

British Army Field Offices In The Crimea 1854-6

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The star between ciphers, often described as OXO was the second cancel used, from 1855 to 1856

1855-6 Star between ciphers (OXO)



Z9 1841 1d red-brown Imperforate
Star between ciphers cancel (OXO).
Not priced in Stanley Gibbons catalogue



Z18 1855 2d blue Plate 4
Watermark small crown,
Perforation 14



Z22 1854 6d violet embossed
Cut to shape but on small original piece
Tied with very fine complete Star between ciphers "OXO" cancel



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1855-6 Star between ciphers (OXO)



Z10 Die I small crown p16
Blue green cancel



Z10 Die 1small crown p16
Black cancel



Z11Die II small crown p16
Plate 2 constant fault FG



Z12/13 Die II
watermark small crown p14
Slightly blued paper



Z12/Z13 Die II
watermark small crown p14
White paper Blue cancel



Z14 Die II
watermark large crown p16
White paper



Z15 Die II
watermark large crown p14
Slightly blued paper



Z12/Z13/Z15 P14
On piece; white paper

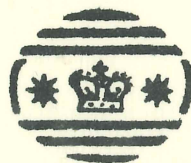
British Army Field Offices In The Crimea 1854-6

Shortly after the outbreak of the Crimean War in 1854 a branch of the British Army Post Office was established in Constantinople as a sorting and forwarding station for the vast numbers of letters passing to and from the various units of the British forces in the Crimea, as well as those of the Turkish contingent. Sub-offices were set up in the Crimea at Varna and later Balaclava and in Scutari.

This was the first office outside Great Britain to make use of British postage stamps. Mail originating, or passing through Constantinople, was cancelled with the "Crown in Stars" or the "Star between Ciphers OXO" cancels although other mail was cancelled in Great Britain. Peace was declared on 30 March 1856. The Army post Offices in Varna, Scutari and Balaclava were closed, while the Base Army Post Office in Constantinople became the centre of the British postal service in the Levant

Two cancels were used, the crown between stars (1854-5) and star between ciphers (1855-6)

1854-5 Crown between stars



Z2 Die I Watermark small crown perf 16 pair
Not priced for Crimea in Stanley Gibbons catalogue



Z3 Die I small crown p16 Z3Die ? small crown p16



Z3? Die ? small crown p16 strip of 3
also with London Inland Section 42 in diamond cancel

CRIMEA

Army Field Post Offices in the Crimea 1854-6

In July 1853, the Russians over-ran the principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia, and a declaration of war by the Turks followed in October. On 27th January 1854 Great Britain and France declared war on Russia. The Army Post Office in Constantinople opened in June 1854.

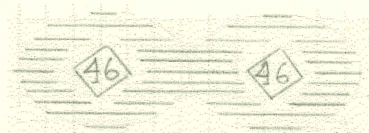
From May 1854 by agreement with France, then uniform postage rate to England was 3d for letters up to ¼ ounce. Prepayment by British adhesives was accepted. The Army Post Office at Constantinople primarily sent mail directly to London Foreign Branch office where the adhesives were cancelled.



British Army PO cancel

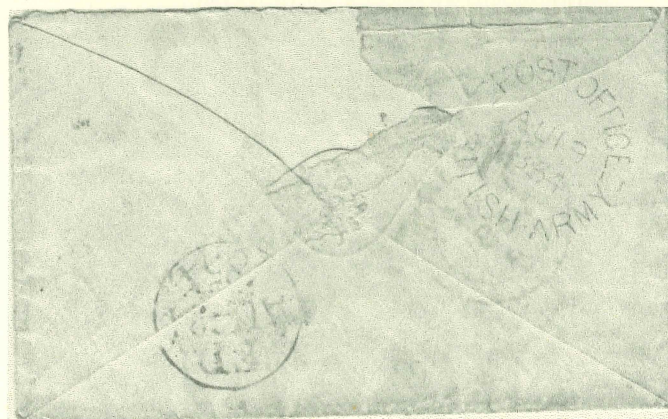


London Foreign Office transit



London Inland Office double cancel 46

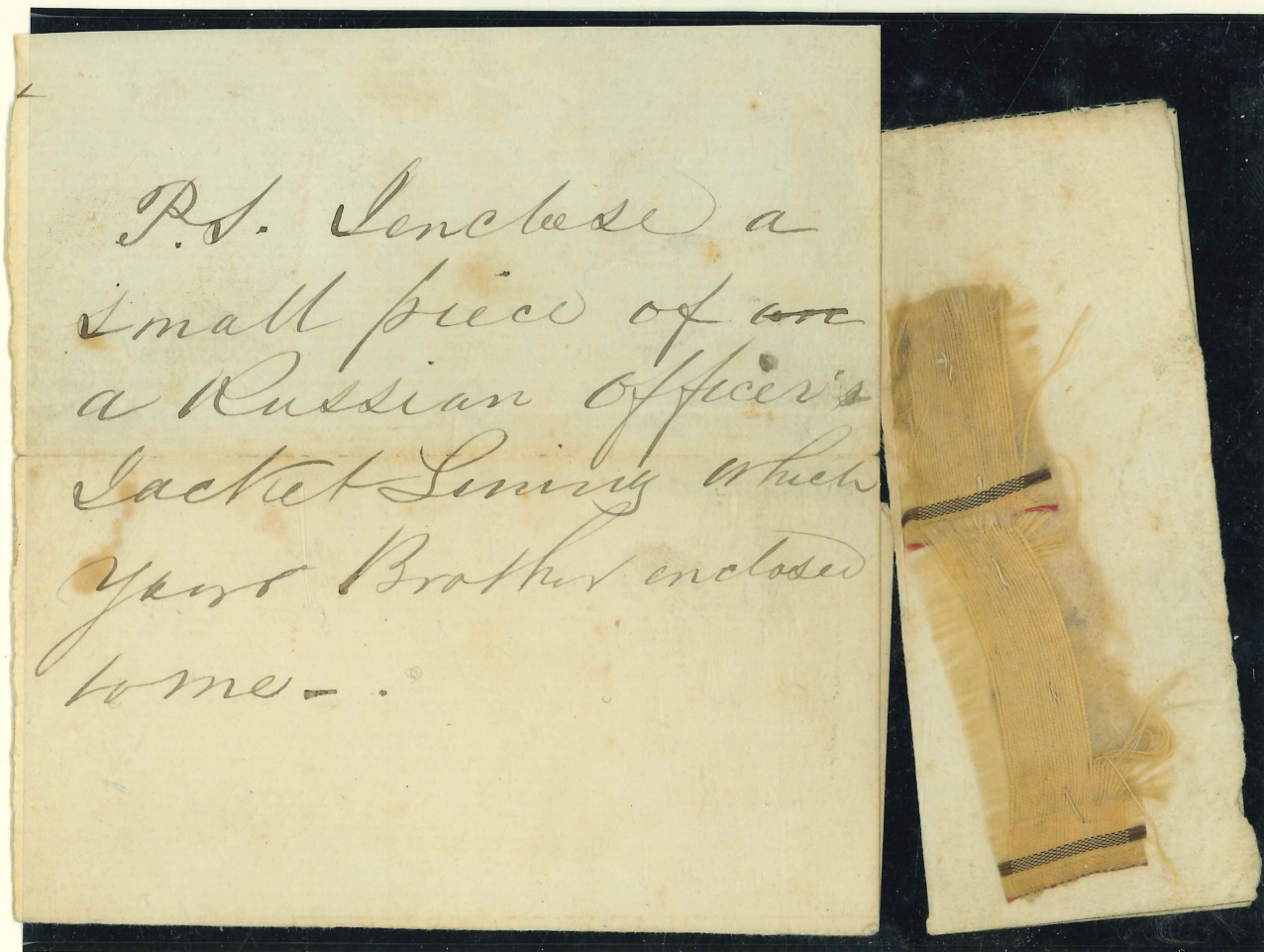
Double cancels numbered 45, 46 and 47 and treble stamps numbered 48 and 49 were used to ease the pressure upon the staff who were faced with thousands of letters, each bearing strips of 3 adhesives which had to be cancelled in a hurry to meet the night mails.



1854 (Aug 16th 1854) envelope from British Army in the Crimea to London. Front has in script "From the British Army Crimea" and three 1d die I perf 16 red brown stamps. Cancelled on arrival in London on Aug 31st 1854 (London Foreign Department transit) and with a black British Army CDS for Aug 16th 1854.

CRIMEA

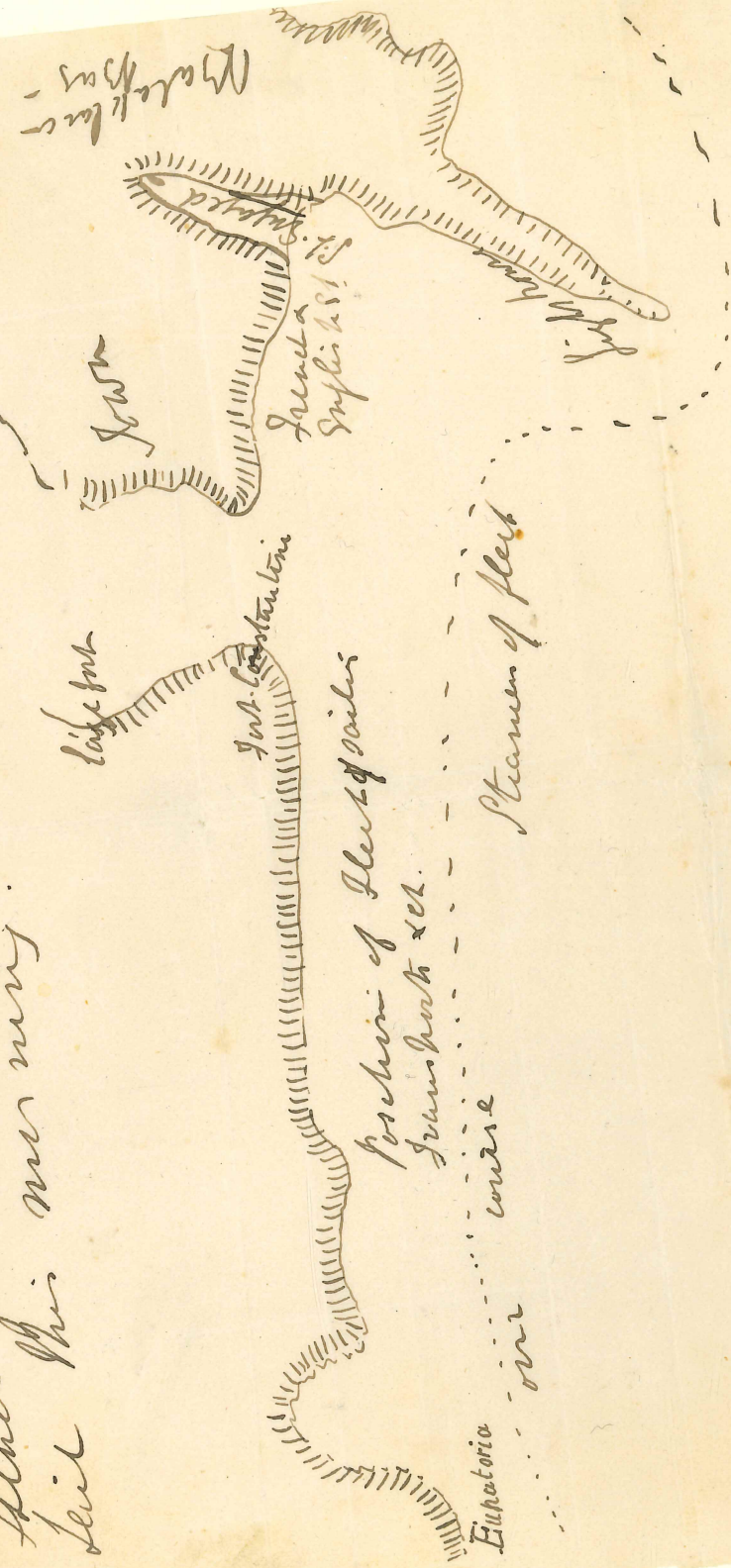
Army Field Post Offices in the Crimea 1854-6



1855 Envelope from British Army Crimea to Warwick carried by packet to London at a cost of 3d. Front has in script "From the British Army Crimea" and three perforation 14 Large crown Die II 1d red brown stamps. Cancelled on arrival in London on 17th December by triple Inland Section No. 49 in diamond (only used on triple stamps) then to Warwick on 18th. Reverse has blue circular Post Office British Army Dec 1st 1855

No letter enclosed, but a postscript, enclosing a piece of silk from the enemy's uniform "A small piece of a Russian Officer's Jacket Lining". An incredible piece of history!

...ava bay, ...
Send you a plan, a rough one of our
side this morning.





CRIMEA

Army Field Post Offices in the Crimea 1854-6



In March 1854 British troops together with an expeditionary force from France were sent to Turkey and the Crimea in support of the Turks against the Russians. Initially it was decided that the normal civilian postal service to Turkey and the Black Sea was sufficient. Mail was despatched from London via the French 'overland route' and onto Constantinople (now Istanbul). There it was handed to the French Consular Postal Service who in turn passed it to the French Army Post Office for distribution to the British Army. Return French packets from Constantinople to Malta carried mail where it was transferred via the British Post Office agent onto vessels bound for Southampton.

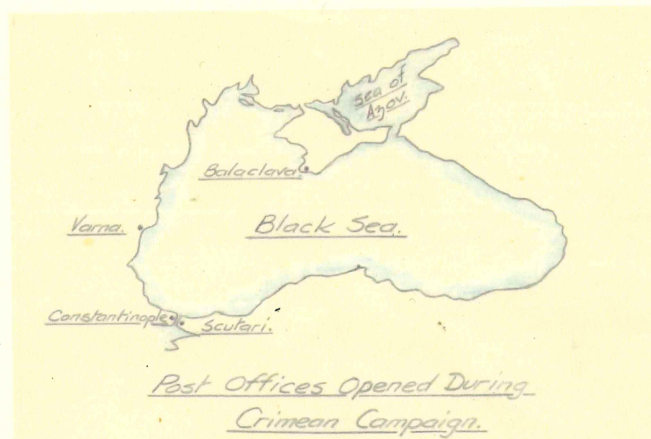
The outbound system from Britain proved to be both expensive and inadequate. The British set up Army Post offices at Constantinople, Varna and Balaklava but it was not until February 1855 that the service worked efficiently. A further Army Post Office was established at Scutari to provide postal services to the Barrack Hospital staff and patients.



1856 small envelope to Leamington, Warwickshire, unpaid with manuscript "3" and "via Marseilles" on the front. The reverse has blue-green British Army Post office CDS code B for April 15th 1856, London transit stamp and Leamington green double ring stamp for April 29th 1856.

CRIMEA

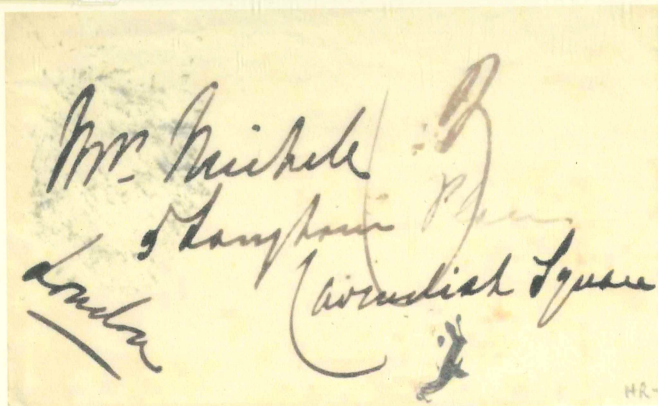
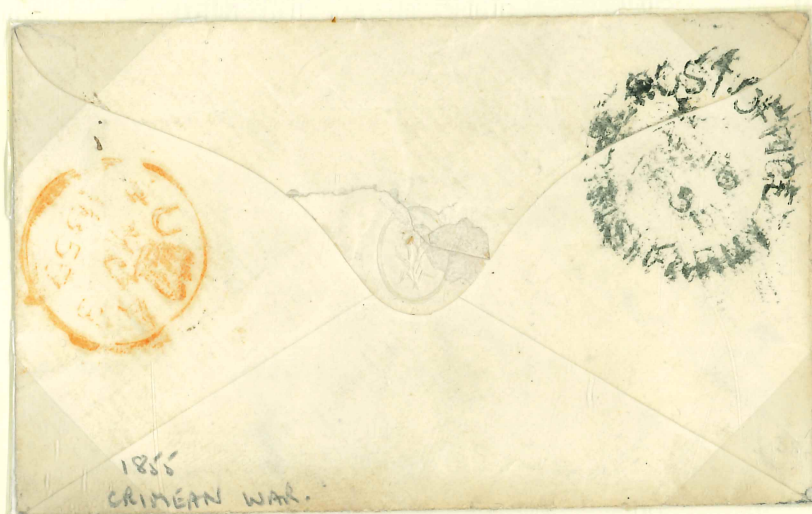
Army Field Post Offices in the Crimea 1854-6



During the Crimea campaign, post offices were set up at Constantinople and Scutari on the Bosphorus, Balaclava on the Crimean peninsula and Varna, on the Black Sea in modern day Bulgaria.



This cancel, often in blue or green was found on the reverse of covers sent from the British forces in Crimea.



1855 small envelope to Cavendish Square London, sent unpaid with manuscript "3" i.e. 3d to pay on collection on front. The reverse has a smudged blue-black British Army Post Office circular cancel dated April 16th 1855 and red London receiver.

CRIMEA

Army Field Post Offices in the Crimea 1854-6



Crown between stars cancel



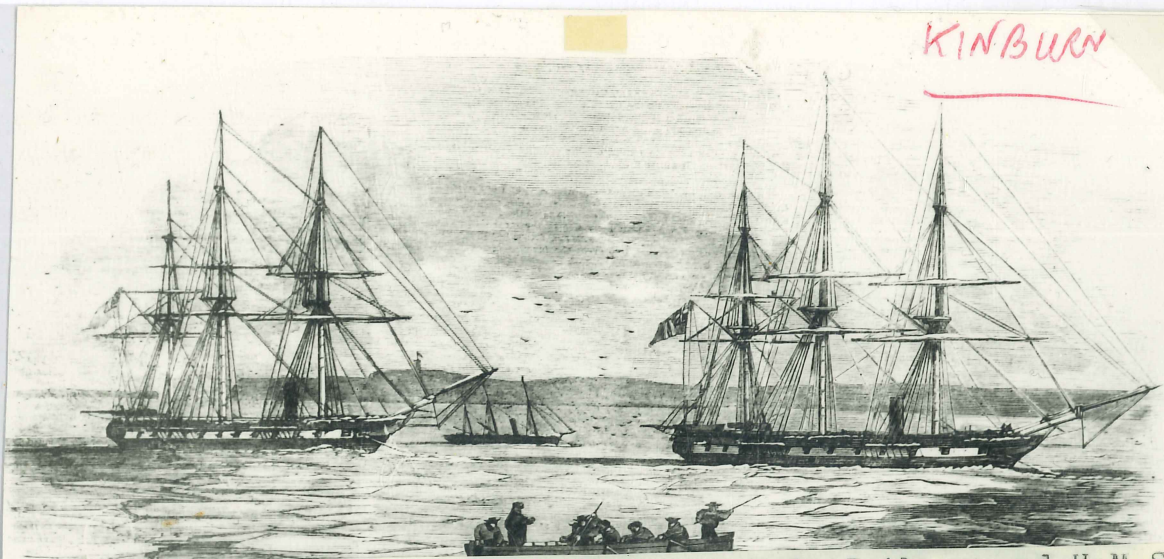
1854 Entire to Lady Bradford in London by her son in Yeni Bazaar near Varna, now in Bulgaria.

The front has three star-crown-star Z2 cancels and manuscript "via Marseilles"; stamps are pair and a single 1d die I perf 16 plate 177. Z2 is not priced in Stanley Gibbons.

Reverse has blue-green smudged British Army Post Office cds Aug 29th 1854, black receiving mark Sep 9 1854 and red SP 9 1854 mark. This is a very early cover using British stamps from the Crimea.

Lady Bradford of 10 Chester Street Grosvenor Place London was a London socialite; contents include outbreak of cholera and a fire in Varna " part of Varna has been burnt down, all our stores and the bazaar" He says that he hears "the French are exceedingly discontented at being kept there doing nothing and are getting quite mutinous."

August 1854 (the letter was written on August 21st) was a time of inactivity and preparation; on the 18th of September a troop of the 11th Hussars (better known as the Light Brigade) was sent on a short march into the country for a reconnaissance prior to the main march being made.



H.M.S. Curacoa (on the left) with H.M.S. Tribune and H.M.S. Beagle in the ice off the Russian fortress of Kinburn at the mouth of the River Dnieper on the Black Sea coast during the severe winter of 1855/56. H.M.S. Curacoa was a 31 gun screw driven frigate of 1569 tons. She was launched at Sheerness in 1854 and was sold by the Navy in 1871.



Cover from an officer serving in H.M.S. Curacoa stamped with 1854 Watermark Small Crown 1d Perf 16 Die I cancelled Crown between Stars. On reverse date stamps of Type II British Army Post Office A (at Constantinople) 5th March 1855 in green, London 18th March and Southampton.

Via Newcastle.



Mrs. Woff
B. N. Co. Bank
High St.
Glasgow
Scotland

Covers

- | | | | | |
|----|-----------------|-------------------|------------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. | [Pw 24 Sept 24] | Rec Oct 18 London | No Arm PO. | from Transport Steamer |
| 2. | Oct 8? | Rec Oct 24 .. | Army PO Type 1 Green | from Balaklava |
| 3. | Dec 23 | Rec Jan 1 .. | Army PO Type 1 Green | from Camp Balaklava |
| 4. | [Pw 27 Dec 27] | Rec Jan 15 .. | No Arm PO | ? |
| 5. | May 8 | Rec May 22 | Army PO Type II Code B Black | from Camp KA |

Letters

- | | | | |
|------|-----------------|-------------------------|--------------------|
| (1)? | 20 September 54 | Off Sebastopol | |
| (1)? | 24 September | Transport Steamer Jason | |
| (2)? | 6 October | Balaklava. | — Partial transcr. |
| (2)? | 8 October | Balaklava | |
| (2)? | 10 October | | |
| (3) | 22 October | | |
| (4) | 27 October | | |
| (5) | 8 May | | |

The image shows a stack of five envelopes. The top two envelopes are open, revealing handwritten letters. The letters are written in cursive and contain details about the location of Sebastopol and Balaklava, and mention dates like Sept. 20, 1854. The handwriting is somewhat faded and difficult to read in some places.

furniture, which our bold dragons have
discovered makes capital fire wood.
The night before last we burned at our
little bivouac fire (where two or three of
us generally assemble every evening
after dark, to smoke cigarettes, chaff
and drink coffee, sometimes followed
by rum and water) a chest of drawers
and a chair or two - a sofa was shared
as being useful for sitting on, and a
kettle bed with a place at one end for
the bedding was preserved as a table - I
did not see it but heard that a bear
was caught at a neighbouring fire.

Dearest Mamma

at least for us - another couple of days peace
but always get the best of it - and the guns of the
town are blazing away every five minutes; as yet
our guns have not answered, they begin tonight they
say, and certainly there has, within the last hour
been a great increase in the shooting - we are nearly
four miles from the town, so have not always
the best information about what is going on - two
or three of us go to the front almost every day, and
in order to see shells tumbling about -
French cavalry have been landing today, and we
are very glad to see them - I am for patrol tomorrow
rather for patrol - no night work, thank goodness -
I go out at sunrise & return by sunset, going about 10 miles.

10th Oct 54
Compliment, doing no harm as then we were
as they were nearly 8 to one and from the
nature of the ground we could not see their
full force - we stopped every few yards
and fired at them, but as we got near
a piece of open ground where we could have
had a chance they turned and retired -

Today I am on my only my mule, and have
been in the saddle nearly all day - a small
party of Cossacks have been attacking our
pickets - we saw them at a distance, no firing
from us - I have now (7.30 P.M.) no halfer
how to go round the pickets, and again at
4 in the morning - so you see we are not
idle.

No news - our heavy siege guns have not
yet begun - we expect they are expected to be
ready - Men are pretty healthy, we have
no disease among us - I hear of some
illness among the guards - but nothing
extraordinary - Jim Jones is quite well
to me.

~~Tomorrow~~ I hope will buy letters from you
Is it not too bad giving you such a long crawl
to reach - but dear Bessie and baby
Yours most affectionately

W. Wright

I have written to Robert by this mail & thank
him for his present, but not helped much
as I would like to have done - It is a
most useful present, and really the
cut for deep having shown us what
a Currier North wind is. I shall be
very glad to see it - fancy seven
horses dead in 5th one night - 11 days
14, 4th of - horses half dead & some
frozen into the mud - not a day
without two or three horses dead -
we have to do commissariat work
now - carrying up biscuit to the
front, and carrying down sick men -
all Subalterns work - how much
better off we are than the feet - they
are always on picket or guard or
in the trenches - fired at by
Riflemen - or attached by Tories -
half fed - no fuel - miserable in
fact - if it were possible for British
infantry to be miserable before an
enemy - we are never before

Balaclava, Oct 6th 1854

Dearest Mamma
at last our real campaigning has
begun again up to this we have been playing at it -
we landed on Sunday morning; not being able to enter
the harbour which was full of shipping we were landed
in small steamers carrying some 130 boxes - The greater
part of my box ^{was} had been confined in the lower
hold were in a very bad state, they soon picked up a
good hay and oats. The country is most superior in
every respect to Bulgaria, the houses are clean, white
washed to a nice, furniture good, gardens nicely kept,
roads as good as English. The people I have seen little
of as most of them ^{returned} ^{slowly} ^I believe they are clean & intelligent.
The battle of Alma - which only lasted for 3 hours
equalled any battle we have ever been engaged in -
Said Raglan says that never except for a short
space of time at water too had he seen a heavier
fight - 2500 we lost, 20 officers killed, 70 wounded
to give you a slight idea of it you must
imagine a deep ravine, the top of the higher
side entrenched and heavy guns planted
every inch of the opposite ground across which
our infantry had to march had been previously
marked off and measured by the Russians with
the view of throwing the range of their guns with
our men had to cross this line of fire and
advance under a most murderous fire
up a very steep hill, to climb the entrenchment
and drive the Russians out at the point of the
bayonet, which they most gallantly did -
fighting more like demons than men -

trotted my men in the direction of the firing and found that some two thousand Russian cavalry a few Cossacks, but principally regulars, were manoeuvring in our front, happily ignorant of the smallness of our force - they had first shown by sending down a Regiment of Cossacks on some ten men who were patrolling from the heights, ~~and~~ who had to cut for it - three of them are missing - we retired slowly, skirmishing, and firing on our friends, who returned the compliment, doing little harm to them, none to ourselves - I formed up on the ridge of a hill and showed front to them they retired, and then began to advance - by this time up came Lord Serean and all the cavalry and some horse artillery, and away cut the brave Russians, who by this time must have numbered 6000 - a large proportion of them infantry - we could not follow, and contented ourselves by sending a few shells among them - I sincerely trust my next will tell of the fall of the town - every one is very sanguine -


a very different life this, and much pleasanter and more exciting than life in Bulgaria - Asmodemus is very well - as well as his master, who gets better, the more knocking about he gets -

I have scarcely any baggage with me, and am much more comfortable than when I had more -

We get capital mutton here, a great improvement on the ration buffaloe of Varna - shops are opening in Bazarclava - and altogether we are very comfortable -

I got your letter about Mr. Pittman yesterday - I will write you a full account if I can this evening -

Ireland
Mrs Henry Leslie
Port Ballintrae
Bushmills
Ireland
via Marseilles



Ireland
Mrs Henry Leslie
Port Ballintrae
Bushmills
via Marseilles Ireland



Ireland
Mrs H. Leslie
Port Ballintrae
Bushmills
via Marseilles



THE CRIMEAN WAR



ENTIRE JULY 15, 1853, TO FRANCE, IN WHICH THE WRITER SPEAKS OF
GOING TO WAR, TOGETHER WITH THE BRITISH FLEET, AGAINST RUSSIA.

"ESCADRE DE LA MEDITERRANEE" (FRENCH MEDITERRANEAN SQUADRON)

DATE-STAMP JULY 15, 1853.

BACKSTAMP - DRAGIGNAN JULY 26, 1853


THE LETTER WAS WRITTEN ON BOARD THE "CHARLEMAGNE" AT BEZIKA.



ENTIRE FROM A FRENCH SOLDIER IN THE 84TH REGIMENT OF LINE,
2ND BATTALION VOLTIGEUR, CAMP MASLACK WITH 'ARMEE D'ORIENT'
DATESTAMP OF SEPT. 10, 1855 TELLING HIS MOTHER HOW EXPENSIVE
EVERYTHING IS, COMPARED WITH FRANCE. 30 CENTIMES PAID.
BACKSTAMPED ON ARRIVAL LE RIBAY SEPTEMBER 21, 1855

1854- Cover to France tied 'ARMEE D'ORIENT 23 NOV 1854' pmk & hollow no.30 pmk
In 1854 France joined England in the war against Russia fought in the Crimea. In the later stages they were supported by the Sardinians. The French army was particularly successful in the assault on Sebastopol. Because of the shortage of British ships, much of the early mail from British forces was carried by French vessels. Mail from this campaign was marked 'Arme'e d'Orient'.

France
Paris
Monsieur
Henry Richemont
et M. de Goyard
Comme.



P. 1207 / 117

S. J. g. The Herriidge House
Worcester
Captain Norbury
The Carabineers
British Army
Crimea



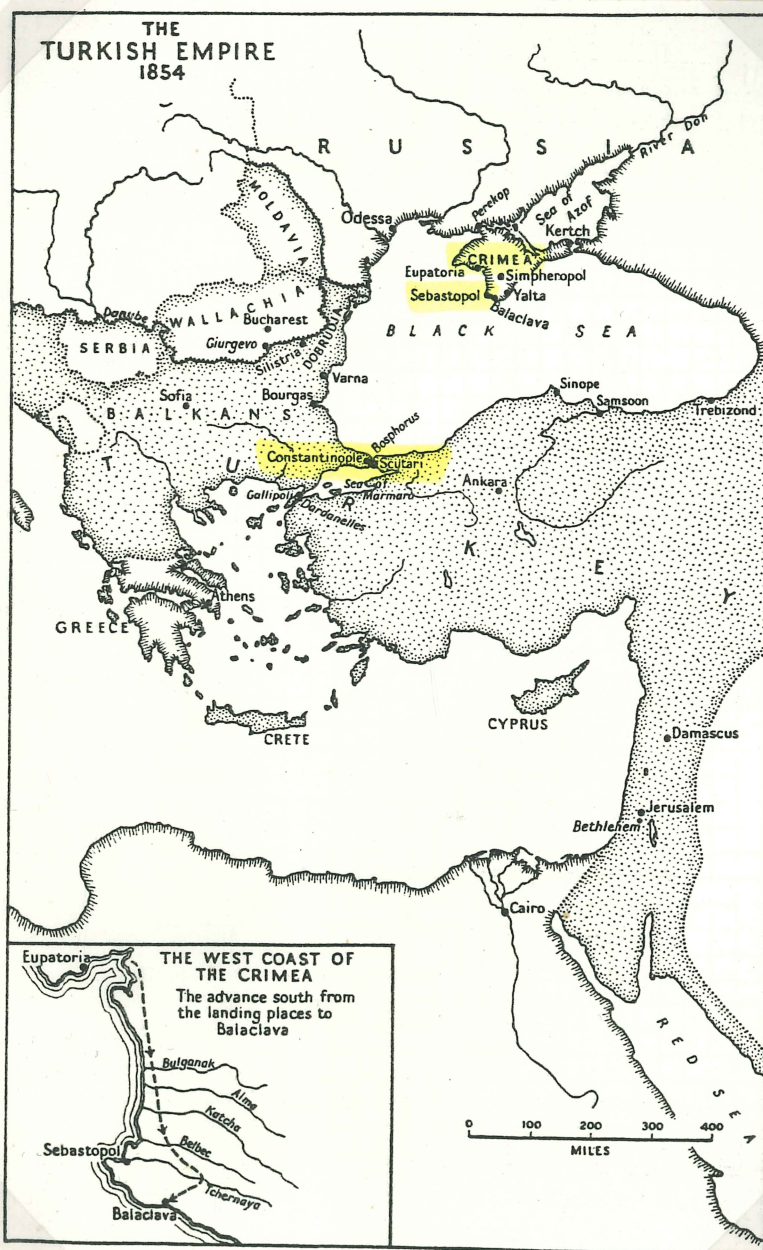


W. H. Stance

19th

Miss J. G. Loraine
Earley House
Earley
W. Reading
England
Berks

THE CRIMEAN WAR




THE CRIMEA WHERE THE BATTLES
WERE FOUGHT IS A PENINSULA
OF SOUTHERN RUSSIA ON THE
NORTHERN SIDE OF THE BLACK
SEA



THE WOUNDED SOLDIERS WERE
BROUGHT TO THE SCUTARI
DISTRICT OF CONSTANTINOPLE
WHERE THEY WERE NURSED
BY FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE
AND HER TEAM OF NURSES.

Ireland
Mrs Henry Leslie
Post Ballintrae
Bushmills
Ireland
via Marseilles
A



Ireland
Mr. H. Leslie
Post Ballintrae
Bushmills
via Marseilles Ireland

