

9.3 4th Australian Light Horse Brigade

The Australian 4th Light Horse Brigade comprised of the 4th Light Horse Regiment from Victoria, the 11th from Queensland, and the 12th from South Australia. There was only one type of Australian 4th Light Horse Brigade datestamp used by the Australian Mounted Division during the campaign which had been in constant use since the Gallipoli conflict. It was transferred from the Imperial Mounted Division in February 1917, and changed its name again to the Australian Mounted Division in June 1917. Its usage is detailed from the following locations listed in the tables below:

Country	Location	Opened	Closed
Palestine	Rafa area	5.1.1917	3.1.1917
	Gaza	4.1.1917	5.1.1917
	Rafa area	6.1.1917	26.9.1917
	Beersheba	1.11.1917	6.11.1917
	Deir el Balah	2.1.1918	1.4.1918
	Selmeh	6.4.1918	
	Jericho	8.4.1918	24.4.1918
Transjordan		30.4.1918	4.5.1918

Country	Location	Opened	Closed
Palestine	Bethlehem	14.6.1918	13.7.1918
	Jericho	19.7.1918	10.8.1918
	Ludd	25.8.1918	18.9.1918
	Kantira		29.9.1918
	Kuneitra	1.10.1918	27.10.1918
Syria	Damascus	29.10.1918	1.11.1918
	Homs	2.11.1918	4.11.1918
Lebanon	Tripoli	5.11.1918	15.3.1919
Egypt	Moascar	18.3.1919	14.5.1919

The Second Battle of Gaza

The Second Battle of Gaza was fought between 17-19.4.1917, following the defeat of the Egyptian Expeditionary Force at the First Battle of Gaza in March. The town was defended by the strongly entrenched Ottoman Army garrison, which had been reinforced after the first battle by substantial forces. They manned the town's defences and a line of strong redoubts which extended eastwards along the road from Gaza to Beersheba. The 3rd and 4th Light Horse Brigades were involved in the offensive, but the strength of the defenders, their entrenchments, and supporting artillery decimated the attackers.

Gaza area, Palestine

Period of use: 5 January - 26 September 1917



A scarce registered letter cancelled by the "FIELD POST OFFICE/ L.H. 4." datestamp of the 29th April 1917 (Emery Type DS 55), ten days after the Second Battle of Gaza.

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Rafa & Gaza area, Palestine

Period of use: 5 January - 26 September 1917

A photograph taken by Private Roy Bayes of the 11th Light Horse Regiment at Wadi Ghuzze just before the Second Battle of Gaza on the 19th of April 1917.



A Field Service Postcard cancelled by the 4th Light Horse Brigade cds dated the 30.7.1917 when the Brigade was stationed in the Rafa - Gaza area for eight months of training before the charge at Beersheba.

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The Charge at Beersheeba

The Battle of Beersheba was launched on the 31.10.1917 as part of the wider British offensive collectively known as the Third Battle of Gaza. The final phase of this all day battle was the famous mounted charge of the 4th Light Horse Brigade. Commencing at dusk, members of the brigade stormed through the Turkish defences and seized the strategic town of Beersheba whose capture enabled British Empire forces to break the Ottoman line near Gaza on 7.11 and advance into Palestine.

The wells of Beersheba were vital for the welfare of the Desert Mounted Corps' horses, many of whom had been without water for several days. All the Australian Light Horse Brigades were engaged in the battle and enemy resistance was fierce. At 3:30 pm there was only a few hours of day light remaining and orders were issued for the final phase of the struggle. Chauvel decided to put the 4th Light Horse Brigade straight at the remaining trenches, from the south-east. Chauvel knew that he must take the town before dark in order to secure the wells. Brigadier General Grant made the decision to order his light horsemen to charge cavalry-style, when they would normally have ridden close to an objective then dismounted to fight.

Trooper Edward Dengate remembered: *"we got mounted, cantered about a quarter of a mile up a bit of a rise lined up along the brow of a hill paused a moment, and then went at 'em. Captain Davies let out a yell at the top of his voice . . . that started them all we spurred our horses . . . the bullets got thicker...three or four horses came down, others with no riders on kept going, the saddles splashed with blood, here and there a man running toward a dead horse for cover. A lot of the fellows dismounted at that point thinking we were to take the trenches, but most of us kept straight on, where I was there was a clear track with trenches on the right and a redoubt on the left, some of the chaps jumped clear over the trenches in places, some fell into them, although about 150 men got through and raced for the town, they went up the street yelling like madmen."*

While the 4th Light Horse Regiment dismounted at the trenches and tackled their objective on foot many in the 12th Light Horse Regiment were able to get straight through and take the town. The success of the charge was in the shock value and sheer speed in which they took the town before it could be destroyed by a retreating Turkish force. Thirty one light horsemen were killed in the charge and thirty six were wounded. Some originals from the Brigade who had enlisted in 1914 such as Albert "Tibbie" Cotter, the famous Australian cricketer, were killed. The Turkish defenders suffered many casualties and between 700 and 1,000 troops were captured.

Beersheeba area, Palestine

1 - 6 November 1917



Note: This photograph was taken by Private Roy Bayes of the 11th Light Horse Regiment who was an agricultural labourer before the war in Terowie, South Australia. He survived the war and returned to Australia on the 19.4.1919.

A photograph of the 11th Light Horse Regiment outside Beersheba after the famous charge by the 4th and 12th Australian Light Horse Regiments. The 11th Light Horse performed flanking duties at Beersheba.

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Beersheeba area, Palestine

1 - 6 November 1917



A rare photograph of an Australian BE2e captioned on the reverse "*Turkish aerodrome outside Beersheba showing result of bombs*" where the rear of the aircraft hanger has been destroyed.

"Enemy aeroplane brought down by one of ours near Beersheba"



This photograph was taken just after the battle and is endorsed on the reverse "*Captured Turkish guns at Beersheba Railway Station*".

9.3 4th Australian Light Horse Brigade

Deir el Balah, Palestine

Period of use: 2 January - 1 April 1918

<p>A.F.W. 9078 W 299/M 1950. 4/17. K. & J.</p>	<p>ACTIVE</p>	<p>[Crown Copyright Reserved.]</p>	<p>SERVICE</p>
<p>This envelope must not be used for coin or valuables. It cannot be accepted for registration.</p>		<p>[Several letters may be forwarded in this Cover, but these must be all from the same writer. The Cover should be addressed in such case to the Base Censor.]</p>	
<p>NOTE:—</p>		<p><i>Miss E. Moon</i> Address:—</p>	
<p>Correspondence in this envelope need not be censored Regimentally. The contents are liable to examination at the Base.</p>		<p><i>Langley Deni</i> <i>Wellington Rd.</i> <i>Bournemouth</i> <i>England</i></p>	
<p>The following Certificate must be signed by the writer:—</p>			
<p><i>I certify on my honour that the contents of this envelope refer to nothing but private and family matters.</i></p>			
<p>Signature <i>E. S. Moon</i> Name only</p>			

An Honour Envelope postmarked with the 4th Light Horse Brigade datestamp of the 25.3.1918 when the Brigade was stationed at Deir el Balah for three months of training after the fall of Beersheeba and Gaza. They moved into the Jordan Valley in time to participate in the Es Salt raid between 29.4. and 4.5.



A photograph of the troops swimming in the surf at Der El Belah during training in early 1918.

9.3 4th Australian Light Horse Brigade

Jericho, Palestine

Period of use: 8 - 24 April 1918

<p>A.F.W. 8078. W226/M1950 4/17. M. & S. LTD.</p> <p>ACTIVE</p>	<p>[Crown Copyright Reserved.]</p> <p>SERVICE</p>
<p>This envelope must not be used for coin or valuables. It cannot be accepted for registration.</p> <p>NOTE:—</p> <p>Correspondence in this envelope need not be censored Regimentally. The contents are liable to examination at the Base.</p> <p>The following Certificate must be signed by the writer:—</p> <p>I certify on my honour that the contents of this envelope refer to nothing but private and family matters.</p> <p>Signature } <i>H. Lavington</i> Name only }</p>	<p>[Several letters may be appended in this Cover, but these must be all from the same writer. The Cover should be addressed in such case to the Base Censor.]</p> <p>8-AP-18</p> <p>Address:— <i>Mrs M. Lavington</i> <i>"Maison"</i> <i>Gordon Rd.</i> <i>Claygate</i> <i>England. Surrey</i></p>

An Honour Envelope with the 4th Light Horse Brigade cds dated the 8.4.1918 when the Brigade was stationed at Jericho.

This period of use of the datestamp is not recorded by Proud



A photograph of the 4th Light Horse Brigade at a well at Wadi Kelt, near Jericho.

9.3 4th Australian Light Horse Brigade

Kantira, Palestine

20 - 29 September 1918



A photograph taken by Private Roy Bayes of the 11th Light Horse Regiment after the battle at Wadi Al-Far'a on the 21.9.1918. On the reverse is notarised "*Brining in a captured plane at Fara*". The Ottoman soldiers and their wagons were trapped in a valley and destroyed by the R.A.F.

Photographs of German aircraft during the Light Horse Campaign are rare



Another photograph taken by Private Roy Bayes of the 11th Light Horse Regiment crossing the River Jordan. This image would have been taken in late September 1918 on the way to the Turkish outpost of Samakh.

9.3 4th Australian Light Horse Brigade

Kantira, Palestine

20 - 29 September 1918



A photo taken by Private Roy Bayes of the 11th Light Horse Regiment after the capture of Samakh in late September 1918. Note the tent with the Turkish flag still flying in the centre of the photo. Proud does not record any mail from Kantira during this period of the campaign.

Kuneitra, Palestine

1 - 27 October 1918



A British official photograph postcard of the “Australian engineers repairing the bridge over the Jordan at Jisr Banat Yakub, Palestine”.

Note: This photograph would have been taken after the war ended, with the Australian Mounted Division capturing this area in late October 1918 just before they entered Damascus on the 29th of the month.

9.3 4th Australian Light Horse Brigade

Tripoli, Lebanon

5 November 1918 - 15 March 1919



A scarce registered letter addressed to England and cancelled by the 4th Light Horse Brigade cds dated the 27.11.1918 just after the brigade had arrived in Tripoli, Lebanon.



A photograph endorsed on the reverse "Brigade Camel Transport and the 3rd Machine Gun Squad camp on the beach at Tripoli, February 1919".

9.3 4th Australian Light Horse Brigade

Mejdlaya, Lebanon

25 December 1918

The two real photo postcards below depict Christmas dinner for the 13th Army Service Corps at Mejdlaya in northern Lebanon



These photos were taken by Driver Harold Albert Lennartz who embarked on the 28th October 1917 and saw minimal action before the Light Horse Campaign ended in November 1918. He returned to Australia on the 26th July 1919.

9.4 The Imperial Camel Corps Brigade

The Imperial Camel Brigade was formed on 19.12.1916, under the command of Brigadier General Clement Leslie Smith, VC. The brigade originally comprised three battalions, 1st (Australian), 2nd (British), and 3rd (Australian), plus supporting units. The total brigade strength was around 4,150 men and 4,800 camels. With the change of terrain from Transjordan to Syria, the Imperial Camel Corps was disbanded. They used three types of datestamps:

1. 4th Light Horse datestamp: January to February 1917
2. British FPO M1 datestamp: March to May 1917
3. British FPO CZ datestamp: June 1917 to June 1918

Their usage is detailed from the following locations listed in the tables below:

Country	Location	Opened	Closed
Palestine	Rafa	5.1.1917	20.1.1917
	Bir el Hassana	2.1917	2.1917
	Gaza	3.1917	7.1917
	Sana Redoubt	8.1917	8.1917
	Beersheeba area	10.1917	4.11.1917

Country	Location	Opened	Closed
Palestine	Gaza	11.1917	12.1917
Transjordan	Jordan Valley	3.1918	4.1918
	Amman	30.4.1918	5.5.1918
	Jordan Valley	5.1918	6.1918



A photograph endorsed "Camel Corps on trek".



A photograph endorsed on the reverse "The Australian Camel Corps in the Desert".



A photograph endorsed on the reverse "Australian Camel Corps on the Desert fighting units".

9.4 The Imperial Camel Corps Brigade

Transfer of troops to the Imperial Camel Corps

December 1916

In January 1917, a number of troops from the 4th Light Horse Brigade were transferred to the newly established Imperial Camel Corps. They only stayed for a period of two months before being reassigned back to the 4th.

A letter detailing the transfer of troops from the 4th Light Horse Brigade to the Imperial Camel Corps



An A.I.F. envelope addressed to Victoria and cancelled by the Base Army Post Office T cds dated the 18.12.1916 which was allocated to the British Base Army post office at Port Said, Egypt. There is a British framed oval "BASE CENSORS OFFICE/EEF PORT SAID" cachet unusually in rose.

Note: The envelope was written by Private John Cashmore of the 4th Light Horse Regiment which was part of the 4th Light Horse Brigade when for two months they were transferred to the Imperial Camel Corps from January - February 1917.

The letter states "*I think we will be riding camels next....*" Private Cashmore survived the war and returned to Australia on the 15.6.1919.

Mail from this period of the campaign is not recorded by Proud

9.4 The Imperial Camel Corps Brigade
Gaza, Palestine

Field Post Office M1
March - July 1917



An envelope addressed to an interned prisoner in Malta cancelled by the "FIELD POST OFFICE/ M 1" cds dated the 15.4.1917, a British type datestamp used by the Imperial Camel Corps Brigade for three months between April and May 1917. On the front is a "Return to Sender" cachet in rose and a purple circular cross cachet which is attributed to mail arriving in Malta.

Note: The envelope was written by Corporal Ernest Eatock of the Australian Army Medical Corps, attached to the 1st Battalion, Imperial Camel Corps. He was awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal for bravery at Amman, Jordan on the 5.5.1918. He survived the war and returned to Australia on the 19.7.1919. Usage of this datestamp by the Imperial Camel Corps is very rare..

A scanned image of the reverse of this envelope showing a "Return to Sender" cachet in red and two censor tapes applied in Egypt.



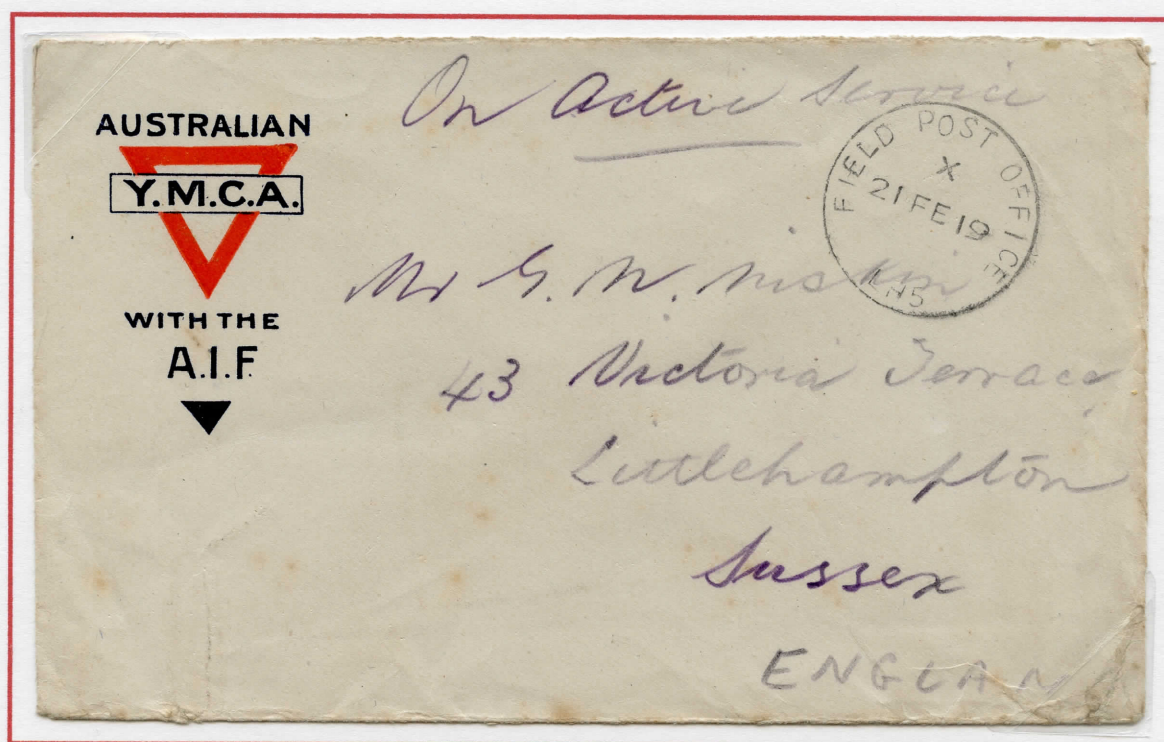
9.5 5th Australian Light Horse Brigade

The Australian 5th Light Horse Brigade was formed in July 1918 and comprised the 14th and 15th Light Horse Regiments in addition to French and New Zealand units. Since it was formed late in the war, mail from this Brigade is very scarce of which it used the British type datestamps "FIELD POST OFFICE/ LH5". Its usage is detailed from the following locations listed in the table below:

Country	Location	Opened	Closed
Palestine	Ludd area	15.9.1918	
Syria	Damascus	1.10.1918	27.10.918
	Homs	28.10.1918	24.11.1918
Lebanon	Baalbek	25.11.1918	3.3.1919
	Beirut	4.3.1919	20.3.1919
Egypt	Moascar	4.1919	11.7.1919

Moascar, Egypt

Period of use: April - 11 July 1919



An envelope cancelled by the "FIELD POST OFFICE/ LH5" cds dated the 21.2.1919 (Proud Type D1) when the 5th Light Horse Brigade was resting at Baalbeck in Lebanon.

Usage of the 5th Light Horse datestamp is rare with only a couple of examples recorded

9.5 5th Australian Light Horse Brigade

Homs, Syria

28 October - 24 November 1918

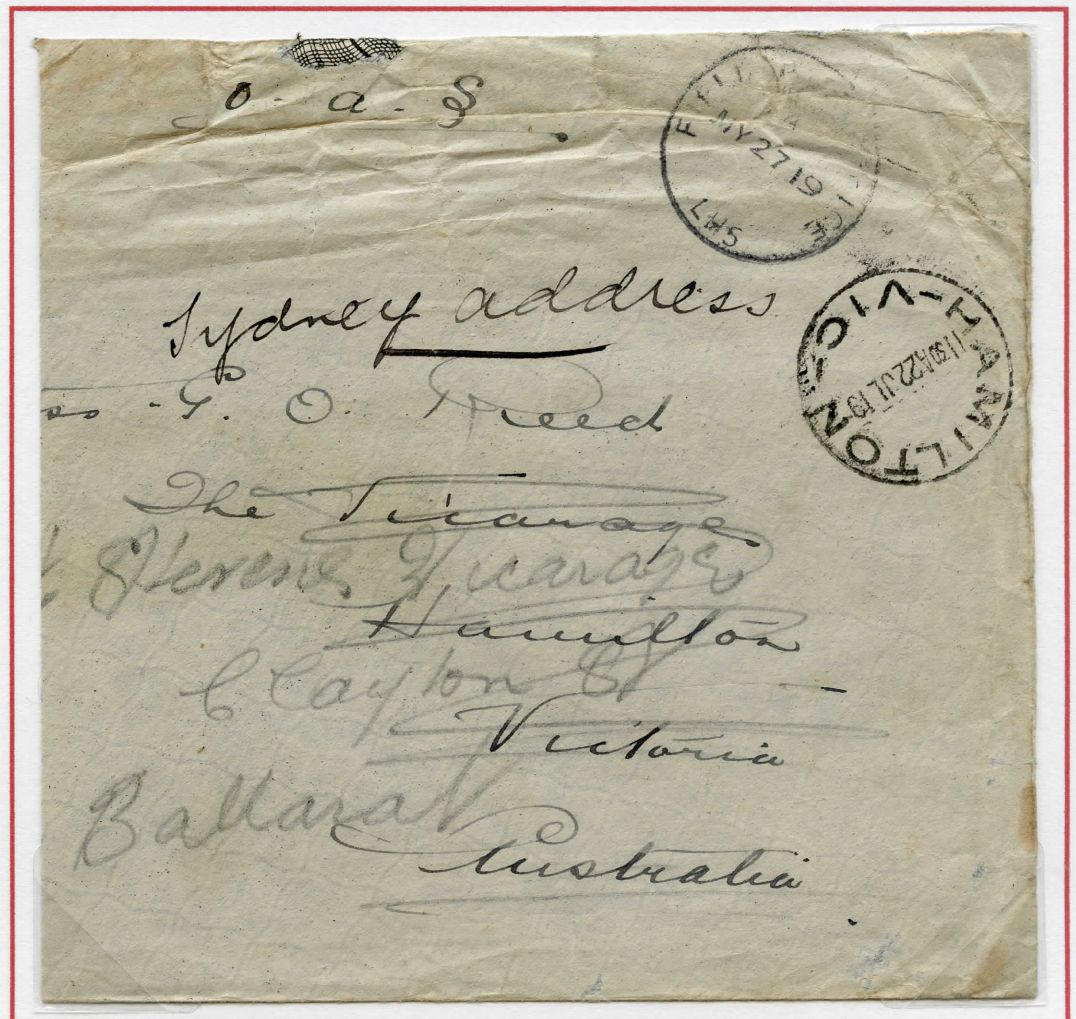


A picture postcard published by Reid & Sons of Heliopolis, Egypt depicting the "Australian troopers in the Bazaar, Homs, Syria".

It is cancelled at Muntazah on the 2.7.1920 by a British occupational soldier to his home in Scotland.

An envelope cancelled by the "FIELD POST OFFICE/ LH5" cds dated the 27.5.1919 (Proud Type D1) when the 5th Light Horse Brigade was resting at Moascar in Egypt before embarking for home.

This period of use of the datestamp is not recorded by Proud.



Usage of the 5th Light Horse datestamp is rare with only a couple of examples recorded