

On active service, no stamps available

J.F. Burn-Murdoch Kaimi
Com^d Sgt. Cavalry



Angleterre.

**THE RECONQUEST OF THE
SUDAN
1896 DONGOLA EXPEDITION**

**BURN-MURDOCH ARCHIVE
[No. 43]**

Officer's Unpaid Letter

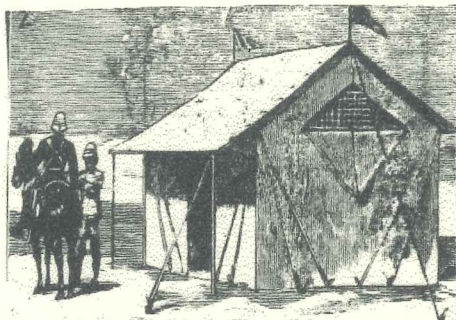
**Endorsed: On Active Service
No Stamps Available. J. F. Burn-
Murdoch, Kaim. Comg. E. Cavalry.**

Via CAIRO to ENGLAND 24 V 96

The cover doesn't have a date stamp of origin, a T marking and the amount to be collected. It appears to have arrived without a charge being collected. The cover is cancelled **CAIRE D 24 V 96 TXII** and backstamped **SEVENOAKS 4 PM JU 1 96.**

British Army Post Offices in Egypt 1882

Soldiers and Sailors letters: The heavy postal charges levied caused great hardships to many Soldiers and Sailors serving overseas and their dependents. In 1795 a Government Act (George III, c53) provided for the transmission of letters at a privilege rate of 1d for non commissioned officers, seamen or private soldiers through the official packet service, subject to a number of regulations. Letters had to bear the full name, rank and regiment together with the signature of the commanding officer.

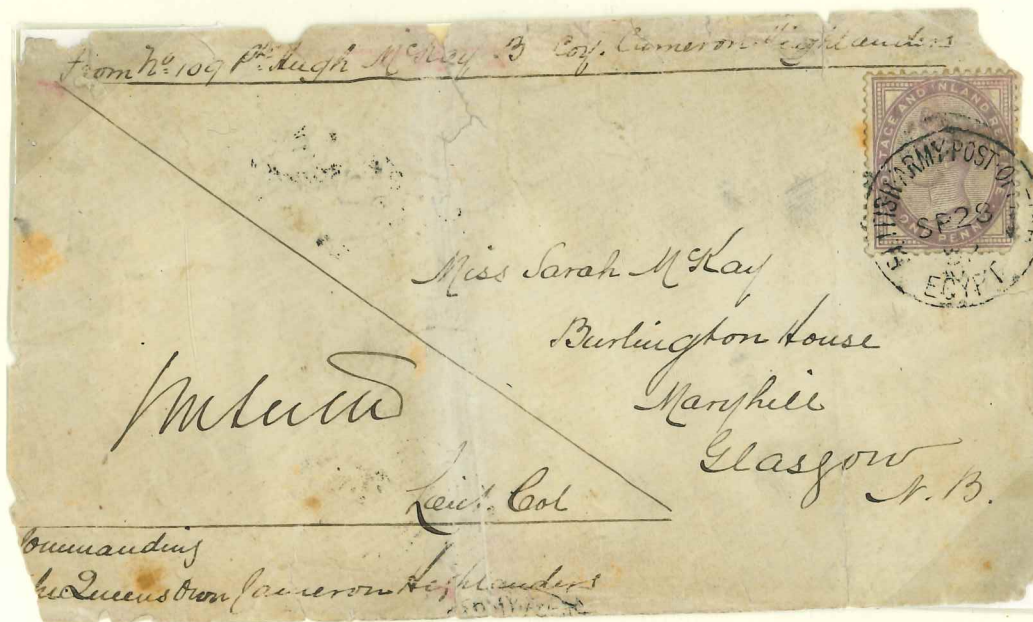


An APO in Egypt

Soldiers letter to Glasgow September 28th 1882



DS1 CDS



Sep 28th 1882 front to Glasgow from private in Cameron Highlanders, endorsed with his army particulars and with his commanding officer's (Lt Colonel) signature. A postal service was provided during the Arabi revolt from 021st August to 7th October (less than 7 weeks)

Cancelled with 1882 Sept 28 (code missing) "BRITISH ARMY POST OFFICE EGYPT" c.d.s. probably DS1 in Proud E (ed) 1982 History of British Army Postal Service. Proud has tentatively assigned DS1 to Army Post Office (APO) 1 based at Alexandria (Tribunal), run by 1 Corporal and 10 men.

H

via Italy

J. Lee Barber. Esq.

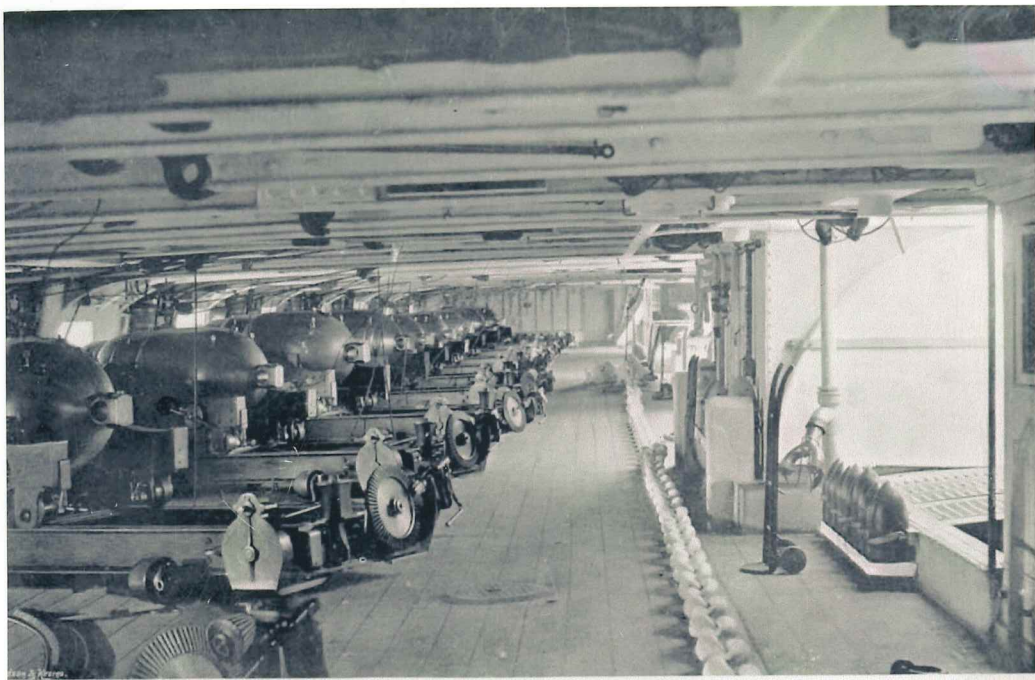
10 Westcott
Suffolk

England



on active service
no stamps payable

NOVEMBER 18th 1882.



By H. ELLIS, 1882

GUN-DECK, H.M.S. "NORTHUMBERLAND"

Copyright - HUDSON & REARNS

Arabi Rebellion 1882

On July 11th, The British fleet under the command of Admiral Sir Frederick Beauchamp Seymour bombarded Alexandria. Over the next week sailors and marines occupied strategic positions in and around Alexandria. The channel squadron, including H.M.S. Northumberland joined the ships of Admiral Seymour off Alexandria on July 17, 1882.



2½d. Officer's letter to ENGLAND.

adhesives cancelled in London,
by 28 in diamond within oval of bars.

endorsed on reverse: "Letter No. 12. Alexandria. 20 July."
Tunbridge Wells: 26 JY 82. 6 days in transit.

Lieutenant Howard F. Hay, R.N.
serving on H.M.S. Northumberland,
Captain George Stanley Bosanquet.

Class 1. Broadside Ironclad. Launched 1866.

Parties of Sailors and Royal Marines were landed
for operations around Alexandria and Ramleh.

This cover, endorsed on the back "RECD, T. W. July 26th 1882. 19th Letter from dear H. Written July 20th Alexandria," has the Tunbridge Wells date stamp of July 28 82. The stamps were cancelled in London with "28" in a nine-bar oval. The cover, probably sent in the Naval Bag, is from Lieutenant Howard F. Hay, R.N., serving on the H.M.S. Northumberland. It is the third earliest recorded date from this campaign.

This cover is from the John Firebrace Collection and is a companion to the cover illustrated on page 51 of Firebrace J (1997) Nineteenth Century Wars in Egypt and the Sudan Stuart Rossiter Trust Fund, Bristol and Cavendish Auctions, Derby

British Army Post Offices in Egypt 1882

The Anglo-Egyptian War of 1882 (also known as the Arabi Rebellion).

In 1882 Great Britain sent its Mediterranean fleet to Alexandria attempting to exert a calming influence during the political crisis under the virtual dictator of Egypt, Colonel Arabi Pasha, the War Minister. However, rioting erupted, Europeans were killed, and the Egyptians continued to fortify their defences around the city in defiance of British demands. After an ultimatum to surrender the area forts was ignored, the fleet bombarded Alexandria on July 11 and the city was occupied a few days later.

By the end of July additional British troops arrived and in mid-August they moved to the Suez Canal and occupied Ismailia. The forces advanced, taking Kassassin on August 26. The battle of Tel el-Kebir took place on September 13 and Cairo was secured the next day. Arabi fled but was captured on the 17th, tried and sent into exile. This campaign was the first for the newly formed Army Postal Corps, which arrived on August 21. Egyptian civilian postal facilities were also used.

Mails from Britain were dispatched 3 times a week via the 'overland route' through France to Alexandria. The Army Post Offices offered a letter and parcel service and sold stamps and postal orders. In addition to the mail services, a free parcel service from the Naval docks at Deptford was also set up. These parcels travelled by Government store ships and transports.

Stationary Army Post Offices were established at Alexandria, Ramleh, Cairo, Port Said and Ismailia, while mobile Field Post Offices were attached to the divisional headquarters and moved when they moved



DS4 cancel



1/2d green 1880. Cancelled with 1882 Sept 11 (code B)
Clear large part "BRITISH ARMY POST OFFICE EGYPT"
c.d.s. DS4 in Proud E (ed) 1982 History of British Army Postal Service



2 1/2d blue plate 22. Cancelled with 1882 Sept 18 (code B)
Clear large part "BRITISH ARMY POST OFFICE EGYPT"
c.d.s. DS4 in Proud E (ed) 1982 History of British Army Postal Service Also Plate 23 Sept 22 (code B)



EGYPT, 1879 1p Rose, cancelled with Sep 12 (code A)
cancel Clear large part "BRITISH ARMY POST OFFICE EGYPT"
c.d.s. DS4 in Proud E (ed) 1982 History of British Army Postal Service

British Army Post Offices in Egypt 1885

Gordon and Khartoum



Major General Charles George Gordon, CB



The Mahdi

Control of the Sudan had been slipping from the Egyptian Government's hands ever since the rise of the Moslem prophet, The Mahdi, in 1881. There had been clashes of arms between the Mahdi's forces and the Anglo-Egyptian armies. It was in this context that the engineer Major General Charles Gordon (1833-1885) was despatched to the Sudan in January 1884 with the brief to arrange the evacuation of the Egyptian garrisons from the region.



In May 1884 May Khartoum was isolated and the energies of General Gordon were devoted to the defence of that town. After months of delay due to the vacillation of the British government a relief expedition was sent up the Nile under the command of Lord Wolseley. It started too late to achieve its object, and on the 25th of January 1885 Khartoum was captured by the Mahdi and Gordon killed.

The failure of the Gordon relief expedition does much to rectify the false impression - which enjoys a wide currency of belief - that Victorian military campaigns consisted of an unbroken chain of successes with little loss in blood to British troops and their allies. The ill-fated expedition to relieve Gordon was a protracted failure, if one considers the duration of the campaign to have commenced with the battle of El Teb (29 February 1884) and to have ended in April 1885. Moreover, the casualties in the upper echelons of command were particularly heavy.

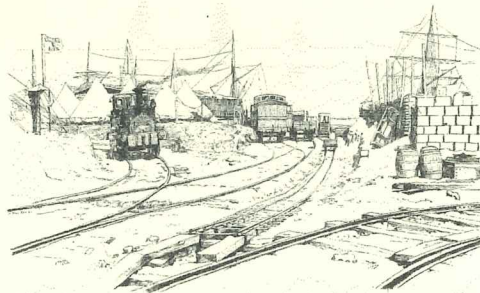


1881 1d lilac on piece. Sudan Expedition 1885 and the relief of Gordon Very clean Hand written Suakin with complete strike of "BRITISH ARMY POST OFFICE EGYPT" c.d.s. Code A. Used in Suakin on second Suakin expedition between 28th March and 27th May 1885. Cancel - April 22nd 1885 Cancel is Proud D/S 4, used by 2nd brigade at Handoub, Otao and Tambuk. The railway was completed on 30th April, so the letter was transported by camel.

British Army Post Offices in Egypt 1885

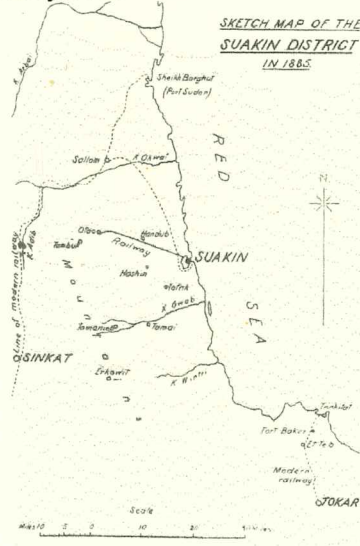
Sudan Expedition and the Relief of General Gordon 1885

The Army Post Office Corps under the command of Major Sturgeon was despatched to Suakin in support of the expeditionary force raised to relieve General Gordon in Khartoum. They landed at Suakin on 27 March 1885 and established the Base Army Post Office there. Further Field Post Offices were opened at Quarantine Island, the railway terminus and one each with the Headquarters and 2nd Brigade. The mails travelled the same routes as for the Egyptian Campaign of 1882. A daily mail service between Suakin, the Headquarters, Handub and Otao was arranged. Every morning a messenger travelled by train to Houdoub with the mail. The railway was constructed by Kitchener's 'Band of Boys' a member of which, was Lieutenant M Nathan RE, who was to become the Secretary to the Post Office in 1910. "The Band of Boys' was the nickname given by the army to the young Royal Engineers officer in the Sudan who built Kitchener's 'impossible' desert railway in 1897."



Terminus of the Suakim and Berber railway at Quarantine Island

The Field Post Offices offered letter and parcel services, sold stamps and postal orders. The mail service was again a success as testified by Lieutenant G Parry of 12 Company Commissariat and Transport Corps who recorded " I have never mentioned anything about our postal arrangements. We used to get our letters very regularly, considering all things, and though some necessarily never reached us, there was nothing to complain about. They only took ten days coming all the way from London, overland, via Brindisi, Alexandria, Cairo and Suez, where a steamer of one sort or another met the mails and ran then down to Suakin... When the detachment of the Post-office Volunteers arrived, everything was very well managed. ..." The Army Postal service closed on 30 May 1885



Sketch map of the Suakim district 1885



1884 2½d lilac Sudan Expedition 1885 and the relief of Gordon .Used in Suakin on second Suakin expedition between 28th March and 27th May 1885. . Part strikes of "BRITISH ARMY POST OFFICE EGYPT" c.d.s. on April 21st 1885 Cancel Apr 21st 1885 Cancel is Proud D/S 4, used by 2nd brigade at Handoub, Otao and Tambuk (see 1d lilac above) The railway was completed on 30th April, so letter was transported by camel.

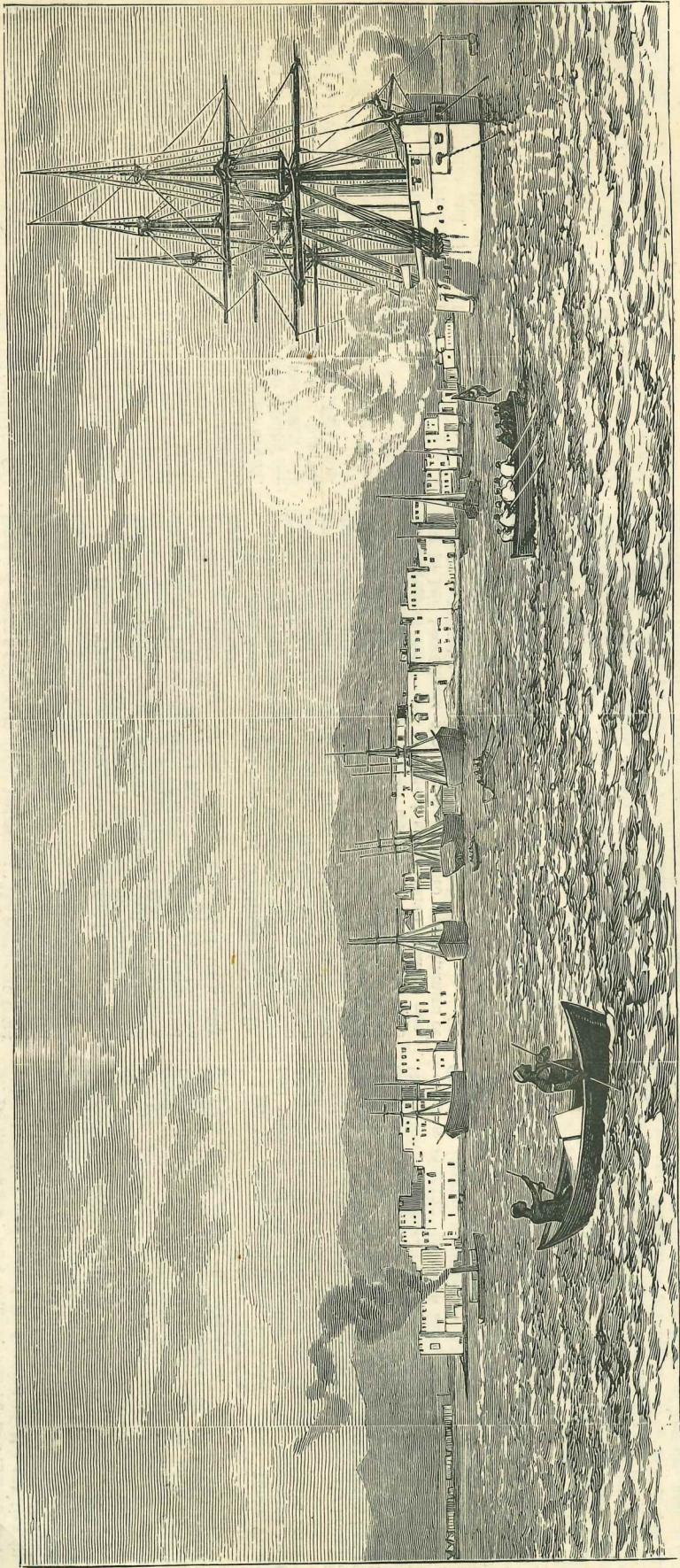
British Army Post Offices in Egypt 1885 – Base Post Office

To the west of Suakin, a coastal town on the Red Sea, are rocky hills and flat land covered with scrub and thorn bushes. The army had camped near Suakin and were struggling to cope with the heat and lack of water. The Base Post Office was set up in Suakin in the small cramped Egyptian Civil Post office.

Picture – Illustrated London News



DS1 cancel – Base PO Suakin



SUAKIN, FROM THE ENTRANCE TO THE HARBOUR,



1884 2 1/2d lilac used in Suakin on second Suakin expedition between 28th March and 27th May 1885. Large part strike of "BRITISH ARMY POST OFFICE EGYPT" c.d.s. on March 31st 1885 Code C. Cancel is Proud D/S 1, used by Base Post Office at Suakin



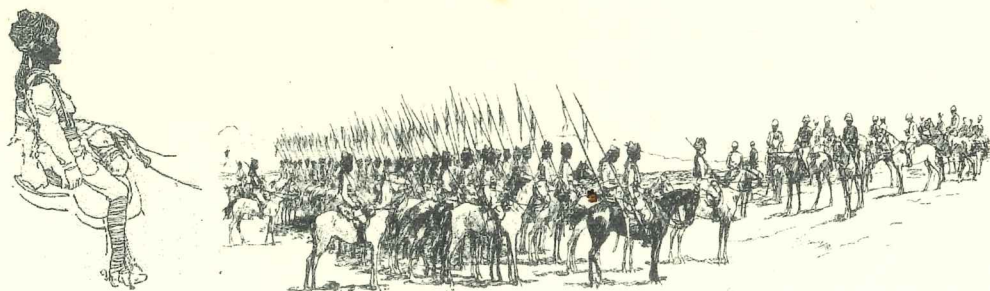
1884 5d dull green used in Suakin on second Suakin expedition between 28th March and 27th May 1885. Part strike of "BRITISH ARMY POST OFFICE EGYPT" c.d.s. Cancel is Proud D/S1, used at Base PO

Indian Army Post Offices - The Suakin Expedition 1885-6

The Indian contingent.

On 8th February 1885 the British Government ordered the Viceroy of India to send an Indian Contingent to hold Suakin throughout the summer. A considerable force (including 4 000 camels) left in February and March, including a detachment of the Indian Army Postal Service, which reached Suakin on 7th March and opened the Base Post Office on the 8th and later set up two Field Post Offices

The British Post Office Corps closed its offices on 30th May 1885, after which the Indian Army Postal Service served the remaining troops. The Indian Field Post Office closed on 25th November 1885, although some British and Indian forces remained in Suakin until 11th May 1886.



Bengal Lancer

The Indian Contingent



Indian Field PO cancel



Indian Army Post Office 9 pies cut-out from the Sudan Expedition 1885 and the relief of Gordon. The British Army postal service closed on 30 May 1885 and then the Indian Field Post Office in Suakin served the remaining troops until 22nd November 1885. This cancel is dated 8th October 1885. The letters of other ranks and followers were charged a concession rate of 9 pies for letters to India

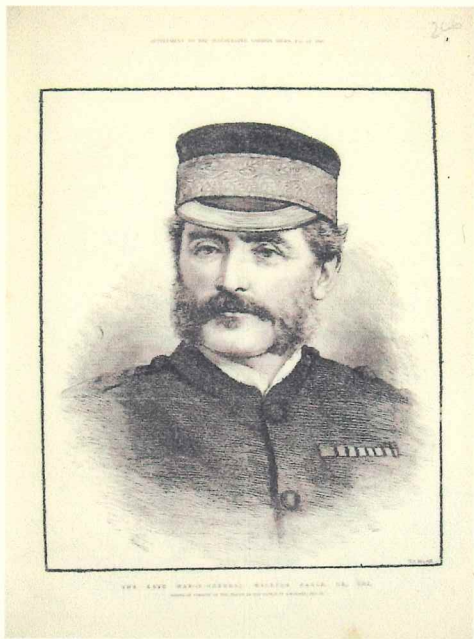
Sources

Firebrace J (1997) Nineteenth Century Wars in Egypt and the Sudan Stuart Rossiter Trust Fund, Bristol and Cavendish Auctions, Derby

Proud EB ed. (1982) History of British Army Postal Service Vol I 1882-1903 Proud-Bailey, Heathfield,

British Army Post Offices in Sudan 1885

Major-General William Earle (1833-85) was leading one column trying to relieve General Gordon in Khartoum. Eventually, part of the relief force reached Khartoum, but sixty hours too late to save Gordon and the garrison from massacre that had occurred on the night of 25th January 1885. During the relief attempt Britain would suffer the death of three Generals – Gordon himself, along with Stewart and Earle, each respectively leading the Desert and River Columns. Earle died at Kirbekan on 11th February, still advancing to Khartoum unaware of Gordon's massacre, along with twelve of his men. Upon learning of Gordon's death the column were forced to retrace their steps just a month later, in March 1885.



Major-General William Earle



Statue of Major-General Earle, Liverpool City Hall

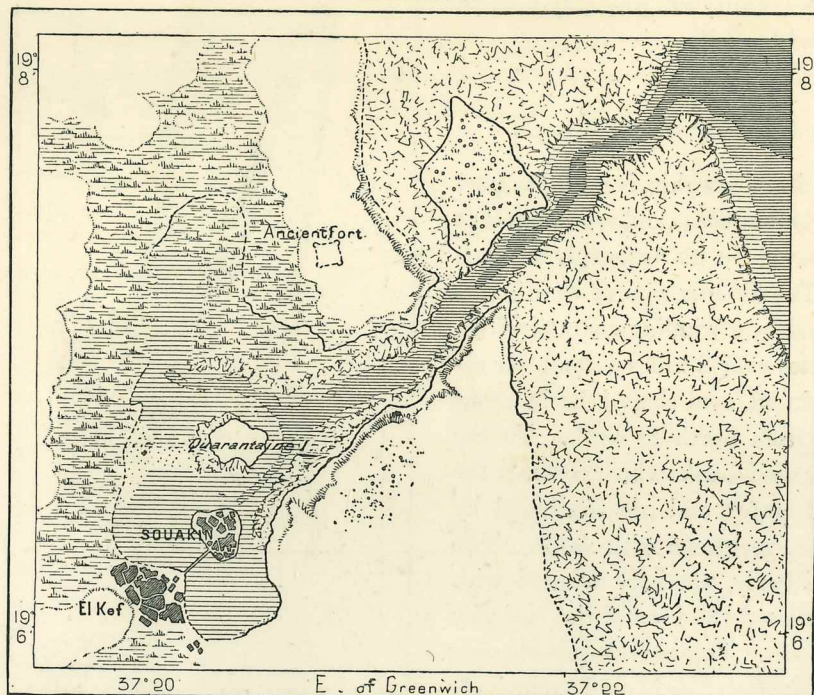


Written to the widow of Major-General William Earle, the daughter of General Sir William John Codrington.
Sent from HQ (cancel type DS3)

British Army Post Offices in Sudan 1885

Fig. 84.—SUAKIN IN 1882.

Scale 1 : 50,000.



C. Percoc

Depths.
 0 to 32 Feet. 32 to 64 Feet. 64 Feet and upwards.

Sands and coral reefs exposed at low water.
 1,100 Yards.

“SUAKIN in 1882” taken from a book of Geological Survey maps published in 1885.

The text on the reverse says that Suakin or Sawakin is the safest port on the Red Sea coast. The riverain zone of coral banks is pierced by a winding channel which penetrates over 2 miles inland, terminating in an oval basin about 1 mile from North to South. To the west are sand-banks which contract the sheet of water and are continued by shallows overgrown with weeds. Two large islands, partially fringed with rocks, exceed the level of the basin by several feet. One of the islands, that of Sheikh Abdallah (“*Quarantine Island*”) is used exclusively as a cemetery: the other, farther south, comprises the town of Suakin, properly so-called. The chief port lies between the two islands.

1884 2½d lilac Sudan Expedition 1885 and the relief of Gordon .Used in Suakin on second Suakin expedition between 28th March and 27th May 1885. . Part strikes of "BRITISH ARMY POST OFFICE EGYPT" c.d.s. on April 15st 1885. The cancel is Proud D/S 3, used by Field Post Office 2 at HQ camp.