

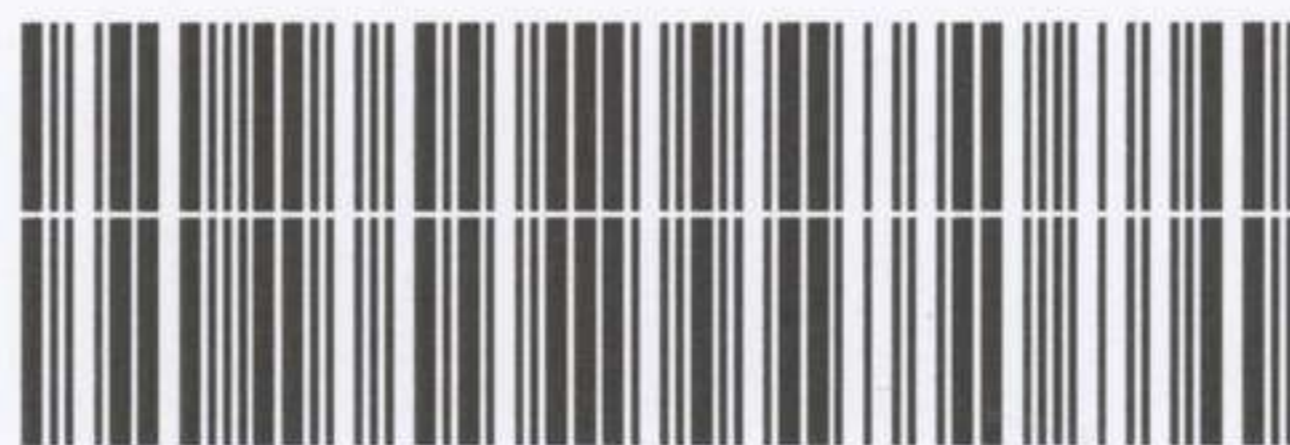
AWM4
Australian Imperial Force unit war diaries,
1914-18 War

Postal

Item number: 17/3/6

Title: Australian Base Post Office,
Egyptian Expeditionary Force

November 1918



AWM4-17/3/6

266 → C M Y
Ref. No. / /

Australian Base Post Office,
S.E. 5 KANTARA,
10th December 1918.

D. A. P. S.,
A. I. F. Headquarters,
LONDON.

Herewith my monthly report on the working of the Australian Army Postal Services in the E.E.F. for the month of November 1918.

The month of November has been a very eventful one - the Armistice with Austria being signed on the 4th and with Germany on the 11 and, as far as we are concerned postally, it certainly was eventful for we received three large mails from Australia - all arriving on the 22nd November. The ships which arrived were the "Pakeha", "Malta" and "Essex". Each ship was boarded by a party from this office soon after arrival, but only in the case of the "Pakeha" was it possible to offload any mail before the vessel proceeded through the Canal, and then only 700 bags. This was partly due to the short stop of the ships at Port Tewfig but mainly to the fact that cargo was stacked on top of the mails and it was impossible to move this owing to the shortage of time and labour. I am given to understand that the Civil Postal Authorities in Australia, when applying for mail space, ask for more than they require, consequently cargo is loaded on top of mails at ports en route to Egypt to fill up. The delay in this instance was serious for, on account of the mails arriving together, it was necessary to group them before running against the cards, and, although the "Essex" arrived at 10am on the 22nd, the last portion of her letters was not received at the Base until 9.30am on the 25th - three days - the other two boats being offloaded in the meantime. The attached statement of mail handled shows how the mails arrived and were dealt with.

In preparation for the Xmas rush, 24 "A" class men were marched in between the 4th and 6th November from Details, Moascar, and were given instruction in the duties required of them, but just as they were acquiring some knowledge of the work, orders were received on the 11th to march them all back to Moascar as they were required for a draft to their units. A new batch of 35 men were marched in - 13 on the 19th and 22 on the 21st - to replace the 24 marched out and sickness of permanent staff in the Base and Field. Nearly all these men were inexperienced in clerical work and none had any previous knowledge of Postal work, and, as a large number of our permanent staff had been evacuated to hospital, the problem we were up against will be appreciated. Approximately 320,000 letters, 65,280 newspapers and packets, 32,000 parcels and 1375 registered items were received. The staff actually handling this volume of mail numbered 54, of whom 35 were the temporary Xmas staff, and the fact that the whole was cleared within 13 days is, to say the least, very creditable indeed, considering the delay occasioned at the commencement and the fact that the majority of the staff were inexperienced.

The new Records and Redirection room proved to be of great benefit, in fact it would have been impossible to handle such a large mail without the additional accommodation for laying out the letters in numerical order before redirecting.

I arranged with the D.A.A.G., A.I.F. in Egypt for the Official Photographer to take some photographs of the A.B.P.O. during the handling of these mails and some very fine and interesting photos have been procured for War Records.

In my report for the month of October, I mentioned that letters for all ranks reporting to A.I.F. Headquarters, Cairo for Convalescent Leave were being forwarded to the Post Office there for delivery to the addressees. Owing to the enormous

number of

number of callers, the porchway in which the Post Office is situated was blocked up, and the Commandant decided that all convalescents were to report to the Depot Stores, Cheshire for medical examination, and mail was to be forwarded to the Postal Orderly there for delivery. This arrangement has been put into force temporarily during the epidemic of Influenza.

You will perhaps be glad to know that on two occasions when fires broke out in the Ordnance Depots at Kantara, the staff of this Base were, if not actually first, at least a good second on the spot, and showed their usual initiative and resourcefulness on each occasion, so much so that two men who have been attached to the A.B.P.O. for some time were specially noticed by Headquarters, Canal Zone. A memo commending them for specially good work was received by me with a request that the contents be communicated to the soldiers mentioned whose names are

No. 3421 Tpr. Forster A.H. 10th A.L.H.
2625 Tpr. Phillips H.A. 4th A.L.H.

RECORDS AND REDIRECTION.

This section has been exceptionally busy during the month. The 1914 furlough to Australia and United Kingdom and the repatriated prisoners causing a fair amount of extra work in recording private addresses and authorities. The enormous number of evacuations from hospitals to convalescent leave has also greatly increased the work.

The number of entries made on the cards amounted to 21,419, and the number of references without entry 21,396 - a total of 41,815 and an increase of 7,065 over the previous month. A noticeable feature was that the number of references made to the cards was practically the same as the actual entries made. This is very unusual, but may be explained by the fact that man A.Fe.B.213 which should have reached us in October, did not arrive until November owing to the extensive operations which were being carried out at the time, consequently men showing "to hospital" were already recorded from Hospital Sheets, thus their movements were duplicated in inward records.

The number of advices re change of address received were also very great being 2435 for the month - an increase of 533. The troops have now gained confidence in our postal system and know that provided they supply us with their location, they will receive their mail.

The returned mail from the Australian Mounted Division is still fairly heavy owing to the distance between the A.B.P.O. and the Field. It takes about 5 or 6 days to reach this Division which accounts for the heavy returns - the 213s being delayed in transit from Unit to Base.

This section has done splendid work during the heavy Xmas rush, and things are running very smoothly - very few mistakes being made, which is surprising as some of the men have never seen a card index and are not clerical men. The whole staff have taken an interest in the work, the temporary men in particular. Having a fresh party of temporary hands to assist on arrival of each mail proves a splendid advertisement to the Corps, as these men see exactly how the mails are handled and get an insight into the whole system, also find out that it is no slacker's job for they all admit they never worked harder in their lives. They go back to their units and inform their comrades of what they have seen and we have no cause to complain of lack of advertisement in this way.

DEAD LETTER OFFICE.

This section has shown considerable improvement and the new alphabetical card index system for tracing purposes -

thus obviating

thus obviating the necessity for referring mail matter to 3rd Echelon for verification etc., - makes this Base self-contained as far as records are concerned. Of course the work has been increased on account of the tracing being carried out here instead of A.I.F. Headquarters, but by handling this untraceable mail at this office, much work has been saved the Records Section at Cairo and the mail, being dealt with on the spot, does not suffer delay as formerly.

Owing to the heavy Xmas parcel mails received, many parcels were opened up and the contents distributed to the Australian Comforts Fund. During the month 543 parcels were dealt with and a large quantity of miscellaneous articles handed over which should be a very acceptable addition to the stock of the Comforts Fund available for distribution to the troops at Xmas.

The D.L.O. is in splendid working order and I am pleased to say that it is very rare for any fault to be found with the work in this section.

PARCEL SECTION.

The parcel mails have been very heavy indeed and this section, staffed with temporarily attached untrained men have really worked wonders. In one day 1010 bags of parcels, approximately 12,120 parcels averaging 12 to a bag, which is, if anything a low estimate, were listed, bagged and despatched. Thirty men including one M.C.O. were employed, and concluded a very strenuous 10 days.

The parcels received from Australia were well packed and arrived in very good condition considering they had been stowed under some tons of cargo during the voyage. All States forwarded their advance parcel lists with the letter mails, which was a great relief because for some time previous, Sydney had been neglectful in this respect. Evidently the cable which I caused to be sent to Defence some little time back requesting all States not to fail to send these lists in advance when forwarding the Xmas Mails, had good effect.

A certain amount of pilfering has been occurring during transit of mails from Australia and between Port Said and Tripoli. Three cases were reported - one between Australia and Port Said and two between Port Said and Tripoli. Careful investigation was made but without result. The case between Australia and Port Said happened on board the "Essex". The matter has been referred to the D.N.T.O., Egypt for further enquiry. In the three cases, the pilfering was confined to about four bags of parcels in all, portion of the contents only being stolen or damaged. The mails were not in the custody of the Australian Army Postal Corps at the time.

In a previous paragraph, I mentioned that an alphabetical Card Index was now in use. This new Index is a miniature affair, practically a Nominal Roll of the A.I.F. in Egypt but is very valuable in more ways than one. For instance, in the Parcel Section it is found that many of the Regimental Numbers shown on the lists from Australia are incorrectly stated, necessitating reference to cards to pick up the correct number in order to locate the addressee. Under the old system, regimental nominal rolls had to be searched or 3rd Echelon referred to. The former was a very tedious task, entailing much waste of time, and the latter considerable delay in obtaining the information, as the letters had to be forwarded to Cairo and parcels and registered items listed, which was also a great waste of stationery, and again it was a considerable time before the letters and lists were returned from 3rd Echelon. Very little trouble is experienced in keeping this index up-to-date, the addition of reinforcements being all that is necessary, and this only means writing up a few cards monthly as the reinforcements arrive.

During the

During the recent operations in Syria and Palestine personal signatures for parcels were obtained in nearly every case, the exception being in the 12th Light Horse Regiment, when, owing to the terrible conditions prevailing in Damascus and the surrounding districts - hospitals being full of cases of Malaria and Spanish Influenza, as well as casualties - The O.C., of this Unit had all absentees' parcels opened and foodstuffs extracted and delivered to men of his unit in hospital, as food other than ordinary rations was very scarce. The conditions at this period were very trying indeed owing to the celerity with which the cavalry advanced. Personal articles included in the parcels were held by the O.C., (Lieut.-Col. Cameron) for delivery to the addressees of the parcels opened up. The O.C., signed the parcel lists and thereby takes full responsibility for his action. Although irregular, I think under the circumstances, nobody who understands the conditions would raise any objections to the contents of their parcels being distributed for the benefit of their sick and wounded comrades. The lists have been endorsed and filed at the A.B.P.O., and I have written to the O.C., of the unit for the facts of the case for records purposes, as my information has been received from the Supervisor of the Division verbally.

All the Xmas parcels have been cleared and despatched to the Units.

REGISTRATION SECTION -

This section is working steadily on without any trouble. There was a fair increase in the number of items received from Australia, from the A.B.P.O., London, also locally, and in the number despatched to Australia.

	<u>Oct.</u>	<u>Nov.</u>	<u>Increase</u>
Articles received from A.B.P.O London	214	335	121
" " " Australia.....	1110	1375	265
" despatched to Australia	1476	1573	97
<u>Total ..</u>	<u>2800</u>	<u>3283</u>	<u>483</u>

The figures for the local postings to and from the Field are not included in the above. For further information please see detailed statement attached hereto.

Here again, as in the Parcel Section, the small Alphabetical Card Index has proved of service in tracing addressees whose Regimental Nos., are incorrectly stated on the registered lists from Australia and elsewhere.

SORTING, DESPATCH, & TRANSPORT -

Outward Mails - Although all units were advised that postings for Australia should reach the A.B.P.O., not later than 1st November in order that they may be despatched in time to reach Australia for delivery by Xmas, a large quantity of correspondence etc, arrived during the month, making the outward despatches much above the average. The number of despatches to United Kingdom increased, possibly owing to the cessation of hostilities causing an increase in the sailings between Egypt and Europe. The outlets to Australia have not been so frequent.

Figures for the Outward Mails are as follow :-

<u>No., of Items despatched</u>	<u>October</u>	<u>November</u>	<u>Increase</u>	<u>Decrease</u>
Letters	204,000	266,000	62,000	
Parcels	402	399		3
Papers & packets	14,150	21,270	7,120	
Reg. Items	1,476	1,573	97	
<u>Totals</u>	<u>220,028</u>	<u>289,242</u>	<u>69,217</u>	<u>3</u>

The Australian Mounted Division is still in the forward area near Tripoli and mails take some time to reach the units of that formation. Transporters are sailing more frequently, and, as Kantara is now the port of departure in nine cases out of ten, mails for
Tripoli

Tripoli are loaded here, which is a great advantage and saves a considerable amount of time and labour, as against despatching by rail to Port Said for embarkation and also cost of railway transport which is charged to the A.I.F. The Anzac Mounted Division is still in the back area near Ludd, and mails are forwarded per Military Railway, reaching the units within approximately 24 hours.

Inward Mails - Three large Australian Mails arrived during the month, but compared against the previous month a decrease is shown in the parcels which is accounted for by the fact that many Xmas parcels were received in October. The figures for October and November are as follows :-

<u>Total No., of bags received</u>	<u>October</u>	<u>November</u>	<u>Decrease</u>	<u>Increase</u>
Letters	137	157	-	20
Parcels	2420	2247	173	-
Papers & Packets	456	509	-	53
<u>Totals ..</u>	<u>3013</u>	<u>2913</u>	<u>173</u>	<u>73</u>

The increase in the number of letters received in November was approximately 60,000; newspapers and packets 15,120; registered articles, 265; = a total increase of 75,385 items. The mails received from the United Kingdom were above the average = Letters 138,000 (approx), parcels, 3420.

Transport - The transport work has been exceptionally heavy. Mails have had to be loaded on to and from ships and trains almost continually, and in order to cope with the work, extra lorries and fatigue parties have had to be requisitioned for. The Transport Staff were required to work early and late, which they have done willingly and carried out their duties in a very satisfactory manner. No great difficulty was experienced in obtaining extra motor lorries when required, as the Motor Transport Depot were very good and assisted us in every way. No hitch occurred and the exceedingly large volume of mail matter - inward and outward - has been handled apparently without effort.

This combined section has worked splendidly throughout the busy Xmas Season.

STAFF -

This has always been a most difficult problem for the Australian Army Postal Corps. Ever since my arrival in Egypt, I have been trying to get the permanent staff up to strength of the approved establishment, but my efforts unfortunately have not altogether been crowned with success, owing to the G.O.C., refusing to allow the transfer of any but "B" class men to the Corps, and the lack of men of this category suitable for postal work. The result has always been a greater proportion of temporarily attached than permanent men, which is not at all satisfactory. In my previous report I stated my reasons against the employment of "B" class men in this Office, and I will not therefore go into the matter again.

During the exceptionally busy Xmas season, the whole staff - permanent and attached - have worked splendidly, and the mails were handled in very good time, no serious mistakes being made, although three quarters of the staff were temporarily attached men. The N.C.O's showed tact in dealing with and supervising their Staffs. The temporary men had, of course, to be shown everything, but once shown, the majority of them worked willingly and very little trouble was experienced with them.

DISCIPLINE - Generally good.

A.A.P.O.C.	One N.C.O. -	Out of bounds.	Reprimanded.
"	One private -	Drunkenness -	Admonished.
Attached.	Two privates -	Overstaying leave -	Reprimanded and lost 1 day's pay

I deeply /

I deeply regret to record the death of two (2) attached members of the Corps - No. 5625, Trooper L. Rossbach, 1st A.L.H., Regiment, and No. 1165, Trooper B.L. Dornan, I.C.C., Trooper Rossbach was attached to this Base from 20/9/1918 and was evacuated to Hospital on 29/11/1918. His death from Lobar Pneumonia was reported from the 24th Stationary Hospital on 9/12/1918. A party from this Office, including myself, attended the funeral. He was buried in the Military Cemetery at Kantara the same day. Trooper Dornan who was attached to Field Post Office L.H. 5 was admitted to hospital on 18/10/1918 and died on 5/11/1918 from Malaria and Pneumonia. Both were very good lads and during the period they were under my control, I found them attentive and conscientious in their duties. Their loss is very much regretted by the ~~xxxxx~~ members of this Corps. I have written to the parents conveying our deepest sympathy.

1914 Furlough -

Two members of the Corps left for Australia on 15/11/1918. The balance of eligibles are expected to leave any day now. This will leave the Staff very weak as regards senior N.C.O's, all the Senior men being 1914 men. However, I suppose we will unearth some men fit to replace them. The work will not be so difficult, as it is possible the troops will concentrate prior to demobilisation, which will make things easier and supervision much simpler.

GENERAL -

The Australian Mounted Division which is located, as I have already mentioned, in the Syrian Area, is at present separated from the Anzac Division, the latter being at Bir Salem and postally controlled by the D.A.D.A.P.S., Lines of Communication (British). The D.A.D.A.P.S., Desert Mounted Corps (Major Nichol) who controlled the Australian Division was evacuated to hospital, and Major Routh (R.E.P.S.) is acting as D.A.D.A.P.S., of the Corps during his absence.

The 7th Australian Light Horse Regiment proceeded overseas to Salonika a few weeks ago and mails for that unit are being despatched to Port Said, thence to A.P.O., "X", (Salonika). Prior to departure, the Postal Orderly of the Unit was instructed as to the disposal of undeliverable mail matter etc., and a letter was written to the O.C., containing instructions as to the handling of mails during their absence. Some trouble was experienced in obtaining the location of the unit after departure, and mails had to be held pending a location. The D.A.P.S., R.E.F., G.H.Q., and A.I.F., Headquarters had no definite information, and at last "Stralis" cabled Salonika for a location, but in the meantime, the D.A.P.S., supplied the information and mails are being forwarded accordingly.

Tape in lieu of envelopes for re-directed correspondence -

I have advised you in a separate letter regarding this matter. So far, tape suitable for our purpose is not available in Egypt, and envelopes are therefore still in use.

Attached are the reports from the D.A.D.A.P.S., Desert Mounted Corps, and Postal Supervisor, Australian Mounted Division, also statistical reports from the Anzac Mounted Division, F.P.O's L.H. 5 and D.M.I. The other reports have not yet come to hand, but will be forwarded to you at a later date.

D.A.P.S., A.I.F. in Egypt.

A.W. Ross

Captain
D.A.P.S., A.I.F. in Egypt.

AUSTRALIAN BASE POST OFFICE, S. Z. 3

STATEMENT OF MAILS HANDLED DURING MONTH ENDED NOVEMBER 30th 1918

NUMBER OF BAGS RECEIVED FROM AUSTRALIA - Letters	157	
Papers & packets	509	
Parcels	<u>2247</u>	2913
NUMBER OF BAGS DESPATCHED TO AUSTRALIA - Letters &c	195	
Parcels	<u>97</u>	292
Number of local bags received		1310
Number of local bags despatched		2916
Number of bags received from A.B.P.O London - Letters &c		138
Parcels...		<u>342</u>
Number of bags despatched to A.B.P.O London - Letters &c		16
Parcels...		<u>31</u>

STATISTICE -

Letter mails received from Australia	3
Number of letters received and run against Card Index.....	320,000
Number of letters circulated as addressed	160,000
Number of letters re-directed (including those to D.L.O)	160,000
Local clean postings received and despatched to Australia -	
Letters	266,000
Newspapers & packets	21,270
Parcels	<u>399</u>

DEAD LETTER OFFICE -

Number of items on hand - 1/11/1918	1,450
Number of items received from all sources	17,191
Number of items put into circulation	2,090
Number of items returned to sender and Australia	10,808
Number of items submitted to 3rd Echelon	1,051
Number of items on hand - 30/11/1918	3,750
Number of parcels opened & forwarded to Aust. Comforts Fund..	527
Number of packets opened & forwarded to Aust. Comforts Fund..	16
Number of personal changes of address received	2,241
Number of changes of address received at Enquiry Window	194

REGISTRATION -

Items on hand - 1/11/1918	528
Items received locally	59
Items received from Australia	1,375
Items received from A.B.P.O. London	335
Items received from F.P.O's in Egypt	2,386
Items despatched locally	62
Items despatched to A.B.P.O. London	21
Items despatched to Australia	1,573
Items despatched to F.P.O's in Egypt	2,447
Items on hand - 30/11/1918	580
Total number of items received (exclusive of balance on hand)	4,155
Total number of items despatched	4,103

Articles /

Articles received from Australia were disposed of as under :-

Number of items received	1,375
Correctly addressed and forwarded	526
Re-directed	770
Returned to sender	79
Submitted to Echelon	-

PARCELS -

Number of parcels received from Australia	32,000
Number of parcels circulated as addressed	19,000
Number of parcels re-directed	13,000
Number of parcels again referred to cards	4,309
Number of parcels referred to 3rd Echelon	149
Number of parcels received from A.B.P.O London	1,368
Number of parcels despatched to A.B.P.O London	309
Number of parcels despatched to A.B.P.O London (P. of W).....	-
Number of parcels despatched to A.B.P.O London (No trace RHF)	13
Number of parcels despatched to Australia	399

NEWSPAPERS -

Number of newspapers received	62,280
Number of newspapers forwarded as addressed	59,000
Number of newspapers re-directed	3,200
Number of newspapers unable to trace (damaged, &c)	80

PACKETS -

Number of packets received	5,000
Number of packets forwarded as addressed	1,800
Number of packets re-directed (including D.L.O)	1,200
Number of packets submitted to 3rd Echelon	-

The aggregate number of days occupied in disposal of Inward Australian Mails was 14.

Hours worked per day -

During sorting of letter mail	11 hours
Remainder	9 hours

STATEMENT OF MAIL HANDLED AT A.B.P.O. S.Z.3 ex H.M.A.T's

"ESSEX", "MALTA", and "PAKSHA".

Time and date of arrival at Port Taufiq 1000 on 22/11/1918
 "Essex" boarded by staff from A.B.P.O S.Z.3 at - 1100 on 22/11/1918
 but owing to a heavy cargo of fodder being stacked
 on top of the mails, they could not be unloaded.

"Malta" boarded by staff from A.B.P.O S.Z.3 at - 1130 on 22/11/1918
 but as the ship was under quarantine on account
 of sickness on board, the mails could not be
 unloaded immediately, so the party proceeded to
 the "Paksha".

"Paksha" boarded by staff from A.B.P.O S.Z.3 at - 1330 on 22/11/1918
 but only 700 bags were taken off, as she received
 orders to proceed through the Canal at 1800.

"Malta" boarded again atMidnight on 22/11/1918
 Unloading completed at 0400 on 23/11/1918

First portion of letter mail (40 bags) ex
 "Paksha" and "Malta" arrived at A.B.P.O S.Z.3 at 1100 on 23/11/1918

"Paksha" arrived at Port Said at 1215 on 23/11/1918
 Boarded by staff from A.B.P.O S.Z.3 at 1400 on 23/11/1918
 Unloading completed at 1845 on 23/11/1918

"Essex" berthed at Kantara at 1500 on 23/11/1918
 Boarded by an N.C.O from A.B.P.O S.Z.3 and
 arrangements made to off-load mails as soon as
 the cargo of fodder was removed. The E.S.O.,
 promised to notify us as soon as the ship "was
 clear", but before the fodder had been touched
 she received orders to proceed to Port Said.

Second portion of letter mail (46 bags) ex
 "Paksha" arrived at A.B.P.O S.Z.3 at 0930 on 24/11/1918

"Essex" arrived at Port Said at 0800 on 24/11/1918
 and cargo of fodder was removed immediately.
 Boarded by staff from A.B.P.O S.Z.3 at 1330 on 24/11/1918
 Unloading completed at 1835 on 24/11/1918

Third portion of letter mail (57 bags) ex
 "Essex" arrived at A.B.P.O S.Z.3 at 2130 on 24/11/1918

Fourth and last portion of letter mail (14 bags)
 ex "Essex" arrived at A.B.P.O S.Z.3 at 0930 on 25/11/1918

Parcels and newspapers from the three boats
 arrived at A.B.P.O S.Z.3 on the 23rd, 24th and
 25th, the whole mail being "ticked in" and
 stacked in States, etc, at 1730 on 25/11/1918

Number of bags received - 2913.

Letters	157	sorting completed	1730 on 28/11/1918
Newspapers	509	" "	1730 on 3/12/1918
Parcels	2247	" "	1100 on 8/12/1918

Particulars /

Particulars of despatch

Office of origin -	Desp.	Date	Average dates of postings	Number of bags			
				Lts	News Pcls	Total	
Brisbane	19	18/9/18	12/9/18 to 18/9/18)	44	57	258	359
	20	23/9/18	18/9/18 to 23/9/18)				
	21	14/10/18	23/9/18 to 14/10/18)				
Sydney	23	24/9/18	13/9/18 to 24/9/18)	53	194	883	1130
	24	15/10/18	24/9/18 to 15/10/18)				
Melbourne	21	18/9/18	12/9/18 to 18/9/18)	54	128	744	906
	21 Sup.	23/9/18	18/9/18 to 23/9/18)				
	22	3/10/18	23/9/18 to 3/10/18)				
	23	14/10/18	3/10/18 to 14/10/18)				
Adelaide	36	19/9/18	17/9/18 to 19/9/18)	15	69	214	296
	38	27/9/18	19/9/18 to 27/9/18)				
	37	28/9/18	27/9/18 to 28/9/18)				
	39	1/10/18	28/9/18 to 1/10/18)				
	40	12/10/18	1/10/18 to 12/10/18)				
Perth	23	1/10/18	19/9/18 to 1/10/18)	5	45	144	194
	24	7/10/18	1/10/18 to 7/10/18)				
	25	25/10/18	7/10/18 to 25/10/18)				
Launceston	20	16/9/18	11/9/18 to 16/9/18)	5	5	2	12
	21	21/9/18	16/9/18 to 21/9/18)				
	22	2/10/18	21/9/18 to 2/10/18)				
	23	8/10/18	2/10/18 to 8/10/18)				
	24	11/10/18	8/10/18 to 11/10/18)				
Hobart	23	21/9/18	11/9/18 to 21/9/18)	3	11	2	16
	35 Sup.	10/10/18	? ?				
	37	12/10/18	? ?				

Registered mails

Brisbane	159
Sydney	651
Melbourne	427
Adelaide	61
Perth	72
Launceston	5
Hobart	-
Total	1375

Remarks - The three mails have been grouped together, as will be seen by the above statement. Considerable difficulty was experienced in grouping the letter portion as it arrived in four separate despatches. The Staff worked exceedingly well, and considering the size of the letter mail, and the scattered way in which it arrived at the Office, I think they did well to dispose of it in 5 days from the arrival of the first portion. The recent reinforcements from Measor worked willingly, but we had we an experienced staff of course the mail would have been disposed of much sooner.

The whole mail was completed in 13 days, or 129 working hours, from the arrival of the first letter portion, which is very creditable, averaging 23 bags of mail opened up and disposed of per hour, or 224 bags a day. The staff actually handling the mail numbered 54, of whom 34 were inexperienced, being only temporarily attached. This evidently completes the Xmas mail as Australia were requested to despatch them in time to arrive by the 24th November.

Despatches 24 to 36 are outstanding. Verification Notes have been forwarded to Hobart and London.

9/17/18

Frank M. Blackwell
he/c
Sgt.

MONTHLY REPORT - POSTAL SUPERVISOR, AUSTRALIAN MOUNTED DIVISION.

November 1918

In forwarding this report on the postal work of the Division for November, I wish to state that the duties of Divisional Supervisor were only taken over by me towards the latter end of the month.

The quarterly inspections were carried out by myself and a check of the stock and cash in hand was made of F.P.O's L.H.3, L.H.4 and D.M.2.

Despite many difficulties in the handling and transfer of the very heavy mails despatched from S.Z.3, they were all overcome and no delays were caused to the mails once their arrival at the Railhead Office.

I would like to draw your attention to the delay in the big despatches from S.Z.3 caused by the Port of embarkation despatching the mails on transports that tranship at Beyrout; when this occurs the despatches from S.Z.3 that are made up at a later date are often received (by a direct transport) and delivered some days earlier as there is not at present a regular service between Beyrout and Tripoli for heavy despatches.

Heavy rains have made it very difficult for the F.P.O Staffs and Post Orderlies to deliver mail in good condition, but all are giving the best attention possible to the disposal of mails and the carrying out of their duties.

Australian Mounted Division
November 1918.

(Sgd) R.H. McNamara
Sgt.
A/g. Divisional Supervisor

MONTHLY REPORT UPON WORKING OF AUSTRALIAN POSTAL SERVICES IN THE
FIELD - NOVEMBER 1918

On November 4th, the Australian Mounted Division less the 5th A.L.H Brigade moved ~~xxxx~~ from north of Homs to Tripoli and camped round and about 7 miles outside the Town. Mails are being sent out to them daily by ration lorries.

The 5th A.L.H Brigade, less the 14th Regiment and the 2nd N.Z.M.G. Squadron, moved from north of Homs to Baalbek on the 24th November at which place they will be fed by train from Beyrout. The 14th Regiment and 2nd N.Z.M.G. Squadron (1 section) will draw their mails from H.M.

The changes in staff during the month, owing to promotions and sickness have been many and varied, throwing extra responsibility and work on the N.C.O's and men who were able to stick to their posts, but the interest shown by all these in the welfare of the Service resulted in the work being performed without a hitch.

H.Q. D.M.C.
2/12/1918

(Sgd) R.A.C. Routh
Major, R.E.
D.A.D.A.P.S.,

MONTHLY POSTAL STATISTICAL REPORT ANZAC MOUNTED DIVISION. MONTH OF ..November.....1918

I T E M		A.P.O S.Z.41	D.M.I	L.H.1	L.H.2	Total
1.	Total No., of bags received at Div. Stat. A.P.O's L.N & P) Parcels)	318 276				318 276
1a.	Total No., of bags received at Field Post Offices Letters) N. & P.) Parcels)		35 21 97	38 113 126	32 59 193	105 193 416
2.	Total No., of Inward Despatches	89	35	28	36	188
3.	Total No., of bags despatched - Letters) News & Packets) Parcels)	224	94	117	79	514
4.	Total number of outward despatches	170	60	54	69	353
5.	Cash transactions - P.O. Issued	£25-17-0	£33-15-0	-	£33-3-0	£92-15-0
	P.O. Paid	2-0-0	21-10-0	£5-12-0	1-11-6	30-13-6
	Stamps sold	1-12-8	5-7-1	5-15-2	6-14-11	19-9-10
	War Savings Certificates sold	-	-	-	-	-
	Remittances	50-0-0	60-0-0	-	55-0-0	165-0-0
6.	Registered letters received over counter	27	108	158	232	525
7.	Registered letters received from other Offices	343	108	210	193	854
8.	Registered letters despatched	386	147	206	270	1009
9.	Number of forward registered bags received	12	-	-	-	12
10.	Number of parcels received over counter	7	43	27	33	110
11.	Number of parcels received for re-direction in the B.M.F.	-	-	-	-	-
12.	Number of parcels received for return to A.B.P.O.	43	196	541	150	930 x
13.	Number of parcels received for delivery	421	627	1110	1262	2420
14.	Number of forward parcel bags received	274	-	-	-	274
15.	Number of cables or telegrams sent delivered	35	11	23	27	96

x Includes local postings which circulate direct to the Field in the first instance, and not through Records, A.B.P.O. S.Z. 3.

MONTHLY STATISTICAL REPORT FROM F. P. O. L. H. 5

November 1918

1. Total No., of bags received - Letters	16 x 131
News & Packets	75
Parcels	<u>57</u> 279
x 131 bags received prior to 14/11/1918 no detail check recorded.	
2. Total No., of inward despatches	16
3. Total No., of bags despatched	95
4. Total No., of outward despatches	50
5. Cash transactions - Postal Orders issued	£21 14 0
Postal Orders paid	12 9 0
Stamps sold	1 8 4
War savings sold	-
Remittances	-
6. Registered letters received over counter	92
7. Reg. Letters received from other offices	249
8. Registered letters despatched	282
9. No., of forward registered bags	-
10. No., of parcels received over counter (clean)	2
11. No., of parcels received for return to A.B.P.O....	∅ 94
12. No., of parcels received for delivery	315
13. No., of forward parcel bags	-
14. No., of cables or telegrams delivered	7

∅ Includes locally posted items which do not circulate through A.B.P.O. S.2.3 in the first instance.

MONTHLY STATISTICAL REPORT FROM F. P. O. T. W. I

November 1918

1. Total No., of bags received -	Letters.....	406
	News & packets	39
	Parcels	332
2. Total No., of Inward Despatches		392
3. Total No., of bags despatched		512
4. Total No., of Outward Despatches		365
5. Cash transactions -	Postal Orders Issued	£78-18-0
	Postal Orders paid	25-8-6
	Stamps sold	15-8-11
	War Savings Certificates sold..	Nil
	Remittances	£90
6. Registered letters received over counter		481
7. Reg. Letters received from other offices		573
8. Registered letters despatched		637
9. Number of forward registered bags		Nil
10. No., of parcels received over counter (clean)		414
11. No., of parcels received for return to A.B.P.O		878 x
12. No., of parcels received for delivery		3465
13. Number of forward parcel bags		Nil
14. Number of cables or telegrams delivered		27

x Includes locally posted items which do not circulate through A.B.P.O S.Z.3 in the first instance.

Ref. No. 65 / 2 / 4

Australian Base Post Office
S. 2. 3 KANTARA
November 8th 1918

The D. A. P. S.
A. I. F Headquarters
L O N D O N,

With reference to your communication No. 6002/2/3 of the 12th July last, I forward herewith History of the Australian Army Postal Services covering a period 1914/1918.

I regret not being able to give more accurate and interesting information owing to my records, etc, not being available, these having been left in London on my departure for Egypt. I have therefore been compelled to trust to memory.

The Egyptian portion of the History is being written up now and I hope to forward same within the next week.

A. W. R.

Captain.
D. D. A. P. S., A. I. F in Egypt.

History of the Australian Army Postal Services on Active
Service abroad - 1914 to 1918.

On the formation of the first Australian Division for active service overseas, it was of course necessary to have postal facilities for this Force, and in this connection Mr A.W.Ross, having postal experience in civil life also previous military service (in South African War) enlisted as Staff Sergeant in charge of the Divisional Headquarters Field Post Office, the staffs of the Field Post Offices being as follows :-

Headquarters, F.P.O. 1st Division - No. 48 Staff Sgt. A.W. Ross
No. 49 Private L.A.P. Ward

.....

1st Australian Divisional Train F.P.O. -

No. 444	Staff Sgt. W.R. Shepherd
" 445	Sgt. C.J. Parish
" 446	Cpl. E.C. Henderson
" 447	Pte. R.A. Whitelaw
" 448	" C.J. Minto
" 449	" A.O. Baker
" 450	" E.S. Hazeldine

.....

1st Australian Infantry Brigade F. P. O. -

No. 4	Cpl. C.J. Fletcher
" 18	Pte. R. M. Waugh

.....

2nd Australian Infantry Brigade F. P. O. -

No. 4	Cpl. C. C. Hadley
"	Pte. P. White

.....

3rd Australian Infantry Brigade F. P. O. -

No. 2	Cpl. A.D. Spriggins
" 3	Pte. R. T. White

.....

1st Light Horse Brigade F. P. O. -

No. 12	Cpl. W. E. Green
" 13	Pte. C. L. Downs

There /

There was no commissioned officer appointed for the Australian Army Postal Service at this time and Staff Sergeant Ross was attached to Colonel Selheim's staff at the Victoria Barracks, Melbourne, to make all the necessary postal arrangements for the first Australian Division prior to and after embarkation for overseas. The Civil Postal Administration was approached in regard to the sorting into Units and the handling of all mails for this Force and the question of free postage and other facilities was gone into and arrangements made accordingly. The Field Post Offices for the 1st Australian Divisional Headquarters, 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Infantry Brigades, 1st Australian Divisional Train, and 1st Light Horse Brigade were established and all the necessary equipment, stores, etc, obtained. A small booklet containing extracts from the British Army Postal Manual was printed and copies distributed to all the Australian Field Post Offices. Date Stamps for each F. P. O., Crown Impression seals for the sealing of mail bags, etc, were made and supplied. No postage stamps or cash advances were supplied to the F.P.O.'s. Colonel Paterson, A.A.Q.M.G., did not think this was necessary owing to the Australian Imperial Force being bound for England, where further necessary supplies would be procurable, also in view of the fact that arrangements had already been made for free postage in regard to letters posted by members of this Force on board ship.

Owing to alterations being made in the date of sailing, transports with Troops from the other States arrived at Melbourne and some of the Troops being disembarked they proceeded to various camps in and about Melbourne. This of course meant that much mail matter was received at the G.P.O., Melbourne for these Troops, most of which had to be dealt with by the postal staff of the Divisional Headquarters who were attached to the staff of the Victoria Barracks, Melbourne. Records were kept of all Units on board ship or in camps at Melbourne and mail was re-directed and forwarded accordingly.

Owing to the number of transports, viz, 28, which left with the first Division, it was impossible to split up the staff of the respective F.P.O.'s in such a way as to enable a postal man to be placed on each transport. However, arrangements were made for the posting and collection of letters on each ship.

The Divisional Headquarters ship - the "Orvieto" - which left Melbourne at 3.30 p.m., on October 21st 1914 carried the other Headquarters Staffs, also 1st Divisional Headquarters F.P.O., 1st Light Horse Brigade F.P.O., 2nd Infantry Brigade F.P.O., 3rd Infantry Brigade F.P.O., and portion of the 1st Divisional Train F.P.O. The "Hymettus", "Benalla", and the "Geelong" carried the balance of the 1st Divisional Train F.P.O., - the "Euripides" the 1st Infantry Brigade F.P.O. The "Orvieto" proceeded to the rendezvous at Albany, arriving there at 8 a.m. on 26th October, to which port the other Transports had proceeded and awaited the arrival of the Headquarters ship. As we were to remain at this port for four or five days it was decided to open a Field Post Office at the Civil Office on shore to enable mails to and from the transports - which included New Zealand ships - to be handled. A Staff Sergeant and two(2) men from the 1st Divisional Train Office were sent ashore to establish this office. Mails which were received but unable to be delivered prior to the departure of the ship from Melbourne were taken on board the "Orvieto" and on arrival at Albany were distributed to the various transports, correct records of registered articles being kept. Great difficulty was experienced in getting from transport to transport to deliver and collect mails, but eventually small tugs were made available and the services of the postal staffs of the various ships utilised to deliver the mails.

The convoy of 28 Australian and 10 New Zealand ships escorted by 6 War Ships* left Albany at 6 a.m. on 1st November 1914 (Sunday). Instructions were issued to all C.O.'s of troops on board transports in regard to the posting of letters. Letters
could /

* (See Diary held by Lieut. Hazeldine for names.)

could be written but must be left open for censorship. Arrangements were made that on arrival of the convoy at different ports of call, a tug or launch would visit each ship and collect all postings as well as any telegrams or cables which it might be desired to send. Members of the postal staff accompanied each tug or launch and were responsible for these collections. All the mail was taken on board the Headquarters ship where it was censored by Officers acting as Censors. After being censored, the mail was taken charge of by the Divisional Headquarters Postal Staff and properly made up for despatch according to Postal Regulations. It was then taken ashore by the N.C.O in charge and handed over to the Civil Postal Authorities for despatch to its destination. Any cables received were handed in for despatch. A letter containing instructions to delay the despatch of mails for two (2) weeks was written by the G.S.C to the Civil Postal Authorities at each port of call as it was not desired to release these mails until we were well on our journey to England. (Colombo is the port of call referred to in this respect). Cables were also held for 48 hours.

The postings on board were very heavy indeed and it was fortunate that the main portion of the postal staff were on the Headquarters ship.

On 1914 the Force arrived at Suez. Some of the Headquarters Staff - an advance party - disembarked and proceeded to Cairo. The N.C.O in charge of the Divisional Headquarters F.P.O., accompanied by two (2) members of the 1st Divisional Train F.P.O., also had instructions to disembark and proceed by train to Port Said to establish a small post office there for the purpose of handling mails to and from the transports. This office was established in the Civil Post Office, Port Said, every assistance being given to the staff by the Civil Postal Authorities there. On arrival of the "Orvieto" at Port Said, the N.C.O in charge of the F.P.O., proceeded on board with mails and was handed a number of envelopes containing disembarkation orders to be delivered personally to the O.C. Troops of the transports following and to obtain a signature for each. To enable this to be carried out it was necessary to be prepared night and day for the ships as they came through the Canal. Many of the transports only remained for one or two hours, and sometimes so short a period as 30 minutes. Only one transport was missed and this was owing to the fact that the ship arrived early in the morning and did not stay for half an hour. However, the letter to the O.C was forwarded by registered post to the Postmaster at Alexandria who was requested to arrange for the delivery of the letter on board immediately on arrival of the transport. This was done.

On Saturday, 3rd December 1914, the Australian Infantry, Divisional Artillery, also 4th Light Horse Regiment (Divisional Troops), went into Camp at Mena, and the Light Horse and portion of Artillery proceeded to Camps at Maadi. The 1st Divisional Headquarters, F.P.O., was established with the Divisional Headquarters in the rear of the Mena Hotel. Immediately on arrival, arrangements were made with the Egyptian Civil Postal Director (Mr A.C. Williams), G.P.O., Cairo, for the supply of the necessary Postal Stationery, letter boxes, and other office equipment which was to have been obtained upon our arrival in England, under instructions from Colonel Paterson, A.A.Q.M.G., 1st Australian Division. Special electric trams were arranged for the carrying of mails between the Civil Post Office, Cairo, and Mena Camp. Letter boxes were erected in the camps by the Civil Authorities and a Civil Post Office was established outside the camp opposite the Mena Hotel. This was for the convenience of troops to enable stamps to be purchased, also for the transaction of Money Order business, and parcel and registration work to be done, the F.P.O.'s not having been supplied with such facilities. At this time free postage was not available for members of the Australian Imperial Forces in Egypt, 4 milliemes (1d) being the amount of postage required on all letters to Australia provided they complied with the postal regulations in regard to weight. Had Australian Stamps been supplied to the F.P.O.'s, such stamps to be/overprinted

specially

A.I.F

"A.I.F"., a large amount of Revenue would have been returned to the Commonwealth instead of going to the Egyptian Government.

To enable a good postal system to be established in the Camp, it was decided that the 1st Divisional Train F.P.O., should be the main office and to handle all in-coming and out-going mails, all other offices to circulate their mail to this office. The N.C.O in charge of Divisional Headquarters F.P.O (Staff Sergeant A.W. Ross) was transferred to take charge of this office and the N.C.O from Divisional Train F.P.O (Staff Sergeant Shepherd) took up duty at Divisional Headquarters F.P.O.

A mail time-table with a proper system of delivery and collection of mails by General Service Waggon was arranged throughout the camps. The work at the Divisional Train Office was very heavy owing to the enormous quantity of outward postings to Australia. No mails from Australia were received until (see Diary held by Lieut. Hazeldine) 1915. Much discontent was caused amongst the troops owing to this, and many rumours were prevalent as to the amount of letters received from home. It was also rumoured that seventeen (17) tons of mail, stacked in the Headquarters, Mena House, was being held from the troops. This, ~~xxx~~ of course, was only a rumour. The Divisional Train Office received prompt advice of the arrival from and sailing to Australia of any mail boats, and, on the arrival of a ship at Suez or Port Said, close enquiry was made regarding mails on board and whether there were any for the Australian Imperial Forces. The reply was always "No". As matters were getting very serious, the N.C.O in charge of the Divisional Train F.P.O brought the matter before Colonel Selheim and requested that Australia and London be cabled regarding the non-receipt of mails. Colonel Selheim referred the matter to General

Bridges who arranged that the cables be sent. In a few days a reply was received from the High Commissioner, stating that a number of bags of mail were on hand and would be despatched to Egypt on a certain date. No reply was received from the Defence Department, Australia, for some considerable time afterwards. Later, we were informed that the reason why these mails were overcarried to London was on account of the outer bags being labelled "G.P.O., London" with nothing to indicate that they were for the Australian Imperial Force, Egypt. Therefore, upon enquiries being made on board the mail boat at Egypt, no information was available to the ship's officers that they had mail for the Australian Troops. Had the bags been labelled "A.I.F" there would have been no difficulty about putting them off at any port en route. A great deal of trouble was experienced owing to letters being received in Egypt addressed to a number of Imperial Reservists who left Australia on board the "Miltiades", and proceeded to England. All such mail was subsequently forwarded to the War Office, London, for disposal.

In connection with the receipt of parcels from Australia, some considerable trouble was experienced owing to a delivery charge being made for each parcel. All parcel mails were received by the Civil Postal Authorities (Customs Department) Cairo, a despatch note giving particulars of the charges, etc, being prepared by them, which was forwarded to the addressee who was required to proceed to Cairo and collect his parcel after paying the charges due. This of course was out of the question, as soldiers could not be permitted to leave Camp on such errands, which meant travelling by tram 16 miles there and back. At Christmas time an enormous quantity of parcels were on hand at the Civil Post Office, Cairo, and to obtain these, it was necessary for the N.C.O in charge of the Divisional Train F.P.O to proceed to the Civil Post Office Parcel Section, check over, list up, and sign for something like 800 to 1000 parcels, and hold himself responsible for the collection of the respective amounts due from the addressees. Two (2) or three (3) General Service Waggon were required to transport these to Mena Camp. All these parcels with the exception of two or three were correctly delivered, money obtained and handed over /

over to the Civil Post Office. On the establishment of a Civil Post Office in the precincts of the camp it was arranged that all parcels be forwarded to that office, the despatch note being handed over to the Divisional Train F.P.O. (next door) for delivery to the addressee, advising him to call at the Civil Post Office for his parcels. This worked satisfactorily.

About? (see Diary held by Lieut. Hazeldine) January 1915 the A. I. F., Intermediate Base was formed with their Headquarters at Cairo, Colonel Selheim being appointed Commandant. A small staff consisting of one (1) Staff Sergeant, one (1) Corporal, and two (2) Privates was attached to these Headquarters to form an Australian Base Post Office and on the departure of the Force for the Front, would be required to handle all A.I.F., mails. It was known that this small staff would not be capable of carrying on after the departure of the fighting troops, and it was understood that additional personnel would be supplied later. The Australian Base Post Office was located in the basement of the building occupied by the Staff Paymaster and his staff at Cairo. All mails for the A.I.F. were taken over by them from the Civil Post Office and despatched to the Units at Mena Camp and respective Light Horse Camps. Clean postings from the camps were made up into direct mails to Australia and handed over to the Civil Post Office for despatch to the respective destinations. Mail items for addressees who could not be located at the camps were forwarded to the Australian Base Post Office for disposal.

About this time the 1st Australian and New Zealand Army Corps was formed with their Headquarters at Shepherd's Hotel, Cairo. It was necessary to appoint an Assistant Director of Army Postal Services on the Corps Staff, and General Bridges decided to give this appointment to Staff Sergeant A.W. Ross, N.C.O., in charge of the Divisional Train F.P.O. (senior postal N.C.O) who was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant on the 26th February 1915 and graded as Assistant Director Australian Army Postal Services. The Corps Headquarters F.P.O., consisting of one (1) Staff Sergeant, one (1) Corporal and one (1) Private was also formed, one (1) other rank being supplied by the New Zealand Expeditionary Force.

About? (see Diary held by Lieut. Hazeldine) the 3rd Australian Infantry Brigade left for a destination unknown. This turned out to be the Greek Island of Lemnos where they remained for some considerable time and were eventually joined by the other Units of the 1st Australian Division prior to their departure for Gallipoli. Mails for these troops were despatched to the Army Post Office at Alexandria for forwarding. Many parcels and Money Orders were received at the Civil Post Office, Cairo, for the members of this Brigade. The parcels could not be delivered owing to the difficulty in collecting the delivery charges. Arrangements were made by the Assistant Director that any parcels received for members of the A.I.F., who had proceeded overseas, should be delivered free of delivery charges and the parcels were forwarded to the 3rd Brigade accordingly. It was reported by the Civil Postal Authorities that a large number of Money Orders for members of the 3rd Brigade were on hand and it was desired that some arrangements should be made for clearing these. A scheme was put up to the Staff Paymaster by the Assistant Director Army Postal Services to enable these to be cleared and, after consultation with the Local Director of Postal Services (Civil) it was arranged that a statement of all Money Orders received and the amount of same should be forwarded to the Staff Paymaster, A.I.F., the bulk amount to be paid to the credit of the A.I.F. The Staff Paymaster would then credit the pay account of the respective payees who could draw the sum payable to him in the money order. This arrangement was carried out and proved very satisfactory as on the departure of the 1st Division for Gallipoli, hundreds of Money Orders, amounting to a very large sum of Money, were received.

Had /

Had not such a scheme been prepared beforehand, considerable trouble and inconvenience would have been caused, not only to the A.I.F., but also to the Civil Postal Authorities.

On the 9th April 1915, the Army Corps Headquarters left Cairo for Alexandria to embark on board the H.M.T., "Minnawaska" which left for Lemnos Island on the 10th April. The Corps Headquarters, Divisional Headquarters, and portion of other Headquarters went on board this ship, also the — ? Battalion. The Corps F.P.O., located in a deck cabin transacted postal business on board and on arrival in Lemnos Harbour acted as the receiving and despatching centre for the whole of the Corps formation. On arrival of the Australian Imperial Force at Lemnos Island, the Army Postal Services of the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force, operating in the Dardanelles, including the A.I.F., came under the control of the Director of Army Postal Services (Major McClintock, R.E.P.S - British), assisted by Captain Henderson (Deputy Director, R.E.P.S - British), the former being stationed at Alexandria, Egypt, and the latter at General Headquarters, the Force in the Field, each Army Corps Headquarters having an Assistant Director of Army Postal Services attached to the Staff. The General Headquarters transport received the mails for the whole of the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force and mails for the Anzac Division were collected daily by the N.C.O in charge of the Corps Post Office by means of a launch. The postal personnel of the other transports likewise collected their mails for their respective units from the Corps Headquarters transport daily.

Free postage was in force for ordinary letters, registration being permitted in the case of official letters only. Parcels were not accepted for despatch. All outward postings for Australia and Egypt, as well as undeliverable, were despatched to the Australian Base Post Office, Egypt, via the British Army Postal Service, M.E.F., who made all the necessary transport arrangements.

About 7 p.m. on the evening of the 24th April, the transports with the Australian Imperial Force started for Gallipoli, arriving there about 4 a.m. on the 25th, and the landing commenced in the early morning of the 25th. F.P.O.'s were established on shore at Gallipoli soon after landing and arrangements were made for the handling of mails to and from the troops.

The Corps Headquarters F.P.O., was established and located in Anzac Cove Gully, the 1st Australian Divisional Headquarters Post Office with the Headquarters was located on the beach between Anzac Cove and North Pier. The Brigade F.P.O.'s did not land until later, the 1st Australian Divisional Train F.P.O., remained on board the transport (see Diary held by Lieut. Hazeldine) and later transferred to the H.M.T "Seeang Bee" which was used as a Depot Ship from which tugs, launches, etc, kept up communication between the various transports and shore. Colonel Paterson, A.A.Q.M.G., proceeded on board as O.C Depot Ship. Inward mails were all placed on board the "Seeang Bee" and taken charge of by the N.C.O of the Divisional Train F.P.O., (Staff Sergeant E.S. Hazeldine) who arranged for the sorting and delivery of miscellaneous mail matter to the troops left on board various transports, also to the force ashore.

About this period, the old designations of Australian Field Post Offices were changed. Instead of using date stamps as "1st Div. H.Q. F.P.O" or "1st Aust. Inf. Bde. P.O.", etc, a code stamp was used - "1st Div. H.Q. F.P.O" became "D.N.1", 1st Bde., F.P.O", "A.N.1", "1st Div. Train F.P.O", "T.N.1", other Infantry Offices with same letter, and number of their formation added. Light Horse Units had letters "L.H" with a number representing their formation.

Delivery of mail matter was effected by means of tugs, trawlers, etc, Mails for the troops ashore were received at the Corps Headquarters F.P.O., and handed over to the respective

post orderlies of the units who were required to arrange the necessary transport (in some cases mules and donkeys, but in most cases man power). Owing to the Precipitous nature of the country it was impossible to use even mules and donkeys and the difficulty of mail transport was great. Most of the mails had to be taken to the units under cover of night as it was too dangerous, owing to rifle and shell fire, to approach the positions in daylight. Only those who have had experience of the conditions of Gallipoli can appreciate the work carried out by the Australian Army Postal Service and the postal orderlies of the units in the field.

The receipt of mails was very irregular. It often happened that the ship with mails for the A.I.F arrived off the Peninsula, but owing to bad weather and other conditions, it was impossible to land them and they had to be taken back to Lemnos, in many cases being transferred to another boat bound for Gallipoli at a later date. As the ships were unable to approach the pier and were required to keep a considerable distance off shore owing to shell fire, mails had to be off-loaded and man-handled to the F.P.O., very often under shell and rifle fire. Outward mails were properly made up and under instructions from the G.O.C., particular care had to be taken to despatch such by the best means available, often the only means of transport being warships, torpedo boats, etc, whose destination was unknown. Sometimes the mails carried by these ships were transferred to transports proceeding to Lemnos, Alexandria, etc. or taken to Malta or other ports. The correct circulation of the mails was via G.H.Q ship stationed off Gallipoli, but it was not always possible to place them on board owing to the lack of transport facilities. Later, a kind of advanced Base Post Office was established in the Gully next to Anzac Cove formed by part of the personnel of the 1st Divisional Headquarters F.P.O., and supplemented by attached men and men drawn from the F.P.O's as well as British and New Zealand postal personnel, for the purpose of handling all mails for the force in Gallipoli, as it was found impossible for the Corps F.P.O to carry on the work which had considerably increased in volume.

The sorting of mails in Australia was fairly satisfactory the mails received being sorted in accordance with instructions issued by the Postal Department prior to the departure of the 1st Australian Division. There was a fair amount of mail matter received incorrectly addressed which had to be checked over and records searched for location of the addressee. Of course this was only natural as the people in Australia were not then educated up to it.

Owing to conditions prevailing at Gallipoli, it was not possible to keep up-to-date records of casualties, transfers, etc, but nominal rolls were kept by Unit Postal Orderlies who endorsed undeliverable correspondence - "Wounded", "Killed", "Missing", or "Hospital" as the case might be, and returned same to the Field Post Office, from whence it was despatched to the Australian Base Post Office at Alexandria, Egypt.

As the casualties on Gallipoli were very heavy, the quantity of returned or undeliverable mail matter was correspondingly great. The Australian Base Army Post Office, Egypt, was inundated with returned mail, and, before they knew where they were, the Base Post Office was stacked with bags of letters, packets, newspapers, parcels, and registered articles. The whole of the postal trouble evidently arose from the fact that prior to the departure of the A.I.F for Gallipoli, adequate staff was not provided at the Australian Base Post Office to deal with the mails to and from the Field. The staff of the A.B.P.O then consisted of one (1) Staff Sergeant, one (1) Corporal, two (2) Privates - total four (4), (later increased to about twenty (20) other ranks). This being a Base Post Office came under the control of the Commandant, Australian Intermediate Base, Egypt.

The /

The Assistant Director Army Postal Services, A.I.F., (Lieut., A.W. Ross) attached to the staff of A. & N.Z. Army Corps brought the matter of the A.B.P.O. to the notice of the AA and Q.M. Col. Leslie (Imperial Officer) and suggested that the staff be increased, also other arrangements be made to enable the mails of the A.I.F., to be properly dealt with. The A.A. & Q.M.G., informed the A.D.A.P.S., that the matter was for the Commandant, Australian Intermediate Base, Egypt, to arrange and nothing to do with the Corps staff. He presumed the Commandant would make the necessary arrangements. These arrangements were not made until too late, and, owing to the enormous quantity of casualty mails on hand, the limited and untrained postal staff - some of the men being grooms, ~~xxxxxxx~~ farmers, jockeys, etc - and the fact that Mails from Australia kept arriving in Egypt one after another, it was evidently impossible to make any headway to clear off the old mails or to organise and introduce up-to-date systems for dealing with the redirection work. Owing to this and conditions of transport, the difficulties regarding delivery and general handling of mails for the Force on Gallipoli, complaints were frequent, especially in regard to mail for men evacuated to hospital. Casualties were sent to Lemnos Island, Egypt, Malta, Gibraltar, England, etc, and the difficulties in connection with the records of these will perhaps be understood especially as mails were so irregular and reports of movements of casualties did not reach Alexandria for three (3) or four (4) weeks, sometimes longer, therefore the redirection work of the A.B.P.O., Egypt was held back owing to the hospital casualty reports, etc, not being available to enable this work to be carried out and clear the mails. 3rd Echelon at this time were not supplying the Post Office with necessary data.

In? (~~see Diary held by Lieut. Hazeldine~~) 1915, portion of the Australian Base Post Office was removed to Alexandria and located in a Goods Shed on the wharf, half of the building being occupied by a British Post Office. Staff Sergeant Chas. Cunningham of the A.I.F. Intermediate Base Headquarters (Clerical Staff) was promoted to commissioned rank (Lieutenant) by Colonel Selheim, Commandant, A.I.F., Egypt, and placed in charge of the Australian Base Post Office, Alexandria.

At this time there were two (2) Australian Base Post Offices in Egypt - one at Alexandria and another at Cairo, also a large redirection section in Cairo as well as a staff located in the Parcel Section, Civil Post Office, Cairo, for dealing with parcels for members of the A.I.F. Parcels were then arriving at the Civil Post Office, Cairo, and being handled by the Civil Postal Authorities prior to being passed to the A.I.F. postal staff for despatch to the Field. A receipt for each individual parcel was required by the Civil Post Office. Later, arrangements were made for all military mails to be delivered direct to the Australian Army Post Office.

The work of the F.P.O.'s at Gallipoli increased considerably owing to the heavy casualties and the amount of mail to be written up and returned to the A.B.P.O., also the manner of transporting and distance from the F.P.O., to distributing Office the road to which was over very steep hills, most of the mail transport being carried out at night owing to shell and rifle fire. It was therefore decided to increase the staff of the Divisional and Brigade Headquarters F.P.O. by one (1) private. The Divisional Train F.P.O., Staff remaining the same, viz, seven (7) other ranks. The F.P.O., staffs had a very trying time, their offices being established in dug-outs, in many cases quite close to trenches and exposed to shell, rifle and machine gun fire, as were all offices located on Gallipoli. The Postal staff did all they could, working day and night to clear mails and effect delivery. Everything was carried out in accordance with postal procedure as far as it was possible, having regard to the conditions prevailing. All mails were properly checked inward and outward, receipts obtained for registered articles, and in many cases for parcels also.

Great /

Great difficulty was experienced in checking Despatches from Egypt owing to two or more different despatches arriving at the Advanced Base Post Office (British) on board the H.M.T., "Aragon" at Mudros at one time, and on account of the limited accommodation making it impossible to dump the bags separately, consequently mixing the despatches and when reloading to transports for Gallipoli, no notice being taken of the despatch numbers. A waybill showing the total number of bags despatched was sent with the mail guard to be handed over to the N.C.O. in charge of the postal distributing office at Anzac Cove, who, after checking the bags receipted the bill and returned it to the officer in charge Advanced Base Post Office, Mudros. Thus it will be seen that although letter-bills and way-bills were made out at and forwarded from the A.B.P.O., Egypt, it was impossible for the Field Post Offices to keep a proper check and the letter-bills and way-bills were practically useless to them. A letter-bill from the A.B.P.O. would show 40 bags of mail for, say, 1st Infantry Brigade, enclosing 2 bags of registered articles - numbering 100 items - but only 30 bags enclosing 1 bag of registered articles - 20 items - would perhaps be received yet the way-bill received from the Advanced Base Post Office Mudros who transferred the mails, would show 50 bags - no registered articles, as these would be enclosed in bags made up at the A.B.P.O., Egypt, and not opened en route as a rule - which would be correct according to the despatch from Mudros. The next mail from Mudros would perhaps include the missing bags with others for which no letter-bill had been received at the F.P.O., the bag containing the bill being held over with the balance of the mail at Mudros. This will give an idea of the difficulties in connection with checking and keeping trace of despatches of Mails from our Base Post Office, Egypt. The same would apply to mails from Gallipoli to Egypt. A case in point - 2 bags containing some 150 registered articles were advised on a letter-bill received at a F.P.O., at Gallipoli, but were not received with the bags which arrived by that particular despatch. The matter was reported to the A.D.A.P.S., who wired O.C., A.B.P.O., Egypt and to other post offices in an endeavour to trace the missing bags. The O.C., A.B.P.O., wired to say that they had been despatched on a certain date but no trace of them could be found. Sometime after another mail arrived at Gallipoli and the missing bags were received, having been held up with other mails at Mudros as described above.

Owing to the absence of postage stamps, postal orders etc, at F.P.O.'s, no registration or parcel ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ post work was transacted with the exception of O.H.M.S., (Official) items. Letters up to 4 ozs in weight were accepted for free postage. As there was little or nothing in the way of parcels of value to send from Gallipoli, it was not considered necessary to stock stamps, etc, at F.P.O.'s, but later when a Field Cashier visited Gallipoli at irregular intervals with pay for troops and applications were being received for postal notes and stamps, arrangements were made for the sale of these at a combined British-Australian and New Zealand Office at Anzac Cove. The counter-work, viz, sale of stamps, British Postal Notes (these for circulation to United Kingdom, Egypt, New Zealand, etc, but not Australia as they were not then negotiable in the Commonwealth) was handled by the R.E.P.S., (British) Section who had an advance in cash and stocks, and as soon as the troops became aware of this arrangement a large amount of business in postal notes, letter-cards, etc, was transacted.

The A.D.A.P.S., Anzac Corps controlled all the Postal Services at Anzac Cove, Gallipoli viz 1- Australian, New Zealand British and Indian ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ Offices. The British and Indian Offices had on sale Stamps, Postal Notes, etc.

Mail Services between Egypt and Mudros and Gallipoli also Mudros and United Kingdom were arranged by the D.A.P.S., M.E.F., Egypt. Local services, viz, between Mudros, Imbros, Anzac Cove, Cape Helles, Suvla Bay, by the D.D.P.S., M.E.F., G.H.Q., Imbros Island. Land services by the respective A.D.A.P.S.

The /

The system of transporting to and landing mails at Anzac Cove was as follows :- Loaded on to transports or fleet-sweepers at Mudros, offloaded into barges, lighters, etc, and man-handled from piers to the Advanced Base Post Office at Anzac Cove situated about 700 yards from the pier up a steep hill; checking was carried out as the bags were dumped.

Owing to shell fire etc, the transports and fleet sweepers had to keep well out from land and parties of men were sent on lighters or barges to offload mails and bring them ashore. A N.C.O and two or three men in charge of a gang of Maltese labourers usually carried out this work, which was very trying and also dangerous as it ~~was~~ sometimes happened that our friend the Turk took a hand in the game and sent along a shell or two to hurry the business up. In one case the shelling was very severe and the fleet sweeper had to move off quickly to avoid being sunk. One shell struck the ship but did little damage. Unfortunately a barge with about 156 bags of Australian Mails, stores, etc, on board, which was towing at the ship's side was overturned and mails, etc, all lost owing to the rough sea and wash of the ship, which was moving very quickly at the time. This accident was inquired into and full particulars of the mails reported and advertised in Corps Orders.

On November 17th 1915 - 168 bags containing A.I.F., N.Z.R.F., and British mails were lost through the foundering of the tug "Gaby" off Gallipoli. An Australian Postal man acting as mail guard on this tug had a narrow escape from being drowned, and was rescued only just as the tug sank.

577 bags of Australian Mail were lost through the sinking of the transport "Orange Prince" (torpedoed) between Alexandria and Mudros.

Other mails were also lost owing to shell fire, etc, mine explosions, loss of ships, etc. Records of Post Offices and Postal Orderlies were sometimes lost in this manner. Everything possible was done to safeguard the mails, but it was not possible to watch everything or every individual, especially when mails were carried through communication trenches at night and on Indian mule carts along the beach for 3 to 5 miles in the dark. Mail guards were provided, but with 20 to 30 carts it was not possible to provide a man for each cart. Robberies of registered mails and parcels took place and after employing every means to trace the thief or thieves, a trap was set and an Indian Mule Cart driver was caught red-handed and dealt with. Maltese labourers were also caught robbing the mails on the barges as they were being brought from transports, in spite of the fact that military police accompanied each barge to and from the shore. Mail bags were split open and contents of parcels rifled by the labourers who were a pack of cunning thieves. Of course the postal officials got the blame for the loss of parcels, etc, stolen in this manner, which was most unjust, as one could not do more to protect the mails at that time owing to shortage of men and conditions prevailing; later, the mails were landed under supervision of N.C.O's and parties of men told off to watch them closely, and in this way the thieving became less frequent. Mails on ships coming from and going to Alexandria and other ports were at times rifled and things became so serious that mail guards had to be supplied on all transports carrying mails. On many ships there was no accommodation for safeguarding mails, which were simply dropped into the hold or stacked on lower decks. Nearly all cases of interference with mail matter was traced to outsiders, and not to the postal officials. It was very rarely that a postal official or unit postal orderly interfered with postal articles.

Early in the Gallipoli Campaign, about May or June 1915, a break of some considerable time occurred without any mails being received and everybody was discontented at not receiving letters, etc, from home. A.I.F., Intermediate Base, Egypt, and 3rd Echelon, Alexandria were complaining about the non-receipt and delay to mails to and from Gallipoli, and owing to this it was decided to send an Officer to Egypt to make some

enquiries /

enquiries regarding postal matters generally. The A.D.A.P.S., Anzac Corps was instructed to proceed on this mission and left Gallipoli on the 16th June 1915 for Alexandria, via Mudros, arriving there about 20th June 1915. After reporting to the D.A.P.S., M.E.F., (Major McClintock) and discussing certain matters, also visiting the A.B.F.O., located in a goods shed on the wharf at Alexandria - Lieut. C. Cunningham being in charge - he left for Cairo to inspect the Army Post Office, A.I.F., there. As already stated herein, there were two (2) Base Post Offices in Egypt, one (1) in Cairo also a redirection section and parcels section. A Warrant Officer was in charge of the offices in Cairo, a Staff Sergeant supervising the redirection and parcels sections. The staffs of these offices, also the office at Alexandria, consisted mainly of temporarily attached men - men discharged from hospital who were without any postal knowledge or clerical experience, and it was no wonder the Base Post Office had difficulty in carrying on satisfactorily. The staff were without a thorough knowledge of the composition of the A.I.F., and mis-sorting was continually taking place. Location work, viz, recording the moves of units to enable mails to be despatched to the latest location was not properly understood owing to the untrained staff. Letters addressed to 3rd Echelon, Alexandria, were found in the Base Post Office, Cairo, amongst returned mail, and in the redirection section "Live" mail was discovered amongst "undeliverable" mail etc, etc, all owing to apparently inexperienced sorters.

The work of the Australian parcels section at the Civil parcels office, Cairo, was slow and laborious, but they were handicapped by having to give individual receipts for parcels to the Civil Authorities. Parcels were listed in duplicate to all units and bagged accordingly.

The Redirection Section was located in a room in an old barracks in Cairo. The place being stacked with bundles and bags of letters, parcels, etc awaiting redirection. Here again men from hospital were temporarily attached to carry on this important work. Small memorandum books were being kept for the purpose of recording addresses, which were written up by a staff of 2 or 3 men from hospital lists supplied to this section. It is not possible at this date to say whether these returns were rendered weekly or fortnightly.

As it was thought impossible to redirect the mail, at the same time deliver to addressees calling at this office for letters, etc, the callers being very numerous and the staff here being kept continually looking up their mail, no headway could be made with the redirection work, consequently, for 2 days or more every week, the doors were closed against callers to enable this work to be carried out. This could perhaps have been avoided by increasing the Staff - if available - and working at night, and so get ahead of the back mails.

The A.D.A.P.S., A.I.F., (Lieut. Ross) suggested a card system for records, instead of the flimsy exercise books which were only causing delay and were quite out of date, and not at all suitable for redirection work. However, the Commandant, Australian Intermediate Base, Cairo, and the O.C., A.B.F.O., both declined to accept the suggestion and continued on in the old way. Other matters were gone into and many little difficulties overcome on the spot without a lot of unnecessary correspondence.

It is not meant in this history to criticise any section of the Army Postal Corps, but to point out the difficulties, systems and suggestions for improvements, etc, in connection with the whole service.

Regarding the Australian Base Post Office, I think the Officer Commanding should write up the history of that section, and will not therefore go any further into the working of that Office, except to say, it would appear that, although the staff at the A.B.F.O., at the time was composed of inexperienced men as previously mentioned herein, it was not the fault of the O.C., as it was impossible to obtain a sufficient number of trained postal or clerical men at the time and he was forced to accept the best he could get, owing to the enormous quantity of mails inward and outward to say nothing of the heavy redirection work which had to be handled.

Prior to leaving Alexandria for return to Gallipoli the following proposals suggested by the A.D.A.P.S., Anzac Corps were discussed at a small conference held in the D.A.P.S., M.E.F., (Major McClintock) Office, Alexandria:-

1. The sorting of portion of Australian Mails on board mail boats en route - viz, late postings, miscellaneous bags and Headquarters mail. A small staff to be placed on each boat who would also sort mails outward bound to Australia from Egypt on return journey. Four weeks on journey to and from Egypt was being wasted. The arguments against this proposal were that it would require too much accommodation; staff would have to consist of 5 men and an N.C.O., on each boat which would mean if a boat left Australia every two weeks with A.I.F mails, six staffs of 5 or 6 men would be required to keep the ~~same~~ scheme working.
2. At this period, Mails for the A.I.F were being sent to Alexandria by train from Suez (occasionally from Port Said) which was a great waste of time, railway and transport. Nearly all Light Horse and many other units including Headquarters, A.I.F Pay Corps, etc, were located in and around Cairo - mails being re-despatched from Alexandria. It was suggested that a Travelling Post Office be attached to the train from Suez - the Civil Postal Authorities were willing to supply the van - and some of the mails could be sorted en route, saving 7 or 8 hours, also, mails from Cairo be trucked separately and sent direct to Cairo. This scheme was also side-tracked as not being worth while or some other such reason. It is believed that later on these mails were **DIVERTED** ~~to Cairo direct~~ to Cairo direct.
3. Another suggestion was that an Officer and small staff of trained Postal N.C.O's and men with a thorough knowledge of the working of the Army Postal System in the Field and Base be sent to Australia for the following purpose - The Officer to supervise generally the sorting, despatching, etc, of all army mails and to keep in touch with the Army Postal Corps in the Field and advise the Civil Postal Authorities on all military postal matters, such as composition of Forces; new formations; locations and sorting of mails for such. The N.C.O's and men to be allotted to different States and attached to the respective General Post Offices to supervise and assist the Civil Authorities in the handling of Army Mails. These men would be kept advised with up-to-date instructions by the Officer mentioned previously, who would be attached to Defence, Melbourne, but required to travel to G.P.O's in each State occasionally to inspect the working in connection with Army Mails, etc. If this scheme had been carried out much trouble would have been saved and the sorting of mails could have been improved considerably; many other things could also have been improved and the Army Postal Corps would have had a connecting link in Australia to look after their interests - advise the Defence Authorities also keep the public posted with much valuable information which would have saved many unfounded complaints which were made through ignorance on the part of the people in Australia. Many things could have been dealt with on the spot by the Army Postal representative without wasting time in referring them to the A.I.F overseas. This scheme was passed out as it was thought by one or two of the Officers present that it was not worth while considering as the War might be over any day (this was in June / July 1915) It was too late. Ridiculous, considering 12 months had not elapsed since the war began.

Later in 1915 the Defence Department, it is understood, arranged for a Warrant Officer of the Instructional Staff in each State to attend at the respective G.P.O's for the very purpose which was suggested at the Conference mentioned herein. These men, although having military experience, would be practically useless, as they had no knowledge of what was required in the Field or Base Post Office and were not in touch in any way with the Army Postal Authorities overseas. Many letters were returned to the Senders by these Warrant Officers as insufficiently addressed, which /

which, had they reached the Army Post Office, could have been delivered without trouble. In fact many did eventually arrive in the field with the original address thereon and delivery was effected. This caused complaints from the addressees and the Army Post Office got the benefit of it all.

At the completion of duty in Egypt which lasted about 12 to 14 days, the A.D.A.P.S., returned to Gallipoli and verbally reported the result of his enquiries in Egypt to the D.D.P.S., M.E.F., Imbros Island and to the A.A. & Q.M.G (Col. Lealie) Anzac Corps, and Major Griffiths, 1st Australian Divisional Headquarters. Some improvements in the mails were noticed later, but the old trouble regarding parcels being received in a very much damaged condition was recurring and a letter was sent to the Commandant A.I.F Headquarters, Cairo, suggesting that a parcels section be established at the Base Post Office, Alexandria, and all parcels handed over direct to the Army Post Office without first going through the hands of the Civil Post Office, also that damaged parcels be re-wrapped or repacked where necessary prior to despatch to the field. The reply received was that arrangements had already been made for this to be done. This improved matters somewhat, but still many parcels were received in the field without any address and contents loose in the bags owing to the amount of handling they received and the dumping from ship to ship, etc. Contents of parcels received loose, which it was impossible to deliver owing to lack of address, were handed over to hospitals on the beach for distribution to patients.

It is not necessary to continue in regard to Field Systems, suffice to say that they were the best possible taking into consideration the unparalleled conditions prevailing. The staffs of all offices including New Zealand, British and Indian, worked splendidly in their efforts to keep the services going.

Some of our units were at Cape Helles, Mudros and Imbros at different periods and mails were transferred accordingly.

The 1st Divisional Train F.P.O staff under Staff Sergeant E.S. Hazeldine supplemented by attached men were stationed on board the H.M.T "Aragon" at Mudros and acted as a distributing centre between Alexandria, Gallipoli (Imbros, Cape Helles and Anzac Cove). Mails for A.I.F Units at these places were despatched direct from the "Aragon", locations being supplied by A.D.A.P.S., 1st Anzac Corps.

Note: The system in vogue at the 1st Australian Divisional Train Office on board the "Aragon" might be supplied by Lieut., E.S. Hazeldine who was Staff Sergeant in charge of the office during that period.

To enable mails to be more conveniently handled to and from ships, it was decided to establish an office right opposite the North Pier at Anzac Cove below the Ordnance Depot, and the distributing office located near Anzac Gully was accordingly transferred there on completion of a building 50 ft x 30 ft which had been erected for the purpose. This building consisted of timber frame-work filled in with sand-bags, and was a very fine structure indeed for Gallipoli. Barbed wire enclosures were being erected in which mail bags were to be dumped, also accommodation for the staff - bunks being fitted as the winter was very severe. There was a small tramway from the pier right round this office and mails could be loaded from lighters on to trucks and taken right up to the Post Office door and dumped without any carrying. Unfortunately the office had only been established and working about 2 or 3 weeks when the evacuation from Gallipoli took place. Mails however, were kept going right up to the last few days. Instructions were issued for all mails on hand at F.P.O's to be cleared and handed over to the distributing office at North Pier at the earliest opportunity and no mails were to be held in F.P.O's but must be cleared daily. This referred mainly to clean outward postings and returned or ~~xxxx~~ undeliverable mail matter.

On December 1915, the D.D.A.P.S., M.E.F., at Imbros was advised that no more mails should be forwarded to Gallipoli

add /

and inward mails ceased accordingly. Outward mails from Gallipoli were despatched as opportunity offered. Portion of the Staff of the Distributing Office which consisted of British, Australian and New Zealand N.C.O's and men, remained behind until, just prior to the final evacuation to clear off any mails on hand. All mails on hand were cleared, also Postal Records.

The Field Postal Staffs proceeded to Mudros with their units, the staff of the Distributing Post Office on arrival at Mudros being temporarily attached to an Australian Depot of Supply, and later on were disbanded. The British Staff were instructed to report to the A.D.A.P.S., at Mudros. Later, the Australian and New Zealand Staff were attached to the 1st Australian Divisional Train Post Office at Mudros under Staff Sergt. Hazeldine, and the Indian Postal Staff to an Indian Unit.

The A.D.A.P.S., Anzac Corps and F.P.O., Corps Headquarters were located on Lemnos Island with portion of Corps Staff. General Birdwood and other members of his staff proceeded to G.H.Q., Imbros after the evacuation and later proceeded direct to Egypt.

On account of the hold up of mails during the evacuation, there were at this time something like 40,000 bags of mail at Mudros or on board transports awaiting delivery to all troops including Australian and New Zealand. Owing to the enormous stacks of mails on shore at the 1st Australian Divisional Train Office, and the fact that A.I.F Units were not expected to remain long at Mudros, but were to embark for Egypt instructions were issued by the Corps Headquarters to the D.A.P.S., M.E.F., that mails were not to be delivered to Australian units, but forwarded to Egypt as soon as transport was available.

A few small units however did obtain mails and effected delivery of them to the addressees. These units had to procure and pay for private water transport themselves to carry the mails across the harbour, as Naval transport was not available for this purpose at the time.

During the occupation of Gallipoli, the Army Postal Staff, including Australian, British, and New Zealand, did very good work, often being under shell, machine gun, and rifle fire whilst discharging their duties, but seldom did this deter them and often it was necessary to command the N.C.O's and men to cease work owing to extra heavy shelling before they would desist in their endeavours to unload or load mails.

In one particular instance, Sergeant Neilson, N.C.O in charge of a British Divisional Field Post Office controlled by the A.D.A.P.S., Anzac Corps, was bringing a convoy of mule carts loaded with mails from his division located about 3½ miles from Anzac Cove (Corps Headquarters) towards Suvla Bay. It was night, but not very dark, owing to a small moon shining. The convoy had to proceed along the Beach and at one or two points was exposed to machine gun fire. Sergeant Neilson was wounded in the leg, but borrowed a mule from a unit ~~xxxxxxx~~ nearby, mounted, and continued on his journey bringing his convoy safely through and delivering his mails. After having his wound dressed, he returned the same way with his convoy reloaded with mails for delivery to his division. For this action he was recommended by the A.D.A.P.S., Anzac Corps, for some award, and later received the Distinguished Conduct Medal. This Sergeant is now a Lieutenant in the R.E.F.S., R.E.F. Acting Staff Sergeant J.P. Styring, Australian Army Postal Corps, for some time in charge of the Postal Distribution Office at Anzac Cove also did very good work, and was later recommended for award, eventually receiving the Meritorious Service Medal in December 1916, whilst in France.

As already stated, portion of the Anzac Corps Staff was left at Mudros to await a transport bound for Egypt. The A.D.A.P.S., Anzac Corps and F.P.O Staff left for Egypt by the "Empress of Britain" which conveyed about 5000 troops across. The voyage was uneventful and nothing exciting occurred on the way. Owing to danger of submarines, all were required to wear lifebelts /

lifebelts during the day-time. We arrived at Alexandria early in 1916 and proceeded to Ismailia where the Corps Headquarters were located. At this time there were two Anzac Corps Headquarters - 1st and 2nd. The former under Lieut. General Birdwood and the latter under Major-General Godley. The staff of the 2nd Corps consisted, with the exception of one or two, of Officers of the old original Corps Staff. The 1st Corps had not been properly formed at this time and all the formations of the old Corps were under the command of Major-General Godley. Later, most of the Officers of the original Corps Staff were transferred to the Headquarters of the 1st Anzac Corps under Lieut. General Birdwood and new Officers appointed to fill their places on the 2nd Anzac Corps (most of these being British). Our Australian units in Egypt were scattered - some at Tel-el-kebir, Ferry Post, Serapeum, Maadi and Zeitoun - where they were dumped after the evacuation from Gallipoli.

On 10/3/1916, A.I.F Order No. 107 was issued, which reads as follows :- ORGANIZATION OF POSTAL UNITS -

"All postal units of the A.I.F will hereafter form portion of a postal corps designated the Australian Army Postal Corps, and, as far as the exigencies of the service admit, all promotions will be made from within the Corps, and not within the individual units of the Corps. The A.D.A.P.S., A. & N.Z.A.C., and the N.C.O's and men of the A.I.F borne on the establishment of the Postal Services A. & N.Z.A.C., are transferred ~~xxxx~~ to the Australian Army Postal Corps with their existing seniority".

Thus the staffs of the special Base Postal Corps enlisted in Australia for service in Egypt and the Field Postal Personnel became amalgamated.

On the formation of the 2nd Anzac Corps, it was necessary to appoint another D.A.D.P.S., A.I.F., and Staff Sergeant E.S.Hazeldine, N.C.O in charge of the 1st Australian Divisional Train, F.P.O., was commissioned and took up duty on March 12th 1916. Owing to new Divisions, Brigades, etc, being formed it was necessary to establish Field Post Offices for them, which was a difficult proposition as there was a shortage of good postal men. Many of the original Army Postal Staff were promoted to take charge of the new F.P.O's, and, to complete the staffs, applications were called for from members of the A.I.F who had previous postal knowledge. In this way men were obtained, but they were not always suitable and as the matter was urgent, the best of them were chosen and transferred to the Australian Army Postal Corps.

The Australian Base Army Postal Staff, specially enlisted for duty in Egypt arrived there from Australia in October 1915. The staff consisted of the following Officers and other ranks :-

Captn. Fisher Director of Australian Army Postal Services.
 Lieut. C. P. Wilson
 " Tyler
 Warrant Officer Solomon
 Staff Sergeant H. Crome
 Sergeants
~~xxxx~~ Corporals
 Privates.

Note: Captain C.P.Wilson, O.C., A.B.P.O., London, will perhaps supply the information required to complete the above.

Captain Fisher was attached to the A.I.F Headquarters Cairo, and took control of the Australian Army Postal Services, but owing to some disagreements, etc, he resigned his Commission and returned to Australia in April 1916. This was regrettable, he being a thoroughly ^{EFFICIENT} and capable Officer. Lieut. C.Cunningham O.C., A.B.P.O., Alexandria, on the resignation of Captain Fisher was appointed Acting D.A.P.S., although he was a junior to the A.D.A.P.S., 1st Anzac Corps in the Field.

Mail Services - Mails for A.I.F (from Australia) were nearly always offloaded at Port Tewfik and taken by train to Alexandria for /

for breaking up into units, viz, Infantry Battalions, Light Horse Regiments, etc, - as they were received from Australia sorted into Brigades only - and for location of same. Mails from United Kingdom were landed at Alexandria and Port Said and despatched to the A.B.P.O to be dealt with in a similar manner to Australian Mails. On completion of the "breaking up" etc, the mails were despatched to Cairo - for A.I.F Headquarters, Light Horse, Australian Hospitals and units in and around Cairo - Tel el Kebir - for Infantry, Artillery, etc, units located there. Ismailia - for units of the 1st Australian Division at Serapeum, also for units of the 2nd Australian Division at Ferry Post. A large Camp Post Office was formed at Tel el Kebir to act as the distributing office for the units in that district, the 1st Australian Divisional Train F.P.O on arrival at Mudros being attached to this office for a time to assist, but on 1st Division being transferred to Serapeum were also transferred to that place.

The 1st Anzac Corps F.P.O and the A.D.A.P.S., A.I.F., were located in a building at Ismailia formerly used as an Indian Post Office. An office formed from personnel supplied from the Australian Base Post Office reinforced by attached men was opened at Ismailia opposite the Railway Station in a marquee tent - this office was designated S.Z.4A. All mails for troops at Ferry Post and Serapeum or Ismailia, including the 1st and 2nd Anzac Corps were handled at S.Z.4A., those for Ferry Post being called for by an N.C.O from the 2nd Australian Divisional Train F.P.O, ~~xxxx~~ located on the bank of the Suez Canal. Mails were transported by G.S.Waggon daily, outward despatches also being brought daily to F.P.O Ismailia. The 2nd Div. Train F.P.O (Sgt. Laing) acted as the distributing office for the units in the Ferry Post Area, mails being forwarded by light railway to the Supply Railhead where a temporary post office formed from men drawn from F.P.O's of the 2nd Australian Division was established. Nominal Rolls were supplied to this Office by the units and the mail was, as far as possible, checked before being despatched with supplies by camel transport to the units in the front line, some miles beyond the railhead. "Returned" mail being brought back to the F.P.O on the returning empty camel transport which, after being checked, was despatched with "clean postings" to the F.P.O (S.Z.4A) at Ismailia via the 2nd Australian Divisional Train F.P.O at Ferry Post.

Great difficulty was experienced in transporting the mails to the units owing to the distance to be traversed across the desert and the necessity for guarding the mails from spoilation by the Arabs and other natives who accompanied it. As mails, as well as supplies, were being interfered with, and it was found that in some cases ~~xxxx~~ both were dumped in the sand by the Arabs, who wished to get rid of their loads and return to camp (only after much trouble and search were these things recovered and delivered) it was decided that an Officer and armed guard should accompany all supply convoys. This put an end to the trouble and things went along smoothly.

At Serapeum (1st Australian Division area) the 1st Australian Divisional Train F.P.O, or portion of it, was located on the east side of the Suez Canal at the terminus of a short branch railway built for military purposes, which ran from the main Ismailia - Suez Railway to the east bank of the Canal. Mails from all units located in the Serapeum area were despatched from Ismailia to the 1st Australian Divisional Train F.P.O (Staff Sgt. E.S.Hazeldine) in charge) and on arrival were transferred to G.S.Waggon, taken across the Canal over a pontoon bridge to the 1st Australian Division Headquarters F.P.O for checking, etc, thence to the light railway and despatched to the railhead where a similar system was in vogue to that at Ferry Post. Guards were always sent with the mails on the railway as well as camel or horse transport. The 1st Australian Division Headquarters F.P.O., at this time was, I think, in charge of Acting Staff Sgt. Hadley.

During this time great difficulty was experienced in obtaining receipts (personal) for parcels, but every effort was made /

made and in a great majority of cases the receipts were obtained. Difficulty arose in regard to transport on the railway and camel transport owing to the heavy mails for the A.I.F., and it was found impossible sometimes to clear the mails in one day, but they were always cleared the following day.

At a later date, mails landed at Port Tewfik, were sorted out for Serapeum, Tel el Kebir, Ferry Post, Ismailia, Cairo and Alexandria, and forwarded to those places direct. This of course made the work of the distributing offices very much heavier as they had to do the breaking up prior to despatch to the units in the field; however, it expedited the delivery of the mails and also saved considerable transport on the railways as well as much unnecessary handling.

About February 1916, the re-organization of the Australian Infantry took place and the formation of the 4th Australian Division was commenced. Portion of the old Battalions of the 1st Australian Division was transferred to the new Division and replaced by reinforcements, thus the 1st and 4th Divisional Infantry units were composed partly of old and partly new troops, Officers and other ranks alike. Imagine if you can, from a purely postal point of view, the problem set before us. Mail matter would arrive in ~~bags~~ addressed to one unit while the addressee was with another, which meant sending the correspondence, parcels, etc, to the original unit, checking through nominal rolls to ascertain the new unit to which the addressee had gone, then forwarding the mail accordingly. Theoretically, a very easy problem but not so in practice. First of all the preparation of the nominal rolls - an enormous job - and the checking of the mail matter against the rolls a still greater job, for once the roll was prepared it was finished with, but the arrival of each mail meant checking over again, and so on, ad infinitum. Troops were instructed to write home immediately and advise their correspondents of their transfer and the designation of the unit to which they were now attached; many did so, but a great many failed, and mails were coming addressed to the old units for many months following. In any case, some two months at least must elapse before any effect could be felt from those who had advised as instructed. In order to expedite the checking of the mail matter at the units, authority was given for an extra postal orderly to be attached to Infantry Battalions. This assisted to some extent and relieved the pressure somewhat at the unit, but the work at the Field Post Offices was very much increased owing to the extra handling and transferring of the mails from one Battalion to another, i.e., mail undeliverable at the 1st Battalion at Serapeum had to be forwarded to the new Battalion at Tel el Kebir, a distance of approximately 25 miles by rail, exclusive of the extra distance to be travelled on the military light railway at Serapeum from units in the line. It will thus be apparent what this cross transfer of mails meant from a transport view, to say nothing of the handling en route at the postal points. Naturally, there was very considerable delay in delivery to portion of the mails, but the majority of the troops understood the reason and were patient and uncomplaining.

As the 1st Anzac Corps, including the 1st and 2nd Australian Divisions were shortly to proceed to France, it was necessary to make arrangements, not only for the formations proceeding overseas, but for those remaining behind. Owing to the reorganization mentioned previously herein, this was a most difficult question, and, in order to formulate some practicable scheme, a Conference was arranged to be held at the Savoy Hotel, Cairo, to discuss the whole question. This took place about the end of February of beginning of March 1916. The following Officers were present :-

- Lt. Col. P. Warren, Director of Army Postal Services, M.E.F.,
(now E.E.F) (British)
- Captain Manning, Deputy Director of Army Postal Services (Brit.)
- " C. Fisher, Director of Austn. Army Postal Services.
- Lieut. A.W. Ross, Assistant Director of Australian Army Postal
Services - 1st Anzac Corps.
- " C. Kemp, Assistant Director (British) Cairo.
- " C. Cunningham, O.C. Australian Base Post Office, Alexandria.
Lieut. /

Lieut. Chas. Wilson, O.C. Australian Base Post Office, Cairo.

Many important matters were discussed. The main question being the handling of mails for the A.I.F., in Egypt and France. Owing to the re-organization of the Australian Infantry and other units, great difficulty in dealing with these mails was anticipated. Whether mails on arrival from Australia should be sent direct to France and returned to Egypt after all mail matter for the troops there had been extracted or, disembarked at Egypt first and mail for those troops in Egypt picked out, the balance being despatched to France - this was discussed at length; finally it was decided that the latter procedure would be the best. Arrangements were made accordingly. Although it would mean delaying the mail for the troops in France, it was thought preferable to permitting it to be sent past Egypt to France in bulk, taking it across France to Calais or wherever the Australian Base Post Office was to be located, and returning the Egyptian portion. The whole of the mails for A.I.F had therefore to be checked through in Egypt prior to despatch to France. An enormous job, however, it was apparently the only way out of the difficulty.

For many months the Australian Army Postal Corps suffered owing to the numerous complaints regarding delay, etc, to mail matter through no fault of the staff who were not to blame in any way. owing to the mails having to be held up in Egypt as mentioned herein and that for Egyptian personnel extracted, much delay was occasioned. This, together with the removal of the Australian Base Post Office to France, the organizing of new systems and services, thence the transfer of the Australian Base Post Office to London on arrival of the A.I.F Administrative Headquarters in London, and the unavoidable loss of a certain period of records - all caused trouble to the Australian Army Postal Corps and tended towards dissatisfaction amongst those who did not understand the situation.

To enable preliminary arrangements to be made for A.I.F Postal Services in France, and to establish a Base Post Office either in France or England, it was decided to send an Australian Postal Officer across to confer with the Director of Army Postal Services, B.E.F., (Colonel Price), (British), who was located at Abbeville, France. Lieut. C. Wilson, O.C., Australian Base Post Office, Cairo, was accordingly instructed to proceed to France immediately on this mission. This Officer left by P. & O. Boat on 1916. Lieut. Col., Warren, D.A.P.S., M.E.F., gave Lt. Wilson letters of introduction to Colonel Price and Lieut. Col. Wheeler, O.C., Home Depot (British) London. Every assistance was rendered Lieut. Wilson, by these as well as other British Postal Officers, and everything was done to enable him to successfully establish the Australian Base Post Office at Calais (that being the place decided upon) and to make other necessary arrangements.

The Australian Base Post Office was established at Calais, France in 1916 and staff was transferred in drafts from the Base Post Offices in Egypt, extra men being attached (when necessary) from units to complete establishment. Applications were invited from men of the A.I.F with previous postal experience for transfer to the Australian Army Postal Corps. This was necessary owing to the shortage of postal staff consequent upon the formation of the new Division and Brigade Field Post Offices of the 4th Australian Division.

The new Base having now been formed, mails were despatched there as some of the Australian Troops had already moved to France.

About this time, Captain Fisher, D.A.P.S., A.I.F., located at A.I.F Headquarters, Cairo, issued special Australian Postal Stationery for use in the Base and Field Post Offices. On the arrival of the 1st Australian Division in Egypt, Egyptian Civil Postal Stationery was obtained for use by A.I.F and was continued to be used until, and for a time after, the opening of the Gallipoli Campaign. British Army Postal Stationery was also used, as there/

There was no special Australian stationery available. No doubt the new stationery issued by the D.A.P.S., A.I.F., was very complete, but at the same time it was very costly, and although it to some extent still being used, is being replaced again by British supplies, with the exception of registered and parcel listing books, which are specially adapted for our service.

Owing to Australian mails being offloaded at Marseilles a small staff of Australian postal men was attached to the British Assistant Director's staff at that port to assist in the handling of our mails to and from Egypt.

Note: Units proceeding from Egypt to France - Order of embarkation should be available at the Records Section, Australian Administrative Headquarters, London.

All mail on hand for units embarking was delivered to them prior to embarkation, and any received subsequent to embarkation was forwarded to British Army Post Office, Port Said, for despatch to France.

The Australian Divisions commenced to arrive in France about February/March 1916 and to proceed to their allotted areas in the north of France. The 1st Anzac Corps (General Birdwood and staff left Alexandria on board H.M.T. "Transylvania" for Marseilles on 30th March, arriving there on April 4th 1916), arrived at Marseilles on 4th April and proceeded to, and were located for some time at a small village near Hazebrouck called La Motte. The Corps Headquarters F.P.O (Staff Sgt. R.M. Waugh, N.C.O in charge) was re-opened for the transaction of postal business about 10th April 1916. The postal system in France was somewhat different to that in Egypt and Gallipoli, consequently the Australian Postal Staff required to be instructed to a certain extent in order to make themselves acquainted with the new procedures, and arrangements were made with Colonel Price, D.A.P.S., B.E.F., that a N.C.O or private of the British Army Postal Service be attached to each Australian Railhead, A.P.O., Field P.O., and Postal Detail Supply Column of Divisions, for instructional purposes until the Australian Staff became conversant with the new conditions. The British details were attached to our offices for about one (1) month and then returned to their respective offices, our men taking over complete control. Captain Ferguson, Assistant Director (R.E.P.S) 4th Army Headquarters, controlled the Postal Services of the formations in that Army in the North, including the 1st Anzac Corps, and did all he could to assist the D.A.D.P.S., A.I.F., (Lieut. A.W. Ross) and gave much valuable aid in many ways, the two services working very smoothly.

The Australian Railhead A.P.O's were always located at their respective Divisional Supply Railheads. F.P.O's were invariably with their formations when in rest, but, when formations in the line, were allotted a suitable position by the D.A.D.P.S., of the Corps usually near the regimental transport or billeted in nearest village.

The system of working in France was as follows :-

First of all it must be explained that the whole of the Army Postal Services in the British Expeditionary Force were under the control of a Director (Colonel Price (R.E.P.S) who had his Headquarters at Abbeville, France. Under him the control was split up in the following manner :-

Northern France - A Deputy Director (Major, - now Lieut.Col).
 Southern France - A Deputy Director (Major, - now Lieut.Col).
 each Army Headquarters having an Assistant Director (Captain now Major), each Army Corps Headquarters a Deputy Assistant Director (Lieutenant now Captain). The British Base Post Office at Havre, Boulogne, Calais, Marseilles, etc, were also under the immediate control of an Assistant Director with the rank of Captain.

There is one thing that might be pointed out here, viz :- the ranks of the respective grades in the Army Postal Services, which, taking into consideration the magnitude of these services, were much too low. The Director of the Army Postal Services in France, who controls the whole of the combined services in the theatre /

theatre of war in that country, should surely have held the rank of a Brigadier-General and the lowest grade, viz, Deputy Assistant Director (Corps) that of Captain, at least. In 1917 the rank of the respective grades was raised - Deputy Director from Major to Lieut. Colonel; Assistant Directors from Captain to Major; Deputy Assistant Directors from Lieutenant to Captain. The Director of Army Postal Services, B.E.F., to remain full Colonel. These promotions were all without pay or allowances. The Australian Army Postal Officers were not granted the higher rank for some reason or other which put them in a very anomalous position. Owing to the more elaborate or complete system in the Australian Service, greater responsibilities were thrown on to the shoulders of the Australian Postal Officers, yet they were given a lower rank although holding the same grade as the British, who, in addition to their Army Pay received their full civil Postal pay. Australian Commonwealth Employees on Active Service received no pay other than their military.

Postal Officers attached to an Army Corps Headquarters Staff and responsible for the postal services of that Corps are required to communicate and come into contact with all ranks, from Generals down, and in many cases have to push very hard in the interests of the service to gain their ends, and if they are of a junior rank it makes things doubly hard for them in carrying out their duties.

Many Officers have no consideration for the Army Postal Service. ~~xxxxxxx~~ One understands that Supplies, Ammunition, and Medical Supplies must come first, but surely the Postal Service should receive more consideration than they do, and the Officers and other ranks of that service should be given more attention and assistance in order that they may be able to maintain an efficient service for the Army or Corps to which they are attached. It is pleasing to know, however, that all staffs are not alike in this, and many Headquarters go out of their way to render assistance to the postal service, as they understand the value of mails and the effect they have generally upon the troops under their command.

The D.A.D.P.S., of a Corps receives the most secret and confidential information regarding formations, their moves, operations, etc, and is responsible for the Corps Postal Services which is a very big job, the Corps formation consisting of three, four, and sometimes more Divisions and as many as 25,000 Corps troops - in some cases more. This was the case in the first (1st) A. & N.Z. Army Corps when on the Somme in 1916/1917. Some idea of this Officer's responsibilities will thus be apparent, and it will perhaps be agreed that he should at least hold the rank of a Captain.

Returning to the system of working in France - on arrival of the 1st Anzac Corps it was necessary to re-arrange the postal staffs in accordance with the establishment of the British Expeditionary Force. The system was to a degree, similar to that which had been in vogue at Ferry Post and Serapeum, but of course on a more complete basis, as, at the former places it was only a temporary measure; however, in France proper Divisional Railhead Post Offices and Divisional Supply Column staffs were arranged for and established. Railhead Offices had a staff of 1 Sergeant and 3 privates; the Supply Column, 1 Corporal and 2 Privates. There was also an extra private required for the postal lorry (as mail-guard) at F.P.O Corps Headquarters. Each Division had two (2) three-ton motor lorries for postal purposes; Corps F.P.O having one three-ton lorry. The Postal Staff of the Divisional Supply Column travelled with their lorries daily to the Railhead A.P.O., picking up mails for the units of their Divisions, and delivering them over to the respective Field Post Offices from whence they were taken by postal orderlies to the units for delivery to the addressees, or, if undeliverable, returning the mails the following day to the Field Post Office for despatch to the /

the Australian Base Post Office where redirection to hospital or elsewhere was carried out. After the Supply Column lorry had completed the run and delivered all the mail, it returned to the Railhead A.P.O with outward mail collected from the various Field Post Offices, which was made up and despatched from that office by rail or lorry (according to the instructions received), to the Australian Base Army Post Office at Calais. Army mails usually travelled with supplies, with the exception of the "EXPRESS" mails which came all the way by motor lorry - in relays. "Express" mails were made up in the British Army Post Office, London. These bags contained official and private correspondence for Headquarters of Armies, Corps, Divisions, Brigades (Infantry) and sometimes Headquarters of Heavy Artillery. The "Express" bags usually reached the field within twenty four (24) hours after leaving the United Kingdom owing to, as stated above, their being sent up by Motor Lorry instead of by Supply Train. Mails by Supply Train used to take from 48 to 72 hours according to the Railhead. The "Express" service was especially good and was a great boon, as important official papers were very much expedited thereby.

In the early part of 1916, mails for the A.I.F were landed at Marseilles and passed through to the Australian Base Army Post Office at Calais for sorting, checking, and despatch to the respective Railhead A.P.O's. All local postings were despatched by "cross post" direct to the Railhead A.P.O's (not via A.B.F.O) and forwarded with other miscellaneous mail matter to the F.P.O concerned for delivery to the addressee. Registered items at one time, under instructions from the D.A.P.S., B.E.F., were being made up at the Railhead Post Offices and re-listed by those Offices on to F.P.O's. As there was a considerable number of registered items received on the arrival of an Australian mail - numbering some hundred or more for each Brigade (a low estimate) - the work at the Railhead office was too heavy and the Postal Lorries were sometimes kept waiting for two or three hours while these items were listed and bagged for despatch to the F.P.O's, thus delaying the whole of the Divisions' mail. The D.A.D.P.S., 1st Anzac Corps, after some trouble, had this system discontinued and arranged that if more than a certain number (above 3) of items were being despatched on an A.P.O., a bag should be made up direct to the Field Post Office serving the unit instead of the items being handled at the Railhead Office. The bag was treated as one item on the Railhead letter bill. This saved an enormous amount of time and labour, and expedited the delivery of the whole of the mails.

All units have a Postal Orderly whose duty it is to look after the unit's mail, calling at the Field Post Office daily to hand in outgoing mail matter ("clean postings") and receive the inward mails, which he loads on to a limber waggon and transports to his unit for delivery to the addressees. Registered articles were delivered against personal receipt or order. The Postal Orderlies were advised by their respective F.P.O's at what time to call for their mail, as the time varied according to the distance from Railhead and the position of the F.P.O from the unit. The distance in some cases between Railhead and F.P.O being 8 to 10 miles.

Railhead A.P.O's were, during the early part of 1916 located in Railway trucks at supply railheads, sometimes two offices in one truck. Eight men working and sleeping in one large covered truck is not conducive to good health, comfort, or efficient service, but in spite of the lack of accommodation, &c, the men all worked splendidly and did their best to give as good a service as was possible under the circumstances. Rarely was there any grumbling, except in connection with their inability to clear the mails, which, owing to the late arrival of the Supply train (or non-arrival, as it at times failed to arrive until the following day) meant a double mail the next day, making it impossible /

impossible for the lorries to clear the "dump", consequently keeping a small portion hanging over each day. The staffs worked early and late in their efforts to clear the mails, and eventually made things good again.

When units or formations changed location, mails had to be diverted and to enable this to be done without delay, the D.A.D.P.S., of the Corps had to keep himself posted with up-to-date information regarding moves or intended moves within the Corps, so as to advise the D.A.P.S., B.E.F., of Lines of Communication and have the mails diverted from the Base to the new location. Should the information not reach Lines of Communication in time to divert the bags at the Base, the Railhead A.P.O., Staff, who are also advised, would arrange to forward the mails from their office.

Before proceeding further, I think it advisable to just briefly outline the system of delivery of mail to men in the trenches. In many cases it was impossible to get mail - with the exception of a few letters - to them. Consequently, mail matter was often held under instructions from Unit Commanders by the postal orderlies at the regimental transport camp some miles in the rear. Letters - sometimes parcels - were taken up to the trenches with the supplies during the night. Registered items and parcels being held over until the unit came back for a spell in the Rest Area. Owing to the shell fire, etc, and the chance of giving positions away by sending parties of men backwards and forwards, it was not permitted to send mails or supplies up in the daytime. Mail matter for delivery to troops in the front trenches was usually delivered by Company Quartermaster-Sergeants when issuing supplies. Items for which a personal signature was required from addressee, if sent up to the trenches, were listed and handed to the C.Q.M-Sergeants of the unit concerned, who procured the signature on delivery or returned the article to the Regimental Postal Orderly to hold until it was possible to effect delivery to the addressee and obtain the required signature. The same procedure was adopted in regard to parcels, but parcels owing to their bulk were, as a rule, held over until the men came back to the Rest Area. The latter plan appeared to be the best as the men could then enjoy the contents of their parcels in comparative comfort. Of course, the whole matter depended upon the position of the trenches and the violence of the enemy's fire, as well as other questions of military importance, and special postal arrangements were made to fit in accordingly. All these arrangements were made by the D.A.D.P.S., of the Corps.

As already mentioned, special Postal Motor Lorries were provided and mail time tables compiled and strictly adhered to.

Parcels: Parcels were received from the Australian Base Post Office in direct unit bags, each containing a list enumerating the parcels enclosed therein. Unit postal orderlies were required to deliver the items, obtain the addressee's signature, and return the list to the Field Post Office serving the unit, together with any undelivered items, for which a clearance was given on the ~~returned~~ returned list by the N.C.O in charge of the Field Post Office. It was impossible at times to obtain the addressee's personal signature, but every effort was made to procure this, and in nearly all cases, when the men were in the Rest Area, with success.

Mails from the Field Post Offices were, when the quantity warranted it, made up direct on the Australian Base Post Office or any other Army Post Office, but in all other cases they forwarded it to the Divisional Railhead office for despatch with other mail matter received at that office. The usual practice was for all bags to be despatched to the respective Railhead A.P.O's and re-labelled from there. * Owing to the lack of accommodation and the generally bad conditions prevailing, also the enormous quantity of mail matter handled at the Railhead A.P.O's, it was found impossible to continue the system of listing all parcels passing /

* Waybills, letter bills, etc, being made up, as required, at that office

passing through, and the D.A.P.S., A.I.F was asked to provide an extra man at each of these offices in order to maintain the "listing system", or to abandon it for the time being. The extra assistance was provided and the listing was continued, the staff at Australian Railhead A.P.O's now being increased to 1 Sergeant and 4 privates (formerly 1 sergeant and 3 privates). Even then it was impossible during the very busy periods to list everything as hundreds of British parcels were received from all offices in the field for "cross posting". Owing to our men being granted leave to the United Kingdom and to Paris, where they made many friends, and consequently increased the number of their correspondents, the local and English postings grew to an enormous extent; however, everything possible was done and rarely did parcels escape being listed. NOTE: A new system of parcel listing, &c, was adopted in 1918 and is now being given effect to.

All Army Post Offices in France were given Code designations similar to F.P.O's at Gallipoli. The following are the designations allotted to the Australian Army Post Offices :-

1st Anzac Corps Headquarters F.P.O.	H.W.1
<u>1st Australian Division -</u>	
Railhead A.P.O	R.W.1
Headquarters F.P.O	D.W.1
1st Infantry Brigade H.Q. F.P.O	1.W.
2nd do do	2.W.
3rd do do	3.W.
1st Divisional Train F.P.O	T.W.1
<u>2nd Australian Division -</u>	
Railhead A.P.O	R.W.2
Headquarters F.P.O	D.W.2
5th Infantry Brigade H.Q. F.P.O	5.W.
6th do do	6.W.
7th do do	7.W.
2nd Divisional Train F.P.O	T.W.2
<u>3rd Australian Division -</u>	
Railhead A.P.O	R.W.3
Headquarters F.P.O	D.W.3
8th Infantry Brigade H.Q. F.P.O	8.W.
9th do do	9.W.
10th do do	10.W.
3rd Divisional Train F.P.O	T.W.3.
<u>4th Australian Division -</u>	
Railhead A.P.O	R.W.4
Headquarters F.P.O	D.W.4
11th Infantry Brigade H.Q. F.P.O	11th.
12th do do	12th.
13th do do	13th.
4th XXXXXXXXXXXXXXX Div. Train FPO	T.W.4
<u>5th Australian Division -</u>	
Railhead A.P.O	R.W.5
Headquarters F.P.O	D.W.5
4th Infantry Brigade H.Q. F.P.O	4.W.
14th do do	14.W.
15th do do	15.W.
5th Divisional Train F.P.O	T.W.5

From memory it is not possible to give the exact locations of these Offices on arrival in the B.E.F., but this information can be ascertained from records held in the Australian Base Army Post Office, London.

The order in which the Australian Divisions arrived in France and other data not included in this history will be available at the Records Section in Australian Headquarters, London.

The /

The D.A.D.P.S., of the 1st Anzac Corps controlled the Postal Services of the New Zealand as well as the Australian Force, but, as this history deals only with the Australian Army Postal Services, no further mention need, I think, ~~xxx~~ be made herein as far as the New Zealand Force is concerned.

The 2nd Anzac Corps and the 4th Australian Division, followed by the 3rd Australian Division, did not arrive in France until some time after the 1st Anzac Corps. Major-General Godley was in command of the 2nd Anzac Corps and had the 3rd and 4th Australian Divisions attached to that Corps. Lieut. Hazeldine, D.A.D.P.S., of the 2nd Anzac Corps having been evacuated to hospital in Egypt, an Officer from the infantry reinforcements was appointed acting D.A.D.P.S., in his place. This Officer (Lieut. Waters) arrived in France with the 2nd Corps, and as Lieut. Hazeldine was instructed to report to London for duty as D.A.D.P.S., A.I.F., Depots in United Kingdom, Lieut. Waters was (in October 1916) appointed permanently D.A.D.P.S., 2nd Anzac Corps, and taken on the strength of the Australian Army Postal Corps.

About June 1916, the Army Postal Establishments were amended and an increase of one (1) Warrant Officer, Class 1, allowed for the staff of the D.A.D.P.S., of the Corps, this Warrant Officer to act as travelling Postal Supervisor for the Corps. His duties were to generally supervise the services and assist the D.A.D.P.S., As no Warrant Officer was available in the A.I.F Postal Services at the time, a Company Sergeant Major of the R.E.F.S was lent by the British Army Postal Service until one could be appointed. This N.C.O was of great assistance to the D.A.D.P.S., Later, Staff Sergeant A.D. Spriggins, N.C.O in charge of the 2nd Australian Divisional Train F.P.O was appointed Acting Supervisor, and carried out his duties in a very satisfactory manner, and was recommended for promotion to substantive rank, but the D.A.P.S., A.I.F., decided to appoint Warrant Officer H. Crome, from the Australian Base Post Office, London, to the position. This Warrant Officer, although not fully conversant with the Field Postal Services, having been employed in the Australian Base Post Office since his arrival from Australia in 1915, with the assistance of Acting Warrant Officer Spriggins, became familiar with and carried out his duties satisfactorily. In October 1916 owing to a vacancy occurring in the D.A.P.S.'s Office in London, Warrant Officer Crome was re-transferred there and Acting Warrant Officer Spriggins then received the promotion to Warrant Officer, Class 1. A further alteration in the Army Postal Establishment took place later on in 1916; a Company Sergeant Major (Warrant Officer Class 11) for each Division being provided for to act as Divisional Supervisor. As the A.I.F Postal establishment had not been so amended at the time, the D.A.D.P.S., 1st Anzac Corps made temporary appointments, the senior Staff Sergeant of each Division being made acting Company Sergeant Major (Divisional Supervisor). These appointments turned out very satisfactory and was the means of greatly improving the services as the D.A.D.P.S., of the Corps, owing to the number of Divisions, Corps troops, etc, within the Corps area, the extent of country over which our troops were operating, also the shortage of motor cars, found it impossible to thoroughly supervise in detail all units and inspect the F.P.O's satisfactorily. These Supervisors, after they became thoroughly conversant with their duties were of great assistance to the D.A.D.P.S., and rendered valuable aid to the N.C.O in charge of the A.P.O's and Field Post Offices. The Divisional Supervisors usually took up their quarters at the Divisional Railhead Offices as it was found more convenient to work out through the divisions, owing to the lorries reporting at railhead first for mails which had to be delivered to the F.P.O's of the divisions and finally returning to the railhead on completion of delivery. In this way they were also able to visit the Divisional Headquarters, Brigade Headquarters, etc, and obtain information of any intended moves or alterations of location of units, which it was their duty to keep the D.A.D.P.S., informed of in case he should not have received the information in time to divert or transfer the mails of the particular unit concerned. the
accounts /

accounts of the Field Post Offices were also checked by the Supervisors periodically as well as by the D.A.D.P.S., Surplus cash was taken charge of and paid in to the Field Cashier. Accommodation for the Field Post Office and billets for the staff was also arranged. The Divisional Supervisors being on the spot were able to advise the N.C.O's i/c of F.P.O's and fix up little matters at once, at the same time keeping in touch with the D.A.D.P.S. This enabled the D.A.D.P.S., to give more time to important matters and improved the services generally.

About this time (October 1916) the D.A.P.S., A.I.F., applied for an increase of staff. An Officer was required for the D.A.P.S' Office, London, and the D.A.D.P.S., 1st Anzac Corps (Lieut. A.W.Ross) who had held the rank of Lieutenant for about 20 months and was the first Postal Officer appointed in the A.I.F., was promoted to the rank of Captain and graded as Deputy Director of Army Postal Services, A.I.F., on November 1st 1916, being transferred to London on the 22nd December 1916 in accordance with the D.A.P.S' request. Lieut. C.J.Fletcher D.A.D.P.S., A.I.F Base Depots in France was appointed to succeed Lieut. A.W.Ross as D.A.D.P.S., 1st Anzac Corps, and took up duty there about December 20th 1916. Captain Ross proceeded to London immediately and took up duty at A.I.F Headquarters on 22nd or 23rd December

Very shortly after Captain Ross arrived in London, the D.A.P.S., instructed him to make an inspection of the Parcels Section of the Australian Base Post Office, Regents Park, and later on the Redirection Section, Mount Pleasant. Reports of these inspections are on record at the Administrative Headquarters, A.I.F., London.

A further alteration in Postal Establishments was approved by the War Office - War Office letter No.121/8856 (SD2) dated December 6th 1916. The alterations were as follows :-

1. The Company Sergeant Major (Warrant Officer Class 11) at Corps Headquarters to be abolished.
2. A Company Sergeant Major (Warrant Officer Class 11) or Company Quarter Master Sergeant (Staff Sergeant) to be allotted to Divisional Headquarters for Divisional Supervision - the two ranks to be in proportion of 2 Company Quarter Master Sergeants to 1 Company Sergeant Major (Warrant Officer Class 2).
3. The Sergeant at Divisional Headquarters F.P.O to be replaced by a Corporal.
4. The Corporal of the Divisional Train F.P.O to be replaced by a Sapper.
5. One Sapper of private to be added to the Corps Headquarters F.P.O.

With these alterations, the authorised establishment for Corps and Divisional postal units will be shown as below :-

Corps H.Q. F.P.O.	1 Sergeant, 4 Sappers or Privates;
Div. H.Q. F.P.O.	1 C.Q.S.M., or C.S.M., for Divisional supervision.
	1 Corporal and 2 Sappers or Privates at Divisional F.P.O.
Railhead F.P.O.	1 Sergeant and 3 Sappers or Privates.
Div. Train F.P.O.	1 Sergeant and 2 Sappers or Privates.
Brigade H.Q. F.P.O.	1 Corporal and 2 Sappers or Privates.
Supply Columns	1 Corporal and 2 Sappers or Privates.

As the A.I.F had Staff Sergeants in charge of their Divisional Headquarters F.P.O's and Divisional Train Offices while the British had Sergeants, it was decided to re-arrange our Staffs, and in 1917 Staff Sergeants were placed in charge of Railhead A.P.O's and Sergeants in charge of Divisional Train F.P.O's, the Corporal from the Divisional Train being transferred to the Divisional Headquarters F.P.O., to replace the Staff Sergeants who were appointed Divisional Supervisors. We still had two Corps Supervisors (Warrant Officers Class 1) one at 1st Anzac and another at 2nd Anzac. However, as

the /

the question of taking the Unit Postal Orderlies on the strength of the Australian Army Postal Corps was then being considered, it was decided to retain these Warrant Officers as they would probably be required for the inspection of Postal Orderlies. After careful consideration had been given to the ~~xxxxxx~~ question of taking over the Postal Orderlies, it was decided not to do so but an A.I.F Order was promulgated (see A.I.F Orders Nos. 862 of 18/6/1917 and 1009 of 7/12/1917) giving power to the D.A.D.'s P.S., to inspect the work of the Postal Orderlies, also to recommend to the O.C., of the unit the removal of any Orderly, who in the opinion of the D.A.D.P.S., is unsuitable and to replace him by a man having previous postal or clerical experience in the Commonwealth Public Service in Australia. This gives the Army Postal Corps a certain amount of control over the orderlies without lessening in any way the responsibilities of the Officer Commanding the Unit, who must be responsible for the rationing, accommodation, and discipline of the men, and also supply the necessary transport for units' mails. So far this scheme has worked well and should continue to do so.

In order that proper supervision might be exercised over the orderlies, authority was obtained for the retention of the Warrant Officers Class 1, and they were supplied with a Motor Cycle and side car each to enable them to move about quickly and visit all units which were scattered over a very large area. The side car was required so that if necessary, light bags of official mail containing urgent papers, etc, might be taken along for early delivery, also to provide means of transport for the D.A.D.P.S., of the Corps should he be unable to procure a motor car at any time.

On the transfer of A.I.F Troops from the 2nd Anzac Corps to 1st Anzac, the Corps Headquarters F.P.O personnel were absorbed into the Postal Corps, several vacancies occurring making this possible. Lieut. Walters, D.A.D.P.S., 2nd Anzac Corps, having applied for transfer to the Infantry was accordingly transferred. The Warrant Officer Class 1 was taken on the strength of the D.A.D.P.S., 1st Anzac Staff, his services being utilized as Corps Supervisor (for Postal Orderlies). The 1st Anzac Corps was re-designated "The Australian Corps"; 2nd Anzac being designated the 22nd Corps, British. The New Zealand Division remained with the 22nd Corps, as well as the 4th Light Horse Squadron (Corps Cavalry).

Captain Fletcher, D.A.D.P.S., 1st Anzac Corps, France, who succeeded Captain Ross in the Field, will be able to supply more definite information regarding the working in the Field since December 1916.

The history of the Australian Base Post Office, A.I.F Depots - United Kingdom and France - might perhaps be written up by the respective Officers, as they no doubt have the necessary data. I have no records with me in Egypt, and am therefore unable to furnish particulars as to places, dates, etc, or procedures, and have only outlined this history to the best of my ability, lacking the necessary and definite information. I understand that the actual writing up of the Postal History will be taken in hand by somebody specially selected for the duty, the respective reports being then merged into one.

I have been unable to touch the Egyptian part of the history ~~xxxxxx~~ up to date, as you will understand my hands have been pretty full in looking after things over here since my arrival, but I will do my best to get on to it at an early date provided the Xmas Mails do not come in on us too soon.

Ref. No. 65 / 2 / 4



Australian Base Post Office,
S.Z.3 KANTARA
November 15th 1918

The Commandant
A.I.F Headquarters
Cairo

In continuation of my memorandum to you on the 8th instant, herewith please find copy of the History of the Australian Army Postal Corps in Egypt covering period June 1916 to June 1918.

The work of the Australian Army Postal Corps in Egypt previous to June 1916 was included in the general History - period 1914 / 1918 - copy of which was forwarded to you on the 8th instant.



SEEN
COMMANDANT,
DATE

A. W. Ross
Captain
D.D.A.P.S., A.I.F in Egypt.

*3a
Q
War Records.*

Ref. No. 65 / 2 / 4

Australian Base Post Office
S.Z.3 KANTARA
November 15th 1918

The D. A. P. S.,
A.I.F Headquarters
L O N D O N,

With reference to your communication of the 12th July last, No.6002/2/3, and in continuation of my memorandum to you on the 8th instant, I now forward herewith the History of the Australian Army Postal Corps in Egypt covering a period June 1916 to June 1918.

This information has been compiled from information received from various sources and it is thought to be fairly accurate, with the exception of perhaps dates which are difficult to verify owing to lack of records.

The work of the Australian Army Postal Corps in Egypt previous to June 1916 has been included in the general history - period 1914 to 1918 - which was forwarded to you on the 8th instant.

Details of the Re-organisation of the Egyptian Section carried out by the D.D.P.S., A.I.F., commencing on February 16th 1918 and subsequently, will be found in the "Report" rendered to the A.C.M.G., and D.A.P.S., A.I.F., in May 1918. That report and the subsequent Monthly Reports should complete the Australian Army Postal Corps History in the E.E.F., and enable the person, whom I understand you have arranged to write up the History, to collect the material and complete a connecting and interesting record of the Australian Army Postal Corps.

Captain
D.D.A.P.S., A.I.F in Egypt.

History of the Australian Army Postal Corps in Egypt
1916 - 1918

In June 1916, after the last Infantry, etc, Drafts had left for France, the Australian Army Postal Staff - left behind to look after mails for the remaining portion of the A.I.F in Egypt, i.e., Light Horse Formations, Camel Corps, etc, - were left without any controlling officer, and had to act on their own initiative. This was a very unsatisfactory state of affairs, as although the N.C.O's and men were capable of handling the mails, ~~etc~~, an Officer was badly needed as a supervisor and to attend to all matters of administration. Indirectly the service came under the jurisdiction of A.I.F Headquarters, Cairo, but no actual assistance was received in any way; consequently they drifted under the control of the British D.A.P.S., E.E.F. Later, this arrangement was officially recognised and remained in force until the D.D.P.S., A.I.F., was appointed to Egypt in 1918.

The A.I.F Postal system at this time was fairly satisfactory considering the conditions under which it was being worked, but there was plenty of scope for improvement which was taken every advantage of by the members of the Postal Staff.

There were nine (9) A.I.F Post Offices in Egypt at this time, being designated as follows :- Australian Base Post Office, S.Z.4A, situated at Ismailia and consisted of a Staff of one (1) N.C.O., and five (5) men, which was altogether inadequate to cope with the work; Field Post Offices L.H.1, L.H.2 and D.M.1 serving the 1st Australian Light Horse Brigade 2nd A.L.H Brigade, and Anzac Mounted Division Headquarters respectively, were situated at Hill 40 in Sinai where our troops were operating. F.P.O L.H.3 serving the 3rd A.L.H Brigade was situated at Serapeum with its Brigade. L.H.1, L.H.2 and L.H.3 details F.P.O's were at Tel-el-kebir, being with their respective Brigade detail camps. F.P.O M.D.T.1 was stationed at Kantara, being the Divisional Train Office for the Anzac Mounted Division, transferring all mails from the Base to the Field.

A combined staff from the Base and L.H.1 Details F.P.O used to unload all Inward Mails from Australia at Port Taufic assisted by local labor, the latter expense being borne by the A.I.F., but as this proved to be very unsatisfactory owing to the poor class of labor supplied, and also an unnecessary expense, arrangements were made for Egyptian Labor Corps personnel to offload all mails. A truck was supplied to carry each Brigade's mail, i.e., one for the 1st Brigade which was despatched to Tel-el-kebir, as the Brigade Details F.P.O at this time was handling and re-directing all mails for their Brigade, two orderlies being attached from each Regiment, who were held responsible for the correct delivery of their respective unit's mail. This system was introduced by the G.O.C of the Brigade in February 1916 and proved very satisfactory, inasmuch that it obviated unnecessary delay to a certain portion of the mail, and was also a saving of transport which was a big proposition at this time. Trucks were also made up on the 2nd and 3rd Brigades, the former being despatched to Kantara East Military Railway by the staff of M.D.T.1, eventually reaching its destination, i.e., F.P.O L.H.2 at Hill 40. Bags for the Anzac Division Headquarters were also included in this truck, as both the F.P.O's were situated together. The latter truck was "kicked off" at Serapeum and transferred by the light military railway to F.P.O L.H.3 which was at the Railhead. All miscellaneous bags were forwarded direct to the Base for disposal.

It will be seen that this system was not a good one as far as the quick delivery of mail was concerned. The men of the 2nd and 3rd Brigades in the field certainly received their mail expeditiously, but those away from their Unit, such as

Details /

Details, Hospital, Convalescent, etc, had to wait until their mail was returned to their Detail F.P.O's at Tel-el-kebir, where a portion of it was finally disposed of, and the remainder owing to the lack of up to date records, was forwarded to the Base Post Office for trial against the "Returned Letter Office" records, but, as these were no more up to date than the former offices, the mail was very often lying at the Base for months before being disposed of.

On July 31st, the Details Camp commenced to move from Tel-el-kebir and was completely established in Moascar on the 6th August, the F.P.O's moving on this date, L.H.I details F.P.O acting as Camp Post Office. After a short period the D.A.P.S., E.E.F., who had just taken over the control of our unit, decided to move the Base Post Office from Ismailia and amalgamate it with L.H.I Details F.P.O which was then working in four E.P.Tents. This move was made on 22nd August 1916 and the new office was re-designated the Australian Base Army Post Office, S.Z.3.

The alteration proved highly satisfactory, but as the tents were not large enough to enable the staffs to cope with the work satisfactorily, a more commodious-wooden-building was erected near the Moascar Railway Siding, which was very convenient as the mails were quickly handled to and from trains.

At this period a new system was introduced, which allowed of the mails being delivered more expeditiously and in a more efficient manner. All Inward Australian and English mails were opened and dealt with at the Base Post Office instead of forwarding a large portion of it direct to the field. To enable this to be carried out, the 2nd and 3rd Brigade Details F.P.O's were closed, and the respective orderlies for each Regiment transferred to the Base Post Office. Nominal Rolls were obtained for each Unit and the names entered in alphabetical books, each orderly being responsible for keeping his records up to date, and re-directing and forwarding his own Regiment's mail.

One of the most important, and yet, the most neglected section in the Base, was the "Returned Letter Office", and at this time it was in a disgraceful state. About 12 bags of letters were being held up pending the location of addressees. Most of this correspondence was returned from the field under the old system, some of it being over 12 months old. The records for this section were kept in alphabetical books by one man, the only source of information received being a few miscellaneous hospital sheets, and personal advices of change of address.

At the suggestion of one of the staff, the whole of this section was reorganised. A Card Index System was introduced for all casualties for miscellaneous units, such as Signallers and Engineers, etc. Circular memos were sent out to all hospitals, Convalescent Depots, and Detail Camps, etc, efforts being made to obtain records from every source of information which would be of assistance to us. A.F's.B.213 were applied for from all Units, but on the advice of the D.A.P.S., E.E.F., these were not supplied, consequently our records were not so complete as they might have been. Nevertheless a vast improvement was made, and only a small proportion of mail matter was classed as undeliverable as compared with the previous system, most of it being for men who had transferred in the Field, which pointed to the fact that A.F's.B.213 were essential to complete the records and facilitate the delivery of the mails. This class of undeliverable correspondence was forwarded to 3rd Echelon, Cairo, for trace against A.I.F Records, and our records were amended accordingly.

Australian Troops in Sinai at this time had just achieved an overwhelming victory over the Turks at the battle of Romani, and were following up the rapid Turkish retreat. The Field Post Offices who were in close proximity to the scene of action received a fair portion of shell fire, F.P.O L.H.2 being badly damaged, but luckily there were no casualties,
and /

and all mail matter and postal records were saved.

This victory was the fore-runner of a rapid advance by our troops, which terminated in the capture of El-Arish. Mail matter was continually despatched to the Field during these operations, and considerable difficulty was experienced in delivery to the units. The Military Railway being only a single line was the sole means of transport for mails from the Australian Base Post Office to the Force in the Field. F.P.O.'s were usually stationed near the railway at the point from which the formations received their supplies. Unit Postal Orderlies called at the F.P.O.'s daily for their mails, at the same time handing over their outward postings which were forwarded to A.B.P.O., S.Z.3, Moascar, daily.

Occasionally, owing to the frequent movements of our troops, scarcity of rolling stock, and the irregularity of departures and arrivals of trains, F.P.O.'s were not always able to keep pace with their units and had to send their mails long distances to effect delivery. Transport was very scarce, only camel and sand sledges suitable for the country being used; wheeled transport was absolutely useless on the desert sand.

Early in 1917, the offensive was again resumed, and our troops advanced through Rafa, Khan Yunis, and Deir-el-Belah in rapid succession, thus conquering Sinai, and establishing themselves in Palestine, which at this point, was beautiful country. Wheeled transport which was brought into use, greatly facilitated the delivery of mails from the Railhead to the Units which were scattered broadcast. Only a small proportion of the units camped amidst sand dunes were being served by camel transport.

In May 1917, owing to the extensive advance made by our troops, it was decided to move the Australian Base Post Office, S.Z.3, from Moascar to Kantara. This was carried into effect on May 19th 1917. The new office was hardly large enough and was situated, from a health standpoint, in about the worst place the authorities concerned could have chosen, being right on the shores of a malaria infected swamp.

Owing to the Staff being very much under strength the men were forced to do too much, and work very long hours in intense heat, the result being that, as soon as they became a little run down, they were stricken with Malaria and carried off to Hospital.

F.P.O M.D.T.I which was situated at Kantara prior to the arrival of the base, moved to Moascar, and was re-designated F.P.O T.M.I, and acted as Camp Post Office.

At this period, the D.A.P.S., E.E.F., cancelled our system of direct vouching between A.B.P.O., S.Z.3 and F.P.O.'s and introduced a new system of vouching on the Field to "R" locations. Every Base Office in Egypt despatched to "R" locations, i.e., all mails for the Anzac Mounted Division F.P.O.'s were made out to R.M.I, the Australian Mounted Division to R.M.2, for an Infantry Division, say the 52nd, to R.52, and so on. These offices were only "phantom offices", i.e, they did not actually exist, but to overcome this a British Army Post Office was established at all Railheads to break up and deal with all "R" despatches. F.P.O.'s were also instructed to vouch direct on their respective Railhead offices instead of to the Base. Local Postings to and from the Field circulated direct as addressed and did not pass through the Base Post Offices.

From a postal view, this alteration was very satisfactory as all the F.P.O.'s were able to move from the various Railheads and rejoin their Brigades and Divisional Headquarters. A horse was allotted to each F.P.O in place of the bicycle shown on the establishment, thus allowing them to keep in touch with their Railhead Offices, to hand over postings, etc., and receive Inward despatches. Should a large despatch be forwarded from the Base, the D.A.D.A.P.S., Desert Corps was always advised by wire. This enabled him to make arrangements for sufficient transport accordingly.

Of course, this new system absolutely broke the backbone of the Australian Parcel Listing Scheme, as all parcels to and from the field, unless made up in unit bags, were dealt with at the British Railhead Offices where parcels are not listed, consequently hundreds of parcels were received unlisted at the various Australian Offices, thus making it impossible to keep a check on parcels despatched to and from the A.B.P.O., or F.P.O.'s.

The N.C.O in charge of the Australian Base Post Office and all the N.C.O's in charge of Field Post Offices protested very strongly against this system, but without avail. Once again the necessity for an Australian Postal Officer was apparent. One N.C.O wrote a letter of protest to the D.A.P.S., E.E.F., who in turn forwarded it to the Commandant, A.I.F Headquarters, with a covering memorandum asking that the N.C.O be severely censured for having addressed a communication direct to his Headquarters instead of through the D.A.P.S. (British).

The above difficulties could easily have been overcome had the Anzac and Australian Divisional Railhead Offices been controlled by A.I.F ~~xxxxxxx~~ Postal Personnel instead of British, and, as these offices were serving Formations which were composed of nearly all Australian Units, they certainly should have been Australian Army Post Offices.

The staff question at the Base at this time was a very serious proposition. The only confirmed N.C.O's being one Staff Sergeant and one Sergeant. There were several acting Corporals who had held this rank for a considerable time, and, as there seemed no likelihood of them ever receiving paid rank, they lost a certain amount of interest in their work, which was perhaps only natural. The Staff was never kept up to strength, being at times as many as twelve (12) men short, consequently the mails were considerably delayed, Half-hearted attempts were made to fill the vacancies, but the office was very rarely worked with a full staff.

About the middle of October 1917, our troops once again took the offensive, and made rapid advance through Beer-Sheba and Gaza. Simultaneously the Christmas Mails commenced to arrive at the Base, and were despatched to the field as quickly as possible.

The acting N.C.O's were at last confirmed in their ranks which gave them further encouragement, and greater interest in their work.

During the operations from Beer-Sheba to Jaffa, great difficulty was experienced by the F.P.O's in delivering mail to the Units. At the request of the Director, E.E.F., mails were sent out from the Australian Base Post Office as quickly as possible, the consequence was, the Railhead Offices could not cope with them, and forward them on to the F.P.O's (which were now attached to their Supply Trains) owing to the lack of transport.

The scheme of attaching the F.P.O's to their Supply Trains was an excellent one, as they were always able to move forward with them and so keep in touch with their Brigades which were moving rapidly. Nevertheless, great difficulty was experienced in keeping the mail up to the troops, as the only possible mode of transport was the already overtaxed supply waggons and camels. The "despatches" were broken, bags had to be placed here and there on camels or waggons whenever the opportunity offered. At one period the F.P.O's were 25 miles from the Railhead Offices (Dier-el-Belah) and the troops another 25 miles further on. Mails were sent as frequently as possible from the Railhead Offices to Gaza by supply camels, and from there to the F.P.O's by supply waggons. They were then sent another 25 miles further afield to a refilling station, from whence they were transferred to the various Brigades and Divisional Supply Trains, and taken to the rationing area where they were handed over to the Unit Postal Orderlies.

Before the operations were suspended, and the Xmas mails disposed of, heavy torrential rains fell, followed by
floods /

floods, which made transportation very difficult, dozens of motor lorries and wag ons being stuck in the mud for days. The mails arriving from the Base in extraordinary large batches were consequently lying at the dumps for days, and a large portion of the parcels mail damaged owing to exposure to the rain etc.

The whole of the A.I.F Postal Staff worked uncomplainingly throughout the advance, and, despite the enormous difficulties that were encountered, did exceedingly well. At many periods they had to rely on their own initiative to obtain transport, etc, and the D.A.D.A.P.S., Desert Corps spoke very highly of the masterly way in which they had coped with their work.

After the offensive had subsided, and the Railheads moved further afield, the postal services resumed their normal service again.

In February 1918, the D.D.P.S., A.I.F., arrived in Egypt to re-organise the A.I.F Postal Services and several excellent improvements have been made. A complete Card Index System has been introduced in lieu of the old Nominal Rolls, etc, the establishment of an Australian Railhead or Divisional Stationary A.P.O., for the Anzac and Australian Divisions to replace the British Offices, and the appointment of ~~an~~ Australian Divisional Postal Supervisors for the two Divisions. The supervision was previously carried out by British Postal Supervisors which was not a satisfactory arrangement as it very often caused friction between the two services. The appointment of so many British N.C.O's to positions ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ within the Australian and New Zealand Corps area caused dissatisfaction amongst the Colonial Postal Staff as it meant a blockade to their advancement owing to the vacancies (new offices, etc) being filled by British personnel. However, this is now altered and Australian Post Offices have been established to serve Australian Units when the formation warrants it, and the Australian Army Postal Corps in Egypt are now on a very satisfactory footing generally.

As previously mentioned herein, the D.D.P.S., A.I.F., arrived in Egypt on February 16th under instructions from the Commandant, A.I.F Headquarters, London, to re-organise our Postal Services in Egypt.

After carrying out the re-organisation and placing the service on a sound footing, and forwarding his report with recommendations to the Commandant, A.I.F Headquarters, London, he prepared to return as it was understood he was to do so as soon as the re-organisation was complete. However, instructions were cabled for him to remain permanently as D.D.P.S., A.I.F in Egypt, and accordingly the D.A.P.S., E.E.F., handed over control - officially - on 26/6/1918.

For particulars of the working of the Australian Army Postal Service in Egypt since February 16th 1918, please refer to the D.D.P.S' Re-organisation Report of May 8th 1918, and Monthly Reports which will enable the history of the Australian Army Postal Corps in E.E.F., to be kept up to date.

On the 8th March 1918, the A.E.P.O., S.Z.3., moved into a new building situated at Kantara East. This arrangement was appreciated by the Staff, as, not only being an improvement in the despatching of mails to the Field, but more congenial from a health standpoint.

The appointment of an Australian Postal Officer in Egypt permanently appears to be appreciated by the Staff, as the Australian Postal Corps in the E.E.F., now have an Officer to take an interest in them, and the welfare of the service generally.

A. W. R.

Australian War Records Section,
Australian Headquarters, (Egypt,
Cairo, 12th November, 1918.

H/M.

W.R. 40631

D.D.A.P.S.

Aust; Base Post Office, (S.Z.3.)
KANTARA.

690 3 1

Receipt if acknowledged of the History of the Aust;
Army Postal Services covering the period of 1914/18, forwarded
under cover of your memo No. 65/2/4 of the 8th instant.

sm

HR

Major.
for.D.A.A.G.
AUSTRALIAN HEADQUARTERS, Egypt.

pa

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

Australian Imperial Force.

DR. To. Rank & Name _____

Unit & Address _____

DATE		£	S.	D.
	Claim for Sick Leave Allowance			
	Period : _____ To _____			
	_____ Days at 4/- per day.			
	Authority in Central Registry			
	File No. _____			
	Signature of Claimant _____			
		£		

CHECKED REGISTERED
Lst _____
Passed for payment
_____ Capt.
Paymaster
Date _____ / _____ / 19

Total _____ Pounds _____ Shillings
 _____ Pence.

_____ Certifying Officer

Received on the _____ 19 _____ from the Staff Paymaster Australian Imperial Force, Cairo, the sum of _____ Pounds _____ Shillings
 _____ Pence in full payment of above account.

Witness to the payment } _____
 and Signature }

Signature of claimant & recipient must be identical unless Form 24 is given by claimant and attached hereto.

Ref. No. 65 / 2 / 4

Australian Base Post Office
S.Z.3 KANTARA
November 8th 1918

The O. C.
War Records Section
A.I.F Headquarters
Cairo

Herewith please find copy of the History of the
Australian Army Postal Services covering a period of
1914/1918.

The Egyptian portion of the History is being
written up now and I hope to forward same within the next
week.

A. W. Ross

Captain
D.D.A.P.S., A.I.F in Egypt.

