

A.P.O. GET THEIR MAN

Johnny's mother hears regularly from her son in the Middle East but one day she gets a cable saying "I am not receiving any letters from you."

"That's funny" says mother. "I've written every Sunday since he left home. I'll complain to the Army Post Office people."

Her pen scratches acid into her complaint. The Army Postal Services politely acknowledge receipt and say the matter is "being attended to."

"And that's all the satisfaction I shall get" sighs Mother.

And that is where she is wrong. Her letter has set in motion a small but highly efficient organisation of the A.P.O. known as the Special Investigation Section. A copy of the complaining letter reaches the Section in Cairo by the fastest route. Trained investigators - all of them men with wide experience of similar work in civil life - begin their inquiries.

First of all: "Where is Johnny?"

Through the location service of 2nd Echelon, which files the records of every man in the M.E.F., they find that his correct address is with a battery in Palestine. Next, they write to Johnny's O.C. asking him to reply to a series of questions about Johnny's recent movement and the mail he has received; what mail he thinks he has not received, and so on.

Back comes the reply giving all the information required together with a note from Johnny himself saying he is sorry, but when he last moved he omitted to send his new address to the Post Orderly at his old battery. Since complaining to his mother he has notified the Post Orderly and is now receiving his mail satisfactorily.

Thus another file at the Special Investigation Section's offices is closed with a letter to Johnny's mother assuring her that the letters she writes are now being delivered regularly. They don't say it was Johnny's fault - just explain that the trouble was due to "change of address".

Not all inquiries are as simple as Johnny's. The Investigators have much knottier problems to deal with - stolen Postal Orders, for example, missing parcels and so on. Such cases call for skilled detective work before the rogue or fool is discovered. Weeks, often months, go by before it is possible to trace the cashing of a particular Postal Order. Then the A.P.O. get their man .....

Every case of mail going astray is inquired into. It may be a very simple affair - such as Johnny's - but always the APO considers the inquiry worth while. Something is learnt from nearly every case and it is only by discovering the real root of the trouble that the A.P.O. can hope to prevent similar difficulties arising.

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