

MALTA RAILWAY POSTAL COURIERS

by Adrian (Paddy) Patrick

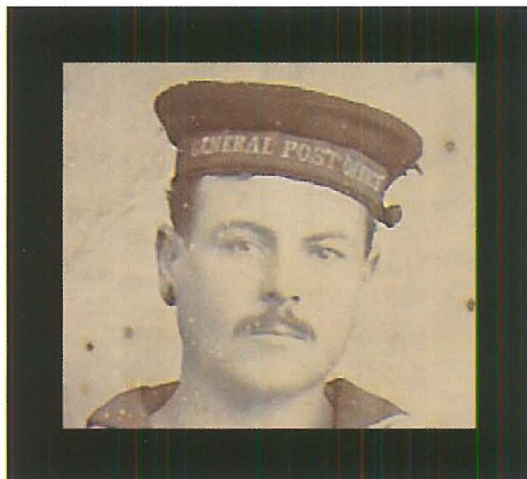
The photograph below is a recent eBay purchase. It represents an important part of the history of the Malta railway. The four 'Sailors' are wearing a hat with the inscription, 'GENERAL POST OFFICE'.

From MSC Study Paper 18 - Maltese Postmen's Personal Handstamps 1889-1949:

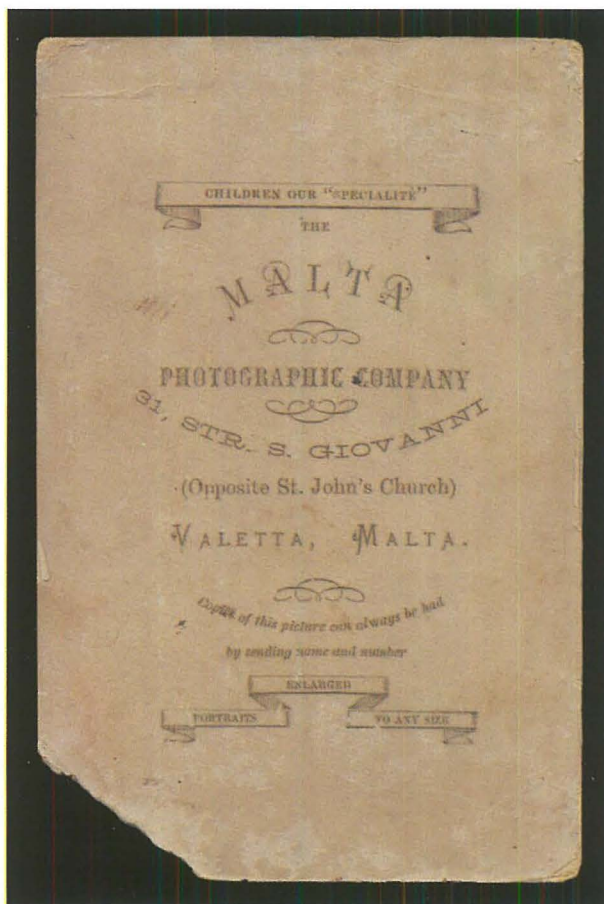
One of the railway's most interesting characteristics, or perhaps more correctly, characters, was the post office railway courier, whose uniform (summer style and winter) was an almost exact copy of that worn by British non-commissioned naval



'GENERAL
POST OFFICE'
on the cap

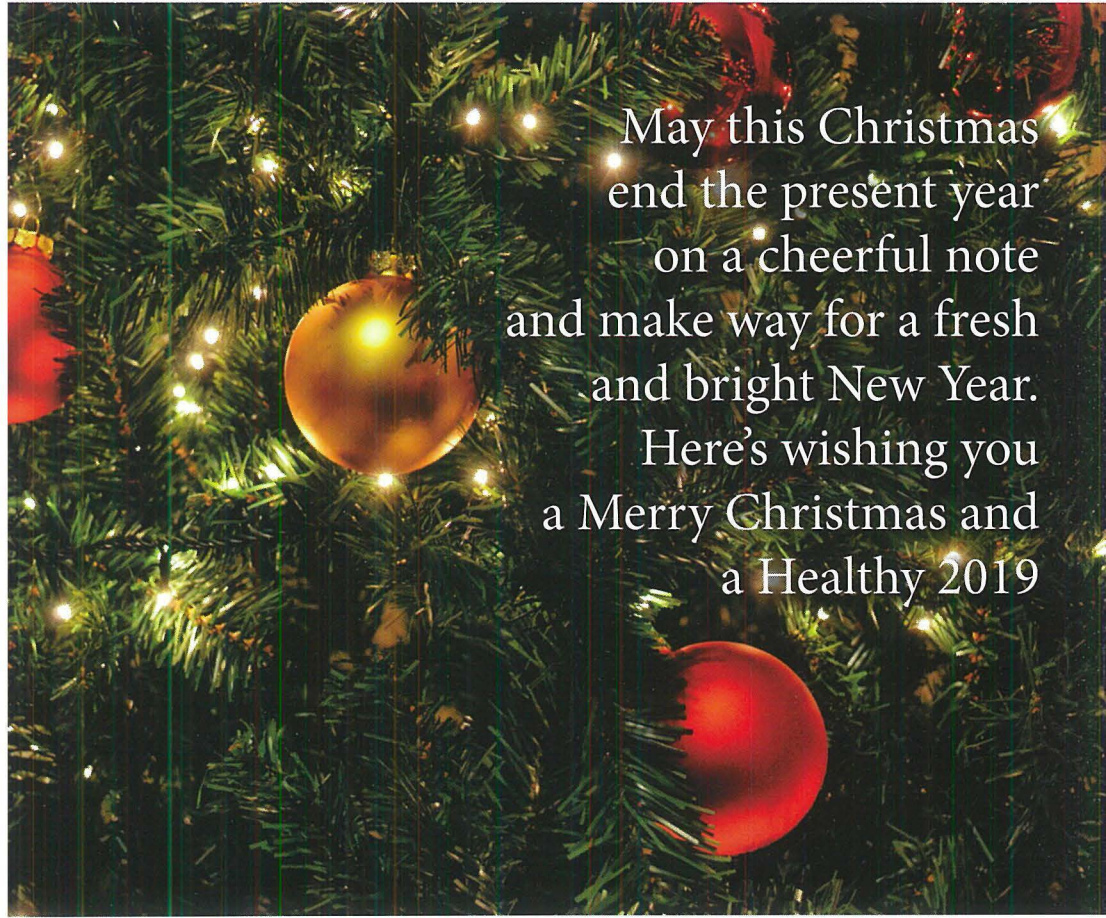


Cabinet
photograph
by the Malta
Photographic
Company
approximately
1910-1920.
16.6 x 10.7mm



personnel. Hence, the nickname ‘sailor’, in maltese ‘bahri’, which was the title afforded them. Their function was to collect from the sorting office the bags of mail for delivery to postmen responsible for the areas adjacent to the railway line from Valletta to Notabile (Mdina). Couriers would travel on the train, handing the bags to the relevant postman. The reverse situation applied when the postman returned to a later train with his collections for the day.

THE PHOTOGRAPH IS BY ‘THE MALTA PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPANY’ WHICH WAS THE REGISTERED NAME OF THE COMPANY OWNED BY ONE OF MALTA’S LEADING PHOTOGRAPHERS AT THE TIME, SALVATORE LORENZO CASSAR. HE ONLY USED HIS COMPANY’S NAME WHEN HE STARTED HIS PHOTOGRAPHY STUDIO. I WOULD DATE THIS PHOTOGRAPH TO CIRCA 1910.



May this Christmas
end the present year
on a cheerful note
and make way for a fresh
and bright New Year.
Here’s wishing you
a Merry Christmas and
a Healthy 2019