

EGYPT STUDY CIRCLE.

THE QUARTERLY CIRCULAR.

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THE QUARTERLY CIRCULAR.

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Chairman - Lt.-Col. W. Byam, O.B.E., The Oriental Club, Hanover Square, London, W.1.

Keeper of the Philatelic Record - A. S. Mackenzie-Low, "Dorset House",
Hastings Road, Bexhill-on-Sea, Sussex.

Secretary-Treasurer & Editor of "The Quarterly Circular",
F. S. Mumford, 174 Buxton Road, Stockport, Cheshire.

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THE CHAIRMAN.

The wedding of our Chairman to Mrs. D. M. Thomas took place quietly in Rochester Cathedral on Saturday, November 15th 1952 and the following is a copy of the letter which was sent to Lt.-Col. Byam, O.B.E. on behalf of all members of the Circle.

174 Buxton Road,
Stockport,
Cheshire.

12th November, 1952.

My dear Byam,

I am writing on behalf of all the members of the Egypt Study Circle to offer you our sincere congratulations on the occasion of your marriage and to send our good wishes for the health and happiness of yourself and your future wife.

We have all felt for you in your loneliness during the past year or two and are glad you are now, once more, to have a home of your own in which you may find happiness and, we hope, time for philately.

You will be very much in our thoughts on November 15th and we assure you of our affection and loyalty and of our gratitude for all you have done for the Egypt Study Circle by your splendid example. May you long remain at the helm to steer us.

Yours very sincerely,

(signed) F.S.Mumford.

Honorary Secretary,
Egypt Study Circle.

STUDY VI. THE POSTAL MARKINGS OF EGYPT.

We have received the following communications from Mr. Mackenzie-Low.

Mr Seymour Blomfield has just completed a new set of drawings of the postal markings starting from 1865. They give the revised numbering and are being produced by photography in 5 sheets (about 15 illustrations to the sheet). The cost will be about £3-15-0 for the negatives in addition to 2/6 a set for the prints.

At the last Study Circle meeting it was decided that Blomfield should be re-imbursed for the cost of the illustrations and it was agreed that a charge of 5/- per set, including postage, be made to those members who required them. The Keeper of the Record has been requested to collect the money for Seymour Blomfield and distribute the photographs when they are received from the U.S.A. Members in America and Egypt should subscribe direct to Mr. Blomfield.

I have received a further communication from Seymour Blomfield informing me that he has prepared 12 Data Sheets which will permit of the illustrations being cut out and pasted in their correct places on these sheets, which will be useful for reference.

They can be sent to all members who have subscribed for the illustrations. There will be a small charge which will be announced later.

A. S. Mackenzie-Low.

STUDY I. EGYPTIAN POST OFFICES ABROAD.

Lt.-Col. J. R. Danson has recently shown me a copy of the 1 P.T. Egypt 1872 used at LEROS.

The Egyptian postmark is of type III. - LEROS and the letters V.R. are quite clear but only part of the date, which may be 1873, is visible.

This is the first Egyptian P.O. marking from LEROS I have recorded. No knowledge of the existence of an Egyptian P.O. there being known.

Any further information will be welcome.

A.S. Mackenzie-Low.

Keeper of the Philatelic Record.

THE CIRCLE'S PROPOSED HANDBOOK.

We have received the following from Mr. Martin Smith and those members who are able to assist or who desire further information are asked to communicate with him direct. His address is :- 15, Palace Mansions, London. W. 14.

"As this work is now about three quarters complete, the time has come to review the subjects which have not yet been covered. They are :-

1. Introduction; 2. Early Period; 3. French Post Office;
4. The 1884 overprint; 5. Straight sets after 1914; 6. Commemoratives;
7. Officials after 1924. 8. Postage Dues after 1888; 9. Postal Stationery; 10. Postal Markings after 1880; 11. Air Stamps after 1946; 12. Express Stamps; 13. Essays up to 1878.

Various members of the Circle have agreed to work on items 1, 3, 6, 11, 12 and 13 but I should be very glad if some members would agree to undertake some of the others or send me any unpublished information they may have.

I think most members are familiar with the scope of the work by this time but if anyone wants further details I shall be pleased to supply them. "

THE POSTAL HISTORY OF THE SUDAN, 1873-98. by Lt.-Col. J. R. DANSON, M.C.; T.D.

A copy of the paper read by Lt.-Col. J. R. Danson before the Society of Postal Historians together with four maps is included in this number by kind permission of the Society of Postal Historians and Lt.-Col. J. R. Danson.

E. E. F. POSTAL MARKINGS.

by Gordon Ward.

Various lists have been published of the marks used by the units of the Egyptian Expeditionary Force but very few of these incorporated the letters E.E.F. or the full title of the Force. This was so because the Force was made up of Australasian, Indian and Imperial Forces, each of which had its national military postal organisation with characteristic hand stamps. The scope for true E. E. F. handstamps was therefore considerably restricted and those few of which I am aware fall into the following groups :-

- (a). The AERIAL POST / E.E.F. marks described by our Vice-Chairman, J.H.E. Gilbert, in L'Orient Philatelique for October, 1946 and amplified in subsequent publications.
- (b). The obliterations used in Palestine with the initials of the words " Occupied Enemy Territory 'A' Egyptian Expeditionary Force ". These are commonly found on the E. E. F. stamps of Palestine.
- (c). Base Censor Marks.
- (d). Various other markings.

The Base Censor marks seem all to have the same words PASSED BY / BASE CENSOR / E.E.F. but there is considerable variation in size and in the precise shape of the rectangular box in which they are contained. The box is really an octagon made by cutting off the corners of a rectangle with straight or incurved lines. I have not sufficient material to say anything of value about the dating of these marks.

The first two marks falling under the heading "VARIOUS" are franks :-

- 1. POSTAGE FREE / E.E.F. 66 mm. wide. Not boxed. Seen on a cover addressed by the Lt.-Col. in command from an Indian Unit to Bombay.
There is an Indian F.P.O. mark dated 10.6.20 but its number is obscure.
- 2. POSTAGE FREE / E.E.F. in a box about 56 mm. wide in black on a cover addressed to London from the Orderly Room of a regiment stationed at Surafind in Palestine. For date see next.

3. A single circle with bars across the centre enclosing the date 2.4.21. Above the bars the letters R.M.S. and below E.E.F. This is a Railway obliterator of Indian type and is on the same cover as No. 2. in black.

Two other E.E.F. marks were evidently used at a Base P.O. which was probably at Suez or, just possibly, at Tanta.

4. UNABLE TO TRACE / BASE A.P.O.T. / E.E.F. In a box 68 mm. wide and stamped in red. On a letter addressed from England on 15.4.18 to Mesopotamia. It was readdressed to India and then to Palestine but was never delivered.
5. On the same cover as last ARMY R.L.O., E.E.F. / UNDELIVERED FOR REASON STATED / RETURN TO SENDER.

These are all the E. E. F. markings incorporating those letters which I have been able to trace. They suggest that such handstamps were confined to headquarters units but they raise a number of questions which can only be answered when very much more information is available.

MEMBERS' QUERIES.

1. When did the use of A R as an obliterator cease ?
2. What is the meaning & usefulness of the word "CASH" on an obliterator ?
3. 1914-18 War Skeleton type F.P.Os. Which "SZ" numbers were located in Egypt ?
4. When, if at all, did any of the following hotels change its name to one of the others ? All are, or were, in Cairo. Savoy Hotel. Continental Savoy Hotel. Continental Hotel. Grand Continental Hotel.

Members able to answer any of the above queries are requested to communicate with the editor - F.S.Mumford, 174 Buxton Road, Stockport, Cheshire.

SOME NOTES ON THE THIRD ISSUE.

Numbers Printed and Used.

The document, a copy of which appears below, was discovered by the indefatigable researches of Ibrahim Khalil Chaftar into the archives of the Egyptian Post Office.

FRANCOBOLLI DELLA 3ra EMISSIONE. (IN USO DEL 1 GENN 1872.)

Serie.	Numero dei francob. Consignati al Ministero.	Imposto.	Numero dei francob. zittirati del Ministero.	Imposto.	Residuo dei franc. al Ministero.	Imposto P.T.
Da Para 5	2,500,000	312,500	1,420,000	177,500	1,080,000	135,000
10	2,200,000	350,000	1,000,000	250,000	1,200,000	300,000
20	1,940,000	970,000	1,250,000	640,000	660,000	330,000
Piastre 1	11,900,000	11,900,000	7,040,000	7,040,000	4,860,000	4,860,000
2	1,300,000	2,600,000	820,000	1,640,000	480,000	960,000
2 $\frac{1}{2}$	600,000	1,500,000	220,000	550,000	380,000	950,000
5	160,000	800,000	120,000	600,000	40,000	200,000
	20,600,000	18,632,500	11,900,000	10,897,500	8,700,000	7,735,000

ESISTENZA FRANCOBOLLI ALLA CASSA CENTRALE (A TUTTO OGGI)

Serie.	Numero dei francobolli esistente alla Cassa Deposito	Imposto	No. dei franc. esistente per l'Incaricato delli spedizione	Imposto	No. totale dei franco-bolli esistente alla Cassa Centrale	Imposto P.T.
Da Para 5	140,000	17,500	6,355	1791.35	146,355	19,291.35
10	80,000	20,000	36,145	9036.10	116,145	29,036.10
20	150,000	75,000	7,111	3555.20	157,111	78,555.20
Piastre 1	260,000	260,000	23,494	23,494	283,494	283,494
2	104,800	209,600	6,505	13,010	111,305	222,610
2 $\frac{1}{2}$	50,000	125,000	8,436	21,087.20	58,435	146,087.20
5	15,000	75,000	4,083	20,415	19,083	95,415
	799,800	782,100	92,128	92,390.05	891,928	874,490.05

MEDIA DI CONSUMO MENSILE FRANCOBOLLI DELL'ANNO 1875.

<u>Serie.</u>	<u>Numero dei Francobolli</u>	<u>Imposto P.T.</u>
Da Para 5	26,822	3352.30
10	17,494	4373.20
20	25,870	12,935
Piastre 1	136,802	136,802
2	14,040	28,080
2 $\frac{1}{2}$	3,431	8,577.20
5	1,958	9,790
	<u>226,417</u>	<u>203,910.30</u>

Alexandria, 17 Agosto 1876, Il Cassiere Centrale. (signed)

This is a report dated 17th August 1876 from the Chief Cashier of the Post Office on the stocks of stamps held, presumably at the date of the report. The first section gives the number of stamps delivered to the Ministry, the numbers issued to the Post Office and the stocks in hand. The second section gives the numbers held in the Post Office strongroom and those in the issuing department and the total of these two figures. The third section gives the average monthly usage for the year 1875. The monetary value of the stamps concerned is in every case given in the column next to that showing the numbers held. Presumably the report was drawn up with a view to seeing when it would be necessary to reorder the stamps. There are two obvious mistakes in the document. The number of 20 para stamps issued by the Ministry should obviously read 1,280,000 and not 1,250,000; this is probably a clerical error. It will also be noticed that the value of the 5 para stamps held by the issuing department is overstated by 1,000 piastres.

At the time when this document was drawn up the third issue had rather more than two years and seven months to run so it is interesting to see how long the stocks might be expected to last at the 1875 rate of usage with a view to seeing whether it was likely that any further printings were made. The table below shows the position.

<u>Value.</u>	<u>Stocks held.</u>	<u>Average monthly usage.</u> <u>1875.</u>	<u>Probable duration of stocks.</u>	
5 Para.	1,226,355.	26,822.	3 years	10 months.
10 -	1,316,145.	17,494.	6 -	3 -
20 -	817,111.	25,870.	2 -	8 -
1 Piastre.	5,143,494.	136,802.	3 -	2 -
2 -	591,305.	14,040.	3 -	6 -
2 $\frac{1}{2}$ -	438,435.	3,431.	10 -	2 -
5 -	59,083.	1,958.	2 -	6 -

If one allows for a further months supplies of stamps in the branch post offices which is probably on the low side, particularly in the case of the higher values, it will be seen that a sufficient supply of all values existed to last until the 1879 issue became available. While it is not possible to be dogmatic it seems quite probable that no further printings were made and that the figures given in the first column of the first section of the cashier's report are the total numbers of the third issue stamps printed. The formation of the U.P.U. in 1875 would tend to favour the use of the lower values as against the high ones. It is not clear why it was necessary to overprint the 2½ piastre with 10 para.

An interesting sidelight on the expansion of the postal services is shown by a comparison of the monthly sales during the currency of the first issue with those for 1875 and those for the currency of the third issue up to the date of the report as set out below.

AVERAGE MONTHLY SALES.

Value.	1866 - 1867.		1872 - 1876.		1875.	
	Number.	Value.	Number.	Value.	Number.	Value.
5 Para	13,395	1674.15	22,244	2780.20	26,822	3352.30
10 -	12,558	3139.20	16,070	4017.20	17,494	4373.20
20 -	12,643	6321.20	18,598	9299	25,870	12930
1 Piastre	62,666	62666	122,846	122846	136,802	136802
2 -	8,705	17410	12,995	25770	14,040	28080
2½ -	-	-	2,938	7345	3,431	8577.20
5 -	968	4840	1,835	9175	1,958	9790
10 -	400	4000				
	<u>111,335</u>	<u>100051.15</u>	<u>197,416</u>	<u>181232.00</u>	<u>226,417</u>	<u>203910.30</u>

It will be noticed that the receipts for 1875 show an increase of 112% over 1866-67 and 12½% over 1872-76. The very large increase in the usage of the 20 para in 1875 may be due to the reduction in the letter rate for the Levant from 2 piastres to 1½ piastres during that year. It is clear from the layout of the cashier's report that the 1872 and 1874-75 printings were never regarded as separate issues.

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THE POSTAL HISTORY OF THE SUDAN 1873-1898

Lt. Col. J.R. Danson

The paper deals with the early Postal History of the Sudan, from about 1873 when the Post Offices were run by the Egyptians until about 1898, by which time the Sudan Postal Services were firmly established.

Before coming to the actual postal services which were available in the early days I fear it will be necessary for me to give you a short History Lesson to remind you of various events which took place in North East Africa in the latter part of the last century and in order to help you to follow my remarks I have provided 4 maps which I hope you will find useful.

It must be remembered that Egypt was a Province of the Turkish Empire and was governed by a Khedive who was, at any rate in theory, responsible to the Sultan of Turkey for the good government of his Province. There was no frontier between Egypt and what was later to be known as the Sudan and, in fact, very little was known of Central Africa.

In the early days of the 19th Century the Khedive, Mahomet Ali, began to expand his province to the South and in 1820 he sent his son Ismail with an army to take over the country. Ismail set up his headquarters at a village which was later to be known as Khartoum but the local inhabitants appear to have been somewhat displeased by this encroachment by Egypt and they promptly murdered Ismail and his staff while at dinner by burning down the house in which the dinner was being held.

Mahomet Ali took a terrible vengeance for this outrage and the provinces of Kordofan and Sennar were added to Egypt.

Further penetrations followed and by 1850 Egyptian rule extended to 120 miles south of Khartoum and in 1866 the ports of Suakin and Massawa were given to the Khedive by the Sultan of Turkey.

The Egyptian rule was thoroughly corrupt, and the chief export was slaves and in the late 1860's, as a result of pressure from some of the European powers, the Khedive Ismail commissioned Sir Samuel Baker to effect reforms and in particular to attempt to suppress the Slave trade and also bring the Equatorial Provinces under Egyptian influence.

In 1874 Baker was succeeded by General Charles E. Gordon as Governor of the Equatorial Provinces, a post which he relinquished in 1876. In the following year, however, at the express request of the Khedive, he returned to the Sudan as Governor General but in 1879 he resigned and trouble shortly afterwards broke out.

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In 1881 Mohammed Ahmed proclaimed himself "El-Mahdi" - "The Divine Guide to Salvation" and raised an army in a revolt against Egypt, and during the following few years he and his followers recaptured the whole of the Sudan with the exception of Wadi Halfa in the North and Suakin on the Red Sea.

It will be seen then that between say 1860 and 1885 Egypt had occupied the greater part of the Sudan and been ejected again by the Mahdi.

To come now to the postal history of the period. Egypt had joined the U.P.U. in 1875 and as far as I have been able to ascertain about 24 post offices were opened in the Sudan between 1867 and 1879. As far as I am aware however, no official list has been published, and the lists which do exist differ in material details. Moreover, there is a considerable difference of opinion as to the dates upon which offices were established at various places and when they were closed.

In the absence of any official list of Post Offices, the best evidence that an office existed at any particular place is a postage stamp or cover bearing the postmark of the town but apart from Wadi Halfa, Massawa and Suakin, Egyptian stamps used in the Sudan are very rare indeed and I doubt whether examples exist from some of the smaller places. Other evidence must therefore be sought and this is found in the existence of interpostal labels bearing the names of various places in the Sudan.

The use to which these labels was put is somewhat obscure but contrary to the note in Volume II of Robson Lowe's Encyclopaedia they were not official franks and had no franking value.

They were certainly used on occasions to seal up packages which had burst in the post and I show you an example of this usage at Alexandria; and they were probably, almost certainly, used for sealing packages of letters being sent in bulk from one post office to another in order to show at a glance the origin of the package.

I am showing several pages of these labels with the names of various towns in the Sudan, also an official registered cover from Wadi Halfa, which has neither postage stamp nor interpostal label on it, but which was apparently delivered at destination without surcharge. This cover goes to show, I think, that the interpostal labels were not official franks.

As far as I have been able to ascertain the following Post Offices existed in the Sudan and I give, where known, the dates of opening and closing.

The first office to be opened was at Suakin, probably in November 1867, and it has remained open ever since.

The Office at Massawa is stated to have been opened either in November 1867 or 1869 and it was probably closed about the end of December 1885 after the town had been handed over to the Italians.

On the 1st October 1873 offices were opened at Berber, Dongola, Khartoum and Wadi Halfa, and of these Berber was closed on the 2nd May, 1884, Dongola on the 13th June 1885, Khartoum on the 15th December 1884 and Wadi Halfa has remained open.

Kassala was probably opened in the autumn of 1875 and was closed either in July or September 1885.

I am showing stamps or covers from all the above places.

Nine further offices were opened, it is stated, at the request of General Gordon in 1877 or August 1878 at Gedaref, El Facher, El Messalamieh, El Obeid, Fazogl, Fashoda, Karkoj and Salamieh. El Obeid was closed on the 19th January 1883 but the dates of closing the other offices is unrecorded.

No details are on record regarding the opening or closing of the following 8 offices:- Chaka, Dabroussa, Dara, El Galabat, Sennar, Korti, Taoufikia and Tokar.

When the actual date of closing is unknown it may reasonably be assumed that the offices closed automatically at or about the time that the particular district in which they were situated was overrun by the followers of the Mahdi.

No stamps of the first issue of Egypt have been recorded as having been used in the Sudan, but this is hardly surprising as the second issue was current when the Post Office was opened at Suakin in 1867.

Of the 2nd issue only one example is known to me, a 2 Piastre in Dr. Byam's collection used at Suakin in 1868, almost certainly on the 21st August.

Stamps of the 3rd Issue are somewhat more plentiful as they were current until 1879 by which time the majority, if not all, the offices were in operation and it is possible that all values exist used at Massawa, Suakin and Wadi Halfa.

The 4th Issue (De La Rue issue of 1879/84) are reasonably common when used at Suakin and Wadi Halfa, but in addition to these I am showing you stamps of this issue used at Berber, Kassala, Khartoum and Tokar.

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Of the later issues up to 1897, probably all values exist used at Suakin and Wadi Halfa.

Postage due stamps of the 5 Mills - 1 and 2 Piastre value are known used at Suakin in 1887.

It will be interesting to note that the year date on the Berber cancellations, which is in Arabic, shows the date as 1880 for that year and for the next three years, and the final figure has been altered to 1, 2 or 3 in manuscript for the 3 following years.

The postal rates in force between 1867 and 1875 for internal postage are uncertain, but for foreign mail they were as follows:-

Single letters to England or the Continent prepaid via Brindisi.
4 Piastres 5 paras.

Single letters to England prepaid by long sea - 3 piastres 10 paras.

Single letters to Malta and Gibraltar prepaid - 2 piastres 20 paras.

Single letters to India, Ceylon, Straits, China, Japan, Australia and New Zealand - 3 piastres 10 paras.

After joining the U.P.U. in 1875 the usual foreign rate of 2½d, or 1 Piastre, was in operation.

So much for the stamps in use up to 1885. As I have already reminded you, from about 1885 until 1896 the whole of the Sudan, with the exception of Wadi Halfa and Suakin was held by the followers of the Mahdi and of his successor the Khalifa and no posts were in operation in the occupied territory. But there was a good deal of fighting in the Suakin area and two expeditions were sent from Wadi Halfa, one in 1885 and another in 1896-8 and these operations have some bearing on the postal history of the country.

It will be convenient to keep what I call the Red Sea Littoral separate from the Expedition up the Nile from Wadi Halfa, as they had little to do with each other.

I will start with the Red Sea and get rid of Massawa and Suakin once and for all, but I am sorry I shall have to give you some more history and it will be convenient to start in 1882 before the country was fully overrun by the Mahdi.

OPERATIONS ON THE RED SEA LITTORAL.

During 1882 the power of the Mahdi was increasing and though repeated attempts were made by the Governor General of the Sudan to subdue him, these failed, usually with heavy losses, and the Mahdi's following swelled in proportion to his success.

In October 1882 the Governor General at Khartoum called for large reinforcements, but as the British Government were unwilling to send troops so far south, the Egyptian Government had to send the necessary forces. These consisted of about 10,000 native troops who were sent to Suakin by sea and thence across the desert to Berber on the Nile. These troops were little better than an armed mob and they had no success and eventually the Egyptian Government engaged a retired officer of the Indian Army, Col. W. Hicks, to take command of the Army.

He, together with a European Staff, duly arrived in the Sudan, and took command in July 1883. Two months later he marched into the Kordofan desert at the head of 10,000 men but met a greatly superior enemy force near El Obeid, and on the 4th November he and his army were totally destroyed.

As a result of this, the whole of the Sudan South of Khartoum lay at the mercy of the Mahdi, and the capital, Khartoum was in great peril.

As soon as the news of this disaster reached England, the British Government advised the Khedive to abandon all territory south of Wadi Halfa, but the Khedive was unwilling to do this, and applied to Turkey for 10,000 Turkish troops to be sent to Suakin. The British Government, however, would not agree to this, though it was obvious that troops from some source would have to be sent.

In the meantime, in August 1883, the tribes round Sinkat, an important village lying some 40 miles inland from Suakin rose against the Government. At their head was a man named Osman Digna.

In October 1883 Osman Digna invested Sinkat and moved towards Suakin and besieged Tokar and on the 6th November he wiped out the Egyptian troops who had been sent from Suakin to relieve that place. On the 2nd December he annihilated a small Egyptian force near Tamanieb and all the country inland from Suakin was in his hands.

In order to deal with the situation the Egyptian Government appointed Major General V. Baker, head of the Egyptian Gendarmerie, to raise a force of 4,000 men and take it to Suakin.

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This force encountered a much smaller army under Osman Digna at El Teb on the 4th February 1884, and was completely routed.

On the 8th the garrison at Sinkat was wiped out.

The British Government then decided that British troops must be sent and accordingly two Brigades of British Infantry, and other troops - about 4,000 in all - under command of Major General Sir Gerald Graham, V.C., K.C.B., were despatched and reached Suakin on 22nd February 1884. On the 25th most of the troops were landed at Trinkitat, preparatory to a move towards Tokar, which had fallen to Osman Digna.

On the 29th February the force met and completely defeated the Dervish Army at El Teb and then advanced to Tokar which was found abandoned by the enemy.

Early in March the force was concentrated at Suakin but on the 13th they again encountered and completely routed a Dervish force at Tamai.

The road to Berber was now open but the British Government refused to allow the force under General Graham to proceed there and in fact gave instructions that the campaign was to be brought to a close. Two British battalions were left at Suakin as a garrison and the remainder was withdrawn.

In February 1885, after the fall of Khartoum, and the death of General Gordon, the British Government decided to send a second expedition under Lt. Gen. Sir Gerald Graham, V.C., K.C.B., to Suakin with the intention of crushing Osman Digna and guarding the construction of a railway from Suakin to Berber.

By April General Graham's force amounted to some 13,000 fighting men and 11,000 followers.

On the 19th March he defeated a small Dervish force at Hashin and on the 22nd a larger one at Tofrik.

On the 2nd April a strong force was sent out to attack Tamai which was known to be Osman Digna's headquarters but on the 3rd the place was found to be deserted and having destroyed the huts and stores, the force withdrew to Suakin.

In the meantime work on the railway proceeded very slowly and on the 2nd May, Lord Wolseley arrived at Suakin with the news that the British Government had once more decided to abandon the Sudan and to discontinue the construction of the Railway to Berber. Consequently a large force was no longer required at Suakin.

The force was accordingly reduced until all that was left was one British battalion, an Indian contingent and several Egyptian units, about 6,000 men in all.

During the following few years the garrison remained at Suakin and the defences were put into a proper state. Osman Digna, however, was still at large and still had a large following and in January 1888 he established himself at Handib and attacked the water forts at Suakin. He was pushed back by a small force under Sir H. Kitchener, the Governor-General of the Red Sea Littoral, but Kitchener was severely wounded in the neck and had to go to Cairo.

Osman Digna then increased his activities round Suakin and blockaded the town until September, when he threatened a serious attack. The town's garrison was accordingly strengthened and the Sirdar of the Egyptian Army, Major General F.W. Grenfell, C.B., took command. On the 20th December he led his force out of the town and routed the enemy at Gemmaiza near Handib.

Once more, however, the British Government withdrew the forces and a garrison of about 2,000 was all that was left at Suakin.

Osman Digna continued to cause trouble and early in 1891 a force from Suakin occupied Handib and Tokar and later Afafit (a short distance beyond Tokar) at which place Osman Digna was decisively defeated.

In 1892 Osman Digna returned and caused some trouble near Suakin and in 1895 he raided Tokar. In 1896 a small force was despatched from Suakin to deal with him and he was driven back into the hills. Early in 1900 he was captured in the Gemilab Hills 100 miles south of Suakin.

During the Dongola Expedition of 1896 every available Egyptian soldier was needed on the Nile, so a contingent of Indian troops was sent to hold Suakin to replace the Egyptian garrisons.

It will be seen that British troops were employed on various occasions in the Red Sea area but only once were English stamps used, i.e., in 1885.

In that year a detachment of the Army Postal Corps consisting of 20 N.C.O's and men under Major Sturgeon left England on 3rd March and returned to England on 28th July 1885. They opened an office at Suakin and do not appear to have functioned elsewhere, though there was probably a sub-office somewhere in the vicinity.

For cancelling the postage stamps they used a single lined circle enclosing the words British Army Post Office, Egypt, with the date in the centre and over the date a letter, A or C.

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Military Telegraph stamps were cancelled with a large double lined circle inscribed "Field Telegraph No. - " between the circles and the date in two lines with either SK or QI above it in the centre.

It is the use of these two pairs of letters which leads me to suggest that two offices were in operation at or near Suakin.

The postal arrangements are contained in a poster dated 11th August 1882, a photograph of which I am showing you. This was published for the Egyptian War of 1882, but the G.P.O. confirm that the regulations remained in force in 1885. You will notice that the poster refers to regulations published in the Post Office Guide. I have also obtained an extract from the Guide for the date in question and am showing you a copy.

I am also showing several pages of Postage ^{AND} Telegraph stamps of Great Britain used at Suakin 1885.

Regarding the Indian contingents which served on the Red Sea Littoral between 1885 and 1896 I have been unable to obtain any very precise details of their postal arrangements, but it is, I think, quite clear that they had their own postal detachments, and these functioned not only at Suakin but also at Tokar.

A fair number of soldiers' and seamen's envelopes with embossed 9 pies stamps surcharged 1 anna exist, mostly used in 1896-7 and I am showing some of these. Other material is rare but I am passing round what I have. You will notice that these come from Tokar as well as Suakin.

There are several types of postmark which I need not describe in detail as they are before you, but I might mention that the type showing a large B in a circle of parallel lines was used at Tokar. As however, a similar type of postmark was used on Indian stamps in other places in East Africa you must have it on a cover to be sure that it was used in the Sudan.

The Egyptian Civil Post Office remained open during the whole period under review to satisfy the postal requirements of the local inhabitants and also, apart from five months in 1885, for use by the Military garrison.

I am showing some further examples of Egyptian stamps used in Massawa and Suakin and we can now leave the Red Sea Littoral and go back to the Nile.

THE CAMPAIGN of 1884-1885 up the Nile undertaken to relieve General Gordon at Khartoum.

In February 1884 General Gordon arrived back in Khartoum to supervise the withdrawal of the Egyptian garrison but on the 19th April all communication with Khartoum was cut off, and in August, moved by public opinion, Mr. Gladstone, the Prime Minister, moved a vote of credit in the House of Commons to undertake operations for the relief of Gordon.

Lord Wolseley, who had had experience of river transport in Canada was appointed to command the force and he had to assist him Colonel Sir William Butler who had had similar experience.

The original plan was simple. A column of infantry in boats was to work up the River from Wadi Halfa, accompanied by mounted troops and transport on the Banks. If the column was delayed a camel corps was to leave the Nile at Korti and strike across the Bayuda Desert to Metemma. Having arrived there a small force was to be despatched to Khartoum by steamers to be sent down by Gordon.

Special boats were built in the British Isles and sent out to Alexandria whence they were sent by train to Assiut and so up the river to Wadi Halfa.

It had been hoped to use the railway which ran from Wadi Halfa to Saras ($33\frac{1}{2}$ miles) to transport the boats round the second Cataract, but the railway was found to be of very little use.

The history of this railway is interesting. The original idea came from Said Pasha who, in 1860, proposed to connect the Sudan with Egypt by a railway. Nothing much was done until 1873 when Ismail Pasha instructed an English firm to construct a 3'6" gauge line from Halfa to Kerma at the head of the third Cataract.

Modifications and alterations in the scheme followed, but by 1877 the line had reached Saras ($33\frac{1}{2}$ miles) and the formation, exclusive of bridges, was completed for a further 21 miles.

The line did not pay and General Gordon as Governor General of the Sudan objected to the scheme being continued and from 1877 to 1884 the short length of line was used only about once a week and everything fell into decay.

In October 1884 the 8th Railway Co. R.E. arrived from England and took over the railway and by the 2nd of November two trains a day were running between Halfa and Saras. The line was extended southward until the 21st February 1885, when a station was opened at Ambigol Road, 17 miles from Saras and $50\frac{1}{2}$ from Wadi Halfa.

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In the meantime the Army had proceeded up the Nile in boats and early in November 1884 the headquarters had reached Dongola and by Christmas Day most of the force was concentrated at Korti.

It was then decided to send a Desert Column on camels across the Bayuda Desert to Metemma occupying the oasis of Gakdul and Abu Klea on the way, while the River column would fight its way up the Nile, capture the Abu Hamed, drive the Dervishes from Berber and join hands with the desert column at Metemma.

The desert column was commanded by Brig. Gen. Sir Herbert Stewart and the river column by Major Gen. Earle.

On the 30th December the desert column set out and on the 17th January 1885, having occupied the wells at Gakdul, the enemy were decisively defeated at Abu Klea. On the following day the advance was continued and on the 19th the force occupied Gubat on the river. General Stewart had been wounded on the 18th January and the command of the Desert Column fell to Sir Charles Wilson.

On the 24th January as a result of messages received from Khartoum, a small force was embarked on two steamers which proceeded up the river and on the 28th Khartoum was in sight, but those on board learned that the town had fallen two days previously. The two vessels proceeded as far as the junction of the Blue and White Niles after which they returned down stream and on the 4th February the force arrived back at Gubat with great difficulty, having lost one steamer on the way.

Meanwhile the river column was advancing up the river from Korti in 217 boats, with mounted troops on the banks. On the 4th February while at Birti the Commander heard of the fall of Khartoum and received orders to halt. On the 8th however, he was allowed to proceed but on the 24th February when the force was only 26 miles from Abu Hamed orders were received to withdraw to Merowe, where the column arrived on the 5th March and later in the month it joined hands with the desert column at Korit.

Towards the end of March the force commenced to withdraw to Dongola, leaving rearguards at Korti, and on the 11th May complete evacuation of the Sudan was ordered and by June the Nile Expedition was at an end.

One brigade was, however, left at Wadi Halfa, with outposts at Kosha, 42 miles south of the Railway Terminus at Akasha. On the 30th December a Dervish force appeared near Kosha and Gennis but was defeated.

Early in 1886 the force was withdrawn to Wadi Halfa, this place being held by Egyptian troops, while the British troops were stationed further north at Aswan and other places.

No special postal arrangements appear to have been made for this expedition and in particular, no detachment of the Army Postal Corps accompanied the troops.

Covers from the Expedition are rare and I have only seen one bearing a stamp of any kind from Korti, 9th Feb. 1885. Usually they are endorsed "On Active Service, No Stamps Available" or some similar wording and they were delivered at destination on payment of 1d. or 2½d.

The current type of Egyptian post mark was used on the covers, the least rare being Korti. I am showing such covers as I possess.

From 1885 until 1896 no post offices were in operation in the Nile Valley south of Wadi Halfa.

THE CAMPAIGN OF 1896-1898.

Ever since the death of Gordon in January 1885 the British public had been anxious to avenge his murder but the Government were unwilling to go to the expense of a further expedition and intimated that any expedition should be composed of the Egyptian Army, which, by 1896 consisted of fourteen well trained battalions of Infantry commanded by the Sirdar, Col. H.H. Kitchener.

Early in 1896, however, certain political events took place which altered the position. In the first place, a strong Conservative Government came into power in Great Britain, and rumours reached London that the French from Equatorial Africa were advancing towards the upper water of the Nile. Moreover, the Italians advancing from Massawa to Kassala were hard pressed by the Abyssinians and on the 1st March were crushingly defeated at Adowa. In these circumstances it was feared that the Dervishes might invade Egypt and a suitable pretext was furnished for immediate action. On the 13th March a telegram was despatched to Kitchener to commence operations. The Campaign which followed may be divided into two parts.

- (1) The Dongola expedition of 1896-7 which followed the route of the old Wadi-Halfa - Saras Railway and
- (2) the campaign for the capture of Khartoum for which a new railway was built from Wadi Halfa across the desert to Abu Hamed and eventually to Khartoum.

THE DONGOLA EXPEDITION.

The Nile route was followed by this Expedition which was composed of the Egyptian Army with certain British Battalions attached, all under the command of Kitchener. The dervishes were in strength at Dongola with outposts at Suarda, Firket and Akasha.

The campaign opened on 16th March 1896 when a small force was despatched to seize Akasha, which was reached on the 20th.

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The old railway between Saras and Akasha had been destroyed but this was soon in working order again and it was extended as the force moved forward until in May 1897 it reached Kerma from which point it was not taken further.

Until the latter part of May 1896 there was no move forward from Akasha, but the force was concentrated there and the railway relaid and communications opened up. On the 7th June a strong force which had left Akasha a few days earlier completely routed a Dervish force at Firket and a large area was cleared of the enemy.

The force occupied Kosha but a serious outbreak of Cholera occurred and spread to Saras, Ambigol, Akasha and irket.

No further advance took place until August but on the 26th June railhead reached Akasha and on the 4th August it reached Kosha.

Meanwhile, further British reinforcements had arrived and in August, when the Nile rose, several steamers were hauled through the second Cataract at Wadi Halfa and on the 23rd August four gunboats and three unarmed steamers arrived at Kosha. Another steamer which had been built in England and sent out in sections arrived at Kosha and was put together there.

In August the advance continued and Abu Sari was occupied on the 23rd and later the force concentrated at Fareig.

On the 18th September the force advanced against the enemy at Kerma but they withdrew to Hafir on the opposite side of the river.

On the 19th the enemy were shelled by the gunboats which then proceeded up river to Dongola which they reached the same evening.

The enemy evacuated Hafir during the night and the advance was continued and on the 24th September Dongola was entered.

Subsequently El Debba, Korti and Merowi were occupied and by the end of the year Dongola province was more or less pacified.

During this expedition unoverprinted Egyptian stamps were used at Wadi Halfa and very occasionally by the troops up the Nile. As a general rule, however, letters were sent unstamped. I am showing a number of such covers, some of which you will observe were written by Capt. Stanton, the Designer of the first Sudan postage stamp and addressed to England. As a general rule these were taxed 2½d. on arrival, which was the proper rate for an Officer's letter, but in two instances the double rate of 5d. was charged and once only 1d. which was the appropriate rate for a soldier's letter.

The other Series, mostly signed by Major Drage were addressed to Egypt and no charge was levied on these. Apparently they were looked upon as local letters on which presumably no charge was made at this

time though in the following year a charge of 3 mills was made on such letters.

I come now to the final campaign.

THE CAMPAIGN FOR THE RECAPTURE OF OMDURMAN AND KHARTOUM.

On the 1st January 1897 a new railway from Wadhi Halfa to Abu Hamed was commenced. The reason for this was that the new campaign was likely to be considerably greater than that which had undertaken the recapture of Dongola province in the previous year and much larger forces would be required.

To have followed the Dongola route would have entailed bridging the Nile between Debba and Merowe and constructing the railway across the Bayuda Desert in the face of hostile action from Metemma.

The distance from Wadi Halfa to Abu Hamed is 230 miles and at first progress was slow as for the first five months of 1897 the Kerma Railway was still under construction. By the middle of July, however, about 100 miles had been laid.

Kitchener then decided that Abu Hamed must be captured before the railway could advance further and accordingly a strong flying column was sent from the Merowe District to capture the town, which lay some 118 miles distant, and on 7th August Abu Hamed was duly captured. As a result, of this, and of patrolling by gunboats, the enemy evacuated Berber on the 24th August and the town was occupied by our troops on the 5th September. Later in the month a Camel Corps post was established at Dakhila, afterwards known as Atbara.

On the 31st October the railway reached Abu Hamed and early in November the Suakin-Berber route was reopened after having been closed for 13 years.

During the closing months of the year it appeared likely that the enemy would make a heavy attack on Berber and on the 1st January 1898 Kitchener applied for British troops to be sent to reinforce his army and a British Brigade from Egypt under Col. Gatacre, C.B., D.S.O., arrived at Abu Dis, 30 miles south of Abu Hamed by the end of the month.

The main Dervish army, some 40,000 strong, was at Omdurman with a further 20,000 at Metemma.

In February the enemy force at Metemma under the Emir Mahaud marched against Berber and crossed the Nile on the 25th February. Meanwhile, railhead had reached Sherik, 70 miles short of Berber on the same day.

Mahmud's army was in the angle formed by the Rivers Nile and Atbara and on 12th March he began to move down the Nile to attack Atbara but on the 18th he struck across country towards Hudi on the Atbara, only to find that the Anglo-Egyptian Army had arrived there before him.

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Mahmud therefore swung further south and took up a position near the village of Nakheila where he was attacked and defeated by the Anglo-Egyptian army on the 8th April in a battle known as the Battle of the Atbara.

Subsequently the troops went into summer quarters at Atbara, Abadieh, Darmali, Selim and Berber.

On the 5th May railhead reached Abadieh, 12 miles north of Berber and on the 3rd July the railway from Wadhi Halfa to Atbara was completed.

During the summer further reinforcements arrived and by August the army consisted of 8,200 British and 17,600 Egyptian and Sudanese troops with 44 guns and 20 maxims on land and 36 guns and 24 maxims on the river. This force was considered to be sufficient for the work of destroying the Dervish Army and reoccupying Khartoum and the advance commenced.

On the 25th August, Metemma was occupied and on the 2nd December the Dervish Army was completely routed at the Battle of Omdurman where the enemy lost over 11,000 killed and 16,000 wounded, the Anglo-Egyptian losses being 48 killed and 382 wounded only.

This was the decisive battle of the campaign and the ruins of Khartoum were occupied, a Memorial Service to Gordon being held there on 4th September.

This ended the campaign and the bulk of the British troops returned to Egypt.

The postal services during the campaign were as follows:-

On 1st March 1897 the first (Provisional) issue of Sudan postage stamps appeared, eight values of Contemporary Egyptian stamps being overprinted for the use of the troops.

In some instances however unoverprinted Egyptian stamps continued to be used and occasionally no stamps were available and letters were endorsed accordingly.

The postal rate for letters from the Expeditionary Force to Egypt was fixed at 3 mills for prepaid and 6 mills for unpaid letters but arrangements were made to charge only 3 mills on unpaid letters from the forces delivered in Egypt when the senders' commanding officer certified that no stamps were available.

This postage was collected by affixing a 2 mill, Egyptian postage stamp together with half of a similar stamp, but later a 3 Mill. postage due stamp was made by surcharging an Egyptian 2 PT postage due stamp.

On the 1st March 1898 the second (permanent) issue of Sudan postage stamps appeared. This was designed by Captain (later Colonel) E.A. Stanton (pasha) C.M.G., later Governor of Khartoum.

I am showing some covers from members of the Expeditionary Force and also examples of the use of split Egyptian postage dues.

During this period the Posts and Telegraphs were being run by the Army and in most cases the Post Office and Telegraph Office were in the same building or tent.

The first provisional issue of postage stamps was overprinted T E L in an oval in Black or Blue by means of a hand stamp for use on telegrams and in 1898 a special issue of Military Telegraph Stamps appeared. It seems, however, that the postal authorities did not always bother to use the special Telegraph stamps on telegrams as many postage stamps of the first two issues are known cancelled Army Telegraphs.

There is one other form of cancellation which is occasionally met with on the stamps of the first two issues. I refer to the Manuscript Cancellations such as "Rail Head" or "Atbara" and the like which it has been suggested were postal markings in use before the proper obliterations became available.

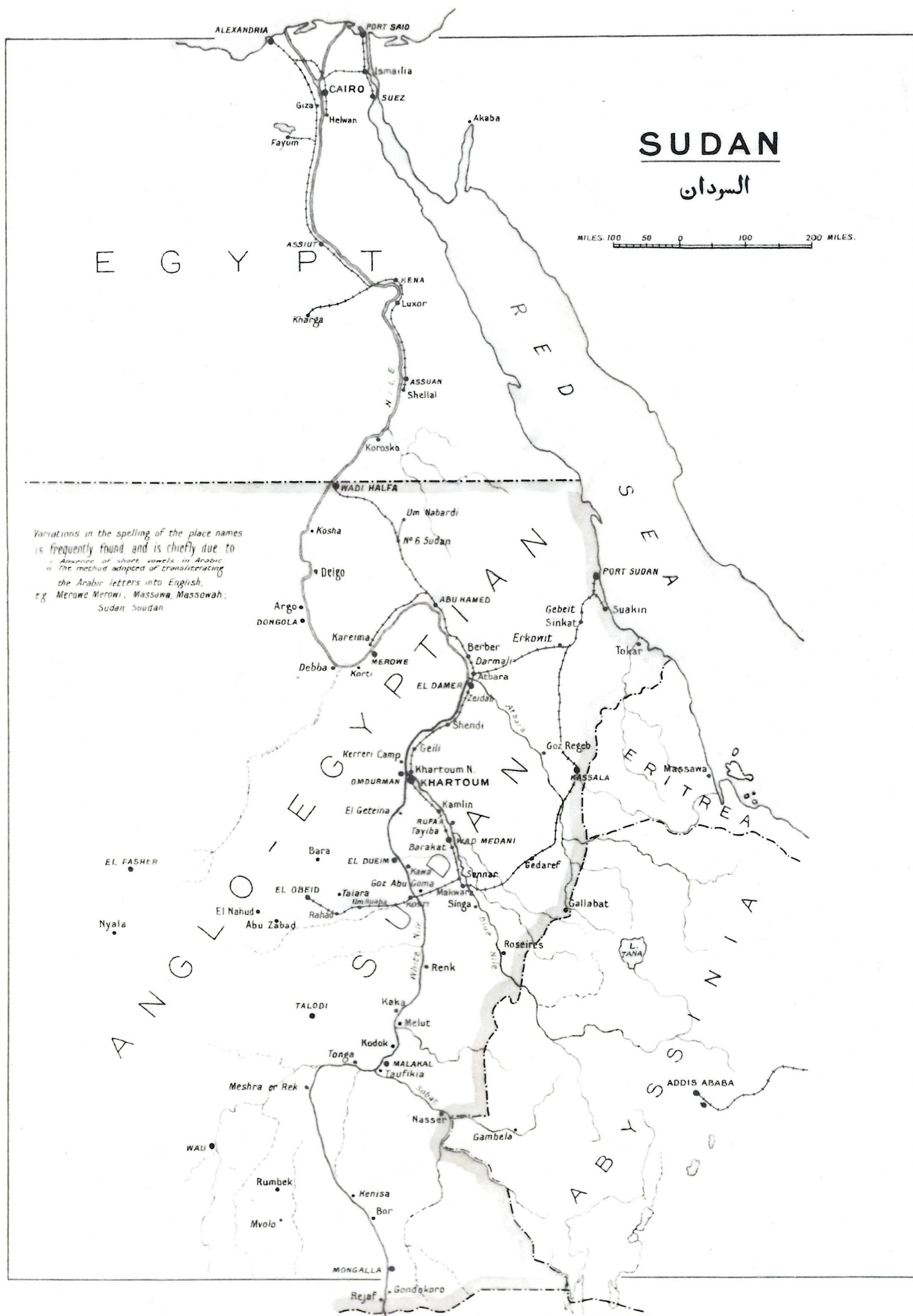
In my opinion these cancellations are all of Telegraphic and not postal origin, though some of these are really fiscals.

I am showing a few telegraph forms containing Manuscript cancellations on the stamps and it will be seen that in some instances fines for Text Errors are referred to. I conclude from these forms that the native telegraph operators were fined so many Milliemes for each Transmitting error they made and each month the fines were collected. To do this the names of the offenders were written on a telegraph form together with the amount of the fine and as each man paid his fine, stamps of a similar value were affixed to the form for accountancy purposes, and cancelled either in manuscript or by the use of the office stamp.

* * * * *

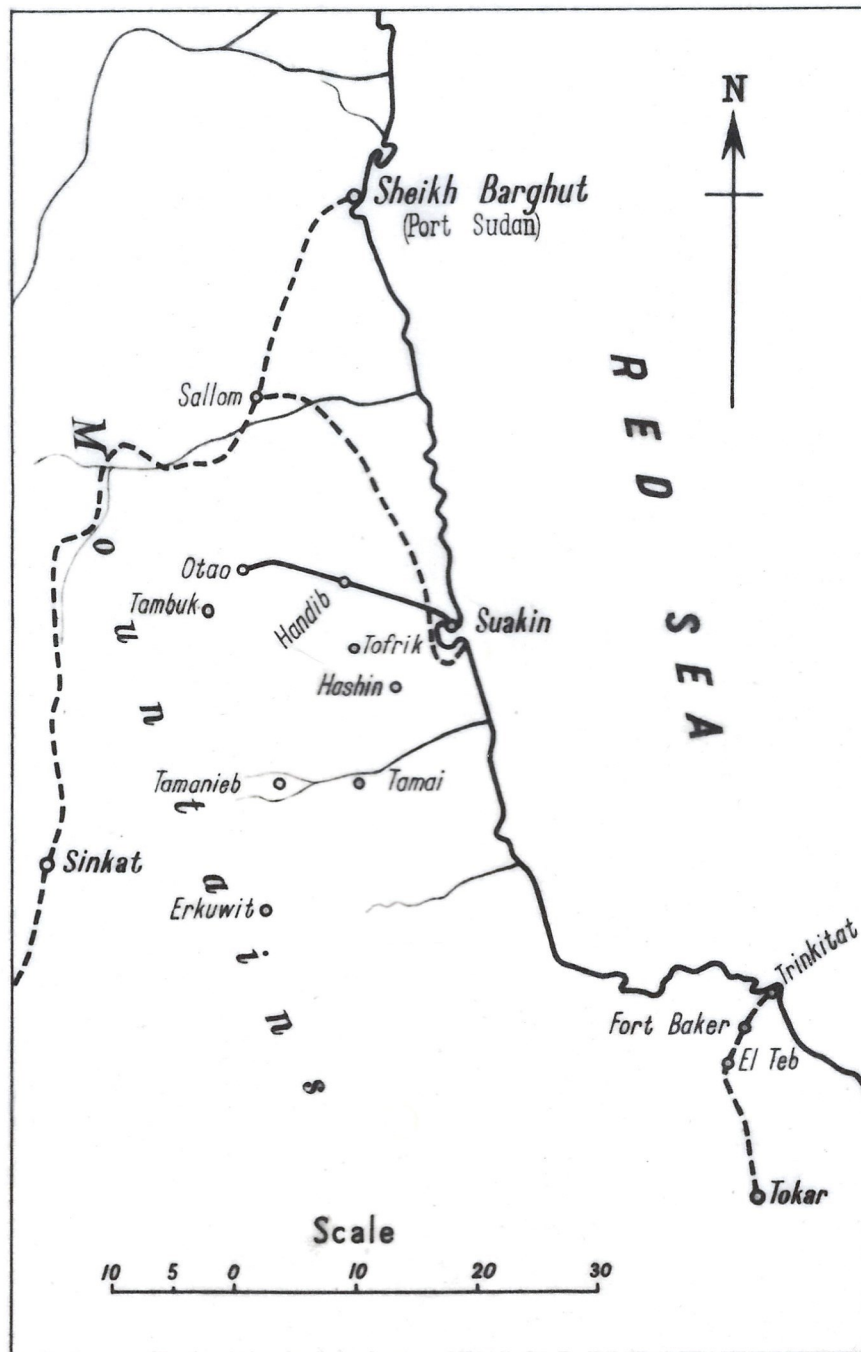
Editor's Note: Any member who is specially interested in this subject can obtain a set of the 4 maps, referred to in the 2nd paragraph, on application to the Secretary. Price 2/6d post free.

(Paper accompanying Display, 6 Feb. 1952.)



Sketch Map of the Suakin District in 1885.

Railways - existing - shown thus —
 Modern Railways shown thus - - -

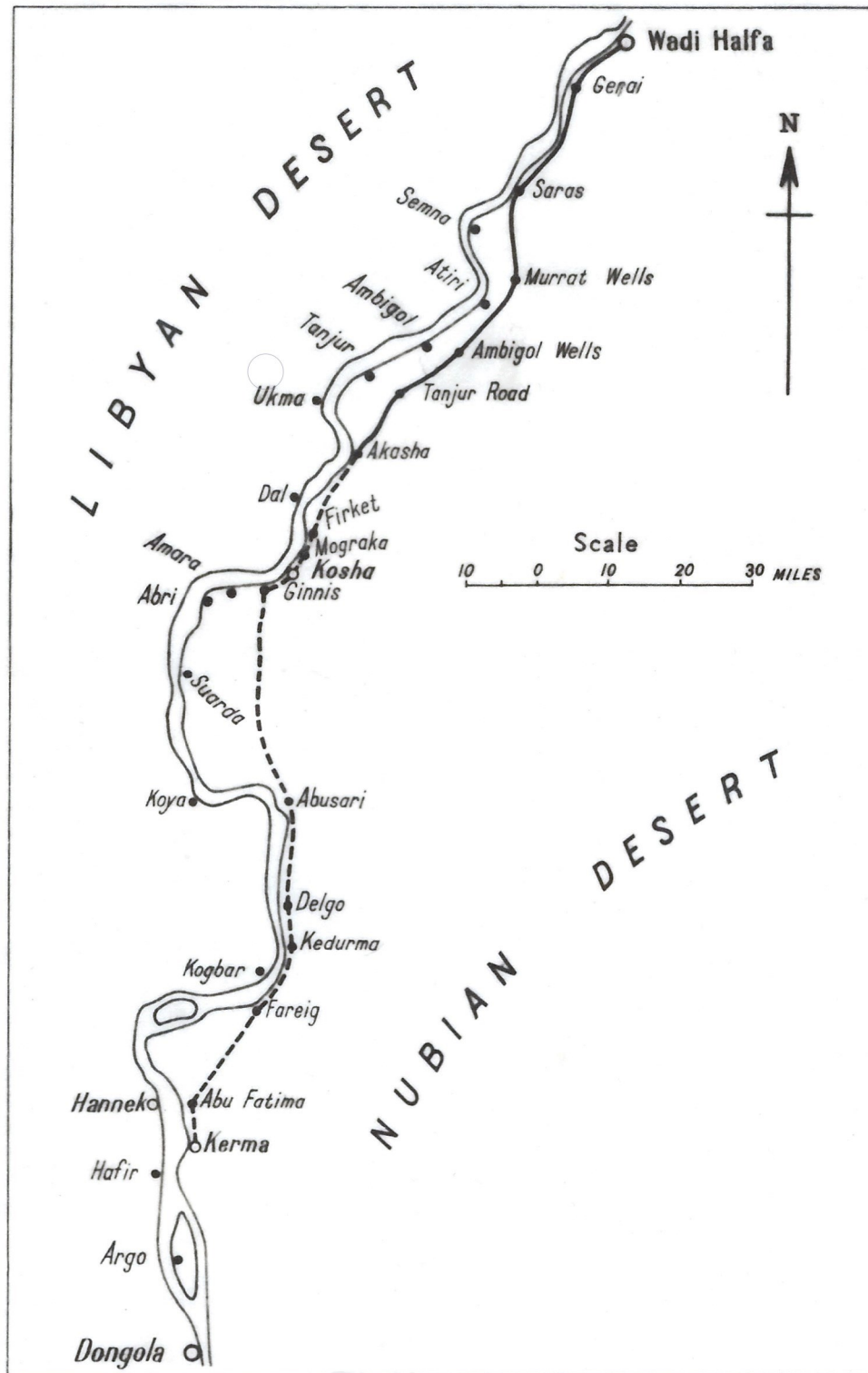


*Copied from "The Royal Engineers in Egypt
 & the Sudan" by Lt. Col. E.W.C. Sandes, D.S.O., M.C.*

Sketch Map of The Nile from WADI HALFA to DONGOLA

Showing the Halfa-Akasha Railway of 1885, thus ———
and its extension to KERMA in 1896, thus - - - - -

River Nile shown in blue.



Copied from "The Royal Engineers in Egypt and the Sudan" - by Lt. Col. E.W.C. Sandes, D.S.O., M.C.