

Kibble, Daryl. *The Arab-Israeli Conflict: No Service, Returned and Captured Mail*. Available from publisher: www.vividpublishing.com.au/darylkibble/, 384pp, hardbound, AUD \$112. + postage. 2014. ISBN 9781925086584.

Reviewed by: Gene Fricks (Editor, *Collectors Club Philatelist*, New York)

Daryl Kibble has written a fascinating account to sort out a very chaotic and confused era. When Great Britain terminated its mandate over Palestine, they took with them many of the government services including the posts. With the termination came the declaration of the State of Israel, military attacks from surrounding Arab states, and embargos on the transfer of mail to Israel.

The author organized his presentation of this early time period based upon the postal markings of the sending countries. This framework accounts for both the large volume mailers such as the United States and Great Britain as well as the one-of-a-kind such as Malaya. Egypt became the holding point for much of the mail during the embargo and Syria continued to process the mail, sending on to Jordan to figure out how to deliver it. The first chapter contains a very useful table listing dates of suspension and resumption of services from about every member of the UPU as well as images of primary sources retrieved from postal archives around the world.

The second chapter renders the story of the embargo from the perspective of the Arab states, a boycott that lasted from 1948 until the 1980s (or to the present for a few such as Lebanon) with varying levels of commitment. At least for the early years the embargo saw extensive use of censorship; the various tapes and markings used in Egypt form a subtheme of their own in the book as well as being the first time publication of such tapes and markings in the philatelic literature.

A boycott usually engenders a response and Israel was no exception in this regard. The author documents 34 types of postal markings used by the Israeli administration to return undeliverable mail to senders (only five had been identified in previous research). These instruction markings are found as rubber handstamps as well as mimeographed labels.

The “captured mail” aspect of the title refers to events related to the 1956 Suez action, with Israeli, British and French forces engaged to reopen the canal after Egyptian nationalization. This affected particularly hard the postal activities in the Gaza strip. More mail became “captured” during the Six-Day war in 1967 and produced an extensive postal history that Kibble explores in some depth, again for the first time in the philatelic literature in this detail.

Mail recovered from crashes has its own interest level. When associated with any of the acts of terrorism of the last half-century, the artifacts become poignant examples. By their nature, most of these examples are not common.

The author concludes with surveys of postal operations and source materials for the Palestinian Authority and HAMAS, as well as what he calls "Other Conflicts & Incidents," such as the Yom Kippur war and the 1991 Gulf War. Kibble maintains the high standard of scholarship.

The book does not include an index in the traditional sense. This is because finding the relevant areas of interest in the publication are easily achieved through a comprehensive Table of Contents. The author also gives us an extensive bibliography. The presentation of the material in part resembles that of a postal history exhibit. Finding one's way about the subject will take a bit of experience for the non-postal history reader, but the learning curve is not steep. The publication is of course targeted to the philatelic postal history community.

Production qualities for the book are outstanding. Quality high-density paper shows off the huge number of illustrations to great advantage and the binding will last for many years of use. The work is produced by a "print on demand" system.

Recommended.