

Air Mails

The First Air Stamps

These stamps were specially printed for the Government Experimental Air Mail Service between Cape Town and Durban, introduced on 2 March 1925. The set consisted of four values, 1d., 3d., 6d., and 9d., each in a different single colour with the same design of an air-borne biplane of the period and inscribed bilingually. An official of the Department of Posts and Telegraphs was responsible for the basic design, which was finally drawn by Arthur Cooper, a former employee of Waterlows who had joined the Cape Times Ltd. of Cape Town.



The stamps were printed (by the Cape Times) on a soft wove unwatermarked paper by the photo-lithographic offset process in sheets comprising an upper and lower pane of 60 each (6 rows x 10) separated by a horizontal gutter 15 mm wide. As the same master negative was used for both panes in each value, some of the varieties are repeated. They were perforated 12 by a single line treadle perforator, and one line was missed at the edge of some panes and sheets.

There were no control numbers or marginal arrows, but on each sheet a replica of the value tablet of the stamps, only much larger, was printed at the centre of the top and bottom margins, and on each pane in the centre of the right-hand margin. Except in the case of the 6d. value, where the top tablet is positioned above one stamp, the marginal tablets have the perforation running through them. Thus they are usually collected in blocks of four, and are so listed under controls.

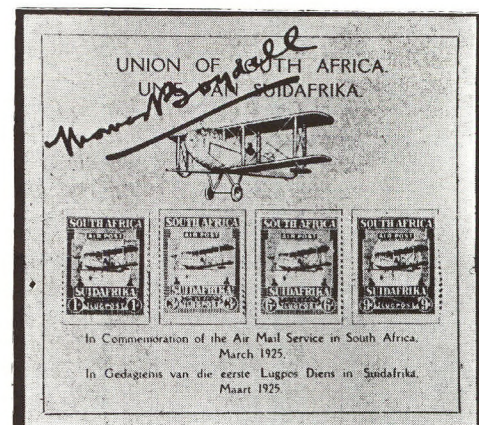
The set was issued on 26 February 1925 and sold in the areas served by the new service; also at General Post Offices in Johannesburg and Pretoria and at the High Commissioner's Office in London. It is important to note that the stamps

were only valid for prepayment of the airmail portion of the postage – articles carried had to bear ordinary stamps as well for the normal postage rate. Though their use was discontinued at the end of June, they were still on sale at Pretoria until 31 October of the same year. The plates were subsequently destroyed.

A piece of paper showing the impression of 12 of the 1d. stamps in imperforate condition was purchased by a Cape Town stamp dealer from a youth who stated he had obtained it amongst some waste. This block was cut up into single stamps and copies were sold separately as imperf (Wyndham). They are, as might be expected, in very poor condition. Also, three sets of prints of the engraver's master design, which had been rejected by the photographic department as unsuitable for use in the preparation of the group negative, were misappropriated and subsequently found their way into the hands of collectors.



Official souvenir card issued to members of the Universal Postal Union



Official souvenir card

Proofs

The four values struck in the form of a block of four on a sheet of unwatermarked, gummed paper. Top left, 1d. value top right, 9d., bottom left, 3d., bottom right, 6d.

(a) Violet, (b) Vermilion, (c) Blue, (d) Magenta (e) Green. Per block of four Black and white prints without values (100 x 80 mm) from engraver's master design.	Each	3 000,00
Black and white prints of 1d., 3d., 6d. and 9d. values.	Each	2 000,00
Official Souvenir Cards. Set of four stamps mounted on official souvenir card, inscribed in English and Afrikaans, dated March 1925 presented to pilots and other distinguished persons associated with the service (a) Signed by the Minister of Posts and Telegraphs, Thomas Boydell; (b) Signed by the Postmaster General, E. G. Stuurman.	Each	500,00
Set of four stamps mounted on official souvenir card, inscribed in French, dated April 1925, issued to members of the U.P.U.	Each	300,00

Basic Stamps, Controls and Varieties

		Mint	Used
16	1d. Red (Shades)	8,00	10,00

Control – Block of four

Ca.	With '1d' in circle on margin	–	60,00
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Varieties

	Plate	
V1.	Missing serif to 'd' in left value circle rows 6 and 12/2	25,00
V2.	Smudge on 'R' of SUIDAFRIKA. Row 7/9	25,00
V3.	Open top of 'R' in SUIDAFRIKA. Row 11/10	25,00

General

V4.	Imperforate at left margin	1 000,00
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		Mint	Used
17	3d. Blue (Shades)	15,00	18,00

Control – Block of four

Ca.	With '3d.' in circle on margin	–	300,00
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Varieties

	Plate	
V1.	Dash under wheel. Rows 3 and 9/8	50,00
V2.	Stroke through strut. Rows 3 and 9/9	50,00

General

V3.	Imperforate at left margin	3 000,00
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		Mint	Used
18	6d. Mauve (Shades)	30,00	35,00

Control – Block of four

Ca.	With '6d.' in circle on margin		200,00
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Varieties

	Plate	
V1.	Stop in front of 'LUGPOS.' Rows 1 and 7/6	80,00
V2.	Short 'T' of Air. Row 3/9	80,00

General

V3.	Offset at back – complete	400,00
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		Mint	Used
19	9d. Green (Shades)	60,00	70,00

Control – Block of four

Ca.	With '9d.' in circle on margin		350,00
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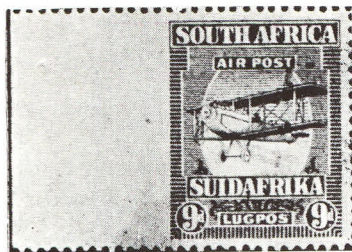
Varieties

	Plate	
V1.	'Extended strut' flaw. Rows 5 and 11/1	120,00
V2.	Oblique stroke through left value cir- cle. Rows 5 and 11/6	120,00
V3.	Broken 'R' in SUIDAFRIKA. Row 12/8	150,00

General

V4.	Imperforate at left margin	500,00
V5.	Imperforate at bottom. Row 6	800,00
V6.	Offset at back – complete	600,00

Note: Very often and in all values the face of the airman appears in solid colour. Being caused by over-inking, it is not listed.



19 V4



19 V5



19 V2

The Forgeries

Although, due to the simplicity of their design and the method of production the stamps present few problems for the forger, it came as a surprise when forgeries of them did appear in 1953, because at that time they were comparatively inexpensive. As these forgeries were eagerly sought after by collectors who paid good prices for them it is perhaps not surprising that they are still being produced, borne out by the fact that some of the paper used for them is of comparatively recent manufacture.

The forgeries differ from the stamps in the colours, which never match exactly, the gauge of perforation, size and the spacing between them, so they present no difficulty for the collector who knows the stamps well. In addition the forgeries, of which there are two distinct types, each having two different perforations, have small differences in the design, the more important being the following:

Type 1:

The horizontal lines under "AIR POST" are all of the same thickness, whereas the two upper ones should be thicker. The two perforations are (a) 11½ and (b) 13.

Type 2:

The right-hand end of the top broken line under "AIR POST" projects further to the right than those below it, whereas these ends should be aligned. The two perforations are (c) 11 and (d) 11½.

As each value of a set should be of the same worth (sic) they are listed and priced as sets:

Forgery	1 (a)	200,00
	1 (b)	150,00
	2 (c)	50,00
	2 (d)	50,00

Second Air Stamps

This short set, consisting of only two values, 4d. and 1/-, became available at all Post Offices in the Union on 16 August 1929. Their production marked the inauguration of the second air service by the Government and, unlike their predecessors, they were valid for pre-paying all of the postage and not just the air mail portion.

The design, common to both values, shows a side view of a biplane banking across its centre, with the country's name enclosed in scrolls above and below in English and Afrikaans respectively. The words LUGPOS and AIR POST appear alternately in the four corners and the value tablets at each side. The artist was a member of the Government Printer's staff.

The stamps, monochrome, were produced by the typographic process on unwatermarked paper at the Government Printing Works in Pretoria. The sheets comprised upper and lower panes each of 60 stamps (6 rows x 10) enclosed by a continuous jubilee line and separated by a 13,5 mm wide gutter. The same 60 image master plate was used for both panes of each value, so that in the 4d. the "Short T" in AIR" flaw appears in both panes.

Jubilee lines are of the same pattern in both values, with a gap above and below the fifth stamp of the first and last rows respectively. Near the centre of each of these gaps there is a coloured dot which served to position each sheet for perforating, done by a single comb appliance gauging 14 x 13½. The sheets were fed in at their left-hand margin, which is thus not perforated through, while the top and right hand ones are. There is only a row of single holes in the bottom margin, and there are no marginal arrows or plate numbers, and thus no controls.

Drawings purporting to be rejected designs for this series have no status.

"Paste-Ups"

1/- Value in black. Size 5,35 x 4,3 mm (each) 1 000,00

Colour Trials

1/- value, printed on the back of obsolete Government land charts.

(a) Orange, (b) Orange-yellow, (c) Orange-vermilion, (d) Bright rose, (e) Scarlet each 200,00

Plate Proofs

4d. and 1/- values in black, imperforate each 400,00

		<i>Single</i>	
		Mint	Used
20	4d. Green (Shades)	5,00	4,00

Varieties

Plate	M/U
V1. White blob between 'A' and 'F' of AFRICA. Row 3/8	10,00
V2. Short 'T' in AIR. Rows 3 and 9/9	10,00
V3. Slight thickening of bottom frame line under 'U' of LUGPOS. Row 12/5	10,00
V4. Slightly thicker upper edge of cloud. Row 12/9	10,00

Note: Copies in blue are changelings.



20 V4 with normal stamp

General

V5. Offset at back – partial 200,00



		<i>Single</i>	
		Mint	Used
21	1/- Orange (Shades)	30,00	25,00

Variety

Plate	M/U
V1. Break in bottom frame under 'U' of LUGPOS. Row 12/5	60,00

5

London Pictorials

Typographed and Recess Printings

The introduction of a series of pictorial stamps to replace the King's Head issue was contemplated as early as September 1922. In 1923 essays of four different designs and in various colour combinations were submitted to the Union Government by Harrison and Sons Ltd. of London. The first of these, for the 1d. value in horizontal format, embodied a standing Springbok based on a design by B. G. Harrison.

Artist's Drawings

In black pencil and ink on thick white paper.

- Vignette – Springbok without background. –
- Frame – 68 x 56 mm. –

Essays

1d. Springbok, in photogravure by Harrison & Sons Ltd. on unwatermarked gummed paper.



Harrison Essay

I. Unscreened:

Size 20,75 x 17 mm – perf. 14

- Black. b. Blue. c. Purple.
- d. Carmine.

Size 23 x 18,75 mm – imperf.

- Black. f. Blue. g. Purple.

Each 75,00

II. Screened:

Size 23 x 18,75 mm – imperf.

- Carmine and green. b. Black and blue.
- c. Purple and blue. d. Carmine and blue.
- e. Black and green. f. Purple and green.
- g. Blue and green.

Each 50,00