98 }

Extract from General Orders

167 Nile Expedition, 1898.

x x x x  
(ii) In reference to G.O. 74, (ii) of 1898, Pending approval of the Secretary of State for War, Capt. Ois H.S. Rawlinson Bt. Coldstream Gds. & Capt. G.E. Bernard A.S.B. are appointed D.A.G. on the staff of the Dirdar E.A.

True Copy  
G.E. Bernard

# THE RECONQUEST OF SUDAN — 1898 NILE EXPEDITION

## Transcript

### *Extract from Nile Field Force Orders*

- A. *The following appointments have been made on H. E. the Sirdar's Staff.*  
*Captain Sir H. S. Rawlinson, Bart= Coldstream Guards, to be DAAG for "A" duties.*

*Captain E. E. Bernard, A.S.C., to be DAAG for "B" duties.*

*By order*  
*H. Rawlinson Capt.*  
*D.A.A.G.*

*Halfa*  
*Fe 1. 98*

---

### *Extract from General Orders*

---

#### *167. Nile Expedition, 1898*

*(ii) In reference to GO 75, (ii) of 1898, pending approval of the Secretary of State for War, Capt. Sir H. S. Rawlinson Bt., Coldstream Guards & Capt. E. E. Bernard ASSC are appointed DAAG on the staff of the Sirdar, E.A.*

*By order*  
*H. Cooper, Col. AAG*

*Hd Qu Cairo*  
*5.2.98*

*True Copy*  
*E.E. Bernard*  
*Capt.*  
*DAAG*

Sir Henry S. Rawlinson, Bart., served in the Burmese Expedition 1886-87, the Donghola Expedition 1898, and the South African War 1899-1901.

Edward Edgar Bernard was commissioned in the Devonshire Regiment and later the Army Service Corps. He served in the Ashanti Expedition in 1895-96. He joined the Egyptian Army 22 January 1898 and served until about 1923. He was financial Secretary to the Sudan Government from 1905-23.

Col. Harry Cooper was appointed Assistant Adjutant General, Egypt on 3 April 1896. He had seen service in the Ashanti War in 1874, Boer War in 1881, Burmese Expedition 1886, Dongola Expeditionary Force 1896-98, and South African War 1899-1901.



## THE RECONQUEST OF THE SUDAN — 1898 NILE EXPEDITION

### Incoming Letter from England to Wadi Halfa

This cover posted at **KNUTSFORD MR 9 98** to **Wady Halfa** [sic] which is in Sudan, not Egypt. It is backstamped **ALEXANDRIE 15 III 98 V** and **HALFA 21 III 98 TI**.



At this time Major Sandbach was Assistant Adjutant General (A.A.G.) to General Rundle who was in command of the Line of Communications from Assouan to Berber, and Commandant of Halfa Camp. He was responsible for the build-up of stores, ammunition and other military supplies for the advance to Khartoum.



Backstamps on reverse of cover

## THE RECONQUEST OF THE SUDAN—1898 NILE EXPEDITION

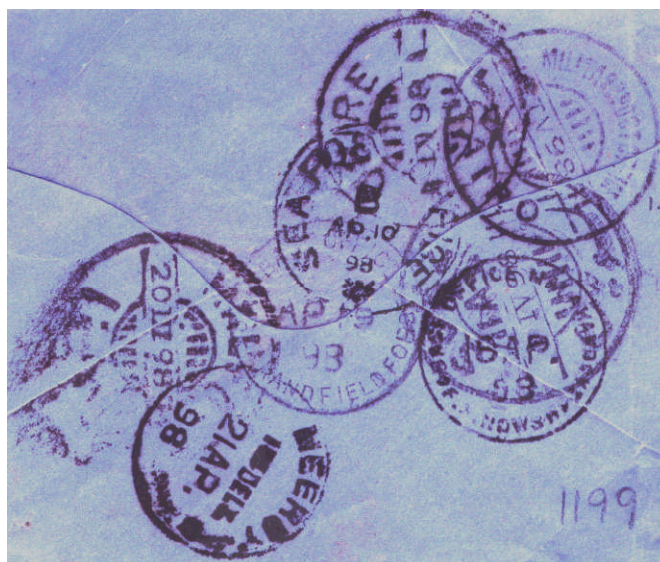
Officer's Official Paid Cover — *ON HER MAJESTY'S SERVICE*

BERBER, SUDAN to MEERUT, INDIA

12 (?) III 98

This stampless, official cover is from one expeditionary force to another. Sent by Major-General William Forbes Gatacre (endorsement at lower left corner) at Berber about March 12, 1898, it went to Veterinary Captain Henry Thomas William Mann of the Malakand Field Force in Punjab, India, and then forwarded to Meerut. It is backstamped **HALFA 20 MR 98, CAIRO 1 AP 98, MILITARY POST OFFICE CAIRO 1 AP 98, SUEZ 1 AP 98, SEA POST OFFICE 10 AP 98, BASE OFFICE MALAKAND FIELD FORCE, NOWSHERA 16 AP 98, BASE OFFICE MALAKAND FIELD FORCE 19 AP 98** and **MEERUT 21 AP 98**.

Major-General Gatacre commanded the British Brigade at the Battle of the Atbara and the British Division at the Battle of Omdurman. Captain Mann was commissioned 26 May 1880 and promoted to Captain 26 May 1890. He was in the Egyptian War of 1882 and was present at the battle of Tel el Kebir.



Reverse of Cover



## THE RECONQUEST OF THE SUDAN — 1898 NILE EXPEDITION

### Incoming Letter from England to Halfa

CHAMBERLY, ENGLAND to CAIRO

MR 26 98

Incoming letter to Major Sandbach to Cairo, readdressed and forwarded to Halfa where he was Commandant of Halfa Camp. It is backstamped **ALEXANDRIE A 3 IV 98**, **MILITARY POST OFFICE ALEXANDRIA 3 IV 98**, **CAIRE 3 IV 98** and **HALFA 11 IV 98**.



A letter of Sandbach's in a cover dated 11 March 1898 mentions mail service. It says, in part:

*There are 3 mails to and from Egypt by all of which letters seem to come, an English mail, a French mail and an Italian mail: as far as Halfa there are two regular mails per week: but on to here [Merowi] we have only one. It comes in on Thursdays and goes out on Fridays.*<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> *The Camel Post*, No. 50, 1994, "The Sandbach Correspondence [Part 2], Richard Stock and Norton Collier, p 8.

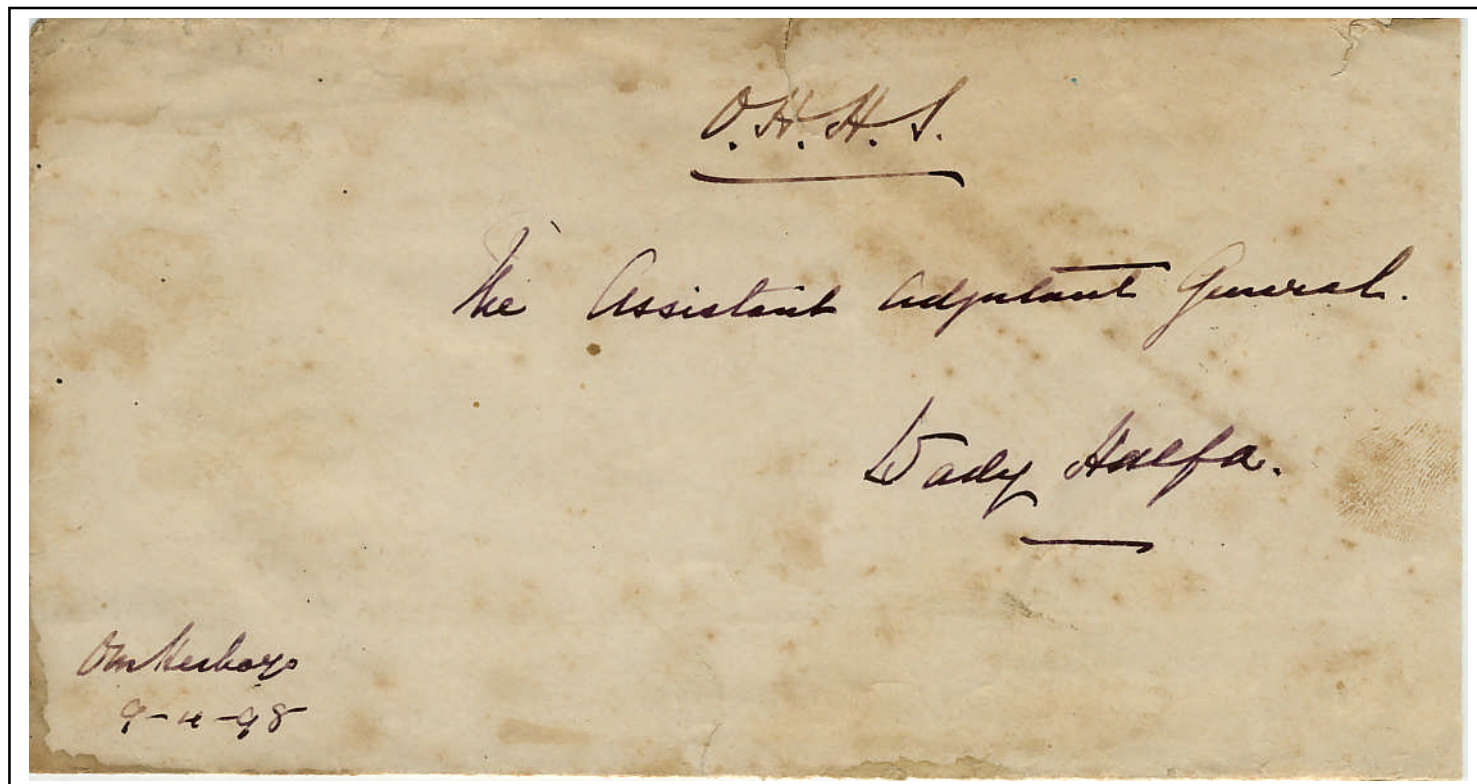
# THE RECONQUEST OF SUDAN — 1898 NILE EXPEDITION

Stampless O.H.H.S. Cover

OMHESBAYO to WADY HALFA

9 4 98

This official cover to The Assistant Adjutant General (Major A. E. Sandbach) at Wady Halfa is backstamped **HALFA 17 AV 98**. Enclosed in the cover was a report on water transportation and a letter from Captain Fitzroy Edmund Penn Corzon.



List of Water Transport between Omhesbayo & Bahr el Jebel. 8.4.98						
Description	No. of Boat	Ardebage.	Description	No. of Boat	Ardebage.	Remarks.
Gyassa	153	224	Muggar	248	60	
"	139	145	"	8	60	
Muggar	245	300	"	211	60	
"	200	200	"	19	50	
"	223	200	"	242	50	
"	106	200	"	1	50	

Curzon served with the Egyptian Army from 15 January 1898 to 2 October 1898. He was killed in France on 9 September 1916 while commanding the 6<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Royal Irish Regiment.



THE RECONQUEST OF SUDAN — 1898 NILE EXPEDITION

Letter from Captain Fitzroy Edmund Penn Curzon to Major A. E. Sandbach

Onkeshore.  
9.4.98

Dear Sandbach,

I enclose herewith a list of the Duggars & their numbers now working regularly between Harkham & this place. I asked Hobbs to send a list to the General as I thought he would like to have it by him.

I think I told you in my last that the Sakra is not in a good state of repair, & with her old engine is only fit to carry officers & details with their baggage & between these two stations. She is said to be able to do a little towing but so far I have not seen her so employed. One of her scumtricks is broken & another is fractured but we are replacing

## THE RECONQUEST OF SUDAN — 1898 NILE EXPEDITION

### Letter from Captain Fitzroy Edmund Penn Curzon to Major A. E. Sandbach

Omhesbayo  
9 • 4 • 98

Dear Sandbach,

*I enclose herewith a list of the nuggers & their numbers now working regularly between Bashtinab & this place. I asked Hobbs to send a list to the General as I thought he would like to have it by him.*

*I think I told you in my last that the Fahra is not in a good state of repair & with her old engine is only fit to carry officers & details with their baggage in between these two stations. She is said to be able to do a little towing but so far I have not see her so utilized. One of her ... is broken & another is fractured but we are replacing the broken one from Berber.*

*The number of camels working each day varies considerably owing to the supplies of water carried from the river near ... to railhead. But you will observe from my report enclosed that an average of nearly 50 tons per day, of Egyptian supplies alone, are sent through.*

*As to British supplies a deal of extra labour is thrown on the two Ordnance representatives here by reason of the constant repairs required for the wooden boxes in which they are for the most part packed. ... Robertson has reported to me that these repairs amount to over 50 per cent of the number of packages sent through. Unless these repairs are carefully executed it follows that the rails are liable to be driven into the ties inside. In fact we have seen several cases of this during the last month.*

Yours sincerely,  
Fitzroy Curzon

P.S. *What a splendid fight it must have been yesterday. I suppose it will send the entire show – for the present at all events. One thing strikes me as very remarkable, and that is that in spite of their reported famished condition, the dervishes appear to have fought as well as ever!*

*When do you expect the railway to reach Abadiyah?*

*It is very hot here & we have continuous dust storms. I have shot a lot of sand grouse & some bustard geese etc..*

---

**Fitzroy Edmund Penn Curzon**, born 23 March 1859 at Gopsall Hall, Atherstone, England, received his commission in The Lancashire Fusiliers on 8 December 1877. He later transferred to The Cameronians (Scottish Rifles), becoming a First Lieutenant on 1 July 1881, and adjutant 20 November 1882. He transferred again, this time to The Royal Irish Rifles, and received his promotion to Captain 14 November 1888. He became adjutant on 1 January 1892. He joined the Egyptian Army from 15 January to 2 October 1898 obtaining the rank of Bimbashi. He served in the South African War 1899-1901 as a Special Service Officer. He was promoted to Major on 18 October 1902 and retired. When the Great War broke out Curzon became a Lieutenant Colonel and commanding officer of the 6<sup>th</sup> Battalion of the Royal Irish Regiment, which he raised and trained. He died in France on 9 September 1916 at age 57 and is buried the British Military Cemetery at Carnoy, France. He was mentioned for a D.S.O in Sir Douglas Haig's Despatch of 13 November 1916.



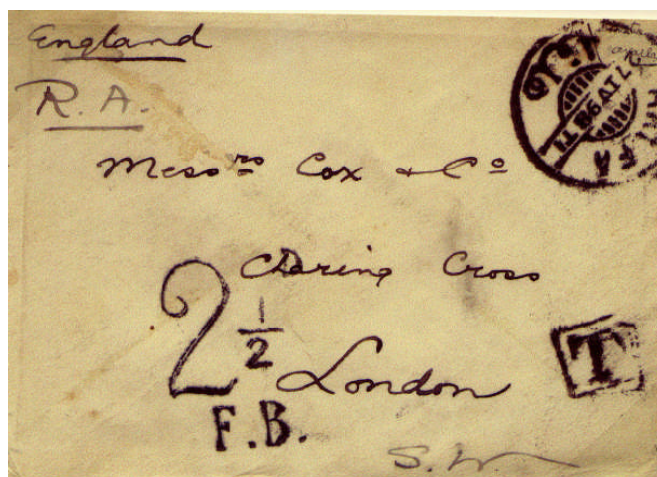
## THE RECONQUEST OF SUDAN — 1898 NILE EXPEDITION

Unpaid Officer's Letter — Endorsed: *No Stamps Available*

HALFA, SUDAN to LONDON

27 IV 98

In early May an accident occurred on the Nile (probably at the first cataract although the exact nature of it is unknown) causing some mail to get wet. Sixteen covers have been recorded bearing the ***Wet through collision on the Nile*** straight-line handstamp on the back.<sup>7</sup>



Front reduced

<sup>7</sup> *The Camel Post*, No. 64 (Autumn 2001), pp. 9-11. For additional information see Firebrace, pp. 174 and 180, and A. E. Hopkins, *A History of Wreck Covers*, Third edition, Robson Lowe Ltd., London, p. 48.

## THE RECONQUEST OF THE SUDAN — 1898 NILE EXPEDITION

Incoming Cover from England

WINCHESTER, ENGLAND to CAIRO

MY 10 98

Incoming letter to Major A. E. Sandbach in Cairo, endorsed "**Please Forward**" and sent on to **E. A.** [Egyptian Army]. It is backstamped, **MILITARY POST OFFICE CAIRO ? V 98** and **HALFA** with an unclear date. .





# THE RECONQUEST OF SUDAN — 1898 NILE EXPEDITION

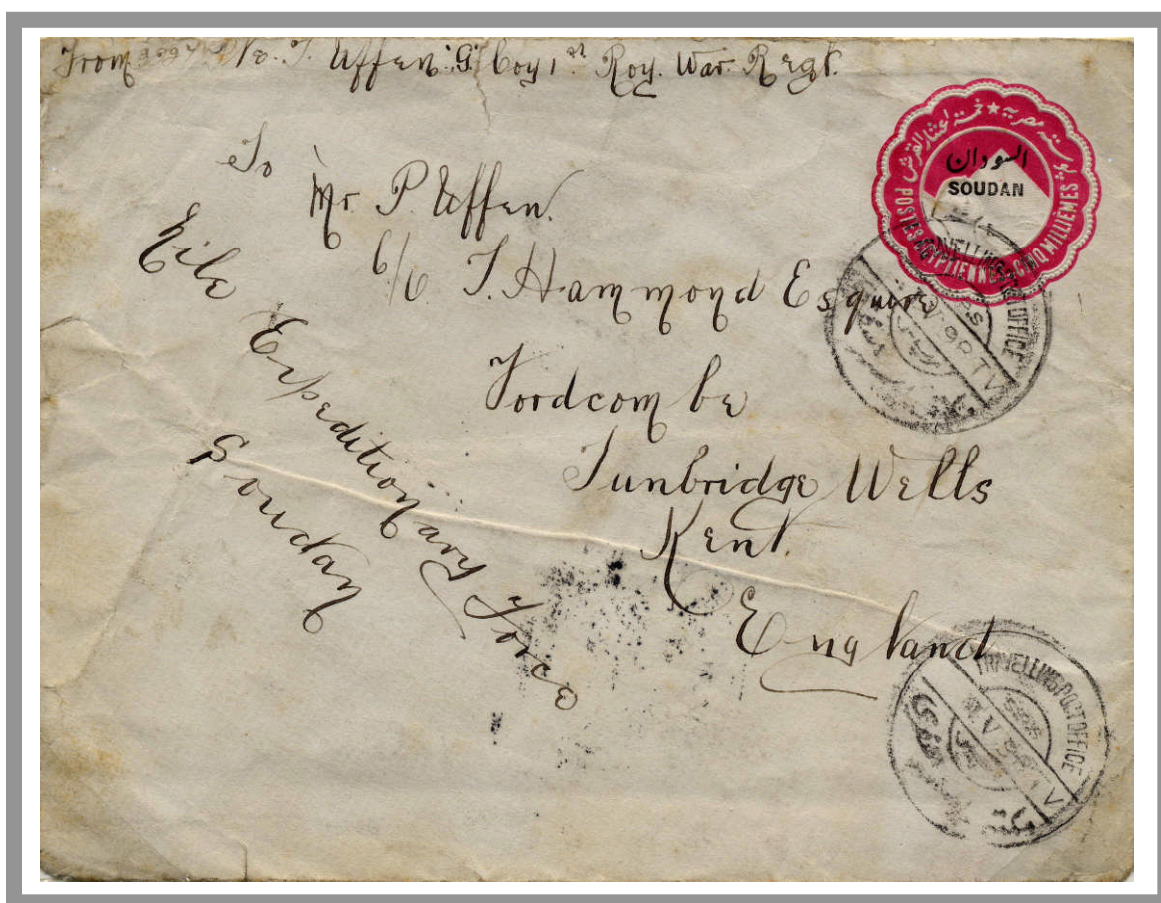
## Five Milliemes Soldier's Letter

TRAVELLING POST OFFICE, S.P.S. to TUNBRIDGE WELLS, KENT

? V 98

Egyptian five milliemes embossed envelope overprinted SOUDAN. The cover is from 3297 Pte. T. Uffen "G" Coy. 1st Roy. War Regt. to Mr. P. Uffen, endorsed **Nile Expeditionary Force Soudan**. The 1st Battalion of the 6th Royal Warwickshire Regiment formed part of the British Brigade. It left Army of Occupation duties in Alexandria in January 1898, arriving in the Sudan in early February. It took part in the Battles of Atbara (April 8) and Omdurman (September 2).

The cover was written in May while the regiment was in summer camp at El Sillem around Fort Atbara. The military post took it to the Desert Branch of the Military Railway that by early May ran between Halfa and Abadie, some 12 miles north of Berber. It was stamped with the **TRAVELLING POST OFFICE S.P.S. – V 98 TV** c.d.s. The day slug is unclear (perhaps 11) and could very well be missing. **S.P.S.** stands for Sudan Postal Service while the accounting mark **TV** indicates the Desert Branch. It is backstamped **WADI HALFA S.P.S. 19 V 98**, **ALEXANDRIE 24 V 98**, and **TUNBRIDGE WELLS 6. PM JU 2 98**.



## THE RECONQUEST OF SUDAN — 1898 NILE EXPEDITION

### Internal Letter

BERBER, SUDAN to HALFA, SUDAN

5 JU 98

Cover with 5 milliemes camel stamp from Captain (later Field Marshall) Douglas Haig at Berber to Major Arthur Sandbach, Governor of Nubia. The stamp is tied with a manuscript "X" and cancelled with the **BERBER 5 VI 98** c.d.s. It is backstamped **HALFA 6? VI 98**. The enclosed letter states in part, 'On the Atbara, I was Broadwood's C.S.O. We had a busy time as the Cavalry was out before the infantry left the Nile. But I'll tell you all about our experiences when we meet.' The battle of Atbara took place on 8 April 1898.



Douglas Haig (of the Scotch whisky family) was commissioned in the 7<sup>th</sup> (Queen's Own) Hussars as a Lieutenant on 7 February 1885, promoted to Captain 23 January 1891, and made his Majority 16 November 1898. He saw action during the reconquest of the Sudan at Atbara and Omdurman, receiving a brevet of Major, mention in dispatches, and the Egyptian medal with two clasps. He later went on to serve in South Africa and India, becoming Major General 1 May 1904 and Lieutenant General in 1914. He was created Field Marshal in 1917 and 1<sup>st</sup> Earl Haig in 1919. His name is most often associated with the slaughter in 1916's Somme offensive and 1917's Passchendaele (Third Ypres) campaign.



## THE RECONQUEST OF SUDAN — 1898 NILE EXPEDITION

Letter from Captain Douglas Haig at Berber to Major Arthur Edmund Sandbach at Halfa

Berber

5. VI. 98

My dear Sandbach,

---

experienced on the Egyptian  
trip, carried off the first.  
— But come over & hear  
all the gossip for yourself &  
I'll be glad to see you,  
heartily Believe me

Yrs Sinc

---

Douglas Haig

We have a famous murder  
trick on — a Sudanese murdered  
a man; he was seen to shoot  
him with a revolver & one man!  
— But as alibi the <sup>prisoner</sup> shows that he  
was a prisoner in charge of the guard!

## THE RECONQUEST OF SUDAN — 1898 NILE EXPEDITION

Letter from Captain Douglas Haig at Berber to Major Arthur Edmund Sandbach at Halfa

Berber

5. VI. 98

My dear Sandbags,

Thanks very much for so kindly sending the lcers. — The inhabitants about here are so useless or lazy that they make nothing in that line. —

I was so pleased to hear that you had got that important post of "Govr. Of Nubia" and I hope you like the work. — If you can get away for a week come over here & will do all we can to amuse you! Fine houses! Unlimited shooting from your door to Suakim! Small & large game etc. fishing etc. also polo thrice weekly European game, & once with native cavalry! I mention this just to show what you may expect, & I was forgetting to add (now that the lcers are here) — cold drink—!

I am busy training a Squadron — all the men are young and horses are old. But I enjoy the practical work in the mornings after 2 years of theory.— On the Atbara I was Broadwood's C.S.O.— We had a busy time as the Cavalry was out even before the infantry left the Nile — But I'll tell you all about our experiences when we meet. You must try and come over and have a look at this "Ever Victorious Army"— Hannay is here, in great form but lamenting all the time that his light is hidden under a bushel (i.e. Shackelton Bey). Blair & MacBean owners of a famous racing stable, were much disappointed at only getting seconds at the Dharunli spring meeting yesterday especially as Sparkes Bey, the "old hand" experienced on the Egyptian turf, carried off the firsts.— But come over & hear all the gossip for yourself & I'll be glad to see you.

Meantime Believe me

Yours Sincly

Douglas Haig

We have a famous murder trial going on — A gunner murdered a man; he was seen to shoot him with a revolver some man! — But as Alik the prisoner shows that he was a prisoner in charge of the guard!, could you have a better alibi? Von Happer is J. A. General, & I am Prosecutor. A very interesting case tray. I don't know how it will end.

D. H.



## THE RECONQUEST OF SUDAN — 1898 NILE EXPEDITION

### Double-weight Soldier's Letter

DARMALI, SUDAN to LONDON

12 JU 98

The single rate for a soldier's letter to England was five milliemes. This double-weight letter is franked with the one piastre of the first permanent issue of Sudan, issued on March 1, 1898. Endorsed **Nile Expeditionary Force 1898 Soudan**, it is from N° 2910 J. Moen 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion Lincolnshire Regiment (part of the First Brigade). The cover is backstamped **HALFA 15 VI 98**, **ALEXANDRIE A 24 VI 98**, and **CAMBERWELL (S.O.) S.E. 3:15.PM JU 30 98**.



Darmali, located ten miles above Fort Atbara, was a temporary base camp used for the build-up of British forces for the upcoming campaign. It was open from March to November 1898 and used the S.P.S. (Sudan Postal Service) type circular date stamp.

## THE RECONQUEST OF SUDAN — 1898 NILE EXPEDITION

### Five Milliemes Soldier's Letter

HALFA, SUDAN to COVENTRY, ENGLAND

21 VII 98

This cover from No. 4336 Pte. C. Pollard E Company, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, Royal Warwickshire Regiment is endorsed *Nile Field Force Sudan*. It is backstamped **HALFA 21 VII 98** and **COVENTRY. 5:30 PM AU 3 98**.



At this time the Royal Warwickshires were in summer encampment at El (Es) Sillem above Fort Atbara on the Nile River. July was a very busy month as the British and Egyptian forces along the Nile prepared for the impending advance to Khartoum.



## THE RECONQUEST OF THE SUDAN—1898 NILE EXPEDITION

Incoming Cover from England

OSWESTRY, ENGLAND to WADY HALFA

JY 28 98

Incoming letter to Major Sandbach in Wadi Halfa, Sudan, where he was also the Assistant Adjutant General to General Rundle who commanded the communications from Assouan to Berber. The cover is backstamped **BWLCH Y CIBAN A JY 29 98**, **MILITARY POST OFFICE CAIRO 3 VII 98** and **WADI HALFA S.P.S. 13 VII 98**.



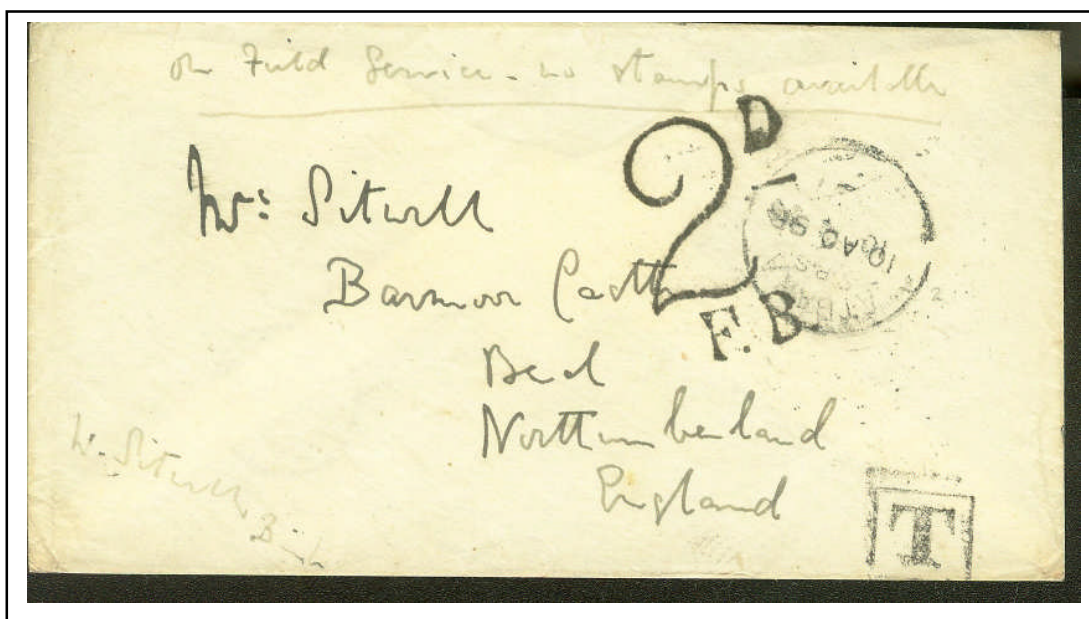
## THE RECONQUEST OF THE SUDAN—1898 NILE EXPEDITION

Unpaid Officer's Letter Endorsed: *On Field Service – No Stamps Available*

ATBARA, SUDAN to BEAL, ENGLAND

10 AO 98

The Atbara post office opened at the end of May 1898 to serve the buildup of troops along the Nile. The S.P.S. in the datestamp stands for Sudan Postal Service, making this type the first true Sudanese c.d.s. The early postmarks to the end of August had the month in letters while the later datestamp has the month in Roman numerals. This cover bears the **ATBARA S.P.S. 10 AO 98** c.d.s. The boxed **T** marking was applied at the first post office receiving the letter. The handstamp **2<sup>d</sup> F.B.** marking was struck in England to indicate postage due. However, this marking is in error as the postage to be collected was 2 ½ d. It is endorsed at the lower left **W. Sitwell Bim** [Bimbashi]. On the reverse is the transit datestamp of **WADI HALFA S.P.S. 12 AO 98** and the receiving stamp of **BEAL A AU 24 98**.



Reverse of cover - reduced

The cover is from Major William Henry Sitwell, The Northumberland Fusiliers, to his wife. Sitwell was commissioned a 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant on 14 January 1880; Lieutenant, 1 July 1882; Captain, 10 April 1889; Major, 21 January 1898, and Brevet Lieutenant Colonel, 16 November 1898. He was with the Egyptian Army from 3 September 1897 to 8 December 1899. He served in the Afghan War in 1880 (Medal) and with the expedition to Ashanti under Sir Francis Scott in 1895 (Star). He participated in the Nile River Campaign and was present at the battle of Khartoum. He was wounded, mentioned in dispatches twice, made a brevet Lieutenant Colonel, and received the British Medal and the Khedive's Medal with Clasp.



## THE RECONQUEST OF THE SUDAN—1898 NILE EXPEDITION

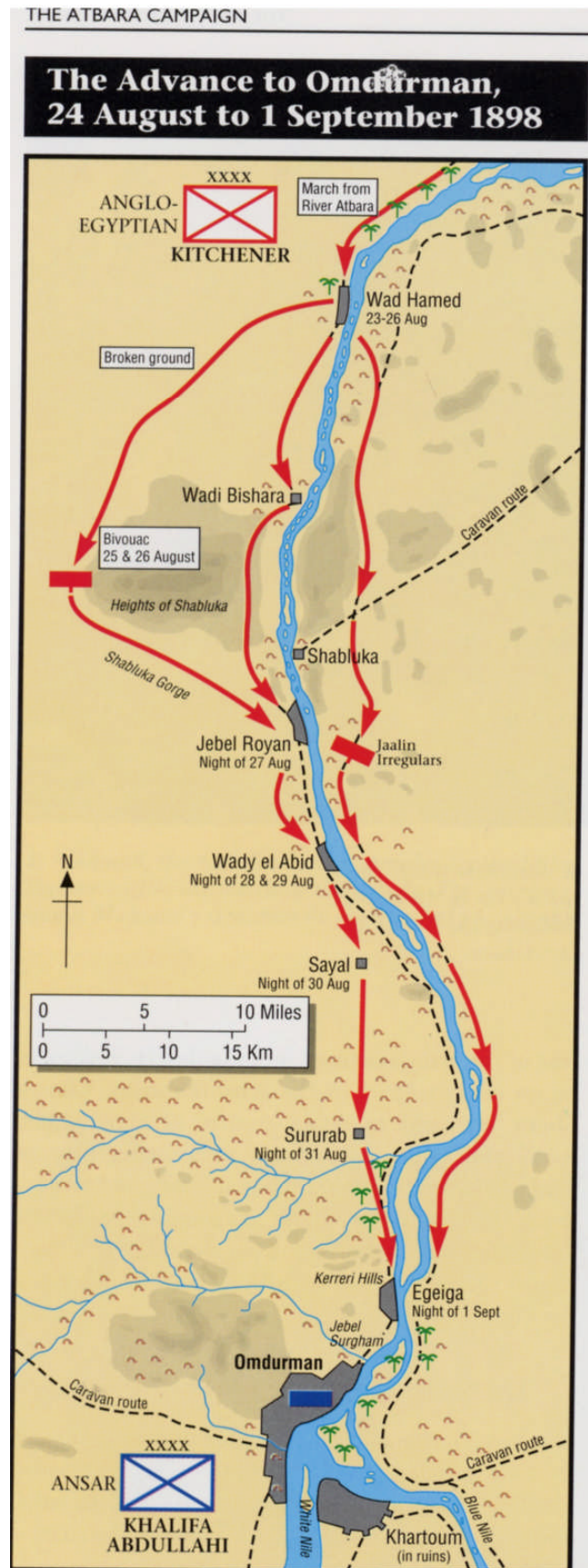
### The Mahdist's First Attack on the Zareba at Omdurman

A sketch by Corporal John Farquharson of the Seaforth Highlanders<sup>8</sup>



<sup>8</sup> Featherstone, Donald, *Omdurman 1898, Kitchener's Victory in the Sudan*, Osprey Military Campaign Series, London, 1993, page 68.

## THE RECONQUEST OF THE SUDAN—1898 NILE EXPEDITION



Source: Featherstone, Donald, *Omdurman 1898, Kitchener's Victory in the Sudan*, Osprey Military Campaign Series, London, 1993, page 54.

## THE RECONQUEST OF THE SUDAN—1898 NILE EXPEDITION

1 Piastre Officer's Letter

ATBARA, SUDAN to DUBLIN, IRELAND

23 AO 98

This five milliemes postal stationery envelope is uprated with a five milliemes adhesive to pay the one piastre rate. It is cancelled with the **ATBARA S.P.S.** c.d.s. ten days prior to the capture of Khartoum and backstamped **ALEXANDRIE A 29 VIII 98**.



The cover was sent to the wife of Richard Henry Stewart Sawyer, Surgeon Major of the Royal Army Medical Corps. He served in the 1898 Sudan Campaign and was present at the battle of Khartoum. He received the British Sudan Medal and the Khedive's Medal with Clasp. He later went on to serve in the South African War.

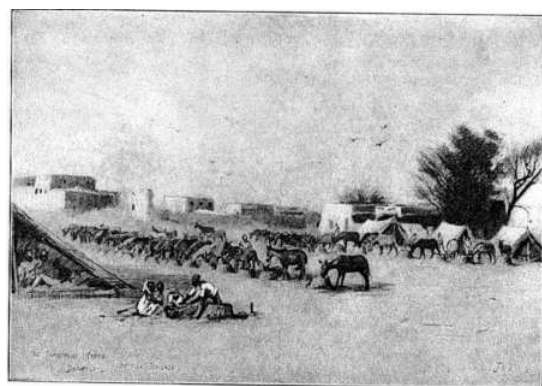
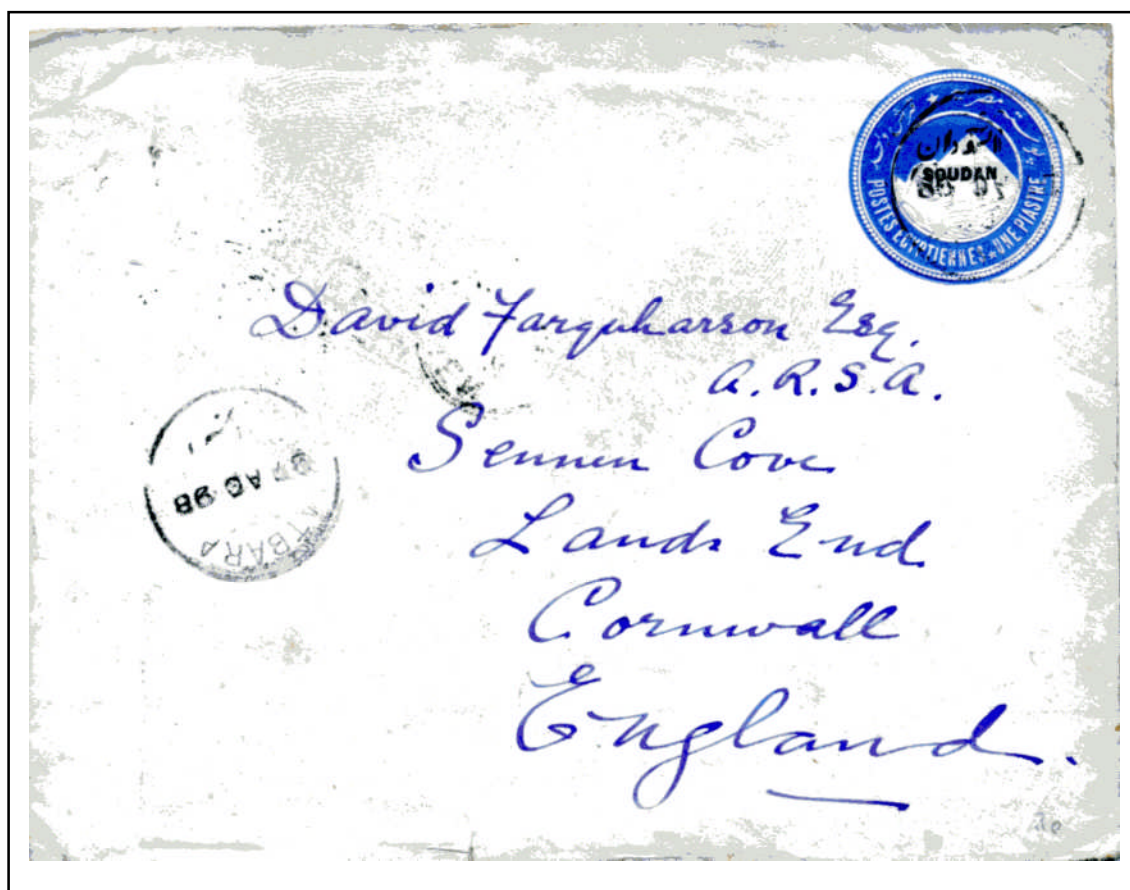


## THE RECONQUEST OF THE SUDAN—1898 NILE EXPEDITION

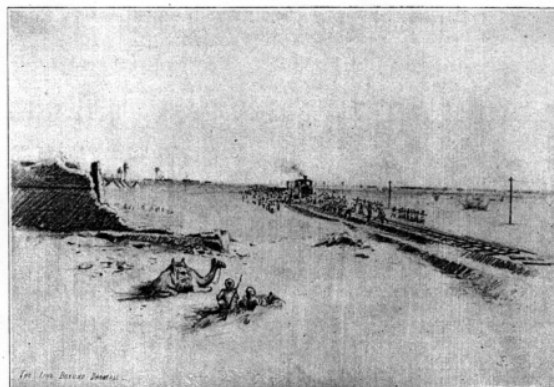
ATBARA, SUDAN to LANDS END, CORNWALL, ENGLAND

27 AO 98

This cover is cancelled with the **ATBARA S.P.S. 27 AO 98** c.d.s. and backstamped **ST. NWEN SP 9**. Addressed to the landscape painter David Farquharson, A.R.S.A. (Associate of the Royal Scottish Academy), it is believed to have been sent by his artist son, Corporal John Farquharson (1865-1931), Company C, 1 Battalion of the Seaforth Highlanders. The Highlanders participated in the battle of Omdurman. Corporal Farquharson had two sketches in *The Illustrated London News*, August 20, 1898, page 271. Obviously the corporal was entitled to use the 5 milliemes concession rate but used this convenience envelope instead for some unknown reason.



THE TRANSPORT LINES, BRITISH BRIGADE, DARMALI.  
Drawn by Corporal J. Farquharson, 1st Seaforth Highlanders.



THE ADVANCE OF THE RAILWAY BEYOND DARMALI.  
Drawn by Corporal J. Farquharson, 1st Seaforth Highlanders.

## THE RECONQUEST OF THE SUDAN—1898 NILE EXPEDITION

### 1 Piastre Officer's Letter

ATBARA, SUDAN to CAMBERLEY, ENGLAND

5 IX 98

This cover has the ATBARA postmark with the month in Roman numerals. The date is three days after the battle and capture of Omdurman and Khartoum. The cover is backstamped **WADI HALFA S.P.S. 6 IX 98**, **CHALLAL 7 SE 98**, **ALEXANDRIE ? IX 98 VI**, and **CAMBERLEY 5.30PM SP 15 98**.



This cover is addressed to Major General T[homas] E[dmund] Byrne, Royal Artillery retired, from his son Lieutenant Gerald Bertram Byrne of the Rifle Brigade. The enclosed partial letter, dated August 26<sup>th</sup>, 1898, was started at Wady Bishara (which is crossed out) and replaced by "El Guez." (?). It reads:

*My dear Papa: We arrived at Wady Hamed at 9 a.m. on the 24<sup>th</sup> having started at 4.30 p.m. on the 19<sup>th</sup> from Atbara – five days journey by steamer. It was the funniest voyage on a steamer I have ever performed! We used to run into the bank once an hour to escape some strong current or another and tie up the steamer every night when the wind got up. At "Wady Hamed" which is about 4 miles north of "Shabluka" — we were employed all day while we were at "Wady Hamed" in loading and unloading boats – taking things into the camp and back again. I never saw such disorder – every thing was mixed up and nobody seemed to know anything! I paraded one morning at 3.45 and proceeded as ordered to a certain spot to load camels. I did not even find the camels – far less the staff officer to whom I was to report! There I stayed till 6.30 and slept! At 1 p.m. we received orders to march with the 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade (our brigade) left at 5 a.m. on the 25<sup>th</sup> inst. We (the Right ½ B<sup>n</sup> RB) [Rifle Brigade] waited till 4 p.m. in the hope that the left ½ B<sup>n</sup> would arrive from . . . The letter stops here.*

## THE RECONQUEST OF THE SUDAN—1898 NILE EXPEDITION

### Incoming Cover from England

CAMBERLEY, ENGLAND to WADY HALFA

SP 29 98

Incoming letter to Major Sandbach in Wadi Halfa, Sudan, readdressed to the War Office in Cairo where he was assigned after the Battle of Omdurman. He departed for England before the end of October. The cover is backstamped **PORT SAID 5 X 98**, **CAIRE 5 X 98**, **WADI HALFA S.P.S. 10 X 98** and **CAIRE 13 X 98**.





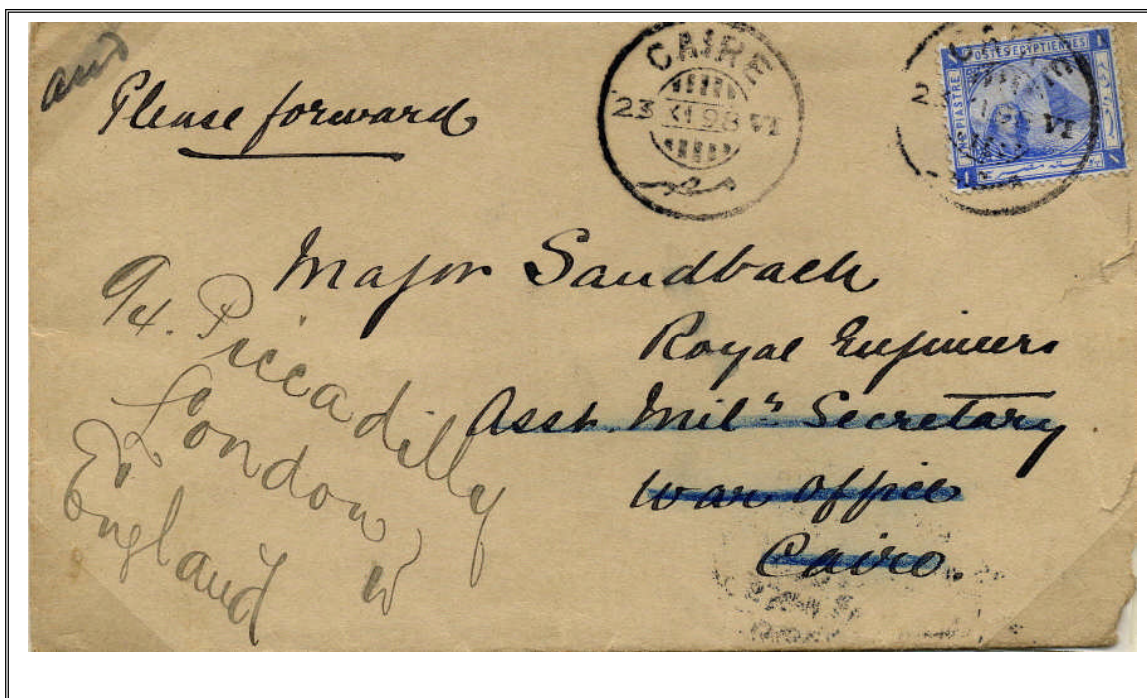
## THE RECONQUEST OF THE SUDAN—1898 GEDAREF RELIEF FORCE

### 1 Piatre Officer's Letter

BLUE NILE, SUDAN to ENGLAND via CAIRO

5<sup>th</sup> Nov. 1898

This cover is from Major-General H. M. L. Rundle to Major Sandbach. The enclosed letter dated Blue Nile 5<sup>th</sup> Nov 1898, was most likely written at Gedaref, about 60 miles from the Abyssinian border. Rundle arrived there on October 22 with 1,100 men to relieve the besieged force under Lieutenant-Colonel Parsons who was engaged in mopping up operations against remnants of the Dervish army. Rundle wrote he would be visiting some posts before going back to Omdurman. Not knowing Rundle's whereabouts over the next several weeks, it is thought that this cover was carried to the War Office by a soldier at the request of the General where the forwarding address was added and then placed in the Egyptian postal system. It is postmarked **CAIRE 23 XI 98 VI** and backstamped **LONDON. W. 6.30PM NO 30 98**



SIR HENRY MCLEOD LESLEY RUNDLE (6 January 1856 – 19 November 1934) — Lieutenant, Royal Artillery, 14 August 1876; saw action in the Zulu War, the first Boer War (wounded), the Egyptian War (1882), the Nile Expedition (1885-captain and brevet major), the Dongola Expedition of 1896; promoted to major-general for distinguished service. Adjutant-General of the Egyptian Army during the Omdurman campaign and led a column up the Blue Nile to relieve Gedaref. Held various commands in England following his Egyptian service. Served in South Africa 1900-1902.. Returned to England in 1902 and promoted to Lieutenant-General in 1905. In 1909 became governor and commander-in-chief in Malta and promoted to general. In February he returned to England and became commander-in-chief, Central Force, which was organized for home defense during 1915-1916. Retired from the army in 1919..

## THE RECONQUEST OF THE SUDAN—1898 GEDAREF RELIEF FORCE

BLUE NILE, SUDAN to ENGLAND via CAIRO

5<sup>th</sup> Nov. 1898

Copy of letter written by General Henry MacLeod Leslie Rundle to Major Arthur E. Sandbach

Blue Nile  
5<sup>th</sup> Nov 1898

My dear Sandbach

*I have to thank you for a very interesting letter dated 15<sup>th</sup> Sept. I am indebted to you for the way you cleared through the troops, and I hope you eventually recognized that having been the man to pass them all up - you were the man to pass them all down – and it was practically giving you the ?? of the communications at a most important time and that I did not hustle you off a moment too soon. I say this as I am under the impression at the time you rather resented being sent but I think on reflection you must have seen it was a big job I gave you & if you had not gone I must have done so myself. Of the two I think it was for you to go and the able manner in which you did the work justifies me in my own mind for doing as I did. I have been up here with a force opening the road to Gedaref & relieving Charles Parsons who got himself shut up there. This is not a pleasant country, perpetual jungle, rain & fever. Out of 500 of the X<sup>th</sup> there were one day only 200 fit to march. We lost Cottingham from fever the other day & nearly all English officers have been down with it & we all more or less live on quinine. Mitford who is doing staff officer to me has had a bad bout of it. I am going up to visit the posts and shall then go back to Omdurman. The Sirdar is in England being feted and Hunter has been invalided home. I suppose by the time this reaches you, you will be in full swing in your new appointment. I expect that you will thoroughly enjoy it after this bashi-bazook soldiering & get yourself cordially disliked by having come from this country. I would conceal the fact if I were you & pretend I've never been here. Good bye and good luck to you. I shall always like to hear of you and from you. I will look up some loot for you when I get back. Thank God you & I will never see Merowi again.*

*Yours sincerely*

*H.M.L. Rundle*

## THE RECONQUEST OF THE SUDAN — 1898 NILE EXPEDITION

### Soldier's Unpaid Letter

SAWAKIN, SUDAN to CAIRO, EGYPT

21 III 98

The rate for letters to Egypt from soldiers at the front was three milliemes, but as the forces moved deeper into the Sudan, postage stamps were less available. In order to avoid postage due of six milliemes, unfranked letters, supposed to be endorsed by the commanding officer, were charged only three milliemes. As no such postage due stamp existed the postal administration authorized the diagonal bisection of a two milliemes stamp to be used along with a full two milliemes stamp to make up the proper rate until new 3 milliemes postage dues were made available.<sup>9</sup>

This cover from a "Tommy" at Sawakin is backstamped **CAIRE 5 AP 98**. While it has the soldier's number and unit and is endorsed **Army of Occupation**, it does not have the commanding officer's initials or signature nor does it have **On Active Service No Stamps Available** written on the front.



<sup>9</sup> The Weekly Bulletin of the Egyptian Postal Department, February 14, 1898. See Smith, pp. 419-420



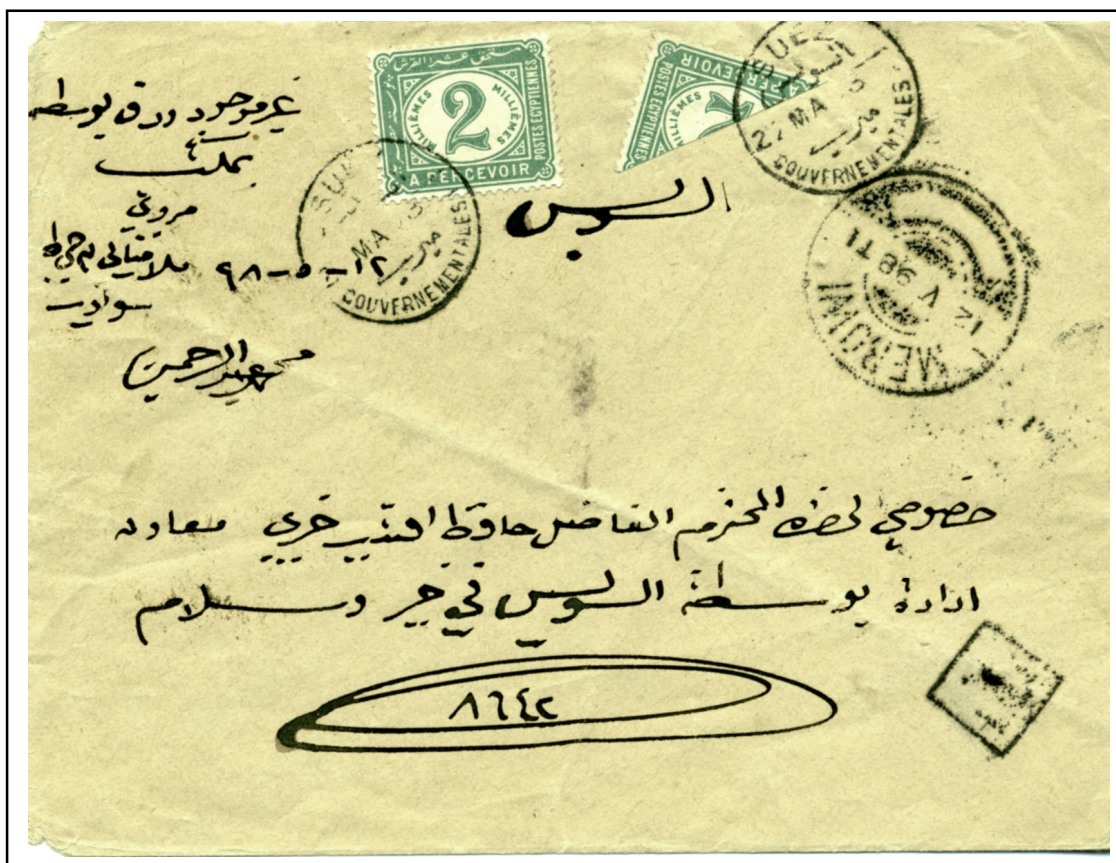
## THE RECONQUEST OF THE SUDAN — 1898 NILE EXPEDITION

### Soldier's Unpaid Letter

MEROWI, SUDAN to SUEZ, EGYPT

12 V 98

An unfranked letter sent by an Egyptian soldier from **MEROWI 12 V 98** to Suez with the boxed **T** handstamp. The three milliemes postage due was collected by means of a two milliemes postage due stamp and a diagonal bisect of the same. The adhesives were cancelled on arrival with strikes of **SUEZ GOUVERNEMENTALES 22 MA 98**. The reverse of the cover has transit and arrival marks of **HALFA 17 V 98**, **CAIRE**, and **SUEZ A 22 V 98**.



Reverse of cover - reduced

## THE RECONQUEST OF THE SUDAN — 1898 NILE EXPEDITION

### Soldier's Unpaid Letter

WADI HALFA to CAIRO, EGYPT

26 VII 98

In order to provide three milliemes postage due stamps the postal administration authorized the surcharging of the two piastres postage due with **3 Milliemes**. The overprint setting is Type B with 2.5 mm. Space between '3' and 'M'. The stamps were placed in circulation in April or May 1898, although L. Balian says May 7.<sup>10</sup>

According to regulations this unpaid concession rate cover should have the unit of the sender, the commanding officer's authorization, and **On Active Service No Stamps Available** on the front. Perhaps by this time such authorization became burdensome and it was unofficially done away with. The cover is postmarked with the blue **WADI HALFA 26 VII 98 TI** c.d.s and backstamped **CAIRE 31 VII 98**. The postage due was applied in Cairo and cancelled with the **CAIRE** c.d.s.



<sup>10</sup> Leon Balian, *Catalogue, Stamps of Egypt with Egypt Used in Palestine and Sudan*, Nubar Press, Chubrah, Egypt, 1998, p. 70



## THE RECONQUEST OF SUDAN — 1898 NILE EXPEDITION

Victor Nahman Forgery

MEROWI, SUDAN to TANTA, EGYPT

16 MR 98



The above is a "Nahman" forgery. Smith points out that most, but not all genuine covers, are from Egyptian troops and (1) nearly always addressed in Arabic with the officer's endorsement in Arabic; (2) a large proportion is addressed to smaller towns, and (3) nearly all covers are tatty, with worn edges and tears, and they are more or less dirty. Most of the forgeries are addressed in European handwriting and the majority is addressed to **Victor Nahman**. The above cover is endorsed in English **Field Service No Stamp Obtainable FB From Pte. William Adams**. Note the misspelling of Field with the i and e transposed. The postmark of origin on these fake covers is generally forged although the stamps are genuine. In this case the letters of MEROWI are too tall by about half a millimeter, 4.5 mm for the genuine and 5 mm. for the forgery. Other cancellations on the covers are either forged or applied by favor.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>11</sup> See *The Quarterly Circular*, Vol. V, No. 2, November 1957, "Forged Covers of the Sudan Campaign," Peter A. S. Smith, pp. 18-21. See also Smith, pp. 423-426.



## THE RECONQUEST OF SUDAN — 1898 NILE EXPEDITION

### Nahman Forgery

HALFA, SUDAN to CAIRO, EGYPT

4 AV 98



The above is a "Nahman" forgery. It is addressed to **Victor Nahman Esq.** and endorsed **Feild Service No Stamp Obtainable FB From Pte. 967 A. Adams**. Note the misspelling of Field with the i and e transposed. Is the sender, Pte 967 A. Adams, any relation to Pte. William Adams on the previous forgery? The HALFA datestamp above differs from the genuine in that the letters are too large, the inner circle has seven vertical bars compared with six, and that the abbreviation of the month is in French (AV) and not in Roman numerals (IV)

## THE RECONQUEST OF SUDAN — 1898 NILE EXPEDITION

### Nahman Forgery

ATBARA, SUDAN to ALEXANDRIA, EGYPT

30 VII 98



The above is a “Nahman” forgery purchased as such from a well-known California auction house over the Internet. It was originally described without any note that it was a forgery. As a matter of fact, the dealer tried several times over the 2004-2006 period to sell it as a legitimate cover. It is addressed to **Victor Nahman Esq.** and endorsed **Field Service No Stamp Obtainable FCE From A Savage Pte. 247 R.F.** Note the misspelling of Field with the i and e transposed. The ATBARA30 VII 98 has been identified as a forgery.<sup>12</sup> The cover is backstamped **ALEXANDRIE A 27 VIII 98 IX.**

<sup>12</sup> See Joseph H. Chalhoub's *THE NILE POST Handbook and Catalogue of Egyptian Stamps*, Joseph Chalhoub, 2003, p. 774.



# ADMINISTRATION DES TÉLÉGRAPHES — EGYPTIAN ARMY TELEGRAPHS

Mod. No. 832.

## ADMINISTRATION DES TÉLÉGRAPHES.

No. d'ordre \_\_\_\_\_ BUREAU

No. d'origine *1128*

Mots *44*

Reçu de

Employé *Curley*

OBSERVATIONS.

Date.....

\*Heure de la réception



h. *9* m. *35*

Transmis à

Date *189*

H. m.

Employé

OBSERVATIONS.

### REÇU LE TÉLÉGRAMME SUIVANT

De *Kerma*

date

*27*

*189*

\*Heure de l'expédition

h.

*8*

m.

*30*

A

*Landbach*  
*mr*

*am leaving early tomorrow morning I stop publish orders I left with you re command dated tomorrow and in my name not cockranes stop will wire you from halfa my further movements stop general griffell will remain there two or three days. Rundle*

KERMA to MEROWI

ARMY TELEGRAPHS M 27 II 98 R

Stagg type 37 c.d.s. used from July, 1897 to March, 1898.

Am leaving early tomorrow morning stop Publish orders I left with you re command dated tomorrow and in my name

est prévenu que l'Administration des Télégraphes Égyptiens n'accepte aucune responsabilité pour le retard ou les erreurs dans le service des Dépêches Télégraphiques.



Mod. No. 832.

ADMINISTRATION DES TÉLÉGRAPHES.

No. d'ordre BUREAU

No. d'origine 722

Mots 15

Reçu de

Employé

OBSERVATIONS

Date.....

Heure de la réception



h.

m. 116p

Transmis à

Date 189

H. m.

Employé

OBSERVATIONS.

REÇU LE TÉLÉGRAMME SUIVANT

De Assuan

daté

15 8 189

Heure de l'expédition

h.

m. 1 15p

A Nubia

Halfa

734 31 this ammunition has arrived & will be forwarded first opportunity Comdt

Proc.  
very much  
at Assuan

Out. Jandar  
R 122  
R  
15 MAR 98

ASSOUAN to NUBIA, HALFA

HALFA 15 MAR 98

C.d.s. unlisted in Staggs

734 731 this ammunition has arrived & will be forwarded first opportunity.

Comdt


Alexandrie.  
public est prévenu que l'Administration des Télégraphes Egyptiens n'accepte aucune responsabilité pour le retard ou les erreurs dans le service des Dépêches Télégraphiques.



# SUDAN MILITARY TELEGRAPHS

Army Form  
No 2 Tele.

## SUDAN MILITARY TELEGRAPHS

No of Message <i>395</i>	No of Words <i>13</i>	Received At <i>BB</i>	Forwarded At	
Code		From <i>SQ</i>	From	
Service Instructions		By	By	
		Employé	Employé	
Handed in at the <i>Berber</i>	Office at <i>H 43</i>	Received here at <i>5 9</i>	m. Of	Office

Lagoudakis, Printer, Alexandria.

TO

*Commandant*  
*Kaep*  
*Your 1402 please post to*  
*battalion at present most underst.*  
*rength*

*Sirdar*

BERBER to HALFA

ARMY TELEGRAPHS H 11 VII 98 L

Stagg type 37 c.d.s. used from July, 1897 to July, 1898.

Your 1402 please post to battalion at present most under strength.

Sirdar



# SUDAN MILITARY TELEGRAPHS

Army Form  
No 2 Tele.

## SUDAN MILITARY TELEGRAPHS

No of Message <u>574</u>	No of Words <u>31</u>	Received At <u>BIB</u>	Forwarded At <u></u>	Date Stamp <u>H 14 VII 98 L</u>
Code <u>Om</u>		From <u>S</u>	From <u></u>	
Service Instructions <u></u>		By <u>cmv</u>	By <u></u>	
		Employé <u></u>	Employé <u></u>	

Handed in at the Berber Office at 6.12 m. Received here at 6.13 m. Of  Office

Lagoudakis. Printer, Alexandria.

TO

Comdt  
Halfa  
Let me know when british ammn has passed through Halfa stop have reisses sailors & firemen for gunboats which left Shellal on 7th gone on to Abadia yet

Sirdar

Am

BERBER to HALFA

ARMY TELEGRAPHS H 14 VII 98 L

Stagg type 37 c.d.s. used from July, 1897 to July, 1898.

Let me know when British ammn has passed through Halfa stop Have reisses [?] sailors & firemen for gunboats which left Shellal on 7th gone on to Abadia yet? Sirdar



# ADMINISTRATION DES TÉLÉGRAPHES — EGYPTIAN ARMY TELEGRAPHS

Mod. No. 832.

## ADMINISTRATION DES TÉLÉGRAPHES.

Alexandrie. L'Administration des Télégraphes Égyptiens n'accepte aucune responsabilité pour le retard ou les erreurs dans le service des Dépêches Télégraphiques.

No. d'ordre \_\_\_\_\_ BUREAU

No. d'origine 2177

Mots murad

Reçu de \_\_\_\_\_

Employé \_\_\_\_\_

OBSERVATIONS.

Date.....

\* Heure de la réception } h. \_\_\_\_\_ m. \_\_\_\_\_



Transmis à \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_ 189 \_\_\_\_\_

H. \_\_\_\_\_ m. \_\_\_\_\_

Employé \_\_\_\_\_

OBSERVATIONS.

### REÇU LE TÉLÉGRAMME SUIVANT

De Assuan daté 2 \_\_\_\_\_ 189 \_\_\_\_\_

\* Heure de l'expédition } h. 4 m. 54

A \_\_\_\_\_

Landbach  
Halfa

1958 your 1569 none here  
now but 14 cases left by  
alexandra on 17 instant marked  
berber slopes.  
Drage

ASSOUAN to HALFA

HALFA 20 JUL 98

C.d.s. unlisted in Staggs