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**'Despatch by Major-General J. M. Stewart, C.B. on the operations of the Aden
Field Force 1st April to 31st August 1918'**

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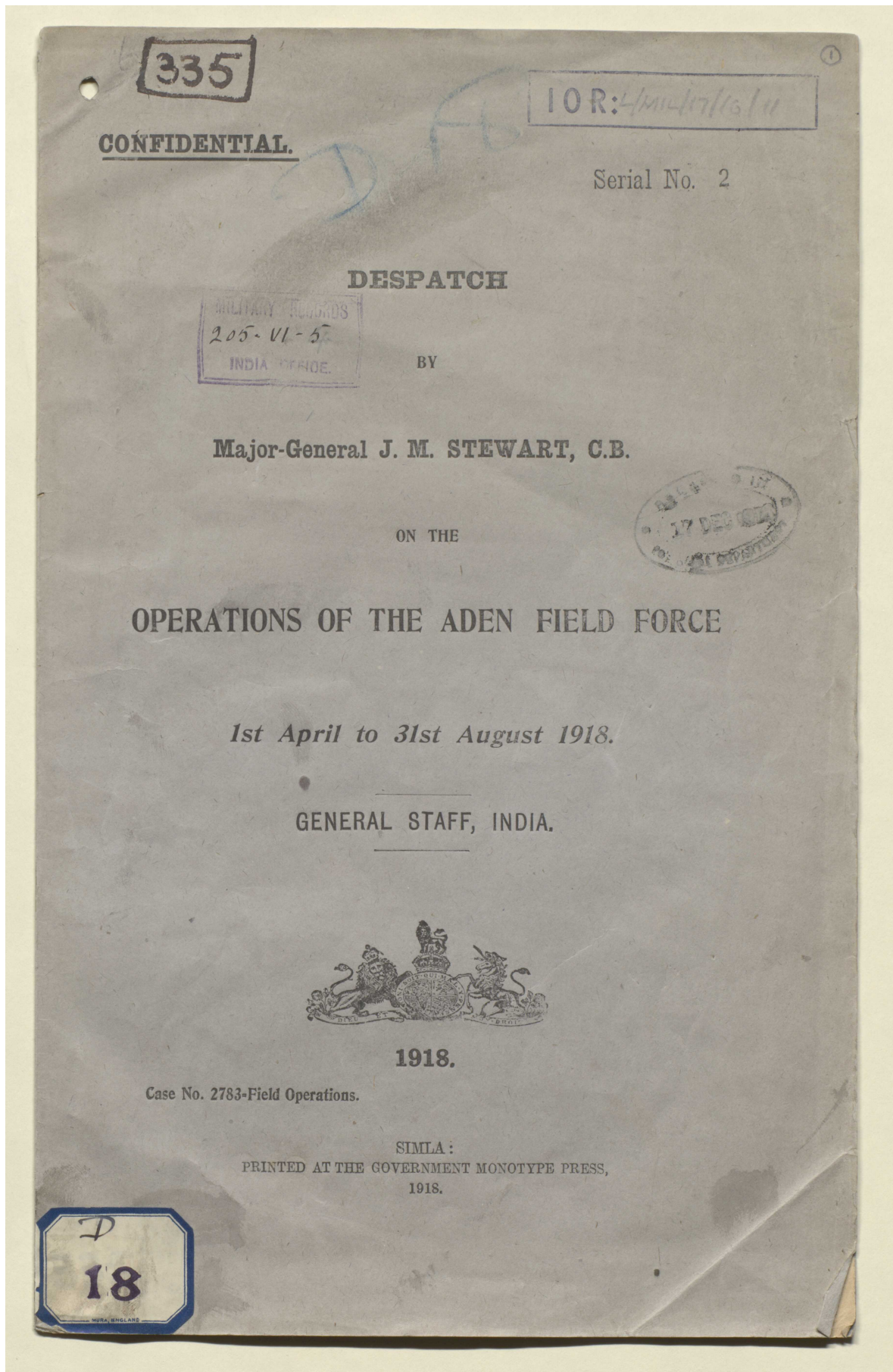


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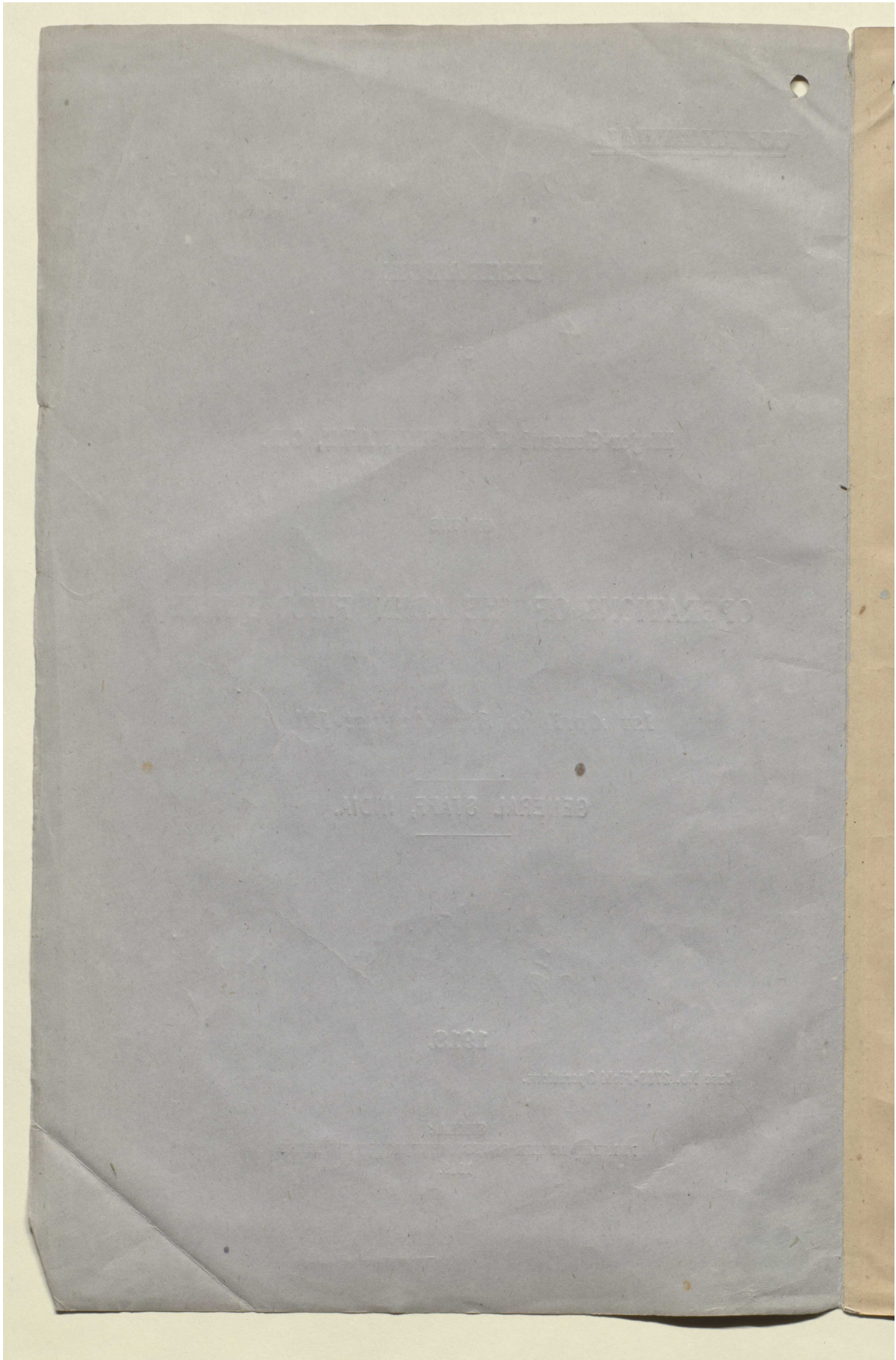
Despatch by Major-General James Marshall Stewart, the General Officer Commanding, Aden Field Force, addressed to the Chief of the General Staff, Army Headquarters, Simla.

The file comprises copies of two letters containing a summary of the operations of the Aden Field Force for the period 1 April 1918 to 31 August 1918.

'Despatch by Major-General J. M. Stewart, C.B. on the operations of the Aden
Field Force 1st April to 31st August 1918' [front] (1/6)



'Despatch by Major-General J. M. Stewart, C.B. on the operations of the Aden
Field Force 1st April to 31st August 1918' [front-i] (2/6)



'Despatch by Major-General J. M. Stewart, C.B. on the operations of the Aden Field Force 1st April to 31st August 1918' [2r] (3/6)

CONFIDENTIAL.

(Dy. No. 76797.)

No. 1124-12-G.S., dated Aden, the 31st August 1918.

From—The General Officer Commanding, Aden Field Force,
To—The Chief of the General Staff, Army Headquarters, Simla.

I enclose herewith a summary of the operations of the Aden Field Force up to 31st August 1918.

I recognise that this is not really a despatch, but a report of operations. But in accordance with the instructions conveyed in War Office telegram No. 84253-M. S.-3 of 7th August 1918, I submit a list of officers and men whose services during the period under consideration are deserving, in my opinion, of recognition by mention in despatches, as well as a list of those I recommend for specific reward.

I would request that such recommendations as may receive the approval of His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief may be telegraphed to the India Office as otherwise it seems improbable that they can reach the War Office by 1st November as directed in the above mentioned War Office telegram.

Copy to the Chief of the Imperial General Staff.

No. 1124-11-G.S., dated Aden, the 31st August 1918.

From—The General Officer Commanding, Aden Field Force,
To—The Chief of the General Staff, Army Headquarters, Simla.

In my No. 1124-9-G. and No. 1124-10-G. of 18th February and 15th May respectively, I submitted an account of the operations of the Aden Field Force up to 31st March. I now have the honour to forward an account of the operations from 1st April 1918 to 31st August 1918.

2. During this period the hot weather has rendered any considerable operations inadvisable, and the withdrawal of the British battalion to barracks in Aden has also largely reduced the number available at Sheikh Othman for offensive operations.

The troops have, however, continued by means of constant reconnaissance and patrol work, to keep touch with the enemy's dispositions and prevent him from weakening his piquet line.

These duties and other enterprises of a minor character against the enemy's piquets have led to frequent skirmishes in which the enemy have invariably been compelled to retire.

3. The more important of these encounters occurred on 16th May when the Hatum defences were successfully engaged; 7th June when reconnaissance to the east of Hatum resulted in a number of casualties; enterprises against piquets east of Darb tomb on 2nd July and 10th August, while on 30th July the cavalry undertook a very successful enterprise against an enemy detachment, which had been placed at Bir Salah, 7 miles north-west of Little Aden, as a base for enemy smuggling enterprises.

4. The artillery have also continued, usually with aeroplane co-operation, the systematic bombardment of enemy camps. Though, since the arrival of the aeroplanes the enemy has to a great extent "gone to ground" as a result of these bombardments, and his camps are now very hard to locate, there is no doubt that considerable loss is occasioned as evidenced by the reports we get of frequent changes of camp sites.

5. The Royal Air Force has continued to render invaluable service in spite of the great heat and normally heavy winds which render flying both difficult and dangerous. In addition to normal reconnaissance work they have carried out continual bomb raids on enemy camps and headquarters. The planes have been repeatedly hit, the enemy having improvised some quite effective anti-aircraft defences, probably from their Q. F. mountain guns.

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6. During May the road and railway north of Robat were completed to distances of 1,800—2,700 yards respectively beyond our outpost line and this is, I consider, as far as they can be pushed at present in anticipation of an advance. The only opposition offered by the enemy to this work was by shelling the working parties fairly regularly, to which our artillery replied effectively, usually silencing their guns.

7. There has been no change in the attitude of the enemy, who still persists in a steady defensive, and it is increasingly difficult to draw him from his entrenchments.

On three occasions in June, he brought down guns to the scrub east of Assela to shell our camp at Sheikh Othman, but little damage was done. To prevent this manoeuvre, a strong picket has been placed at Sq. P. 56-8-8 and since this was established no further attempt has been made.

There have been occasional periods of patrol activity on his part notably in April and again quite recently, but no inclination is evidenced to risk any serious engagement. At the same time his morale seems unimpaired, his picket line is still strongly and determinedly held and there is no sign of any exhaustion of his ammunition, as he is ready to open heavy fire with both rifles and guns when occasion demands.

He appears to have been able to maintain his numbers by means of drafts from the Yemen and recent information is to the effect that he has concluded an agreement with the Imam which should release more men, and reports of reinforcements by the Imam's levies are also current. The Idrissi movement referred to in my last despatch has not yet succeeded in altering the situation here in any way; indeed during June the Turks re-occupied most of the territory taken by the Idrissian forces in the spring. Fresh attacks by the latter are, however, promised in the near future.

8. The lull in operations has been taken advantage of to carry out some systematic training, which was especially needed in the case of a large number of young Indian soldiers. Several special classes of instruction for officers and others have also been held.

9. Generally the health and spirit of the troops has been well maintained through the monotony of the hot weather. There has been a slight attack of beriberi among the British troops and a considerable epidemic of influenza among the Indians. This latter is, however, now abating.

10. The administrative services have continued to work smoothly and well in carrying out normal duties and effecting improvements for the benefit of the troops.

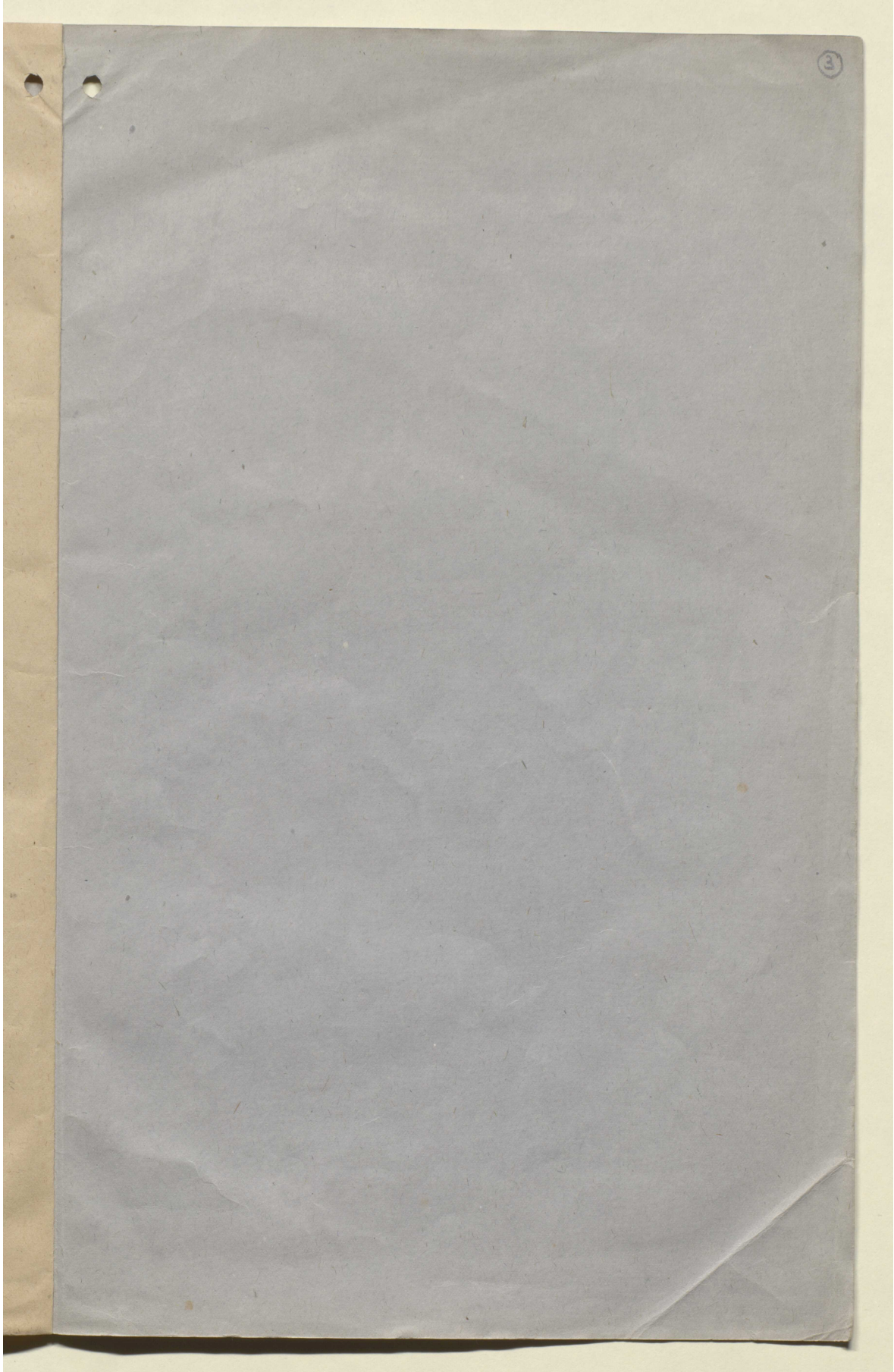
11. In conclusion I submit for consideration a list of officers and men whose services during the period under consideration are deserving in my opinion, of recognition, by mention in despatches, as well as a list of those I recommend for specific reward.

Copy to the Chief of the Imperial General Staff, War Office, London.

G. M. Press, Simla, No. C. 240 G.S.B.—16-10-18—70—A.G.



'Despatch by Major-General J. M. Stewart, C.B. on the operations of the Aden
Field Force 1st April to 31st August 1918' [back-i] (5/6)



'Despatch by Major-General J. M. Stewart, C.B. on the operations of the Aden
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