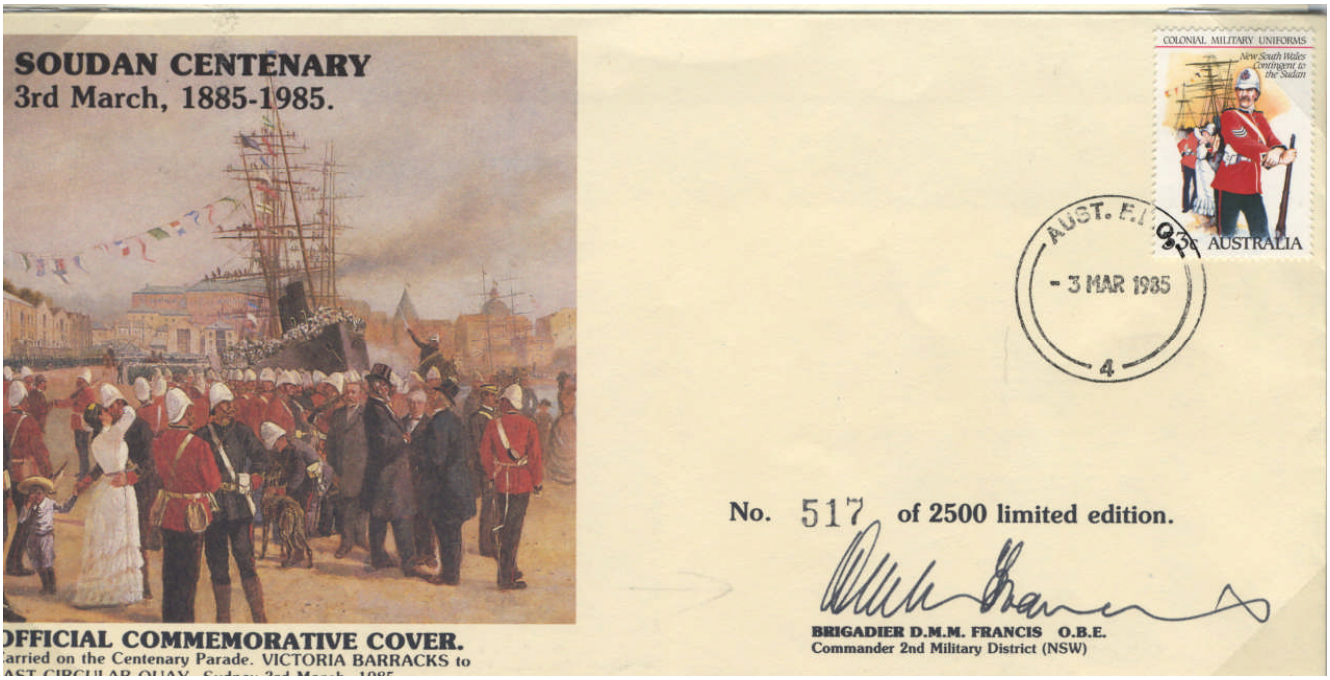
THE SUAKIN FIELD FORCE 1885

CENTENARY OF THE NEW SOUTH WALES CONTINGENT
AUSTRALIA'S FIRST WAR



Reduced in size

The following is on the reverse side of the cover.

The departure of the Soudan Contingent on 3rd March, 1885. was a most significant event in Australian military history as it was the first time that a formed body of troops had sailed away to fight overseas.

In January 1884, Major General Gordon was sent to Egypt to assist the Khedive in suppressing a revolt by Mohammed Abdullah (the Mahdi or Messiah). He reached Khartoum in February and was almost immediately besieged by a large force of Dervishes. After a ten month resistance, Gordon & the garrison were massacred on 26th January, 1885.

News of the defeat was received in Sydney on 11th February and the acting Premier, Mr. W. B. Dalley cabled London offering an Infantry Battalion and two batteries of Artillery. Recruiting commenced on 16th February and two weeks later on 3rd March, the force of some 750 men and 225 horses were embarked in two troopships, the "Iberia" and "Australasian".

The troops landed at Suakin on 29th March and were attached to the British Brigade of Guards. After taking part in a number of skirmishes the Contingent embarked for home on 17th May, and landed in Sydney on 23rd June, 1885

Our first Battle Honour "SUAKIN 1885" commemorates these events.