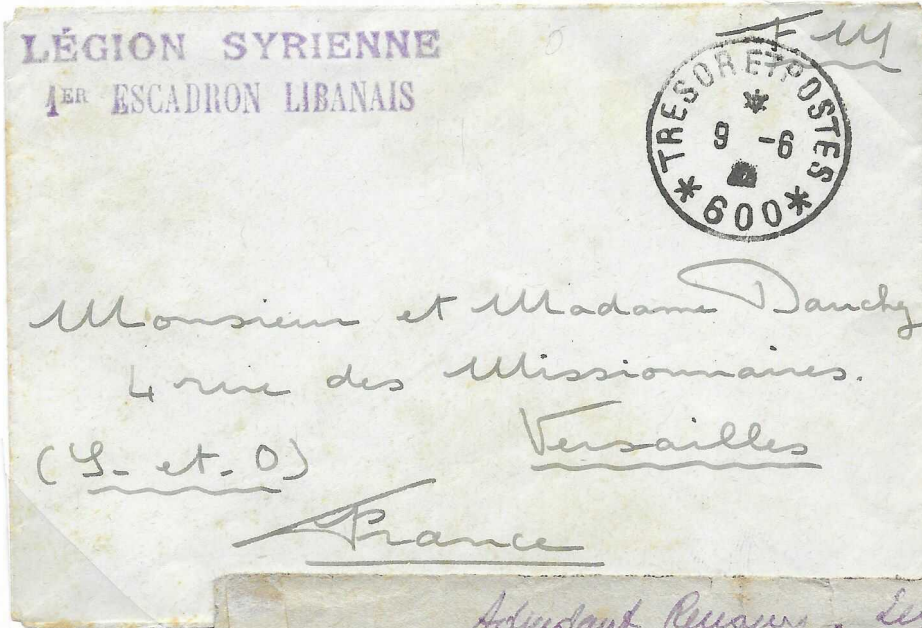


SYRIA
Legion Syrienne
1er Escadron Libanais

Tresor et Postes 600
9 June 1921
25 September 1921

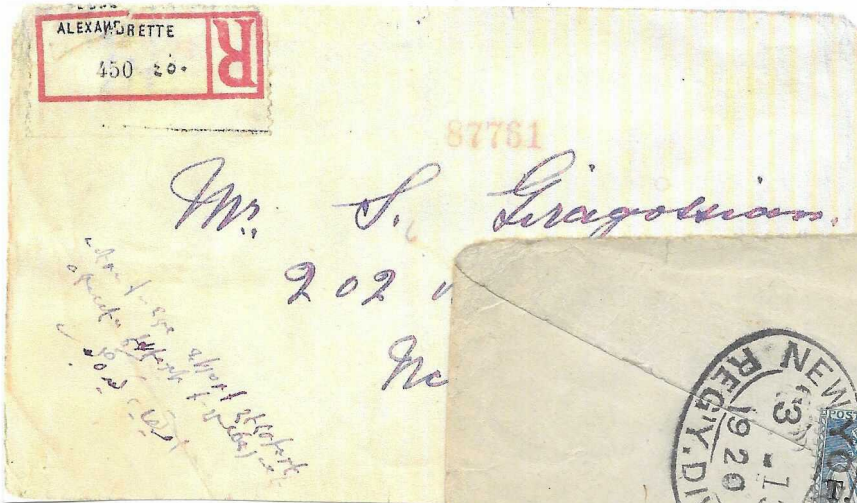


With the term "Syria" applying to the entire area under French administration, there was also a Lebanese unit within the Syrian Legion, known as the "1st Lebanese Squadron." Examples above show outbound and inbound letters involving this group.

SYRIA
T.E.O. Franking

Alexandrette
12 February 1920

Beyrouth
17 February 1920



The first French stamps specifically for the occupied territory were issued on 21 November 1919 and consisted of French Levant issues overprinted "T.E.O. (Occupied Enemy Territory)" and surcharged with the appropriate denominations. Upper example paid the 2 piastre rate for an international registered letter sent from Alexandretta to New York City. Lower cover with four color franking from Beirut to Ohio.

SYRIA
O.M.F. Franking

Broumana (Liban)
5 December 1919

Alexandrette
3 September 1920



The first stamps to specifically identify "Syria" were French definitives overprinted "O.M.F. (French Military Occupation)/Syrie" and surcharged with new denominations. The catalogues all indicate that the stamps were issued in 1920 (although the upper cover from Broumana clearly shows a December 1919 date). These stamps were initially used in all of the French-occupied coastal areas of the Eastern Mediterranean, including Lebanon, the Alawite Territory, Alexandretta and even Cilicia.

SYRIA
Official Mail
Palmyre Marking

Beyrouth
17 September 1920

Tresor et Postes 610
24 January 1925



Upper cover contained an official letter from the High Commission of the French Republic in Syria and Lebanon, located in Beirut. However, postage was required because it was sent to a foreign country. Cover below sent from Palmyra, the site of the most well-preserved Crusader castle in the Levant, by a member of the 1st Company of the Camel Corps. There was no post office at the castle, so a special origination mark inscribed "Palmyre" was applied. A military postmark was then applied at Damascus.

SYRIA
O.M.F. Franking

Alie (Liban)
8 December 1921

Djadj (Djebeil)
1 March 1921

Saidnail (Bekaa)
19 January 1922



The "O.M.F. Syrie" overprints continued to be used throughout Lebanon until superseded by the "Syrie - Grand Liban" overprints in 1923. Examples above used from small villages to most unusual destinations in Missouri, Pennsylvania and Saskatchewan,

SYRIA
O. M. F. Franking

Beyrouth
11 July 1921

Halep
10 February 1923



These examples of O.M.F. overprints are used on registered mail from Beirut (Lebanon) to London and from Aleppo (Syria) to Istanbul, Turkey.

SYRIA
O.M.F. Franking

In addition to the use of overprinted Arab Government stamps, various issues of French stamps with the same overprint were now available for use in the interior provinces of Syria, including Aleppo and Damascus, as well as the coastal areas.



Halep (Souk el-Habil)
 1 February 1922

Damas
 25 February 1923



Registered covers with O.M.F. overprints on French stamps mailed from Aleppo and Damascus in the former Kingdom of Syria to Turkey and Switzerland, respectively.

SYRIA

Overprints on Arab Government Stamps

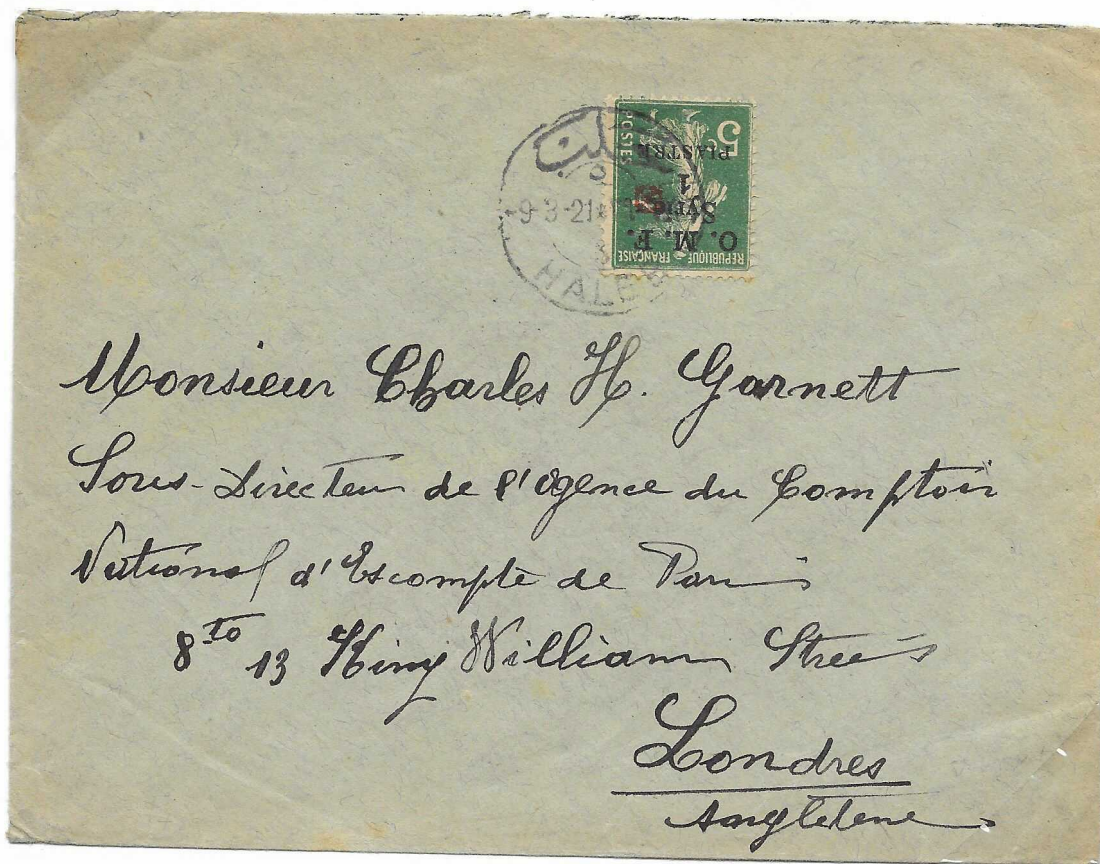
Notwithstanding the British promises to support an Arab government in the interior parts of Syria and the subsequent inauguration of Emir Feisal as King, the French fully intended to exert their control over the entire country. In the summer of 1920, they were ready and their troops advanced from the coastal area, defeating the Arab forces at Maysalun and entering Damascus on 25 July. King Feisal fled from the country (but subsequently, under British protection, was named King of Iraq). In 1921, the remaining stocks of Arab Government stamps were overprinted "O.M.F. Syrie," surcharged with new values and placed in service.



Picture postcard and registered letter mailed from Damascus to New Hampshire and Galata (Turkey), respectively, during the period that the overprints on Arab Government stamps were used.

SYRIA
O. M. F. Franking
Currency Depreciation Issue

Halep
9 March 1921



Even after the withdrawal of the EEF in favor of the French, Egyptian piasters continued to circulate in the Vilayet of Aleppo, while old Turkish currency remained in use elsewhere in Syria. Because the latter had depreciated in value, O.M.F. stamps sold in Aleppo were overprinted with a square control mark in black or red in December 1920. This was intended to prevent currency arbitrage with adhesives purchased more cheaply elsewhere being used in Aleppo. This cover was franked with a surcharged 1 piaster stamp with red control mark, thus paying the international letter rate to England. It is the only example of such franking seen by exhibitor.

SYRIA
O.M.F. Airmail Franking

Haleb
26 May 1921

Alexandrette
5 October 1921



In order to expedite military communications, the French created an airmail service between Aleppo and Alexandretta in late 1920. A limited quantity of 3,500 sets of three O.M.F. overprints (see lower cover) were additionally marked with a square box inscribed "Poste par Avion" and placed on sale on 1 December 1920. When these ran out, a second set was similarly overprinted and 1,500 sets issued on 12 June 1921 (upper cover).

SYRIA
O.M.F. Airmail Franking

Haleb
10 October 1921

Beyrouth
25 July 1922



The airmail service was popular, requiring more sets. On 5 October 1921, three values of O.M.F. stamps were overprinted "Avion" reading down, and 5,500 sets were issued. In 1922, a new set of four values (a 2 piastre denomination being added) was overprinted "Poste par Avion" across the top, and 10,000 sets were issued.

A. P. T. : T. E. O., 48

Un colis
Administration des Postes et Télégraphes des Territoires Ennemis Occupés, Beyrouth

COUPON
تسليمه
Timbre du bureau d'origine
طابع مكتب التصدير

10 MAR 1923
HALEP

Bureau REPUBLIQUE FRANÇAISE O.M.F. POSTES 20c
تذكرة

Expédition Numéro du colis غرة الطرد
250

Nom et domicile de l'expéditeur اسم وسكن المصدّر
Melle Mes-
sageot.
Mr. Syrie

Impression du cachet de fermeture du colis.
تعبئة الحزم الموضوح على الطرد

10 MAR 1923
HALEP

Nombre des déclarations en douane الرمز المتحصل غروش
Taxe perçue Prs 42.50 عدد تقارير الكمرتك

a remplir pour les valeurs déclarées
Valeur assurée القيمة المؤمن عليها

FCS.
فرنكات

Nom et adresse du destinataire اسم وسكن المرسل اليه
Joseph. Messageot
Mersine
Lieu de destination الجهة المتصدر اليها *Cilicia*

Poids exact d'un colis valeur déclarée وزن الطرود بالقيمة
225 g.

a remplir au bureau au change

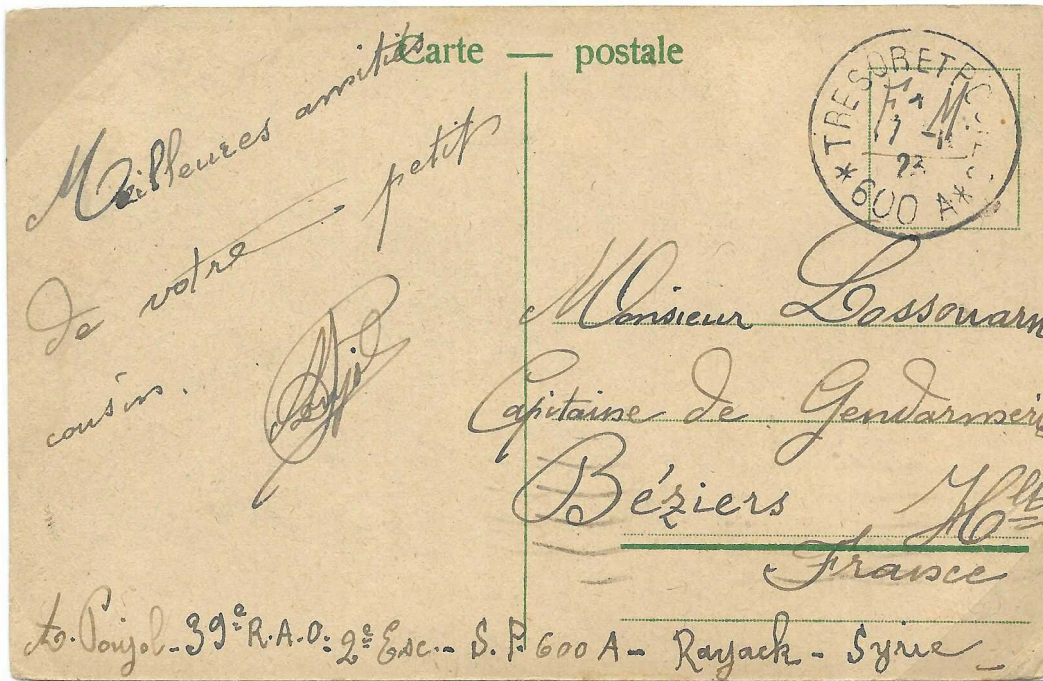
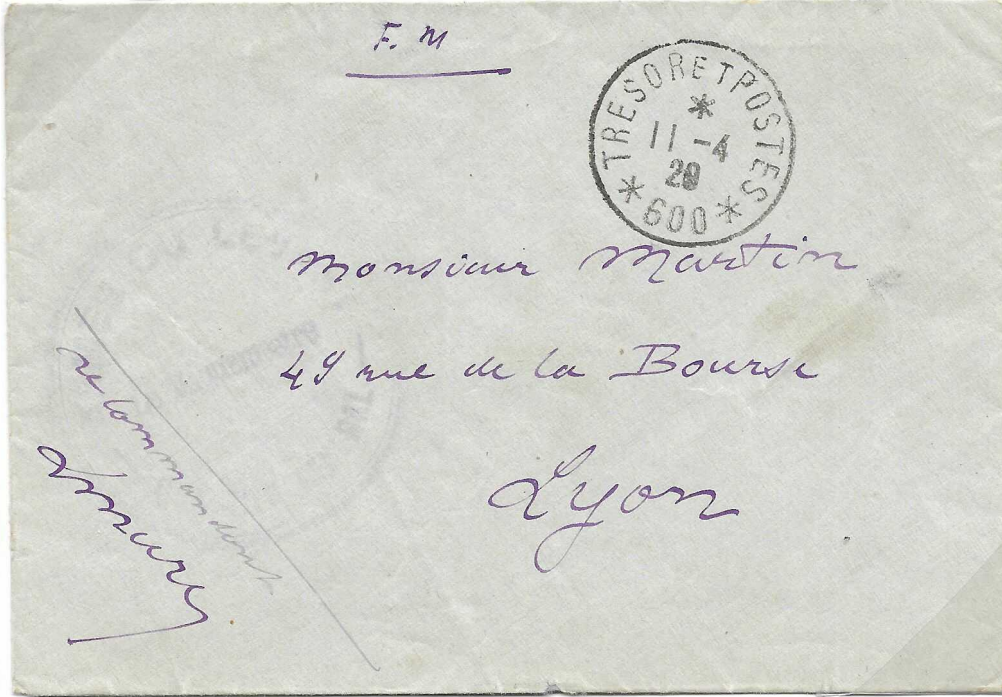
Acheminement
Voie من طريق *Sheandrette*

The use of O.M.F. stamps for postal services other than letters and cards is highly unusual. The example shown is the address card for a value declared (42.50 piastres) parcel sent from Aleppo to Mersine (Cilicia), which by this time had been restored to Turkey. Note use of a new French-Arabic postmark instead of the old Ottoman one.

SYRIA
Military Mail

Tresor et Postes 600
11 April 1920

Tresor et Postes 600A
17 January 1923



With a large area to be patrolled, the French established garrisons in the major cities. Above items sent from the headquarters of the French Army of the Levant at FPO #600 in Beirut and from FPO #600A in Rayak.

SYRIA
Military Mail

Tresor et Postes 606
7 June 1921

Tresor et Postes 608
5 July 1920



Registered covers from FPO #606 and 608 at Rayak (Lebanon) to France, with 60 centimes registration fee paid in each case by French adhesives.

SYRIA
Military Mail

Tresor et Postes 607
14 August 1921

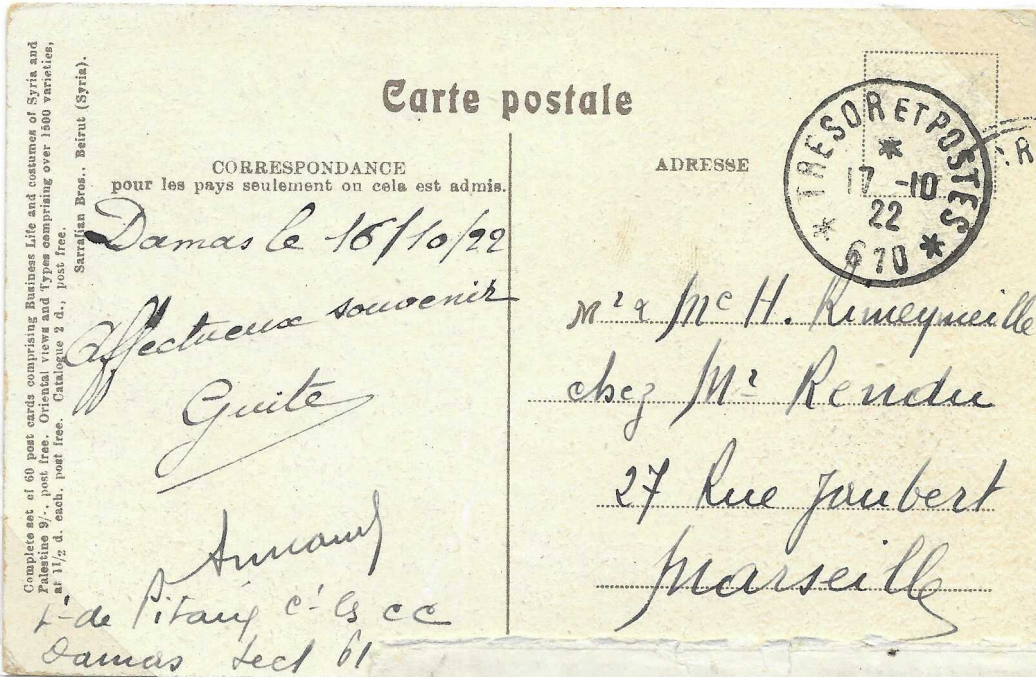
Tresor et Postes 607-A
20 April 1922



Military letters sent from FPO #607 at Alexandretta and #607-A at Antioch. Note that while postage was not charged, the registration fee had to be paid in French stamps.

SYRIA
Military Mail

Tresor et Postes 610
17 October 1922
24 March 1923



Postcard and registered cover from FPO #610 at Damascus. The latter was sent to Mainz in the French-occupied Rhineland area of Germany and then forwarded to Wiesbaden.