

British Forces in Egypt Postal Seal for Silver Jubilee in 1935

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The postal seal used by the British Forces in Egypt that was overprinted in order to commemorate the 25th year since the accession to the throne of King George, is undoubtedly the most sought after single item in order for a collector to complete a basic set of the first omnibus issue ever produced (Fig. 1).



Figure 1. The basic stamp showing the Silver Jubilee overprint. Enlarged to double size.

The 1984 booklet by John Hobbs FRPSL *British Forces in Egypt Postal Service 1932-1940* is undoubtedly the most detailed account of the issue and has thus far not been surpassed by any other publication. In Hobbs' book, a detailed account is presented in the whole history accounting for the reasons of the production of all the seals as well as the usage with all the varieties known at the time being listed. The aim of this short article is not to replace what is written by Hobbs but to add little detail as to new findings regarding the Silver Jubilee overprint that was used.

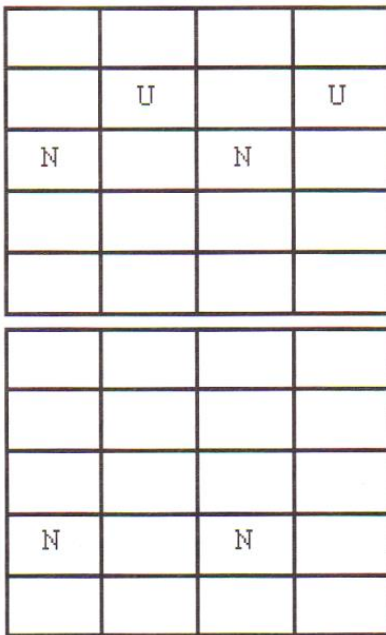


Figure 2. The positions of the 'N' and 'U' varieties on the two panes.

The overprint was applied by 'Harrisons and Sons Ltd', on the blue seal picturing the Sphinx, in red with the words JUBILEE COMMEMORATION 1935, in two operations on each of the two vertically disposed panes, A at the top and B at the bottom, of the stamps that consisted of five rows by four columns each. In all 27,000 of these seals were overprinted with each member of army personnel having an allowance of 20 seals only, i.e. half a pane. Hobbs lists two varieties, the first being the thin upstroke of the letter 'N' in the word 'COMMEMORATION' and the second the short, or damaged, 'U' variety in the word 'JUBILEE'. The positioning of both of these varieties seems to imply that the overprint was indeed applied in two operations, one covering the left and the other the right of the two panes as suggested in Figure 2. It is suggested by Hobbs that the 'U' variety sometimes occurs in pane 'B' as indicated by the lower case letters in the figure.

Further study of a complete pane 'B' and a right marginal block of ten from pane 'B' under great magnification suggests that a further five minor differences exist on the overprint and these are again symmetrical as to the middle vertical line dividing the pane in two. Figure 3 indicates the positioning of these varieties on the pane.

Description of Varieties

At positions 1.1 and 3.1 a small part of the letter ‘J’ is missing from the top left side of its long arm (Figure 4).

At positions 1.2 and 3.2 there is a small indent on the lower part of ‘J’ on the left outside side (Figure 5).

At positions 1.4 and 3.4 the top right parts of the upper stroke of ‘N’ show a slight inclination to the right (Figure 6).

At positions 1.5 and 3.5 the left side of the lower part of ‘J’ on the outer part is flat (Figure 7).

At positions 2.3 and 4.3 the bottom part of the third ‘M’ is bent inwards (Figure 8).

1.1	J	2.1		3.1	J	4.1	
1.2	J	2.2	U	3.2	J	4.2	U
1.3	N	2.3	M	3.3	N	4.3	M
1.4	N	2.4		3.4	N	4.4	
1.5	J	2.5		3.5	J	4.5	

Figure 3. The positioning of the varieties on the pane.

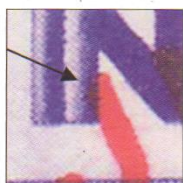


Figure 4
Part of ‘J’ missing

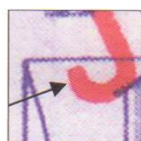


Figure 5
Indent in ‘J’



Figure 6
Inclined ‘N’

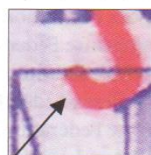


Figure 7
Flat edge to ‘j’



Figure 8
Bent ‘M’

Reference

1. Hobbs J.E.O., *British Forces in Egypt Postal Service 1932-1940*, 2nd edition, Author 1984