

KING GEORGE VI VARIETIES

Part 37—South Africa

Richard Lockyer OBE commences a two-part study of the 'War Effort' stamps

In May 1941 the Postmaster General in South Africa announced that a special issue of stamps was in preparation to illustrate the country's contribution to the war effort. The first value, released on 1 August 1941, was the 3d., followed at intervals by the 4d. (20 August), 6d. (3 September), 2d. (15 September), 1d. (3 October), 1s. (27 October), ½d. (19 November) and 1½d. (12 January 1942). They were of conventional size and shape and were replaced a year or so later by the bantam series. These small stamps were introduced to save paper and remained current until 1945. It has been estimated that paper for the equivalent of 500 million stamps was saved during the period of their issue. An additional 1s.3d. value of conventional size was released on 2 January 1943.

Both war effort issues offer some attractive varieties. Some are straightforward and affect the visual appearance of a stamp, others show marked differences in shade or perforation. In addition, it is worth noting that marginal inscriptions can provide information about the printing sequence for the bantam series.



Smuggy

Stocks of both the ordinary pictorial and war effort stamps were on sale at the same time. This practice continued throughout the period the large and bantam stamps were available. It is most important to bear in mind that both series were overprinted for use in South West Africa. The slightly different issue dates are given in *Part 1*. Inverted overprints occurred. However, they are usually found as separate lots at auction rather than chance acquisitions, lurking unrecognised in a dealer's stock-book at a stamp fair. At a recent display meeting a young collector used the term 'smuggy' when talking about his collection of KGV1 varieties. He was asked the meaning of this strange philatelic term and explained that it described a stamp with a listed catalogue variety purchased at normal price...!

The Large War Effort Issue— Printing Details

The issue was printed by rotogravure at the Government Printing Works in Pretoria, using paper watermarked with the multiple Springbok's head: sideways (with horns pointing to the right) on the 2d., 4d. and 6d. and upright on the remainder. The 2d. and 1s. stamps were bilingual. The rest were arranged alternately in English and

Afrikaans on each sheet and, with the sole exception of the 6d. value, all unilingual stamps started with an Afrikaans stamp first on the sheet. The usual marginal arrows were printed in the colour of the stamp in the centre of the top, bottom and side of each sheet. The 1s.3d. was the only stamp to have the BUY UNION LOAN slogan in the margins. This occurred on the first and second printings, but not the third. The 2d., 4d. and 6d. were perforated 14 all round, with the remainder perf. 15 × 14 (or to be strictly accurate 14½ × 14½).

Sheet Size

The ½d., 1d., 1½d. and 1s.3d. stamps were issued in sheets of 240 with twenty horizontal rows of 12. Sheets of the 2d., 4d. and 6d. had 120 stamps with six rows of 20 and the 3d. and 1s. with 20 rows of six.

Design

The ½d. depicted South African infantry on the march, while the 1d. featured not only an army nurse (Barbara Palmer) taken from a painting by Captain Neville Lewis, but included the symbols of the Red Cross and the cross of the order of St John. The stamp thus recorded the efforts of the nursing and associated services. The presence of epaulettes on the shoulders of Barbara Palmer indicates that she could have been a nursing sister. Another portrait by Lewis of Lieutenant Robert (Bob) Kershaw appeared on the 1½d. Kershaw was the first South African airman to win the DSO in World War II. More artistic work by Lewis was used for the 2d. to mark the contribution by the navy. It was reported that the name on the sailor's cap ribbon was AFRIKANDER. The 3d. value illustrated the work of the Women's Auxiliary Corps, with the head and shoulders of Elizabeth Liebenberg in the centre and a lorry and driver, seated telephonist, lathe operator and parachute packers (?) in the four corners. The crude power of coastal defence artillery was shown on the 4d., while the 6d., featuring a steel worker, drew attention to the efforts of those who produced and fashioned basic raw materials into weapons of war. The

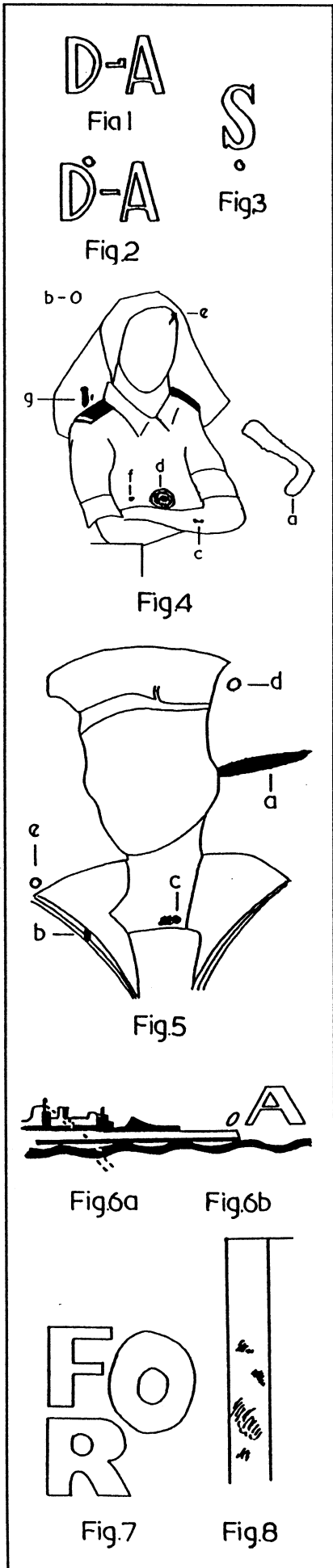
stark outline of a tank and an armoured car on the 1s. value spoke for the Tank Corps. Finally, the work of the Corps of Signals was commemorated on the 1s.3d. stamp with a signaller relaying messages during battle. This value was primarily used for airmail purposes.

Printing Dates and Numbers Printed

Fortunately, an article by A Lichtenstein published in the *South African Philatelist* was reproduced in *Stamp Collecting* on 26 August 1944. He used information released by the South African Post Office Publicity Department and the details that follow were drawn from that source. ½d.: First printing (October–December 1941), yellow-green, 112,000 sheets; second printing (January–March 1942), deep green, 121,500 sheets; third printing (April–June 1942), pale greenish blue, 11,400 sheets. 1d.: Four printings, total 312,200 sheets. No material difference in colour, except that the later printings were more rose than carmine and paler. 1½d.: Three printings, 351,500 sheets in all, the later printings being paler. 2d.: One printing of 48,500 sheets. 3d.: Two printings, 116,300 sheets altogether; no shades worth mentioning. 4d.: First printing (July–September 1941), bright chestnut, 45,250 sheets; second printing (April–June 1942), chocolate, 17,400 sheets. 6d.: One printing of 63,500 sheets. 1s.: One printing of 78,300 sheets.

Above and below: Two of the War Effort stamps depicting a Nurse and Ambulance and a Sailor and Destroyer. Other designs show Infantry, an Airman, Women's Auxiliary Services, Artillery, Electric Welding, Tanks and a Signaller





Liechtenstein confirmed that there were no remainders. He pointed out that to arrive at firm figures for numbers issued in South Africa it was necessary to subtract those sheets overprinted for South West Africa. He quoted the following figures, again drawn from the quarterly report of printings released by the Post Office Publicity Department: ½d. bright green (1400), blue-green (1000) and pale greenish blue (5000). 1d. shades (7250). 1½d. shades 8150. 2d. (2650). 4d. chestnut (1420), chocolate (1000). 6d. (2450). 1s. (2010).

From all these figures it is possible to calculate the number of stamps issued for use in South Africa: ½d. bright green, 110,600 sheets of 120 pairs. ½d. blue-green, 120,500 sheets of 120 pairs. ½d. pale greenish blue, 106,400 sheets of 120 pairs. 1d. red (shades), 304,950 sheets of 120 pairs. 1½d., 342,950 sheets of 120 pairs. 2d., 44,850 sheets of 120 singles. 3d., 113,880 sheets of 60 pairs. 4d. chestnut, 43,830 sheets of 60 pairs. 4d. chocolate, 16,400 sheets of 60 pairs. 6d., 61,050 sheets of 60 pairs. 1s., 76,290 sheets of 120 singles.

Relative Scarcity

The catalogue price for the second printing of the 4d. (SG 92a) reflects the much lower printing figure for the chocolate stamp (described in *Part 1* as red-brown). In a letter to *Stamp Collecting* (19 August 1944) W E Broomfield wrote that, judging by a supply of used single copies of the 4d. he had received, those in the chocolate shade had been heavily used for postal purposes, as at least half were this colour. He added that, bearing in mind the printing figures, it seemed likely that mint copies in the chocolate shade would be in short supply. The current catalogue price supports this comment. On the other hand, it is surprising to note that the 2d., although printed in comparatively small numbers, has not followed suit. The 3d. was used in large quantities for petrol licences and this may well help to account for the high catalogue rating, particularly for a used pair. The very small quantities allocated to South West Africa speak for themselves. It can only be assumed that philatelic fashion has a lot to do with the low catalogue price for the set.

The 'Smaller' Stamp

It was noted in the 10 April 1943 edition of *Stamp Collecting* that, throughout the early printings of the large war effort issue, stamps from the tenth row of the sheets of all denominations were narrower (vertically or horizontally according to shape), by one millimetre, than the rest. A year later Liechtenstein described the 'smaller' stamp as a hardy annual, cropping up in the overseas philatelic press (i.e. outside South Africa) and sometimes offered by dealers as a rare variety. He pointed out that it was a common feature of all South African rotary-printed stamps since 1932. The 'smaller' stamp could be found in one row of practically every sheet; the only exception being those few sheets on which the perforating machine registered exactly at the starting and finishing points. He explained that usually there appeared to be a minute shrinkage of paper—about a quarter to one millimetre over the length of a sheet. This resulted in the perforations gradually getting out of register with the stamp design. To correct this misalignment,

the perforating mechanism was adjusted to give proper centring. As the perforating was done while the stamps were still in roll form (prior to being cut up into sheets) evidence of this adjustment was found in different positions on different values and printings. By 1944 he had found the 'smaller' stamp on all eight values of the original large war effort issue. For good measure, Liechtenstein added that the 'small' stamp occurred on the Matabeleland Commemorative stamp issued in Southern Rhodesia on 1 November 1943 (SG 61) and printed by rotogravure in South Africa.

Shades

The listing in *Part 1* only gives extra shades for the ½d., 4d. and 1s.3d. *The Commonwealth Catalogue* goes further, adding dull carmine (1942) for the 1d., deep myrtle for the 1½d., pale violet (1942) for the 2d. and Prussian blue (1942) for the 3d. The 1s., classified as brown in *Part 1* is described as chocolate (27 October 1941) and reddish chocolate (1942). Finally, both catalogues agree that the first 1s.3d. is olive-brown, but the May 1946 printing is blackish brown in *Part 1* and deep sepia in *Commonwealth*. To complicate matters there was an intermediate printing in January 1944. The interpretation of colour through different eyes often causes complications. In contrast varieties occurring on stamps are either present or absent—there is no room for argument!

Varieties (South and South West Africa)

½d. Row 17/5—the hyphen between 'SUID-AFRICA' has a projection at the top right. This gives the impression of a capital letter 'L' on its side (Fig 1). R18/4—a most noticeable dot above the 'D' of 'SUID' (Fig 2). R19/2—a white dot below the 'S' of 'SOUTH' (Fig 3).

1d. R2/12—a 'White Flag' on the ambulance has been reported. R13/7—a crescent or streamer-like mark in the dark background to the right of the nurse (Fig 4a). R14/2—a white spot in the background (Fig 4b). R14/7—a dark spot on the left arm of the nurse (Fig 4c). R14/11—the 'Stain on Uniform Flaw' (SG 89a and Namibia 115a) (Fig 4d). R19/2—a white mark at the foot of the '1' of '1d.' has been noted. R19/5—a small lock of hair shows above the nurse's left eye (Fig 4e). R20/4—a dot over the left hand (Fig 4f). R20/5—a long mark on the nurse's cap above her right shoulder, this has been called the 'Ribbon Flaw' (Fig 4g).

1½d. Mention has been made in the philatelic press of a mark like a 'V' on the airman's shoulder on R16/8 and a white spot in the background on R18/8.

2d. R1/1—a mark from the sailor's ear to the white vertical frame line (Fig 5a) R1/9—a 'Trailing Aerial' on the destroyer (Fig 6a). R2/3—a faint pale circular mark to the right of 'F' and 'R' of 'AFRICA' (Fig 7). R2/7—a dark mark across the collar on the left side (Fig 5b). R3/8—an extra dot on the lower throat adjacent and to the right of a constant darker area of shading (Fig 5c). R4/6—a dot by the sailor's cap (Fig 5d). R5/16—a white spot on the chest of the sailor has been seen. R6/3—a white dot above the right shoulder (Fig 5e). R6/5—a 'flag' on the stern of the warship (Fig 6b). R6/16—a horizontal stroke through '2d.' has received comment.



Fig.9



Fig.10



Fig.11



Fig.12

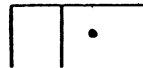


Fig.13



Fig.14

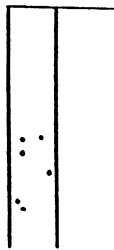


Fig.15

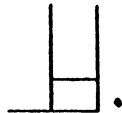


Fig.16

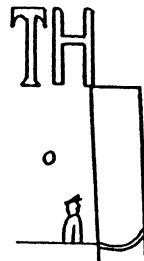


Fig.17

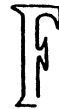


Fig.18



Fig.19



Fig.20

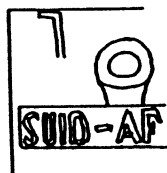


Fig.21



Fig.22



Fig.23

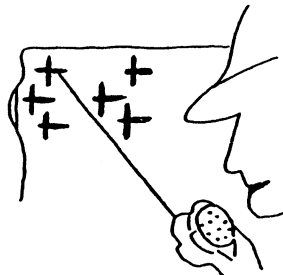


Fig.24



Fig.25

3d. R1/1—coloured smudges in the left panel (Fig 8). R2/5—a prominent dot in the top left corner of the stamp (Fig 9) and an extra stroke of colour from the radiator of the lorry into the side panel. R5/3—a white dot under 'MAAK', above the woman's head (Fig 10). R8/3—a dot in 'O' of 'SOUTH' (Fig 11). R12/4—a white instead of blue background behind the second 'S' of 'POSSEEL', very easy to see, but difficult to illustrate (Fig 12). R15/5—a dot in the top left corner (Fig 13). R18/2—the 'WAC Smoking' variety (Fig 14). R20/3—dots in the left panel (Fig 15). R20/4—a distinctive dot outside the bottom right corner (Fig 16).

4d. R1/6—a white spot just above the left soldier (Fig 17). R3/20—marks on the barrel of the gun, the foot of the 'F' of 'AFRICA' is slightly defective (Fig 18) and the right vertical of the '4' of '4d.' shows a break (Fig 19). R4/19—a well defined shadow of the top half of a capital A above the second 'A' of 'AFRICA' (Fig 20). R5/1—the top right portion of an 'A' in the top left corner of the stamp (Fig 21). R6/1—what appears to be retouch work affecting the 'OU' of 'SOUTH' (Fig 22). R6/2—a white dot under the second 'A' of 'AFRICA' (Fig 23).

6d. Comment has been made about spots or 'sparks' above the flame from the welding torch on R1/19 and a dot on the top frame line on R4/20.

1s. Reports have appeared that on R2/2 a vertical line can be seen in front of the tank, on R2/6 the tank's gun is firing and on R20/5 a stroke passes through the 'STA' of 'POSTAGE'.

1s.3d. A white spot has been noted affecting the 'H' of 'SOUTH' on R2/3 with another to the left of the 'H' on R4/3 and a white dot on the tail of the 'S' on R5/2. The panel line above the hyphen shows a break on R8/6 because the very dark background above the hyphen, between 'SUID-AFRIKA', is much paler than normal. This paleness can be picked out with the naked eye without difficulty. A strong streak of colour resembling tracer fire crosses the sky towards the aircraft on R12/10 (Fig 24).

South West Africa

Two very distinct shades effect the 3d.—blue and milky, or very pale, blue. The overprint on the 3d. and 1s. is larger (9mm) as compared with the remaining values (7½mm). A minor overprint variety can be found on both shades of the 3d. It effects the 'A' of 'SWA' on R1/4 (Fig 25) and has been seen on five sheets.

Part 38 (GSM November 1995) will describe varieties on the South Africa Bantam War Effort Series.

Readers interested in the KGVI era may wish to join the King George VI Collectors' Society. Further details can be obtained from the General Secretary, KGVICS, 98 Albany, Manor Road, Bournemouth, BH1 3EW.