

The Postal History of French Forces in Tunisia 1900-1920 & the South Tunisian Campaign 1915-1917

David Trapnell

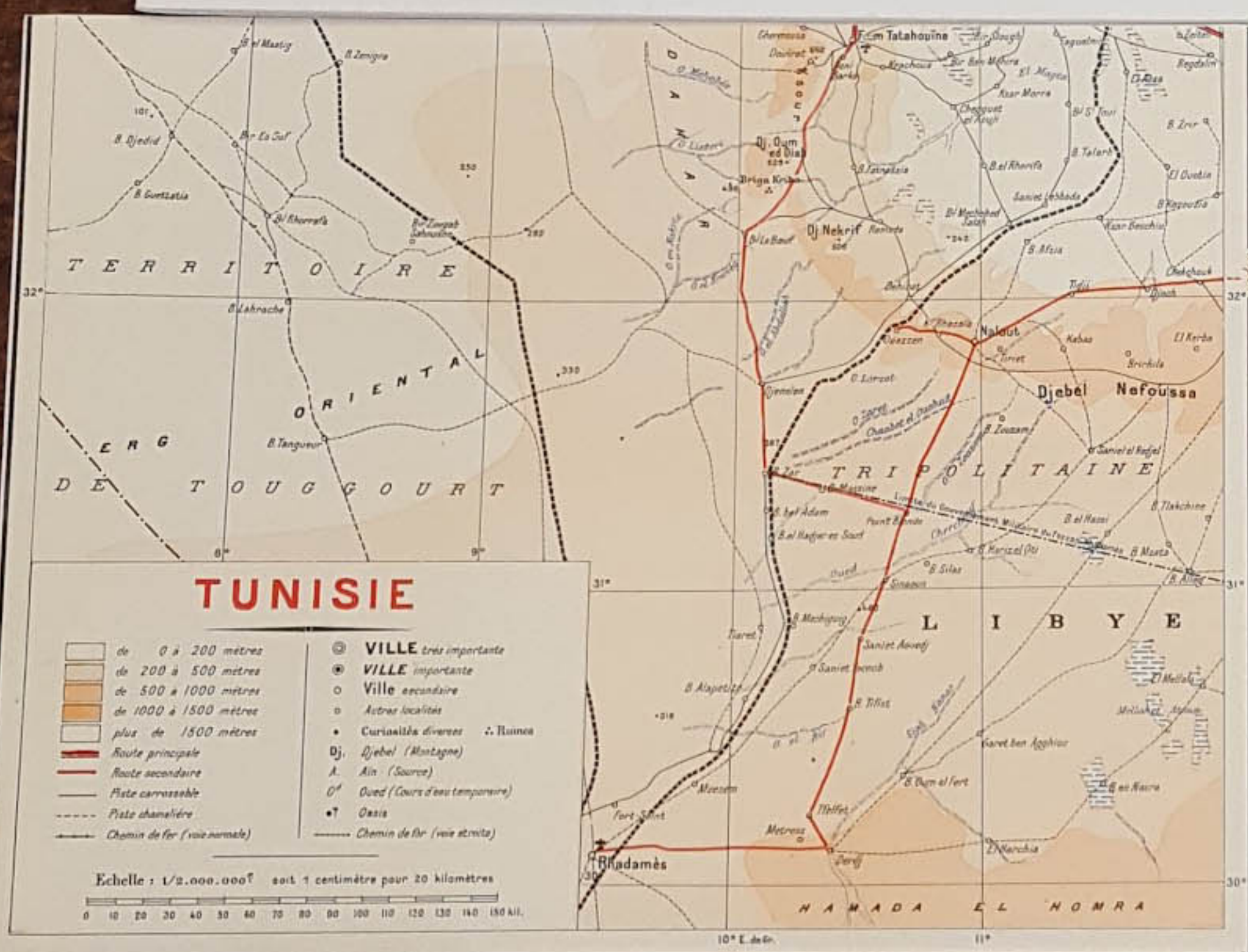


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CONDITIONS IN THE EXTREME SOUTH 1915-1917 CAMPAIGN



The cockroach was everywhere- the south was its kingdom!
Towns shown = Dehibat, Ben-Gardane, Fom Tathouine & Medenine.



The few quality buildings - however grotty - were used as HQs
KEBILI

AVIATION MILITAIRE
COASTAL SQUADRON 490 at SFAX, 1918



cds SFAX 14.8.18

AVIATION MILITAIRE / ESCADRILLE COTIERE 490



By 1918 some 'planes were more sophisticated than this!

SOUTH TUNISIAN SQUADRON 301
(ESCADRILLE 301 S.T.)

MINISTÈRE DE LA GUERRE
DIRECTION DE L'AÉRONAUTIQUE
ESCADRILLE
SUD-TUNISIEN

h/s on reverse of
unused card

MINISTRY OF WAR
AIR SERVICES HQ
SOUTH TUNISIAN
SQUADRON



"Campaign 1915-16. South Tunisia. A flight of 'planes."
Primitive military lorries also shown.
Authorizing h/s the same as example below -



"Authorizing h/s ESCADRILLE 301 S.T." + cds FOUM TATHOUINE 8.11. 1918

TUNIS POSTAL CENSORSHIP OFFICE
+
boxed OUVERT PAR L'AUTORITÉ MILITAIRE



10c adhesive tied by
HÔPITAL MARINE / SIDI ABDALAH
authorizing h/s.

On reverse
TUNIS RP / TUNISIE 8.11.16

GENÈVE 1 arrival ds
16.11.16

CENSORSHIP
DÉTACHEMENT DU 16^e ESCADRON DU TRAIN / TATAHOINE
LE CAPITAINE COMMANDANT
1916



FOUM
TATAHOINE
21.2.16



VISÉ 19.0mm
Bourguinat Fig.246



Bourguinat p.406

Reverse OUVERT SUR REQUISITION / DE L'AUTORITÉ MILITAIRE /
(DÉCRET DU 2 AOÛT 1914)

Addressed from FOUM TATAHOINE to SFAX but CENSORED,
& closed with paper strip, tied by VISÉ h/s & boxed "OUVERT..."

J. BOURGUINAT (2010) Le contrôle postal et télégraphique Français pendant la première guerre ...

Boxed "Vendu par / L'AGENCE INTERNATIONALE /
DES PRISONNIERS DE GUERRE"

Red d/r MINISTÈRE DE LA GUERRE / CONTRÔLE POSTAL TUNIS

AVIATION TUNISIENNE

June 1918



h/s AVIATION TUNISIENNE / LE CHEF DE LA RÉSERVE
No cds.



The Soth-Tunisian Camapaign 1915-1917. Field ambulance.

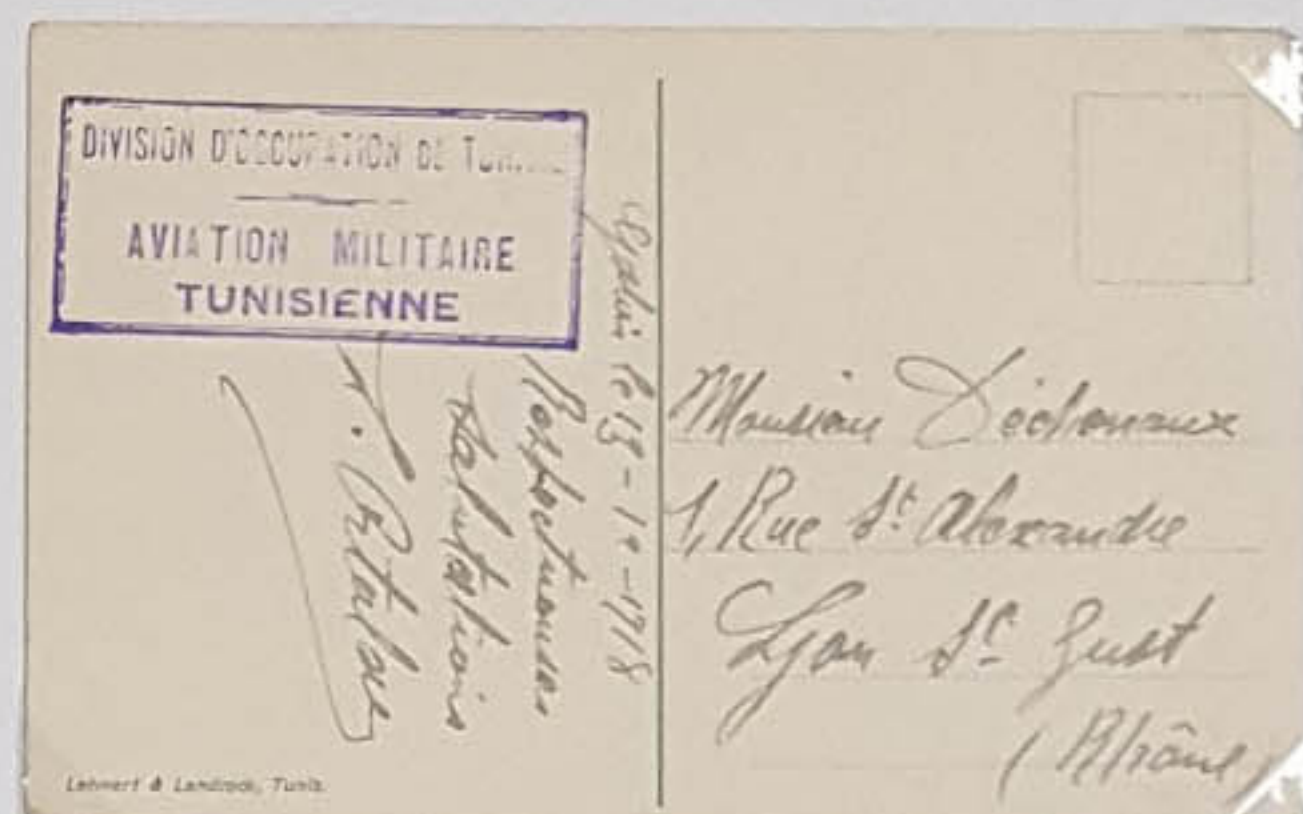
MILITARY AVIATION

1916, 1918

GABES



H/s unusually inclides "SERVICE POSTAL". Posted GABES RP 17.7.1916



TUNISIAN OCCUPATION DIVISION / MILITARY AVIATION, TUNISIA

The sender gave his address as Gabes (airfield).

RÉGIMENT DE TIRAILLEURS INDIGÈNES

(INDIGINOUS MARKSMEN)

1915, 1917



8e RÉGIMENT DE TIRAILLEURS INDIGÈNES / LE COLONEL
cds BIZERTE 16.10.15



4e RÉGIMENT DE TIRAILLEURS INDIGÈNES / LE COMMANDANT DU DÉTACHEMENT
cds SFAK 5.4.17

4th ZOUAVES REGIMENT

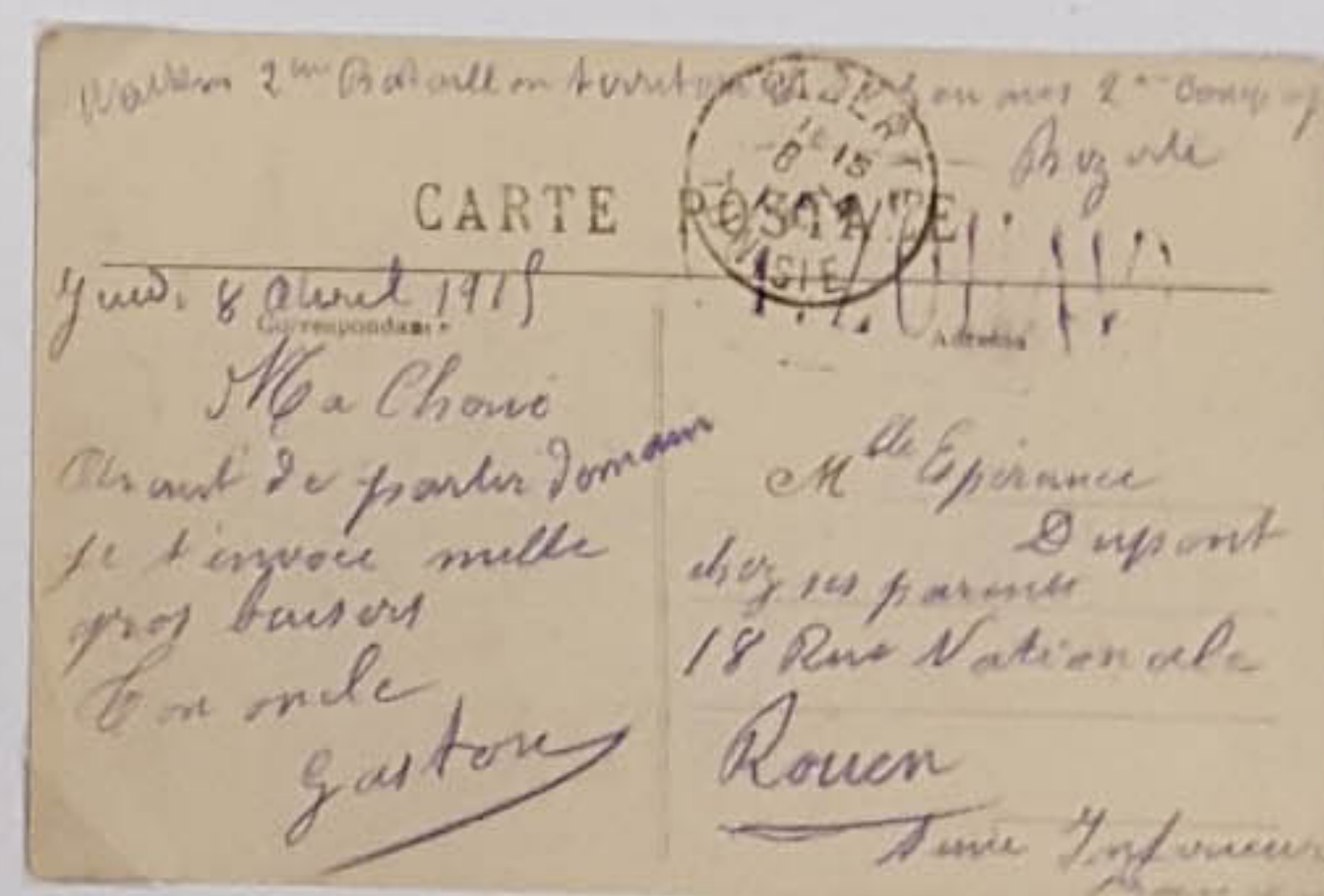
The ZOUAVES were a Berber tribe from Algeria

1915

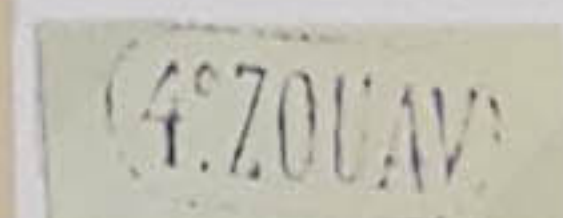


TUNIS DEPOT

4e REGT DE ZOUAVES / DEPOT DE TUNIS / SERVICE POSTAL
cds TUNIS RP 31.5.15



BIZERTE



4o ZOUAV (in oval frame) + BIZERTE cds 8.4.15

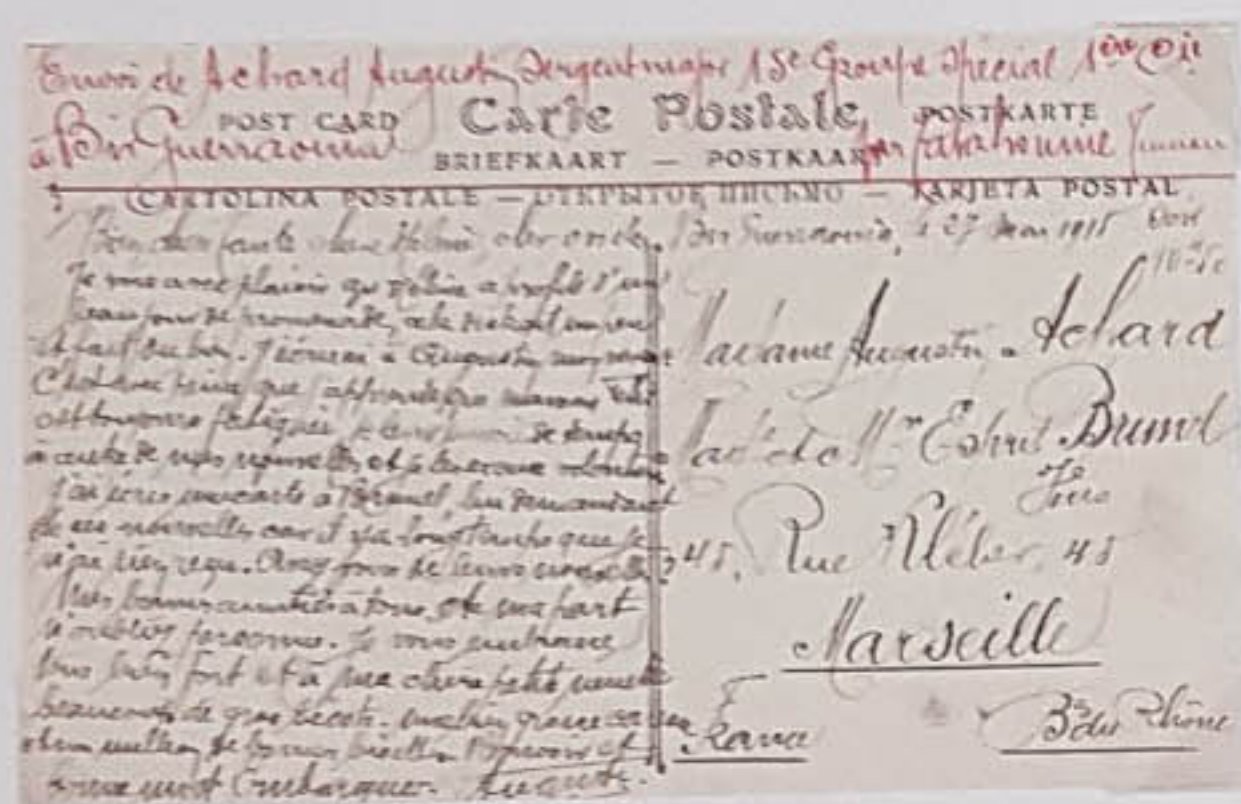


DETACHEMENT DU 15 ESCADRON DU TRAIN / TATAHOUEINE / LE CAPITAINE COMMANDANT
cde FOUR TATHOUINE / TUNISIE 8.4.1918 & on reverse, SFAX 10.4.1918



Numerous horses & camels & their carts in front of TATAHOUEINE camp.
The sender has marked the card "our camp" & "cuisine" (left)

GROUPE SPÉCIAL 1915



Sender - "Sergent Major 15e Groupe Spécial 1me Cie,
à Bir Guerraonia par Tatahouine, Tunisie



h/s " 15me GROUPE SPÉCIAL / Compie de Marche / LE COMMANDANT DU DÉTACHEMENT
M/s date 27 Mai 1915

The picture is on the reverse of the message shown at the top, without date-stamp.



cde MÉDENINE
17.11.1915

COMMANDMENT DU GENIE / TROUPES DU SUD TUNISIEN
Le CAPITAINE COMMANDANT
Card written & signed by the Captain himself



104 BATAILLON DE TIRAILLEURS SENÉGAIS / Le Chef de Bataillon
Sender's endorsement "Cce Mre" = Correspondence Militaire (top right)



117 BATAILLON DE TIRAILLEURS SENÉGAIS / LE COMMANDANT DE LA 1re Cie

NAVAL DOCKYARD & HOSPITAL, SIDI ABDALLAH
1914, 1918



a/h/s MARINE NATIONALE / SERVICE DE LA MER + BIZERTE cds 13.2.1918
Sender "Quartermaster sergent, relief cruiser "Saint Louis", Bizerte, Tunisia"



SIDI ABDALLAH, Port administrative offices + Naval a/h/s as above (worn)
On reverse - cds FERRYVILLE / TUNISIA 14.12.1914

TUNISIA - THE EXTREME SOUTH
SUPPLY TRAINS IN SEVERE TERRAIN
CAMELS & MULES PULL LARGE-WHEELED CARTS



OUM-SOUIGH - the watering place. "Campaign 1915-16"

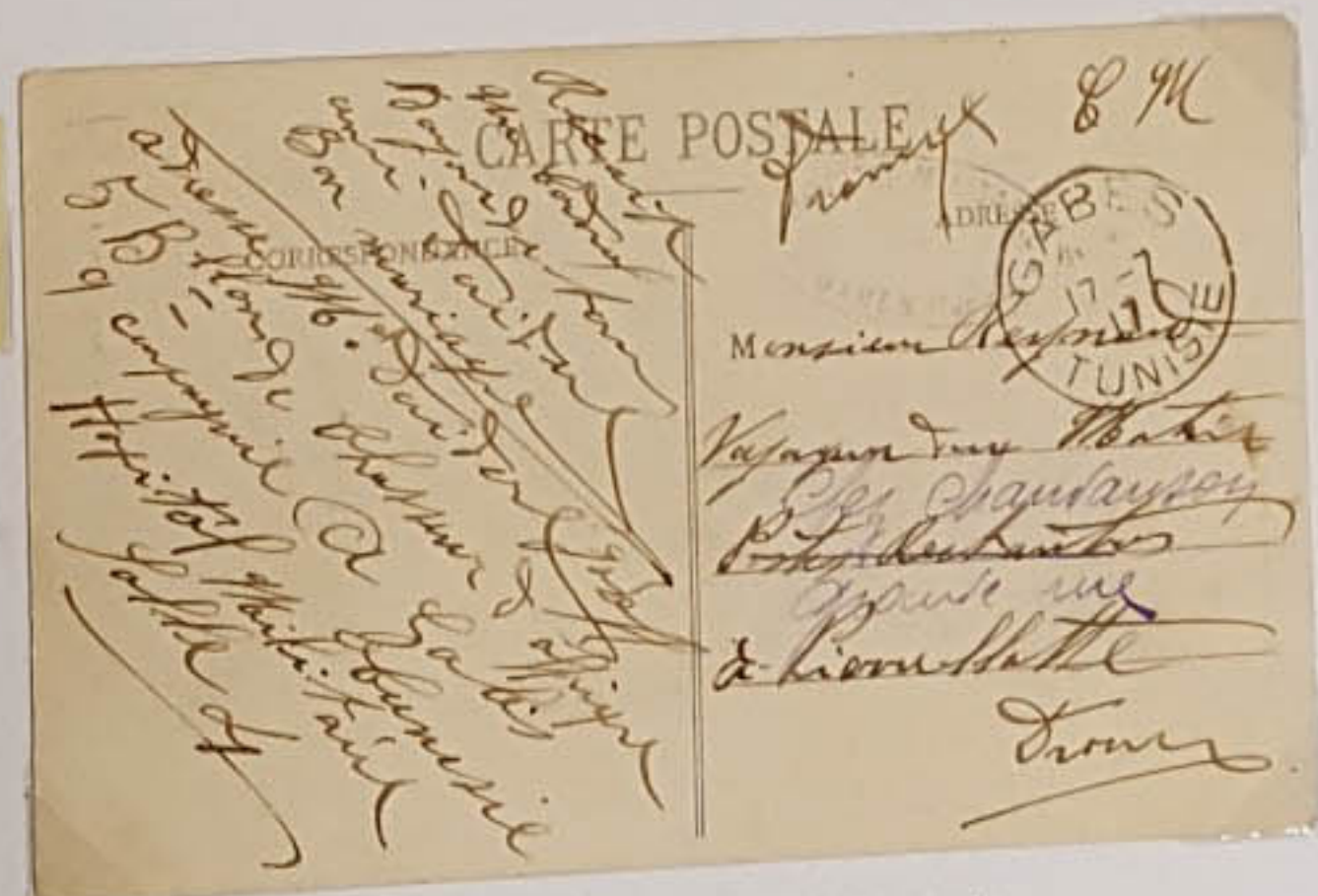


TAMELERT - Convoy halt.
The carts are parked in a square, wheels inwards. Camels in the background.
The size of the cart-wheels is shown by the men beside them.

GABES
1917, 1918



(red) 125th TERRITORIAL REGIMENT, 2nd Co., THE DETATCMENT COMMANDANT
BlackBM in oval = Boite mobile. cds GABES 3.11.1918.



Black oval HOPITAL MILITAIRE / de GABES Tunisie
cds GABES 17.7.1917 + "CM" (Correspondence Militaire)

GROUPE SPECIAL
1917

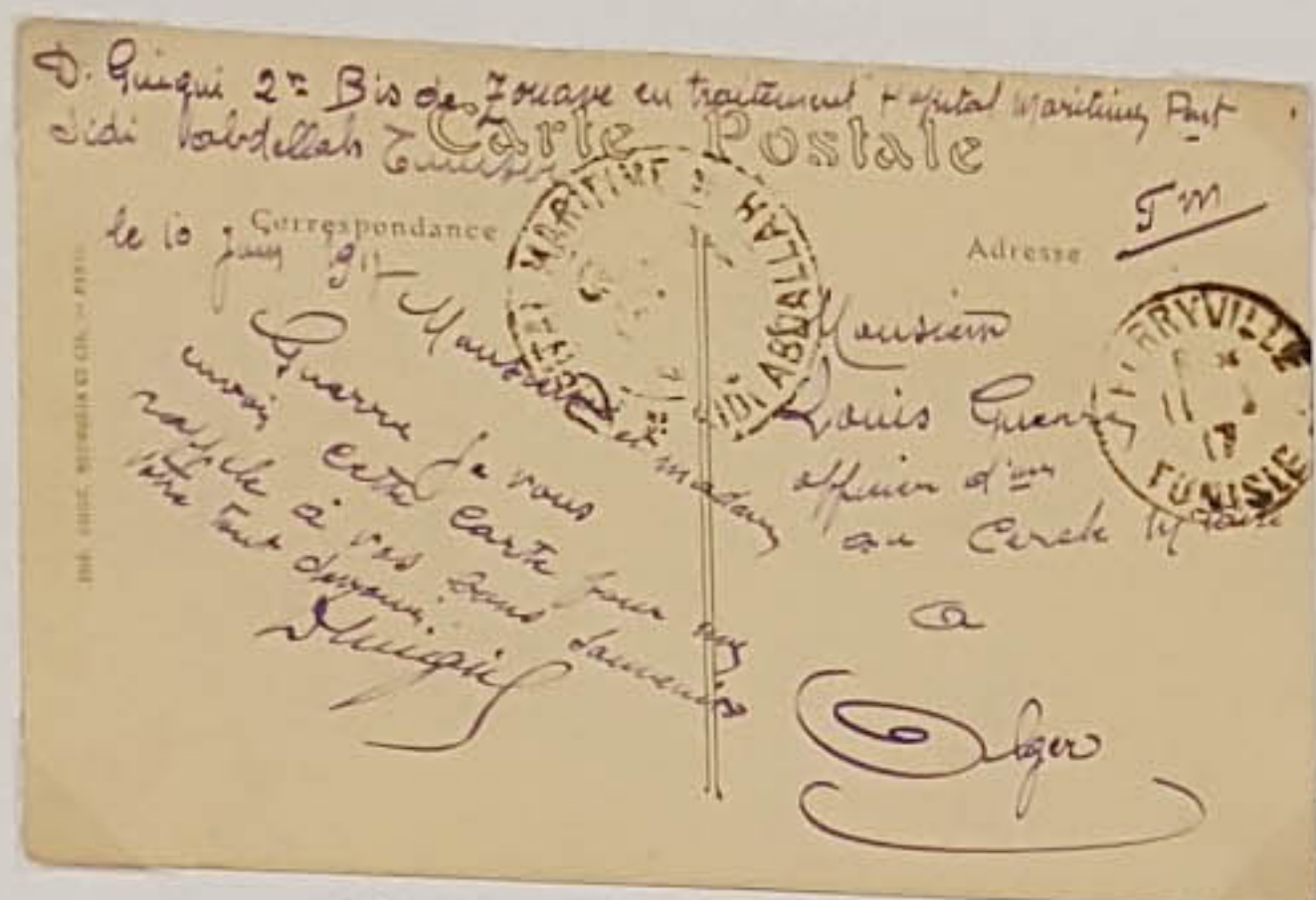


(? 20me) GROUPE SPECIAL / LE COMMANDANT
The view shows a sand storm with rifles stacked & tent prostrate. Dated 22 March 1917.



The same h/s, same correspondence. Dated 8 Jan. 1917.

SIDI ABDALLAH, PORT & ARSENAL, TUNIS
CIVIL POST OFFICE "FERRYVILLE"
1917



d/r black HÔPITAL MARITIME / SIDI ABDALLAH
m/s "2nd Bis de Zouave" under treatment Maritime Hospital,
Port Sidi Abdallah, Tunisia



Maritime Hospital, Sidi Abdallah, FERRYVILLE

BOITE MOBILE

"BM" handstamps from Tunisia are scarce from this period
1910



The 11x19mm BM h/s must have been applied before it reached AL DRAHAM.
The same day it reached SOUK EL ARBA, on the line between TUNIS & Algeria



TABARCA was a small port close to the border with Algeria
at the north end of the road from AL DRAHAM & SOUK EL ARBA.

FRANCHISE POSTALE MILITAIRE
7th FIELD ARTILLERY GROUP
FERRYVILLE, May 1915



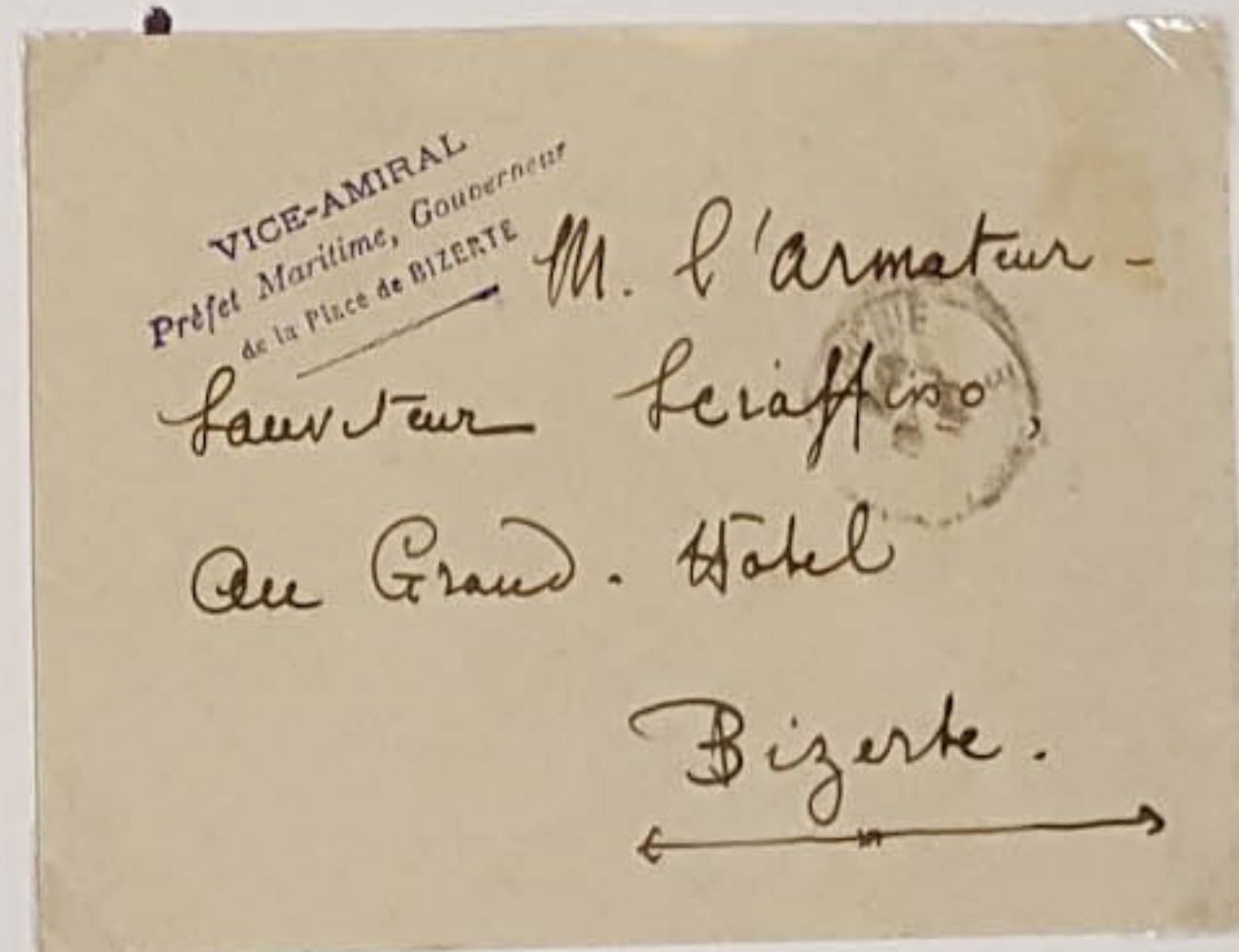
7me GROUPE D'ARTILLERIE A PIED / FRANCHISE POSTALE MILITAIRE



SIDI ABDALLAH arsenal (right), barracks (centre) & wireless station (left)

BIZERTE NAVAL DOCKYARD

1913, 1918



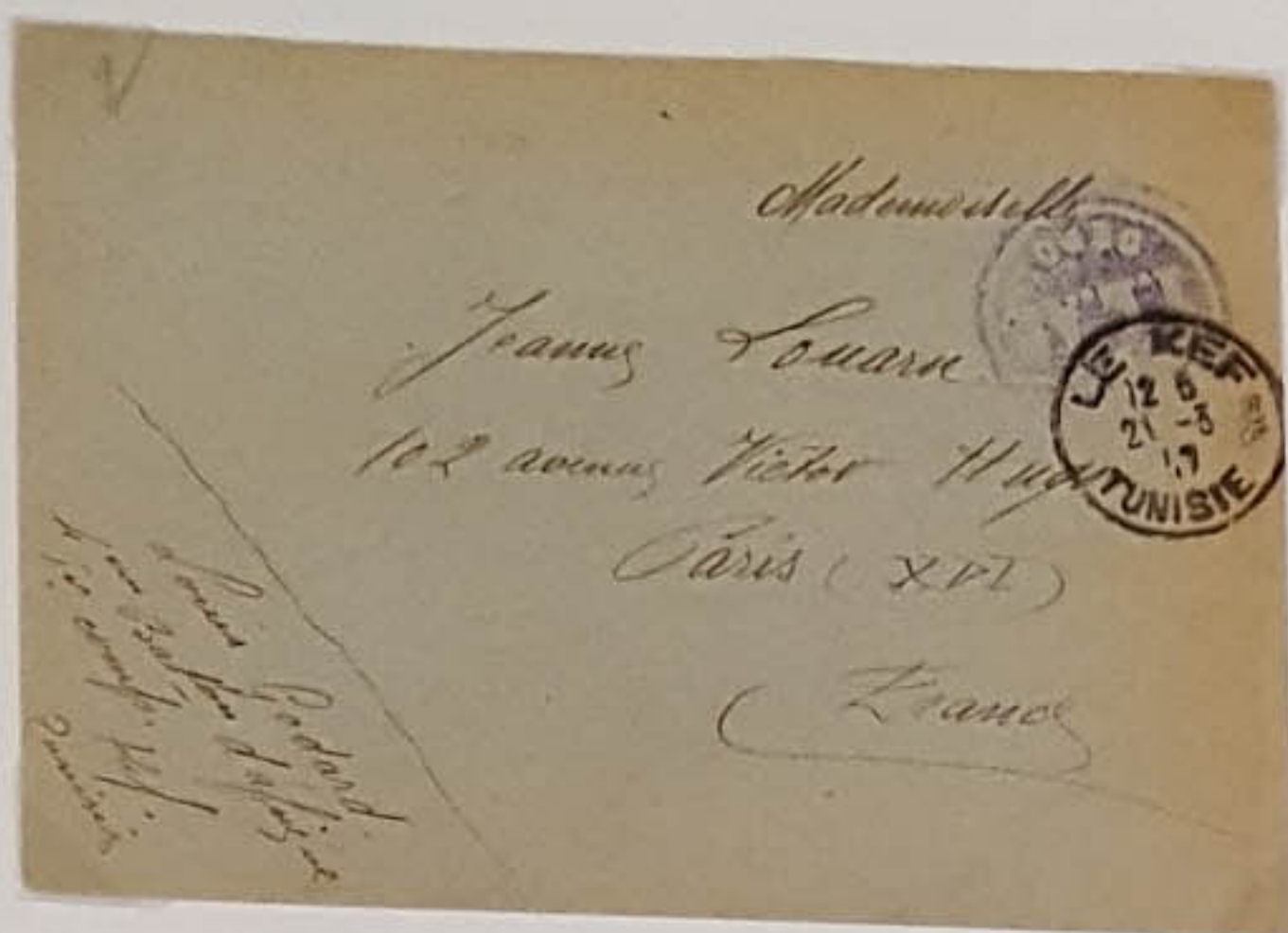
VICE-ADMIRAL, Naval Commander in Chief, Governor of Bizerte Dockyard



BIZERTE Barracks for submarine Crew & Officer's Pavilion

Both cds LA PECHERIE the civil post office in the dockyard, top 18.1.18, lower 20.7.1913.

LE KEF
NORTH AFRICAN ARMY DEPOT, 1917



a/h/s I.L.A.(B.?) DÉPO(T) + cds LE KEF 21.3.1917
Sender's note "4me Bation d'Afrique 1er comp. Kef. Tunisie"



General view of LE KEF - an ancient fortified hill town.
Note man + 2 donkeys, lower left

ENGINEERS AT BIZERTE
1904, 1916



29th ENGINEERS BATTALION / DEPOT
cds BIZERTE 18.10.1915



BIZERTE - "THE NEW ENGINEERS BARRACKS" - ?c.1902/3. cds over 24.10.1904

ARMÉE DE L'AFRIQUE DU NORD
CAMP SERVIÈRE
1914



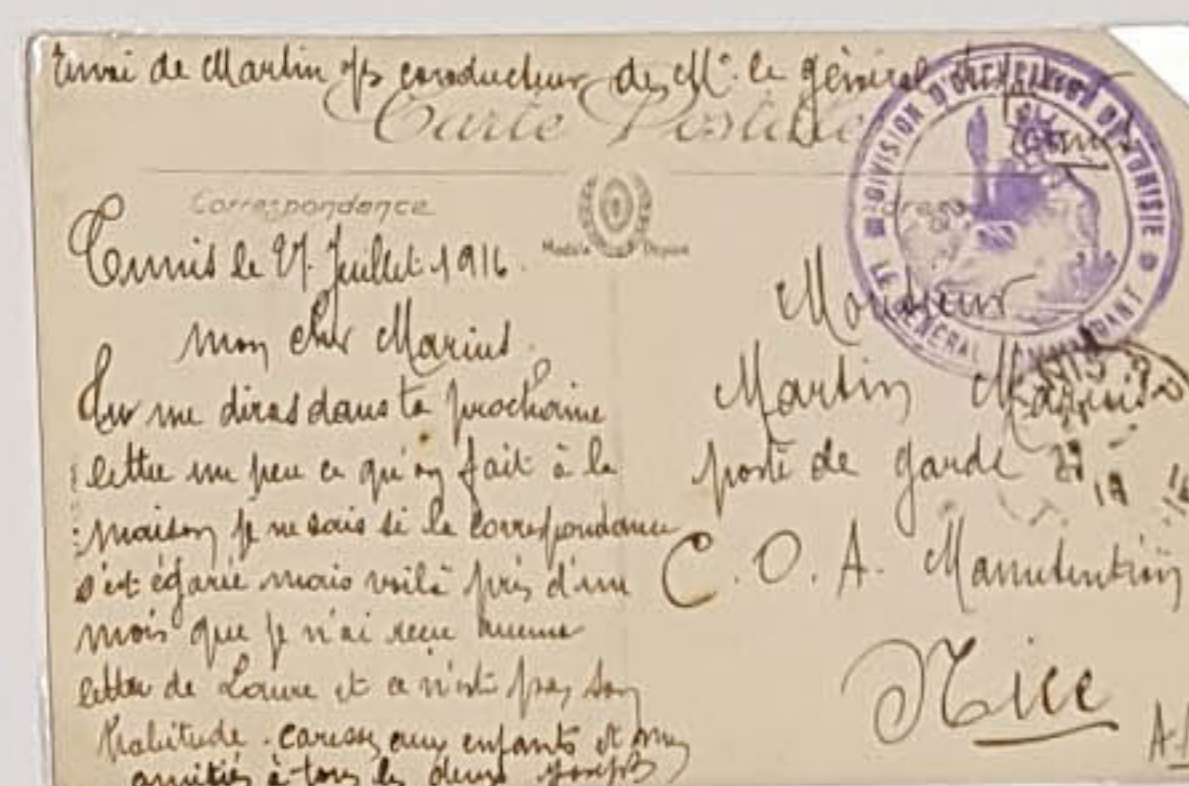
Card headed "Armée de l'Afrique du Nord"
a/h/s COMMANDANT D'ARMES / CAMP SERVIÈRE
cds CAMP SERVIÈRE 17.9.14 + anor. example 7.1.11



CAMP SERVIÈRE

What a desolate, isolated place to be posted!

OCCUPATION OF TUNISIA DIVISION
1916, 1923

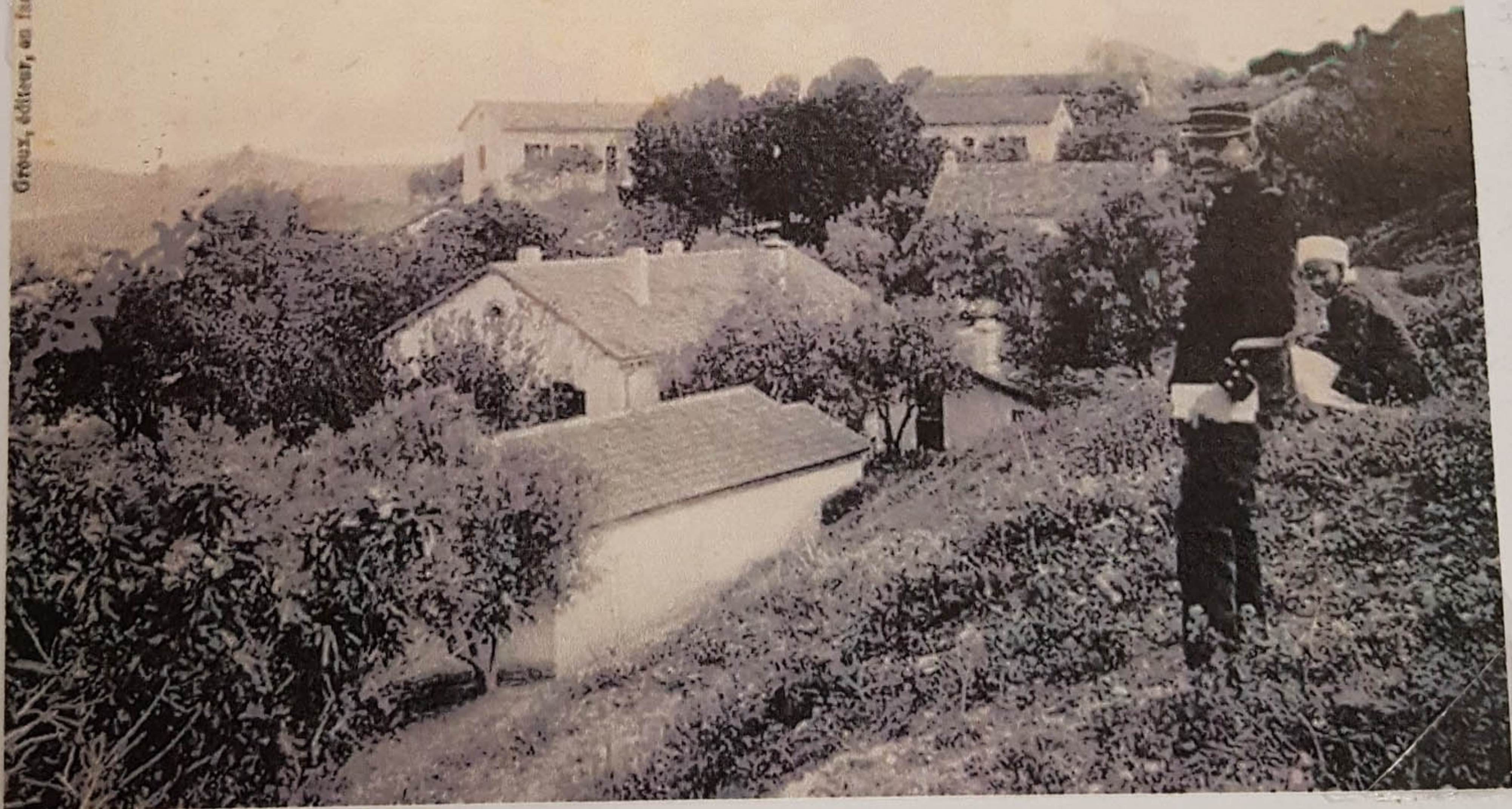


DIVISION D'OCCUPATION DE TUNISIE / LE GENERAL COMMANDANT
Sender "Driver of Mons. the General Inspector. 27.7.1916.



"DIVISION D'OCCUPATION / DE TUNISIE / CONSEIL DE GUERRE"
Tunis cds 4.10.1923

EL KEF. - L'Hôpital Militaire



GENERAL i/c SOUTH TUNISIAN TROOPS
HEADQUARTERS, MÉDENINE, May 1918



d/r "Le Général Commandant les Troupes du Sud Tunisien"
Boxed FRONT SUD-TUNISIEN known only on this correspondence.
Sender "Telphonist, HQ of South Tunisian Detachment, 11 May 1918."



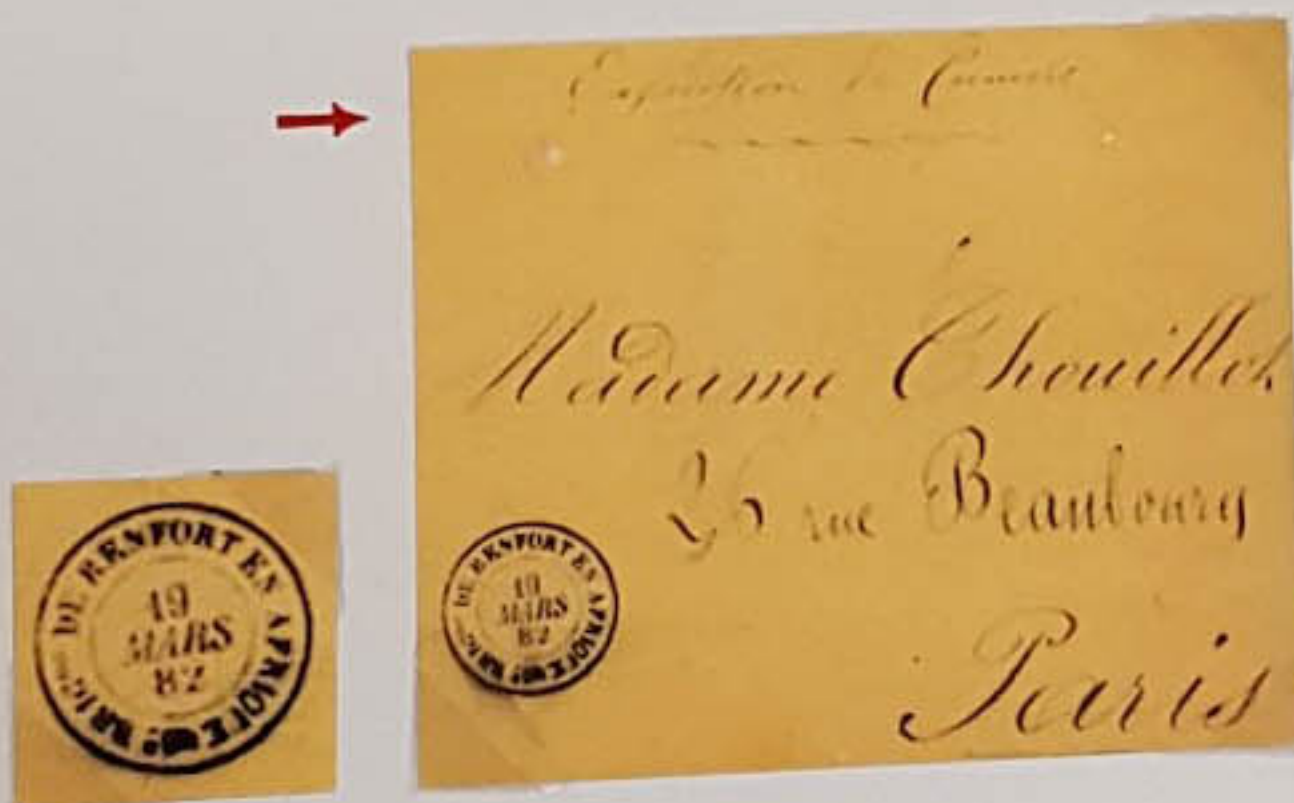
MÉDENINE military camp

THE SENDER OF THE TOP CARD SAYS THE TEMPERATURE IS 38°C!

THE FRENCH OCCUPATION OF TUNISIA 1881-1882



m/s CORPS EXPÉDITIONNAIRE DE TUNISIE
Steel cds TUNIS (TUNISIE) / TRESOR ET PES / 12 AOUT 1882



m/s EXPÉDITION DE TUNISIE
Steel cds DE RENFORT EN AFRIQUE (?) BRIGde / 19 MARS 1882

www image

THE TUNISIAN EXPEDITIONARY CORPS WAS LATER CALLED
THE ARMY OF NORTH AFRICA (L'armée de l'Afrique du Nord)

ARMÉE DE L'AFRIQUE DU NORD
PRIVATE PERSONAL HANDSTAMP - Aug, 1914



The 2-straight-line h/s, lower left, reads
"Le Capitaine PERIGAUD Comm. Le Dépôt /
de la 12e Cie. du 16e Escadron du Train des E.M."

"E.M." here probably stands for "Établissement du Matériel"

Over this is struck the circular authorizing handstamp of
Le Capitaine Commandant, Le Dépôt.

Beside this is the signature of Capt. Perigaud.

ARMY OF OCCUPATION OF TUNISIA
EARLY AUTHORIZATION HANDSTAMPS



s/line DIVISION D'OCCUPATION DE TUNISIE and
Direction d'Artillerie de BIZERTE



2me REGIMENT DE TIRAILLEURS ALGERIENS / 5e BATAILLON / Le Commandant
m/s "Corps débarquement de Casablanca" + cds LE KEF / REGENCE DE TUNIS 8.7.1910

Correspondence to the Army of Occupation is scarce.