

3. The Australian Imperial Force in Egypt

Overview

December 1914 - April 1916

The disembarkation of troops from the First Convoy commenced at Alexandria on the 3rd of December 1914. The postal facilities that were established on the troopship A3 "Orvieto" were transferred to Zeitoun to begin operation in Egypt.

Postal rates

3rd December 1914 - 14th February 1915

When the soldiers arrived in Egypt from the first convoys, they were still expected to pay postage for mail home to Australia. Postcards were sent at the local 4 mils rate, whilst letters to Australia were sent at the 5 mils base rate. Parcels and overweight letters were charged accordingly.

15th February 1915 - April 1916

On the 15th of February 1915 the English Mediterranean Forces, which included the Australian Imperial Forces, announced that all postcards and letters endorsed "On Active Service" were allowed to be sent free of charge.

Datestamps overview

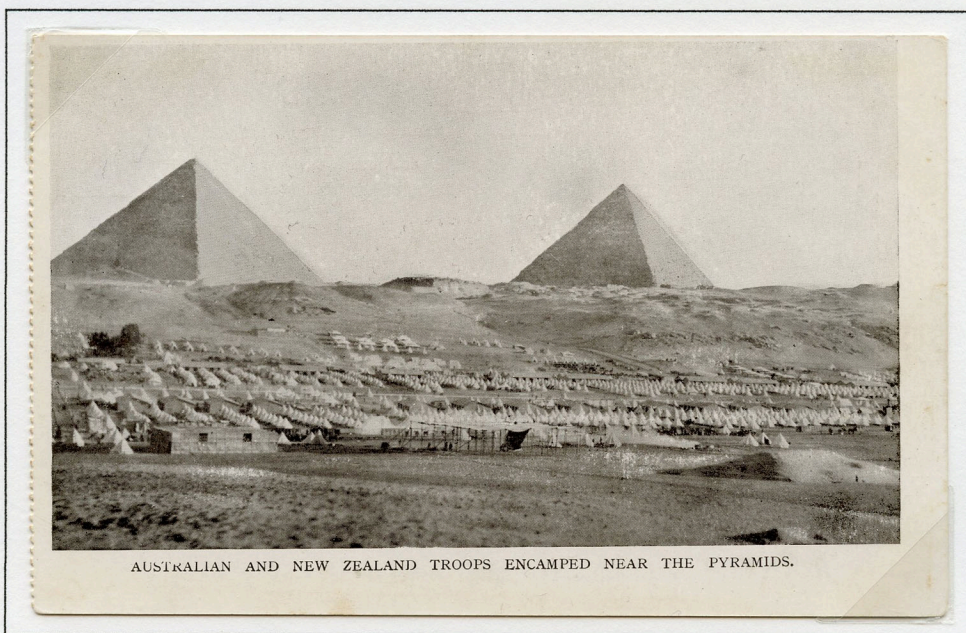
December 1914 - April 1916

With the arrival of the First Convoy on the 3rd of December 1914, the five unit datestamps which were manufactured in Australia were quickly put in to postal service, however, more formalised postal arrangements were urgently needed. In late January 1915, the first metal Headquarters and Inter Base datestamps hastily manufactured in Egypt were delivered to assist the postal officials processing the mail.

Arrangement of the pages for the Australian Imperial Force in Egypt

An arrangement of the Australian Imperial Force in Egypt in chronological order would provide a disjointed representation of the material which would be difficult to interpret. A more realistic approach is defined by featuring six main categories comprising:

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. Postal rates and processing of the mail. | 4. Infantry Brigade datestamps. |
| 2. Stationery used by the A.I.F. | 5. Censor cachets of the A.I.F. |
| 3. A.I.F. Headquarters and Inter Base datestamps. | 6. Instructional cachets of the A.I.F. |



AUSTRALIAN AND NEW ZEALAND TROOPS ENCAMPED NEAR THE PYRAMIDS.

A picture postcard published by Ward, Lock, & Co., Ltd of the "Australian and New Zealand Troops Encamped Near the Pyramids".

The Australian Imperial Force in Egypt

Postal Rates and Processing the Mail

5 mils letter rate - used after free postage was provided to the soldiers

Mail from a Light Horse soldier in Egypt before being awarded the Victoria Cross in France

A real photo postcard of soldiers from the 4th Light Horse Regiment, including Private Moon who is standing at the right and indicated by the X above his hat.



P.S. Thanks for congratulations - Afraid the stars
will never come. One needs to pull the strings &
that is not in my line. Aerodrome camp
anyway I don't hanker
after them much.

Heliopolis

Egypt

14th April 1915

Dear, I am afraid it is
a long time since I wrote to
& I'm afraid I'll have to

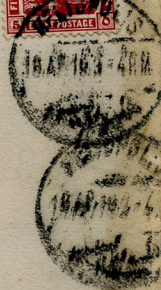
J. Dennis Esq.

Lawong

Mawbrok

Victoria

Australia



A letter headed "Aerodrome Camp, Heliopolis", dated the 14th of April 1915 and addressed to the famous Australian poet C.J. Dennis.

It was written by Private Rupert Vance Moon who was awarded the Victoria Cross for bravery at Bullecourt, France on the 12th of May 1917.

The Australian Imperial Force in Egypt

Mail addressed to soldiers in Egypt

Postal Rates and Processing the Mail

A picture postcard cancelled at Brisbane on of the 27th of July 1915 and addressed to Egypt with a "PASSED CENSOR BRISBANE" cds in red.

The card arrived in Alexandria where it was processed through the Australian Imperial Forces Base post office, before entering the domestic mail with Alexandria and Cairo datestamps of the following day.



Redirected mail



A privately printed AIF envelope postmarked at Sydney on the 3rd of April 1915 and addressed to Private William Jones of the 20th Battalion in Egypt "or elsewhere".

Private Jones was wounded at Gallipoli and hospitalised in Egypt, where the letter was delivered in May 1916. He was discharged as medically unfit for duty, returning to Australia on the 3rd of July 1917. This letter took over 13 months to be delivered.

The Australian Imperial Force in Egypt

Postal Rates and Processing the Mail

Registered mail

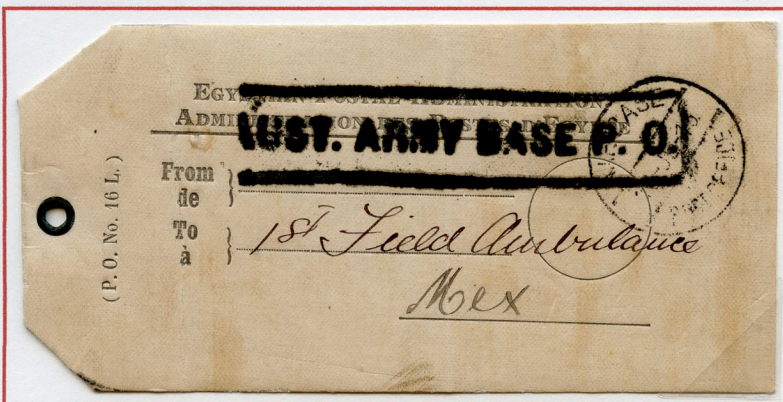
Australian registration labels were brought over with the first convoy and have been found used from December 1914. A number of versions of the registration labels have been recorded, including one printing in green.

The registration fee was 2d, but allowed for no compensation if loss occurred due to war time conditions. There were no official Australian registered envelopes, so the troops used specially printed British type registered envelopes. These were embossed with the King George V circular 2d stamp to cover the registration fee, with the letter postage being free.



A British registered letter cancelled by the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps Headquarters cds, dated the 9th of April 1916 and addressed within Cairo. There is a magenta Registration Label for the Australian Imperial Force (not recorded by Firebrace) and British type “PASSED/ BY/ CENSOR/ No. 3478” cachet in red (Firebrace Type CM 3).

Mail bag tie-on labels



The tie-on labels, like the one at the left were used to identify the various units, once the mail bags had been sorted.

Six examples of the mail bag tie-ons are recorded.

A linen paper tie-on label of the Egyptian Postal Administration, used by the Australian Army Administration, with the circular “A.L.F. BASE/ POST OFFICE” cds dated the 10th of June 1915 (Firebrace Type DS 6) allocated to the Postal Section at Cairo.

The label is addressed to the 1st Field Ambulance at Mex, a coastal town just south of Alexandria. The tag has the boxed “AUST. ARMY BASE P.O.” cachet in black (Firebrace CA 26).

Ex Emery

The Australian Imperial Force in Egypt

Stationery Used by the Soldiers in Egypt

Picture postcards

Egypt was a popular tourist destination before the war and a number of firms published picture postcards depicting local landmarks and ancient Egyptian artefacts. With most of the soldiers embarking on their first trip outside Australian shores, they proved very popular when sent home. The messages generally related to the location of the camps close to the Pyramids, their hygiene (and those of the “natives”) and sights they saw in Cairo when on leave.

Postcards sent by my grandfather

My grandfather wrote a number of postcards home to his mother and father and each of his five siblings. They were sent in a group of between four and nine cards, which he wrote on average twice a week.



This postcard of Alexandria is addressed to his brother Basil.

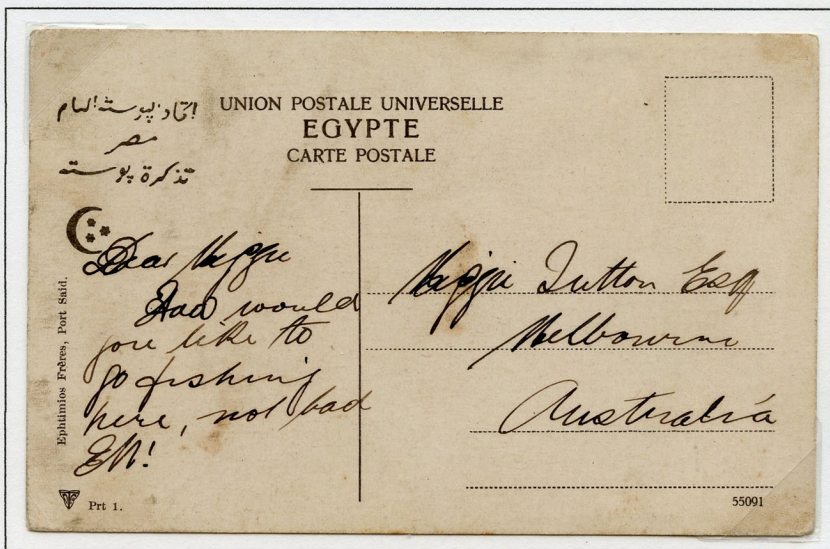
He writes “Dear Bas, How would you like a long trip in this fashion, not as nice as a motor, eh!”

When my grandfather’s troopship the A20 “Hororata” arrived at Suez on the 1st of December, he sent a series of four postcards to his family. This postcard is typical of those sent by the troops back home, although most of them were black and white images.

Postcards sent under cover

Many postcards such as this one were sent “under cover” and not postmarked. It was cheaper for the soldiers to send a series of postcards in one envelope rather than send cards individually.

This postcard of Port Said was sent by my grandfather, to his sister Marjorie. He writes: “Dear Marjorie, How would you like to go fishing here, not bad eh!”



The Australian Imperial Force in Egypt

Stationery used by the soldiers in Egypt

The Christmas 1914 Postcards

For Christmas 1914, two types of postcards were printed in Egypt and used by the soldiers to send Christmas messages back home. The differences are found in the text printed at the top right. It is interesting to note that the word "EXPEDITIONNARY" is incorrectly spelt on both cards.

Type 1a Postcard: "AUSTRALIAN EXPEDITIONNARY FORCE" (without "Xmas Wishes")



A Type 1a card (without "Xmas Wishes" at the lower left) was used under cover by Private Clarence McDougall of the 2nd Light Horse Regiment to his sister in Queensland.

He was promoted to Lieutenant in France and awarded the Military Cross on the 20th of January 1919. On the reverse he writes "This is the latest card in Cairo..."

Type 1b Postcard: "AUSTRALIAN EXPEDITIONNARY FORCE" (with "Xmas Wishes")



The card was written by Captain (later Lieutenant Colonel) Clarence Daly of the 6th Infantry Battalion who was awarded the DSO on the 1st of January 1917 "for consistent good work and devotion to duty".

He was killed in action at Foret de Nieppe on the 14th of April 1918.

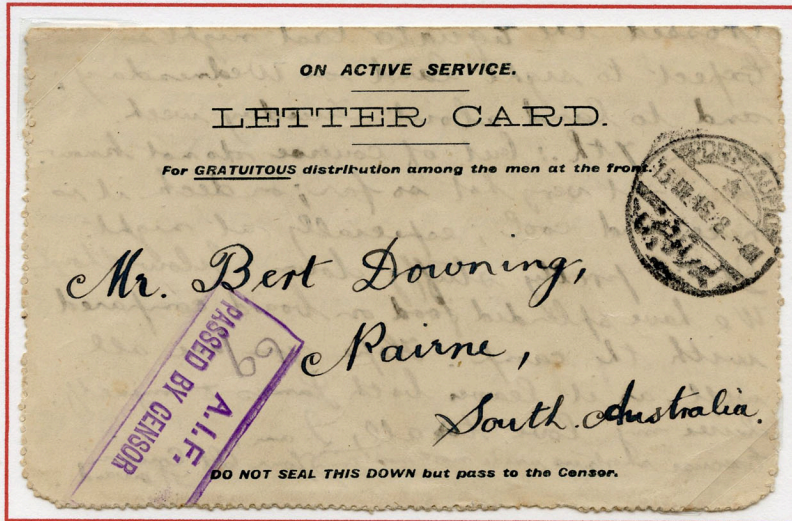
A Type 1b card (with "Xmas Wishes" inserted at the lower left) and headed "Mena Camp", with a Cairo datestamp of the 3rd of January 1915 and addressed to Victoria.

The Australian Imperial Force in Egypt

Stationery used by the soldiers in Egypt

Lettercards privately printed in Melbourne

In late 1915, the extreme shortage of writing materials amongst the troops at Gallipoli prompted the production of three types of lettercards. The Government Printing Office allowed the use of their office machinery, and staff performed the work gratuitously on Saturday afternoons to produce these lettercards. They were printed on thin paper, unlike the official lettercards which were printed on good quality stock. This stationery was provided to the soldiers in the military camps just prior to embarkation. The earliest recorded used examples are all from Egypt.



A privately printed Type 3 lettercard, cancelled at Port Taufiq on the 15th of March 1916 and addressed to South Australia, with the boxed "A.I.F./PASSED BY CENSOR" cachet in purple (Firebrace Type CM 16). The lettercard is headed "At Sea" and states "This will be posted at some port near the Suez Canal entrance I think". From the date of posting, it appears that this soldier was on Convoy 17.

Less than twenty examples of this lettercard are recorded



At left is a scan of the oval illustration on the reverse of this lettercard showing the "2nd A.I.F. EMBARKING".

This is very similar to the official Australian lettercards from the Civil Military Series.

At the base is the inscription "From the Staff of the Commonwealth Stamp Printing Office, Australia".

The Australian Imperial Force in Egypt

Stationery used by the soldiers in Egypt

The 1915 Christmas billy can

In May 1915, the newly formed Australian Comforts Fund began the task of assembling 20,000 billy cans filled with a variety of goods for the Australian troops on active service in Gallipoli and those training in Egypt. Many businesses, and mainly women and girls of school age, rallied to the task of donating goods to fill the quintessentially Australian billy. The demand for billys outstripped supply, so more had to be acquired. Items considered suitable for filling the billys included bootlaces, tinned sardines, tobacco, handkerchiefs, chocolate, writing materials, soap, etc.

Delivery of the billy cans to the soldiers of the A.I.F.

The final tally of 56,000 billys was shipped from Melbourne on the 11th of October 1915 and began arriving in Egypt on the 22nd of December. These were supplied to the soldiers after the evacuation of Gallipoli.

Reply postcard thanking the donor

In many of the billys was a letter from the sender addressed anonymously and soldiers were encouraged to write back expressing their gratitude.



An advertising postcard for "Burford's Prize No. 1 Soap", cancelled at Ismailia on the 5th of January 1916 and addressed to South Australia. The card was written by Private Alexander Shaw of the 4th Field Ambulance who writes:

"Many thanks for your nice Billy can which I received on Xmas eve & was much appreciated by me. Everything enclosed came in most useful. I must also thank you for your photo & I think you look quite charming in your attire..."

The postcard was printed specifically for the Christmas Billy Tin and Burford's was one of the soap manufacturers who donated products for the project. Most of the responses sent home by the soldiers were letters, and this printed card is of considerable rarity.

Private Shaw survived the war and returned to Australia on the 23rd of October 1918.

The Australian Imperial Force in Egypt

Intermediate Base Depot Datestamps

Early June 1915

With the increasing numbers of reinforcement troops and remount horses arriving in Egypt, the current administration centres were swamped with requests. In early June 1915, the Australian Intermediate Base Depot was established in Cairo by Colonel Sellheim. It consisted of seven sections comprising:

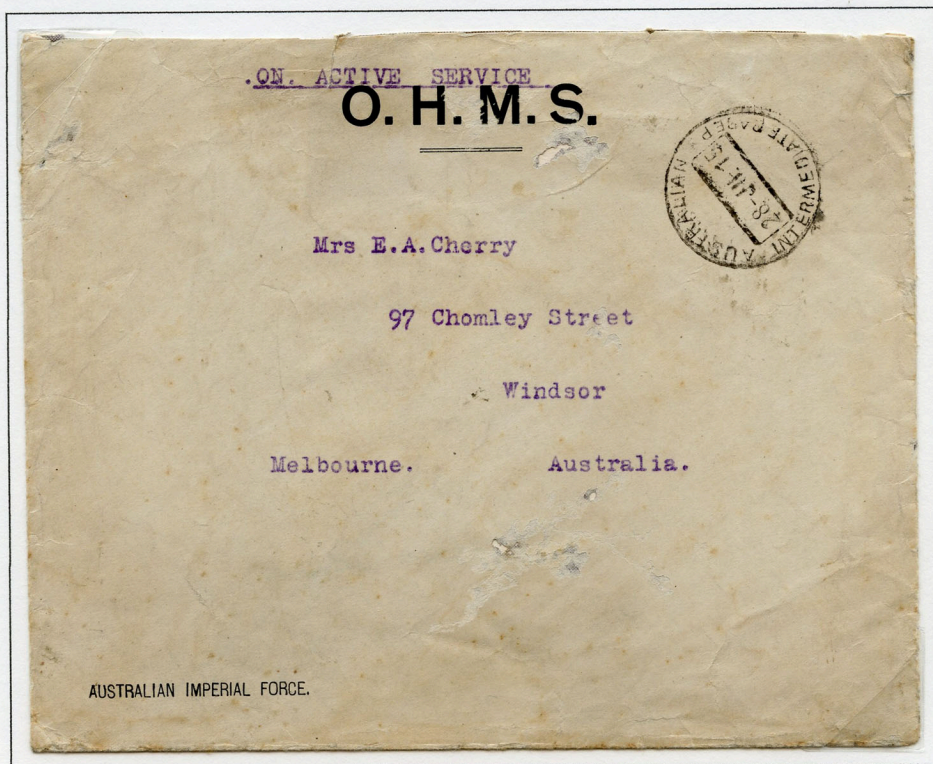
- | | |
|-----------------|-------------------|
| 1. Headquarters | 2. Records |
| 3. Finance | 4. Ordnance |
| 5. Medical | 6. Reinforcements |
| 7. Postal | |

Each section received a cds which is differentiated by the length of "CAIRO" in the datestamp.

The datestamps on the next two pages are very similar and are representative of each of the administrative centres.

Section 1: Headquarters - Type 1

Cairo



An O.H.M.S. envelope cancelled by the "AUSTRALIAN/ INTERMEDIATE BASE" cds dated the 28th of June 1915 and addressed to Victoria. This is a very early use of the datestamp.

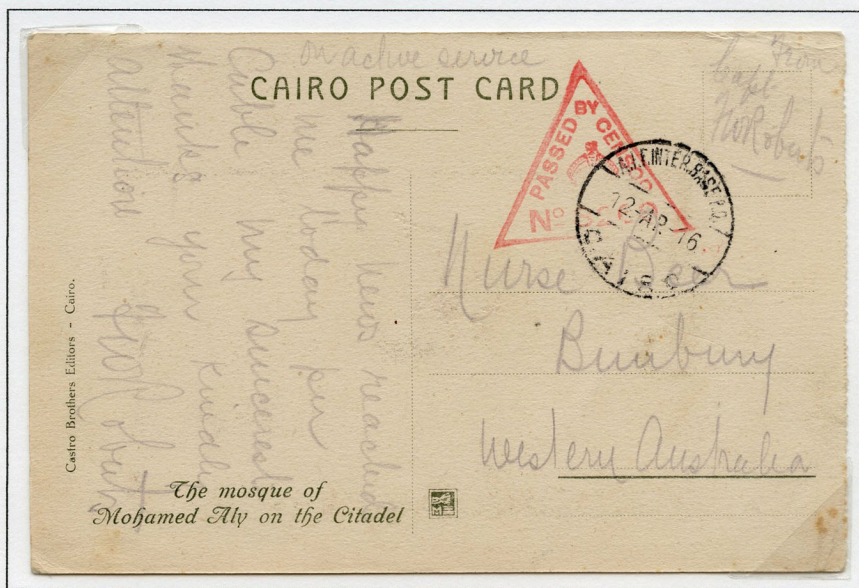
This datestamp was the only type used by the Australians and was allocated to the Headquarters at Cairo.

The Australian Imperial Force in Egypt

Intermediate Base Depot Datestamps

Section 1: Headquarters - Type 2 ("CAIRO" in datestamp 18mm wide)

Cairo



A postcard cancelled by the "A.I.F. INTER. BASE P.O./CAIRO" cds dated the 7th of March 1916 (Firebrace Type DS 3/4 with CAIRO measuring 18mm wide) allocated to the Headquarters

Section 2: Records ("CAIRO" in datestamp 14mm wide)

Cairo



This card was written by Private David Jamieson who was killed in action at Pozieres in France on the 25th of July 1916.

A postcard cancelled by the "A.I.F. INTER. BASE P.O./CAIRO" cds dated the 28th of December 1915 (Firebrace Type DS 3/2 with CAIRO measuring 14mm wide) allocated to the Records Section.

The Australian Imperial Force in Egypt

Infantry Brigade and Light Horse Datestamps

Australian & New Zealand Army Corps Headquarters

Mail from Shepheard's Hotel

The postal facilities of the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps Headquarters was established at Shepheard's Hotel on the 10th of January 1915, with a datestamp manufactured by the British Royal Engineers. The hotel was used by the Australian Branch of the British Red Cross Society, and was used as an informal meeting place for officers.



An envelope with the crest of Shepheard's Hotel in Cairo, with matching letterhead addressed to Victoria and cancelled with the Shepheard's Hotel datestamp of the 13th of March 1915.

The un-named officer in the letter describes some of the everyday life in Cairo "Today we have been granted a holiday and am thinking of going to the races this afternoon"....

Ex Emery

The Australian Imperial Force in Egypt

Infantry Brigade and Light Horse Datestamps

The disembarkation of troops from the First Convoy from Australia commenced at Alexandria on the 3rd of December 1914. The First Convoy brought five datestamps which were made in Australia for the campaign. All other datestamps were made in Egypt by the Postal Services Section of the British Royal Engineers. There are generally three periods of use of these datestamps: in Egypt prior to the landing; at the campaign at Gallipoli; and finally, in Egypt after the evacuation.

The Infantry Brigade and Light Horse datestamps are all very similar. Those on this and the next two pages are representative of these divisions.

1st Australian Division

The datestamp for the 1st Australian Division was one of the five manufactured in Australia and brought to Egypt. The periods of use of this datestamp are recorded in the following table:

Date	Location
Post office opened on 5th of December 1914	Mena Hotel
Left for Gallipoli early April 1915	
25th April - mid December 1915	Gallipoli
Late December 1915	Egypt
January 1916	Tel-el-Kebir
End of January 1916	Serapeum
End of March 1916 - Embarked for Europe	

Serapeum

End of January - end of March 1916



A picture postcard with the "1st AUST. DIV. FIELD P.O." cds dated the 20th of March 1916 (Firebrace Type DS 10) and addressed to New South Wales. There is an additional British type censor "PASSED/BY/CENSOR/No 3137" cachet in red (Firebrace Type CM 3).

During this period of use in March 1916, the 1st Australian Division was located at Serapeum until embarking for Europe later in the month.

The Australian Imperial Force in Egypt

Infantry Brigade and Light Horse Datestamps

2nd Australian Infantry Brigade

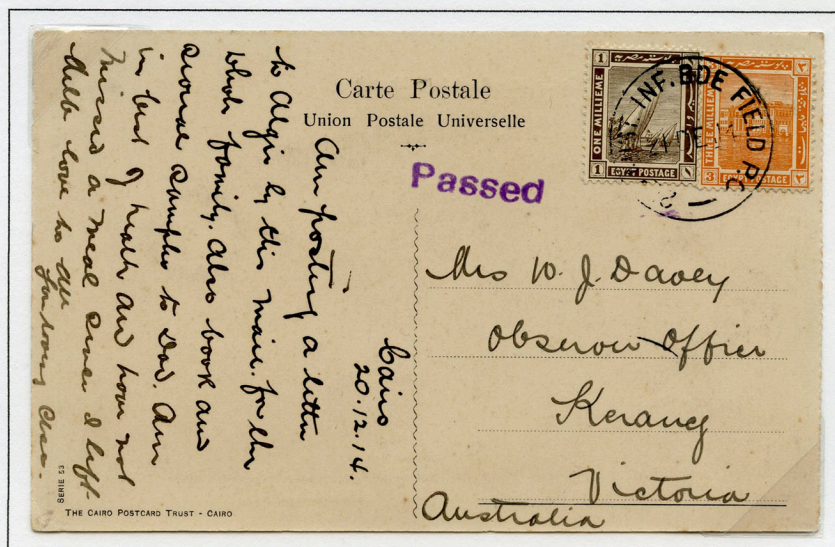
The datestamp for the 2nd Australian Infantry Brigade was one of the five manufactured in Australia and brought to Egypt. The periods of use of this datestamp are recorded in the following table:

Date	Location
Post office opened on 5th of December 1914	Mena Camp
Left for Gallipoli early April 1915	
25th April - mid December 1915	Gallipoli
Late December 1915	Egypt
January 1916	Tel-el-Kebir
End of January 1916	Serapeum
Mid March 1916 - Embarked for Europe	

Mena Camp

5th December 1914 - early April 1915

A card posted in 1914 before free postage was introduced in mid February 1915



A picture postcard from the Mena Camp, with Egyptian stamps making up the 4 mils postcard rate, and cancelled by the "2nd AUST. INF. BDE. FIELD P.O." cds of the 21st of December 1914 (Firebrace Type DS 12). The card is addressed to Victoria where a straight lined "Passed" censor handstamp of Melbourne was applied.

This is an early postcard from a soldier from the First Convoy. Since there was no free postage available to the troops until the 15th of February 1915, all mail had to be pre-paid under civilian postal provisions.

The Australian Imperial Force in Egypt

Infantry Brigade and Light Horse Datestamps

3rd Australian Light Horse Brigade

The datestamp for the 3rd Australian Light Horse Brigade was manufactured by the Postal Service Section of the British Royal Engineers in March 1915. The periods of use of this datestamp are recorded in the following table:

Date	Location
Post office opened end of March 1915	Mena Camp
7th - 16th May 1915	Heliopolis
20th May - mid December 1915	Gallipoli
28th December 1915 - June 1916	Maadi village

Heliopolis

7th - 16th May 1915



An envelope with 5 x 1 mils of Egyptian stamps paying the single letter rate to Victoria cancelled by the "3rd LIGHT HORSE/A.I.F./FIELD POST OFFICE" cds (Firebrace Type DS 24) of the 9th of May 1915. On the reverse is an imprint for the 8th Light Horse Regiment, which is shown at the left.

This brigade was at Heliopolis for nine days from the 7th of May before landing at Gallipoli on the 20th of May.

The Australian Imperial Force in Egypt - Censor Cachets

Censorship of mail in Egypt - Censor cachets

December 1914 - April 1916

When the First Convoy arrived in December 1914 there were minimal postal facilities available. Practically all the mail from December 1914 to January 1915 was not censored in Egypt at all. Gradually, different forms of censorship were introduced for the Allied forces in Egypt.

British censor cachets allocated to Australian units

The Australian Imperial Force was under the direction of the British Mediterranean Forces, who had a much more structured system for processing the mail written by Australian soldiers, especially for censorship. The British military postal administration authorised the use of their censor cachets to the A.I.F. and they allocated a block of numbers between 2199 to 2220, and then subsequently six series of five blocks of numbers when required. These numbers were used throughout the Egyptian and Gallipoli campaigns, with occasional replacements for lost numbers.

Censor cachet Type CM 2

Recorded Usage: April 1915 - April 1916



A postcard dated the 9th of April 1915 and addressed to Queensland with the boxed "PASSED BY/No 2224/CENSOR" British censor handstamp in red (Firebrace Type CM 2). The Australian unit allocated this censor number was the First Australian Divisional Training Brigade.

This is the earliest recorded usage of the British CM 2 allocated to an Australian unit

Australian Military Censor Cachets

Australian unit handstamps used as censors - Confirmation of a new theory

Since the early 1980's, there has been a growing body of collectors who believe that the Australian rubber unit cachets manufactured in Egypt served as censor handstamps. In all the cards and envelopes in this section, none of them bear a censor cachet from Egypt. The British censor administration was very strict, and they would not allow mail to be posted uncensored during the campaign. I believe these cachets were manufactured for the following reasons:

1. To identify the origin of the military unit from where the correspondence came from.
2. To act as a censor cachet. In many cases, there is the signature or initials of the censoring officer, adding further evidence that these handstamps were integral to the censorship function.

After the Gallipoli campaign, the use of the rubber handstamps in other theatres of the war is virtually non-existent. This was due to the British Military Postal Administration who took control of the censoring of mail.

Australian unit handstamps used as censors

At the start of 1915, military censor cachets began to be produced for the Australian Imperial Forces. Although some cachets were produced before the troops landed at Gallipoli, the majority were manufactured during the campaign. The primary supply and manufacture of these implements was in Egypt. It is rare to find covers of a unit using a military cachet, in conjunction with a military censorship handstamp at the same time.

The Military cachets in this section are exhibited under the following categories:

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. Military Censor Cachets | 5. Australian Light Horse Brigade Cachets |
| 2. Australian Headquarters and Intermediate Base Cachets | 6. Australian Training Battalion Cachets |
| 3. Australian Unit Cachets | 7. Australian Instructional Handstamps |
| 4. Australian Officer Censor Cachets | 8. Australian and New Zealand Unit Cachets |

Classification of the censor cachets

Within each of the above categories, the handstamps are exhibited in the following order:

- | | | | |
|-----------------|---------------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Oval cachets | 2. Circular cachets | 3. Framed cachets | 4. Unframed cachets |
|-----------------|---------------------|-------------------|---------------------|

For each cachet, the earliest and latest recorded dates of use are shown at the top right for each item.

Usage and rarity

All the cachets in this section are scarce to rare, with some not recorded in the Firebrace text. Dates of use are recorded for each cachet, with many only known to have been in use for a couple of weeks. Those items which are boxed in bold represent envelopes or postcards of particular rarity.

1. Military Censor Cachets

Australian Troopship Censor Cachets Used on Land

There is evidence to suggest that at least four Australian troopship censor cachets were used on land to censor mail home.

Censor cachet Type MCM 1/E

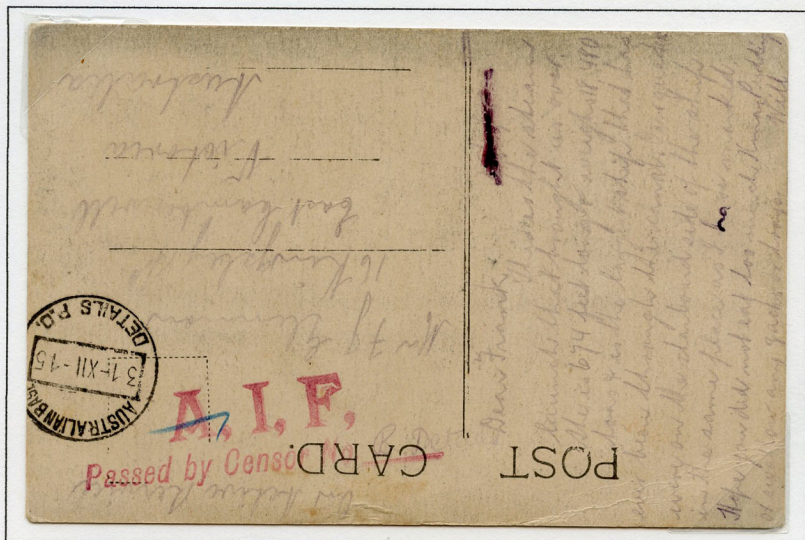
Recorded usage: 27th December 1915 - February 1916



A picture postcard written in Egypt and headed "Cairo 25/12/15" and cancelled by the Base Details cds of the 27th of December. It is handstamped with the unframed troopship cachet "A,I,F,/ Passed by Censor No." (Firebrace Type MCM 1/E) and initialled for censorship.

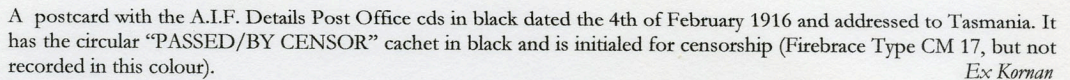
The identification of this ship is unknown, however, the date confirms it as being from the Fourteenth Convoy. Since the card was written at Cairo, it confirms that this censor cachet was applied on land, with this being the earliest recorded example.

A similar card to the above, with the troopship cachet unusually cancelled in red.

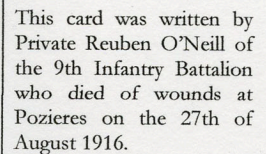


Circular Censor Cachets

Recorded usage: 4th February - 8th May 1916



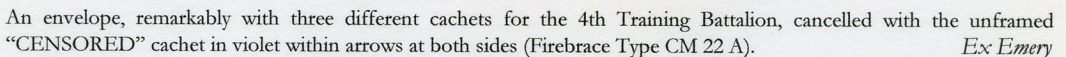
Ex Kornan



A picture postcard with the Australia Base Details cds, dated the 8th of May 1916 and addressed to Queensland. It has the circular "PASSED/BY CENSOR" cachet in violet (Firebrace Type CM 17), initialed, and dated for censorship. This card represents the latest date of use of this handstamp in violet.

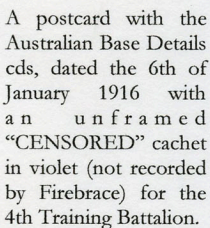
Censor cachet Type CM 22 A

Only recorded use: 27th March 1916



Ex Emery

Only recorded use: 6th January 1916



This censor handstamp is identical to the cachet on the envelope above, but without the arrows at the sides.

2. Australian Headquarters and Intermediate Base Cachets

Postal Section

Censor cachet Type CA 28 A

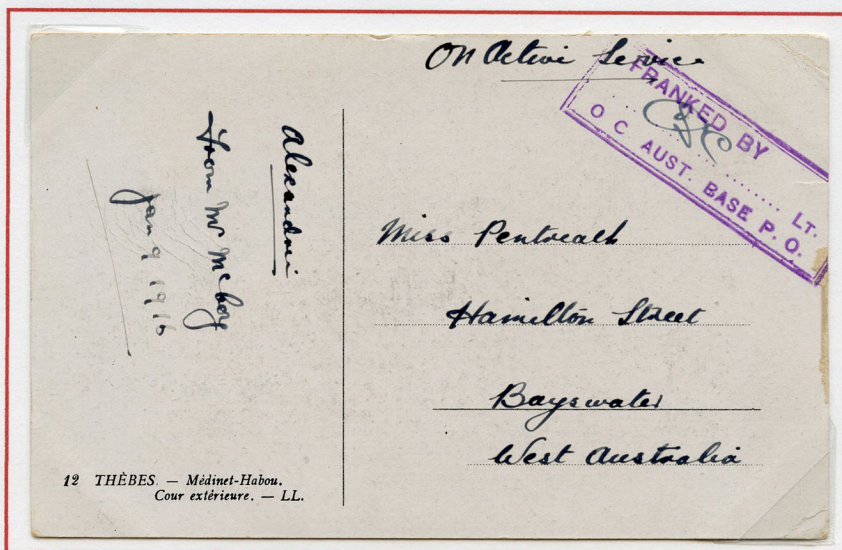
Recorded usage: 22nd March - 6th November 1915



An envelope with the AIF Inter base cds of the 3rd of August 1915 and addressed to Victoria, with the circular "AUSTRALIA INT. BASE POST OFFICE/ ON ACTIVE/ SERVICE/ POST FREE" cachet in violet and initialed for censorship (Firebrace Type CA 28A).

Censor cachet Type CA 26 A

Recorded usage: 9th - 26th January 1916



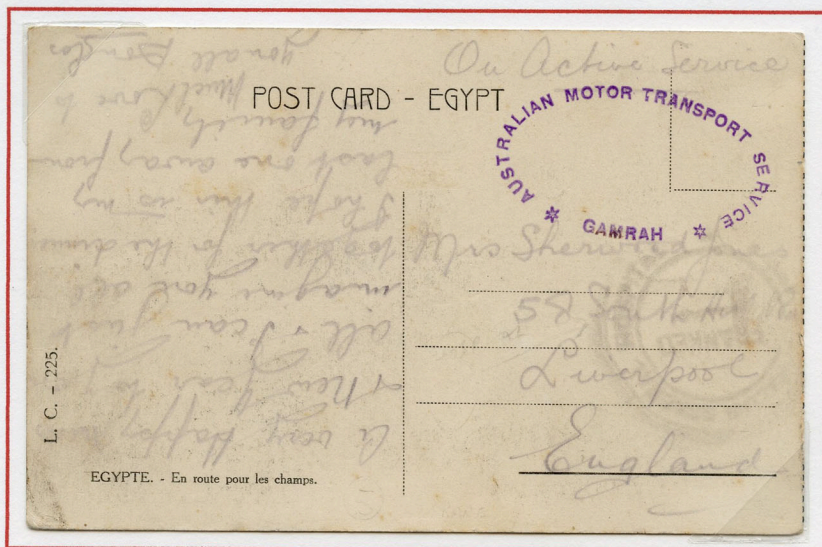
A picture postcard dated the 9th of January 1916 and addressed to Western Australia with the boxed "FRANKED BY/LT./ O C AUST. BASE P.O." cachet in purple (Firebrace Type CA 26 A).

3. Australian Unit Cachets

Censor cachet Type CA 73C

Oval censor cachets

Only recorded use: December 1915



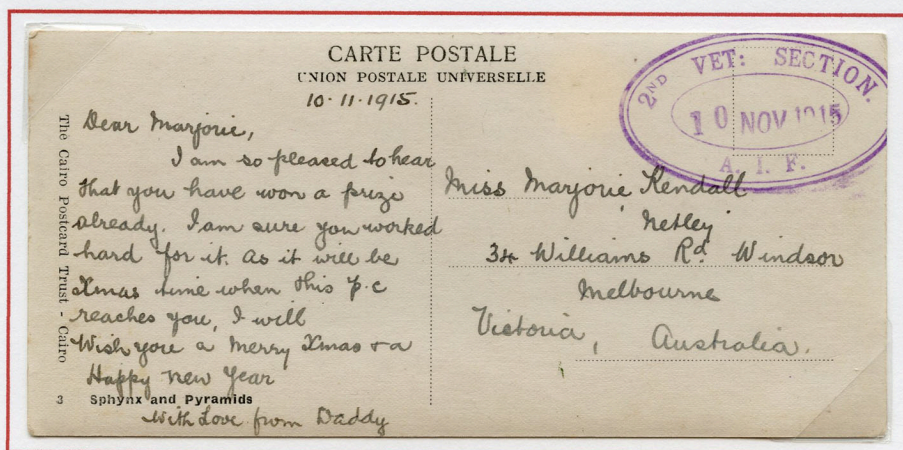
A postcard addressed to England with the oval “AUSTRALIAN MOTOR TRANSPORT SERVICE/ GAMRAH.” cachet in violet (Firebrace Type CA 73C). The message wishes the recipient a happy new year, so it is assumed this card was written in December 1915.

Ex Kornan, Finlayson

This is the only recorded example of this handstamp

An unlisted censor cachet

Only recorded use: 10th November 1915



A postcard addressed to Victoria with the oval “2nd VET. SECTION/ A.I.F.” cachet in violet (not recorded by Firebrace) and dated the 10th of November 1915. The card was written by Captain William Kendall, who was invalided out of the army and returned to Australia in late 1918.

Ex Finlayson

This is the only recorded example of this handstamp

4. Australian Officer Censor Cachets

Unframed cachets

Another feature of the censor cachets was the specific officer censor handstamps. In each brigade, an officer was appointed to censor the mail of the soldiers within their unit. Instead of initialling or signing each letter or postcard, certain units had cachets manufactured identifying the unit and the officer responsible for censoring each item.

An unlisted censor cachet

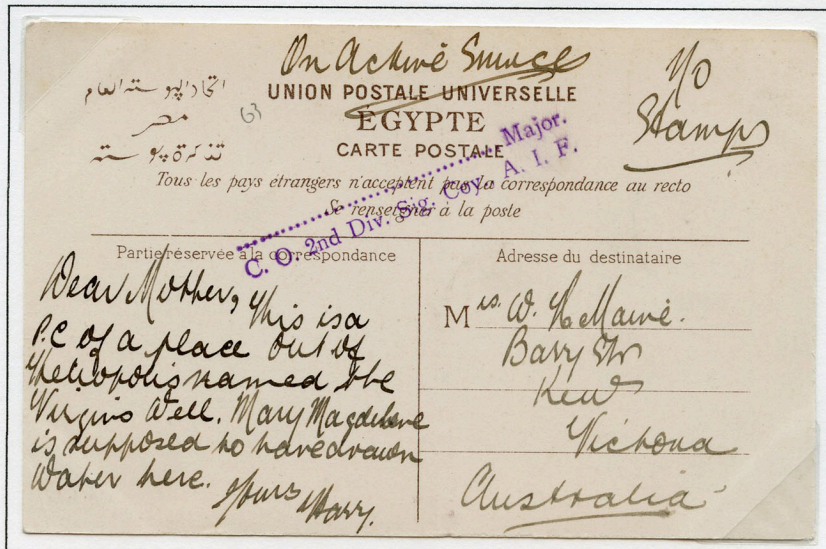
Only recorded use: 20th September 1915



A picture postcard from the "Zeitoun Camp" with the Australian Base Details cds, dated the 20th of September 1915 with the unframed ".....CAPT./C.C. "A" DETAILS" cachet in blue and initialed for censorship (not recorded by Firebrace).

An unlisted censor cachet

Only recorded use: 12th December 1915



An undated picture postcard, unusually without a Base Office cds, with the unframed ".....Major/C.O. 2nd Div. Sig. Coy. A.I.F." cachet in violet (not recorded by Firebrace).

This postcard was written by Lieutenant Henry Maine who was awarded the Military Cross for bravery at Passchendaele on the 4th of October 1917. He survived the war and returned to Australia on the 7th of February 1919.

5. Australian Light Horse Brigade Cachets

2nd Light Horse Regiment

The first Australian Light Horse Brigades arrived with the First Convoy and established their camp at Mena, separate from the infantry brigades. With the assault at Gallipoli, all the horses were left behind in Egypt and the Light Horse Brigades fought on the peninsula as infantry troops.

An unlisted cachet

Only recorded use: 24th March 1915



An envelope with an Egyptian 5 mils stamp cancelled by the Military Camp datestamp of the 24th of March 1915 and addressed to Queensland.

It is handstamped with the circular "2nd LIGHT HORSE/REGIMENT" cachet in violet (not recorded by Firebrace), and an arrival censor datestamp for Brisbane in red of the 24th of June 1915.

3rd Light Horse Regiment

Censor cachet Type CA 115

Recorded usage: 14th September - 1st October 1916

A Field Service postcard with an English Army Post Office SZ 3 datestamp of the 14th of September 1916 and addressed to Alexandria with the oval "3rd L. H. BRIGADE DETAILS/ 14 SEP. 1916/ * F.P.O. 2 *" cachet in grey blue (Firebrace Type CA 115).

Unusually, the card is censored twice by two British censor handstamps.



6. Australian Training Battalion Cachets

1st Training Battalion

The training of the troops in Australia was totally inadequate for the Dardanelles campaign and a number of training battalions were established in different disciplines to prepare the soldiers at Gallipoli.

Four unlisted censor cachets

Only recorded use: 29th January 1916



An OHMS envelope addressed to New South Wales and cancelled by the AIF Inter Base Details cds dated the 29th of January 1916.

There are four 1st Training Battalion cachets on the cover in violet, all being unlisted by Firebrace.

1. Framed oval with "1st TRAINING BATTALION/ Ref. No." cachet
2. Unframed, straight lined "Lieut. & Adjutant/ 1st Training Battalion" cachet
3. Framed oval with "1st TRAINING BATTALION// ORDERLY ROOM" cachet (on reverse)
4. Unframed straight lined "1st TRAINING BATTALION" cachet (on reverse)

At the left is an image of Cachets 3 and 4 on the reverse of this envelope.

The cachets on this cover are the only recorded examples.
Ex Emery

6. Australian Training Battalion Cachets

8th Training Battalion

Censor cachet Type CA 102

Recorded usage: 23rd April - 29th April 1916

An envelope written at the reinforcement camp at Heliopolis with the framed circular "8th TRAINING BATTALION/ ON ACTIVE/ SERVICE/ POST FREE" cachet in purple (Firebrace Type CA 102) and the framed circular "PASSED BY CENSOR" cachet in rose (Firebrace Type CM 18) and initialed for censorship.



The letter was then taken to the Esbakiah Gardens Club in Cairo, which was commandeered from the YMCA, where it received the "MILITARY RECREATION/ FREE/...../E" cachet in red (Firebrace Type CA 80).

It was finally posted through the civilian postal service at Cairo with the cds dated the 7th of March 1916 and sent to New South Wales.

Ex Emery

7. Australian Instructional Cachets

Instructional handstamps were manufactured in Egypt primarily for the redirection of mail. The movement of troops to the front, other divisions or to hospital, necessitated the production of these cachets. All of them are very scarce to rare.

Allocation of the instructional cachets

The instructional cachets were generally used by the Intermediate Base Depots or Military Units, and could be exhibited within each of these sections. However, in many cases, multiple redirectional markings from each of these divisions was applied to the envelopes. It is therefore more practical to represent this material under the one category.

Two unlisted instructional cachets

Only recorded use: April 1915

An envelope from New Zealand cancelled at Taitimu on the 15th of February 1915 and addressed to F. Lansdown at the Liverpool Military Camp near Sydney. On arrival, it was endorsed in manuscript "Egypt" and then sent to the Australian Light Horse Brigades in training there.



The envelope passed between four Light Horse Brigades and was processed by the military postal officials in the following manner:

1. Three manuscript endorsements were applied: "Not First LH"; and an additional manuscript notations of "Not 5th LH"; and "Not 6th LH/Discharged/ at Sydney".
2. It reached the 2nd Light Horse Brigade where:
 - ♦ the unframed "NOT KNOWN/ 2nd LIGHT HORSE BRIGADE" cachet in black was applied (not recorded by Firebrace).
3. The envelope was sent back to Australia, arriving at Victoria where:
 - ♦ the boxed "RECEIVED AT/ DEAD LETTER OFFICE/ MELBOURNE, VICTORIA/ FROM EGYPT/ WITHOUT COMMENT" cachet in red (not recorded by Emery).
4. It was finally returned to New Zealand, where the Dead Letter Office datestamp for Wellington in blue of the 8th of June 1915 was applied on the reverse.

It can only be assumed that soldier F. Lansdown failed a medical examination or was severely wounded in training for him to be discharged from the Liverpool Military Camp in Sydney. There are no records in the Australian National Archives indicating that a soldier by this name fought for the A.I.F. in World War I.

8. Australian & New Zealand Unit Cachets

In early January 1915, the New Zealand and Australian Division was formed from the New Zealand Expeditionary Force and two Australian Brigades. They were sent to Ismailia in late January for training and gradually they started to become known as the ANZAC's; the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps. From the landing at Gallipoli, the reputation of the fighting qualities of the ANZAC's grew within the Allied forces and their Turkish adversaries.

Censor cachet Type CA 69 B

Recorded usage: 26th December 1915 - 11th February 1916

A rare ANZAC military censor cachet



An envelope postmarked with the New Zealand No. 1 Stationary post office datestamp located at Zeitoun, dated the 31st of January 1916 and addressed to New Zealand. It is handstamped with the oval "N.Z.F.A./ Franked/ W. R. GOLDEN/ Lieut./ N.Z. & A.D.A.C." cachet in purple (Firebrace Type CA 69 B). The initials "N.Z. & A.D.A.C." are an abbreviation for the New Zealand and Australian Division Army Corps, shortly to be renamed as ANZAC.

The letter was written by Driver Albert Wainwright who states:

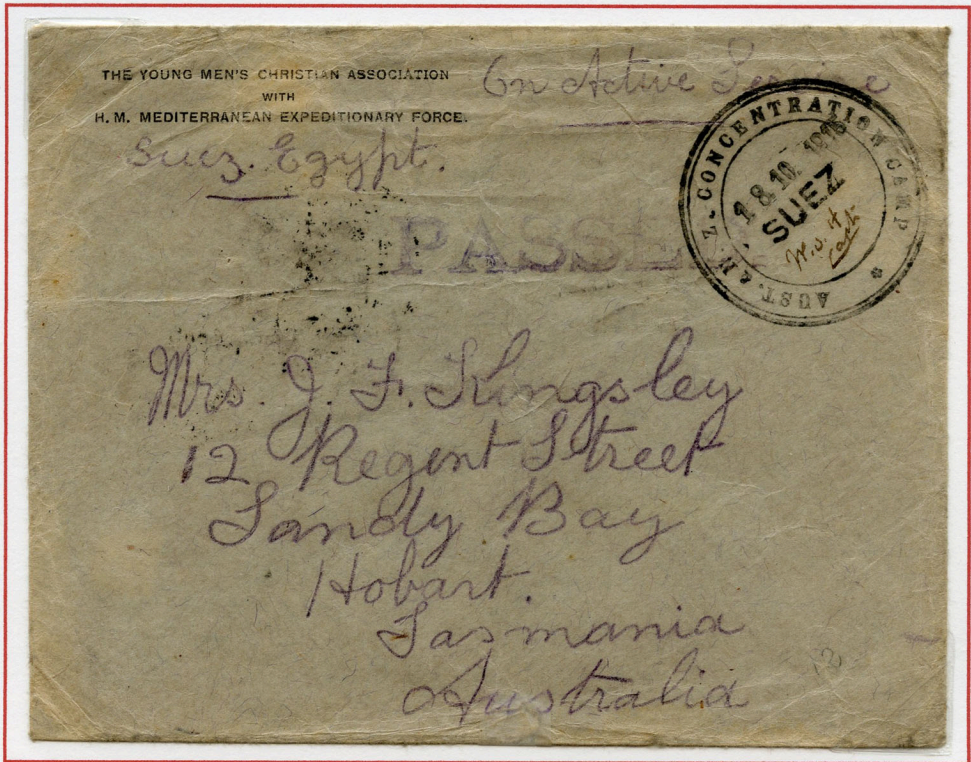
"The general opinion here seems to be that we will all be home for next Christmas dinner and there is any amount of chaps only too willing to bet all they own on it so there must be something in it. I have a bet of 20 piastres on with one chap that the war will be all over & a peace deal agreed by the 22nd of July 1916 so he is pretty sanguine of getting easy money".

8. Australian & New Zealand Unit Cachets

Censor cachet Type CA 83

Recorded usage: 15th October - 18th December 1915

A rare ANZAC hospital censor cachet



An English YMCA printed envelope dated the 18th of October 1915 and addressed to Tasmania with the circular "AUST. & N.Z. CONCENTRATION CAMP/ SUEZ" cachet in black (Firebrace Type CA 83 and not recorded in this colour). It has an Indian Field Post Office Number 311 cds on the reverse (Firebrace Type IFPO 1), and an unframed "PASSED" censor cachet used at Hobart, Tasmania.

Although the expression "concentration camp" is found in the cachet above, it has a totally different context to the term that was used in World War II. In 1915, this phrase was used for the convalescent homes for soldiers recovering from their wounds at Gallipoli.

The envelope was written by Private James Kingsley of the 26th Infantry Battalion who was wounded at Gallipoli and repatriated to Australia on the 31st of October 1915.

Ex Kornan