

# Slide Program #17

# Postal Markings, Covers & First Stamps of the Egyptian Expeditionary Forces as Related to Palestine

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(as presented at The Collectors Club, New York October 15, 1969)

### **History**

When World War I started in 1914, Turkey allied with Germany. This made it imperative that the British defend the Suez Canal against any Turkish attack. The Sinai Peninsula was a part of Egypt, but with the declaration of war against Turkey, the Egyptians abandoned all frontier posts and the Turks occupied El Arish. On December 18, 1914, the English declared a Protectorate over Egypt and prepared for the defense of the Canal.

On February 3, 1915, the Turks launched an attack against the Canal. This attack ended in defeat and a withdrawal of Turkish Troops to their former positions. In April of the same year, the Allies landed at Gallipoli. When the Mediterranean's Expeditionary Force withdrew from the Dardanelles, many of the troops were sent to Egypt and in 1916 the Egyptian Expeditionary Force was formed. This army that eventually conquered Palestine, Transjordan, Lebanon and Syria was composed of unites from Great Britain, India, Australia, New Zealand, France, and Italy.

With the formation of the E.E.F., an extensive Field Post service system was established. This postal system consisted of units from the British, ANZAC and Indian postal services. It required some 50 officers and 1,000 enlisted men to handle mail. 7,000 bags of mail were received weekly for the troops from overseas and the maximum number of bags received in any one week amounted to 25,000. Each bag was handled and rehandled some 25 times before reaching its destination. The average number of letters sent weekly to the home countries was about 550,000. The number of letters for the entire period of the Military Administration totaled about 40 million. The letters received form home in the same period amounted to many millions and probably exceeds the above figure. In addition, letters circulated weekly within the Forces, and letters were posted by the E.E.F. to Egypt. The returned letter office dealt with 4.5 million items, and there are records to show some 300,000 registered letters were sent.

### Foreign Continents in the E.E.F.

I am not showing any of the covers of mail of the foreign contingents in the E.E.F., but a few words should be said about each of these units.

### **Indian Forces:**

The Indian Force arrived in Egypt in the Fall of 1914 on their way to France. To cope with the large number of troops required a considerable Indian Postal Service. In October 1914, the first units of the Indian Army Post Office arrived, and by November the first field post offices were soon established. The Indian Postal Service also dealt with the mail of the British and Australian troops as they had not yet established their own postal services. Following the failure of the Turkish attack on the canal, many of the Indian units were detached and sent to other places and the number of Indian FPO's was greatly reduced. The British Army Postal Service arrived in Egypt in February 1916, and from that date onwards the Indian units operated under the direction of SAPS Col. Peter Warren, who organized the delivery of mails by Travelling Army Post Offices throughout Egypt. With the advance of troops into the Sinai, the railway lines were laid as rapidly as possible and the FPO's were stationed as close to the front as conditions permitted. The Indian postal units used their own types of obliterators, and in addition where stamps were needed, you will find Indian stamps overprinted I.E.F. – Indian Expeditionary Force.

### The Anzacs:

The Australian and New Zealand Mounted Division was formed in Egypt in 1916. This division played an important part in the future campaign to sweep the Turks from the Holy Land. The ANZAC troops had their own trained postal personnel to take care of their needs. Each ANZAC Brigade had its own distinctive date stamp and cancellor which was applied to all mail from the unit.

### **French Forces:**

The French contingent attached to the E.E.F. consisted of a mixed brigade of French soldiers known as the "Legion D'Orient." It was composed of French, Algerians, and Armenians and its strength has been estimated at between 3,000 and 4,000 men. The French troops had no postal service of their own and their mail was serviced by the British Military post office.

### **Italian Forces:**

The Italian contingent attached to the E.E.F. has a probable strength of 300 to 400 men. It left Italy in May of 1917 for Palestine, and went into action on November 08. Little evidence exists about the postal system and facilities used by the Italian soldiers. A few items are known that were handled by the British Field Post facilities. It is possible to identify them by the censor mark in Italian and a cachet bearing the Coat of Arms of the House of Savoy.

### **Occupied Palestine**

January 1917 saw the beginning of the British campaign in Palestine. Covers and letters bearing postmarks prior to January 9<sup>th</sup> cannot be considered as Palestinian. The southern part of the country was occupied by the end of 1917 and the occupation was completed in late 1918.

As the troops advanced there were more Field Post Offices in operation on Palestinian soil. Toward the end of March 1917, we are certain that there were Field Post Office D53 and I58 through I63 operating in Palestine.

The general dates of importance for the Military Occupations of Palestine are the fall of the Beersheba-Gaza line on Oc. 31, 1917, the fall of Jaffa on Nov. 16, Jerusalem and Bethlehem on December 8 and 9. Then the lines remained static until the summer of 1918 when the Haifa-Nazareth line fell on Sept. 20 and finally Damascus was occupied on Sept. 30.

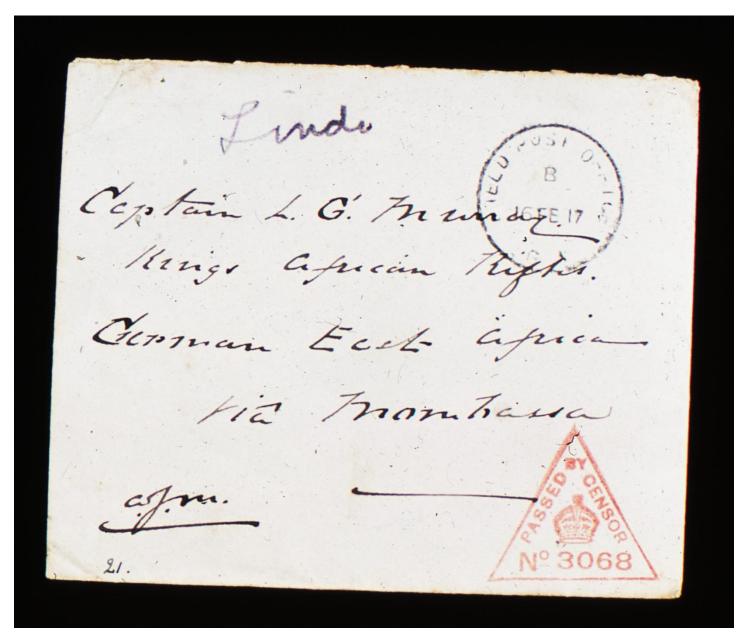
With the armistice, the whole territory of Palestine remained under allied administration. Military postal services for both the authorities and the civilian Administration ended when all of the country was taken over the Civil Administration on July 1, 1920.

During this period of Military Administration, postal services were provided in 19 Palestinian towns and by Travelling Post Offices. The towns included Acre, Beersheeba, Bethlehem, Gaza, Hadera, Haifa, Hebron, Jaffa, Jericho, Jerusalem, Lydda, Nablus, Nazareth, Er Ramle, Safed, Tel Aviv, Tiberius, Tulkarm and Kikhron Ya-akov.

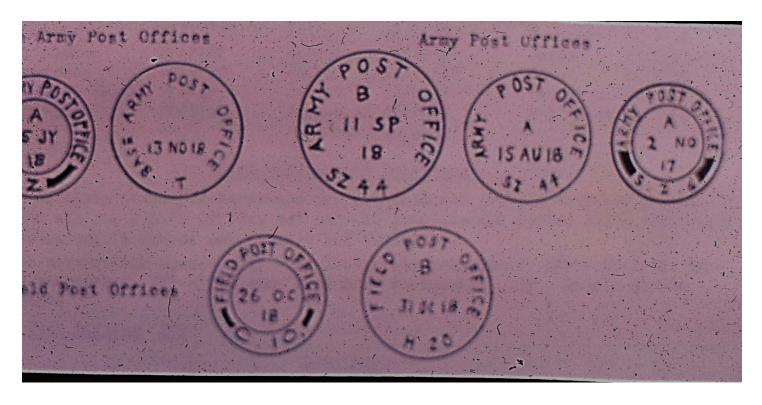
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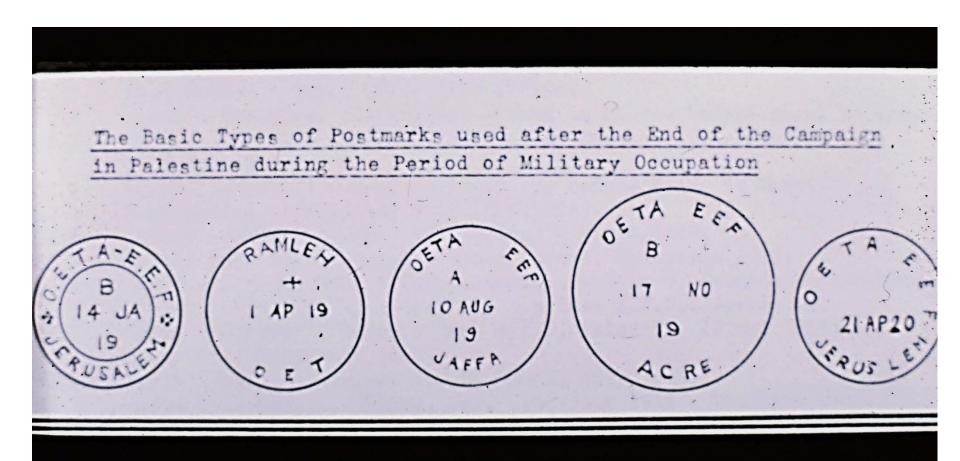




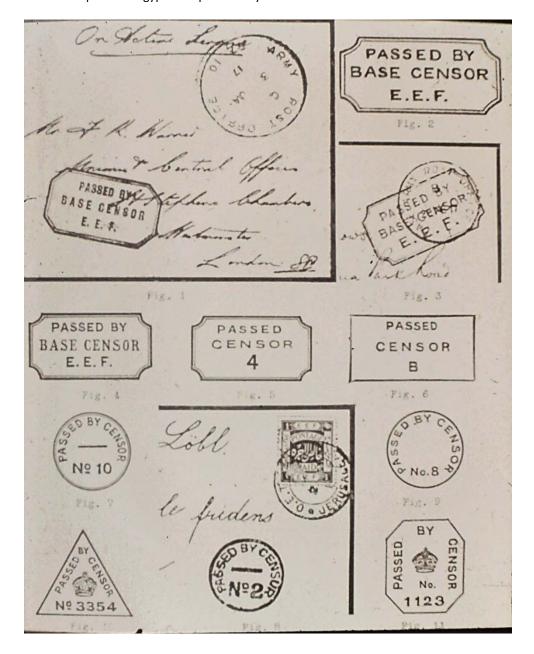
## Three types of Post Offices:

- Base Army Post Offices of E.E.F.
  - K Kantara, T- Port Said, Y Cairo, Z- Alexandria
- Army Post Office
  - Stationary officers around bases, rest camps, store, hospitals and railway head officers
- Field Post Office
  - Served mobile troops and fighting units up to the front, numbers corresponded to Brigade served (ex., FPO I60 served the 160<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade)

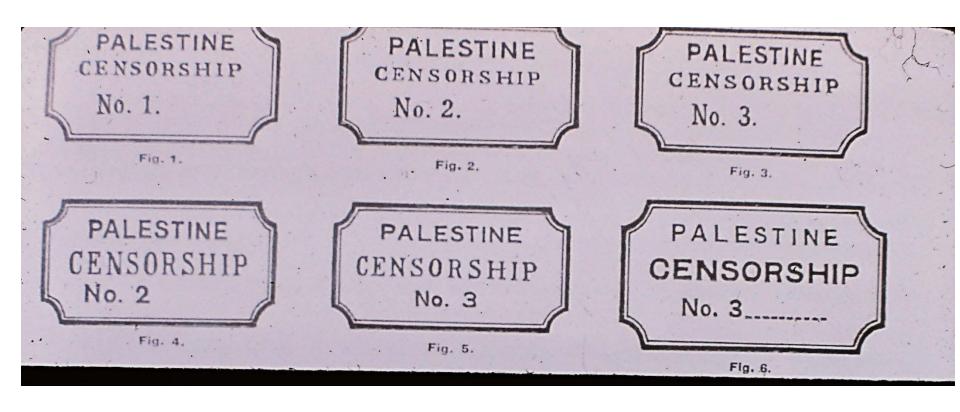














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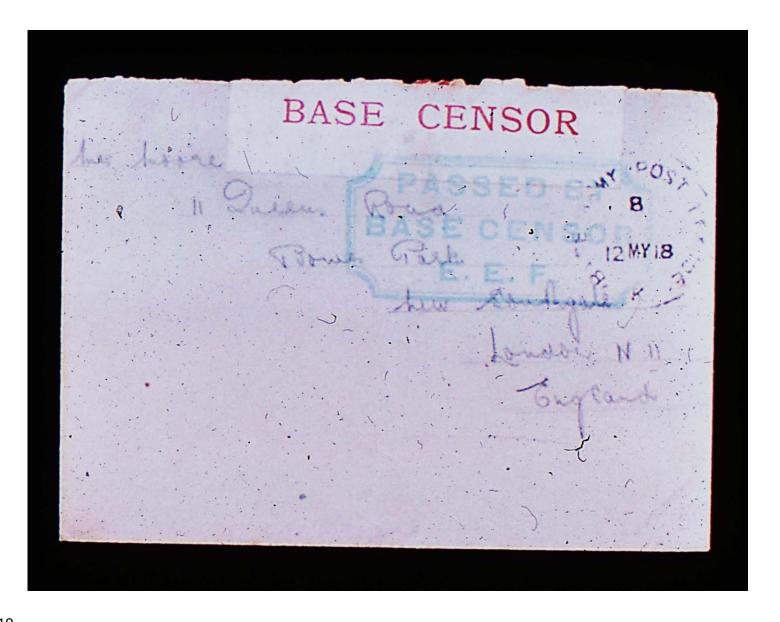




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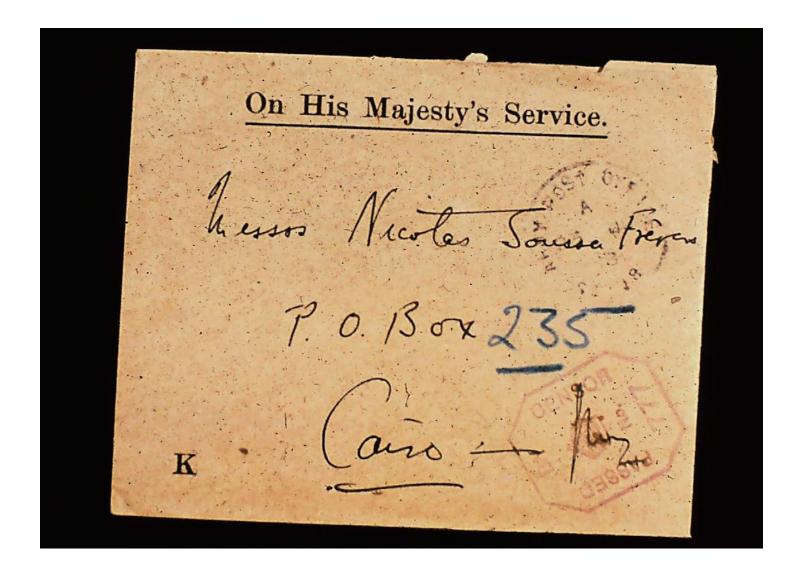




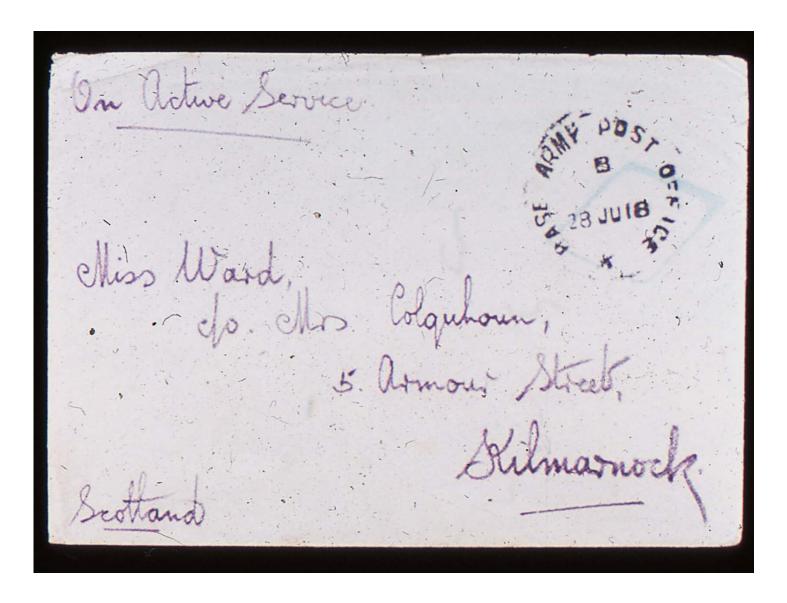






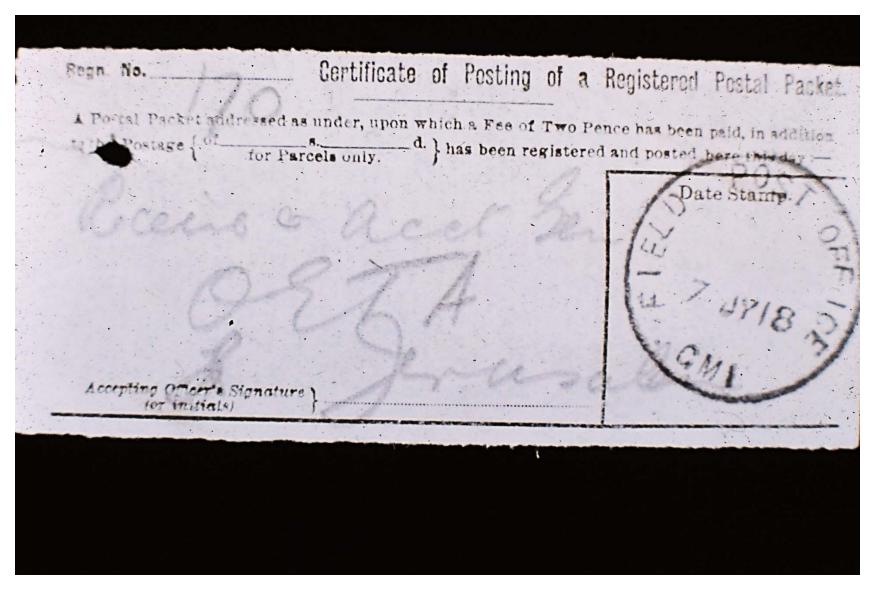








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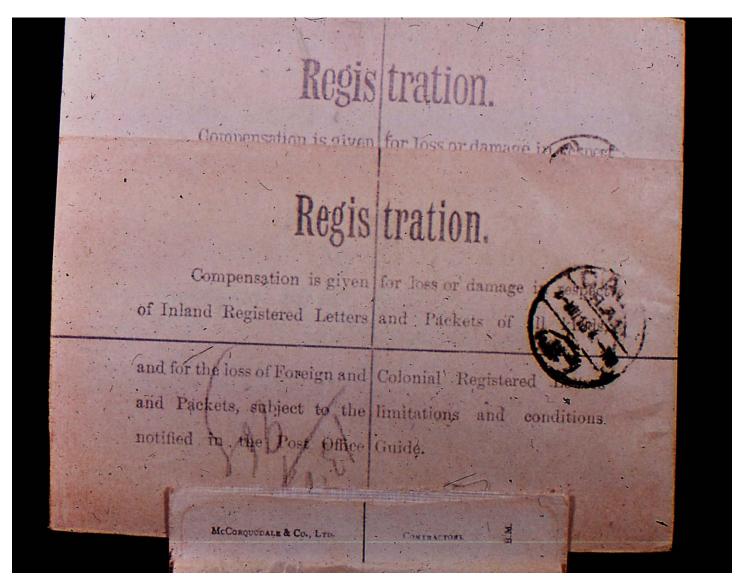




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### The Blues

As the troops advanced and occupied Southern Palestine, the DAPS, Col. Peter Warren, recognized the need for maintaining postal communications for the civilian population. He sent his Deputy, Maj. Touth, to organize the army and civilian post offices in Palestine. At first, the army post offices were opened in the principal towns and they were conducted by army personnel. As there were no facilities for the civilian populations, the inhabitants of Palestine were unable to communicate with relatives and friends outside of Palestine, and they were cut off from the outside world for quite some time. They eagerly awaited the resumption of postal services. In early 1918, the army post offices made arrangements to distribute correspondence received from the civilian population. Previously civilian mail had been handled by the army free of postage for Palestinian delivery.

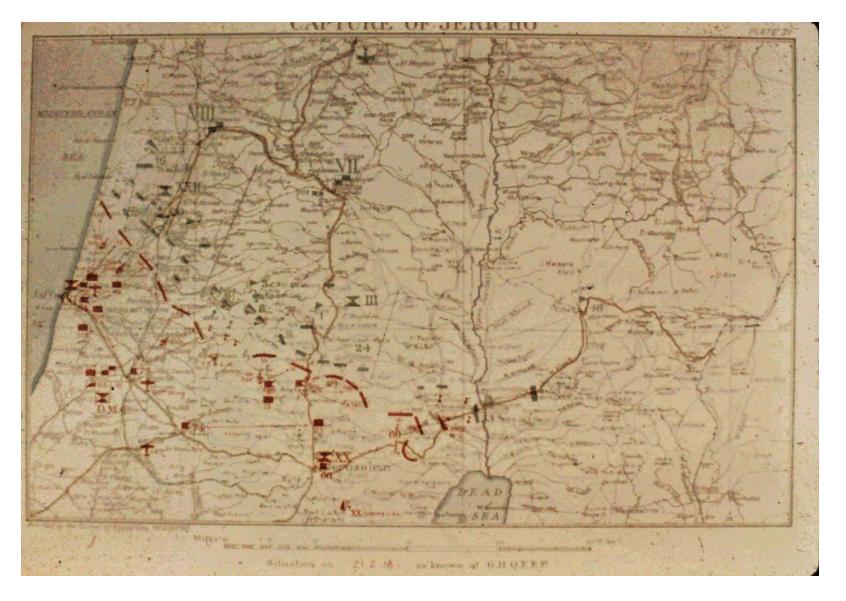
That the military authorities realized the importance of affording postal facilities to the civilian population is revealed in a letter from General Borton to GHQ in which he advises that the first demand from the inhabitants of Jerusalem will be for postal communications. He further suggests that as a temporary and immediate measure, the DAPS should open an office for ordinary and registered mail only. He also suggests the use of an overprinted British stamp or as an alternate, the use of a steel "PAID" stamp to be applied on payment of the postage fee.

### The Blues (continued)

Col. Warren answered on Dec. 1<sup>st</sup> stating that he agreed with the General and advised that overprinted stamps would be preferable to the paid stamp which could only be used for inland postage. The matter was then referred o the Political Branch of GHQ to obtain on opinion, and the Political Officer, Lt. Col. W.H. Deeds, replied on Dec 4<sup>th</sup> that the use of British stamps was politically undesirable and he suggested the use of a small paper label or ticket marked E.E.F. Postage Paid. Col. Warren advised there was no objection to this postally, if the label were dark blue in color and inscribed with the value in Arabic. He also stressed the importance of sending specimen copies for distribution to the Postal Union Countries.

On Dec. 7, 1917, the final approval was obtained for the printing of the first stamp of Palestine under the British Occupation. The work of designing and printing the E.E.F. postage stamps was entrusted to the Typographic Department of the Survey of Egypt. This department had recently produced the postal adhesives of Hedjaz. Despite the many technical difficulties found in the manufacturing of postage stamps, the workmanship reflected the highest credit on the Department. The design was executed by Lt. G.H. Rowntree of the Survey Office and was reproduced by photo-lithography.

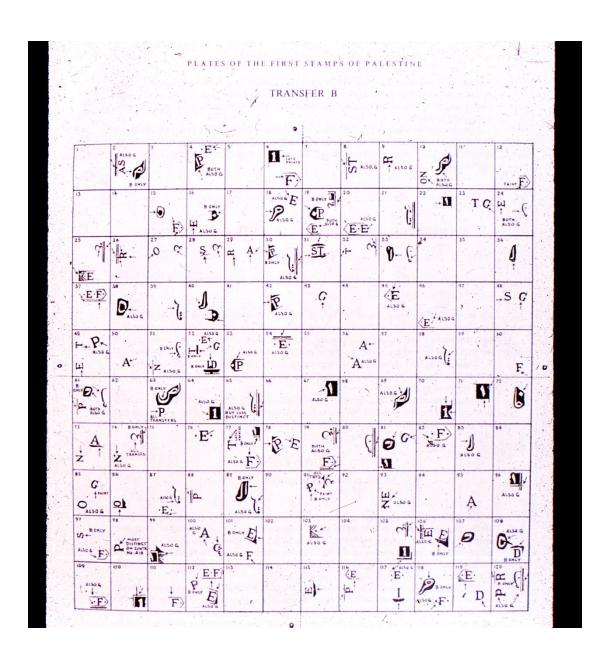






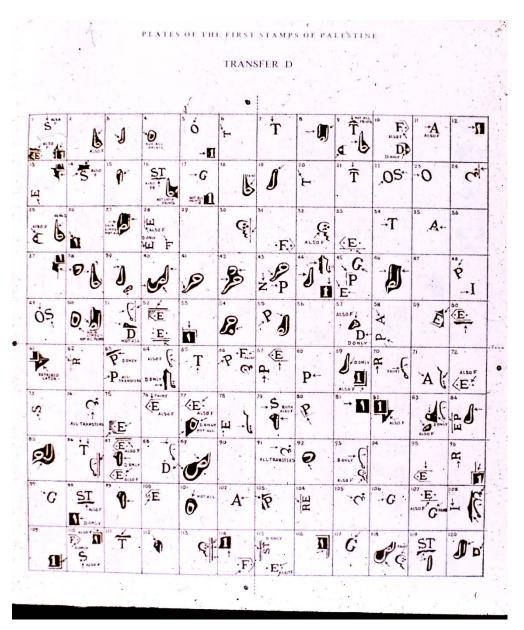




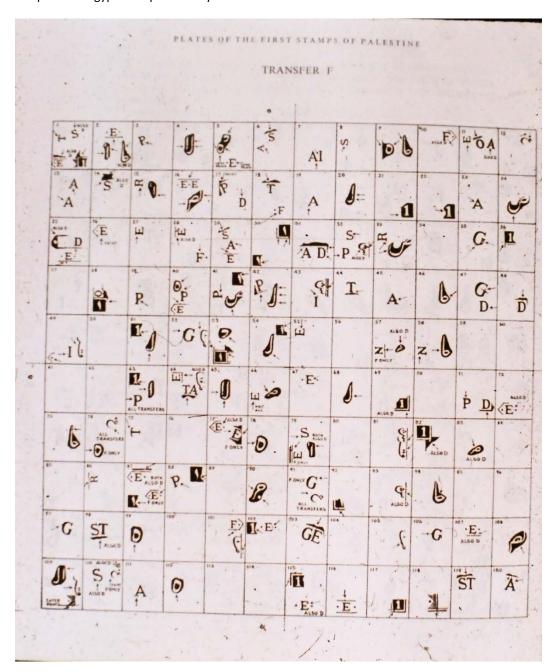




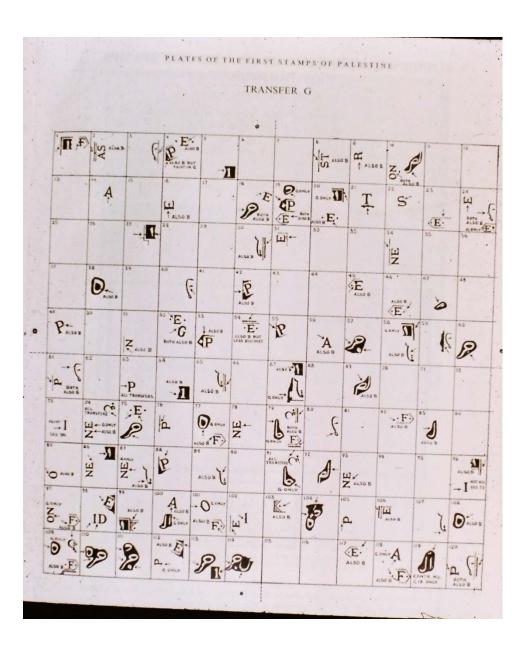
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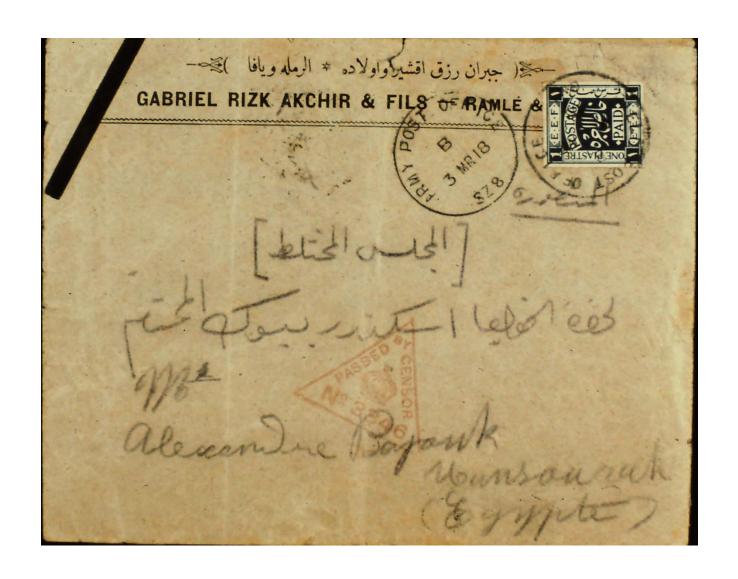




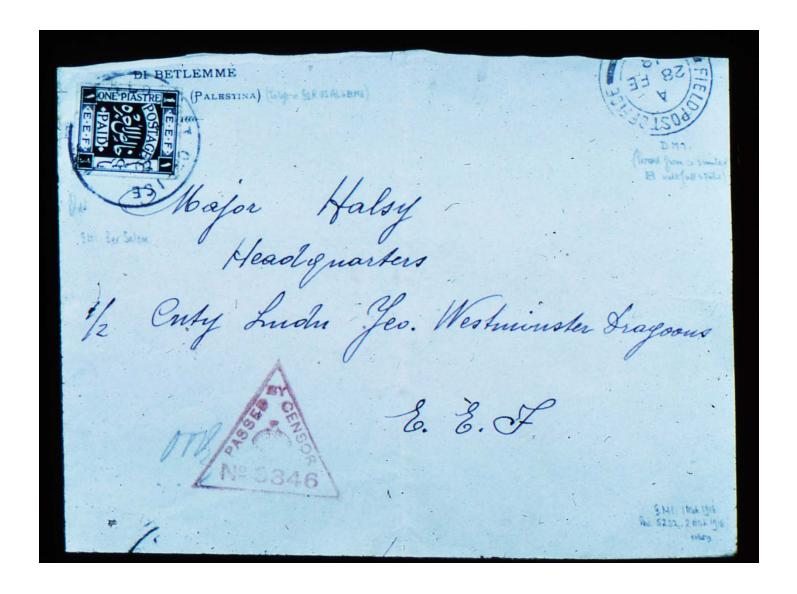








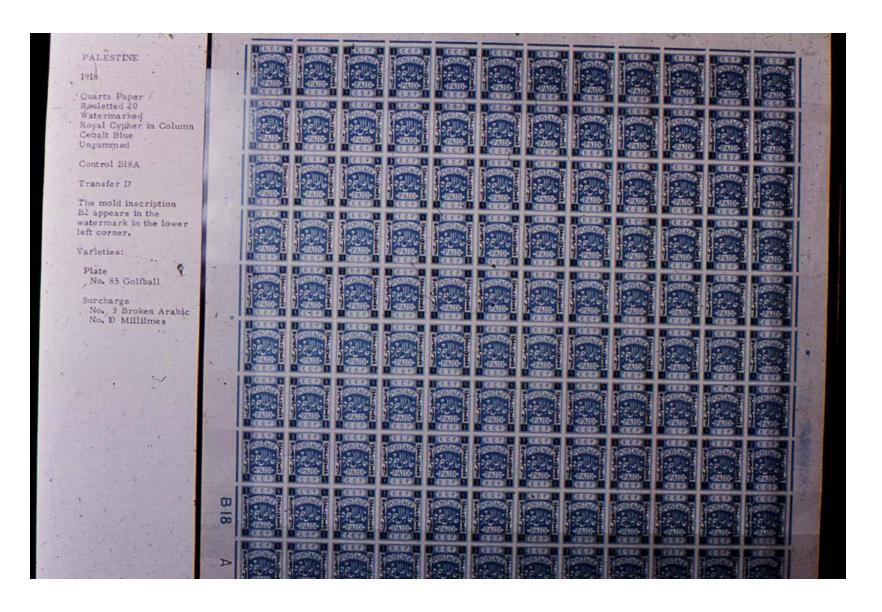








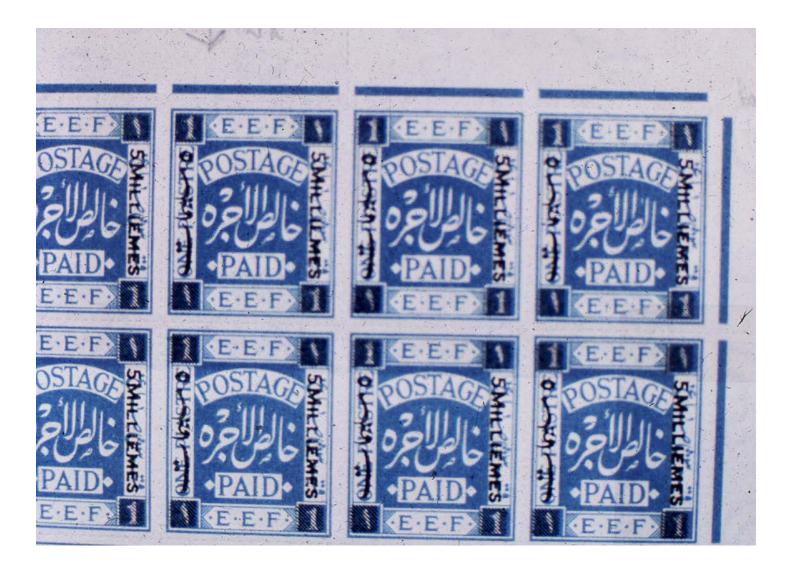












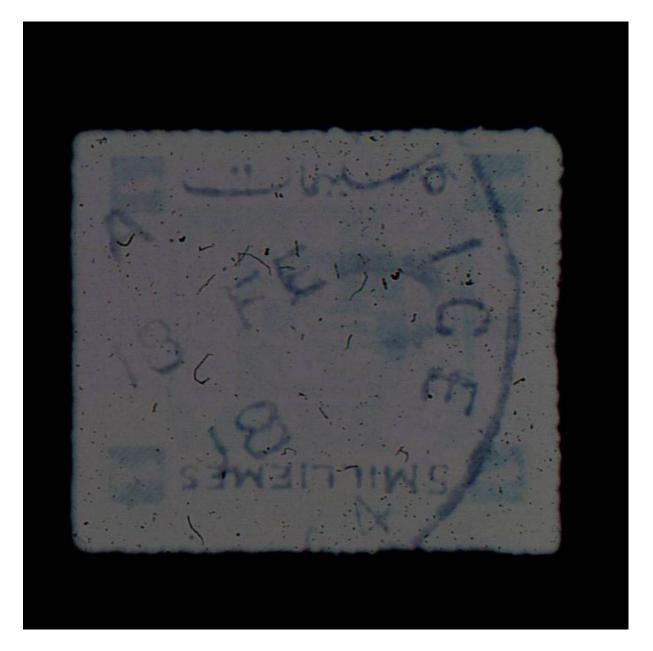


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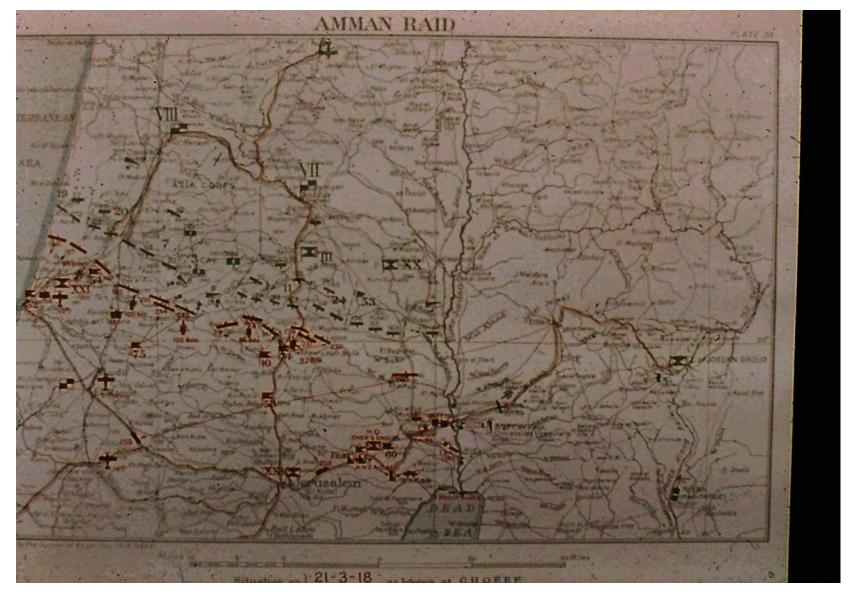




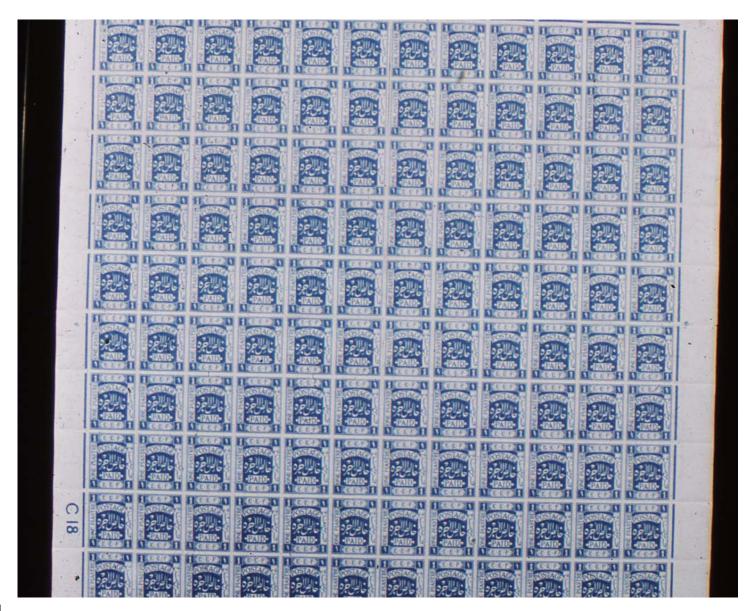




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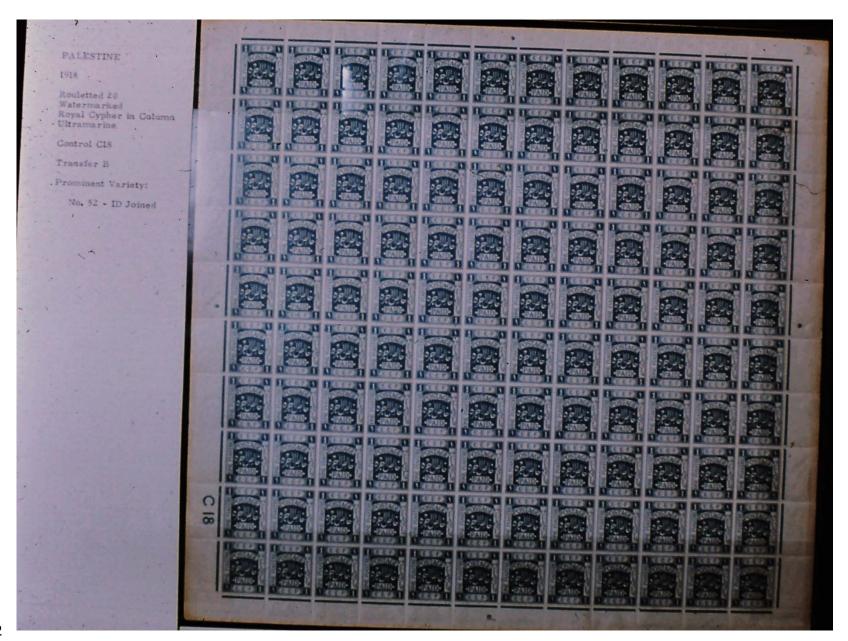




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THE ANGLO-EGYPTIAN BANK Ltd.,	bad at note (Angle-Alex .atasitu
Telegr. Address: Jerusalem 20th. April 1918	e of at tribute one areny-tied and is
Dear Bewsher,  Many thanks for your letter just received. I replied to Sabella seme 5 or 6 days age and returned to him his certificates. I had his application packed away with a lot of other papers so was unable to reply to him before. There are plenty of young chaps here who have had Banking experience so that there is no need for me to go to the trouble of getting a chap up from Egypt when I want to increase the staff. Living is very expensive so that if a man has no home to go to and where he can live cheaply he will require a big salaryte enable him to live at an hotel. The hotel diet itself is practically insufficient without Army rations and so there are many difficulties in connection with getting a man up from Egypt.  All goes well, although there is no profitable business doing just at present. I expect we shall show a huge loss for some time. Still, Courage. I am pretty busy running about trying to get into touch with what few merchants there are. It is very difficult getting goods up from Egypt so trade is practically at a standstill. There is a precionat ion out forbidding the banks making payment in axcess of £5. without authority from the Military Governor, so we have our hands tied in the direction of getting new business. The climate here is good, but the place	



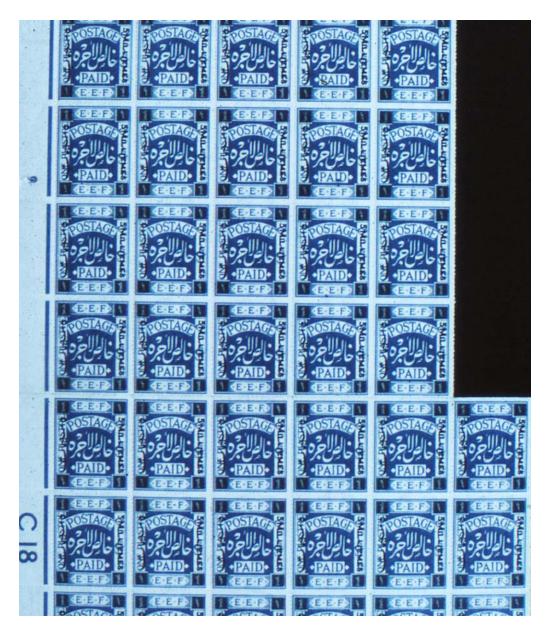
is dull, as after dark there are no places to go to and no lights in the streets. One generally goes to bed at about 9.p.m. I shouldn't mind being back in old Zagazig, especially as one sees a result for one's labours in the direction of a good profit at the end of the half-year. One ought to be optimistic however and I really think there is a good future for Jerusalem provided that it is run by the English and a sufficient amount of capital is devoted to the development of the whole of Palestine. It is a question of time. We are four banks here so the competition is pretty keen. The Credit Lyonnais has been established ever 20 years and the other two banks have a good held on the people, so it will be an uphill job for some time. Hope you are keeping fit and with kindest regards to 







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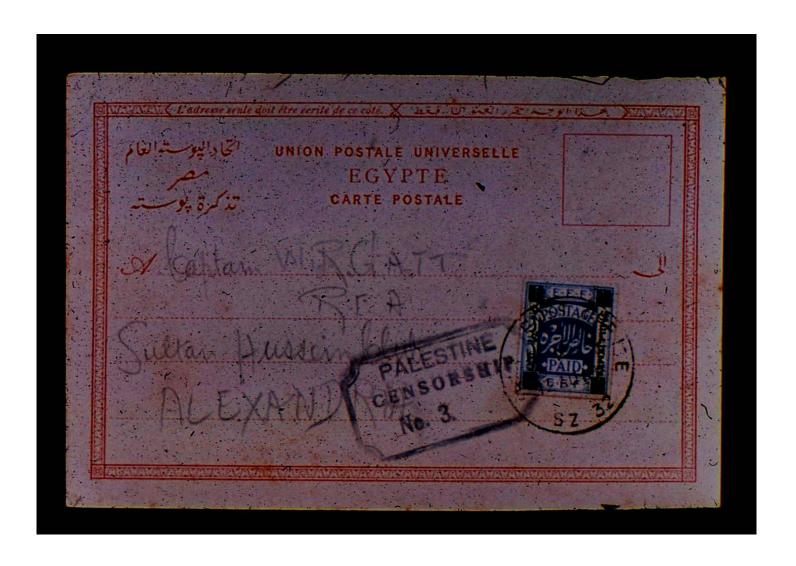












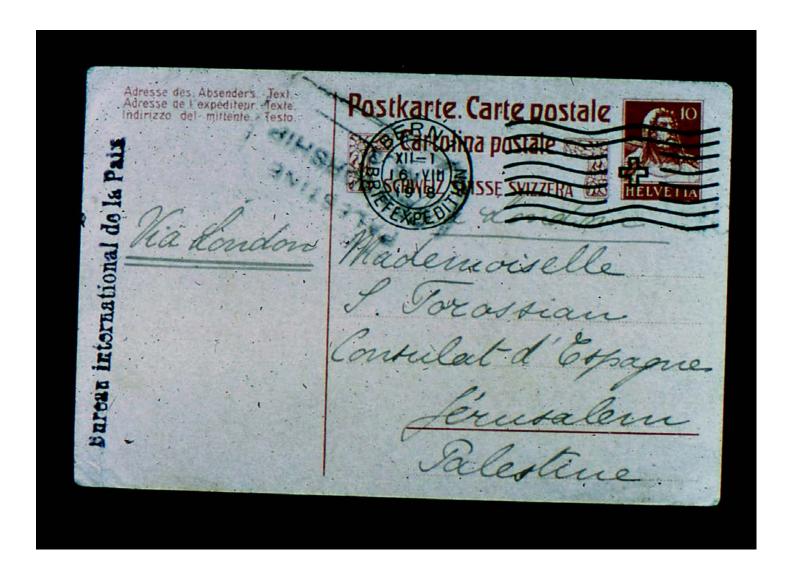
















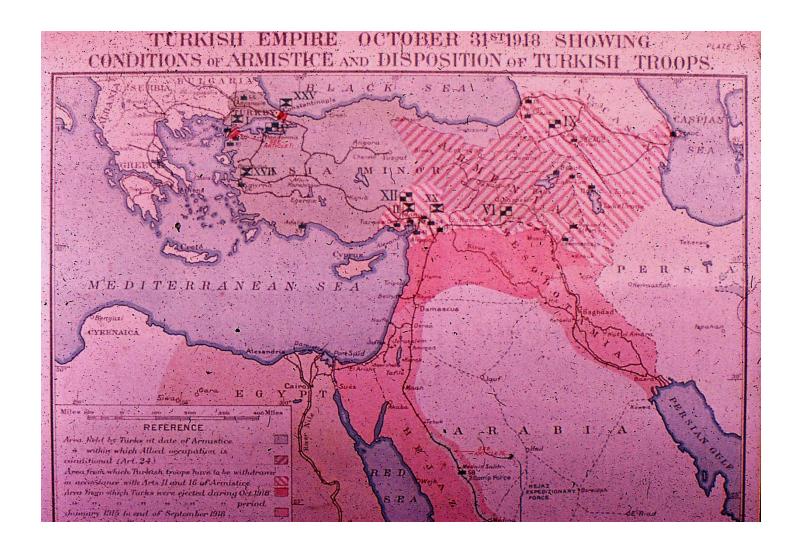




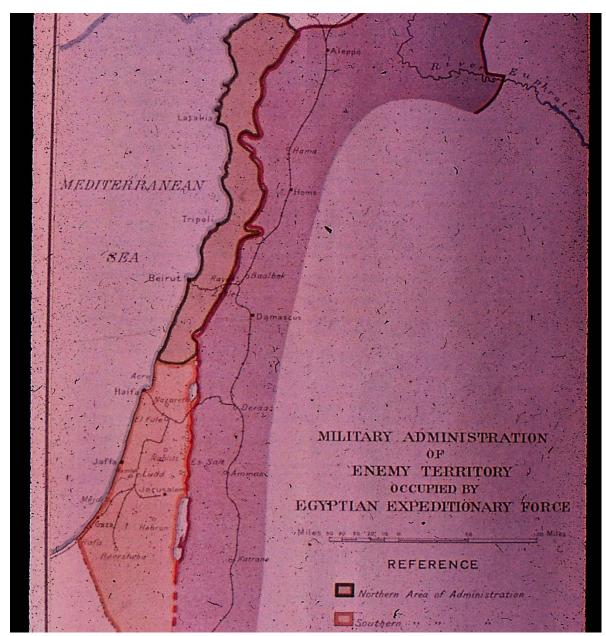








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An official document from the Civil Secretary in Jerusalem, dated Oct. 23, 1920, brings to a close the use of the Palestine Blues and the typographed issues. It is addressed to the District Governors of Palestine for release to the press. It read "The Temporary shortage of stamps of low value has now been made good and the post office restrictions regarding their sale has been withdrawn. Stamps of all values on the new issue may be obtained at any Post Office. It may interest collectors to know that the present issue consists of the following values: 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 milliemes and 1, 2, 5, 9, 10 and 20 piasters. The cost of the complete set is 48.5 piasters."

The sale of the Palestine Blues was for the most part carefully supervised – a few large pieces were sold over the counter and all philatelic orders for these stamps were returned. Because of the need for stamps, these first issues were quickly sold over the counter and used. For this reason, we can account for their scarcity today.

My wife often says that with all of the really beautiful stamps that have been issued, she can't understand why anyone could spend so much time looking at these "Blue" stamps of Palestine...but, perhaps this presentation has shown how fascinating the postal markings, covers, and first stamps of the Egyptian Expeditionary Force can be.

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