

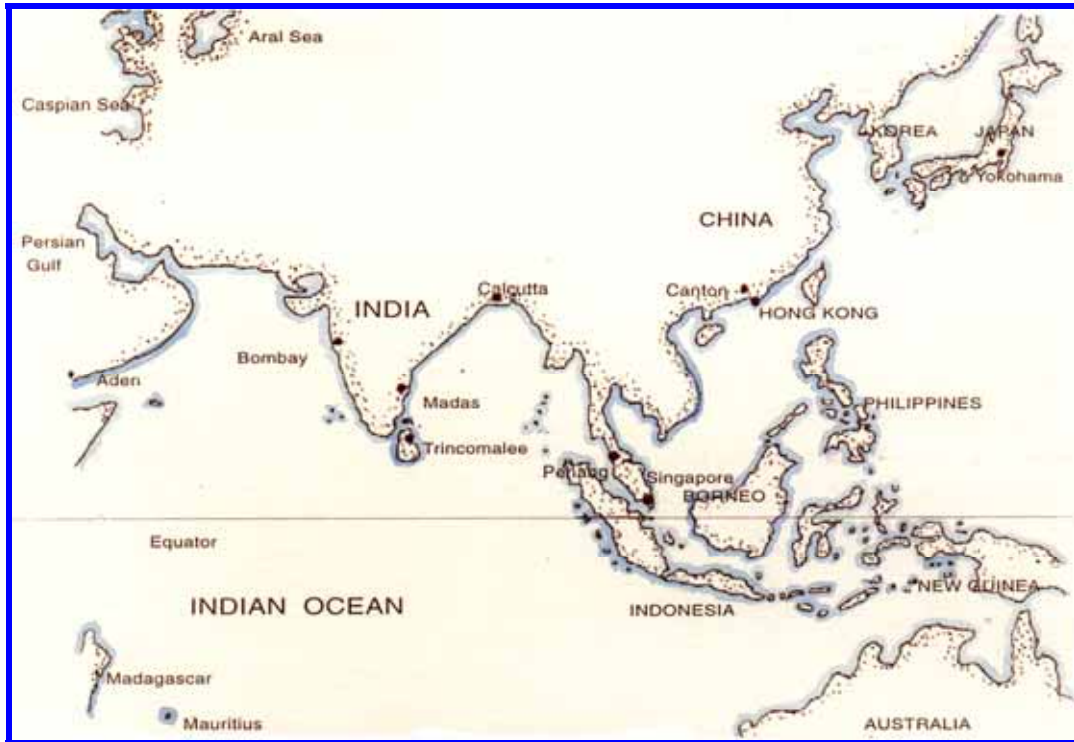
The Royal Navy
East Indies
&
China Naval Station

A brief History
Including Letters from
Officers and Seamen

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MNZM RDP FRPSNZ

May 2011
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EAST INDIES & CHINA STATION



The purpose of creating Stations overseas, was basically for the maintenance and repair of Royal Navy Ships, whilst away from Great Britain. They were also a base for naval stores and the provision of victuals. They provided a means of communications between the Admiralty and the Station; between the ships and the Station and the relief of crews at the end of a commission. The replacement and recommissioning of ships at regular intervals were all matters which had to be dealt with by the Admiralty.

In the East, bases for supplies and refitting were less numerous, and the base at Bombay was supplemented after 1796 by stores at Madras. The capture of Mauritius in 1810 ended the French presence in the Indian ocean. Trincomalee in Ceylon was captured from the Dutch in 1795 and became an important base for both supplies and refitting. Between 1798 and 1816 a Storekeeper was stationed at Penang.

A Base at Singapore was also formed early in the 19th century.

EAST INDIES & CHINA STATION

(Combined pre 1865)

A separate CHINA Station was formed in 1865

The extension of British commerce caused the First China War. A British force was dispatched to China in June 1840. It was during peace negotiations that Hong Kong was ceded to Great Britain. Following the occupation of the island of Hong Kong by the British, this was resented by the Chinese, and hostilities were resumed, with the Canton being occupied by British forces in May 1841. Once again, the Chinese did not honour the agreement reached, and a new attack took place against Nanking in August 1842.

A Naval Brigade, including marines, also took a prominent part, from both the Royal Navy ships and those of the Hon. East India Company.

Hong Kong became a base after the signing of the Treaty of Nanking on 29 September 1842, when Hong Kong was ceded to Great Britain.

The First China Medal 1842, was granted in January 1843.

The next incident where men from the Royal Navy were involved from this station was in 1843, when medals were issued to the naval force taking part in the campaign. 110 medals "Scinde 1843" were issued to the Indus Flotilla, 115 medals for Hyderabad, to the crews of H.E.I. Co's *Comet*, *Meteor*, & *Nimrod*. Medals were also given to naval men for Meeanee 1843, Hyderabad 1843 and Meeanee-Hyderabad 1843.

A Naval Brigade of seamen, 100 strong with 7 officers, from the Indian Navy under Commander F.T. Powell served at the siege of Moolton and received the Punjab 1848/49 medal. This was the first occasion upon which seamen served so far away from their ships. Seamen and marines from HMS *Fox*, *Rattler*, *Serpent*, *Sphinx*, *Salamander*, *Hermes*, *Winchester* and a gunboat together with 22 of the H.E.I. Co's boats, which included *Pluto* and *Feroze*, who took part in the Second Burmese War 1851-53, received the India General Service Medal 1854 with the bar for Pegu.

HMS *Serpent*

HMS *Serpent*, Snake class of 1831, Second Class brig, 418t, 16 guns, complement 110. Keel laid down February 1832, launched 14 July 1832; 1857 Gunnery Tender; 1861 broken up. On the East Indies Station, involved in the Second Burma War 1851-52. Commander William Nevill.

7 September 1845 Entire Letter Madras - From J. Lines Seaman on board Her Majestys [sic] Sloop *Serpent*, and signed by Lieutenant George A. Payre



Posted UNPAID, backstamped LONDON cds and NORTHAMPTON double arc cds 30 October 1845

Letter placed in the “*Sealed Navy Bag*” and carried on P&O *Bentink* from Bombay to Suez 15.9.1845, transferred at Alexandria 9.10.1845 to P&O *Great Liverpool* to Southampton 29.10.1845. The P&O *Great Liverpool* was later wrecked on 24.2.1846; one letter only survived, 24.3.1846.

Concession Rate Letters, to and from Seamen could be sent paid @ 1d, or unpaid @ 2d. (*Act 3 & 4 Vict. Cap 96 – 1.9.1840*). Letters sent to Seamen by Packet Boats from the U.K to the East Indies, must be Prepaid @ 1d, if sent by Private Ship the charge was 3d. (*P.O. Directory 1843*)

HMS Hastings

HMS *Hastings*, 1819-1870 (East India Company ship *Hastings*? 1818 Calcutta) 1763 t, 74 guns, complement 600 men. Purchased from the East India Company on her arrival in Britain 1819; 1855 converted to screw line of battle ship; 1857 to the Coast Guard; 1870 hulked; 1885 sold.

In 1850 HMS *Hastings* was the Flag Ship on the East Indies Station.

Captain Rear – Admiral Francis W. Austen C.B. (21 January 1850)

21 Oct. 1850 Entire Letter - From John Collier Private Royal Marines HMS *Hastings*
Hong Kong China 21 Oct. 1850, signed by First Lieutenant Marines John Holland



Sent UNPAID - Manuscript Figure 2 [black] indicating Twopence to pay on delivery
Backstamped LONDON cds and ASHFORD KENT cds 26 December 1850

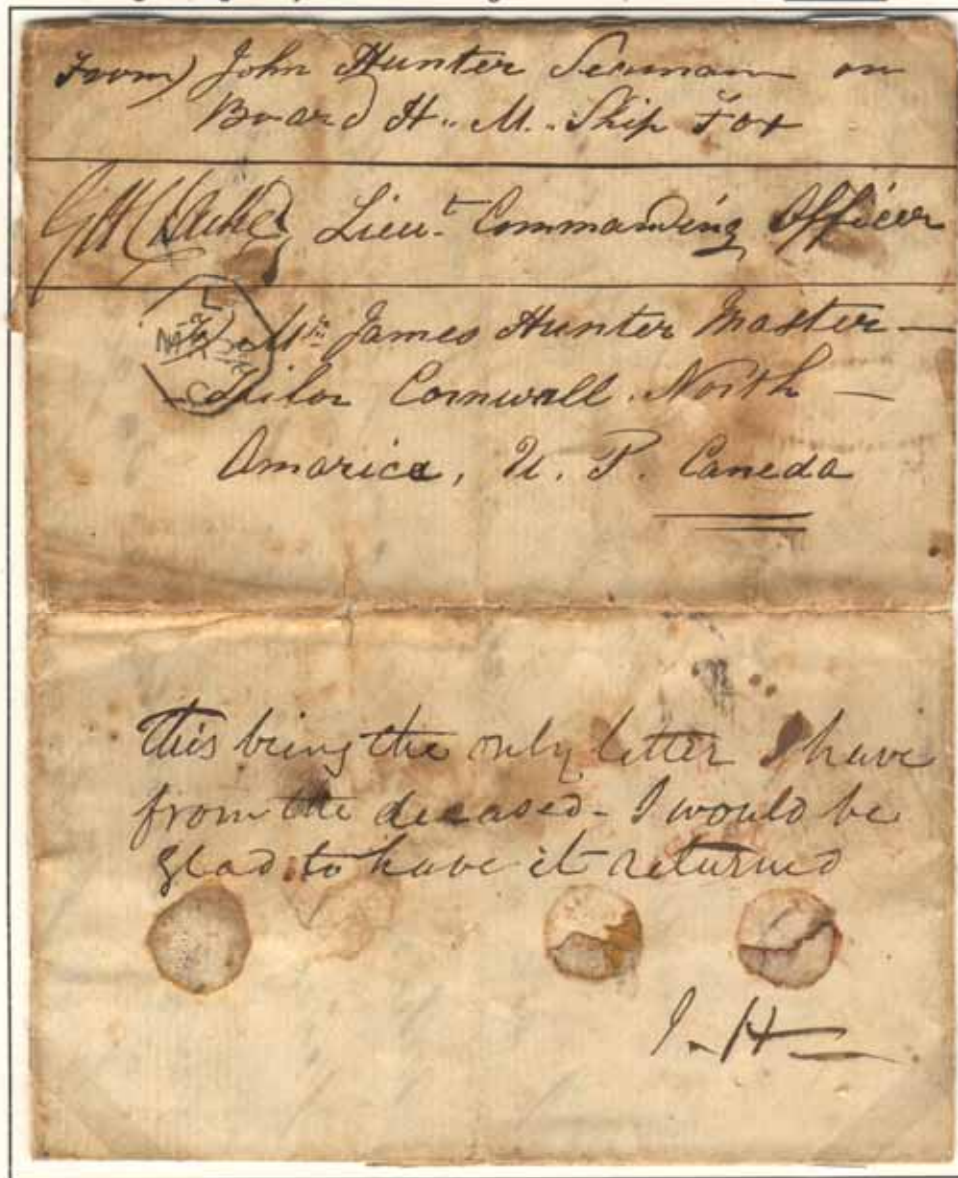
The GPO Notice N° 28 dated 30 August 1850, set the ½ oz concession rate for seamen at 1d to be paid by Postage Stamps or 2d if sent unpaid, which had to be paid on receipt by the recipient.

Royal Navy ships were not permitted to take any action against the Chinese Pirates unless there was clear proof that British ships or subjects were being molested. (May 1844 – March 1845). In October 1849 HMS *Hastings* went to the assistance of HMS *Columbine*, which had gone aground whilst chasing Pirates.

HMS Fox

HMS *Fox*, Leda Class 1794, The largest class of sailing frigates ever built, 1052t, 46 guns, 284 men. Built at Portsmouth Dockyard, keel laid down June 1821, launched 17 August 1829; 1856 converted to screw frigate/transport; 1882 broken up. Commodore George R. Lambert

3 February 1852 Entire Letter - From John Hunter Seaman on Board HMS *Fox* Rangoon, signed by Lieutenant George H. Clarke, addressed to CANADA



RANGOON double circle cds -----, LIVERPOOL lozenge shaped transit marking, believed mainly used 1847- 1860 on Naval mail to North America 22 March 1852 [Robertson M28] Backstamped MONTREAL cds [red] & CORNWALL circular datestamp [red] 3 May 1852

HMS Fox

The note on the reverse of the above letter is most pertinent, following the comments in the letter from John Hunter.

The letter describes the attack on Rangoon, which was the opening of the 2nd Burmese War, and Seaman John Hunter, tells his parents that: -

“If I am shot or if I am dead you can always find out by writing to the Somerset House in London”

With that sanguine comment, the above letter appears to have been his first and last letter to his Father in Canada.

HMS *Fox* was anchored off Rangoon 25 November 1851, and was fired upon on 10 January 1852, and again on 31 January 1852.

In April 1852 (after this letter was written) Rangoon was attacked by the British Naval Forces, and seamen and marines from HMS *Fox* were landed with a company of the 18th Regiment to storm three stockades.

As well as the naval forces from the British ships, men from the East India Co. ships also took part, including those from HMS *Ferooz*

In May 1852, a force which included seamen and marines from HMS *Fox* embarked at Rangoon and proceeded to the entrance to the Bassein River, during the ensuing attack against the stockades up the river, stiff opposition was met, with the total British loss in the operation of 3 killed and 31 wounded, among the wounded were Lieutenant Rice and Lieutenant Royal Marines John Elliott. from HMS *Fox*

The Second China War



The Second China War 1856-60, involved seamen and marines from over 21 Capital ships as well as a number of gunboats.

In the attack on the Taku Forts, the only naval co-operation was made by gunboats. Bars were awarded for Fatshan 1857 (navy only), Canton 1857, Taku Forts 1858 (navy only) Taku Forts 1860, and Peking 1860.

HMS Sybille

HMS *Sybille*, Frigate. 32 pounder, 36 guns (Fifth Rate) *Pique* Class 1832.

Symonds design, 1622t, Complement 275/360. Built at Pembroke Dockyard, keel laid down December 1835; launched 15 April 1847; 1866 Broken up. Was involved in the War in China 1856 – 1860 and at Fatshan Creek in 1857. Commander Charles G.J.B. Elliot.

[5 September 1856] - From James Stewart, Boy HMS *Sybille* China, signed by Lieutenant Edward F. Dent



GB One Penny Red adhesive, cancelled with the barred obliterator N° 50 ? in diamond 1844 type, used by the Foreign Branch of the Chief Post Office London. Backstamped LONDON cds 3 November 1856 and CORK double arc cds [green] 4 November 1856

The P&O *Erin* left Shanghai on 6 September 1856, arrived Hong Kong on 11 September 1856. The P&O *Ganges* picked up the mail, leaving Hong Kong on 13 September 1856, with the mail finally arriving at Southampton per P&O *Pera* 2 November 1856. Lieutenant Edward F. Dent who countersigned the letter, was promoted to Commander 10 August 1857.

Shortly after their arrival at Hong Kong, in the summer of 1857, HMS *Sans Pareil*, HMS *Shannon*, and HMS *Pearl*, were hastily dispatched to Calcutta, in order that they might assist in quelling the Mutiny in India

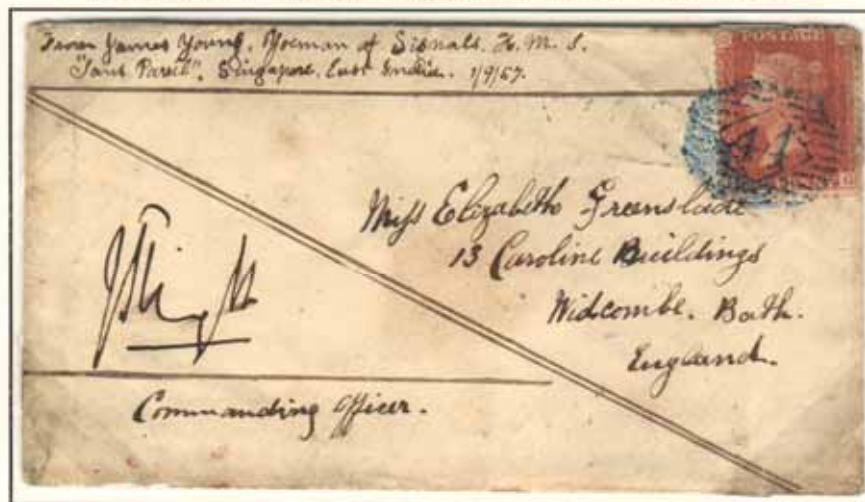
HMS *Sans Pareil* landed a Brigade of 300 marines in August 1857 to garrison Fort William, Calcutta.

HMS Sans Pareil

HMS *Sans Pareil*, Second Rate, 80 guns (two-decker) Sans Pareil Class 1842. 2339 bm, 400hp, complement 750. Built at Plymouth Dockyard, Keel laid down September 1845, launched as screw 18 March 1851, sold 1867.

HMS *Sans Pareil* was involved in the War in China 1856 – 1860 and at Fatshan Creek (1 June 1857), and bombarded Canton December 1857, and provided men for the occupation in July 1858. Battle Honours include the Indian Mutiny 1857 Captain Astley Cooper Key

1 September 1857 - From James Young, Yeoman of Signals HMS *Sans Pareil*, Singapore, East India 1/9/57 signed by Commander Julian F. Slight



GB One Penny Red adhesive, cancelled with the barred obliterator N° 44 [blue/black] 1844 type used by the Foreign Branch of the Chief Post Office London. Backstamped LONDON cds 3 November 1857 and BATH double arc cds [green] 4 November 1857

Placed in the Navy Bag, at Singapore 5.9.57 placed on board P&O Formosa, which was diverted to pick up Service mail, and missed the connection at Galle. P&O Nubia left Galle 3.10. 57, and at Alexandria the P&O Colombo took the mail to Southampton arriving on 3 Nov. 1857

HMS Pearl



In 1857-58 - A Naval Brigade from HMS *Pearl* were involved in over 20 engagements during the Indian Mutiny, together with men and marines from HMS *Shannon*, under the command of Captain W. Peel, who landed with six 68 pounders, (used as field pieces) eight 24 pounders, a battery of 8 rockets and 2 howitzers.

The Brigades were assisted by 120 sailors recruited from merchant ships.

530 "Indian Naval Brigade" medals were issued to men of HMS *Shannon*, and 232 to men of HMS *Pearl*.

NAVAL BRIGADES IN THE INDIAN MUTINY 1857-58

- 1 Ex HMS *Shannon*. Left the ship at Calcutta, First Party 18 August 1857, Captain W. Peel. Second Party 18 September 1857 Lieutenant J.W. Vaughan. Took part in the following actions: -

14 Nov. – 22 Nov. Relief of Residency Lucknow

27 Nov. – 29 Nov. Defence of Cawnpore

1858 2 Mar. – 21 Mar. Capture of Lucknow etc.

Total strength was 534 officers and men, 6—24 pounders plus two 8in. howitzers.

- 2 Ex HMS *Pearl*. Left the ship at Calcutta, First Party 12 September 1857, Captain E.S. Sotheby. Second Party 12 October 1857 Lieutenant S.W.D. Radcliffe. Took part in a number of smaller actions, mostly after the Shannon's Brigade had started to withdraw to Calcutta, after the capture of Lucknow (22 Mar. 58), although they were first in action on 26 December 1857.

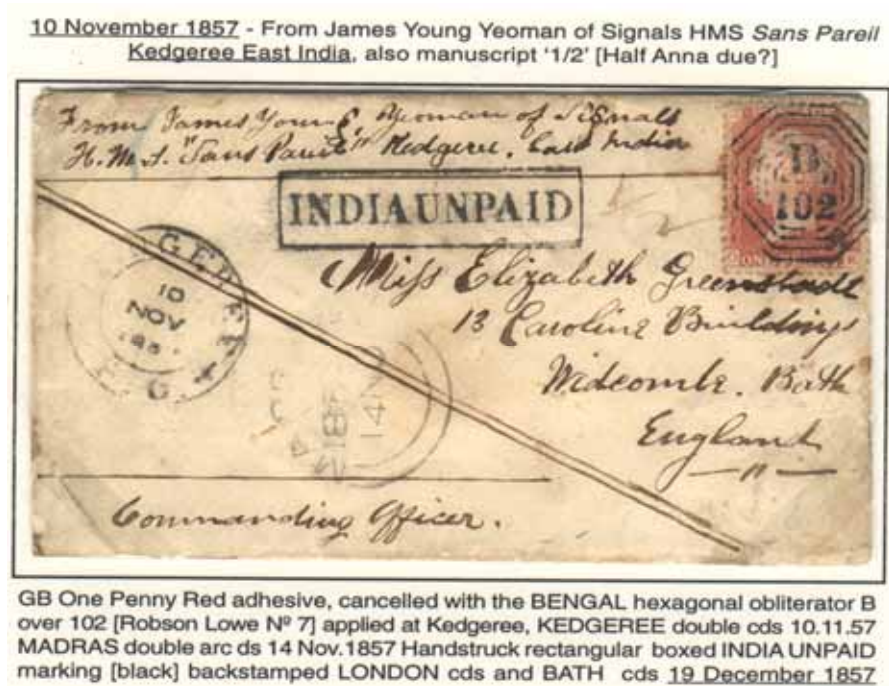
Total strength was 262 officers and men, 4-12 pounder Light howitzers.

The *Pearl* Brigade, required training in land activities before being committed to action. In early November 1857, they were moved to Myrwa (Mairwa) (10 Nov) and they were there until early December.¹

¹ Commander W.R. Rowbottom RN – *The Naval Brigades in the Indian Mutiny 1857-58*-
Published by The Navy Records Society 1947

HMS Sans Pareil

Interestingly, whilst Laird Clowes does not credit any medals being issued to HMS *Sans Pareil*, the Indian Mutiny is part of the ship's Battle Honours, this letter tends to confirm that there were some seamen and marines from the ship which were part of the "Shannon" Naval Brigade.



Letter placed in the Indian Postal service at Kedgerree, 10 November 1857, P&O *Bengal* left Galle 18 November 57, and at Alexandria the P&O *Nemesis* 3 December 1857 took the mail to Southampton arriving 18 December 1857.

HMS Pearl

HMS *Pearl*, Corvette, launched 1855, 2187t, 20 guns, Broken up 1883.

Letter from Charles Allen, Medical Staff Corps which comes under the Army, but he is included on the Supernumerary List of HMS *Pearl*. Regimental number 127, First Class Orderly. First muster Aldershot, embarked for China 4 April 1857, with the 90th Regiment.

Cover clearly Headed "*Chas Allen M.S.C. Naval Brigade*", and countersigned for the Concession Rate. Placed in the Postal System at Sewan, 18 November 1857, where the adhesive was cancelled. The Pearl Naval Brigade training area at Myrwa is not far distance from Sewan.



Although Handstamped "INDIA UNPAID" but correctly treated in England as fully paid. *Provenance Ritchie Bodily November 1997*

Persia 1857 Medal

Crews of 18 ships of the Indian Navy received the Persia 1857 medal for their participation in that campaign, ships included H.E.I. Co's *Feroze*

Bars "Perak" which were added to the Indian General Service Medals, were awarded to naval crews engaged in operations against the Malays during 1875 and 1876, and for services up the Lakut and Lingie Rivers.

Medals were awarded to crews from seven Royal Navy ships took part in the Third Burma War 1885-87, which concluded with the annexation of Burma to Great Britain.

A base was also opened up, at Wei-Hai-Wei in 1895. A base was also opened up in 1875 for 18 weeks at Port Hamilton, situated at the tip of South Korea.

Royal Navy Concession Postage Rates

Seamen were allowed to send and receive letters not exceeding ½ ounce (originally a single sheet) for 1d, this was introduced on 5 May 1795. Originally letters to seamen could not be prepaid, but this was repealed on 25 March 1803. The provisions of the concession rates were extended on 11 July 1815 to include Seamen serving in the East Indies and employed in the service of the East India Company. Great Britain Postage Stamps were to be used on all mail from 30 August 1850.

Special concession rates for Royal Navy Officers were introduced during the hostilities in the Baltic, White Sea and Black Sea (1854-1856) and on 1 June 1857, a Uniform Rate of 6d for ½ ounce letter was introduced, which was finally withdrawn 1 January 1870. The concession rate of 6d per ½ ounce for Army Officers, was not introduced until 1 January 1868.

HONG KONG

The earliest cover that I have in my collection from Hong Kong is dated 21 October 1850.
(see Page 5)

Among the first buildings to be constructed on the Hong Kong Island in 1841, were naval and military hospitals, on the site which later became Wellington Barracks, just east of the naval yard.

Apparently "*Disease, rather than the Chinese, was the enemy facing troops and civilians as they struggled to establish themselves on Hong Kong island*"²

The first Royal Navy Hospital at Wanchai, in use from 1873 to 1941. On the site now stands the Ruttonjee Sanatorium, at the point where Kennedy Road meets Queen's Road East.

Hospital Ships

HMS *Minden* was the hospital ship which accompanied the fleet sent from England, and was later relieved by HMS *Alligator*, and in the 1860s augmented by HMS *Melville*.

HMS *Melville* was sold in October 1873, and the proceeds were used to purchase the Seamen's Hospital in Wanchai.

² Kathleen Harland MA, *The Royal Navy in Hong Kong 1841-1980*, published by the Royal Navy, Hong Kong, HMS *Tamar*, BFPOI

HMS Meeanee

HMS *Meeanee* (ex *Madras*) Vanguard/Collingwood class, Built at Bombay Dockyard, launched 11 November 1848, converted to screw 1857, 80 guns, complement 630/720, hulked 1867.

Was also used as a Naval Hospital ship at Hong Kong, and appears to have been used for many years between the early 1860s and late 1880s. HMS *Meeanee* was sold to the War Office; 5 March 1867, and became the Hospital Ship for the Army with control from the Navy to the Military authorities taking place late 1868 or early 1869, and was still being used 16 years later, broken up 1906.



BPA Certificate 33662

c15 March 1863 Hong Kong, 1d GB adhesive cancelled with the "A86" Mailboat obliterator, used on the P&O *Ripon*. Receiving CARLOW cds 27 April 1863.

Private Edward Boyle, Royal Marine was born at Carlow, Ireland 17 March 1840, joined HMS *Meeanee* 25 November 1862, discharged 26 July 1863, invalided out by first opportunity, by HMS *Magicienne* for passage to Malta and England. Letter countersigned by Captain Royal Marines Arthur C.J. McMeekan

Hong Kong - Royal Navy Hospital.

I am able to illustrate two 2 cent (1d) concession rate letters, dated 1892 and 1893 from Sick Bay Steward G. Stevens.

24 November 1892 - From Sick Bay Steward G. Stevens, R.N. Hospital Hong Kong, China signed [Initials] by Deputy Inspector General A. Turnbull



HONG KONG 2 cents adhesive, cancelled with the Hong Kong oval barred obliterator B62 and HONG KONG cds 24 November 1892. Backstamped ROSS cds 26 December 1892

Deputy Inspector General Arthur Turnbull, who countersigned both letters was the Medical Officer in charge of the Hong Kong Royal Naval Hospital from 1890 – 1893

16 March 1893 - From Sick Bay Steward G. Stevens, R.N. Hospital Hong Kong, China signed [Initials] by Deputy Inspector General A. Turnbull



HONG KONG 2 cents adhesive, cancelled with the HONG KONG cds 16 March 1893 backstamped ROSS cds 17 April 1893

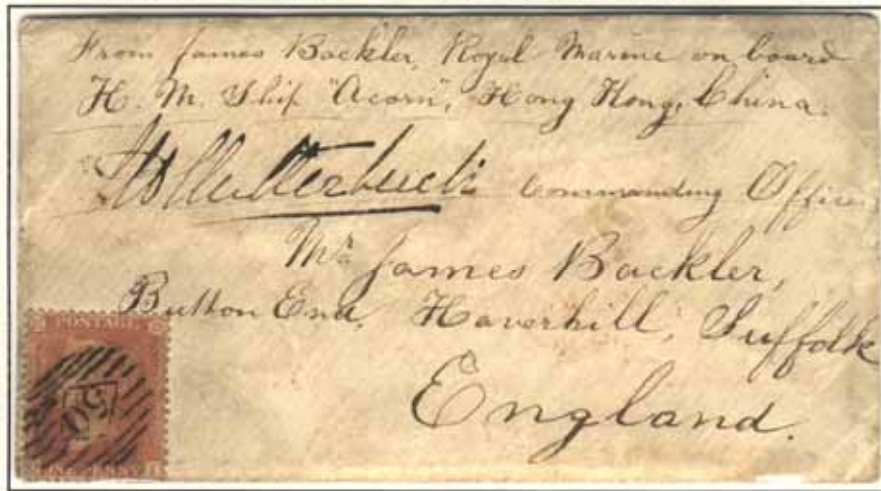
Both Covers Reduced to 90%

HONG KONG -1857

HMS Acorn

HMS *Acorn*, Pilot/Acorn class 1836, Second Class Brig (Sloop). Symonds design. Built at Plymouth Dockyard, Keel laid down November 1837; launched 15 November 1838. Became a Hospital ship at Shanghai; (See 1861 HMS *Acorn*); 1861 hulked; 1869 sold. Commander Arthur W.A. Hood (6 May 1856) was replaced on 1 March 1858 by Commander Richard B. Pearce.

[30 October 1857] - From James Backler Royal Marine on board HMS *Acorn* Hong Kong China, signed by Lieutenant Chas. H. Clutterbuck



GB - One Penny Red adhesive, cancelled with the 1844 type barred obliterator N° 50 in diamond, used by the Foreign Branch of the Chief Post Office London Backstamped LONDON cds & NEWMARKET single arc ds 19 December 1857

Private James Backler Royal Marine, born at Haverhill, Suffolk, entered the Royal Marines at Chatham H.Q., 17 May 1856, age 21. 5ft. 7in. tall, Fresh complexion, grey eyes, red hair, vaccinated, single. Good character. Invalided to 'Hercules' Hospital, 10 December 1857. Discharged 8 March 1858.

Lieutenant Chas. H. Clutterbuck (3 June 1856) who countersigned the above letter was replaced on 12 May 1859 by Lieut. George J.G. Purcell

HMS Acorn

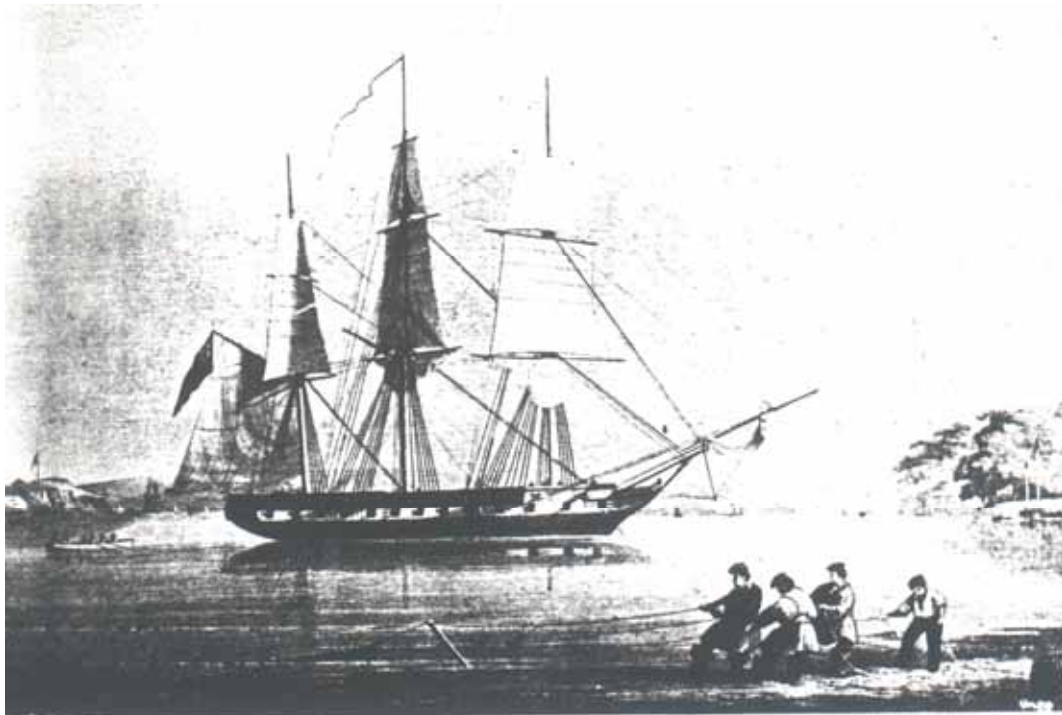
HMS Acorn, Pilot/Acorn class 1836, Second Class Brig. Symonds design. Built at Plymouth Dockyard, Keel laid down November 1837; launched 15 November 1838; 1867 hulked. Became a Hospital ship at Shanghai; 1869 sold.

[5 November 1861] - From George Fossick, Seaman, [on board 1- 22.11.1861] HMS Acorn, Hospital Ship Shanghai signed by Lieutenant Horatio L.A.L. Maitland [both ex HMS Scout]



GB One Penny Red adhesive, cancelled with the Mailboat obliterator A83
Backstamped with RIPON circular date stamp 3 January 1862

HMS Cambrian



After N. M. Condy. Lithographed by T. G. Dutton.

THE SECOND "CAMBRIAN."

T. H. Parker, Brothers.

HMS *Cambrian*, Symonds design, *Pique* class 1832, Fifth rate Frigate, 1622t, 36 guns, complement 275/360. Built Pembroke Dockyard, Keel laid down August 1837, launched 5 July 1841; 1869 Hulked at Plymouth; 1879 floating factory for the steam reserve at Plymouth; 1892 sold to J. Read. Sister ships included HMS *Sybille* and HMS *Flora*.

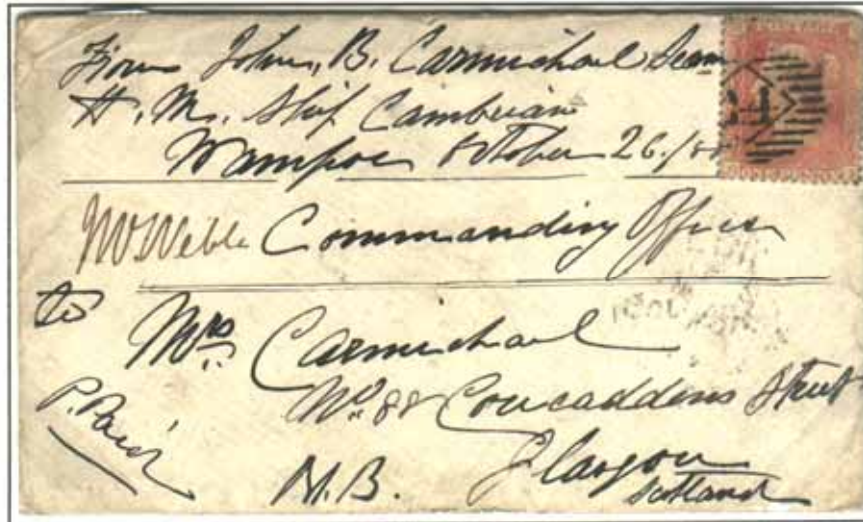
HMS *Cambrian*, provided a Naval Landing party who were engaged in the attack on the Pei Ho Forts on 20 August 1858, and they also attacked and captured Chinese junks near Hong Kong on 22 August 1858, under the command of Lieutenant John Whitmarsh Webb.

HMS *Cambrian* was also involved in the capture of the Taku Forts, and in conjunction with HMS *Surprise* attacked the Pirate stronghold under Lingting Island.

HMS Cambrian

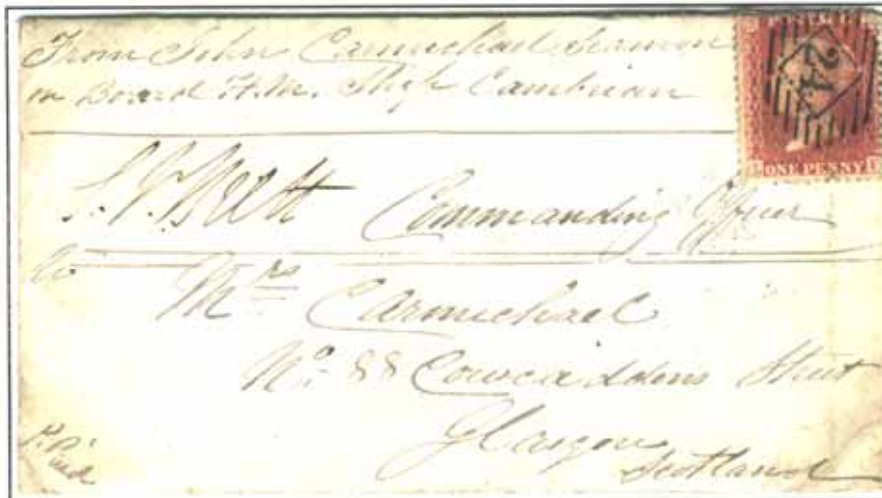
Wampoa

26 October 1858 - From John B. Carmichael Seaman HMS *Cambrian* Wampoa
October 26.58, signed by Lieutenant John Whitemarsh Webb



GB One Penny Red adhesive, cancelled with the 1844 type barred obliterator N° 34 in diamond, used by the Foreign Branch of the Chief Post Office London. Backstamped LONDON cds [red] 22 Dec. 1858 & GLASGOW cds 23 Dec. 1858

[24 April 1859] - From John Carmichael Seaman on board HMS *Cambrian*
[Hong Kong] signed by Lieutenant Spencer P. Brett



GB One Penny Red adhesive, cancelled with the 1844 type barred obliterator N° 24 in diamond, used by the Foreign Branch of the Chief Post Office London. Backstamped LONDON cds [red] & GLASGOW cds 13 June 1859

Letters from Able Seaman John Bolton Carmichael, born Edinburgh.

HMS *Cambrian* was involved in both the “First China War of 1840-1842”, as well as the “Second China War of 1856-1860”

HMS Retribution



HMS *Retribution*, Wood Paddle Steam Frigate, built at Chatham Dockyard 1844, ex *Watt*, renamed 26 April 1844, 1641 b.m. 400hp, 12 guns, increased to 28 guns in 1859; 15 July 1864 sold to Castle & Beech.

Commodore Harry E. Edgell, Battle Honours include China 1858-1859.



Reduced

Letter c27 May 1859, from Seaman William Dingle, countersigned by Commander Shute B. Piers. Backstamped PLYMOUTH 7 August 1859.

HMS Retribution

There appears to be no satisfactory explanation for the postage rate paid of 8d. The standard concession rate for a ½ ounce (maximum) letter was 1d and the letter has been correctly countersigned for the concession. From the size of the cover (4¾ x 9¾ in.) it would have probably been over the ½ ounce limit, but this does not coincide with the current rate at that time, which from Hong Kong to England was 1s for a ½ ounce letter either route (1 May 1858).

Maybe this is the opportunity one of members have been waiting for, and will provide me with the answer, my thanks in anticipation.

Seaman William Dingle was born and lived at Plymouth, joined HMS *Retribution* on 21 August 1856, aged 37 years. He was 5ft. 6in. tall, fair complexion, grey eyes, light brown hair, single, and a seaman by trade. Previously served aboard HMS *Druid* 6.2.1840 - 31.12.1842/ 22.4.1843. HMS *Castor* 24.7.1843-16.11.1847, HMS *Ganges* as Yeoman of Signals 15.3.1848-21.1.1852, HMS *Rodney* as Captain of the Top Masts 22.1.1852-20.8.1856, very good conduct. 22.12.1860 to HMS *Royal Adelaide*.

Lord Elgin, returning from a diplomatic mission to Japan, left Hong Kong on 8 November 1857, upon an expedition up the Yang-tse-kiang as far as Hankow, a city seven hundred miles from the sea. Nankin and its neighbourhood was in the hands of the Ti-ping rebels.

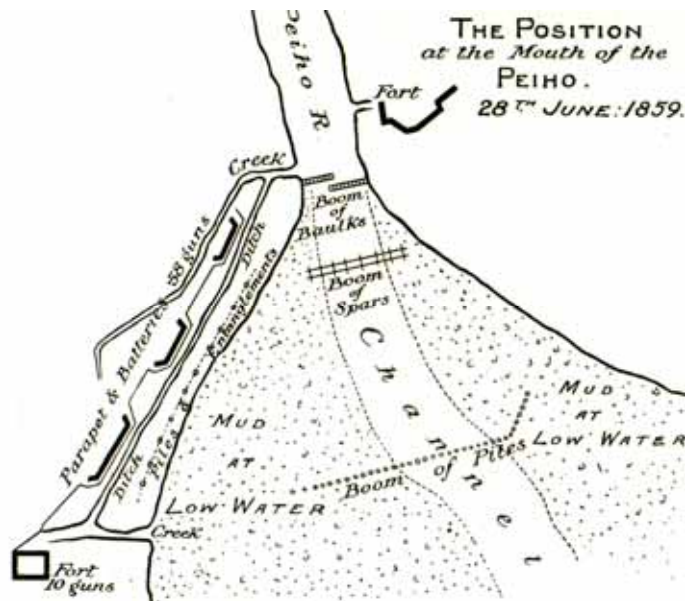
The Ti-pings were quite friendly; but on 20 November, misunderstanding the objective of the leading gunboat; HMS *Lee* which had been sent ahead of the squadron, opened fire on her, whereupon the other escorting vessels of the escort including HMS *Retribution*, Captain Charles Barker, attacked the Ti-Ping rebels. On board HMS *Retribution*, Midshipman George Anthony Wyrley Birch lost an arm and a seaman lost a leg, these were the only British casualties.

HMS Assistance

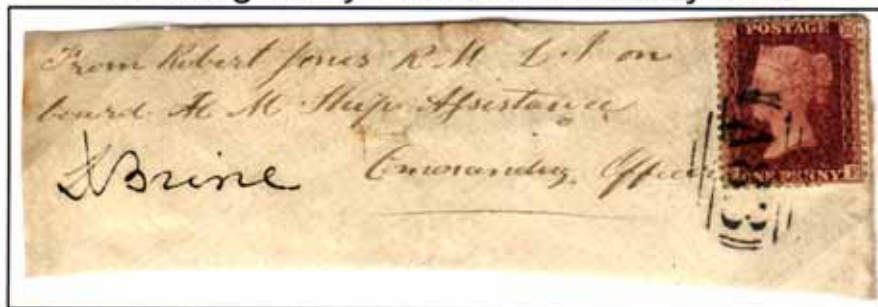
HMS *Assistance*, screw Store-ship, 1820t, 400hp, on Station 1859/60 wrecked off Hong Kong 1860. Commodore Charles John Balfour.

Sir James Hope, G.C.B., Admiral of the Fleet, aboard the Flag ship HMS *Chesapeake*, 51guns, with a squadron, including HMS *Assistance*, arrived in the Gulf of Pechili on 17 June 1859, and the following day proceeded to the mouth of the Peiho. The battle of the Peiho Forts, resulted in the loss of three naval ships, 89 officers and men killed and 345 wounded. Lieutenant Alfred Graves of the *Assistance* was killed.

As this action was a defeat, no medals or promotions were issued.



c.30 January 1860 Hong Kong,
countersigned by Lieutenant Lindsay Brine*



* Left HMS *Assistance* and joined HMS *Opossum* 1 May 1860

Lindsay Brine, took part in the capture of Cyprus
as Captain of HMS *Invincible*, 11 July 1878

HMS Adventure

After the engagements with the Yi-ping rebels at Nankin and elsewhere on the Yang-tse-kiang. In 1868 Great Britain found it was necessary to ensure that British interests in China were not compromised. Although non-intervention was to be the main policy it became necessary to take action against the rebels when they marched on Shanghai, to ensure that it remained an open port.



Letter from Corporal William Campbell Royal Marine, HMS *Adventure*. Letter placed in the Ship's Bag c. 31 December 1860, at Hong Kong.

Countersigned by Lieutenant G.D. Clay Mills. The mail was sorted en-route on board the P&O *Euxine*, at which time the GB 1d red adhesive was cancelled with the A83 Mailboat Obliterator. Received per P&O *Ceylon* at Southampton, on 16 Feb. 1861 and postmarked at Glasgow 18 Feb. 1861.

HMS *Tamar* 4650t, 2170 HP, 2guns, a Troopship of 1863 and in 1896 was being fitted out at Hong Kong to replace HMS *Victor Emanuel* as a receiving ship, commissioned at Hong Kong 1 October 1897, and was sunk as such in 1941. Interestingly servicemen and their families on Hong Kong Island are looked after (1980) by naval doctors working in the Island Practice, HMS *Tamar*.

HMS *Victor Emanuel*

Entire letter 9 July 1891 Hong Kong, Counter signed by
Commander James E.C. Goodrich (mauve rubber stamp)



Backstamped WOLWICH 13 August 1891

Entire letter from Gunner Fracio Cole, Royal Marine.

Distribution of the Royal Navy 1861 – 1874

CHINA and EAST INDIES Station

1861	66 ships	7970 men
		CHINA Station
1865	39 ships	5153 men
1869	35 ships	4118 men
1874	20 ships	2428 men