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THE INDIAN F.P.O. TO 1912.

1839-42. *The First Afghan Expedition.* Candahar was taken in April 1839. Massacre of Cabul Jan. 1842. There was a military postal service with this expeditionary force, of which very little is known, though covers exist covering the whole campaign from early 1839 up to the end of 1844 and it is in this year that the "PAID AFGHAN-ISTAN" cachet appears. (See Fig. III, Pl. I.) This is an oblong 34 m/m × 27 m/m with the wording "negative" in white on red and a narrow oblong across the centre, probably intended for the date to be entered. The earliest known date for this was Feb. 9th, from Sir Robert Sale's Force. The postal rate to India was 12 annas.

In 1844 General Pollack led a relief column to Cabul and as this same mark is found on letters from this column when it retired and again with the punitive force sent up after the massacre in 1842, there is no doubt that this handstamp was taken away from the Expeditionary Force by Pollack when he first withdrew.

The above cachet is found on letters from Jelalabad in Feb. 1840 and later on letters from Cabool where there was a garrison for nearly three years.

1845-49. *The Sikh War.* While there was a regular mail service for the forces engaged here, there do not appear to have been any special postmarks used for the Army and all the offices have the standard type of postmark in use in India at the time. This war needs further investigation from the Postal point of view.

1856. *The Persian Expeditionary Force.* An Indian F.P.O. accompanied this force.

1867. *Abyssinian Field Force.* In Sept. of this year a reconnoitring force was sent to Abyssinia under Col. Merewether and a Field Post Office was established with the second detachment of the Expeditionary Force which followed in Nov. and was disembarked at Massowah. Ordinary Indian stamps were used, the values supplied being the ½, 1, 2, 4 annas, 6a8p and 8a8p. The Letter rates were 4a. for every ½ oz. 8a. for 1 oz. and 8a. for every additional oz. The 6a.8p. stamp seems, however, to be the commonest value. Newspapers were 8 pies for 4 oz. and 1a.4p. for 8 oz. Books—2a. for 4 oz., 4a. for 8 oz. and 4a. for every additional 8 oz.

Newspapers and books had to be prepaid.

The cancellation was "FF" in a barred diamond. (See Fig. IV. Plate I.)

The Field Post Offices were closed down as from end of June 1868.

1878 (April). *Malta Expeditionary Force.* An expeditionary Force was sent to Malta on the 1st of May. When Cyprus was ceded to Britain by Turkey the Indian Contingent were sent to occupy it. A British P.O. was opened at Larnaca which was worked jointly by the British and Indian P.O. until the end of Aug. At first the Mails were carried fortnightly by the Austrian Lloyd Steam Navigation Co. to Bombay and later, weekly, by Bells Asia Minor Steamers. The F.P.O. was opened at Malta in May and closed at Cyprus in August as already mentioned.

1878 (Nov.) *The Second Afghan War.* Postal arrangements were made both for Gen. Stewart's column, Gen. Roberts' column, and for the Peshawar column, a total force of 45,000 troops and 60,000 camp followers. The service with Gen. Roberts' column was extended the 64 miles from Kohat to Thull, in the Kurram Valley. Kandahar appears to have been the base office from whence mails were passed to Quetta. Stamps of Afghanistan were used in combination with stamps of India on letters addressed out of the country.

1882. *The Kalahandi Expedition.* Troops were sent out in June from Sambalpur and Raipur and three F.P.O. were opened and were maintained till the end of that year.

1882. *Egypt Expeditionary Force* of 7,000 men under Major Gen. Macpherson, and F.P.O. were opened in Sept. and closed at the end of October.

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Errata.

Page 12, Line 24
Read "8 annas
for 8a 8p."

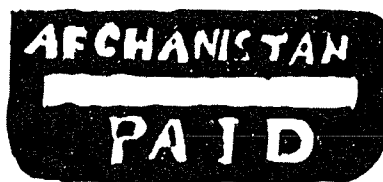


Fig. III



Fig. IV.

1885. *Suakim Field Force.* A force of 10,500 was sent out in Feb. to Egypt. A base office opened at Suakim on March 8th, and mail was carried to Bombay by Govt. transports and the P. & O. packets. This office was closed in November.
1885. (March). *The Pishin Field Force.* The Baluchistan garrison was increased in strength and in April a head office was opened at Rindli, designated the "Pishin Force Frontier Office" and the Quetta P.O. was also used and nine camp P.O. opened.
1885. (October). A force totalling 16,000, including coolies and followers left for Upper Burma in Oct. and left Rangoon in Nov. Rangoon was made the base Office and Prome and Thayetmyo sub-offices while five F.P.O. were opened on the Irawaddy steamers which were used by the five brigades as headquarters.
1888. (March). *The Sikkim Expedition.* A runners' line was opened from Siliguri to Kalimpong (37 miles) for letter mails only, parcel mails being sent by the existing route from Darjeeling via Ghum and Pasok. Padong was made into a sub-office on Mar. 24th. and became the Base office. The force moved out in two columns under Brig. Gen. Graham and Col. Michel, the first towards Fort Lingtu and the latter towards Rhenok Bazar. A post office was first opened at Dulapchin and later removed to Ranglichu, others being opened at Gnatong, Sedonchin, Gantok, Rhenok Bazar and Payong. The I.P.O. managed these offices as far as Ronglichu and Payong, the others being under the Political authorities.
1888. (Sept.) *The Hazara (Black Mountain) Field Force.* A punitive Field force was sent against the Akazai tribes in September. Haripur was made the Base Office for the Derband column and Abbottabad for the Oghi column. The service was extended from Abbottabad to Mansera and a further service established between Abbottabad and Oghi, as well as a runners' line from Haripur to Derband. A railway sorting office was opened at Hassan Abdal.
1888. (Dec.) *The Chin Expedition.* (Burma). A force of 1,200 men was sent to quell a rising and a Field Post Office opened at Kalemmyo, 27 miles from the base at Kalewa. These were closed in July 1889.
1888. *The Lushai Expedition.* A punitive expedition against the Shendus and Chittagong Hill tribes. The Frontier Police boat line from Rangamati to Demagiri was used, the latter place being made the Base Office and an office was opened at Barkul. The Force returned in April 1889.
1889. *The Chin Lushai Expedition.* Two armies operated here, one from Burma and one from Chittagong, each about 3,500 strong. Fort White and Gangaw were the base offices, F.P.O. being opened at Yokwa, Haka and Fort Lungleh.
1890. *The Zhob Valley Expedition,* sent to capture or expel Dost Muhammed who had caused so much trouble during the first Afghan War in 1839. On 27th Sept. a small F.P.O. was opened at Hindubagh.
1891. *The 2nd Black Mountain Expedition.* This consisted of 6,800 men advancing in two columns on Derband, one via Baradar and Pailim to Tilli and the other via Kotkai and Kunhur at which places Post Offices were opened.
1891. *The second Chin Hills Expedition.* A quasi military expedition with Postal arrangements organised by the I.P.O. of which no details are available.
1891. *The Manipur Expedition,* to Assam. This was designated the "Manipur Field Force." Separate postal arrangements were made for the Tammu force and the one operating from Kohima and Silchar. Correspondence from the Tammu column passed via Rangoon. Offices opened at Kindat, Tammu and Minapur.
1891. (Jan.) *The Miranzai Expedition.* Three base offices, at Shahu, Khel, Tog and Hangu.
1891. (Feb.) *The Wuntho Expedition* to Upper Burma. This was not a Field Force so that no Field Post Offices were opened.

1892. (Aug.) *The Wano Expedition*, to Afghanistan. Office opened at Kajuri Kutch and mails sent via Gomal but F.P.O. opened in Sept. Post Offices gradually closed as the Force was reduced as from April 1893.
1892. (Sept.) *The Isazai Field Force*. No information as to Base Office or F.P.O. opened.
1892. (Oct.) *The Kurram Field Force*. Field Offices opened up with Peshawar as a base. Closed at the end of the month.
1894. *The Abor Expedition*. A very short lived affair in which a runners' line was opened from Sadiya to Bomjur, the former being the Base Office.
1894. (Aug.) *The Waziristan Field Force*. Tank was made the Base Office and three F.P.O. moved with the Force.
1895. (March). *The Chitral Relief Force*. 20,000 troops and 30,000 camp followers. The largest force since the 2nd Afghan War. H.Q. F.P.O. opened at Mardan at the end of March. The force was broken up in April after the expedition had successfully accomplished its object.
1896. (May.) *The 2nd Suakim Expedition*. Suakim made a Base Office for the 3,000 troops. Sub-office opened at Tokar with a weekly camel service to the base. Egyptian steamers carried the mail fortnightly to Bombay as also did the P. & O. F.P.O. closed 8th Dec. 1896.
1897. (July). *The Tochi Field Force*. Bannu was made the Base and a service opened up to Khushalgarh on the railway, 111 miles. The Khushalgarh-Kohat service was strengthened and another established between Kohat and Bannu. All closed down in Feb. 1898.

To be continued.

1897. (Sept.) *The Malakand Field Force*. A F.P.O. accompanied a part of the force sent to Abazai. Early in Jan. 1898 a service connected Katlang to Mardan and this was later extended to Sanhao. There was also a service from Mardanto Rustam. On Jan. 9th. the Force was renamed the "Buner Field Force" but only lasted a fortnight.
1897. (Sept.) *The Tirah Expedition*, on the Peshawar frontier. A Base Office opened at Kohat for the main force and at Peshawar for the Peshawar column. Tonga services established from Peshawar to Bara and Jamrud and Field P.O. opened up further on. Other services for the Peshawar column opened up to Landi Kotal in the Khyber Pass and Gandao in the Bara Valley. All services broken up six months later.
1897. (Dec.) *The Tochi Valley Field Force*. Camp Post Offices were opened in six places to serve this semi-permanent force. Services established between Khushalgarh and Kohat and Edwardesabad and Miranshah and Datta Khel.
1898. (May.) *The Swat Valley Column*, for the protection of the lines of communication of the Chitral relief column. Three F.P.O. opened. Two F.P.O. were abolished in end of June and the last on July 15th.
1899. (Nov.) *The Mishmi Expedition*. A F.P.O. opened at Bonjur and a runners' line connected it to Sadiya which was made the Base. Closed Feb. 9th, 1900.
1900. *The China Expeditionary Force*. The Base Office was at Wei-Hai-Wei (Linkung-tao) but later transferred to Hong-Kong. Communications were maintained by the B.I.S.N. Co. and the French 'Messageries Maritimes,' and, as there was an arrangement with the G.P.O. at Hong-Kong that merchant vessels should carry mail to Shanghai, this was used for the mails of the Field Force. Later the mails were carried from Shanghai to Taku by the Chinese P.O. free of charge and, when winter closed the port of Taku, the same authorities carried the mails over the Chifu-Chaingwangtao route. From Chaingwangtao the mails were taken to Tientsin. The main land postal routes were Taku to Pekin and Tientsin to Shanhaikwan. The dollar was fixed at Rs. 1.7.0. As the exact postal equivalent of the Indian Issues could not be found and as the Hong-Kong rate of exchange allowed a profit of 2 cents in the \$ for all Indian stamps sold, the Indian Postage stamps and stationery supplied were not used. There were therefore overprinted "C.E.F." so that their use would be localised, and were sold only to soldiers in uniform. The postage rate to India was fixed as on the inland rates in India. To facilitate the postal service for small bodies of troops stationed at Railway stations a combined Post and Railway Mail was established by the Indian Post Office, between Pekin and Taku and Tientsin and Shanhaikwan and, for this purpose, the $\frac{1}{2}$ c. brown stamp of China was overprinted "**B.R.A. - 5 - Five Cents**" by the British Railway Administration and used on mail not emanating from the actual offices but handed on to the Travelling Railway P.O., as a late fee, at the offices in Tientsin, Pekin, Tongchu, Tonchan and Shanhaikwan. This stamp is therefore a delivery postage of the railway administration and not a postal fee. These were used from April 20th, 1901 to May 20th, 1901. The green overprint was used because the original black overprint was not sufficiently clear. These stamps were cancelled with the name of the station. These stamps are therefore always found on covers in combination with postage stamps.
- Fourteen F.P.O. were closed in Aug. 1901.

- 1903. *The Somaliland Field Force.* Jan. 1903 to Nov. 1904. One base office, and one field office.
 - 1903. *The Tibet Mission* under Gen. Macdonald accompanying Gen. Younghusband to Lhasa. Field P.O. at Gyantse and Lhasa. The latter existed six weeks and the offices were closed as the force retired. Gantok was closed in October but Chimbi remained open till 1909.
 - 1908. *The Bazar Valley Field Force.* From Feb. 13 to Mar. 8. One Base Office and seven F.P.O.
 - 1908. (Apr. 28 to June 4). *The Mahmand Field Force.* No details available.
 - 1911. (May 1911 to May 1912). *The 2nd Abor Expeditionary Force.* Temporary P.O. opened at Saikwaghat in May to serve troops massing there for the expedition. Field P.O. opened up in Sept. when an advance was made towards Kobo.
- (This brings us to the Great War and we shall be glad of an authoritative article of the Indian F.P.O. on the various fronts during this War.—ED..)