

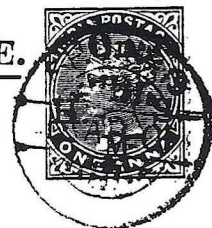
British Field Post

FPO 19 (Tongshan)
15 April 1901

OHMS-overprinted 1 anna.

ON HER MAJESTY'S SERVICE.

Ch. General Macgregor
Shillong



Major F. B. Longe, R.E.

Survey of India

~~*13, 1000 ft*~~

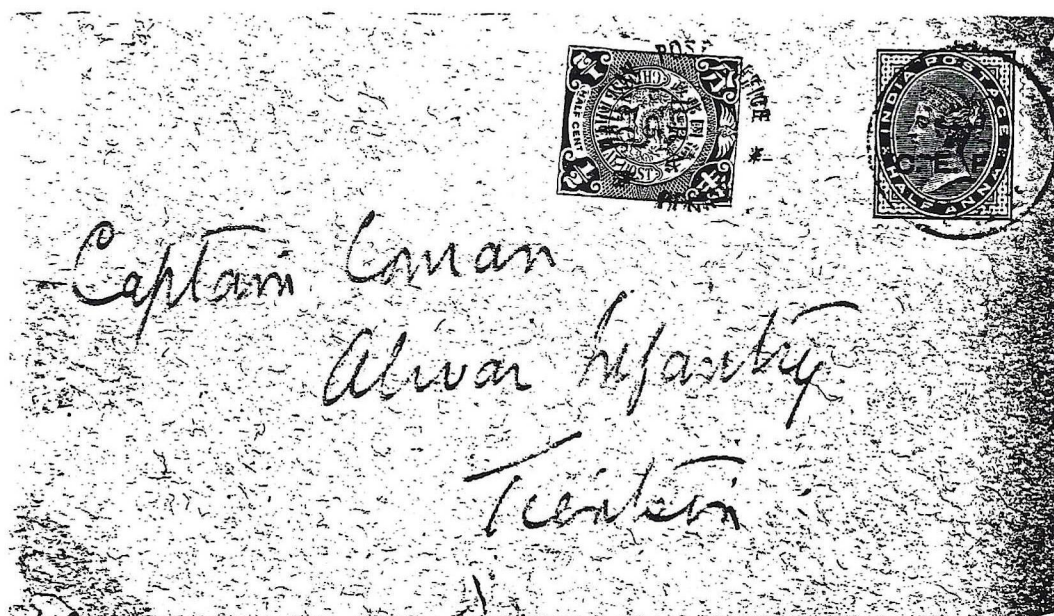
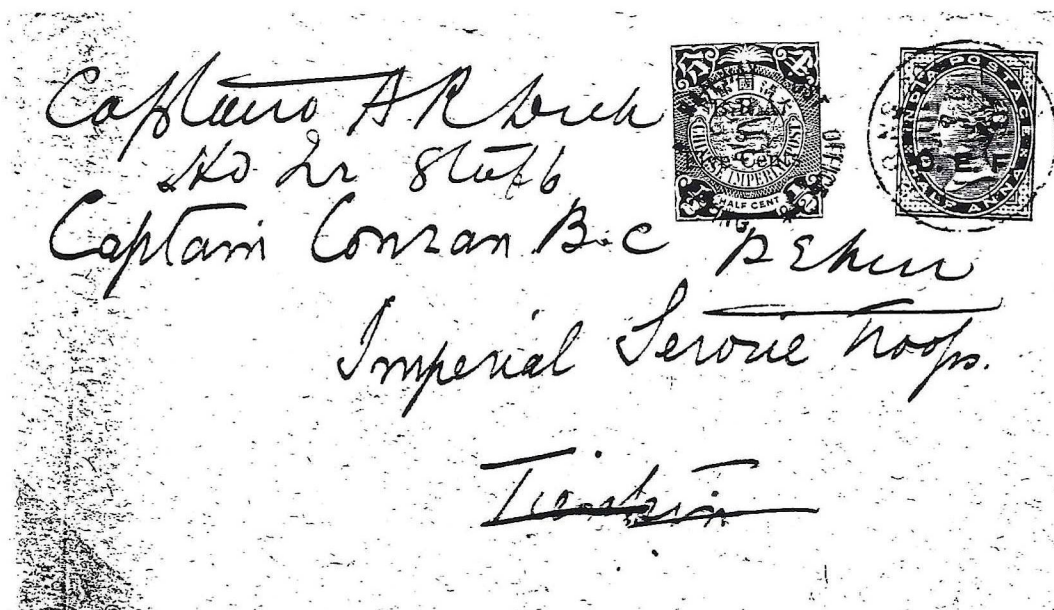
India. Calcutta

P. W. D. Rider
Calcutta

After brief service with the West Peiho Expedition (25 December 1900 - 5 January 1901; no examples reported), FPO 19 opened about 15 February 1901 at Tongshan, the main town on the rail line between Tientsin and Chinwangtao. It remained there until about 1 August 1901.

British Field Post
Railway Post Office - Peking

FPO 20 (TPO)
1 May 1901
15 May 1901

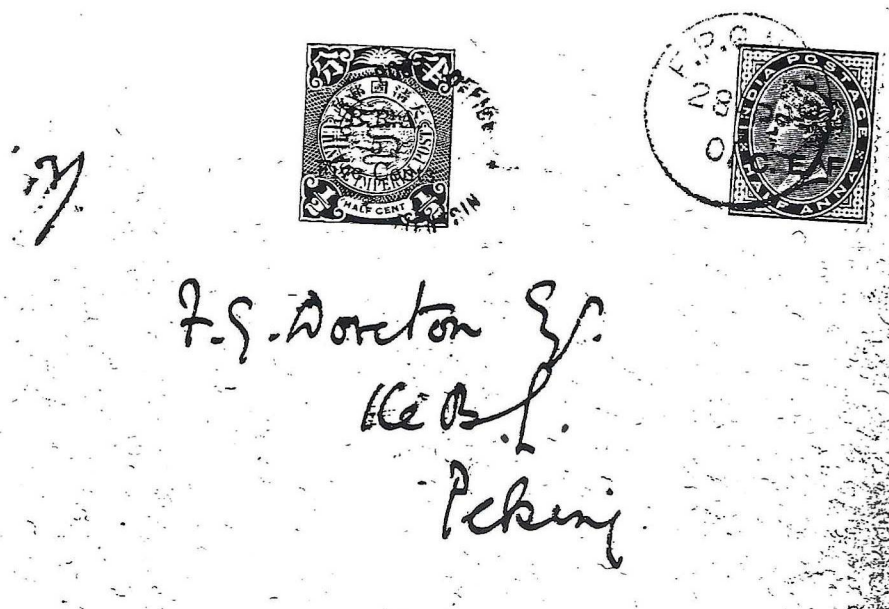


Green overprints, positions 14 (backs of "5" and "C" in line vertically) and 13 (large stop after "A").

Only two types of FPO 20 datestamp are recorded. The FPO 20 bridge type, recorded 20 April - 26 May 1901, and the Base Office C "DEP" postmarks are the only TPO markings taken from the "spare" FPO markings now reported used after the BRA period.

British Field Post
Railway Post Office - Tientsin

FPO 20 (TPO)
28 April 1901

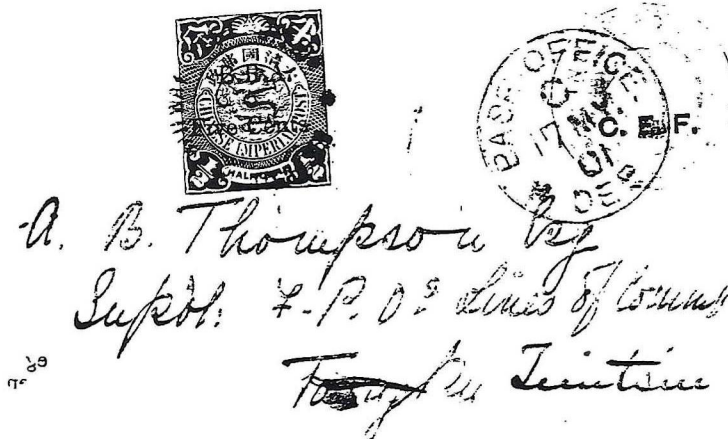


Position 15, black overprint (breaks in left leg and foot of "A").

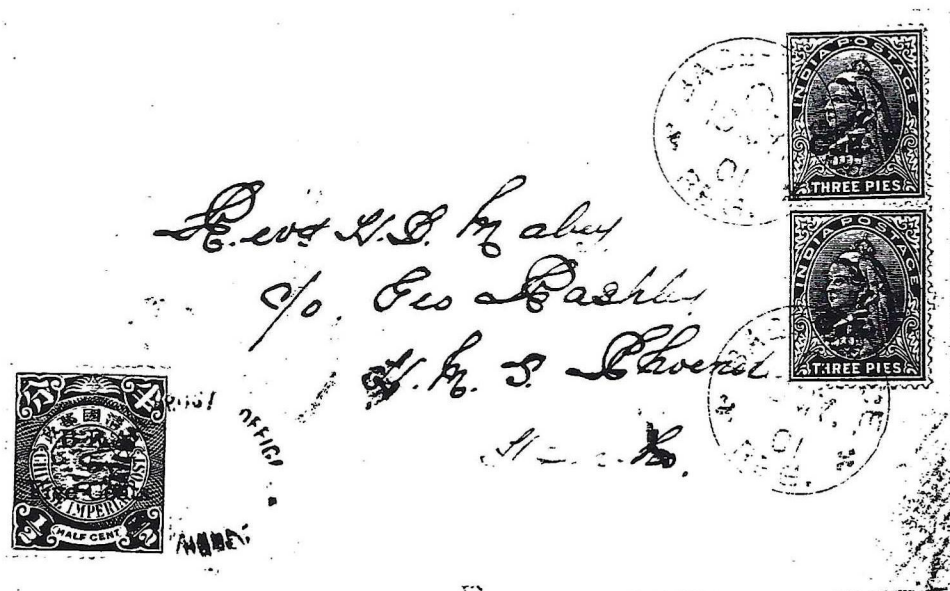
The plain FPO 20 postmark is the only TPO postmark thus far recorded with a usage that pre-dates the BRA stamp period. It is known used from 17 April - 15 May 1901 (questioned by Virk as official records show that FPO 20 opened on 20 April 1901). It is allocated to the Tongku-Peking section.

British Field Post
Railway Post Office - Tientsin

Base Office C (TPO)
17 May 1901
19 May 1901



The "DEF" datestamp is recorded used between 22 April and 29 May 1901.
It is allocated to the Tongku-Peking section.



The "REG" datestamp is recorded used between 26 April and 19 May 1901.
From 12 - 31 May it is allocated to the Tongku-Peking section.

Altogether, 7 different Base Office C postmarks are recorded, including deposit, delivery and registration types which were used as regular postmarks. All are at least scarce; 2 are single examples not seen by modern C.E.F. experts. Of these, 4 types are shown on this and the previous two pages.

British Field Post
Railway Post Office - Tongku

Base Office C (TPO)
19 May 1901



*Lieut. Col. Allen
H.M. "Phine"
Sui Ho-*

On 11 May 1901 the Tientsin-Hanku train was extended to Tientsin-Shanhaikwan. FPO 15 datestamps which had been used on the Tientsin-Hanku section were retired and Base Office C postmarks (previously used on the Hanku-Shanhaikwan section) continued in use for the entire route until 31 May.

Use of the "REG" datestamp definitely did not connote registered mail, as registered and insured letters were not accepted by the Railway postmasters. Nor were parcels or newspapers accepted.

British Field Post
Railway Post Office - Shanhaikwan

Base Office C (TPO)
23 April 1901

Only 2 examples of this postmark are recorded.

Capt Warranston Rq.
Shan-hai-Kwan



Green overprint, position 6 (the only position without irregularities in the type).

The lack of unused BRA stamps suggests that the prohibition against sale to the public was strictly enforced. Still, the stamps were philatelically desirable, with the result that philatelic covers were created to obtain them. The above local cover, mailed at the Railway post office, makes no sense postally. That it was actually carried on the train before delivery is evidenced by the BPO C postmark and the FPO 16 (Chinwangtao) backstamp. Virk, *et al.* tentatively allocate the Base Office C postmarks (possibly excepting the "DEP" type) to the Shanhaikwan-Hanku line from 20 April - 11 May 1901, which would be appropriate for the Chinwangtao delivery shown here.

British Field Post
Railway Post Office - Tongshan

Base Office C (TPO)
23 April 1901



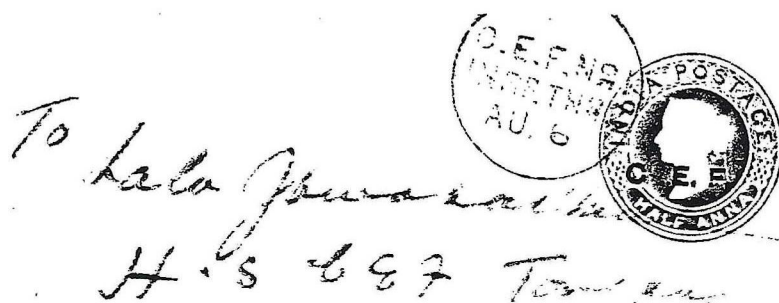
Major Turner
S. O.
Jodhpore Lancers
Shanghai Kwan
— " —

BRA overprints were made in blocks of 20. The existence of several complete blocks (all cancelled) allows plating of all stamps with the green overprint and some with the black overprint. The stamp above is position 3. identified by defects in the letter "R" (break at top and no left foot).

The Travelling Post Office unit processed mail on the trains, using postmarks inscribed Base Office C and FPOs 20 and 15. It is presumed that the different types of postmarks available for these post offices were used exclusively by different sets (mail crews) on a given section (line).

British Field Post

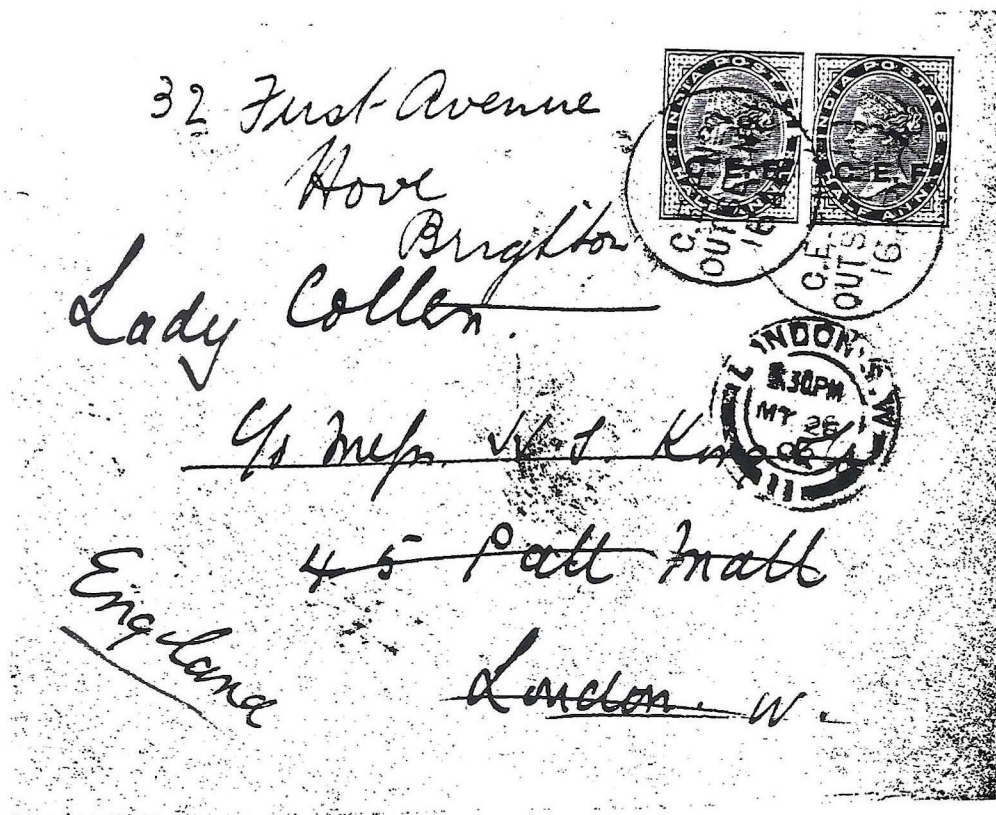
C.E.F. N° 1 (TPO)
6 August 1901



Base Office B
(Tongku) delivery
stamp is scarce.
Note "4" mistaken-
ly inserted for "7"
in date line.

On 20 May 1901 the BRA "station postmaster" scheme was abandoned but the C.E.F. travelling post offices continued to roll until 31 October 1902. Indian Railway Mail Service style datestamps for 3 sections, each with 3 sets, were received in North China on 27 May 1901, and certain of these datestamps for C.E.F. N° 1 and C.E.F. N° 3, were put into service by 1 June. C.E.F. N° 2 postmarks were not used until 17 November 1901. (A "Section" was a segment of track between a home and a destination city. An "In Set" processed mail on the run toward the home city. Usually, at least 2 sets were required to operate a section.) About 30 covers with the RMS type postmarks are recorded.

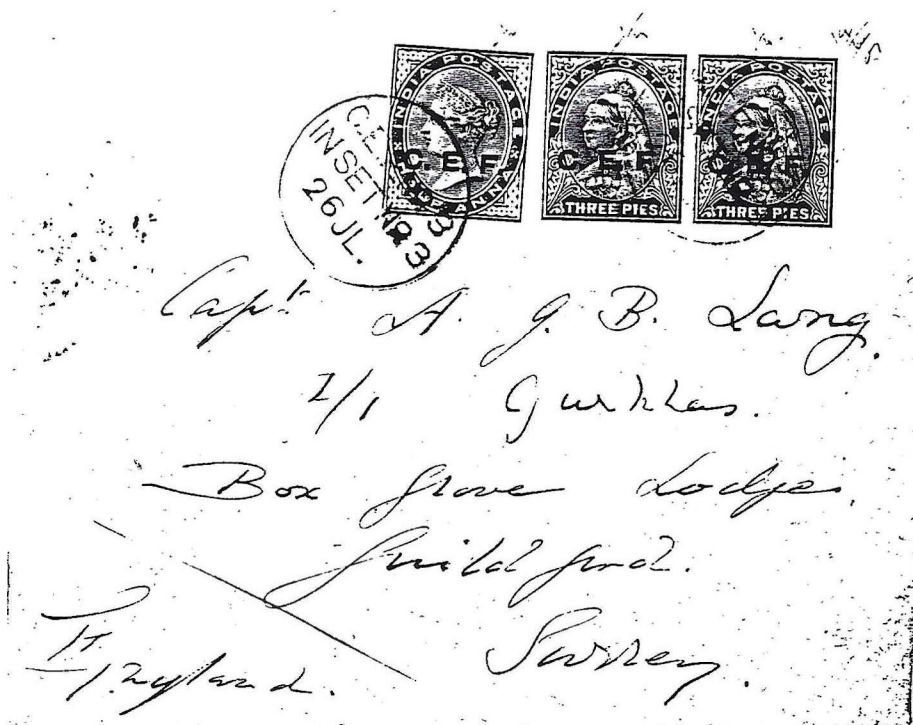
Only 1 example of the C.E.F. N^o 1 Out Set N^o 1 datestamp is recorded.



An "Out Set" processed mail on the run away from the home city. From 1 June to 22 December 1901, C.E.F. N^o 1 was assigned to the Tongku-Peking section. Between 22 December 1901 and 31 October 1902, its postmarks were successively reassigned to 4 other sections including the Tientsin-Tongshan section from 31 March until 2 August 1902.

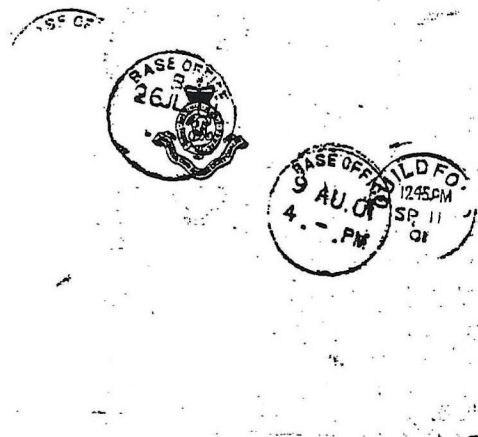
British Field Post
3rd Bombay Cavalry

C.E.F. No 3 (TPO)
26 July 1901

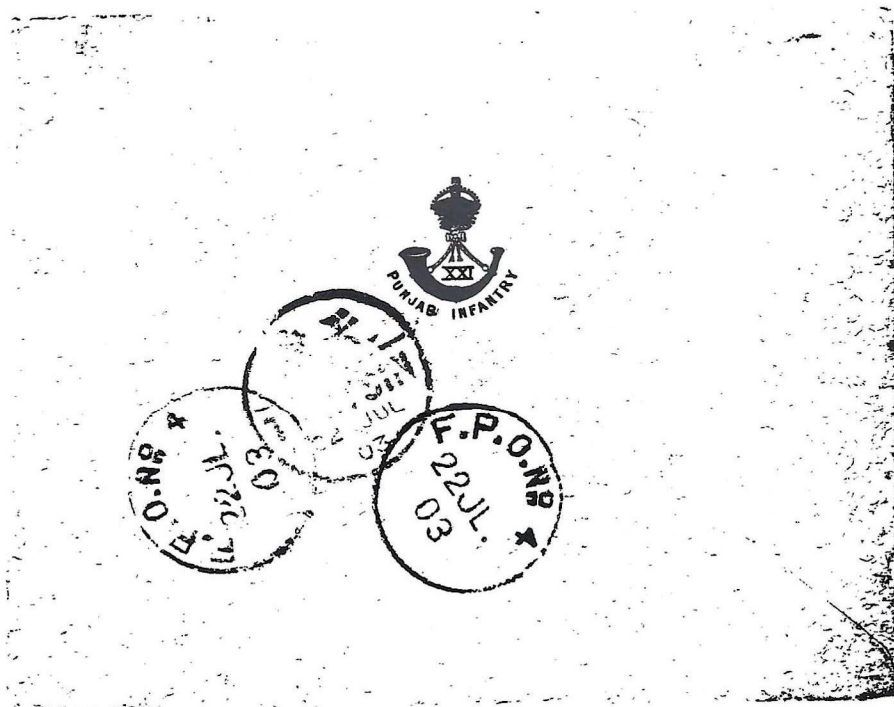
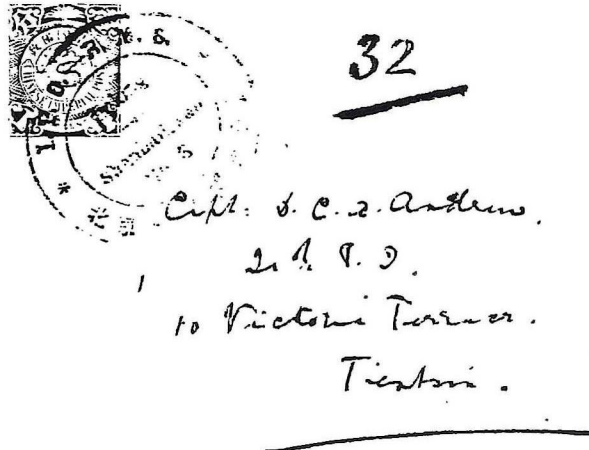


From 1 June to 16 November 1901 C.E.F. No 3 postmarks were assigned to the Tientsin-Shanhaikwan line. The sorter of Section 3, Set 3 lost his cancels on 13 November 1901, so these were not used when C.E.F. No 3, Sets 1 and 2, postmarks were reassigned (on 31 March 1902) to the Tientsin-Peking line.

"With the embarking of the 3rd Bombay Cavalry and the 12th Field Battery, at the end of October and beginning of November [1901], the reduction of the British contingent was finally completed." [Proud]



Following abolition of the BRA 5c late fee on 20 May 1901, letters were accepted at railway stations for processing on the train at normal rates of postage.

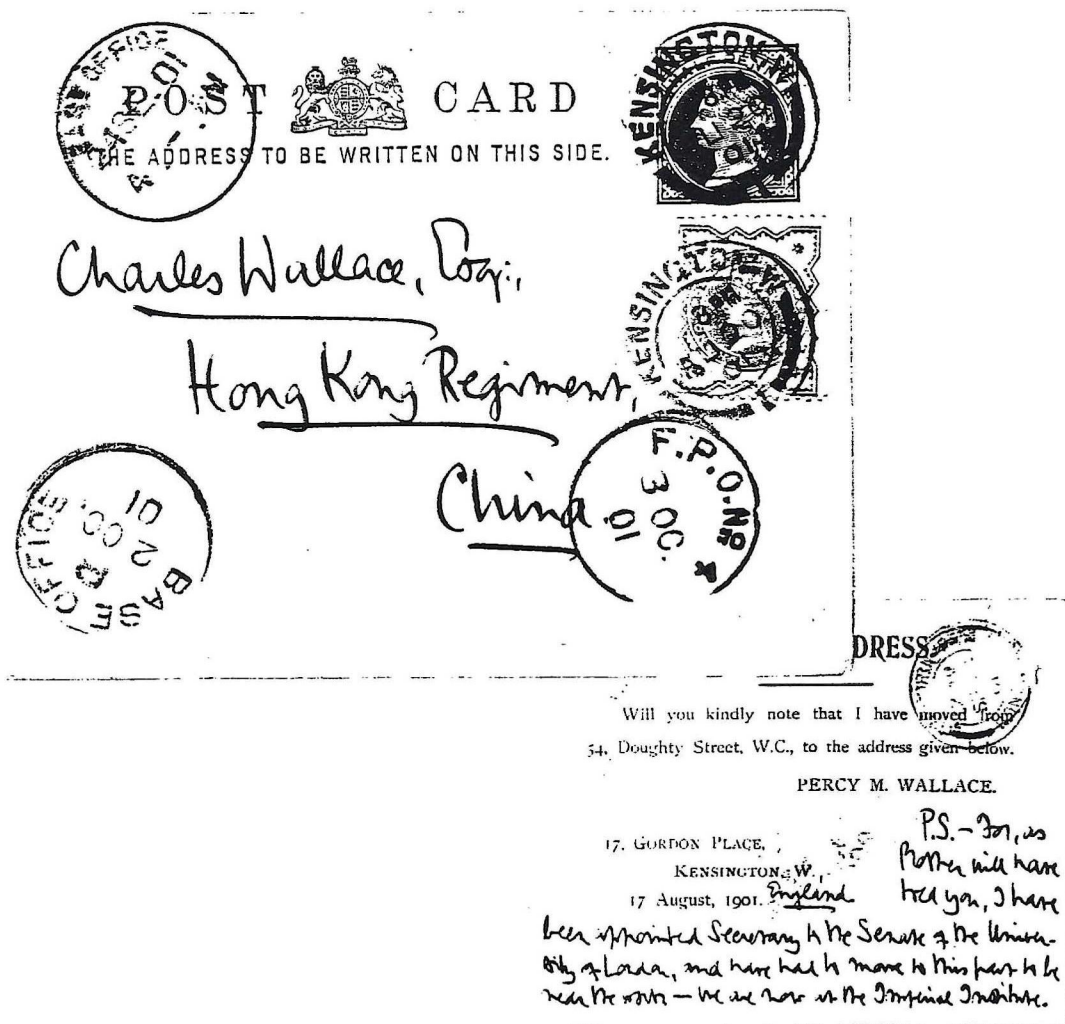


One aspect of the close co-operation between the C.E.F. field post and the Chinese post office was the agreement of each to deliver within its mail system originating in and franked only with the stamps of the other. (As China was a non-member of the UPU at the time of the Boxer Uprising, its stamps were not recognized as paying postage in foreign postal systems outside China.) The Chinese Post Office also continued to operate the travelling post offices established by the C.E.F. after 31 October 1902.

Cover paid at unsealed printed matter rate, posted through the Imperial Post Office Railway Mail Service and transferred to the British Field Post Office (backstamp) at Tientsin for delivery.

Hong Kong
Hong Kong Regiment

Incoming Mail
3 October 1901



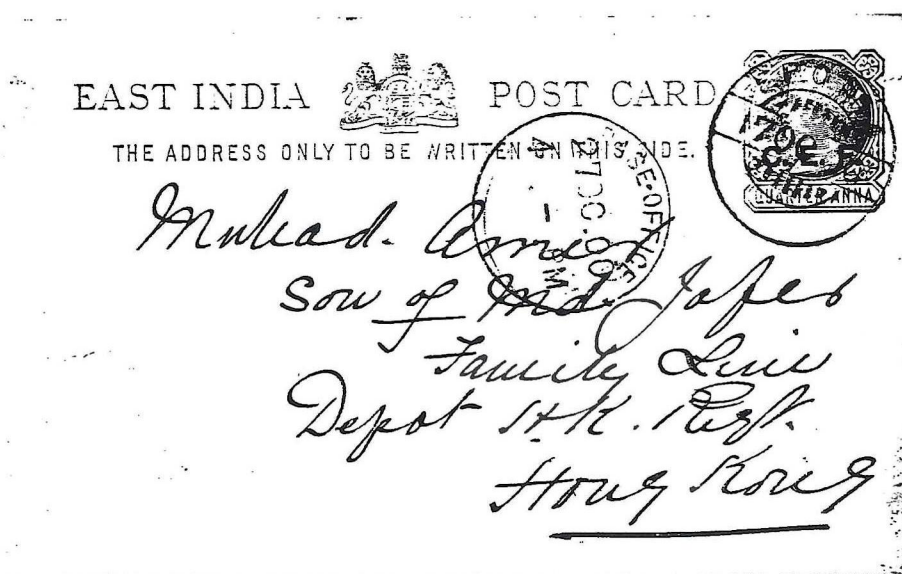
Hong Kong contributed locally-raised troops consisting of an artillery battery and one infantry regiment to the International Force. The Hong Kong Regiment is known to have been at Weihaiwei in late September 1900, and to have moved to Tientsin during the winter of 1900-1901.

As with other British Imperial military units in the Boxer Uprising, the postal needs of the Hong Kong Regiment were served by Base and Field Post Offices of the British Indian Army. Routing here is typical: England to Hong Kong civil post office (backstamp), transferred to Indian Base Office [A] in Hong Kong, then to Base Office B and FPO 4, both in Tientsin. Normal postcard rate from England to Hong Kong was $\frac{1}{2}$ d, but international rate paid here because of "China" address.

609

Hong Kong
Hong Kong Regiment

FPO No. 4 (Tientsin)
17 October 1900



While addressed to Hong Kong (and thus subject to the foreign rate of 1 anna) this card was allowed to go through at the soldiers' concessionary rate of $\frac{1}{4}$ anna as it never left the C.E.F. field post system.

Hong Kong
Hong Kong Regiment

FPO No. 4 (Tientsin)
22 November 1901



*Major W. R. Little
Officers Mess,
Hong Kong Regt.
at Tientsin.*

Local mail, paid at Indian domestic rate. Year slug inadvertently inverted during November 1901. This cover was mailed during the second (and final) period in which FPO 4 was assigned to Tientsin (1 May 1901 - ca. March 1908).

New South Wales
Naval Contingent

FPO 4 (Tientsin)
28 September 1900

Recorded mail from the NSW Naval Contingent consists of 11 covers and cards.
Of these, 4 bear the circular unit handstamp shown here.

The earliest recorded example of mail from the NSW Naval Contingent, and 1 of only 3 items posted from a member of the NSW Contingent in Tientsin.



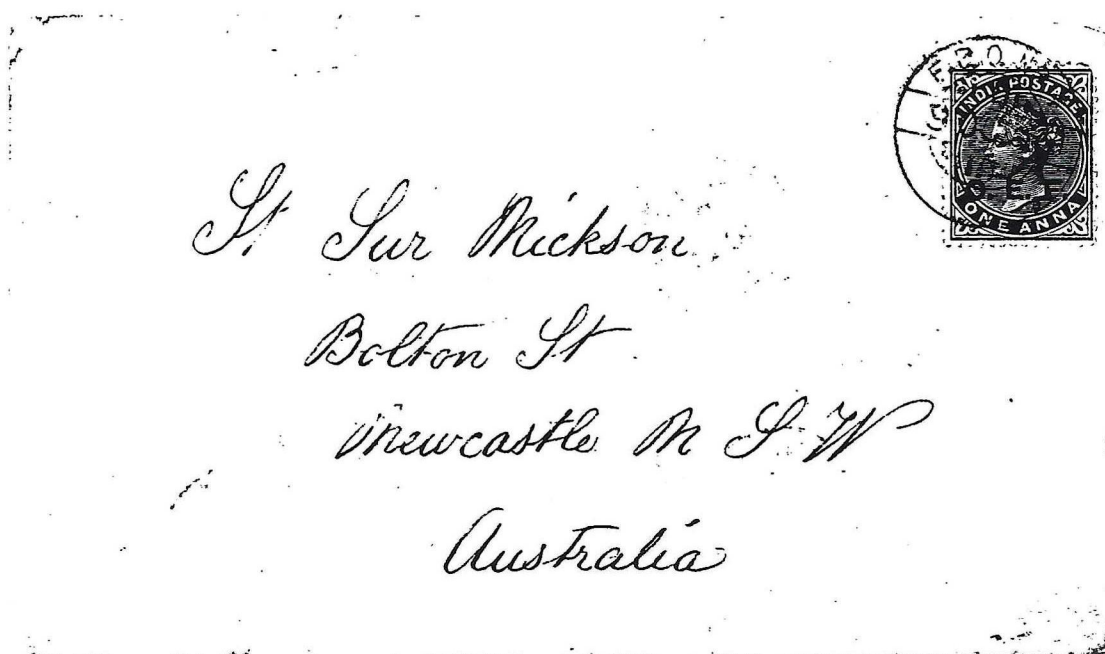
The New South Wales Naval Contingent, consisting of 257 officers and men, arrived in Tientsin ca. 17 September 1900. Between about 18 September and 22 September members of the Contingent participated in the march against the Peitang forts. On 12 October, 254 officers and men moved on to Peking. There they were responsible for administering a portion of the city, police functions, fire-fighting, sanitation and maintenance supervision. The NSW Contingent left China on 29 March 1901.

The 10 pf. postal card pays the full (non-concessionary) international postcard rate, so the handstamp was not being used to claim a right to cheaper postage. Its purpose here is unclear, as all other usages of the unit handstamp are in conjunction with the reduced letter rate of 1 anna.

New South Wales
Naval Contingent

FPO 4 (Tientsin)
9 October 1900

Concessionary rate for incoming mail to NSW military personnel.



On 1 January 1850, the New South Wales Post Office established a rate of 1 penny for prepaid letters from overseas to members of the services. In 1900-1901, 1 penny equalled 1 anna. One of 2 covers mailed through FPO 4 in early October to Staff Surgeon Nickson (neither bearing a unit handstamp or other indication of official mail) showing acceptance of this NSW concessionary rate in China.