

## Emergency Military Currency

By Richard T. Hooper



Many collectors are quite familiar with the military currencies created by various nations during and immediately following invasions and occupations which occurred during the Second World War. Earlier forms of such expedient currencies are somewhat scarcer and more difficult for the collector to obtain. An extremely scarce type, with a fascinating historical background, made its appearance in the latter part of the nineteenth century during the siege of the desert city Khartoum, in the Soudan, by the Arab tribes.

Although the accompanying illustration does not indicate so, the note is printed on somewhat coarse, buff-colored paper, with linen cloth pasted to the reverse. By comparing the English signature with copies of letters, it was determined to be that of C. G. Gordon, commander of the besieged forces. The following translation of the Arabic inscription was provided by Mr. F. K. Saab of St. Louis: "One Hundred Piastres. Military. No. 542. This amount acceptable in payment from the Cashiers of Khartoum (Soudan) or Cairo (Egypt), after six months of date, April 25, 1881. (Signed) Ordouch Pacha. C. G. Gordon." Overstamped in blue are the governmental seals, very indistinct. The reverse purple stamp indicates that the note was finally redeemed at "le Caire" (Cairo).

Some of the more interesting aspects of Charles George Gordon's life add interest to this particular item. Other British military heroes may have had more spectacular success and have had their names inscribed in immortal tribute tendered by a grateful nation, but never in the annals of England's history was there a more loyal and devoted patriot than Gordon, known also as "Chinese Gordon" and "Gordon Pasha." His early strong religious feelings later become quite intensified, giving him somewhat the characteristics of a religious enthusiast or fatalist. Few men of his stature are to be found in any age.

He obtained his commission in 1852, in the Royal Engineers, later achieving the rank of major-general,

C. B. Two years later, at the age of twenty-one, he was ordered to Crimea, where he showed talent for obtaining general knowledge of enemy movements. For his bravery in this campaign he was awarded the British War Medal and the French Legion of Honor. From 1856 to 1863, he served in Bessarabia, Erzeroun, and on the Armenian frontier, finally commanding the Royal Engineers with England's allies against the Chinese forces at Tiensin and Shanghai.

On March 24, 1863, he commanded the forces battling the Taiping Rebellion at the request of Li Hung Chang, governor-general of Kaing Provinces, who had applied to the British commander-in-chief for the services of a capable English officer. He entered his duties as a mandarian and lieutenant-colonel in the Chinese service, destroying the rebel forces after 33 engagements covering a period of two years. He was always at the front of the many storming parties, carrying only a fragile cane termed his "magic wand" by his men. He request to spare the lives of the rebel leaders was granted, but they were later murdered on Li's orders. Due to his unflinching principles he refused to serve any longer, nor would he accept any of the money or rewards presented to him by the Emperor for his services. Following his death his brother, Sir Henry William Gordon, presented to the British Museum in 1886, an order of the First Rank and a gift of 10,000 taels. They are now on permanent exhibition in recognition of his services at Soo Chow.

Governor Li was finally compelled to issue a proclamation exonerating Gordon from all complicity in the murder of the Wangs, whereupon Gordon resumed his command. Regular Chinese forces finally occupied Nanking in July, 1864, and once again Gordon refused to accept a large reward offered to him by the Emperor. He used the greater portion of his own pay to promote the efficiency of his forces, stating in a letter home, "I shall leave China as poor as when I entered it." His



Sudanese stamps picturing Gordon and a desert statue of him.

only concession was to accept the yellow jacket and peacock feathers, with the title of TiTu, the tokens of Mandarin First Class, and the highest military rank in China, as well as of distinction in gold signifying his first class rank.

Following his return to England in 1865, he spent the next six years as corps commander of the engineers at Gravesend. During this period he devoted his spare time to caring for the poor and sick of the neighborhood, concentrating on the poor schools, even taking many of the boys into his home, starting them in life and making arrangements for sending some to sea.

In October, 1871, he was appointed the British member of the International Commission at Galatz. In 1874, he was appointed governor of the equatorial provinces of Central Africa, accepting only £2,000 of the annual £10,000 salary to which he was entitled. In 1877, he received from the Khedive the combined appointment of Governor-General of the Soudan and other areas, on the understanding that his efforts were to be directed toward improved means of communication and absolute suppression of the slave trade. His presence had a good effect on the local chiefs, who were stirred to beneficial action when they heard the "Pasha" was coming! By the summer of 1879, Sulemain, the leader of the slave traders, together with some of the dealers, was captured and shot; thus the traffic in slaves was wiped out.

Gordon resigned his commission in 1879, and returned to England. After a trip the following year with the Viceroy of India as his secretary, he travelled once again to China to advise the governor in connection with the strained relations toward Russia and assisted greatly in easing tensions.

In 1881, the year of this note's emission, Mohammed Ahmed, a Musselman, set himself up as the Mahdi—the long-expected redeemer of Islam—and gathered a number of followers around him who threatened the safety of the Egyptian garrisons in the Soudan. After reaching the decision to evacuate the Soudan, Gordon, at the request of the British government, proceeded to Khartoum, where it was hoped that his great personal influence and knowledge of the country would help to stabilize conditions. But these hopes were not fulfilled. By March, 1884, twenty-five hundred people had been sent down the Nile to safety. The garrison was hemmed in; with no assistance, the wires to the outside world were

cut in April. The siege continued for 317 days. The city fell January 26, 1885, partly as a result of treachery from within the city walls. Two days later, on the 28th, a relief corps, under Wolseley, sighted the city. On December 14, Gordon wrote to his sister, "I am quite happy, thank God, and like Lawrence, I have tried to do my duty." His diary ended on the day of his death with, "I have done the best for the honor of my country. Good-bye."

Shortly after leaving his quarters, and at the height of the attack, he was killed near the palace gates, and his head was carried to the Mahid's camp. In the defense of Khartoum his resources were all too meager, British help was too slow in arriving due to political differences in London, and internal betrayal caused the British defeat. Despite all these obstacles, he managed to convert the river steamers into ironclads, built some new ones, laid land mines, and even struck medals honoring his brave followers in a vain effort to sustain their morale. From a depleted treasury he literally created money for day to day transactions, of which this memento is a cherished example.

## World War II Military Currency of the Axis Powers

By Raymond S. Toy

Soon after my last book, *World War Two Allied Military Currency*, was published in 1965, I found that there is a demand for a book on currency which the Axis Powers issued during the same period.

In trying to help the collector of these issues, I have decided to publish as complete a guide as possible, with the help of Bob Meyer. For better coverage, I will do the research work on the German and Italian notes, and Mr. Meyer will research the Japanese notes.

We realize that this is going to be a big project and we will need all the help the collectors of these notes can give us. We will start with the following listing:

**GERMANY:** Occupation notes for Jersey, Guernsey, France, Holland, Denmark, Belgium, Norway, Poland, Ukraine, Croatia, Slovakia, Czechoslovakia, Greece and Yugoslavia; also reckoning notes.

**ITALY:** Occupation notes for Greece, Ionian Islands and Albania.

**JAPANESE:** Occupation notes for China, Manchuria, Manchukuo, Malaya, Philippines, Oceania, Indonesia and Burma.

Anyone having more information about these or any other notes from World War II kindly contact either Raymond S. Toy (German and Italian), 992 Hacienda Dr., El Cajon, Cal. 92020 or Bob Meyer (Japanese), 2056 Genesee St., North, Orange, Cal. 92667.