

THE TRUCIAL STATES

Palm Trees and Dhow Series of 1961

PURPOSE: A one-frame study of stamps, cancellations and uses of the first and only issue.

BACKGROUND: After 1948, postal matters for the 7 sheikdoms of the Trucial Coast (Abu Dhabi; Ajman; Dubai; Fujeira; Ras al-Khaima; Sharjah; and Umm al-Qiwain) were handled by the General Post Office in London via a Postal Superintendent in Bahrain responsible for all British Postal Agencies in the Persian Gulf. Rising Arab nationalism in the late 1950's made continued use of surcharged UK stamps undesirable and in September 1958, the Political Agency in Dubai suggested a new issue for general use in the Trucial States.

The design brief included:

- UNWATERMARKED paper to avoid an overt British connection (no Royal cyphers or crowns).
- Designs reflective of the Gulf area.

Although the issue was intended to be used by all the sheikdoms in anticipation of new post office openings, the ruler of Abu Dhabi objected—not all seven palm trees were the same height, implying that some sheikdoms were more important than others—and post offices in the other sheikdoms were never opened. Therefore, **Trucial States stamps were used only in Dubai from 7 January 1961 to 14 June 1963** by a population of 55,000 people.

IMPORTANCE:

- Dubai the center for the carrying and entrepôt trade on the Trucial Coast.
- Mostly commercial use, yet few surviving covers. **Key items outlined/matted in deep red.**
- Forerunner to the pejorative "sand dune" (or just "dunes") issues of some of the 7 independent sheikdoms.

What Trucial States stamps were to eliminate: Use of QEII definitives in the Gulf region.



Trucial Coast in 1961

Exhibit Plan

1. Designs & Printing
2. Cancellations
3. Postal Rates & Usage
4. Epilogue

—○ Denotes original research in blue.
Non-philatelic information in brown italics.



Posted 4 September 1958 by D.F. Hawley, the British Political Agent in Dubai, to family in England. Correct rate (40np) for a half ounce airmail letter to Europe.

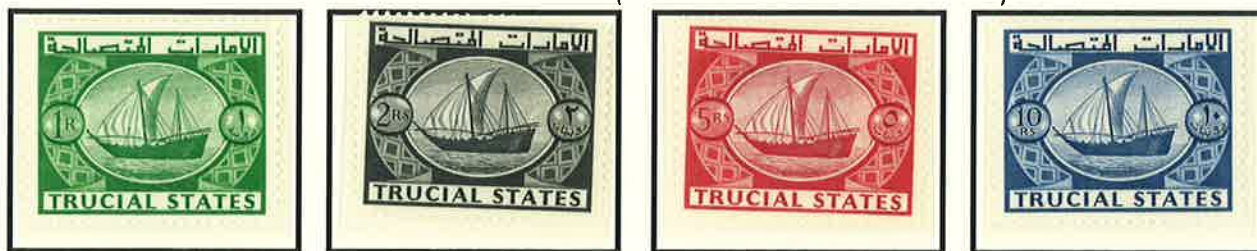
1. DESIGNS AND PRINTING • 1958-1960

Most all recorded pre-production material such as design essays and die proofs are held in the archives of the British Postal Museum, London. No known errors.



- Designed by Michael Goaman
- Stylized grove of palm trees representing the 7 sheikdoms of the Trucial Coast. Called the "Noble Tree," palms were symbols of life as they represented the presence of sweetish water and provided shade, food and building materials.
- Printer: Harrison and Sons Ltd, London, in sheets of 100 (10 x 10).
- Perf: 15 X 14

al-Imadat al-Mutasaliha (Oman Coast Trucial States)



- Designed by Michael Farrar-Bell
- Depicts a sambuk (type of Arab dhow). The sambuk was used for pearling, fishing and as a lighter.
- Printer: Thomas De La Rue and Company Ltd, London, in sheets of 50 (10 x 5).
- Perf: 13 X 12 ½

SPECIMEN Overprints



- The Post Office supplies department ordered stamps from printers and distributed them to the Gulf region.
- Examples of stamps ordered/received were overprinted SPECIMEN for record purposes.

1. DESIGNS AND PRINTING • 1958-1960

- Marginal inscriptions are limited to cylinder/plate numbers, printer's guidelines and name of printer (high-values only).
 - Only one cylinder number for each low-value. (Cylinder number blocks ex-Hibbert).
 - Cylinder number appears only in Lower-Right corner block.



Cylinder 27



Cylinder 17



Cylinder 26



Cylinder 28

1. DESIGNS AND PRINTING • 1958-1960

- Upper-Right corner blocks.
 - Plate number for all values is "1"; appears only in Lower-Left corner block.
 - Name of printer (Thomas De La Rue & Company Limited) Bottom-Center.



PRINTING HISTORY						
DATE	VALUE	NUMBER PRINTED		DATE	VALUE	NUMBER PRINTED
7 December 1960	5np	1,798,400		9 December 1960	Re 1	245,100
	15np	901,000			Rs 2	225,600
	20np	901,000			Rs 5	226,200
	30np	938,000			Rs 10	240,100
	40np	734,000				
	50np	443,200				
	75np	445,500				

2. CANCELLATIONS

Three types of cancellers were used on Trucial States issues. British-type cancellers replaced Indian cancellers circa 1949; no local record of exact dates.



For mail deposited in public letter boxes.



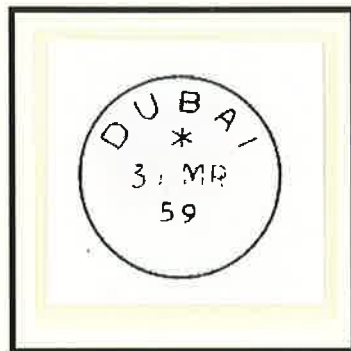
18 JY 61



4 DE 61



10 AP 62



For counter use only.



7 JA 61
First Day Cancel



2 JY 61



25 OC 61



New cancellers, numbered "1" and "2", were registered with the General Post Office (London) Impression Book on 5 December 1961 and gradually replaced the previous two by mid-1962.



26 AP 62



Number (1) 13 JU 63
Next to last day of use



20 JY 61

- CTO's do exist, all identified by corner single-ring cancellers done at post office counters.
- Usual Gulf practice was more defacement or SON cancels.

2. CANCELLATIONS

- Genuine postal usage on cover of the Rs2, Rs5 and Rs10 high values is scarce.
- Besides parcel use, these stamps were also used to send documents by airmail to England.
 - Much of this correspondence was bank-related and would have consisted of copies of ledgers, account information and bank statements.



Block of eight Rs2 stamps with multiple Counter cancels on-piece (heavy reinforced mesh paper). Rs16 was equivalent to £1/4/0 (approximately \$3.40 US). If sent at the airmail rate, this package would have weighed 1¼ pounds.

- High-value Trucial States stamps were also attached to parcel cards (seldom seen) and cancelled with a Counter or Replacement canceller, making it difficult to determine genuine postal usage versus favor cancels.
- General rule: The more strikes on the stamp, the more likely it reflects genuine postal use.
- Parcels known to be cancelled by smudging them with an inked thumb if the stamp was not completely cancelled.



"Smudge" cancel

Genuine used Rs10 stamp from a parcel.



Parcel Post cancel

Rs2 stamp showing possible use of a Parcel Post canceller (seldom seen).



Parcel Post canceller

- At the surface rate of 40np per pound, Rs10 would send a 25 pound parcel anywhere in the world; Rs2 a 5 pound parcel.

3. POSTAL RATES AND USAGE • 7 JANUARY 1961 - 14 JUNE 1963

Postal rates for this area remain largely unexplored but this rate table is believed to be the most current and accurate available.



POSTAL RATES • AIRMAIL		
REGION	LETTER (½ oz.)	POSTCARD
Persian Gulf, Middle East	20np	15np
Europe, North Africa, Indian Ocean	40np	20np
Asia, Africa	75np	40np
North & South America	Re1	60np

- Airmail from the Trucial States was dispatched from nearby Sharjah (which had an airport but no post office).
- In-bound mail to the Trucial States was received from either Bahrain or Bombay.

POSTAL RATES • SURFACE			
	GULF AGENCIES	BRITISH COMMONWEALTH, USA, EGYPT	REST OF WORLD
Letters (1 oz.) each additional 1 oz.	10np 5np	15np 5np	20np 10np
Post card	5np	15np	15np
Parcels (per lb.)	40np	40np	40np
Registration	40np	40np	40np
Insurance	20np to £5 25np to £20	30np to £12 15np each additional 12 oz. to £200	30np to £12 15np ea. add. 12 oz. to £200
Printed Matter (2 oz.) each additional 2 oz.	10np 5np	5np 5np	5np 5np

- Most mail bearing Trucial States stamps was commercial in nature.
 - Postcard usage is quite scarce.
 - Private correspondence is even scarcer.



Private correspondence sent by D.F. Hawley, the British Political Agent in Dubai, using a stamp he helped create. Counter cancel 27 MY 61; correctly franked for airmail rate to Europe. *Placing the stamp on the reverse replicates use of a wax seal common to the area.*

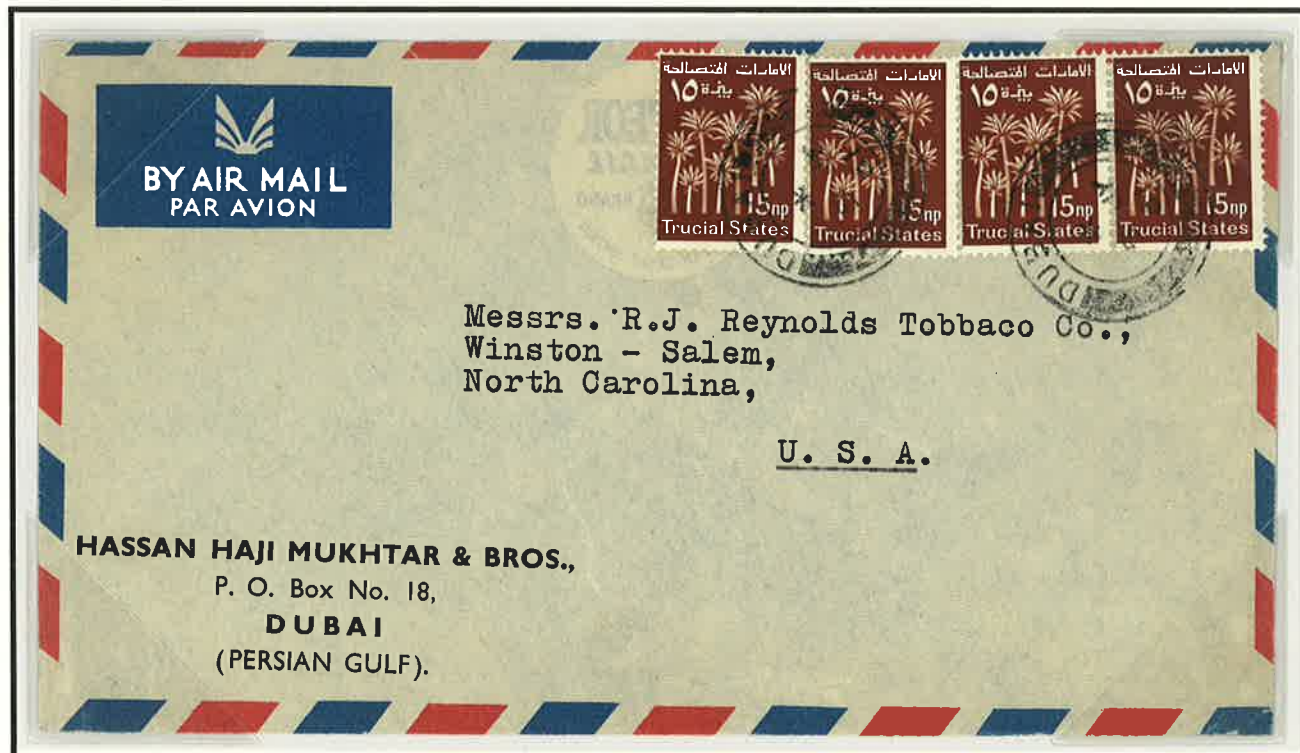
3. POSTAL RATES AND USAGE • 7 JANUARY 1961 - 14 JUNE 1963



First Day Cover to BP (British Petroleum) Switzerland; Counter cancel, 7 JA 61. No official FDC's are known although a token number of philatelic and commercial covers do exist, some addressed to other oil companies. *The BP Switzerland office in Zurich provided sales and marketing services for refined petroleum products.*



Commercial airmail cover with 40np stamp for Europe; Letter Box cancel, 10 MY 61. *Addressed to a bullion dealer, Dubai merchants bought gold on the open market and sold it legally to customers who smuggled it into India and Pakistan.*



Fine commercial usage to the USA. Under-franked by 40np for the Re1 ½ oz. airmail rate to North America; Letter Box cancel, 5 JY 61 (which may account for the under payment not noticed). *Sent by a trading company who began business selling cigarettes and, later, toiletries and other consumable goods.*



Dubai for affixing postage and onward mailing. Note return address: "C/o Political Agency - Dubai, Trucial States." **A black diamond was applied by the dispatching post office to all outgoing mail in October to measure mail volume.** *Started in 1955, the Agricultural Trials Station (ATS) introduced commercial agriculture to the Trucial States. The ATS sought information from the USA where Ward's Nursery was prominent in citrus research and sales.*

Scarce government usage from the Sheikdom of Ras al-Khaima to the USA. Franked Re1 (40np + 40np + 20np) for North America. Letter Box cancel, 10 OC 61. Ras al-Khaima had no post office; outgoing mail delivered to

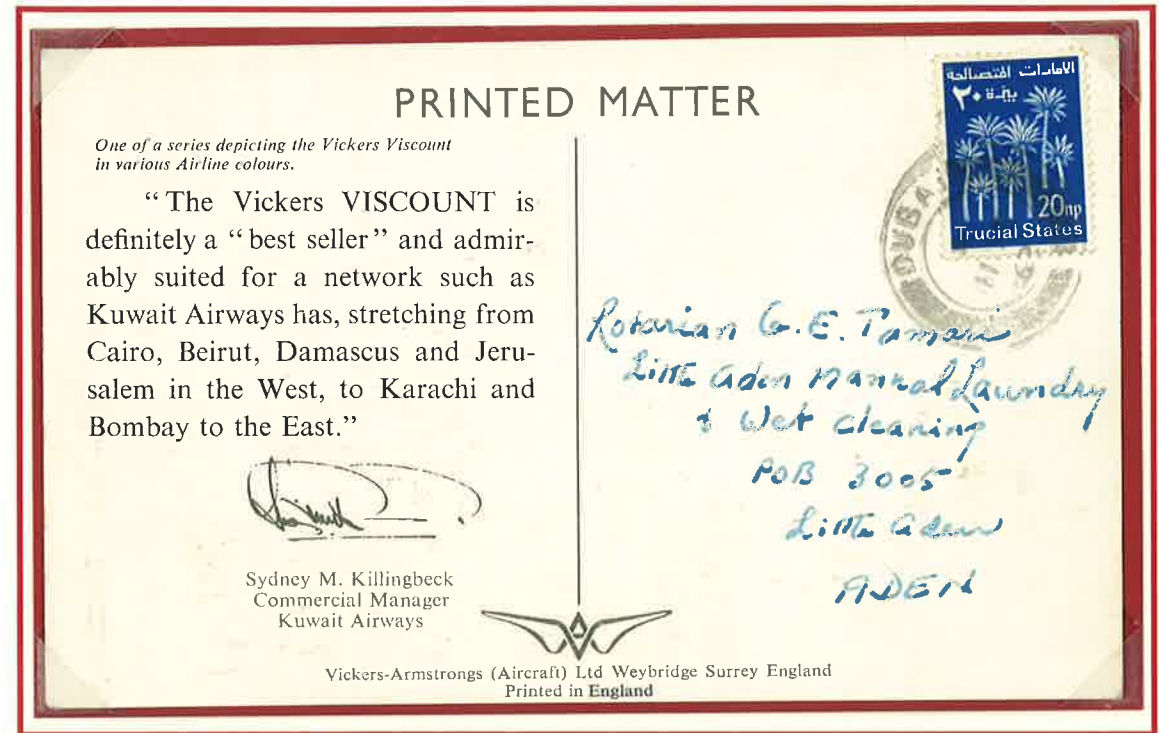
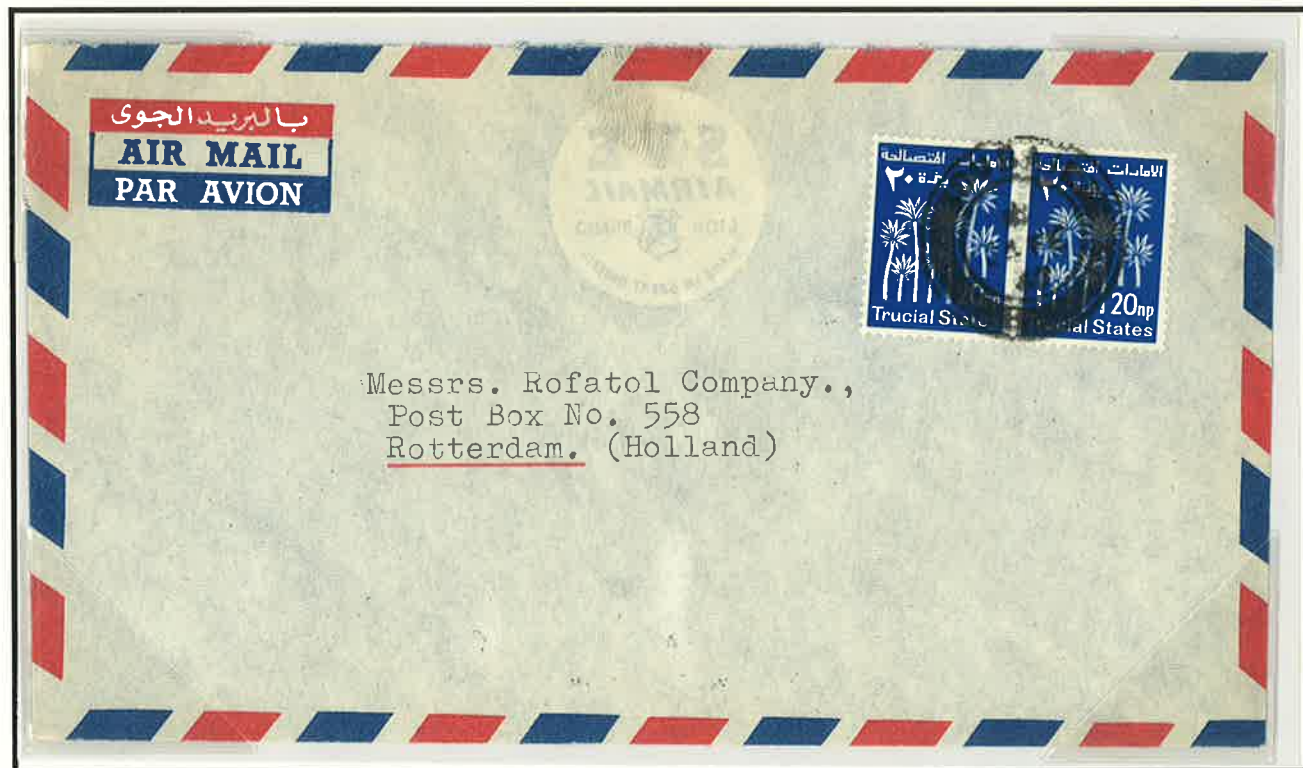
3. POSTAL RATES AND USAGE • 7 JANUARY 1961 - 14 JUNE 1963

Commercial cover from Sharjah franked with two 20np stamps for the airmail rate to India. Indistinct Letter Box cancel but back-stamped 18-12-61 in Bombay. *Fine commercial usage to a trading and shipping company.*

Sharjah had no post office; items had to be taken to Dubai for onward mailing and, in this case, returned to the Sharjah airport for onward delivery. The punched holes at the top are indicative of the binder filing systems common to the area.



Commercial cover with two 20np stamps for the airmail rate to Europe; Letter Box cancel, 24 FE 62. *Sent by a general wholesale food importer and exporter to the Rofatol Company which dealt in the transit trade of milk, edible oils, fats, cocoa products, hardware and capital goods. The Netherlands ranked 4th in trade volume with Dubai.*



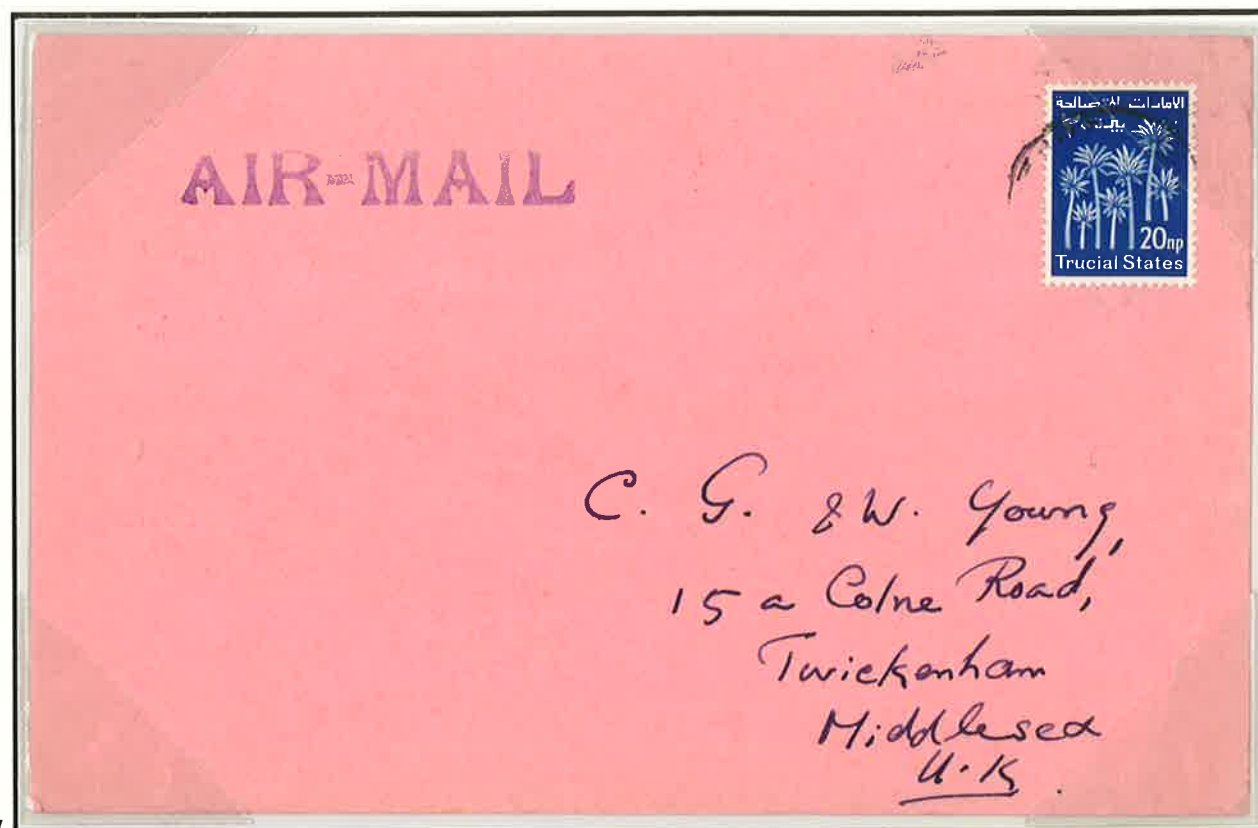
Private correspondence postcard with 20np stamp, the correct airmail rate to the Indian Ocean destination of Aden. Letter Box cancel, 11 JA 62. Tourists were not admitted to the Trucial States; hence, the general absence of postcard mail. This promotional card was from Kuwait.



Commercial cover correctly franked Re1 (40np+40np+20np) for North America. Letter Box cancel, 23 MR 62. *Addressed to an exporter of industrial machinery, equipment and supplies. Note sender's use of "Oman Coast" in lieu of more generally used "Persian Gulf" or "Arabian Gulf".*

3. POSTAL RATES AND USAGE • 7 JANUARY 1961 - 14 JUNE 1963

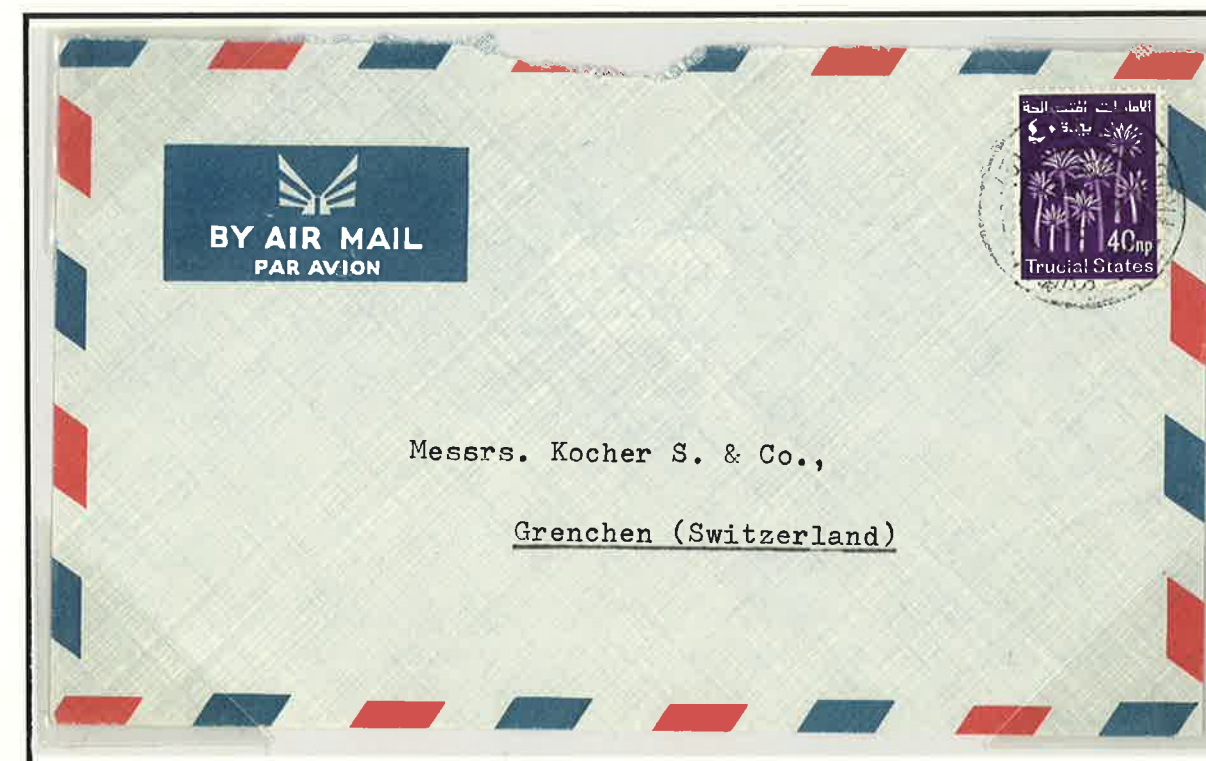
Card dated 27 Mar 1962 from the British Bank of the Middle East, Dubai, to a machine tool maker in the UK. Correctly franked with 20np stamp for the airmail rate to Europe; indistinct Counter canceller. The card acknowledged receipt of export bills, the primary means of payment between the exporter in England and the importer in Dubai.



Registered philatelic airmail cover to the USA with Re1 for airmail rate; 40np for registration; and 30np for insurance up to £12 (more likely an over payment). Replacement, No. (1) cancel, 16 AU 62. Backstamped with scarce "Registered Dubai" Cancellor, 17 AUG 62 (known only with blurred impression). The Postal Superintendent in Bahrain was in charge of all British postal agencies in the Gulf and supplied stamps from the GPO, London.



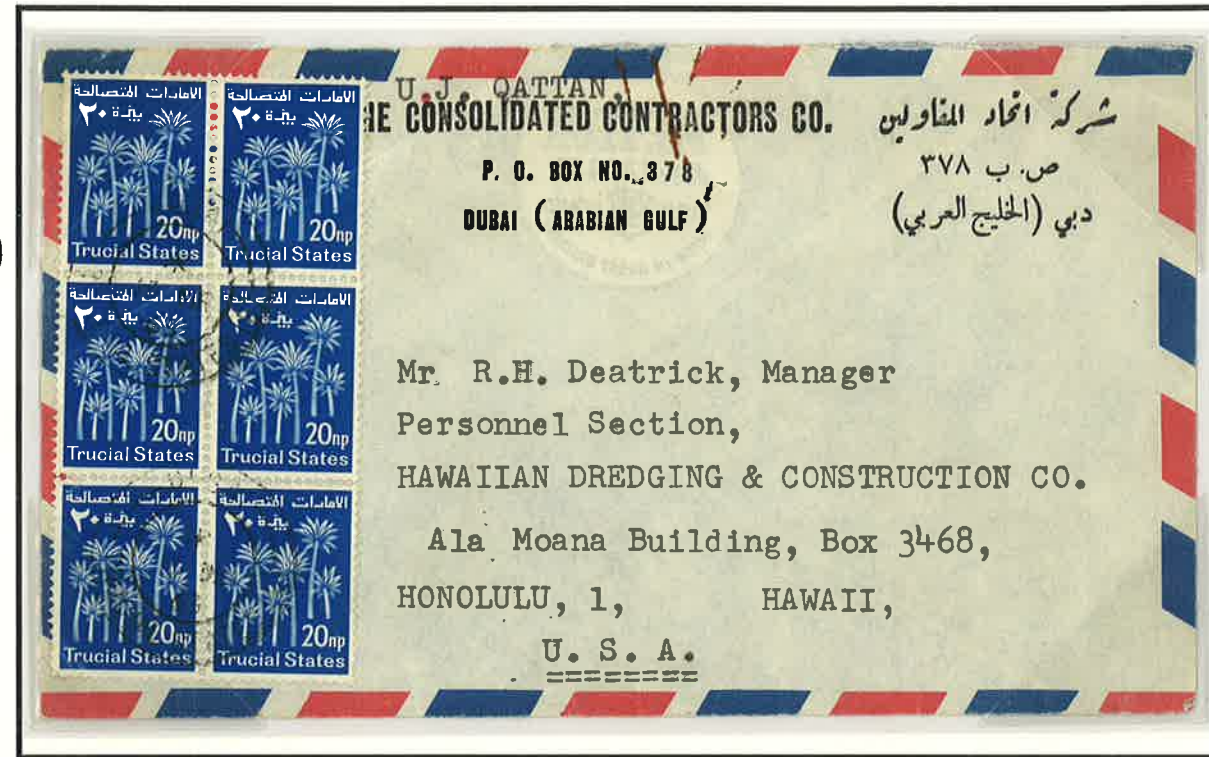
Scarce commercial usage to the USA. Correctly franked Re1 (75np+20np+5np) for North America; Replacement, No. (2) cancel, 12 DE 62. Sent to the maker of the Bates automatic numbering stamp by a general trading company/commission agent handling canned goods, light industrial machines, spices and chemicals.



Commercial airmail cover with a 40np stamp for Europe; Replacement, No. (2) cancel, 5 JU 62. S. Kocher & Co. were owners of the Royce, Amator, Equator and Eska brands of luxury watches, a major import item of Dubai traders.

3. POSTAL RATES AND USAGE • 7 JANUARY 1961 - 14 JUNE 1963

Commercial airmail cover with block of six 20np stamps to pay Re1 rate for North America, plus 20np overpayment. Replacement, No. (2) cancel, 13 MR 63. Founded in Beirut in 1952, the Consolidated Contractors Co. is one of the largest Arab construction and management companies in the world.



BY SECOND CLASS AIR MAIL not included in the official rate chart but was primarily used on unsealed business mail. Rate was half the normal airmail rate. Replacement, No.(2) cancel, 28 MR 63. Directory assistance by Royal Mail with a red crayon MAIDSTONE marking. Sent by a general trading company/commision agent to a manufacturer of custard and lemonade powder, packet soups and baking powder.

4. EPILOGUE

- Use of Trucial States stamps ended on 14 June 1963 when the independent Government of Dubai assumed responsibility for all postal services.
- **Trucial States stamps remained valid in Dubai until 30 September 1963**; such stamps would have received a Dubai hexagonal cancel; rates remained the same until 1966.



Registered airmail philatelic mixed-franking cover to the USA; Dubai-Registered hexagonal cancel, 1-10-63, **one day after** Trucial States stamps ceased to be valid in Dubai. Backstamped Oct 5, 1963 in Lititz, PA. Dubai stamps total Re1 20np, short 20np for registered airmail rate to USA; difference paid with Trucial states stamps (plus 20np over payment).

- Although use of the Trucial States Palm Trees and Dhow Series of 1961 officially ended in 1963, its design influenced the first set of stamps issued by the emirate of Ras al-Khaima, 21 December 1964.



Design comparison between the Trucial States stamps and stamps issued by Ras al-Khaima.