

FRENCH FORCES ABROAD 1893 - 1939 EXCLUDING THE WORLD WARS

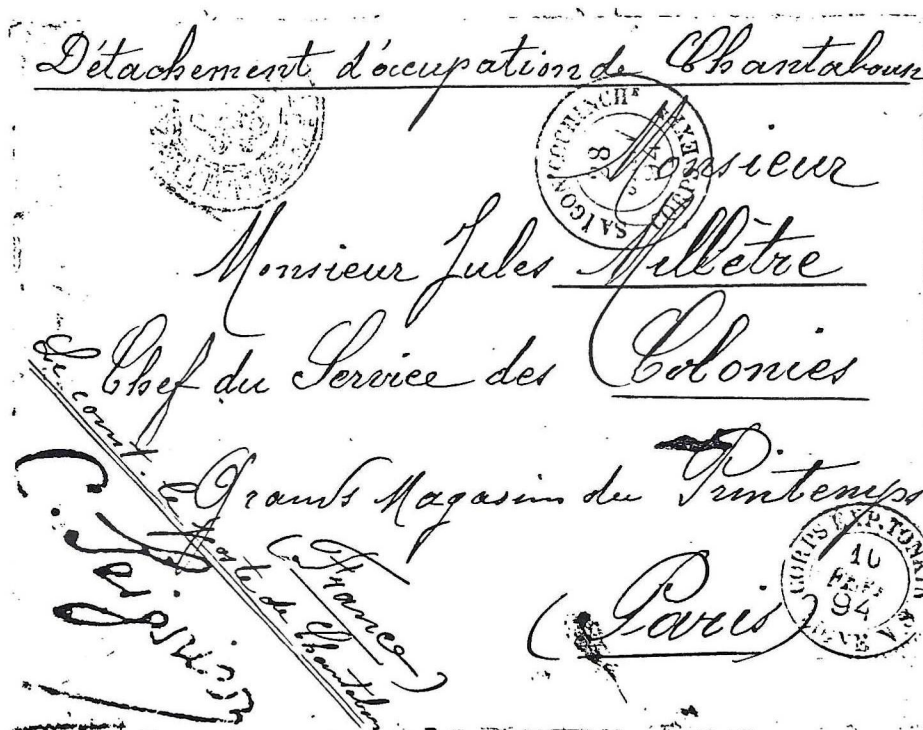
As one of the oldest of the European Great Powers, France has been engaged in military activities outside its home territory for centuries, including such memorable enterprises as its aid to the American colonies and Napoleon's invasions of Russia and Egypt. This exhibit will chronicle the French effort to enhance their national prestige and influence by military means in more modern times.



Siamese invasion of Laos and Cambodia in 1893 prompted a French military response. Mail from members of this expedition, franked at domestic rates, was cancelled upon arrival at base postal facilities in Indochina.

The following pages illustrate postal material from France's military activities in the expansion of her territory and influence from 1893 until the eve of World War II, excluding the overwhelmingly large military history of World War I. During the nearly 50 years treated here, France was involved in what would today be called peace-keeping (e.g., Crete, the Boxer Uprising, Albania and occupation of parts of the post-World War I Turkish, Austrian and German empires) and various other activities including pacification of its League of Nations mandates in the Middle East.

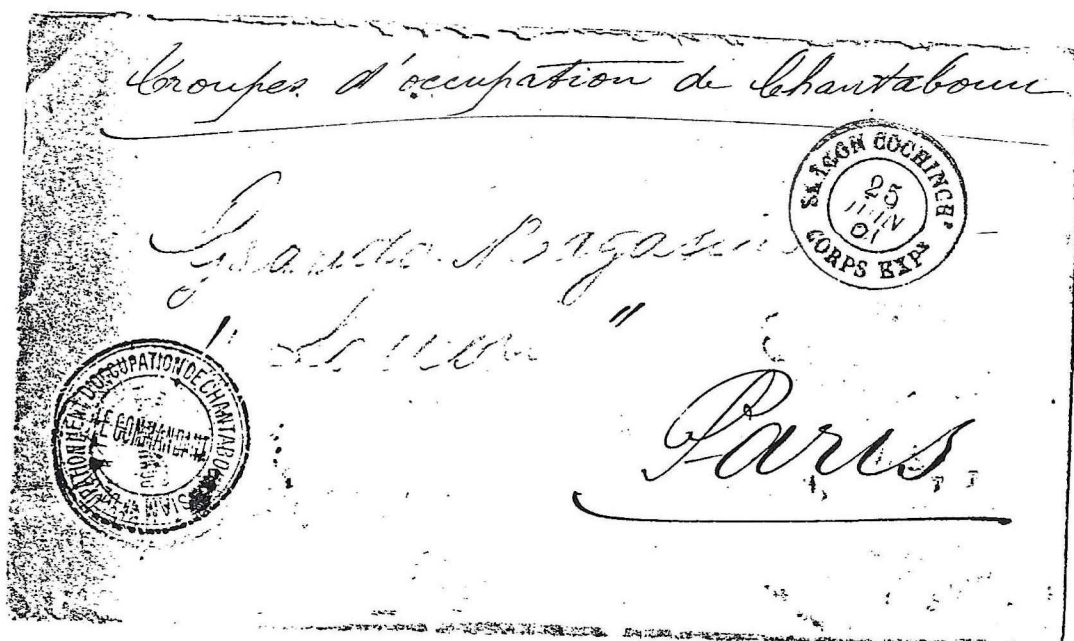
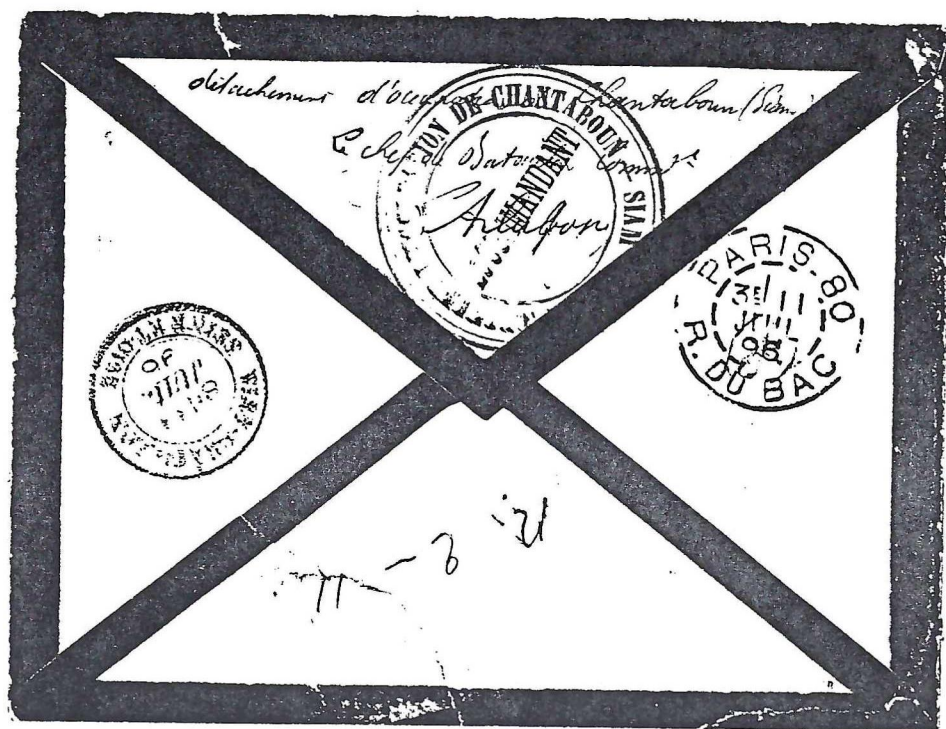
"Abroad" for the purposes of this exhibit excludes military mail originating in Metropolitan France and the French Colonies. Organization is (roughly) chronological and, within operations occurring at the same times, geographical. A serious attempt has been made to use "commercial" covers when these are available.



At the end of 1892, Siam sent its army into Laos and northern Cambodia. A French expeditionary corps was mobilized in Cochin China and succeeded in turning back the Siamese army along the Mekong River. An armistice was signed on 3 October 1893, but the French occupied Chantaboun and Paknam in southeastern Siam pending the delineation of the border on a linguistic basis. The above cover has manuscript endorsement of the "Chantaboun Occupation Detachment" and handstamp of the senior postal official (only two examples recorded).

FRENCH FORCES ABROAD
Siam

Saigon Cochinch./Corps Expre.
3 June 1896
25 June 1901



Later in the occupation period, official cachets were provided to authorize postage-free transmission of mail from the forces in Siam, as shown by the above examples from Chantaboun.

FRENCH FORCES ABROAD
Siam

Saigon Cochinch./Corps Expre.
2 September 1902
29 August 1904

Troupes d'occupation du Siam
M. J. J. J.
Chieu
à Chudamot
Commandant d'armes.



Montieur Jardi
Sergent
10^e Compagnie. 3^eme Regt. Annamite
Yinh Long
Cochinchine

The above covers have unit markings which read "Poste de Pak-Nam/Siam." In 1904, the parts of Laos west of the Mekong were restored and Cambodia received a coastal strip from Kratt to Kaskong. Thus, the use of the postmark "Saigon Cochinchina/Expeditionary Corps" in this campaign dates from 1893 to 1904.

FRENCH FORCES ABROAD
Crete

La Canee
20 November 1897
June 1898

Corps d'occupation de Crète



Monsieur Victor Jacquin

Rue de la Prefecture

Coslov

Var

Corps d'occupation de Crète



Monsieur

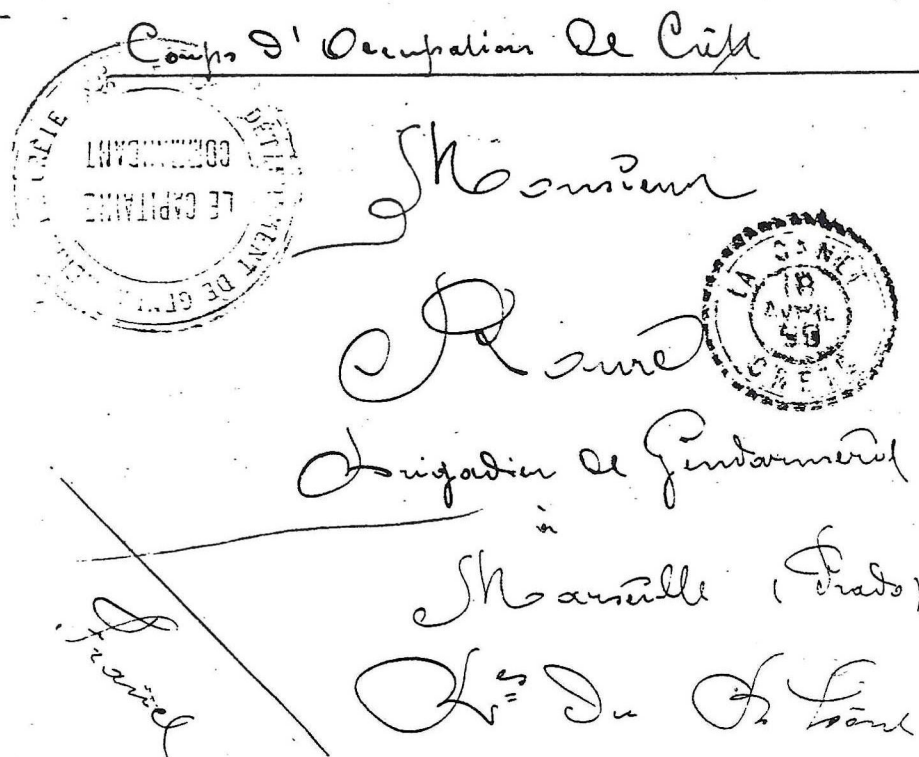
Libet, Demain

Cherret à Cheret

M. Kervaud

Genève

When the Greek population of Crete rebelled against Ottoman Turkish rule, six of the Great Powers decided in May 1897 to send what became the first multi-national peacekeeping force to the island. The French contingent could send postcards and letters free of postage from 1897 to 1 February 1899.



Various unit cachets were applied to indicate that the mail was subject to the military franchise. Above show usage of the markings of the 122nd Infantry Regiment and the Gendarmerie of Crete.

FRENCH FORCES ABROAD
Crete

La Canee
21 August 1900
1 September 1900

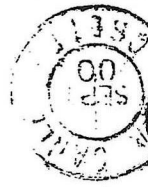
Corps d'Occupation de Crète



*Monsieur E. Benazet
Vins
214 Rue St-Jacques 214
à Paris*



(France)



*Monsieur E. Lethellier
Rue Cassette, 10*

*Paris
France*

After the period of free mail, military personnel were still allowed a concessionary rate at the same level of postage that would be paid within France, providing that a unit cachet was applied to indicate that the mail was entitled to the lower fee.

FRENCH FORCES ABROAD
Crete

La Canee
6 December 1901
1 January 1903

France
Postes françaises en Crète
La Canee
Monsieur le Directeur du journal
le "Grou. Grou,
9. rue J^eanne
1^{er} arrondissement
Paris

Corps français d'occupation de Crète
Reçu sans intérêt
9:5
Monsieur
Jean Zuber
Directeur des papeteries de Corfou
Bonheur
Doubs

Registered mail from the campaign in Crete is quite elusive. In the case of the cover shown, the postage was 30 centimes for a double weight letter plus 25 centimes for the registry fee. However, the sender used an equivalent 1 piaster French Offices in Turkey stamp to pay the latter, producing an interesting mixed franking.

Monsieur le Chef



Monsieur



- 81^e D'INFANTERIE
BATAILLON DE CRETE

LE COMMANDANT

Monsieur le Capitaine Juster
Etat-Major Général Gouverneur
Briançon

(Jb^{les} Alpes)

Félicitations tardives, mais sûres. Vous en avez eu besoin. Super suite à la Canee 12 7^{me} - Rodey - quelle suite. Avec vous espoir retour. Qui en dit Madame Dupuy. Je vote jusqu'à ma nomination à l'acceptation. Je suis sollicité. Je ne suis pas de France. Cordes regards -

Editt. R. Bédarduin, photog. Candie, Crète



III Soldats Français à Hierapetra — Crète 1906

Military mail could also be franked with the special stamps issued for the French Offices in Crete. Note cachets of the "International Troops/La Canee" and the "81st Infantry Battalion of Crete."

FRENCH FORCES ABROAD
Crete

Hierapetra
19 October 1898
4 March 1899
7 March 1899



Madame Gardel
2, rue Boucher

Paris

Cour. expéditionnaire de Crète



Couring-club de

France



Héron . 5.

Paris

Hierapetra — Crete

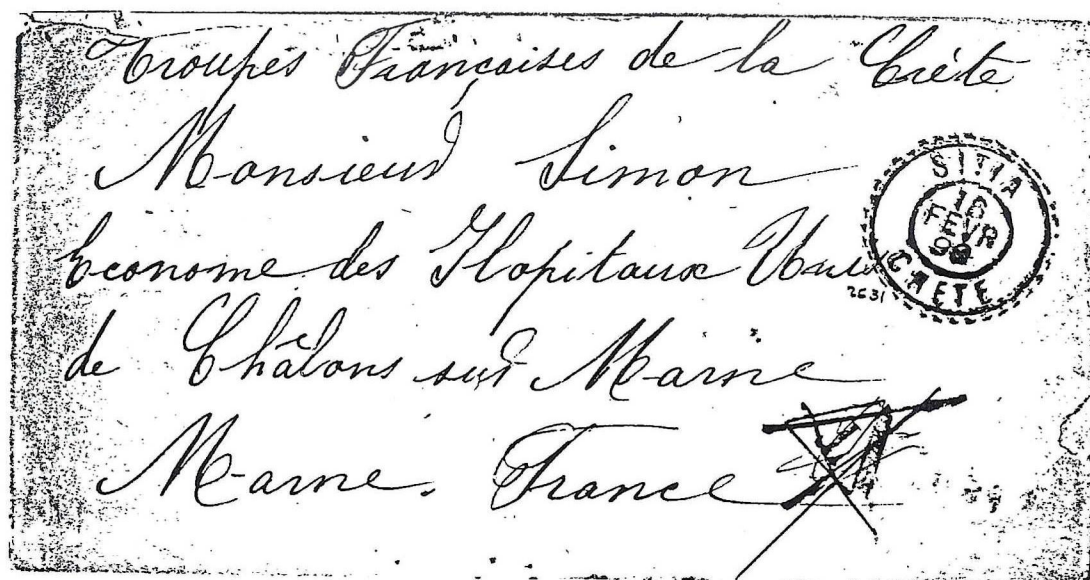


Several other French post offices were in operation around the island, and they also accepted military mail. The 20 para postage stamp was issued under the joint administration of France, Great Britain, Italy and Russia to pay postage (for local letters or international post cards) on civil mail.

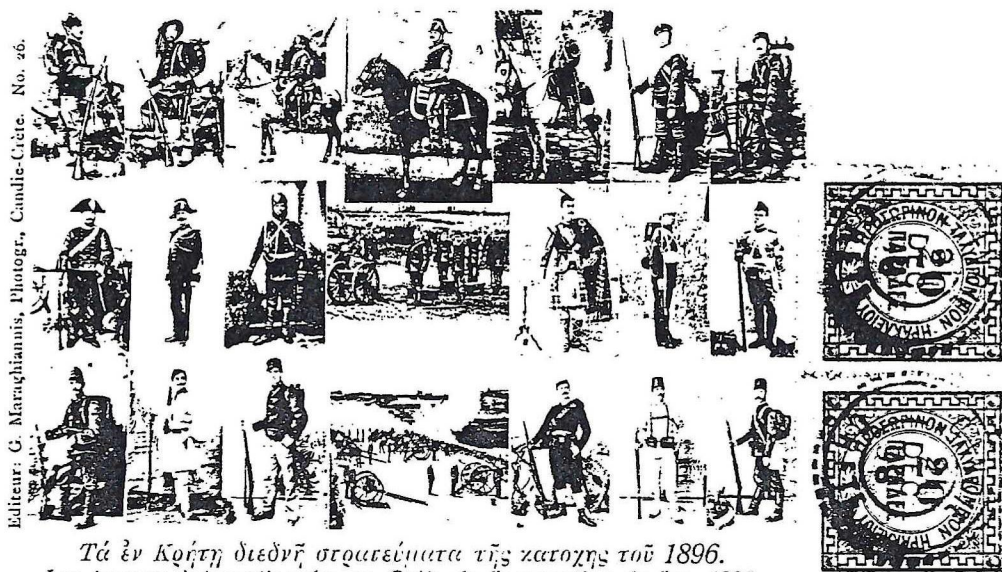
FRENCH FORCES ABROAD
Crete

San-Nicolo
20 June 1899

Sitia
16 February 1899



The French post office at San Nicolo was short-lived and is the most difficult to find of the French postal markings for Crete; it was closed in December 1899. Sitia remained in operation for an extended period, lasting until 30 May 1913 when Crete was formally annexed by Greece.



Editeur: G. Marachianis, Photogr., Candie-Crète. No. 26.

Τὰ ἐν Κρήτῃ διεδρῆ στρατεύματα τῆς κατοχῆς τοῦ 1896.
Les troupes internationales en Crète de l'occupation de l'an 1896.



CARTE POSTALE

Ce côté est exclusivement réservé à l'adresse

Monsieur C. Fournel
Colonel du 3^{me} Tirailleurs
à Constantine
Algerie

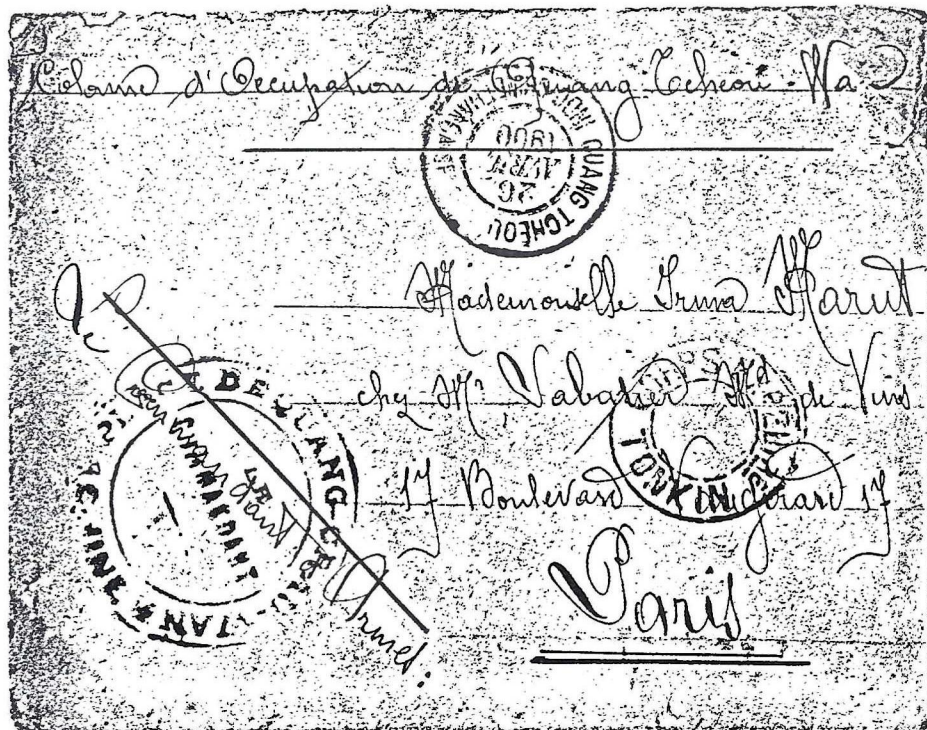
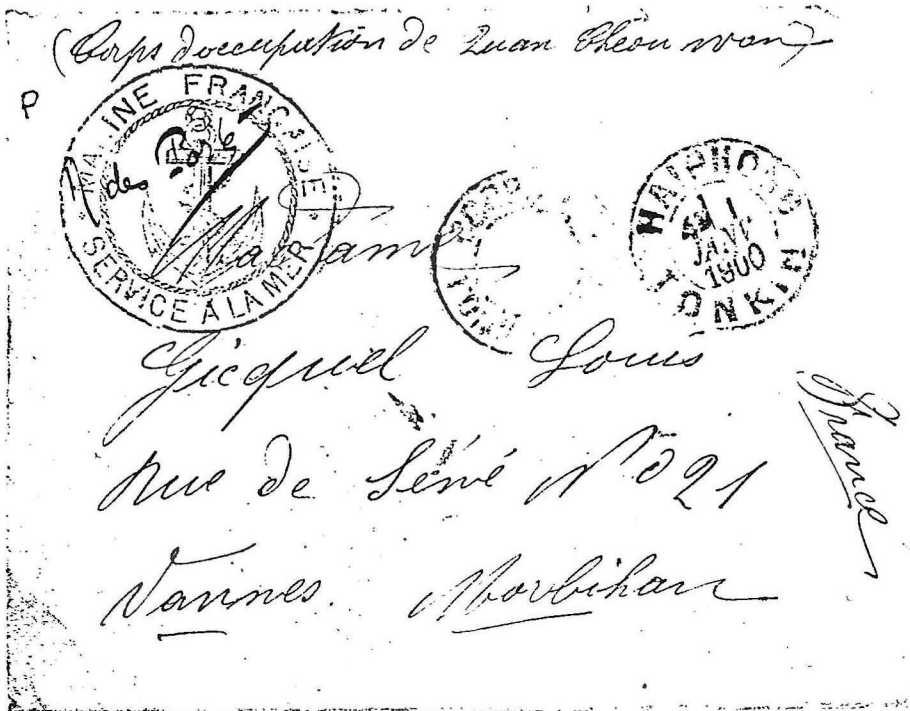


The French post office at Candie was one of the shortest lived; it ceased operations in December 1899. The Rethymo office remained open until the Greek annexation of Crete.

FRENCH FORCES ABROAD
Kwangchowan

Haiphong
1 January 1900

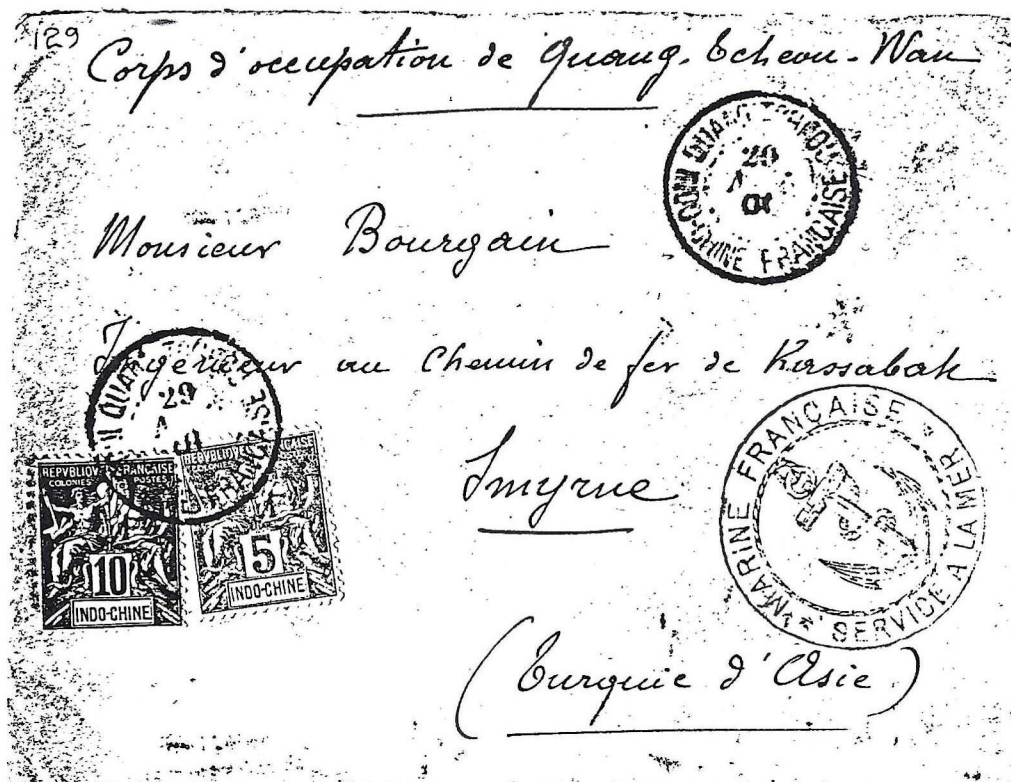
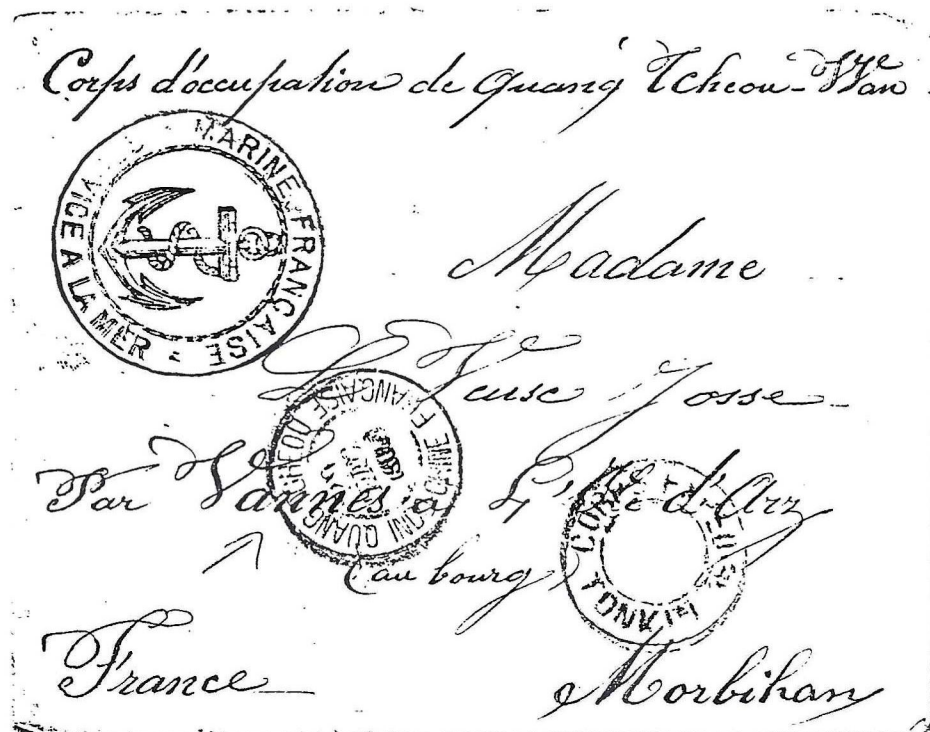
Quang Tcheou
20 April 1900



Following the defeat in the Sino-Japanese War of 1895-96, China was unable to resist the demands of the European Powers for additional territorial concessions. Thus, in 1898 the French obtained a leasehold on a strip of land on the Luichow Peninsula and a half dozen islets in Kwangchow Bay opposite the island of Hainan. (Other countries extorted similar leases, including Weihaiwei by the British, Kiautschou by the Germans and Port Arthur by the Russians.) In the early days, mail from the occupying forces was processed through the civil post office at Haiphong in Tonkin. In 1900, a cds reading "Quang Tcheou/Indo-Chine Francaise" was introduced.

FRENCH FORCES ABROAD
Kwangchowan

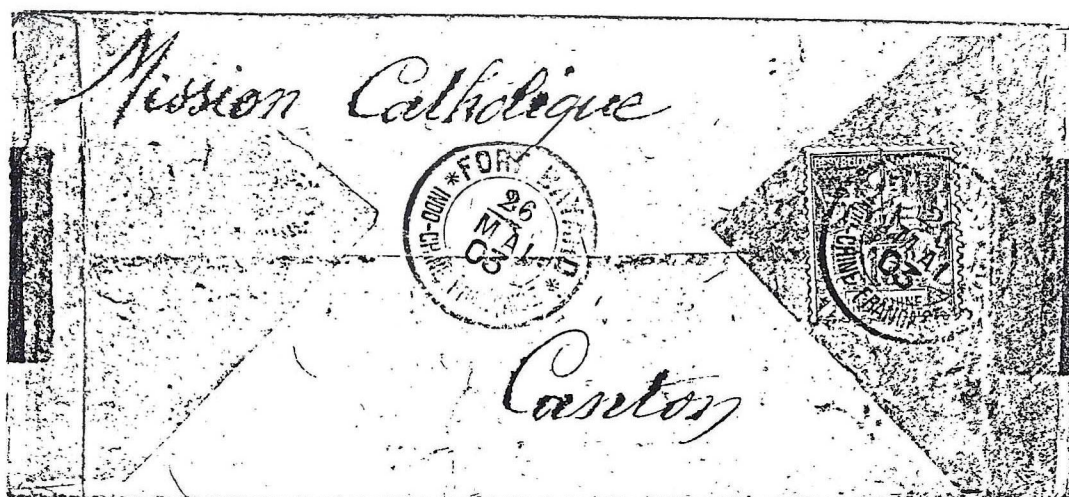
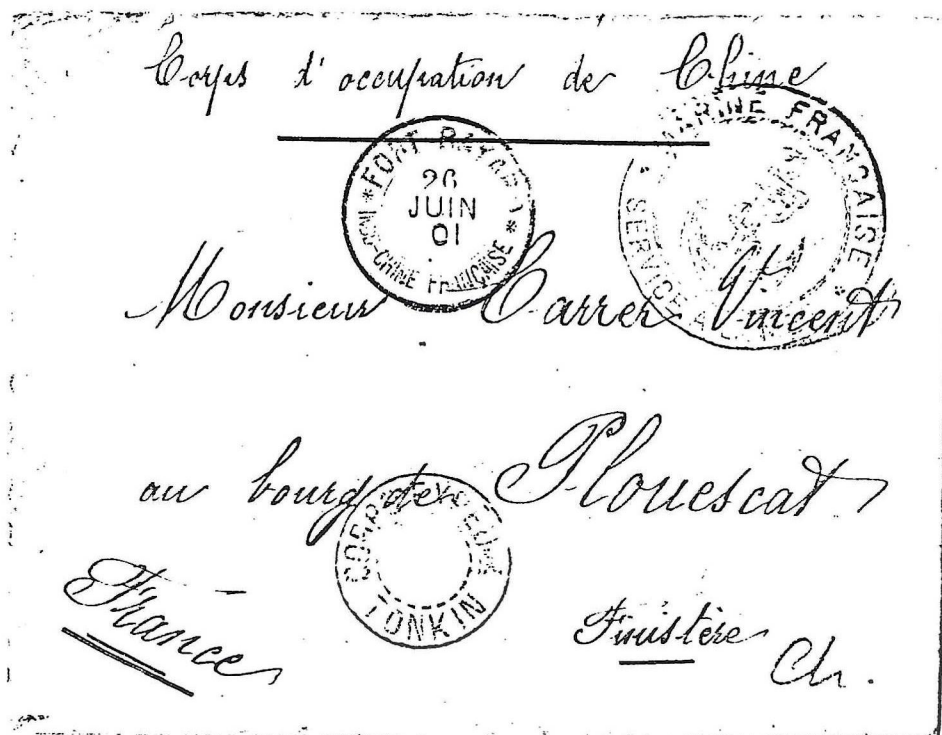
Quang Tcheou
29 December 1900
29 November 1901



For purposes of administration, Kwangchowan was assigned to the colonial government of French Indo-China. Although military mail to Metropolitan France or the colonies was free, postage had to be paid (in Indo-China stamps) on the lower cover because it was sent to a foreign country, i.e. Turkey.

FRENCH FORCES ABROAD
Kwangchowan

Fort Bayard
26 June 1901
26 May 1903

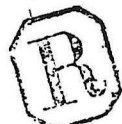


The principal town in the leased territory, Hsi-Ying, was given the appropriately French name of Fort Bayard and a new postmark with this designation was introduced in 1901.

FRENCH FORCES ABROAD
Kwangchowan

Kouang-Tcheou-Wan
15 July 1907
19 October 1908

Recommandée



Monsieur Boivin
P, rue Montmorency

France Paris, 3^e

ADMINISTRATION DES POSTES ET DES TÉLÉGRAPHES
de l'Indo-Chine

BUREAU
DE
KOUANG-TCHÉOU-WAN



691

Messieurs Graca & Co

58 Peel Street

Ann

Hong Kong

The first postage stamps prepared specifically for the leased territory were overprints on French Indo-China, which were placed on sale in October 1906. These were replaced in May 1908 by overprints on a new series of stamps depicting "Native Heads" that had been issued in Indo-China in the prior year.