

The Air Mail Issues

The First Air Stamps



BOYDELL SE HOË VLUG.
BOYDELL'S HIGH FLIGHT.



Die eerste lugpos is verlede Maandag van Kaapstad na Durban gestuur.
The first airmail was despatched from Capetown to Durban last Monday.

UNION OF SOUTH AFRICA

Air Mails

The First Air Stamps

The government's decision to inaugurate Experimental Air Mail Service on March 2, 1925 between Cape Town and Durban was a hurried one. Tenders for the special stamps needed were not called for. Instead an order was placed with the Cape Times, Ltd. Newspaper for the photo-lithographic printing of the stamps for 3/- per thousand. The denominations chosen were 1d., 3d., 6d. and 9d., each in a different single color with the design of a biplane of the period and inscribed bilingually. The stamps were printed in sheets consisting of upper and lower panes, each with six rows of ten stamps, with a horizontal gutter between. The design came from the Department of Posts and Telegraphs. No artists were invited to submit designs and it is commonly believed that drawings purportedly rejected have no status. The set was issued February 26, 1925 and sold in areas served by the new service and in Johannesburg, Pretoria and the High Commissioner's Office in London. The stamps were valid for only the air portion of postage and had to also bear ordinary stamps at the normal postage rates. Printed on soft wove paper on unwatermarked paper by the photo-lithographic offset process. P 12. The stamps were discontinued at the end of June 1925 but they remained on sale in Pretoria until October 31 of the same year. Unsold stamps and the copper printing plates were destroyed December 5, 1925. 677,000 stamps were printed of all four values but only 221,826 were sold.



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The First Air Stamps

SG 26. 1d. Red

Printed on soft wove paper on unwatermarked paper
by the photo-lithographic offset process. P 12

Shades



Bree Street, Cape Town
4 JUL 25⁵



⁵ A rare Bree Street datestamp. Per Putzel the branch office opened in 1903 but changed name to von Brandis B.O. in March 1906. This is nineteen years later.

UNION OF SOUTH AFRICA

The First Air Stamps

SG 26. 1d. Red

Varieties



V1-Missing serif on left "d" Row 12/2



V1-Missing serif on left "d"
Row 12/2



V2-Smudge on "R" of
"SUIDAFRIKA" Row 7/9



V3-Open "R" in "SUIDAFRIKA"
Row 11/10



V4-Imperf to left

Control

Ca. Blocks of four with "1d" in circle on the margin



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The First Air Stamps

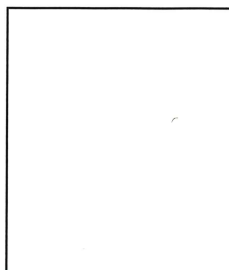
SG 27. 3d. Blue (Shades)

Printed on soft wove paper on unwatermarked paper

By the photo-lithographic offset process. P 12



Variety



V3-Imperf at left

UNION OF SOUTH AFRICA

Air Mails

The First Air Stamps

SG 27. 3d. Blue (Shades)

Control & Varieties

Ca. With "3d" in circle on margin



V1-Dash under wheel. Row 9/8

V2-Stroke thorough strut. Row 9/9

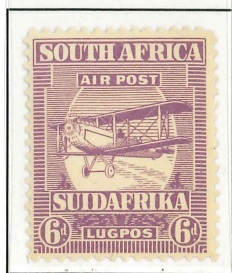
UNION OF SOUTH AFRICA

The First Air Stamps

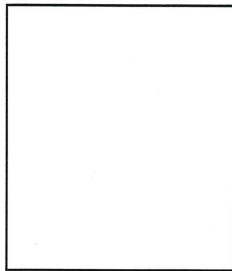
SG 28. 6d. Mauve (Shades)

Printed on soft wove paper on unwatermarked paper

By the photo-lithographic offset process. P 12



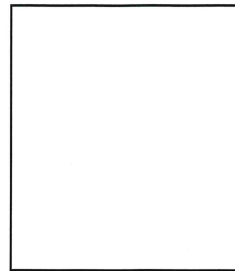
Varieties



V1-Stop before "LUGPOS"
Rows 1 & 7/6



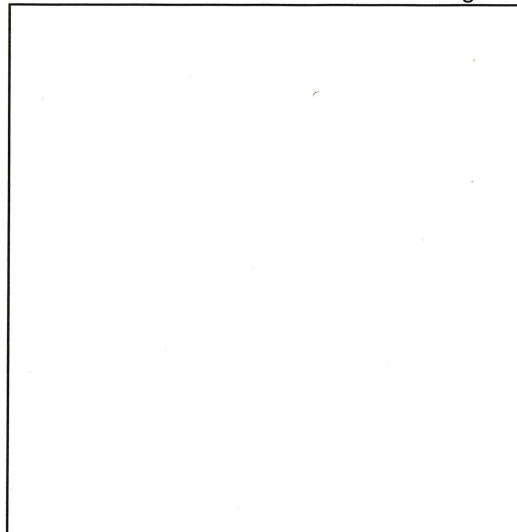
V2-Short "l" in "AIR"
Row 3/9



V3-Complete offset

Control

Block of four with "6d" in circle on the margin



UNION OF SOUTH AFRICA

The First Air Stamps

SG 29. 9d. Green (Shades)

Printed on soft wove paper on unwatermarked paper

By the photo-lithographic offset process. P 12



Varieties



V1-extended Strut flaw
Row 11/1



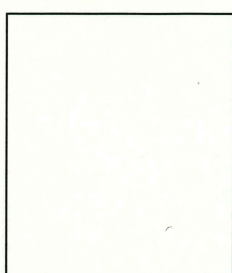
V2-oblique stroke thru
"9" circle. Row 5 & 11/6



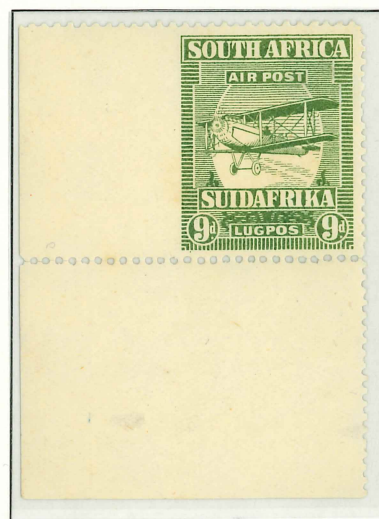
V4-imperforate at left



Ca. Control Block of 4
with "9d" in a circle



V6-complete offset



V4-imperforate at left

UNION OF SOUTH AFRICA

Air Mails *The First Air Stamps*

SG 26-29

Common Flaw to all of the set

Face of pilots solid



Because the Air Stamps were valid for only the air portion of postage a sender had to add ordinary stamps at the normal postage rates. These were used thusly.

Note the "special" air mail bi-plane cancel



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The Air Mail 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. The forgeries differ from the stamps in the colors, which never match exactly, the gauge of perforation, size and the spacing between them. There are two distinct types each having two different perforations.

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) 11 ½ 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) 11 ½

Type 1a. P.11½



Type 2c. P.11



Type 2d. P.11½

