

BELGIAN CONGO STUDY CIRCLE

Bulletin No. 22

November, 1973

The Spring, 1973 meeting, arranged to be held near Birmingham, was selected for an unfortunate date and, owing to inability of northern members to attend, the meeting place was moved to Surrey. Another meeting was held recently but the attendance was very poor.

A circulating packet will shortly be on its way.

NEW MEMBERS

Since the last Bulletin, the following members have joined the Circle:-

G. Celis, BP. 156, Mbandaka, Zaire.

A.G. Pointon, Woodlands House, Woodcombe, Minehead,
Somerset TA24 8RY.

C.J. Spurgeon, 14 Tubbenden Drive, Orpington, Kent.

THE INVERTED CENTRES OF BELGIAN CONGO

by Hilda Jeidel

In the so-called Mols issue of the Congo, three stamps are known to have their centres inverted in relation to the surrounding frame. The three are:-

10 cent. blue of 1895

10 Fr. green of 1898

10 cent. carmine of 1915

giving the colours of the frames; the centres are all blackish/grey. To start with the last one, the 10 cent carmine came up for auction once since I started to collect this country. My bid for it was not successful. I have never seen the stamp.

The 10 Fr. green stamp was advertised by Robson Lowe about the end of 1970. I again made a bid for the stamp and was notified that it had been withdrawn from auction as its authenticity was doubtful.

When I saw Baron de Moffaerts' collection of Belgian Congo stamps in Brussels at Belgica 72, I discovered the 10 Fr. inverted centre there. The stamp was bought from Robson Lowe. The Baron also knew that the stamp had been withdrawn but he insisted on examining it. He and two other experts found the stamp genuine. Robson Lowe then sold him the stamp for the normal price of a genuine inverted centre and the Baron displayed it with pride in Brussels.

I tell this story to let fellow collectors benefit from my experience. I gave up too easily, the Baron persisted and got the rare item.

The 10 cent blue was discovered and bought under amusing circumstances. The story was originally reported in Stanley Gibbons Monthly Journal of 30th June 1897. This is what S.G. wrote:

"Some time ago the stamp dealers Messrs. H.A. Kennedy & Co., London requested from their Brussels agent fifteen series of current stamps of the Congo. The stamps were delivered and charged at face value. An employee of Kennedy's was ordered to display the new set in the showcase. While doing so, the young man discovered that all 10 cent stamps had their centres inverted. He told the boss

about it and without hesitation the firm ordered full sheets of each current Congo stamp. When the stamps arrived, they were looked through and all were found printed the normal way.

Round two was lost. But the firm did not give in. A third attempt was made. This time a limited number of twenty-five stamps each of all current issues was ordered in the hope that the post office might then part with another lot of inverted centres from the same sheet from which the first lot had come.

"Messrs. Kennedy won this round. All twenty-five stamps of the 10 cent blue of 1895 had their centres inverted. Now they owned fifteen and twenty-five of the inverted centres. The hunt for the last ten stamps started. It was known that those stamps were printed in sheets of fifty stamps and so far Kennedy was short of ten stamps. This time they were not successful.

"They went round asking collectors, dealers, anybody possible and even asked Messrs. Waterlow & Sons who had printed the stamps. The latter were most surprised that such an error could be found among their merchandise as extreme care was taken to avoid such happenings. Since then we know that forty such stamps exist and that it is a genuine and rare error". So for Stanley Gibbons.

By and by other inverted centres were found. M. Alfonse Maes of Belgium made a study of them. In 1944 he measured the perforation for the first time. He came to the conclusion that two sheets must have circulated in Belgium. These sheets would have been perforated 12 x 14 in the first two rows and 14 x 14 the remainder. These stamps are known in mint condition with the exception of only one letter which Kennedy addressed to himself and franked with additional postage in order to register the item. There is only one block of four known of these stamps. It could be seen at Philymopia in a collection of inverted centres. A third sheet perf. 15 x 15 must have gone to the Congo. Stamps of this sheet are known in used condition on postcards written between 1898 and 1900, all by the same person travelling from Stanleyville Falls to Leopoldville during that time. All in all five postcards with perf. 15 are known to date. I have in my collection a letter with the 10 cent blue perf. 15. Judging by the hand-writing of the address, this letter was not sent off by the same writer of the postcards and is so far the only one known.

Has anybody got another one?

PERFORATION OF WATERLOW AND SONS STAMPS 1909-22

As has been noted before, the perforation of the 'Etat Independant' stamps and of the same with the 'Congo Belge' overprints were so varied that few, if any, modern collectors are bothered with them. Commencing with the Princes' printing of May, 1909, perf. 14 became normal with 15 exceptional and, occasionally, the compound perforation 14 x 15 for two values of the 1915 booklet stamps. Intermediate perforations of $13\frac{1}{2}$ x $14\frac{1}{2}$ are of little interest as the range of $13\frac{1}{2}$ to $14\frac{1}{2}$ can be found in a single sheet.

It is, however, in the issues from 1910 onwards, worthwhile to measure the perforations of all four sides of a stamp. A copy of the 50c/25c Malines surcharge with the compound perforation 14 x 15 x 14 x 14 has recently been recognised. Presumably when perforating vertically the machine broke down and the sheet or sheets were transferred to another machine with different teeth.

THE 1915 ISSUE

The eight stamps of this issue are all modestly priced and the standard catalogues do not disclose the great interest that exists in the issue. The expenditure of

a few pounds and a great deal of time and energy can produce a substantial and fascinating specialised study.

The purpose of this paper is to list what the writer considers are collectably different stamps with guides to their identification. Most of the information included is already in General Du Four's book but not all members have the book and, in any case the descriptions and lists set out below may well serve as a reminder of what can be found. The multitude of fresh entries, re-entries and retouches to be found on these stamps are not considered although of great interest, nor are the rare imperforate-between pairs or stamps with imperforate margin listed. The General's book illustrates the major plate varieties and lists, but by no means exhaustively, stamps to be found with missing perforations

Proofs and Essays

When the Brussels stocks of the stamps of the 1910 issue were captured by the invading German army, it was considered necessary to demonetize the stamps in order to prevent their illicit use for espionage or propaganda purposes. In general, this was achieved by using the same designs and printing plates and changing the colours of the stamps. However, in the cases of the 5, 10 and 25 centimes values it was, at that time, necessary to adhere to the U.P.U. colours green, red and blue respectively for the overseas printed matter, postcard and letter rates. Changes, therefore, were required to the designs to differentiate them from the corresponding values of the 1910 issue. This was achieved by adding at the tops of the frames the values 'CINQ', 'DIX' and 'VINGT-CINQ' in words; at the same time, and for no apparent reason, minor ornamentation, consisting of scrolls on the 5c and circles on the 10c and 25c, was removed from the dies giving rather simpler designs. There exist die proofs of the three values of the 1910 issue with the ornamentation erased and the new inscription added in ink by the artist. Forgeries of these artist's proofs exist using stamps and not die proofs of the 1910 stamps; the forgeries can be recognised by the imperfections that exist on all the issued stamps.

The late Mr. Joseph Wright had die proofs of values other than the 5c, 10c and 25c in their new colours. These die proofs are, with the exception of that of the 5 francs, easily distinguished from the imperforate 'plate proofs', described later, because the centre dies of the 15c, 40c and 50c had not then been retouched and the 1 franc frame had the weak top ornament.

So-called 'plate proofs', imperforate in the issued colours, and all in black perforated 15, are not uncommon. They are not plate proofs in the accepted sense of the term but special printings made for some unknown reason. If they were plate proofs they would have been printed before the stamps were issued but we know this not to be the case as, in general, the plates are not in the states or, indeed, in some cases, not the same plates that were used for the early printings of the 1915 issue. The plates used for these special printings will be indicated as the individual values are considered.

5 Centimes

The following identifiable stamps can be found. The plates referred to are according to General Du Four's designation with Roman figure for the frame plate, capital letter for the centre plate and, in each case where applicable, Arabic number for the successive state of the plate. Plates thus designated are all of 50 impressions.

Plates V+E - Early printings in yellow-green with fine centres; perforated 14 and 15.

Plates V+E - Middle printings in yellow-green with coarse centres; perf. 14 and 15.

Late printings in blue green with coarse centres; perf. 14 and 15.

Imperforate and black 'plate proofs' are from plates V+E before the centre plate was corroded.

Booklet Stamps - 1st. Printing in yellow green on yellowish paper; perf. 14.

2nd. Printing in blue-green on white paper; perf. 14.

3rd. Printing in deep green on coarse greyish paper; perf. 14 and 15.

Plates VI+F - perforated 14 and 15. The latter perforation appears to be rare.

The stamps from the last plates VI+F are easily recognised by a) the presence of a large black dot at the summit of the mountains and vertically above the largest building and b) the much stronger green line (retouched on the die) above 'CINQ'.

The identification of stamps from plates V+E, as opposed to the booklet stamps is not so easy. Unused booklet stamps from the 3rd. printing are easily recognised because of the greyish paper, with used copies, the greyish paper can be confused with lightly stained paper frequently found on other stamps; the centres of the 3rd. printing are generally grey rather than black. Given a selection of used 5c stamps, those from the 3rd. booklets can, with a little practice, be selected by means of their deep green (as opposed to blue-green) frames and light centres.

Having identified the 3rd booklet stamps, others perf. 15 will be from plates V+E but those perf. 14 require further consideration. In frame plate V all stamps, except the left vertical column of 10, have a green dot in the wider vertical white line between the word 'CENTIMES' and the scrollwork near the left margin. The dot is to the left of the letter N of 'CENTIMES' (vertically above it if the stamp is viewed sideways on with the word 'CENTIMES' normal) and varies in position from the centre of the white line to touching one of the green lines on either side. The dot is not present on the booklet stamps.

Stamps from the left vertical column of V+E present some difficulty in differentiating them from booklet stamps but it so happens that before the late printings (with blue-green frames) there was substantial corrosion of the centre plate, affecting only the left vertical column and, as a result of the corrosion, the horizontal lines of the water, particularly at the left of the central design, are very much thickened and spotted and could almost be thought to have been re-entered. Stamps from the left vertical column from early printings of V+E have, unfortunately, to be positioned in the sheet to differentiate them from booklet stamps from the 1st. printing.

Although not recognised in the General's book, it should be mentioned that there were two states of frame plate V. Originally there were no 'traits de repere' (the French term is used because of ignorance of any corresponding English word; 'guide lines and dots' and 'plate setting marks' are quite incorrect and misleading). After the earliest printings, the plate had engraved on it a 6mm long vertical line between Nos. 13, 14, 18 and 19, a large dot between Nos. 14 and 19, a large dot between Nos. 33 and 34 and a 5mm long vertical line between Nos. 33, 34, 38 and 39. The dots are often removed by the perforations.

10 Centimes

- Plates V+D2 - perforated 14 and 15.
 Imperforate and black 'plate proofs' are from plates V+D2 before re-entry.
- V+D3 - perforated 14 and 15.
- V+E - perforated 14 and 15, the latter uncommon.
- Booklet stamps - 1st. Printing in dull carmine with brownish black centres: perf. 14.
 2nd. Printing in deep carmine with black centres; perf. 14.
 3rd. Printing in dull to bright carmine with grey centres on toned paper; perf. 14, 15 and 14 x 15, the last uncommon.

Stamps from plates V+E and booklet stamps are easily identified as opposed to V+D because the centre is from a retouched die so that the horizontal lines of shading of the sky more or less fill the space within the carmine frame whereas centre plate D leaves large white patches under GO BE of 'CONGO BELGE'.

To provide state 3, centre plate D2 was at least partly re-entered. Apart from impressions where re-entry is obvious from doubling of part of the design, there is on every impression thickening of the horizontal lines of the sky and it has a 'dirty' appearance. The thickening of the lines may be due to general re-entry or to some corrosion of the fine lines on the plate. The frames of V+D³ stamps appear to be in a rather duller shade of carmine than those of V+D2 stamps.

Frame plate V is readily distinguished from the frames of the booklet stamps by a short break in the red circle around the '10' in the bottom left corner; the position of the break is at about 7 o'clock. The break is always present on stamps from centre plate D before retouching of the die and is due to a damaged transfer roll used for preparing the plate of 50 impressions. A new and perfect transfer roll was used in laying out the booklet plate.

Unused stamps from the booklets are easily distinguished (any with the canoes clearly doubled are from the 2nd or 3rd printing) but used copies of the 1st and 3rd. printings can be confused if the paper has been stained but the grey centres of the 3rd. printing should serve to identify such stamps.

15 Centimes

- Plates III4+B3 - brownish black centre; perf. 14 and 15.
 black centre; perf. 14 and 15.
- III5+C - perf. 14 and 15
 Imperforate and black 'plate proofs' are from plates III5+C.
- IV1+C - perf. 14 and 15.
- IV2+C - perf. 14
- V+C - perf. 14 and 15, the latter rare.
- V+D - perf. 14 and 15.

Booklet stamps - 1st. Printing in bluish green and brownish black; perf. 14.

2nd. Printing in bright blue green and black; perf. 14.

3rd. Printing in deep green and grey-black on toned paper; perf. 14 and 15.

Stamps from the first printings with centre plate B3 are easily recognised with the centre plate the same as that used for the 1910 issue before retouching of the die including, inter alia, the addition of a central spine to the third palm frond (from left to right) and the strengthening of the trunk of the small palm tree at the extreme right. This retouched die was used for centre plates C and D and for the booklet plate.

Frame plate III, used for III4+B3 and III5+C, differs from plates IV and V and the booklets in the G of the upper 'CONGO'. In the 'stool' of the G is a short vertical line, joined through a small circle to a clear short curved line. For later plates, IV, V and booklets, a damaged transfer roll was used and the curved section of the line in the stool is faint or has the appearance of an inverted V.

Frame plate V has two minute circles engraved on each impression, one just outside the left frame line, 1mm, from the top frame line and a second small circle in the same vertical position just outside the right frame line. Stamps from plates V+C have blue green frames and black centres. Stamps from V+D have frames in yellow-green, varying in intensity from deep to very deep and brownish black centres.

Stamps from the 2nd Printing of the booklets should be easily recognised with their bright blue-green (almost peacock blue) frames, quite the bluest and brightest of the frames. 3rd. booklets stamps, even when used, should present no problem with their characteristic grey-black centres and dull green frames; the nearest in shades are stamps from V+D but the greyness, rather than brownish tone of the centres serves to differentiate the two.

The problem is in distinguishing IV1+C, IV2+C and the 1st printing of the booklets. With practice, stamps from the 1st. booklets can be identified by the brownish tinge of the centres and the cleanness of the impression of the centres but it cannot be pretended that this is easy or even certain without plating of the stamp. Plates IV1 and IV2 are identical except for re-entry of the five stamps in the fifth vertical column (positions Nos. 5, 15, 25, 35 and 45). Stamps seen with these re-entries have brighter blue-green frames than have those seen from the same plate positions without re-entry but if the brightening of the shade of the ink co-incided with the re-entry of the frame plate is not known.

25 Centimes

Plates III+B - fine and clear centre; perf. 14 and 15. A used copy has been seen with the frame in Prussian blue but this is thought to be a colour changeling.

coarse centre with thicker lines, probably due to corrosion; perf. 14 and 15.

Imperforate and black 'plate proofs' are from plates III+B with fine and clear centres.

Plates III+C - fine and clear centre; perf. 14 and 15.

coarse 'dirty' centre; perf. 14 and 15.

III+D - perf. 14. General Du Four reports also perf. 15 but only perf. 14 for III+C and the same for the stamps with the Malines surcharge. The writer's observations are that centre plate C and not D exists perf. 15 and this with and without surcharge.

It may be noted that, for this value, the states of the frame plate have been ignored and that it has simply been denoted as III. The combinations of plates, as given on Page 167 of the General's book, are incomplete. The following combinations existed: III1+B, III1+C, III2+D and III3+D.

Booklet stamps - 1st. Printing with dull blue (greenish compared with those of the 2nd. Printing) frame and brownish black centre; perf. 14.

2nd. Printing with bright deep blue frame and black centre; perf. 14.

3rd. Printing with dull blue frame and grey-black centre on yellowish or greyish toned paper; perf. 14, 15 and 14X15. Perf. 15 appears to be uncommon and the compound perforation quite rare.

Centre plate B is easily recognised by the white line separating the upper outline of the large rocks in the right foreground from the shading of the waterfall (as existed on the stamps of the 1910 and earlier 25c stamps). Before the preparation of plate C and the booklet plate, the centre die was retouched with dots to fill the white line around the rocks.

There is little difficulty in recognising the 2nd. Printing of the booklet panes with the brightness of the deep blue frames, a shade that has less green in it than any other of the printings of full sheets or booklets.

The 3rd. Printing of the booklets is usually obvious with the greyness of the centres and the dullness of the frames. In the case of unused copies, the toned paper helps considerably in recognition but with used copies, it can be misleading.

The separation of stamps from plates III+C, III+D and the 1st. Printing for the booklets is beyond the writer except by finding the position of the stamp in the sheet or booklet pane and, in some cases, this is indeed difficult, perhaps impossible with used stamps.

40 Centimes

Plates II+A2 - perf. 14 and 15.

II+A3 - perf. 14 and 15.

Imperforate and black 'plate proofs' are from plates II+A3.

Centre plate A2 is recognised by the white mark on the shell of the canoe under the second group of oarsmen (present on the centres of the 1896 and 1910 stamps). To produce state A3 either each impression on the plate was retouched to remove

the white mark on the die was retouched and the plate completely re-entered; the writer believes that there is ample evidence to show that the latter was what happened.

50 Centimes

- Plates III2+B3 - deep plum coloured; perf. 14
 lilac-brown; perf. 14 and 15.
 Black 'plate proofs' are from plates III2+B3
- III2+C - deep plum coloured; perf. 14 and 15.
 deep lilac-brown; perf. 14.
 Imperforate 'plate proofs' are from plates III2+C.

Stamps from plate III2+C are very easily recognised by the presence of shading, in the form of dots, of the smoke from the locomotive; the shading of the further bank of the river has also been strengthened. The centre die was retouched before the preparation of plate C.

1 Franc

- Plates II1+A4 - perf. 14 and 15.
 Black 'plate proofs' are from plates II1+A4.
- II2+A5 - perf. 14.
 Imperforate 'plate proofs' are from plates II2+A5
- II3+A5 - perf. 14.
- II4+A5 - perf. 14 and 15 (the latter reported by General Du Four but not yet seen by the writer).
- II5+A5 - perf. 14 (not yet recognised without the 10c surcharge of 1922 but very probably exists).
- II5+A6 - perf. 14.
- III+A7 - perf. 14 and 15.

Various states of the frame plate are recognised by consideration of the ornamentation in the centre of the top of the frame, the small circle and scrollwork on each side of the circle. In Plate II1+A4 the upper part of the circle and, particularly, the top lines of the scrolls nearest to the circle are very weak and usually non-existent, just as is the condition of the similar stamps of the 1910 issue, especially in the crimson shade (uncommon without the '1921' overprint). In plates II2+A5 each impression on the frame plate had been retouched and the lines of this scrollwork all thickened and this rather unevenly and varying in thickness.

The frame die must have been carefully retouched before the preparation of plate III and all stamps from III+A7 have the central top circle and adjacent

scrolls outlined by thin, neat and continuous lines. Further guides to the recognition of III+A7 are the 'clean' appearance of the centre plate and the fact that in about half of the stamps in the sheet one of the horizontal lines of shading in the vertical panel to the right of 'EEN FRANK', that above the left vertical leg of the N of 'FRANK', is much thickened for the right half of its length.

If in a particular stamp the same small circle and/or the scrollwork and/or the top horizontal frame lines are doubled, even very lightly, the stamp was printed from frame plate II3, II4 or II5 which were successively re-entered producing much gross doubling of the design, particularly of the upper and lower frame lines. Regrettably, it is not possible to differentiate between II3+A5, II4+A5 and II5+A6 without positioning the stamp in the sheet and comparing with complete or reconstructed sheets. In most cases, that is difficult, in part because of the light colour of the frame, and, for some positions in the sheet, probably impossible.

5 Francs

Plates III+A2 - in a wide range of shades of ochre; perf. 14 and 15.

Imperforate and black 'plate proofs' are from plates II1+A2.

II1+A3 - perf. 14.

II2+A3 - in a wide range shades of ochre; perf. 14 and 15.

Frame plate II2 differs from III1 only by the addition of 'traits de repere'.

Differentiation of the combinations of plates is possible only by positioning a stamp in the sheet and this, in some cases, with extreme difficulty.

General

At least the 15c exists with a double impression of the centre, one in albino, due to the centre having once been 'printed' without any ink on the plate. This albino impression can be seen if the stamp is examined with extreme care as a light embossing not coincident with the coloured centre design.

Such a variety may well exist, hitherto unnoticed, for either centre or frame, on any value of this or other engraved issue.

If any member is interested to build a collection of this issue along the lines of this paper, the writer will be very pleased to assist in the allocation of stamps to their appropriate printing plates, but, not, at the moment, of 1 franc stamps to the re-entered frame plates II3, II4 and II5.

R.H.K.

1 FRANC OF 1915 AND 10C/1 FRANC OF 1922

There was an error in the last paragraph of the article on page 3 of Bulletin No. 21. For 'imperforate copies' read 'imperforate-between vertical pairs'.

1941 ALBERT MEMORIAL ISSUE

Following the article in Bulletin No. 21 on the perforation of the issue, Mrs. Jeidel has investigated locally in Cape Town the printing of the stamps and has written as follows:-

"I was amused about Page 3, Paragraph 6. It reads 'S.A. Litho Co. Ltd. and McManus Bros., both of Capetown. Although we have heard of neither Company...'

"First I established the address of S.A. Litho who have moved out of Cape Town to an industrial suburb. The name of the firm is still the same; the address is now: Old Mill Road, N'dabani, Cape, South Africa.

"Then I telephoned Mr. S. Charlaff. He was a director of the company at the time, is now the senior director. On the spur of the moment, he gave me the following details:

"The Belgian Consulate in Cape Town gave a contract to print stamps for Belgian Congo to the Cape Town firm of S.A. Litho in 1941. It was more practical to print stamps in South Africa during the war.

"An official from the postal department of the Congo came down to Cape Town and physically supervised daily the printing of the stamps here. The design was arranged by S.A. Litho, the paper supplied by the Belgian official. Every night he took the plates away, counted the sheets and stayed here for months. The official's name Mr. Charlaff remembered as Mr. De Bruyn. When supervision of production was ended and all spoilt paper destroyed, Mr. de Bruyn left again. For record purposes, the printers asked for a sheet of each value which was promptly sent down to them from the Congo.

"S.A. Litho are only litho-printers with no facilities for perforating the stamps. For this purpose, subcontractors, Messrs. Casey & Behr, who were equipped for the job, were brought in to finish the order. Although Messrs. Litho had never printed stamps before, their job was a perfect one, while Casey & Behr did not do such a good job. Therefore sheets exist imperforate all round and imperforate-between stamps, vertically and horizontally.

"I have in my possession a lower right hand corner block of four stamps bearing a rubber stamp 'C. de Bruyn' in the margin.

"Mr. Charlaff could not remember that a firm McManus Bros. had anything to do with the order.

"McManus Bros., another Cape Town firm and still in existence, is a firm of block makers and I consider it more than likely that they provided the plates for the job, even though Mr. Charlaff may not remember".

THE PRESIDENT MOBUTU ISSUE - G. Celis

The issue comprised two types of stamps:

- a) the small format Arms types (Yvert 693 etc., S.G. 680 etc.).
- b) with portrait of President Mobutu (Yvert 698 etc., S.G. 685 etc.).

These stamps are the result of several printings, of which we give details after having examined hundred of copies of stamps of each value.

Republique Democratique du Congo

Stamps of the Arms type are from two printings; their values are: 10, 15, 30, 60 and 90 sengi, stamps of small face value and little used since 100 sengi = 1 kuta which is worth 0.8 Belgian franc.

The existence of two printings is evident from the examination of the 60 sengi value, of which there exist two distinct dies:

1st. Printing - the height of the stamp is 24mm. and the word 'CONGO' practically touches the elephant's tusk on the right of the arms.

2nd. Printing - the height of the stamp is 25mm. and the word 'CONGO' is more than 1mm. from the tusk. Moreover, in this printing, the vertical lines of perforation always have a large tooth at the top of the stamps.

At the present, we do not know if all values exist in two types; in the large numbers of each value examined only the 60 sengi value is in the two types.

According to information obtained from the central post office in Kinshasa, there were of the President Mobutu portrait stamp:

- 4 printings of the 1 and 2 kuta.
- 3 printings of the 3, 9.6 and 10 kuta.
- 2 printings of the 5, 6, 20, 50 and 100 kuta.

With M. Hulstaert, another Mbandaka collector, I have examined hundreds of stamps of each value without being able to distinguish more than two distinct types of each value. The first and last printings are quite distinct and we have found constant characteristics for the two types of all ten values, but it is impossible to say if the intermediate printings of the 1, 2, 3, 9.6 and 10 kuta values are as the first or the last printing.

The characteristics of the two types are:

	<u>First Printing</u>	<u>Last Printing</u>
Impression	sharp	blurred
Colour of the jacket	light beige	brown-beige
Distance from top of stamp to top of head	1.5mm.	1mm.
Height from top of stamp to bottom of subscript 'DE LA RUE'	31mm	30.3mm.

In the first printing, the double lines of the top of the breast pockets extend to the sleeves of the jacket whereas, in the last printing, the lines end more than 1mm. from the lines of the sleeves.

In the last printing, the words 'DEMOCRATIQUE DU CONGO' are lightly underlined in brown-beige.

Republique du Zaire

The series underwent a partial modification; certain values were changed with new colours; other values were retained and the colours were unchanged.

The words 'REPUBLIQUE DEMOCRATIQUE DU CONGO' were replaced by the words 'REPUBLIQUE DU ZAIRE'.

Arms design: 10, 40 and 50 sengi. It appears that there has been only one printing, the values being little used.

President Mobutu - 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 9, 10, 20, 50 and 100 kuta. These stamps have the same characteristics as the last printing of the 'Republique Democratique' issue.

A second printing has been put into circulation, probably progressively, according to need. Following a presidential decree, denominations had to be expressed in 'Zaires' and not kutas. The first stamp that appeared was the 0.04Z value, replacing the 4 kuta stamp (1 Zaire = 100 kuta = 10,000 sengi) at the end of January, 1973, and followed by the 0.01Z at the end of February.

At the time of writing, we do not know of other values expressed in Zaires. It is probable that the whole series will gradually be replaced and the values expressed in sengi disappear.

Summary

'Arms', 'Republique Democratique du Congo' - two printings, at least for the 60 sengi.

'Arms', 'Republique du Zaire' - one printing known.

'Mobutu', 'Republique Democratique du Congo' - up to four printings of which the first and last are from different plates and dies.

'Mobutu', 'Republique du Zaire' - two printings, the first with values in kutas, the second, now in course of issue, with values in Zaires.

THE UNITED NATIONS ORGANISATION IN THE CONGO (O.N.U.C.)

by T.F.M. Knott

(This is the first instalment of a series of articles that appeared in Forces Postal History Society Newsletters Nos. 56, 57, 70 and 71 and is copied with the kind permission of the Editor, Mr. A.J. Brown).

On June 30th 1960, the Belgian Congo obtained its independence. On July 8th the Force Publique mutinied in Leopoldville and within three days the rot had spread throughout the entire force. Belgian troop reinforcements were called for to protect Belgian civilians and property and on July 11th Belgian paratroops occupied Leopoldville and dispersed to all parts of the country. Their arrival was a signal for the rebellion to flare up everywhere. The Congo Government appealed to the United Nations for technical assistance and the task of defending the independence of the new state was entrusted to the United Nations on July 12th. This issue came before the Security Council on the 13th, and by the 15th the U.N. Force had a Supreme Commander and the nucleus of its officer corps was en route to Leopoldville. Whilst putting the emphasis on African troops, Dag Hammarskjöld included two strictly neutralist European countries - Ireland and Sweden - to reassure the Belgians. By the evening of the 15th the first detachments of troops were flying in from Ghana and Tunisia, and others were ready to leave Morocco and Ethiopia, using Kano in Nigeria as a staging post. By the end of the week the U.N. Force was 12,140 strong, comprising 14 battalions and 5 companies. They were: from Ghana (2100), Ethiopia (1800), Guinea (1200), Ireland (660), Liberia (225), Mali (800), Morocco (2500), Sweden (635) and Tunisia (2200). The Force had patrol jeeps and troop carrying vehicles, a variety of light aircraft and helicopters, its own supply lines, signal corps and public relations organisation. The Force is equipped with the blue and white U.N. helmets, and specially made blue and silver shoulder flashes were being shipped to the Congo three days after the order had been placed with an American firm.

These flashes are about 3 ins. diameter depicting the U.N. emblem surmounted by "O.N.U." and are worn by all troops on the left arm. The scale of the operation was about twice the size of the one organised by Mr, Hammerskjold for the Middle East in November 1956. The command of the Force was given to a Swede - General Carl Carlsson van Horn.

Postal Arrangements. Mail from the various contingents receives many different markings, and generally falls under one of five categories:

- A. Through the civil post office, using Congo stamps and receiving normal civil postmarks. No concession on postage allowed.
- B. By private bag to contingent's homeland; e.g. Italian and Danish contingents (but not all their mail is carried this way). Such mail bears Danish or Italian postage stamps with local cancellations.
- C. Mail cancelled by U.P.F. meter "Leopoldville U 75". Usually mail from Katanga in view of the virtual breakdown of civilian postal services.
- D. Through the contingent's own post office; e.g. Ghana, Canada, Sweden and India.
- E. The U.N. Headquarters in Leopoldville has a post office which has a rubber single-ring datestamp approx. 37mm. diameter, reading "ORGANISATION DES NATIONS UNIES AU CONGO" around the top and date across the centre surmounted by U.N. emblem. This is used on a large amount of "commercial" mail from many contingents, carried free of charge. I haven't seen it used on "philatelic" mail and it has never been used on any of my covers. I have retrieved covers from various countries with this datestamp in red, black or violet.

Since July 1960, twenty-nine countries have supplied personnel to man the ONUC, ranging from Brigade Groups of 3,000-plus men to single military observers. Below, I give an account of each contingent with a description of the envelopes in my collection. This is based purely on information obtained and should not be taken as official. Envelopes of many sizes and types exist printed with the UN emblem and ONUC inscription at the top left hand corner, and a special ONUC aerogramme is also used



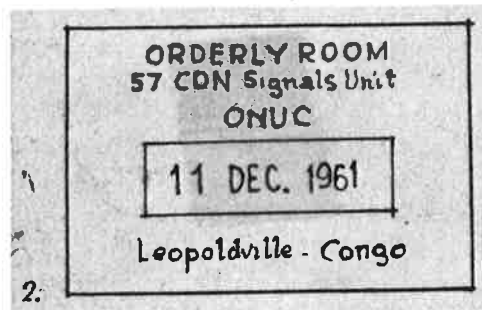
ARGENTINE. There are sixteen members of the Argentine Air Force serving with ONUC - mainly pilots. My only cover bears a 10 f. "Wildlife" stamp overprinted "Congo" and cancelled with the Leopoldville machine datestamp. I'm told by a member that no UN cachets or unit stamps are owned by the detachment.

AUSTRIA. This country has an Army Medical Team - forty-six strong - and two staff officers in the Congo. Just before Christmas 1960 the Austrian Hospital at Bukava in Kivu Province was impounded by the Provincial Government. After three separate agreements had been completed and not observed, the 5th Bn. Queen's Own Nigeria Regt. had to take resolute action to free the Austrians. My cover is an official ONUC airmail envelope bearing a 6f.50c. "Wildlife" and 2f. "Flower" adhesives overprinted "Congo" and cancelled by LEOPOLDVILLE c.d.s. My correspondent at that time (April 1961) told me the team had lost all personal

possessions, office equipment etc., during the battle, and not surprisingly no unit stamps were available. He did, however, type on the cover "Austrian Army/Medical Team/Bakwanga."

BRAZIL. Fifty-two members of the Brazilian Air Force and three staff officers make up this contingent. My covers bear a 3f "Technical Co-operation" and 5F. "Independence" adhesives cancelled by LEOPOLDVILLE c.d.s. Also applied is a rubber stamp reading "BRAZILIAN GROUP/ONUC - B.P.7248/LEOPOLDVILLE, CONGO (AFRIQUE)."

BURMA. Burma supplied nine military observers who were withdrawn within a few months. I have no covers from them, but I understand no cachets existed.



CANADA. Canada's contribution is 19 staff officers, 22 members of the R.C.A.F., and 274 troops, who are mainly Signals and Military police. The contingent has its own post office and mail usually receives the small steel C.A.P.O.5046 c.d.s. although C.F.P.O.25 has been seen on one or two. This latter cancellation is very scarce, and I'd welcome an opportunity to get hold of one. My cover from 57 Canadian Signals Unit bears CAPO 5046 and a rectangular rubber stamp in red reading "ORDERLY ROOM/57 CDN Signals Unit/ONUC/date(in box)/Leopoldville - Congo" This is a bilingual unit and often its members were ill-treated by the Congolese who mistook them for Belgians in the early days. The Canadians first arrived on 1st August 1960.

CEYLON. The present Ceylon contingent consists of thirteen staff officers. I have no covers from this source and haven't heard of any cachets used. First contingent arrived 18th August 1960.

5. Dansk ONUC kommando

6.

DENMARK. Denmark supplies 8 staff officers, 5 airmen and 76 soldiers - mainly a military police company. The advance party arrived at Leopoldville on 27th July 1960, followed by the M.P.Coy on the 10th August. I have a cover bearing a selection of Congo stamps datestamped Leopoldville and also bearing a two-line rubber stamp in black reading "Dansk ONUC/Kommando." I also have a cover which was carried to Denmark by courier and bears Danish adhesives also with this two-line stamp as well as a rectangular rubber stamp in black reading

"DANISH ONUC COMMAND/LEOPOLDVILLE/CONGO." The Danish contingent 1960 Christmas card depicted the UN emblem in white on a blue background with "ONUC/VOEUX DU CONGO(star)GREETINGS FROM THE CONGO", in black.

ETHIOPIA. This nation has 2,998 troops, 8 staff officers and 45 airmen, equipped with Sabre jet fighters. They first arrived in the Congo on 17th July 1960 and have been involved in most of the major incidents, the last action being the December battle for Elisabethville and the capture of the Union Miniere buildings, which they have occupied ever since. I had no success whatever with this Brigade and I understand that no cachets or unit stamps have been seen although obviously they must exist in a force of this size. I would welcome any "gen" on this and would also be interested to learn if any members have covers for disposal.

GHANA. The present strength of the Ghanaian contingent is 641 - a battalion group of the Ghana Regiment. This was one of the first nations to answer the UN call, and her first troops were landing at Leopoldville on the evening of 1st July 1960. The R.A.A. maintained the airlift and a R.A.F. detachment was established at Accra on 1st August 1960. After the formation of the Ghana Brigade, headquarters moved from Leopoldville to Luluabourg in Kasai Province in October 1960. This Brigade consisted of three Bns. of the Ghana Regt. with ancillary troops and 250 Ghana Police. In January 1961 there was a serious conflict between Ghanaian troops and their officers in which the C.O. was seriously injured. As a result the 3rd Bn. returned to Ghana to be disbanded and was not re-formed. The Ghana Brigade bore the brunt of many incidents and suffered many casualties, the worst being the overwhelming of the Port Francqui garrison in which 2 British officers and 41 other ranks were massacred - 24 bodies only being recovered from the river a week later. Mail from the Brigade usually came via the Ghana FPO and bore its datestamp, but in the early days some mail was datestamped at Accra. It would appear from different dates on postmark and cachet that the FPO was in fact located at Accra. Mail to Ghana was conveyed free of charge and normal forces concessional postage of 3d applied to the U.K. I have quite a few covers from this source - five of which I describe below as they cover all the markings I've seen. (Figs. 7 to 12). (Since the above was written, three other markings, Figs. 13 to 15, have been notified by various members from their Ghana covers).

ORDERLY ROOM
1'S BN THE GHANA REGT
Date
8. FORCUMO (LEO)





11.



13.



12.

FPO No 1 FRANKED GHANA

14.

ADJUDANT
2nd BN. GHANA REGT.

15.

1. Cover dated 16th Aug. 1960 with 3d (Prince Philip's visit) stamp cancelled with large d.c.loose-type datestamp reading "F.P.O.No. 1 FRANKED/GHANA", and bearing Army Signals cachet lettered HG/GS (Headquarters, Ghana Signals).
2. My next cover with same adhesive and cancellation but cachet reading ORDERLY ROOM/1s Bn THE GHANA REGT/Date...../FORCUNO (LEO).
3. Cover bearing 3 x 1d Ghana definitives cancelled with FPO dated 29/12/60 and also with Army Signals d.s. as before but now lettered UN 31.XII.60 GB (United Nations Ghana Brigade).
4. Cover with 3d definitive cancelled by Army Signals d.s.and FPO. There are three markings on this cover - Army Signals UN 16 II 61 GB, d.c. cachet reading HEADQUARTERS UNOC BDE/(date)/18 II 61 and FPO d.s. which has now had some hard wear and reads F.P.No.1 FRANKED/GHANA, dated 20 FE 1961. The cachet had "LEO" at the bottom between two thin bars (Fig.10), but this was removed when the Brigade moved to Luluabourg.
5. Cover similar to 4, bearing HQ UNOC Bde cachet and FPO, but latter now reading PO FNO1FRANKED/GHANA/5 JU 1961. This is the latest strike I've seen of this datestamp. Can anyone tell me if any other letter became misplaced after this date, or was it reset or replaced?

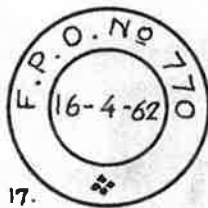
GUINEA. This nation provided 1,200 troops in the early days of the emergency, but they were withdrawn late in 1960 or early 1961. I've seen no covers from the contingent and have heard of no UN cachets or unit rubber stamps. Would welcome correspondence on this one also.

INDIA. At the end of February 1962, India had 4602 troops, 44 staff officers, 136 airmen and 924 administration troops serving in the Congo. The backbone of the force is 99 Indian Infantry Brigade which consists of three crack regiments - 1st Bn. Dogra Regt., 2nd Bn. Jat Regt. and 3rd Bn. 1st Gorkha Rifles. The remainder of the contingent, their location and dates of arrival are as follows:

Indian Military Hospital (Detachments at Luluabourg and Coquilhatville)	Leopoldville	8 & 20/9/60
Indian Supply Company	Leopoldville	21/8/60
Indian Provost Section	Leopoldville	21/8/60 & 10/11/60
Indian Signals Company	Elisabethville	28/9/60
Indian Composite Platoon	Kamina	8 & 20/9/60
Indian Postal Unit		29/8/60
Indian Air Force		5 & 7/8/60 & 23/9/60
Air Despatch		10/8/60

During the Elisabethville battles of September and December 1961, the Gorkha and Dogra Battalions played a leading part. The Gorkhas had the unpleasant task of capturing the post office and attempting to capture the "tunnel" with Irish and Swedish troops. The Dogras captured and garrisoned Elisabethville airport. The Indian Air Force contingent is equipped with Canberras, and during the operations flew many sorties, attacking the fleeing "mercenaries" and bombing and rocketing railway yards and fuel storage tanks.

No less than six Indian FPOs of the small d.c.type are in use in the Congo, and are located as follows: 660 Leopoldville, 716 Albertville, 771 Elisabethville, 777 Kamina, 762 and 770 mobile. FPO 762 was brought into use on 29th Dec. 1960, and visited each station in turn where Indian troops were serving.

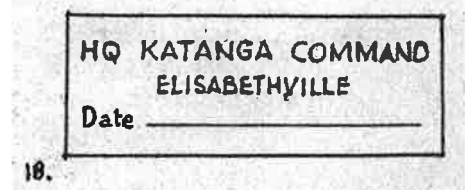


17.

Also:-
660.
716.
762.

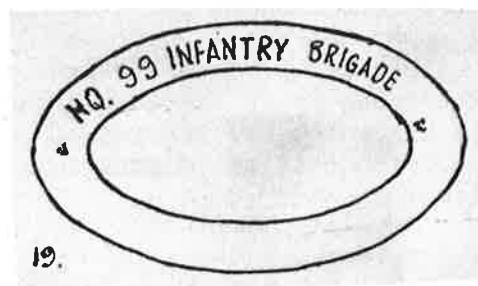


18.



18.

Head Clerk
 HQ 99 Infantry Brigade
 20.



Covers in my collection are as follows:

- A. Bearing various n.p. current definitives cancelled FPO 660, 1/1/61. Also s.c. cachet in red reading INDIAN POSTAL UNIT - ONUC -.
- B. Official ONUC envelope with various n.p. Service adhesives cancelled FPO 716 dated 11/7/61. On the front is a single-line FREE ON ACTIVE SERVICE stamp in purple, with double oval rubber stamp HQ 99 INFANTRY BRIGADE and two-line rubber stamp "Head Clerk/HQ 99 Infantry Brigade". The cover is printed with UN emblem and legend ORGANISATION DES NATIONS UNIES AU CONGO.
- C. Another cover as B but with printed legend and oval stamp only. Adhesives this time various n.p. of the Congo overprinted series, cancelled FPO 716 dated 9/2/62.
- D. Cover with two Indian commemoratives (which I supplied!) cancelled FPO 770 dated 15/5/61. This cover came from the Gorkhas.
- E. Official ONUC foolscap envelope bearing Indian Congo opts. cancelled FPO 771 dated 6/3/62.
- F. Official ONUC cover (as B & C) with mixed definitive and Congo opts. n.p. cancelled FPO 771 22/3/62. In addition a large d.c. 56 BASE POST OFFICE/SET 2 of 5/3/62. This was applied in Delhi as 56 APO is the routing centre for all Indian forces mail. Also a rectangular cachet reading HQ KATANGA COMMAND/ELISABETHVILLE/Date - .
- G. Cover with n.p. Service stamps cancelled FPO 660 31/3/61. This cover also has a single-line O.I.G.S. rubber stamp, a CAPT/ADJUTANT 3/1 GR and treble ring /RD BN. IST GORKHA RIFLES/28 MAR. 1961, all in purple.
- H. ONUC small envelope with treble ring stamp IST BATTALION THE DOGRA REGIMENT and FPO 771 cancelling n.p. Congo opts.

I also have a Christmas card from the 2nd Jats depicting a blue UN flag on a khaki background, with ONUC in a lighter shade and VOEUX DU CONGO GREETINGS FROM THE CONGO in white lettering.

The philatelic press has given a lot of publicity to the set of six Congo overprinted stamps which were issued at the FPOs at Leopoldville, Kamina and Elisabethville and Albertville on 1st January 1962, Army Day, I understand that special FDCs were prepared, but although I have contacted the Philatelic Bureau I've had no reply as yet.

INDONESIA. The Indonesian contingent numbered 1,150 combat troops, who were withdrawn early in 1961. I've seen no covers from this source and have heard of no cachets. I have a shoulder flash as worn by this contingent - a green rectangle with a snarling tiger's head in black/gold/white/red enclosed in a white-line shield with the legend SILIWANGI also in white. This unit arrived in the Congo 1st Sept. and 1st Oct. 1960.

IRELAND. Ireland at the moment has a contingent of 724 men. A battalion at a time now serves there on a six month tour of duty. The first contingent however consisted of two battalions - 32nd and 33rd Infantry Bns. The 32nd Bn. arrived on 28, 29 & 30 July 1960 and although I badly need a cover from this source, I do know that an oval rubber stamp was used reading HEADQUARTERS/32ND INF.BN. As regards subsequent battalions, my notes are as follows:

33RD. Arrived 15 & 16 Aug. 1960 and left in Jan. 1961. Involved in many incidents - the chief being on 8/11/60 when an 11-man patrol was ambushed by tribesmen and 9 of them killed. One man fought valiantly despite being struck by many poisoned arrows, and captured Baluba tribesmen are quoted as saying that he showed such courage that the Baluba are likely to have eaten his remains in order to gain the same courage he displayed. My cover bears an oval treble-lined stamp HEADQUARTERS/33RD.INF.BN/22 NOV 1960. Adhesives are the Independence stamps optd.KATANGA, and the Irish adhesive on the cover is also datestamped Elisabethville.

34TH. Arrived 12, 13 & 14 January 1961 and left six months later. This battalion was engaged more heavily than the 32nd and 33rd having eight armoured cars and every man armed with a sub machine gun. My only cover bears Congo stamps cancelled by Leopoldville machine 21/2/61. The oval rubber stamp as previously reads HEADQUARTERS/34TH INF.BN./17 FEB.1961.

35TH. Arrived during the summer of 1961 and took part in the heavy fighting in Katanga in September of that year. Many men of this battalion were captured and spent a month or more as prisoners of the Katangese. The average age of these prisoners was 24. I have two covers from this battalion as follows:

A. Cover bearing UPF meter no.U 75 and cachet in red HEADQUARTERS/35TH INFANTRY BATTALION/21 OCT.1961 (previous cachets were in black).

B. "Commercial" cover to Ireland - no adhesives but large ONUC cancel in red.

36TH. Arrived in the Congo 6-7th December 1961, and 350 men were immediately flown into the fighting area in Leopoldville where they took a leading part in the capture of the tunnel - a strategic underpass leading to the city's northern suburbs. My only cover bears UPF meter U 75 and oval stamp in black HEADQUARTERS/36TH INFANTRY BATTALION/9 JAN.1962. This battalion is expected to be relieved in June by the 37th Battalion.



All Irish troops in the Congo wear a brassard which is slipped over the left sleeve and attached to the epaulette. The material is k.d. and bears a shamrock leaf embroidered in bright green silk, surmounted by IRELAND in gold silk. My example also has the blue/silver UN flash sewn beneath the shamrock leaf.

(Since the above was written, another mark, Fig.23 above, has been notified as appearing on a cover from the Irish contingent by a member).

(To be continued)

EXTRACTS FROM PERIODICALS

The Stamp Lover Vol. 65 No. 5 - Postal Forgeries of the World - 52 -
H.G. Leslie Fletcher.

Describes eight different genuine surcharges and a postal forgery of the 10K on 2F. Mobutu stamp (Yvert 667, SG 654).