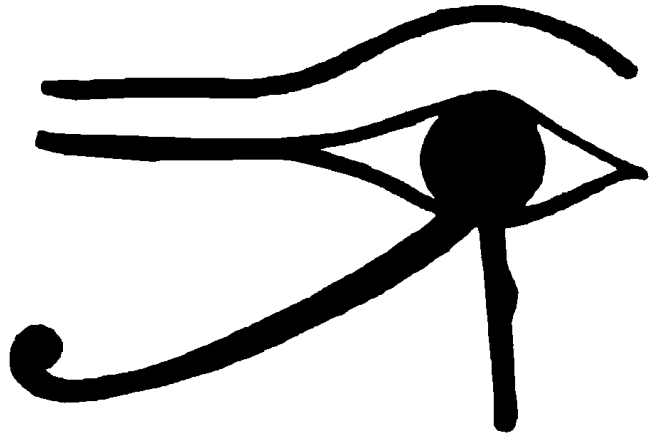


ISSN 0269—252X

The  
Quarterly Circular  
of

THE  
EGYPT

STUDY CIRCLE



June Quarter 2009  
Volume XX No. 6

Whole Series No. 229  
Pages 121–144

**CONTENTS.**

Officers 121, Meetings 122, Members 144, Members' Exhibition success 144,  
Members' Announcements iv

**ARTICLES.**

How Rare are the IAFFA and DALLA STAZIONE Postmarks?	Peter R. Feltus	p124-126
French Forces in Egypt during World War One	Pierre L. Grech	p127-143
Answering the call, reply to QC 228,	Anton Jansen	p144



[www.egyptstudycircle.org.uk](http://www.egyptstudycircle.org.uk)



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

**EGYPT.**

**Stamps: Classic from 1866 to Modern until 1980, Covers from rare early stampless maritime mail, First Issue covers and Proofs of all issues, Farouk Imperfs, Colour Trials, Specimens, Booklets. All facets of Egyptian Postal History bought & sold. Essays, Multiples, Postmarks, Overseas Usages, Suez Canal Company, All Foreign Post Offices and British Forces. In fact Everything for the devoted collector of Egypt!**



1868: Entire letter from Epsom to Mansura franked by 6d. bright violet, plate 6 tied by '280' Epsom duplex. Reverse with fine strike of 'Poste Vice-Reali Egiziane/Alessandria' datestamp (Nov 29) and struck with '1' piastre due marking in black, in Alexandria for the internal rate to Mansura (Nov 30). A rare and fine cover that opens well for Exhibit display. SG 107. £750.

**Quality Stamps, Proofs and Rare Postal History of the World always  
required for Stock or on a confidential Private Treaty basis.**

P.O. BOX 111 LYMINGTON HAMPSHIRE ENGLAND S041 6ZJ

Telephone 01 590 682 683 facsimile 01 590 681 999

Toddytripzinc@aol.com

VAT No. GB 561 9567 09

## **EGYPT STUDY CIRCLE OFFICERS**

**Website: [egyptstudycircle.org.uk](http://egyptstudycircle.org.uk)**

President:	Mr. J. Sears, FRPSL 496 Uxbridge Road, Pinner, Middlesex HA5 4SL.
Chairman:	Mr. P. Andrews 51 Elizabeth Road, Moseley, Birmingham B13 8QH ancientone@btinternet.com
Deputy Chairman:	Mr. J.S. Horesh, U.K.
Secretary:	Mr. M. Murphy 109 Chadwick Road, Peckham, London SE15 4PY egyptstudycircle@hotmail.com
Treasurer:	Mr B. Sedgley Greenpeckers, Seven Hills Road, Cobham, Surrey KT11 1ER brian.sedgley@talktalk.net
Editor:	Mr. E. Hall 6 Bedford Avenue, Little Chalfont, Amersham, Bucks HP6 6PT edmundhall@chalfont.eclipse.co.uk
Librarian:	Mr. D.J. Davis Church View Cottage, Church Road, Upton Snodsbury, Worcestershire WR7 4NH davisatsnodsbury@tiscali.co.uk
Publicity Officer:	Mr. D. Sedgwick 9 Eastlands, High Heaton, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE7 7YD -ann.david_@tiscali.co.uk
North America. Agent:	Mr R.S. Wilson 53 Middle Patent Road, Bedford Village, NY. 10506, U.S.A dadu1@verizon.net
Egypt Agent:	Dr I. Shoukry Apt 1, 10 Kamal El-Tawil St (Ex-Montaza), Zamalek, Cairo, Egypt ishoukry@link.net
Antipodean Agent:	Mr A. J. Chisholm 13 Arden Way, Wilton, Wellington 6005, New Zealand. j_t_chis@clear.net.nz
Committee:	Mr. D. H. Clarke. U.K.

### **Forthcoming Meetings 2009**

July 18 (in York) **	Various	Three speakers
September 19*	Queries/Acquisitions	All Members
November 7	A Railway Journey down the Nile	Dennis Clarke

Midpex July, 11, 2009

Stampex September 16-19, 2009

Philatex November 5-7, 2009

Meetings are normally held at the Victory Services Club, Seymour Street, Marble Arch, London. Members usually congregate in the ground floor bar from 1pm onwards and meetings commence at 2pm.

\* This meeting will be at Stampex at the Business Design Centre, Islington, North London.

\*\* St Chad's on the Knavesmire, Campleshon Road, York - easy walking distance from Racecourse Fair.

### **Report of the Annual General Meeting, May 2 2009**

PRESENT: John Sears (President), Peter Andrews (Chairman), Stanley Horesh (Deputy Chairman), Mike Murphy (Secretary), Edmund Hall (Editor/webmaster), Brian Sedgley (Treasurer), John Davis (Librarian), Dennis Clarke, John Clarke, Mostafa El-Dars, Peter Grech, Paul Green, Alan Jeyes, Sami Sadek, Lewis Said. Guest: Atef Sarian

APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence were received from: David Sedgwick (Publicity), Mike Bramwell, Cyril Defriez, Margaret Chadwick.

Before the meeting the Secretary drew attention to gifts to the Library of reprints of old Egypt postcards, together with bookmarks and a 2009 calendar similarly based, produced by Mohamed Nofal (ESC 489).

Consideration was then given to an application for membership from Atef Sarian, of North London, who attended the meeting as a guest: he was welcomed to membership without a dissenting voice.

Chairman's Report: The Chairman then welcomed those in attendance, and after apologies for absence and a negative on matters arising from the minutes of the last AGM, opened his annual report by saying that we had had a successful year, though with one or two disappointments. These included the resignation of Sherif Samra (ESC 311) as President of the Philatelic Society of Egypt – “a good friend to many in the Circle; we shall miss him very much” – cancellation at the last minute of the meeting planned for Alexandria, and cancellation for lack of support of the New Zealand meeting – “a great pity”. He noted that five days of completely philatelic events was rarely found, and hoped that a meeting might be reinstated for next year.

But not all was gloom and doom: he was happy to note a year of worthwhile displays – particularly from the Acquisitions and Queries meetings, and wondered whether more of these short-talk meetings should be scheduled. The greatest step forward, though, had been on the website, where the hard work of Edmund Hall (ESC 239) had produced something always fascinating and constantly updated with something new. He urged all members to log in and look at the members section, which he hoped would eventually become a wonderful reference library of Egyptian philately.

Looking forward, he welcomed the prospect of our July meeting being in York, and urged consideration of more regional meetings – “I implore you to try to ensure that we get at least one each year” – and offered to arrange a meeting in Birmingham if members wished. He hoped York would be a great draw, and the first of many. The Chairman thanked the Committee for its willing help and support over an interesting year.

Secretary's Report: The Secretary spoke of his grave disappointment at the cancellation of the Alexandria meeting. He advised that membership was increased slightly over the year, from 191 to 199 members, but feared that as several members had yet to pay subscriptions due on January 1, there may be some lapses to come. He noted that the advent of voting papers in the December QC form had quadrupled the numbers supporting the Macarthur Award, and handed over to the Chairman to announce the winner: for the second successive year it was Ahmed Abu Mousa (ESC 584), of Abu Dhabi, with his *Retouches and Flaws on the Fuad Second Issue*. The meeting congratulated Ahmed, and noted that clearly this is the sort of article we like to see in the QC!

Treasurer's Report: The Treasurer presented Circle accounts to December 31 2008, noting a higher income from the increased subscription rate as well as an increase in donations and a small income from the sale of *Postal Bulletin* disks. Expenditure on the QC was slightly up, and Library expenditure very much reduced after the one-off purchase of the *Postal Bulletins* in 2007. The transfer from the Auction account remained constant at £1,500, leading to a surplus for the year of £1,961.18 as against a deficit of £586.10 in 2007. See details, p iii. Members voted to adopt the Accounts (proposed, John Davis; seconded, Peter Andrews). The Treasurer then proposed a vote of thanks to the Accountant, Stephen Bunce (ESC 272), which was seconded by Edmund Hall and warmly applauded.

Auction Report: John Sears reported that the recently completed Auction 47 had sold £8,800 worth of material with only two returns. There had been delays, however, with late delivery of material and late payments, which could potentially cut the Circle commission. He noted that Auctions depended on the same members to supply material each time, and urged all members to become involved for the good of the Circle.

Editor/Webmaster Report: Edmund Hall (ESC 239) reported that the June *QC* was virtually full, but after that there was a yawning gap – and appealed to members to supply any item of interest, whether a learned research piece of eight pages or a one-paragraph titbit: all was grist to the mill. He referred to another postage increase in April, and Sami Sadek (ESC 559) suggested that we might consider online publishing as a cheaper alternative.

On the website front, he reported that much new material had gone up in the members-only area in recent weeks, and was determined to carry forward the mix of archive material from the *QC* or elsewhere with chapters and updates from Peter Smith's wonderful book, and augmented by pages from members' collections. He welcomed the Chairman's enthusiasm, and urged all members to contribute new illustrations.

Library Report: John Davis (ESC 213) said that he could not yet provide a complete accounting as he was still awaiting the results of the sale of the late Robin Bertram's Sudan books through the Sudan Study Group auction. He announced, however, that the net profit from having bought Robin's books at Grosvenor would be £199.50 plus the SSG figure, plus quite a long list of books added to the Library itself. He announced the Circle's gratitude for gifts of *Whatever Happened to the Egyptians?* (AUC Press 2000; Peter Grech) and *Postcard Collectors' Guide to Egypt II: Raphael Tuck* (Mohamed Nofal).

ESC 75th Anniversary and London 2010: The Committee expressed its great gratitude to Stanley Horesh (Deputy Chairman) for having arranged the celebration luncheon meeting for the Victory Services Club on May 7, 2010, and arrangements were discussed at length. Eventually, on the proposal of Edmund Hall seconded by Peter Andrews, the meeting voted to provide a cost-free lunch for all foreign members and spouses, subject to a refundable deposit. Since space may be limited, early acceptance by all members is advised when full details will be announced later in the year. The date and venue are confirmed: please come to help us celebrate!

The Circle will be sharing a table at London 2010 with the Sudan Study Group and the meeting discussed ways in which we might seek publicity and new members. Mike Murphy expressed the hope that the book he is writing with Dr Ibrahim Shoukry on the Rural Post might by then be available, and among many other suggestions it was decided to publish a full-colour *QC* with contributions from as many members as possible: we appeal to all to send in suitable articles, and to volunteer to "man" the stand at London 2010.

Because London 2010 clashes with our normal AGM date, it was decided to delay full consideration of next year's meeting dates until we can judge the success of the York regional meeting, though we shall, as ever, coincide as much as possible with Stampex and Philatex.

Affiliation to the ABPS: Full consideration was given to continuing our affiliation with the Association of British Philatelic Societies (ABPS), and the Secretary drew attention to submissions by 12 members as well as reading out recent emails from three ABPS officials – Colin Searle, the Secretary, John Baron, vice-chair of the Executive Committee, and Willie King, chairman of the PR Committee, all of which were received in two days after clarification of what the ABPS did for its affiliates was sought. In essence, the ABPS officials all admitted that the organisation had largely lost its way, that it was in the throes of change, that a better world was coming, based largely on a much-improved website (sponsored by Grosvenor!), and appealed for us to remain affiliated and to stick with them as the ABPS set out on the right track again... Interestingly, they also raised the question of double-payment of affiliation fees (members might have already paid through membership of a local or other specialist society; something that had not occurred to us. A straw poll revealed that about half of those present were members of another society).

Discussion was long and intense, but it rapidly became clear that the feeling of the room was that our affiliation fees gained us virtually no benefit and that though we supported the idea of an organisation fostering philately in the UK and improving its standards, we did not feel that the ABPS was yet in a position where we could pledge it our support. A motion proposed by John Sears and seconded by Peter Andrews was accepted by 11 votes to two: we shall withdraw our affiliation and observe progress before deciding whether or not to renew.

Peter Grech then proposed a vote of thanks to the Committee for its work over the year, and the Annual General Meeting was formally closed. We then moved on to the Bourse, where, as usual, much material was brought and mulled over, and both buyers and sellers went away happy...

## How Rare are the IAFFA and DALLA STAZIONE Postmarks?

**Peter R. Feltus (ESC 114)**

In lot descriptions in auction catalogues we sometimes see indications of the rarity of the offered items, such as “only five such covers recorded”. Can we trust these figures? Usually not.

About four years ago a stamp bearing the IAFFA postmark was sold (in the David Feldman sale of November 2004 in Geneva). The description said “very few known”. Very recently another IAFFA was offered (in the House of Zion auction of February 2009 in California; the start price was \$1200 (plus 18% commission) and it didn’t sell). The description said “no more than two covers and fewer than 40 stamps known”. These IAFFA cancellations are wanted by Egypt collectors and by Holy Land collectors and thus the fetch higher prices than other postmarks of similar scarcity.



For some years I have been compiling lists of IAFFA and DALLA STAZIONE postmarks. There are now 29 IAFFA postmarks recorded. (Most are on Second Issue red stamps, while one is on the 2pt. blue stamp and a beauty is on a Third Issue 2pt. yellow stamp. Some forgeries are known; they are amusing, as the spelling there is JAFFA, with a J.)

The 30 known IAFFA postmarks on Egyptian stamps.

18	DEC	1870	(Hanna Berty of Paris discovery 25 years ago, now in P.R. Feltus collection in California.)
31	DEC	1870	(Greg Todd discovery, issued C.F. Hass certificate of 1993. Where now?)
20	GEN	1871	(Ex-R. Jeidel, ex-L. Alund, now in J. Chalhoub collection in Canada.)
21	GEN	1871	(Ex-John Gilbert, ex-Holy Land collection of Dr. M. Garfinkel in Florida, sold by Tel Aviv Stamps auction in June 2005 as lot 217 with colour photo. Where now?)
26	GEN	1871	(This date is in a Jaffa pmk date list in the <i>Handbook of Holy Land Philately</i> , without further details.)
1	MAR	1871	(On 1867 2pt blue, P.R.F. discovery in 1970, in P.R. Feltus collection in California.)
3	MAR	1871	(Ex-N.Tombazis of Egypt, photo in <i>L'OP</i> 95. Where now?)
3	MAR	1871	(P.A.S. Smith discovery in 1983, now in P.A.S. Smith collection in Michigan.)
24	MAR	1871	(Now in Forerunners of Palestine collection of Dr. A. Friedberg in Ohio.)
15	APR	1871	(Shown at Ameripex in 1986 in “Bela Sandor” collection of Palestine. Offered recently; Where now?)
?	MAG	1871	(Equally possibly? LUG 1871, ex-Dr. J. Settgest collection in Berlin. Where now?)
?	GIU	1871	(Robert Porter discovery in the 1990s, now in Robert Porter collection in Pennsylvania.)
2	GIU	1871	(Ex-A. Mazloun, ex-J. Danson, ex-L. Gordon, photo in <i>L'OP</i> 95 and colour photo in David Feldman of Geneva auction catalogues of 9/1990 and 11/2004. Where now?)
7	LUG	1871	(Mentioned in <i>L'OP</i> 95, ex-M. Sacher, colour photo in Robson Lowe of Zurich auction catalogue of M. Sacher collection of 11/89. Where now?)
18	AGO	1871	(In David Feldman of Switzerland auctions of 11/85 and 4/86. Where now?)
8	SET	1871	(In David Feldman of Geneva auctions of 11/97 & 5/2001 with photo. Where now?)
29	SET	1871	(T. F. Olson discovery in 1984, now in T. F. Olson collection in California.)
30	SET	1871	(On a lovely Jerusalem to Cairo folded letter bearing a Turkish stamp tied by an Arabic boxed pmk., the Egyptian Jaffa CDS is beside a manuscript “4” and hand-stamped “4” indicating 4pt due, twice the lacking 2pt. Jaffa to Cairo rate, correctly figured. Ex-M. Sacher, colour photo in R.L. catalogue of 11/1989. Zvi Alexander (1922-2008) collection; donated to Eretz Israel Museum in Tel Aviv.)
7	OTT	1871	(J. McEwen discovery in 1970(?), now in P.R. Feltus collection in California.)
13	OTT	1871	(P.R. Feltus discovery, photo in <i>L'OP</i> 120, ex-G.B. Garrett collection. Where now?)
27	OTT	1871	(Sold in Kohler auction and in Zodiac auction in Tel Aviv in 1993. Where now?)
4	NOV	1871	(P.R.F. discovery in 1987, now in P.R. Feltus collection in California.)
14	NOV	1871	(Ex-Barry Hoffman of Boston collection of Palestine. Where now?)
29	NOV	1871	(Ex-Otto Reichert, photo in <i>L'OP</i> 112, now in P.A.S. Smith collection in Michigan.)
15	DEC	1871	(F.F. Fuleihan. discovery in 2000, now in Fuad F. Fuleihan collection in Iran)

- 29 DEC 1871 (This date is in a Jaffa pmk date list in the *Handbook of Holy Land Philately*, without further details.)
- 30 DEC ? (Ex-L. Alund of Sweden, now in J. Chalhoub collection in Canada.)
- ? ? ? (On 1pt second issue. What date? Ex-V Mavian collection in Cairo. Where now?)
- 17 FEB 1872 (On 1872 1pt red stamp. Colour photo shown in the Bale Holy Land Catalogue of 2008.)
- 17 FEB 1872 (On 1872 2pt yellow stamp. Ex-J. Gilbert, ex-E. Antonini, photo in *L'OP* 95, colour photo in the Antonini collection auction catalogue of David Feldman in Geneva, April 1983, recently ex-Dr. Jerome L. Byers' Palestine collection. Where now?)

In the *Handbook of Holy Land Philately*, revised edition by Norman J. Collins, there's a list of sixteen known dates of Jaffa postmarks. Two of them, 26 GEN 1871 and 29 DEC 1871, are listed above but are otherwise unknown; where are they now? The other fourteen dates are known and recorded above with some details.

### DALLA STAZIONE postmarks

Less than two years ago two covers bearing the DALLA STAZIONE marking were offered (in the David Feldman sale of Samir Fikry's treasures in December 2007 in Geneva). The description of one says "Only five covers recorded with this railway marking." However I have recorded 23 DALLA STAZIONE markings, from Alexandria (eight) and Cairo (five) and Suez (ten). See the lists below.

#### The 23 known DALLA STAZIONE Classic Covers.

- 5 Dec 1871 Alexandria to Planta, in Mansura, on 1867-691 pt. red (ex-Robin Bertram; PRF collection.)
- 8 Dec 1871 Alexandria to ? (seen by PRF, recorded in 1982 data sheets. Where now?)
- ? Jan 1872 Alexandria to Cairo, on 1 pt red (ex-Mazloun, photo in *L'OP* 98. Where now?)
- 6 Feb 1873 Alexandria to Port Said, on 1pt red (Luca D. Biolato collection.)
- 19 Sep 1873 Alexandria to Cairo (ex-KW collection. Where now?)
- ? Nov 1873 Alexandria to Mahallet Roh, on 5 pa (4) + 20 pa. (= 1pt) (Leon Balian collection.)
- 25 Dec 1873 Alexandria to Port Said, on 1 pt (Leon Balian collection.)
- 29 Dec 1879 Alexandria to ? (listed in 1982 data sheets: Western-Auctions 10/6/68. Where now?)
- 25 Dec 1872 Cairo to Samanud (P.A.S. Smith collection.)
- 31 Jan 1873 Cairo to Alexandria, on 1pt (photo lot 2285 in Spink sale of 7/2005. Jürgen Fricke collection.)
- 11 Dec 1873 Cairo to Samanud, on 1pt red (ex-Fikry, photos in Feldman sales of 12/06 & 10/08. Where now?)
- 30 May 1874 Cairo to ? (ex-Danson, perhaps in lot 233, perhaps in SAF collection.)
- 28 May 1875 Cairo to Italy, on 1874 2 1/2 pt (2 stamps) (with E. Diena cert., Luca D. Biolato collection.)
- 25 By 1871 Suez to Cairo (ex-Dennis Clarke collection. Photo in Grosvenor sale of Nov. 2008. Where now?)
- 26 Sep 1871 Suez to Cairo, on 1869 20 para greens as if tête-bêche (photo lot 2279 in Spink catalogue of 7/2005)
- 12 Oct 1871 Suez to Cairo, on 1867 20pa green pair (photo ex-Chaftar. Where now?)
- 21 Dec 1871 Suez to Cairo, on 1867 20pa green pair (PASS collection.)
- 31 Jan 1872 Suez to Cairo, addressed in Arabic, on 1872 1 pt red (ex- Robin Bertram collection. Where now?)
- 25 Apr 1872 Suez to Cairo (photo lot 225 in SG sale of 22110181, ex-KW collection. Where now?)
- 30 Apr 1872 Suez to Cairo, unfranked with "80" due marking (Leon Balian collection.)
- 7 May 1872 Suez to Cairo, on 1867 1pt; taxed; stamp obsolete (ex-Mazloun, in *L'OP*; P.R. Feltus collection.)
- 16 Dec 1872 Suez to Cairo, on 2pt yellow (photo in C.F. Hass Postal Bid Sale catalogue of 8/96. Where now?)
- 14 Apr 1874 Suez to ? (recorded by CWM, listed in 1982 data sheets. Where now?)

Remarks: The 16 Dec 1872 cover was lot 502 in Charles Hass's first postal bid sale. In the lot description he says "Inland letter rate was 1pt. per 10 grams but this... weighs only 5g (no sign of there having been enclosures). Given the letter's light weight, and the two day gap between [enclosed] letter date and postmark date, the 2pts franking therefore suggests that there was a supplementary 1 pt. fee for expediting the already-late letter to the Railway Station after normal mails had closed - and that the "DALLA STAZIONE" marking



was the equivalent of "LATE FEE PAID". To our knowledge, nothing is recorded about this, and little material exists for study, but this very rare letter would tend to confirm this premise." Well, the other twenty-one covers listed above suggest otherwise.

Station postmarks are of two sorts. The straight line Dalla Stazione markings (meaning From the Station), were introduced in 1871. (These were classified with Instructional Markings in some early postmark studies. The later ones, mostly circular datestamps with Stazione outside the circles, below the town names, are classed among the General Cancellations.) The stamps on letters bearing these Dalla Stazione markings were normally



cancelled by circular datestamps, apparently at the downtown post offices; it is not known whether the straight line markings were applied at the stations (where post offices probably didn't yet exist) or at the downtown post offices. Perhaps they were applied at the stations, and only to the topmost letters in tied bundles that were sent to the downtown post offices where the stamps were then cancelled, but these covers don't show damage from strings.



**Editorial.** Thanks to members' response to my "empty" page this *QC* has easily been filled. I have several articles that could not make it into this *QC*, so even the September one is already more than half complete. My normal priority is reports and members' details, followed by queries and replies - but because of the excellent article by Pierre Grech some of these have unfortunately had to be held over.



## French Forces in Egypt during World War One

Pierre Louis Grech (ESC 266)

On 2 August 1914 the World went to war.

Egypt, as part of the Ottoman Empire, was drawn into the conflict when Turkey allied itself to Germany and the Austro-Hungarian Empire (30 October 1914). Britain, the de-facto power in Egypt, had pushed for it to join the Allies, but Khedive Abbas Hilmi was in Constantinople at the time, and as a vassal of Turkey gave it Egypt's support. Upon which the British authorities in Egypt deposed him, declaring a British Protectorate on 2 November and appointing Abbas Hilmi's uncle, Hussein Kamel, as Sultan (19 December 1914).

Within the context of Egypt, since France was Britain's ally, French troops came to be involved in two major campaigns on the Middle-Eastern front:

- a) The assault on the Dardanelles in 1915-16.
- b) The advance into Palestine with the Egyptian Expeditionary Force (E.E.F.) in 1917-18.

In between, they took part to a lesser extent in the defence of the Suez Canal against the Turks (1915) and attempted to involve themselves with the Arab rebellion in the Hejaz (1916). Otherwise, during the Great War, France's main battles on the Oriental Front were in the Balkans, and afterwards in the Levant. French Colonial troops played a large part in these, as well as in the defence of France on the Western Front.

### F.M. (Franchise Militaire).

Free franking of mail (*franchise*) was introduced for all the French military on 3 August 1914 and was withdrawn on 1 November 1919. It allowed free postage for postcards and letters up to 20g.

Heavier letters, parcels, newspapers and registered letters had to be franked with adhesive postage stamps.

Franchise was extended beyond 1 November 1919 for troops still operating outside France (including Egypt), and from 17 March 1920 also to troops involved in operations related to the "conclusion and execution of peace treaties" (in the Levant: the occupation of Cilicia, Syria, etc.)

The abbreviation F.M. appears on all these postal items.

### Postal Organisation

For the French military postal service in WWI, consult the excellent works by:

Lt.Colonel C. Deloste: *Histoire Postale et Militaire de l'Armée d'Orient, 1915-1920.* (c. 1968).

Bertrand Sinais: *Catalogue des Oblitérations Militaires Françaises, 1914-1918.* (1979).

Stéphane Strowski: *Les Estampilles Postales de la Grande Guerre.* (Yvert & Tellier, 1976 reprint).

Our interest here is confined to Egypt.

In WWI, the postmarks found on military mail (usually without postage stamps) were of two kinds: "Bureaux de Payeur" and "Secteurs Postaux" (Paymaster Offices and Postal Sectors). The older "Bureaux de Payeur" used double-ring CDS (Ø 23mm) inscribed TRÉSOR ET POSTES plus a number which was different for every Division. These were already in use at the beginning of the war.

(CDS = circular date stamp). See **Figure 1**.

Within a few months the existing system proved inadequate with the rapidly increasing size of the army. By a decree, implemented from 15 December 1914, "Secteurs Postaux" (S.P.) were created to replace the "Bureaux de Payeur" (B.P.).



**Figure 1**

The Secteur was a military unit dealing with postal matters relating to certain troops or divisions. It was mobile, relocating in support of the soldiers according to the needs of a particular campaign, or it could serve at a base or HQ. When the troops became too numerous or spread over a wide area, the Secteur Postal was sub-partitioned; the S.P. number was retained but a suffix letter added (e.g. **601**, **601-A**, **601-B**).

During 1915, S.P.s which had been using the old B.P. CDS were gradually issued with a replacement single-ring CDS (Ø 26mm), also inscribed TRÉSOR ET POSTES. All newly established S.P.s received this new CDS automatically. After the war, most Postal Sectors were dissolved at the end of 1918 or early 1919.

### Postmarks

The TRÉSOR ET POSTES date-stamps used for the mail of French troops in Egypt were supplemented by the old CORRESPONDANCE D'ARMÉES postmarks, brought back into service at Alexandrie (**FMA-1**) and Port-Saïd (**FMP-2**). These date-stamps, issued in 1888 to many of the French P.O.s abroad, identified military mail benefiting from the reduced internal postal rate for soldiers and sailors during expeditions and campaigns abroad. Officially, they were withdrawn on 1 January 1899.



At Alexandrie **FMA-1** had been scarcely used since 1900, but at Port-Saïd, with frequent troop transits through the Canal, **FMP-2** had apparently been used intermittently ever since the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. There was also a plethora of Military Cachets of the various fighting units, which provided justification for their mail's F.M. (see **Figure 3**).

**Figure 2** - FMP-2, above, and FMA-1, below. ‡



**Figure 3**

The seated goddess “Republic” (*déesse assise*), the seal of République Française, is found at the centre of innumerable cachets for ministerial, consular, legislative, administrative and military establishments. The caption in the outer ring indicates the particular authority or fighting unit. These cachets were applied in black, blue, or violet ink. Some cachets had a central inscription instead of the *déesse assise*.

In the war, abbreviations for the names of the various fighting units used on these cachets ran into many hundreds. The Larousse Mensuel No.121 of March 1917 listed over 170 of the more common ones (reproduced in *Les Feuilles Marcophiles*, No. 236) In their *Bulletin de Guerre* No.3 (April 1983) the *Club Le Meilleur* lists 188 abbreviations, many the same as the Larousse.

### The Dardanelles Campaign

Numerous works have been written about this chapter of the war, Alan Moorehead's *Gallipoli* being particularly vivid, and more recently, Harvey Broadbent's *Gallipoli, the Fatal Shore*. The 21 volume *The Times History of the War*, Vols. 3 and 5 and H.W.Wilson's massive 13 volumes *The Great War*, Vols 3 to 6, provide considerable detail.

The following is a brief outline to set the scene.

With stalemate on the Western Front, in January 1915 the Allies decided to open a second front against Turkey.

Winston Churchill, First Lord of the Admiralty, concluded that if British and French warships were to steam through the Dardanelles to Constantinople, Turkey would fall, allowing the Allies to link up with Russia and to provide it with support through the Black Sea. A landing at the Gallipoli peninsula would herald a land advance into Turkey.

Reluctantly the Generals removed troops from Europe to fight that campaign, joined by a French expeditionary force and by troops from the Australia and New Zealand Army Corps (ANZAC) recently arrived in Egypt.

But it did not go according to plan. On 18 March 1915 the warships entering the straits, encountered heavy losses and withdrew. The French battleship *Bouvet* hit a mine and sank in two minutes, with only 64 survivors from its crew of 621.



**Figure 4** – General d'Amade

The military organisation was chaotic and the landings at Gallipoli, which began on 25 April 1915, were to prove mostly fruitless. The Turks had time to prepare and dig-in and it became another bloody stalemate. With Bulgaria siding with Turkey, in the autumn the Allies decided to withdraw from Gallipoli. The evacuation began in secret on 18 December and was completed on 9 January 1916, thus ending that sad disastrous offensive. The surviving French troops were integrated into the Armée d'Orient. France had engaged 79,000 men at Gallipoli. Of these 4,000 were killed, 17,000 injured and 6,000 missing in action.



### **Corps Expéditionnaire d'Orient (C.E.O.)**

To assist in the Allied offensive to take the Dardanelles, the French despatched to the Middle East a newly created force, designated "Corps Expéditionnaire d'Orient" (C.E.O.).

Initially, General Albert d'Amade commanded the C.E.O. until 14 May 1915, when he was recalled as he disagreed with the British Commander-in-Chief, General Sir Ian Hamilton. His replacement at the Dardanelles, the popular General Henri Gouraud, was gravely injured by a shell on 30 June and was succeeded in command by General Bailloud until the arrival of General Sarraill on 6 August 1915. In turn, General Hamilton was replaced by General Sir Charles Monro in October 1915.

The 1<sup>st</sup> Division of the C.E.O. (20,000 men) was formed on 20 February 1915, and began gathering at Bizerte (Tunisia). For its mail it was assigned Postal Sector **194**, and used both the double ring and single ring CDS with number **194** (however the latter not in Egypt). There are two types of the 23mm CDS **194**, one has slightly larger letters and number. They require comparison for identification.



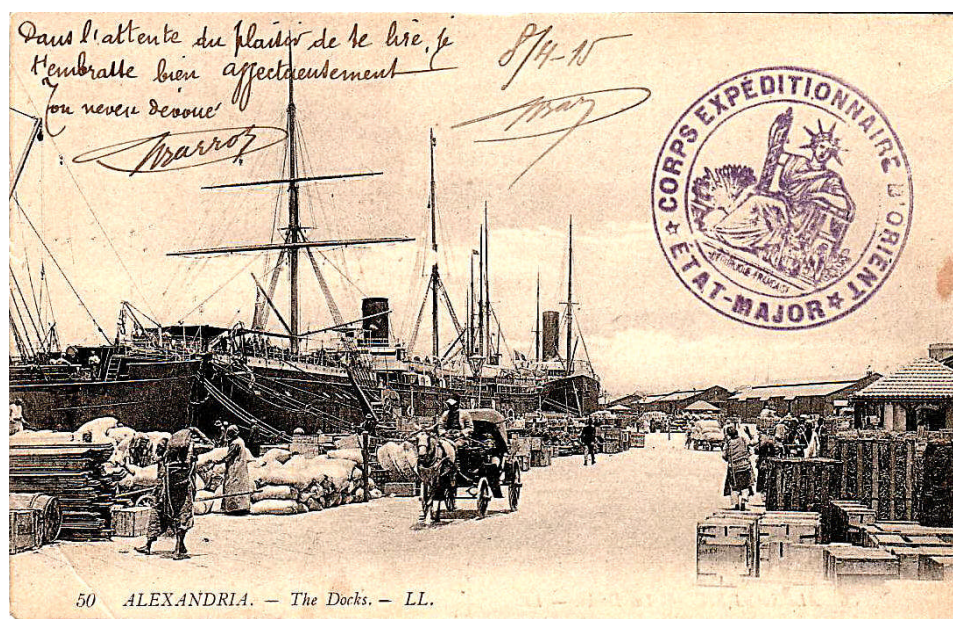
**Figure 5** - Simultaneous scan of two items to show both types of the 194 CDS. On the right hand one (Type 2) the letters in the crown are larger.

From 4 March, the C.E.O. embarked on two convoys at Bizerte. There were French and Colonial Infantry, Zouaves, Legionnaires, artillery, an aeroplane squadron, etc. The first convoy arrived at Moudros (on the island of Lemnos) on 15 March, the second on 17 March. They had

been preceded by an advance party which reached Moudros on 9 March.

It was then discovered that munitions and supplies for the landings had been loaded incorrectly on the Allied ships. So on 26 March the C.E.O. was sent to Alexandria for consolidation, arriving the 28th (Deloste, op.cit.)

The C.E.O. was stationed at Alexandria from 28 March until 16 April 1915, waiting to form up with the ANZAC and British troops on their way to the Dardanelles. Outside those dates **S.P. 194** is used at Moudros (although some elements did not leave until 25 April). Earliest **S.P. 194** recorded at Alexandria: 29 March.



**Figure 6** - C.E.O. Headquarter franchise mark, used at Alexandria, 8 April 1915.

The landings at Gallipoli began on Sunday 25 April, the first French involvement being a diversionary attack on the Asiatic shore at Kum Kale, near the site of ancient Troy. They fought with "splendid heroism against tremendous odds, with no artillery of their own" (H.W.Wilson, *The Great War*, Vol.3, page 372), but had to withdraw two days later. The Foreign Legion then landed on 27 April near Kereves Dere, and it was in capturing positions there that on 21 June the French forces had their most glorious day, but lost 2,500 men. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Division of the C.E.O. fought gallantly at Sed-ul-Bahr where it remained until early October that year, when many of the troops were withdrawn to join the Armée d'Orient at Salonika.



To face up to the entry of Bulgaria into the war, the French formed the “**Armée d’Orient**” in October 1915, with its main base at Salonika. It was assigned a new series of Secteurs Postaux numbers from **501** upward, to uniformly replace all the existing numbers on that front. Two new Divisions arrived from France, and were to be joined by the various elements of French forces fighting in the eastern Mediterranean.

Whereas the British main supply base for Gallipoli was at Alexandria, the French had brought their base forward to the **Base de Moudros** (on Lemnos). This was **S.P. 198**, which was first used in March 1915. That S.P. remained at Moudros during the C.E.O.’s short visit to Egypt in March-April 1915. It is known with both the double and single-ring CDS. **S.P. 198** became **S.P. 506** upon transferring to the Armée d’Orient.



**Figure 7** – Alexandria, 11 April 1915. **TRESOR ET POSTES / 194**. Letter to Paris, from the 27<sup>th</sup> S.M.A. (Section de Munitions d’Artillerie) of the C.E.O.

A 2<sup>nd</sup> Division of the C.E.O., under General Maurice Bailloud, arrived at the Dardanelles on 7 May, and was sent to Sed-ul-Bahr. It was assigned Postal Sector **409** and used the Ø 23mm and Ø 26mm C.D.S. On 5 October 1915, it was re-designated 156<sup>e</sup> Division, and was withdrawn from Gallipoli and transferred to the Armée d’Orient at Salonika. Also in October, its **S.P. 409** was renamed **S.P. 503**, and this was dissolved on 1 November 1919 after Turkey’s surrender.

Note: neither **S.P. 198** nor **S.P. 409** was used in Egypt.

A Postal **Bureau Central Militaire** (B.C.M.) had been created on 15 June 1915 at Marseille to centralise and sort all mail to/from the Oriental Front. (Strowski indicates that the B.C.M. was in a small wooden shack inside the Marseille main post office, and that it was staffed by auxiliaries and numerous lady employees). It operated until 15 February 1919. It relieved **S.P. 198** at “Base de Moudros” which had effectively been carrying out that function. From Marseille mail was sent to Alexandria or Port-Saïd by the first available ship, then on to Moudros by whatever transport was available. There the S.P. would re-direct it and despatch it by mine-sweeper or other small craft to the French beach-heads on the Gallipoli peninsula.



FRENCH SOLDIERS AT ALEXANDRIA.

**Figure 8** – The C.E.O. troops were quartered at Ramleh. Their camp was extensive, stretching for several miles. They were reviewed by General d’Amade and Sir Ian Hamilton on 5 April, Easter Monday.

Still at the Dardanelles in early October, **S.P. 194** was renamed **S.P. 505**. Its short-lived Ø 26 mm CDS **S.P. 194** was re-assigned to the 41<sup>st</sup> Division of Infantry in France (dissolved on 9 March 1919). After the last French soldiers were taken off Gallipoli on 2 January, the remnants of the 1<sup>st</sup> Division of the CEO were reformed as the 17<sup>e</sup> Division Coloniale, with additional troops from France, and were sent to the Armée d’Orient at Salonika at the end of February 1916 (together with their **S.P. 505**).



Meanwhile, as part of the changeover, the C.E.O. which had kept a **Base d’Alexandrie** with **S.P. 410**, had this re-named **S.P. 507** in October 1915. **S.P. 410** only used the Ø 23mm CDS (first date seen in Egypt: 7 May 1915, with the cachet “Base du C.E.O.”). The **S.P. 410** CDS is reported to have been used briefly in October by the Armée d’Orient **H.Q.** at Salonika before it received its own **S.P. 501** single-circle CDS. The **Base de Salonique** was assigned **S.P. 502** (first seen 25 October 1915).



**Figure 9 - S.P. 507.**

The last date seen for **S.P. 410** at Alexandria is 18 October 1915 (there is a flurry of philatelic correspondence dated 14 and 18 October, probably prompted by the arrival of **S.P. 507** to replace it).

Stamps of the French P.O. at Alexandria are found cancelled with the **S.P. 507**. CDS (**Figure 9**). These are mainly “de complaisance”; the dates seen range from 6 October 1915 (earliest date for **S.P. 507**) until 14 February 1916.

The earliest known cover for **S.P. 507** Base d’Alexandrie is dated 9 November 1915. The last is 26 March 1916 on a cover which arrived at Cairo on 4 April. Both have the large C.E.O. cachet from “Le Commandant d’Armes – Troupes Françaises d’Alexandrie”, as in **Figure 10** below.

All these items are philatelic, a genuinely used military cover with **S.P. 507** from Alexandria being elusive.

There are also several “special” covers from the Albert Eid correspondence dating from this period. That eminent philatelist (1886-1950), and later member of the Club Philatélique d’Egypte, was the son of the Belgian consul in Cairo, which enabled him to obtain various unorthodox combinations of cachets, stamps and postmarks, on letters usually addressed to (or re-directed to) himself at the Belgian Consulate, Cairo. They at least do provide examples of some of the various scarce military postal markings (**Figure 10**).

**Figure 10 – 14 October 1915 - A philatelic cover from S.P.410 at Alexandria, on Egyptian stamps. Blue C.E.O. cachet of the Commander of the Troupes Françaises d’Alexandrie, with French military and Cairo Egyptian civil censor marks.**



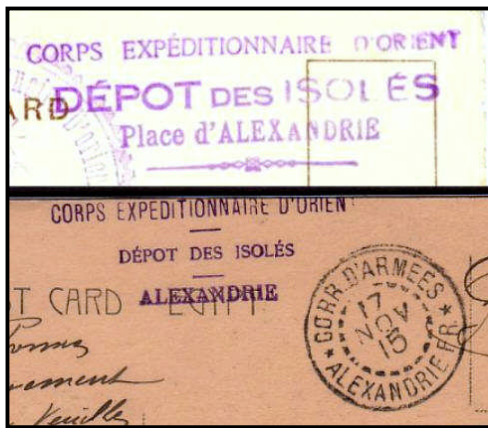
With the last Dardanelles troops having gone over to Salonika in February, it is probably at the end of March 1916 that the Base d’Alexandrie was wound up. **S.P. 507** was sent to the Balkans where it was assigned to the use of **Russian** troops serving with the Armée d’Orient. This Russian Brigade, led by General Dieterich, sailed from Arkhangelsk (Barents Sea) and arrived at Salonika in July 1916. After early reverses in Serbia, they fought bravely around Monastir (today Bitola, Macedonia) in 1916, and **S.P. 507** is reported at Biklista (modern Bilisht, Albania) in January 1917, with Alpine Ambulance Brigade. But in Spring 1917, with the Russian revolution fermenting, they were pulled back from the Ochrida (Ohrid) front to a quieter sector, and finally withdrawn from the fighting altogether in January 1918. **S.P. 507** was at Salonika in June 1918.

### **Linear TRESOR ET POSTES with number**

As the Secteurs Postaux were introduced in December 1914 they were issued with linear postmarks (“griffes”) indicating the S.P. number (see **Figure 11**). They were usually 46mm long (including the ones used in Egypt) though many size and style variants exist. As in the normal French postal service, they were used on registration labels, money orders (mandats), on internal correspondence and reports, on sealing labels, etc. Personnel of the S.P. also used them as justification of their right to F.M. They can be seen on cover even though a CDS might be present. When sub-sectors were created, they too were issued with their *griffe*. The ink used was black, red, violet, and occasionally blue.

**Figure 11 - Linear hand-stamps of S.P. 507 (from a philatelic cover) and sub-sector S.P. 601-B (Palestine).**





**Figure 12 – DÉPOT DES ISOLÉS** of the C.E.O. at Alexandria. Sick and wounded personnel released from hospital had to report to that Dépot. They would be sent to rejoin their units, if fit for active duty, or be sent for additional medical treatment, if necessary. They would be given special leave if needing long convalescence, or be recommended for discharge if permanently disabled. There was also an “isolation” centre for contagious diseases.

It used two franking marks concurrently: a larger one, 65 x 20 mm, “Place d’Alexandrie”, in purple, seen on 26 October and 22 December 1915; and a smaller cachet, 45 x 15 mm, “Alexandrie”, seen 17 November 1915, in deep violet. They are always together with the Correspondance d’Armées CDS **FMA-1**.

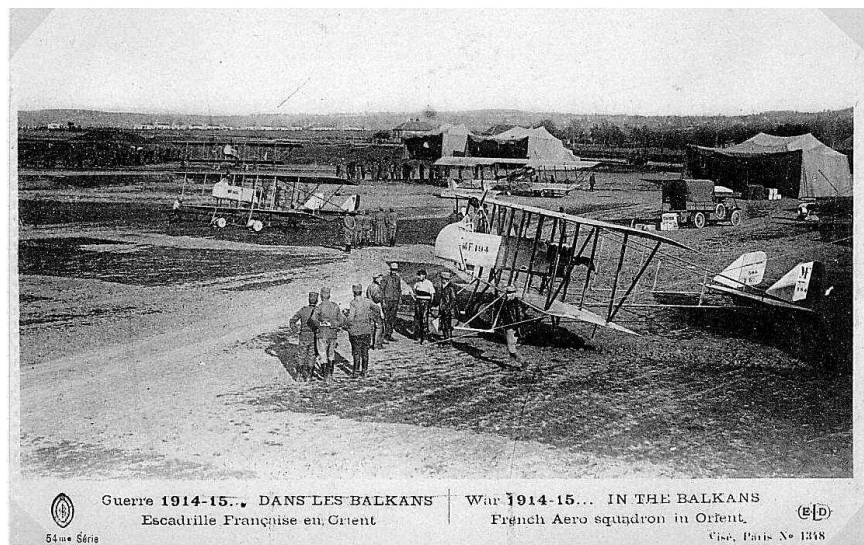
The commandant of the Dépot was Lieutenant Ribet.

### **The Aviation of the C.E.O.**

#### **Escadrille M.F.T. 98** (Maurice Farman Turquie).

This one squadron of Observation Aircraft, using Maurice Farman pusher-aircraft, was led by Capitaine Césari, and was part of the C.E.O. under General d’Amade. They joined up with the other forces at Bizerte, leaving on 4 March 1915 for Moudros where they stayed until 26 March before sailing to Alexandria for the previously mentioned re-organisation. The C.E.O. ground troops left Alexandria on 16 April, but some elements remained until the 25<sup>th</sup>; and the Aviation left even later. This is supported by a postcard from Alexandria, with the Squadron’s cachet (**Figure 13**) dated 27 April: “*Dear Mom, We’re leaving Alexandria in a few days for the Dardanelles...*”

They joined the British at Moudros and then at the advanced airbase on the island of Tenedos, 12 kilometers from the town of that name. “The airfield is 35 km by air from Cape Helles”(Gallipoli). The pilots made their individual living quarters in the shipping crates their aircraft arrived in. The British No. 3 Naval Squadron Commander was Charles Rumney Samson. Together with Césari’s planes they provided reconnaissance and aerial photography to support the landings, and to spot submarines. One night, in June 1915, six French aircraft made a bombing raid on the Turks, dropping 80kg of bombs each (see *L’Illustration* No.3785).



**Figure 13 - ESCADRILLE M.F.T. 98, seal of Le Chef d’Escadrille.** This aircraft squadron flew Maurice Farman “pusher” biplanes, similar to the ones illustrated above at another MF squadron (194).

### **Dardanelles Postscript:**

With the creation of the Armée d’Orient, General Sarraill was appointed overall Allied Commander and transferred to Salonika in October 1915, leaving General Bailloud in charge at Gallipoli. General Brulard took over from him in December to oversee the evacuation of the last French troops, completed on the night of 2 January 1916, thus closing the C.E.O.’s Dardanelles chapter.



### The Red Cross Stamps and Cards

Because of its enormous number of casualties, France was particularly conscious of the need to promote the Red Cross. During the War, French stamps were overprinted with a red cross and surcharged to raise funds in support. This was also done for the French P.O.s at Alexandrie and Port-Saïd.

The 10c Mouchon design from the 1902 issue was surcharged in typography with a cross and 5<sup>c</sup>. This operation was carried out in Paris, on the full sheets of 150 stamps (2 x 3 blocks of 25).

The stamps were first issued in May 1915, but the millésimes (the last digit of the year the sheets were printed, and which was repeated three times in the vertical gutter) are **4** (for 1914) and **6** (1916), indicating more than one print run. Yvert (1940) quotes 100,000 as the quantities printed for each post office.



**Figure 14**



Alexandrie : +5<sup>c</sup> carmine surcharge on 10c rose-red Mouchon - Yvert # 34, SG # 36.

Port-Saïd : Ditto , Yvert # 35, SG # 137.

Sold at 15c, the stamps were worth 10c, with 5c going to the Red Cross.

They were no longer valid for postage after 1 April 1921 (*démonétisés*).

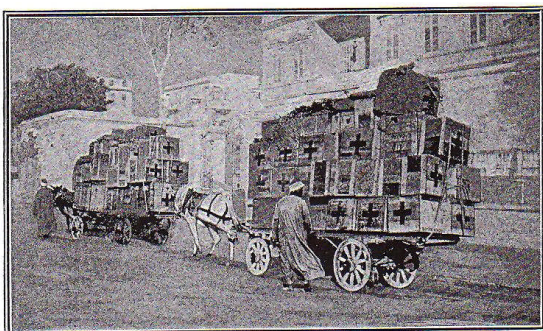
**Figure 15** – Registered cover from the French P.O. at Alexandria, with 5 x Red Cross stamps (25c UPU letter rate plus 25c Registration fee). Dated 17 February 1916.

The sick and wounded from Gallipoli were first taken to Lemnos, and from there by hospital-ships to Egypt, or to Malta or Britain. The actual number of casualties had been greatly under-estimated by the Allies in their original planning, so several hotels and other establishments (Luna Park, etc) had to be converted into hospitals mainly in Cairo, Heliopolis, Helwan and Alexandria. For the French troops, the Base de Moudros functioned as a front line emergency medical centre, whereas Empire Forces were treated on the hospital ships or upon arrival at Alexandria.

**Figure 16** - “Hôpital Parmentier, Campagne des Frères, Alexandrie”. Seen 10 Nov.1915 and 30 Dec.1915.

This hospital was set up in the residence of the French Brothers of Christian Schools, located at Bacos, Alexandria.

The card has a red cross overprint (29 mm) similar to Alexandria’s in **Figure 19**, but without caption. It has the cachet in **Figure 20** on the back .and is franked 4 mills to France.



**Figure 17** – Every available means of transport was enlisted to help the war effort. Here two donkey-drawn carts are used to deliver precariously loaded Red Cross medical supplies to Allied hospitals in Alexandria. When it came to vehicles, the Western Front always had priority.





**Figure 18** - French Red Cross Card, issued in Cairo, and Union des Femmes de France blue cachet.

At the same time, lady volunteers were joining up to raise funds or to act as temporary nurses. This was done by several foreign communities in Egypt.

The French community in Cairo overprinted Egyptian postcards with a red cross (20mm) and to its right a one-line caption in red “**Au profit de la Croix-Rouge française**” (**Figure 18**).

Also displayed on some of these cards from Cairo is a large circular cachet (Ø 35 mm), struck in blue ink, with a cross in the centre.

The inscription around the perimeter is CROIX ROUGE FRANÇAISE \* LE CAIRE \*, and in an inner crown UNION DES FEMMES DE FRANCE in smaller letters.

**Figure 19** - French Red Cross Card, issued in Alexandria.

Some postcards from Alexandria have a different type of bright red overprint: a larger (29 mm) central red cross is surmounted by a one-line inscription “**Au Bénéfice de la Croix-Rouge Française**”.

Similarly at Alexandria, a smaller (Ø 30 mm) circular cachet was struck in red. This had an inner ring of dots and a central cross. Between the rings the inscription read COMITÉ DE LA CROIX-ROUGE FRANÇAISE \* ALEXANDRIE \*.



**Figure 20**

These cards have been seen used between 27 April (Cairo) and 30 December (Alexandria) 1915, indicating the year they were first issued; but presumably they were used throughout the war. They are not very common.

Most of the French wounded from the Dardanelles remained hospitalised in Egypt, many at Alexandria. The cachets and linear “griffes” of French military medical staff treating them are therefore encountered on correspondence (much less after 1916).



**Figure 21**

One example is “Ambulance Militaire / Française/ du Caire”. In Cairo, wealthy private individuals of various nationalities offered their personal cars to be used as ambulances in view of their shortage.

### Mail for the French Navy in the Levant

Naval mail was sorted in floating P.O.s on ships at Toulon, or in an annex of the P.O. at Marseille (**Bureau Postal Naval**). The latter was created on 20 March 1916, and comprised a small team dealing with the naval mail of the Armée d’Orient, a function previously carried out by other military services. They were informed of ship movements as far as possible, and directed the mail accordingly, often via the British island of Malta.

At Alexandrie and Port-Saïd an employee in the French P.O. was assigned to handle Naval Mail, and forward it to destination through the civil post. As mentioned earlier, the old “CORRESPONDANCE D’ARMÉES” CDS was used together with the ship’s free franking mark. Such naval letters and cards are more frequently seen from Port-Saïd, since that office would also receive mail deposited from French warships passing through the Suez Canal on their way to/from the Indian Ocean and the Far East.



### Naval Markings

The French Navy's cachets for Free Franking did not have the goddess Republic in the centre, but had an anchor instead. The generic captions read either MARINE NATIONALE \* SERVICE A LA MER\* (rare in Egypt) or MARINE FRANCAISE \* SERVICE A LA MER\*. These appear on the majority of mail originating from naval cruising squadrons, and in Egypt go together with Correspondance d'Armées CDS (usually Port-Saïd's **FMP-2**).



Figure 22

### Turkish Attacks on the Suez Canal

French warships helped to repel the two Turkish attacks on the Suez Canal from the Sinai.

In the first, on 3 February 1915, the Turks attacked at Qantara, Ismailia, Toussoum and Serapeum. The old coastguard battleship *Requin* operated on Lake Timsah, and the cruiser *D'Entrecasteaux* took part from the Canal. In the second, Turkish troops prepared to attack opposite El Kubri, near Suez. With most of the British fleet committed at Gallipoli, the *D'Estrées*, with the *Jeanne D'Arc* and *D'Entrecasteaux*, fired from the Canal, while on Lake Timsah the *Requin* was joined by *Desaix* and *Montcalm* which were on their way home from the Far East. On 23 March 1915 they provided cover for a pre-emptive strike by an Indo-British force, which routed the 12,000-strong Turkish army that actually included Syrian and Arab detachments.

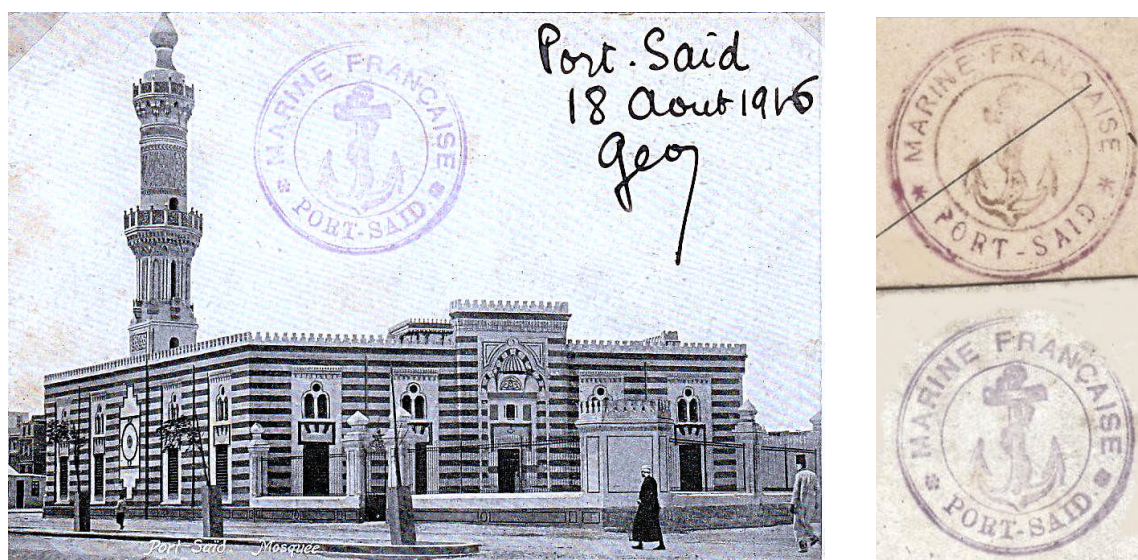


Figure 23 - MARINE FRANÇAISE - PORT-SAID. Comparing both types of cachet: Type 2 is at the top.

### Marine Française – PORT SAID

Several French warships were stationed at Port-Saïd during the war. On the sailors' mail there is either the combination of cachets described under Naval Markings above, or a specific cachet MARINE FRANCAISE \* PORT-SAID\* (of which there are two types), again usually seen together with CDS **FMP-2**:

Type 1: Smaller, earlier type, in blue or violet: Ø 33.5mm. Seen 18 August 1916 to 26 October 1917.

There is a rosette either side of the name PORT-SAID, which is 21mm wide. Bolder, tighter lettering.

Type 2: Larger, later type, in red: Ø 35mm. Seen 31 March 1920 to 8 June 1920. Six-pointed stars either side of the name PORT-SAID, which is 23mm wide. Thin letters, more spread out, almost *sans-serifs*.

On 24 December 1915 the French Navy captured the small island of Castellorizo, near Rhodes, and used it as the "Base de la Première Armée Navale" (several stamp issues were produced by the Naval postal personnel for philatelists). The French departed on 21 August 1921, handing over the island to Italian authorities.

In 1917 the French Navy was further involved in support of Allenby's advance into Palestine. Many of the warships had a seaplane on board, used mainly for observation, and they also provided naval bombardment. The French lost the cruiser *Chateau-Renault*, torpedoed by the German submarine UC38, which was in turn depth-charged and sunk by the French escort vessels.

The various units in the eastern-Mediterranean were later formed up as the "**Forces Navales du Levant**".

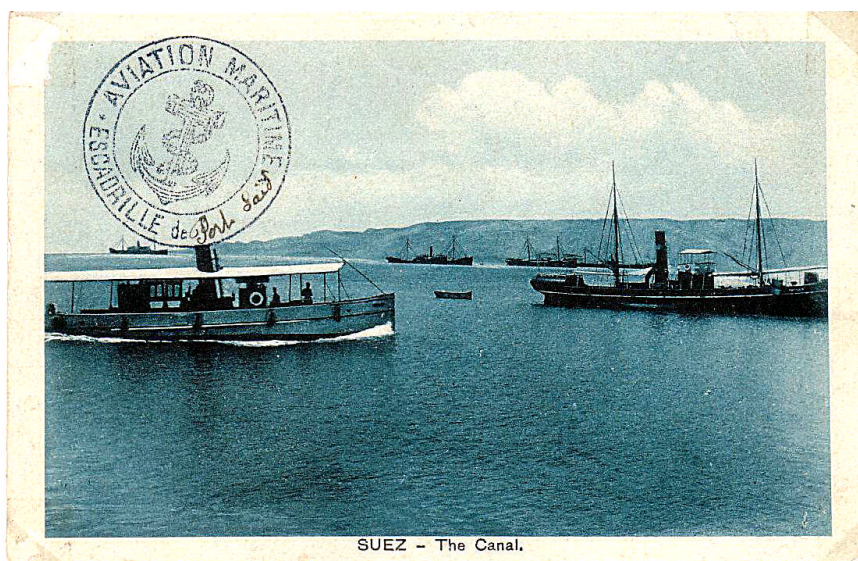


### AVIATION MARITIME – ESCADRILLE de Port-Saïd

On 1 December 1914, a French seaplane squadron comprising eight French Nieuport 80-HP monoplanes, and commanded by Lieutenant de Vaisseau de l'Escaille, arrived at Port-Saïd. They went on to fly aerial reconnaissance patrols off the coast of Sinai and Palestine (**Figure 25**), dropping the occasional bomb on Turkish encampments. The pilots were French, the observers were British and the organisation was under British command. They operated from the decks of two converted seaplane-carriers, *Doris* and *Anne*. (H.M.S. *Anne* was an ex-German cargo steamer, the “Aenne Rickmers”, suitably modified).

First at Ismailia, then at Port-Saïd, their mobile bases allowed greater observation range, up to 50 miles.

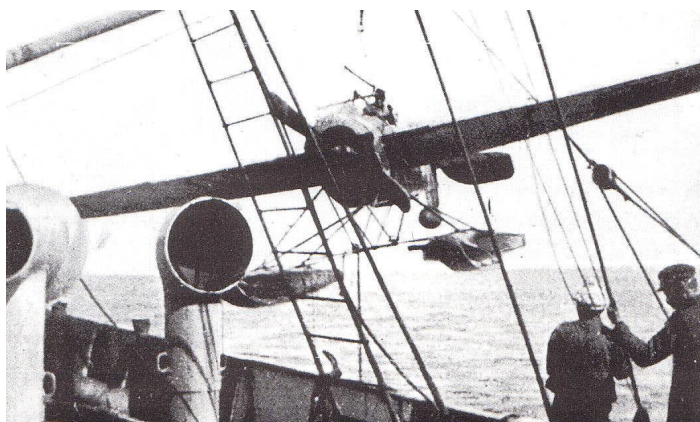
In *QC* No.82, C. Minett (ESC 77) writes: “By mid-1915 the *Anne* had left Egypt for the Gulf of Smyrna and the French Squadron at Port- Saïd continued to fly missions from another ex-German ship, the “Rabenfels”, renamed H.M.S. *Raven II*. Later in June 1916, the Escadrille, together with British seaplanes originally engaged in the Dardanelles campaign, became part of the new *East Indies and Egypt Seaplane Squadron*. The last reported flight of the French unit was 16 April 1916, after which it was withdrawn from Egypt”.



**Figure 24** - AVIATION MARITIME \* ESCADRILLE de **Port Saïd** (*Port Saïd* in manuscript).

For their mail the French crews had the Free Franking mark illustrated on the postcard above.

This cachet is usually accompanied by the Correspondance d'Armées CDS (**FMP-2**) of Port-Saïd. Few items are known and the dates reported, as well as the dates seen, all fall between 11 January 1915 and 14 February that same year. Was the cachet withdrawn to prevent disclosure of the Squadron's whereabouts ?



The Squadron moved north, reaching Argostoli (on the island of Kefallonia, Ionian Sea) on 18 April 1916, for repairs and refit (French Naval Base). Meanwhile the carriers *Raven*, *Empress*, and *Ben-my-Chree* (an ex-Isle of Man ferry) rejoined with the *Anne*. From these ships the Squadron performed bombing and observation missions on the Syrian coast and against the submarine menace.

(See *Aviation, The Pioneer Years*, p.177 Ben Mackworth-Praed, Studio Ed., 1990). Three of the seaplane pilots were: Lt. Grall, Lt. Saizieu (R.I.P.), Lt. Cdr. Delange.

**Figure 25** - French Nieuport seaplane being winched onto the British cruiser “Doris” after a mission.

**Newsflash:** “The public is hereby informed that by order of the military authorities the exchange of picture postcards with NEUTRAL countries is prohibited until further notice.”

From the *Journal Officiel*, No.17, p.3; 21 February 1916.

### **Mission B, Base de Suez**

Much of the background information in the following sections on the “Mission B” and the “Détachement Français de Palestine” was derived from two outstanding articles by Mr Bertrand Sinais, published in *Les Feuilles Marcophiles*, the magazine of the French Union Marcophile. These articles should be consulted for more detailed accounts of the historic events, with numerous illustrations of cachets, troop compositions, etc.

“*La Mission Militaire Française B d’Egypte et du Hedjaz (1916-1920)*”, in *F.M.* No. 217, 1979 ;

“*Le Détachement Français de Palestine*”, in *F.M.* No. 223, 1980.

On 5 June 1916 the Sherif of Mecca, Hussein Ibn Ali, proclaimed the independence of the Hejaz from Turkey. The subsequent story of Lawrence of Arabia and the Arab Revolt is a well documented chapter of the First World War.

With an eye to the future, the French Government wished to participate in that operation and sent to the Sherif a delegation of North-African Muslim officers, commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel Edouard Brémont, which reached Jeddah on 20 September. Amongst them were Lt.Col. Cadi (Algerian artillery), Cpts. Raho and Sa’ad (Algerian Spahis) and Lt. Lahlou (Moroccan Black Guard infantry).

To follow this up, a French military unit, designated Mission B (for Brémont ?), was assembled, ready to travel to the Hejaz in order to support the Arab revolt against the Turks.



A base for the Mission B was set up at Suez, and an initial team of 25 explosives experts, all from North Africa, arrived at Jeddah on 1<sup>st</sup> October. The rest of the troops, travelling on board the paquebot *Amazon*, disembarked at Suez on 21 October 1916. That location had the added advantage of an Egyptian mail-boat which sailed every 10 days between Suez and Jeddah (see Sinais, op.cit.). Part of the Mission B was a 100-bed field-hospital. Also included an artillery unit under Capt. Pisani, which later joined Lawrence and the Arab Northern Army, fighting into Palestine and Syria.

**Figure 26** – 14 January 1917: Cover from the MISSION B, Base de Suez to Tunisia (arriving 27 Jan.). Hopital de Campagne-Mission B – Le Médecin Chef, seated goddess franking mark (with cogged outer circle), and cachet Mission B – Base de Suez / Le Vaguemestre (the orderly dealing with the mail). Letter picked-up at Suez by the French paquebot *Amazon* (octagonal YOKOAMA A MARSEILLE, No.7). Note manuscript Secteur Postal 601, pre-empting Paymaster Dumas’s arrival at the end of January.

In Mecca, however, after a long hesitation, Sherif Hussein decided he did not want more French troops inside Arabia. (Of those already there, Capt. Depui served with the Emir Abdullah’s Southern Army in the siege of Medina, and French officers were part of the main Arab training centre at Mecca).

Consequently the 40 officers and 1,000 soldiers of Mission B (mostly North African) remained stranded at Suez. There were not enough men in that contingent to justify a Postal Sector of their own, so initially their mail was carried by the British Army Post (A.P.O. SZ 15 and SZ 24) as far as the French P.O. at Port-Saïd which applied its date-stamp before onward despatch (**Figure 27**). Mail to them was addressed “Base Française de Suez” and was deposited by French ships at Alexandria, then forwarded to Suez by the Egyptian Post Office. They had postal franchise, but could not receive registered mail or money orders. Eventually there was also a problem with the soldiers’ wages. These were payable each month and the troops wanted to be paid in French currency to avoid a 15% loss on exchange.

Lt.-Col. Brémont repeatedly requested that a paymaster be sent from France. Finally the authorities relented and on 3 January 1917 Postal Sector **601** was created to serve the Base de Suez. It comprised Payeur (paymaster) Dumas, his assistant Milland and five postal officers. On 22 January they sailed from Marseille on board the *Atlantic*, taking up their post at Suez on 30 January 1917.

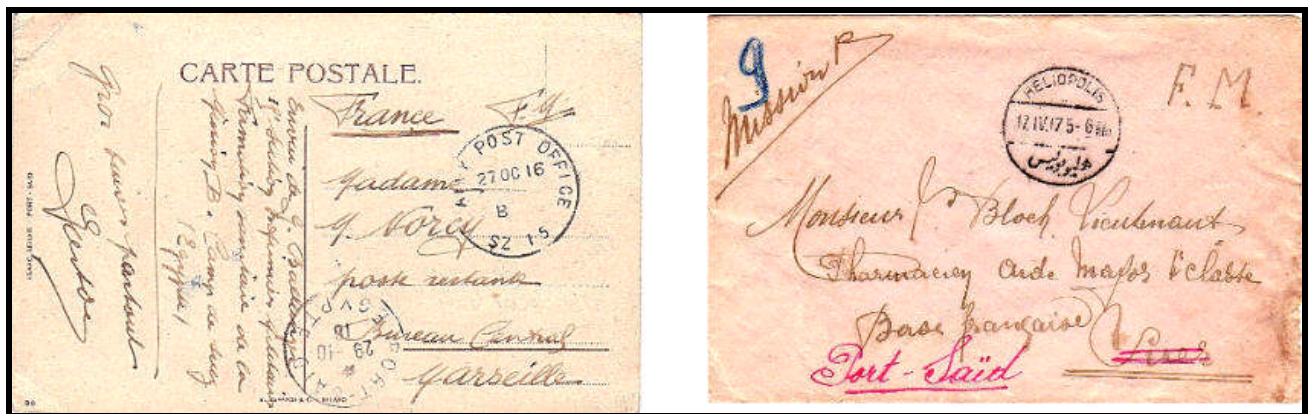


With the formation in Cyprus of the Légion d'Orient and the gathering at Port-Saïd of what would become the Détachement Français de Palestine (D.F.P.), it was decided to transfer **S.P. 601** and the personnel of the Mission B to Port-Saïd.

On 11 April the **S.P. 601** office left Suez and it began operating at Port-Saïd on 24 April 1917. These dates should be noted when establishing whether an item with **S.P.601** CDS originated from Suez or Port-Saïd.

Mail to/from the Mission B during its stay at Suez is scarce. The troops and equipment gradually travelled to Port-Saïd by train beginning from 17 April. In the Hejaz, 13 officers had integrated the ranks of the Sherif as instructors and had supplied artillery and portable weapons with their personnel. A further 200 men were distributed along the Red Sea ports. The rest, the greater part of the troops, were to be attached to the D.F.P.

At the beginning of 1918, between Port-Saïd and Arabia, the Mission B consisted of 24 officers and 669 men. The Mission B d'Egypte was dissolved early in 1919, the troops having already transferred to the Détachement Français de Palestine et Syrie. The troops in the Hejaz became **Mission Militaire Française du Hedjaz**, which in turn was officially disbanded on 1 August 1920. The officers returned to France, except for Captain Depui who became military attaché to the French Consul at Jeddah.



**Figure 27 - Mission B:** **Left**, 27 October 1916 – an F.M. postcard **from** a member of the 15<sup>th</sup> Section of Military Infirmary of the Mission B, carried by British Army Post Office SZ 15 to the French P.O. at Port-Saïd (29/10) for conveyance to France. This was before Mission B had its **S.P. 601**.

**Right**, 12 April 1917 – a cover from the Heliopolis Palace Hotel addressed **to** an officer in the Mission B at Suez. However the Mission B had begun leaving Suez on 11 April, so the letter was re-directed to Port-Saïd. It is F.M. within Egypt, indicating an agreement between French and Egyptian authorities for military mail.

**Meanwhile**, on 11 August 1916, the Armée d'Orient was renamed **Armée Française d'Orient (A.F.O.)**, under the command of General Cordonnier (with **S.P. 510** for its HQ), while General Sarraïl took overall command of all the Allied Armies in the Balkans. On 24 December 1917, General Sarraïl was replaced by General Guillaumat, who in turn was replaced by General Franchet-d'Esperey in the summer of 1918.

Newsflash: On 9 October 1917 Sultan Hussein Kamel passed away and was succeeded as Sultan by his brother Ahmed Fouad, who became King Fouad the 1<sup>st</sup> in 1922.

### **The Palestine Offensive**

Again, numerous works have been written about this phase of the War. A particularly interesting and useful book is David L.Bullock's *Allenby's War: The Palestine-Arabian Campaigns 1916-1918* (Blandford, 1988).

From mid-1916, the British prepared for an assault on the Turks in Palestine in order to better protect Egypt and the Suez Canal. Later that would lead to a push into Syria in support of Lawrence's Arab Revolt, and in pursuit of the retreating Turks. At first under General Sir Archibald Murray, then under General Sir Edmund Allenby (from June 1917), the **Egyptian Labour Corps (E.L.C.)** constructed railway tracks into the Sinai from Port-Saïd (narrow gauge to Romani) and from Qantara (standard gauge to Romani and onward into Palestine). They laid water pipes into the desert, organised water transport by camels, constructed wire-mesh tracks over the sand, carried out advanced skirmishes, etc. The **Egyptian Expeditionary Force (E.E.F.)**'s offensive began at the end of October 1917, and Jerusalem fell on 7 December 1917.

Further advances were delayed in 1918 because E.E.F. troops were transferred to fight on the Western front.



Anticipating the end of the War, the Allies sat down to partition the Ottoman Empire. It was agreed that Britain would have a mandate over Palestine and a protectorate in Trans-Jordan. France, which previously had intervened on behalf of Christian minorities, would have a mandate over Lebanon; later it also gained a protectorate in Syria. To “look after its interests” it was decided that a small number of French troops would be attached to the E.E.F. when it began its offensive. This was the **Détachement Français de Palestine** (D.F.P.). Their purpose would be to fly the flag, and act as auxiliary troops, working with the local police. They would support the appointed French High Commissioner, Georges Picot.

At the Anglo-French conference of 26 December 1916, the concept of the D.F.P. was agreed and that it would comprise three battalions of Algerian and French infantry and a squadron of Spahis.

On 21 April 1917, led by Lt Colonel de Piépape, the D.F.P. landed at Port-Saïd. There it met up with the troops of the Mission B recently arrived from Suez, and a large part of which transferred to the D.F.P.

On 25 May 1917 most of the infantry of the D.F.P. was transported by rail to Khan Younis, where it was made responsible for a specific sector, keeping order and protecting lines of communication.



Général Bailloud.      Général Allenby.  
Le général anglais commandant l'armée expéditionnaire de Palestine,  
et le général Bailloud, inspecteur général des troupes françaises de Syrie.

Promoted to Colonel, de Piépape reported to General Watson. He considered that his D.F.P. might be called upon to actively participate in military action, and should therefore be strengthened (in June 1917 he had about 2,500 officers and men). In November 1917, General Bailloud (formerly of the Dardanelles) was sent from France on an inspection tour of the D.F.P., and reported back favourably. He also transferred overall command of the Base de Port-Saïd from Colonel Brémont of the Mission B, to Colonel de Piépape. As part of the E.E.F.'s autumn 1917 offensive, the D.F.P. moved up from Khan Younis to Deir Sineïd, a small contingent being left at Gaza. Another contingent took a token part in General Allenby's formal entry into Jerusalem on 11 December 1917. After this most of the D.F.P. was transferred to Junction-Station and Ramleh and it set up its advanced **Base Camp at Lydda**, nearby.

On 15 December 1917 additional cavalry was made available (two squadrons of Chasseurs d'Afrique, and an increase in the number of Spahis). On 28 February 1918 the Syrian Company of the Légion d'Orient, was transferred from Cyprus to the D.F.P., and arrived at Ramleh. The D.F.P. also received the artillery section from the Mission B.

**Figure 28**

On 27 March 1918, the French government decided that the D.F.P. should be renamed **Détachement Français de Palestine et Syrie** (D.F.P.S.), since its operations would extend into Syria.

Because of the lack of available transport and supplies, additional troops for the D.F.P.S., which were to enable it to take on more active fighting duties, had to remain encamped at Ferry-Post near Ismailia (this included two Armenian battalions of the Légion d'Orient from Cyprus, and more Spahis, tirailleurs, engineers, etc). There, from April to June 1918, they continued training with the British troops, awaiting transfer to the front, their arrival having coincided with the interruption of the E.E.F.'s Palestine offensive.

With these reinforcements, by the end of June 1918 the D.F.P.S. number had risen to 6,261 men.

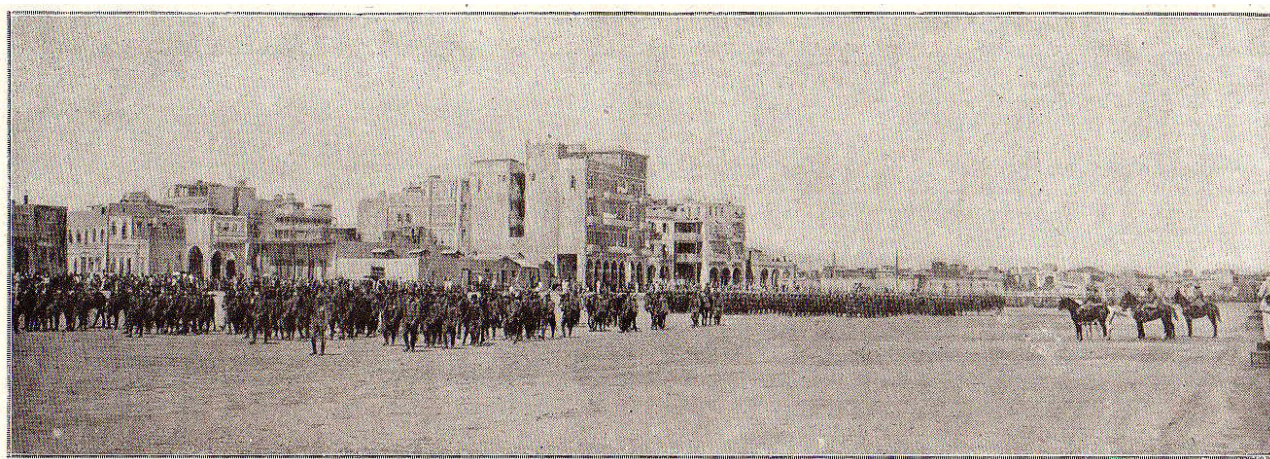
When fighting resumed, its troops played their part, the Chasseurs d'Afrique and Spahis cavalry being particularly distinguished. As was Captain Pisani's mountain artillery, which for some time had been fighting alongside Lawrence and the Northern Arab Army, heading for Damascus.

The D.F.P.S. participated in the 19 September Allied offensive and helped to capture the town of Tul Karm. On 1 October 1918 one of its squadrons entered into Damascus, together with UK troops, ANZACs and Indians (Arab irregulars having penetrated the city the previous night).

French Naval Forces occupied Beyrouth on 5 October (at the time it was a rather small port), and the French troops of the D.F.P.S. entered that city on 20 October. The Turks would abandon Aleppo on 26 October.

For extensive details of the composition and the movements of the D.F.P.S., refer to Sinais, op.cit.

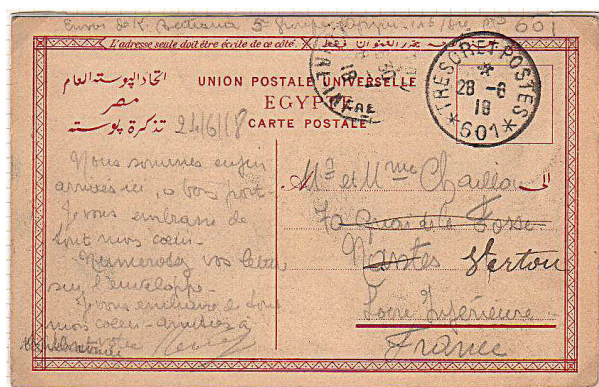




**Figure 29** - French troops of the *Détachement de Palestine et Syrie*, march past after landing at Port-Saïd.

### **Base Française de Port-Saïd, S.P. 601.**

For the offensive into Palestine, Port-Saïd became the main control centre of French military operations. In June 1918 Commandant de Choin administered the base, situated on a sandy strip outside the city. As previously mentioned, Postal Sector **601** was transferred from Suez to Port-Saïd in April 1917.



In March 1917, it had been expected that **S.P. 601** would be able to serve the mail and wages requirements of the Base de Port-Saïd, as well as of the Mission B and the D.F.P. However, soon after, a sub-sector **601-A**, had to be established to handle the D.F.P.'s needs. Another sub-sector, **S.P. 601-B**, was created in October 1917 to deal with the newly formed **Légion d'Orient** at Monarga (a small village, inland from Trikomo), on the island of Cyprus. It comprised Armenians and Syrians. **Figure 30** – 28 June 1918, **S.P. 601** to France, from Port-Saïd. “We have finally arrived safely...”

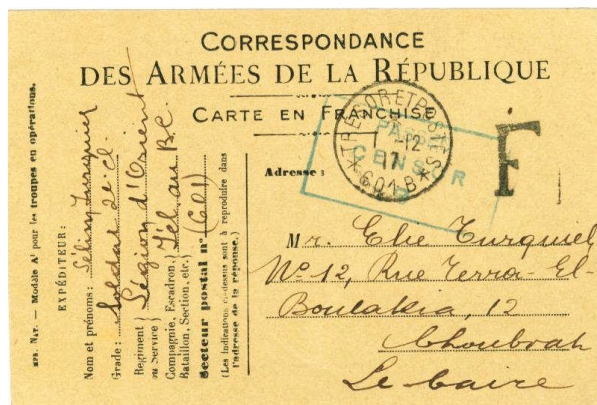
When the *Légion d'Orient* transferred to Palestine, **S.P. 601-B** and its Paymaster Médard went along with it and they were installed at the advanced base at Lydda in July 1918. (Sinai, op.cit.).

**S.P. 601-A** is reported at Khan Yunis from 27 May to 17 November 1917, moving on to Gaza, Jaffa and Ramleh. From late 1917, the mail of the D.F.P. forces in Palestine (**S.P. 601-A**) went by rail from Gaza to Port-Saïd. On arrival there, **S.P. 601** handed it to the Egyptian Civil Postal Authorities, or more frequently to the French P.O., depending on the mail's ultimate destination.

**Figure 31** – **S.P.601-A**



**Figure 32** – Printed military postcard to Cairo, sent from the *Légion d'Orient*, dated 1 December 1917. **S.P.601-B** was still at Monarga. Blue boxed Cairo Civil Censor mark and small French “F”.



**Figure 33** – As for the Dardanelles, the French wounded from Palestine were sent to hospitals and convalescence homes within Egypt. One such was the *Légion d'Orient*'s home at Zeitoun, near Cairo.



In *L'Illustration*, 10 August 1918, Jules Chancel, special correspondent, reported on his visit to the D.F.P. at its advanced base camp at Lydda. He praised the British Army's organisation and how the D.F.P. enjoyed similar supplies to the British troops. Moral was good and the hot sand much preferable to the mud of the Western Front. The only thing they missed was mail, which was very irregular. They could go months without receiving a letter from home, or see a newspaper, due to the hazardous Mediterranean crossings.

### Censorship Marks

During the Dardanelles campaign, Alexandria had been the main centre for censoring mail. This was usually done by British Army censors or by the Egyptian postal authorities (see *QC* Nos. 116 and 117, "*Civil Censorship in Egypt – WWI, 1914-19*", by F.W. Benians and J.A. Firebrace). The French had in addition an oblong oval cachet **CONTROLÉ / par l'autorité militaire** over two lines, applied in black or blue. Dimensions 40 x 18 mm.



**Figure 34**

This cachet was probably of local manufacture since that particular style is not known elsewhere. It is seen on covers between 14 October and 29 December 1915, after which it disappears; presumably because after the retreat from the Dardanelles in January 1916 most French military services were transferred to Salonika.



**Figure 35** – 4 August 1917 - Censor mark used at Marseille (OUVERT Par l'AUTORITÉ MILITAIRE – 312) on a cover from the French P.O. at Alexandrie, also with Egyptian censor mark (wavy lines, ESC type AD.2b). **On the right:** Censor mark 304 applied at Marseilles on a postcard to Egypt from Annecy, 14 August 1918, arriving Alexandria 3 September. The star in the 304 censor oval is an additional French control mark.

In the spring of 1916 distinctive oval censorship marks were introduced for the French postal service, to be used for civilian as well as military mail. They were inscribed **OUVERT Par l'AUTORITÉ MILITAIRE**, and had a number in the middle (see **Figure 35**). Dimensions: 40 x 25 mm. Colours: black, blue, violet.

Each censorship control centre was given a series of numbers, and each number was assigned to a specific Commission of Inspectors so that it could be identified if there were any complaints.

The identification numbers of the French Commissions de Contrôle relevant to this study were :

**301 to 350** : Marseille, and **951 to 960** : Port-Saïd. i.e. up to 50 and 10 groups of inspectors respectively. The highest number issued was **960**. However not all these numbers were used; Marseille used only **301 to 315**, and at Port-Saïd only **951 to 953** have been seen. No specific Commission was set up at Alexandrie, since by then the Dardanelles campaign was over and the British and Egyptian censors operated successfully.

Based on observation of material at his disposal, Lt.Col. Deloste (op.cit.) indicates that at Marseille controllers **304** and **310** dealt with mail to/from Alexandria. To this must be added **312**, as in **Figure 35**.

These Marseille control cachets are regularly found on censored correspondence to France, emanating from the French P.O.s in Egypt during the war. They are usually applied across the adhesive paper tape which was used to re-seal the envelopes after the censor's inspection. The re-sealing tape was either grey plain paper or cream coloured paper with a boxed "Controle Postal Militaire" (as in **Figure 35** above).

The OUVERT (opened) cachet was also used when inspecting postcards. Later, a similar oval cachet was introduced inscribed **CONTRÔLÉ Par l'AUTORITÉ MILITAIRE**, with numbers in Italics and only up to **215**, bearing no relationship to the first series. Mainly used for official military correspondence, this type has not yet been recorded to/from Egypt (Strowski, op.cit., describes the organisation of the censorship service).

Occasionally censored at Divisional level, the soldiers' mail was more usually censored by Commissions installed back at Base. Officers and translators were allocated to that service within the French Post Office at Port-Saïd (for civilian mail as well). French military mail might pass through French and British Military Censorship before reaching the Civil Postal Authorities. Correspondence which had not been inspected on departure was censored upon arrival in France by the Commissions at Marseille.

All French postal, telegraphic and telephonic censorship was ended on 15 August 1919.

### Censorship at Port-Saïd



To deal with the mail to/from the increasing number of French and Colonial troops gathering to form the D.F.P., it was decided on 1 July 1917 to establish a Contrôle Postal censorship office at Port-Saïd.

This began operating on 15 August 1917. Interpreters were hired to deal with the correspondence in Arabic, Armenian, etc, languages which were spoken by the disparate soldiers of the D.F.P. and the Légion d'Orient.

It was issued with two *déesse assise* circular cachets \* **MINISTÈRE DE LA GUERRE \* CONTRÔLE POSTAL PORT-SAÏD**, and censor oval cachets **OUVERT Par l'AUTORITÉ MILITAIRE** numbers **951** to **960**.

Only **951** to **953** are known, the other numbers may never have been used.

**Figure 36**

Before November 1917 it is possible to find the circular cachet (**Figure 36**) as well as the numbered ovals of Port-Saïd together on letters. However this was found unacceptable by the Authorities and a note from Paris, dated 29 October 1917, banned the joint use of these two markings. The oval cachet was intended to preserve the anonymity of the censor and the location of the Secteur Postal base. The circular cachet, with the name, was to be used only on official correspondence from the Censorship Commission of Port-Saïd.

After the 1917 advance into Palestine, some mail originating from the D.F.P. arriving into Egypt received a British censor's "F" mark (French) indicating the provenance, so as to direct it to appropriate interpreters. This "F" comes in two sizes (**Figure 35**), given ESC reference numbers PD.3a (9 x 16 mm) and PD.3b (12 x 22 mm), struck in black or blue. Later these were also applied to incoming mail of French origin from all parts of the O.E.T.A. (**Occupied Enemy Territory Administration**), and have been seen with **S.P. 601**, **601-A**, **601-B** and on correspondence **from Beyrouth**.



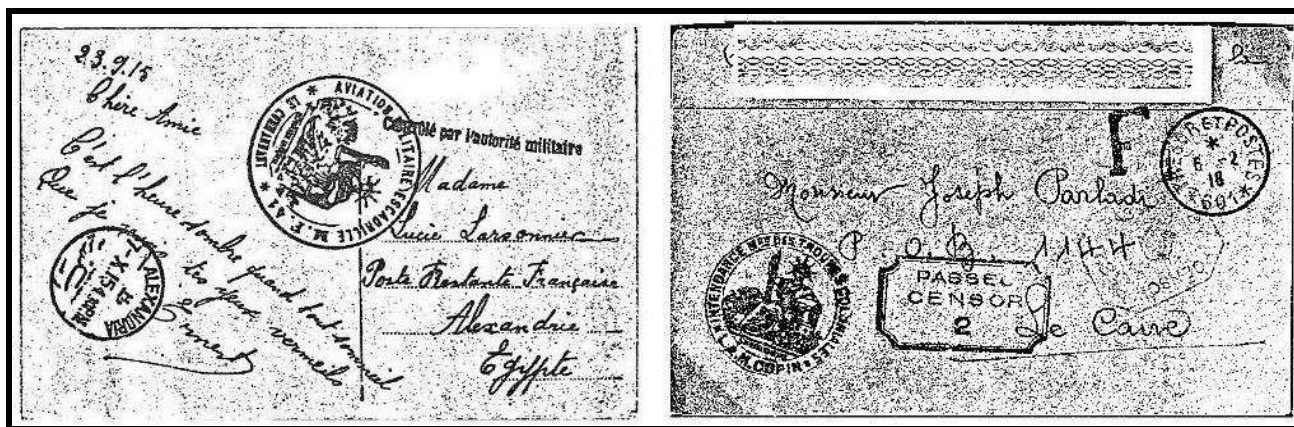
**Figure 37** - Port-Saïd **951** censor mark (*in blue*) on a letter from the D.F.S.P. (sic.) to Cairo, with **S.P. 601** postmark, 8 November 1918. (Blue **951** cachet is rarer than black).

**Inset:** Port-Saïd **952** censor mark (*in black*) on a letter from the D.F.P. to Port-Saïd, postmarked **S.P. 601-A**, dated 28 March 1918.

**Scarcity:** Compared to several other fronts in the Great War, the relative scarcity of correspondence from the French forces in Egypt during WWI derives from the facts that:

- a great part of the troops were Colonial forces (from Morocco, Algeria, Senegal, etc.) who were less likely to write home, most of the mail emanating from the Metropolitan French officers and men;
- for the Dardanelles campaign, their stay in Egypt was very short;
- for the Mission B and Palestine campaign, the military contingents were rather small, and lines of communication were difficult, as mentioned earlier.

From those fronts, military covers with adhesive postage stamps (registered, for example) are very rare.



**Figure 38** - Two fine WWI items: **Left:** a postcard from Aviation Squadron M.F.41 (in Europe) addressed to Alexandria, arriving 7 October 1915, during the Dardanelles campaign, with French linear Control mark. **Right:** a cover from the D.F.P.'s Intendance Militaire des Troupes Coloniales, with **S.P.601**, 6 February 1918; also with the French small **F**, applied by British Army P.O., and Egyptian and British censor marks. (Small **F** is known from 29 July 1917 to 28 June 1919, the large **F** from 29 March 1918 to 28 March 1919).

### The Armée du Levant

Bulgaria's collapse on 30 September 1918 cut Turkey off from its German ally, ending war in the Balkans. Col. de Piépape was named governor of Beyrouth, and command of the D.F.P.S. transferred to General Hamelin. An independent **Base de Beyrouth** was established and the advanced base at Lydda was closed. By November 1918 the bulk of the D.F.P.S. was stationed at Beyrouth. Some contingents then moved on into Turkey and Cilicia under Colonel Brémond, named Chief Administrator of Occupied Territories. On 10 January 1919 the D.F.P.S. ceased to exist, as all French military in Arabia, Egypt, Palestine, Syria, Cilicia and Armenia were grouped in a single command, the "**Troupes Française du Levant**" (T.F.L.).

The **Corps d'Occupation de Constantinople** continued using some of the **500** series S.P.s it brought along. In February 1919, the **Armée du Levant**, which had grown from the D.F.P., was issued **S.P. 600** for the Base de Beyrouth (later with numerous sub-sectors, A to F). This was followed by more numbers in the **600** series, from 606 up to 615 for the military occupation units which had dispersed in Cilicia, Lebanon and Syria. Like most Postal Sectors, **S.P. 601-A** and **601-B** had ceased to exist, but **S.P. 601** continued on at the Base de Port-Saïd after the War (seen used there on 18 May 1921).

By 1923, however, it had transferred to Beyrouth as a **Secteur Fictif** for use at the H.Q. of the military Commandement Supérieur. That H.Q.'s **S.P. 600** had to deal with very large amounts of mail, so **S.P. 601** was placed alongside to assist it. **S.P. 601** had no staff of its own and did not despatch mail; it acted only as a receiving address to facilitate routing mail, and in that sense it was "fictitious". It was still performing that duty in 1931. (Stéphane Strowski's other splendid work, *Les Estampilles Postales Françaises au XX<sup>e</sup> siècle*, has a chapter on the Armée du Levant's S.P. after WWI. Published 1933, it was reprinted by Yvert in 1997). In 1924, **S.P. 601** received the new type of single-ring CDS inscribed **POSTE AUX ARMÉES- 601**.

### The Aftermath of WWI

On 31 October Turkey surrendered unconditionally. The War was over on 11 November 1918. It was followed by broken promises from the Allies and in-fighting between the Arabs. In November 1919, control of Syria was given over to the French, who were already established in Lebanon.

In Egypt, the Capitulations privileges had been maintained by the British during WWI, with a promise to revise them after the war. From 11 March 1919 there were anti-British riots across Egypt, which lasted until mid-April. Later these would lead to strikes, clashes and eventually to Britain's declaration in 1922 that Egypt was "a sovereign and independent state", with Fouad the 1<sup>st</sup> as king.

\*

\*

\*

A special *thank you* to Edmund Hall, ESC 239, for his encouragement and for some of the iconography.

‡ : **Figure 2** postmark references are from P.L.Grech's classification for "The French Post Offices in Egypt".



**Answering the call:** In the report of the February meeting (QC 228, p.100), Stanley Horesh (ESC 118) noted that the Type II-4 Austrian postmark of Alexandria was invariably described as an obliterator only, but that he had two used as transit marks; and asked members to check their collections. I have a 5 soldi postal card sent in September 1886 from Beirut, via Alexandria and Modane a Paris to Tournai in Belgium. The “thimble” is here used as transit mark.

**Anton Jansen** (ESC 383)



### Membership changes

#### **New Members:**

**ESC 639**    **Atef Sarian, 20 Staverton Road, London NW2 5HL**  
(Royal misperforates, cancelled-back and Royal collection in general)

#### **Restoration of membership:**

**ESC 446**    **Pierre Meniaud, 7 rue du Chariot d'Or, 69004 Lyon, France**

#### **Resigned:**

**ESC 457**    **Tarek El-Kerdani**            **ESC 542**    **Oliver Migneco**            **ESC 624**    **Lord Denovan**

### Exhibition success

Congratulations to **Samir Fikry** (ESC 305), who is back on the top medal trail with his new collection of *Postal Services in the Suez Canal Zone*, which won a Large Gold in the postal history section of the Essen international exhibition (May 6-10). There were Gold medals for **Samir Nabih Attia** (ESC 505, *De La Rues 1879-1906*) and **Mordecai Kremener** (ESC 291, *Postal Services of Beirut*), while **Ibrahim Shoukry** (ESC 423, *Rural Post, 1889-1939*), **Mahmoud Ramadan** (ESC 358, *Celebrating the Kingdom, 1922*) and **Ulrich Eckstein** (ESC 273, *French Post Office in Alexandria*) were awarded Large Vermeils. Well done, all of them!

At the AGM it was decided that for our 75th Anniversary and London 2010 we would again produce an all- colour QC along the lines of QC 200. I am very much in favour of the idea and so, as before, am looking for one-page articles colourfully illustrated by some facet of Egyptian philately and between them, hopefully, covering all periods up to today. Articles to me by the end of the year for publishing in next year's March OC.



**EGYPT STUDY CIRCLE ACCOUNTS**

**INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT (GENERAL ACCOUNT) as at December 31 2008**

	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	
<b>INCOME</b>			
Sale of disks	-	168.00	
Subscriptions	2,595.35	3,863.21	
Auction account	1,500.00	1,500.00	
Bank deposit interest received (net)	69.21	42.48	
Sale of ties	-	-	
Donations	90.40	512.39	
Advertisements	125.00	50.00	
	4,379.96		6,136.08
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>			
Meeting room hire	590.50	564.50	
Cost of Quarterly Circulars	2,744.44	2,978.65	
Affiliation fee ABPS	42.60	64.00	
Insurance	19.80	36.60	
Cost of ties sold	-	-	
Website costs	110.10	132.94	
Officers' stationery and telephone	182.64	382.32	
President/Chairman's postage etc	19.35	15.89	
Library	1,256.63	-	
	4,966.06		4,174.90
(Deficit)/Surplus for the year	(586.10)		1,961.18
Surplus at 1 January 2008	<u>11,175.18</u>		<u>10,589.08</u>
<b>SURPLUS AT 31 DECEMBER 2008</b>	<u>£10,589.08</u>		<u>£12,550.26</u>

**BALANCE SHEET (GENERAL ACCOUNT) as at 31 December 2008**

	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	
<b>ASSETS</b>			
Stamp collection at catalogue valuation	5,251.00	5,251.00	
Circle library and records	-	-	
Stock of ties 50 (2007 - 50) at cost	224.20	224.20	
2009 room hire prepaid	672.00	712.00	
Cash at bank			
Current account	2,396.72	5,373.88	
Deposit account	2,895.88	2,938.36	
	11,439.80		14,499.44
<b>LIABILITIES</b>			
Members' subscriptions 2009	115.00	1,120.98	
Due to Officers	78.87	31.76	
Printing of Quarterly Circular	656.85	796.44	
	850.72		1,949.18
	<u>£10,589.08</u>		<u>£12,550.26</u>
Representing			
Accumulating surplus	<u>£10,589.08</u>		<u>£12,550.26</u>

I have prepared the Income and Expenditure Account and Balance Sheet from the records and explanations provided to me, and confirm that they are in accordance therewith.

S W Bunce, Chartered Accountant, 4 March 2009

### **Members' (and others') Announcements**

This page is intended a service to members. The idea is to offer colleagues the opportunity to seek help with their research as well as to make general ESC announcements. All new ventures take some little time to get off the ground, and we hope that more of you will seize the chance to let members know what you are doing and how they can help. We will publish the "advertisement" without fee - new announcements will be added at the top; older ones will drop off the bottom. Contact the Editor or Secretary with announcements (we will not normally publish a telephone number unless there is very good reason to do so).

**Exchange offer** – An Egyptian member offers to exchange stamps of Egypt, Sudan and other Arab countries, mint and used, against mint stamps of GB, Ireland, Australia, Canada and US. Exchange is by want list on catalogue basis. Members may contact Adel Abdel-Hafez at 112B Ammar Bin Yasser St, Heliopolis, Cairo 11351 (adhafez@internetegypt.com).

**Rural request** – One of the very rare early oval Rural Service markings – a double strike on a 3m postal stationery postcard with Damiette CDS of 14.7.91 and addressed to Dresden in Germany – was sold as Lot 414 at Lugdunum on September 22, 2003. If the buyer is a member the authors of a forthcoming book on Rurals would be delighted to hear from him/her. Please contact tawaaf@hotmail.co.uk or the Secretary.

**Gibbons update** – There has been no response (via the Circle official, at least) to Stanley Gibbons' offer to consider any errors, discoveries or updates they should be including in their forthcoming updated Middle East specialised catalogue. But now they are also offering the catalogues at (so far unspecified) cut-price to members. For any observation on either point please contact the Secretary

**Mailboat search** – A non-member in the UK has clarified his search for the mailboat *Boulac*, which served the route between Cyprus and Egypt. He would very much welcome news of any original photographs or postcards. Anyone who can help should contact the Secretary.

**Map postcards** – A UK member is keen to expand his research into the coloured map postcards produced in French by F. Pellegrin at around the turn of the century (Mohamed Nofal page 238). Of the set of 30 he has only 1,5,7,8,10,11,17,19,20,21,22 and 24. Any member who can supply the others can be assured they will go to a good home! Contact the Secretary.

**Auction help required** – The Circle needs a volunteer, preferably living in or near London, to handle the receipt and despatch of lots bought and sold in our twice-yearly members-only Auctions. Just think of all that material passing through your hands....! Please contact the Secretary if you are willing to give up a few days to help.

**Exchange of FDCs** – Akram Toubar, one of the keen young collectors of the Cairo society, is keen on British first-day covers and British Commonwealth stamps and offers to exchange two Egyptian FDCs for one British. Contact him at 254 Sudan Street, Mohandessin, Cairo 12411 (elnasser\_kooki@hotmail.com).

**Catalogue cut price** – Book II of the *Balian Catalogue of Egypt* has been reduced in price after costs have been met and it is now available for £20 including postage. Members should contact Leon Balian direct or John Sears in UK.

**Postal Bulletins** – More photography work has been carried out, and new volumes are now available on disk. In addition to 1890, 1894-97, 1899-1902 and 1906, the following may be ordered from the Secretary (£5 for a disk of any two volumes, or £21 including postage for all ten on five disks): 1907, 1909-10, 1912, 1915, 1917, 1919-21, 1925.

---

### **Web news.**

A new military section has been added with two sections in depth and some others as a "stub" form. Please add any further information that you may have.