



1 (A)



1 (B)

PERSIAN GULF

(3) Bushire

By Major T. L. C. TOMKINS



2 (A)



2 (B)

A CERTAIN Arrian, writing in the second century, describes in some detail the voyage made by Nearchus, Admiral of the Navy of Alexander the Great, called by the Arabs Iskander. It would appear that Nearchus, homeward bound from India in 326 B.C., hugged the coast line as he went westward, and eventually arrived at "A peninsula named Mesambria, wherein were many gardens and all kinds of fruit".

There are still gardens and date groves on this peninsula, fortunately for the European inhabitants, for the ancient town that stood thereon is the modern Rishahr, six miles south of the port of Bushire, and the residential quarter where one can escape from the heat and dust of the town.

The East India Company arrived in Bushire in 1763, and an agreement was entered into between their agent and the Persian Government for the establishment of a factory; Article 3 of the agreement reading as follows:—

"No European Nation whatever is to be permitted to settle in Bushire so long as the English continue a factory here."

Thus granting what amounted to a monopoly of trade to the Company.

This was confirmed by the Shah, Kerim Khan, who also stated that no customs dues were to be collected on either imports or exports, thus establishing virtual free trade, so far as we were concerned.

The Dutch had established a trading post at Bushire, as early as 1747, but this was closed in 1752, and thereafter there was little opposition offered to the supremacy of the British.

Owing to internal troubles in Persia during the late 1700's, the Company temporarily withdrew their trading from Bushire to Busrah, to the detriment of the Persian's trade. This took place in 1769, but the position improved in the following years, and the post was re-established in 1776, and by 1778 Bushire had definitely taken first place as the Company's headquarters in the Gulf.

During the Anglo-Persian War of 1856-57, the post, which had meanwhile been raised to the status of a Residency, was temporarily abandoned, but subsequently the British troops under Outram re-took it and used Bushire as their base for further operations.

In the Great War of 1914-18, Bushire was occupied by British troops on August 8th, 1915, to protect our lines of communication, as there is an important Cable station at Rishahr, where the main cables from Fao and Jask meet.

The modern Bushire is the main port of Northern Persia, being the terminus for the caravan route through Kazurun to Shiraz and Isfahan and thence to Tehran. The inner roadstead is too shallow for large ships, which have to anchor about seven miles out. Sea communications are maintained

by the British India Steam Navigation Co. with a fast weekly mail service to Bombay. There is also an intermediate "all stations" weekly service by the same company. Steamers of the Strick Line run a monthly service to U.K. There was until 1939 an air service by Imperial Airways via Bushire to Karachi, but this was altered after the war, and the route is now via Bahrain.

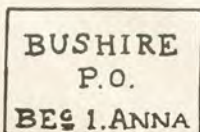
Bushire is the residence of the British Resident, and Consul-General for the Persian Gulf, under whom come all the Political Agents for the other coast towns.

The Indian Post Office opened in 1864, and handstruck markings are known from then until as late as 1891. There are five different types of these markings known, the commonest one being as Type A which is a rectangle with the words "Bushire P.O." and BEG, short for "Bearing" with either 1, 2 or 4 annas, or 1 rupee. This is an unpaid marking, and is always found in black. The other types which are found on envelopes without adhesives, are Types B, spelt "BUSHIER", Type 2(A), Type 3, spelt both "BASHIR" and "BUSHIRE", and Type 5.

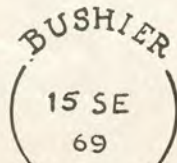


The cancellations found on Indian adhesives, as as follows:—

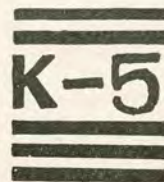
A rhomboid of nine lines which must be on cover to prove office of origin. Type B spelt BUSHIER in a single arc, in seriffed lettering. Type 1(A) very similar, but spelt BUSHIRE, and found in duplex with Type 1(B) which consists of the numbers 308 in a rhomboid of either twelve or fourteen lines sloping down from left to right; these are found with dates from 1866 to 1869. This type was followed by Type 2(A) used single, or in duplex with 2(B), the right half of the duplex having the number 26 in a rectangle surrounded by lines and an outer circle. This was in use from about 1869 to 1872, but examples may exist with later dates. From 1872 to 1879 Bushire was in the Karachi Circle, and used Type 3. This has two different wordings, either BASHIR, or BUSHIRE, in a straight line across the circle. It can be found used singly, or in conjunction with 3(i) readings K-5 between bars—two at top and three at bottom. These markings are found either used as a duplex



A



B



3 (1)



4



5

(Continued on page 627.)

Bushire (concluded)



11



6

or separately on the same cover, the K-5 cancelling the adhesives, and the office stamp elsewhere. As the K-5 cancellation is rather large, it is difficult to get a clearly readable cancellation on a single stamp when off cover. It is therefore desirable to collect this marking either on pairs (or larger) or on cover—when you can find them! In 1879 Bushire came under the Bombay Circle, and Type 3, with both spellings, was used with either Type 3A or 3B, the normal “B” (for Bombay) in a rectangle or circle of horizontal bars. Once again, in some cases, the “B” was used to cancel the adhesives, and Type 3 is often found well away from the “B”, so that here it is absolutely necessary to have the whole cover, or at least, a large enough portion to obtain both markings. There were two sizes of Type 3, the circle measuring, in the one case, 19 mm., and in the other 23 mm. In about 1889, Type 4 came into general use. This consists of a single circle of 18 mm. diameter with four thin bars in the corners. It is common on all the 1882-89 issue of Queen Victoria up to the 2½ annas; on higher values it is seldom seen.

This was followed shortly after by Type 5, a circle of 18 mm. again but with three thicker bars at the corners. This type came in about 1890, and once again is common on the lower values.

Type 6 followed, about 1892. This was a very much larger circle, being 25 mm. in diameter, and having three heavy bars at the corners. Type 6 had a long life, lasting until the early 1920's, and can be found on the stamps of all three reigns. About 1902, the final E of BUSHIRE was damaged, and lost the lower horizontal stroke; so that, from then on the office name is spelt BUSHIRF, no attempt being made apparently to replace the damaged obliterator. Values up to 12 annas are met with, the lower range ½-2½ annas being, as usual, the commonest, and many interesting combinations can be found. These are usually on the backs of the covers, used as a sealing device on the flaps. Type 6 is remarkable for the large size of the day and month line as opposed to the year date, which is very small. Type 7 has been reported from Bushire, but I have never come across a copy yet.

Circa 1900, a new type made its appearance; this is Type II and consists of a single circle 25 mm. in diameter, with the office name round the top in sans-serif type, and the letters “REG.” immediately under it. This, as its lettering implies, was used exclusively for Registered Letters, and lasted until the 1920's. During the Great War in 1914-18, the troops employed in occupying Bushire apparently used the normal cancellation then in use, i.e., Type 6. This I have seen on censored covers. There seems, however, no reason why Indian stamps overprinted “I.E.F.” should not be found from Bushire, but I have never seen any. The Persian stamps overprinted “Bushire under British Occupation” were mostly used by the civilian population, apart from a very few “philatelic” covers sent home by soldiers. These, however, hardly fall within the scope of this article, and, as there are more forged overprints about than genuine ones, perhaps it is just as well. In company with certain other Persian Gulf ports, the use of Indian stamps ceased in 1923, when the Persian Post Office took over. (To be continued.)—Next Port: Busrah,



1 (A)



1 (B)

PERSIAN GULF

(4) Busrah

By Major T. L. C. TOMKINS



2 (A)



2 (B)

TO save possible trouble with the Customers, who if not always right, at least always write, let me say first of all, that I am aware that the modern spelling of the town is BASRA, but I have deliberately adopted the spelling of BUSRAH, for the simple reason that this is the way in which it is spelt on most of the cancellations I shall discuss later on. Come to think of it, Busrah is really not, strictly speaking, a Persian Gulf town at all, being 70 miles from the head of the Gulf, up the Shatt al Arab, which is formed by the confluence of the rivers Tigris and Euphrates. However, as it is the principal port for Iraq, and the head of the Gulf generally, it is usually looked upon as coming within the orbit of India used in the Gulf.

The recorded history of Busrah may be said to begin in the year 638 A.D. when it was founded by the Moslem conquerors of Persian Mesopotamia. It soon grew into a great city and port, and a certain Nasir-i-Khusraw, described it in 1051 A.D. as "a flourishing town, having palaces, bazaars, mosques, and caravanserais in such numbers that it is impossible to count and describe them". Busrah, being on the highway between East and West, not unnaturally became the battleground of warring nations, and in 1534, following the conquest of Bagdad by Sulaiman I, it fell to the Turks. It was during the seventeenth century, however, the seat of a more or less independent Arab chief, and later was very much involved in the long struggle between Turkey and Persia in the latter half of the 18th Century. In the early days, Busrah was practically on the shores of the Gulf, but owing to the constant depositing of mud and silt brought down by the twin rivers, it has gradually been left farther and farther away, as the coastline moves to the South. Busrah was an early Gulf settlement of the Portuguese, who had established a trading post there as early as 1529, and after their expulsion from Hormuz in 1622, Busrah became their chief port. As a result of growing Dutch competition at Bandar Abbas, the East India Company despatched a ship to Busrah in 1639, to sound the possibilities of opening a trading post there, where they would not be subject to Persian vacillations.

A licence was obtained from the Turkish authorities, and the first factory was established in 1643. The Dutch arrived shortly after, and for some years there was fierce competition between the two Companies. Eventually the balance swung in favour of the East India Co., largely as a result of the Dutch methods of trading, and from about the end of the 17th Century the Indian trade prospered exceedingly. So much so, that by 1764 Busrah was recognised by Turkey as a Consulate under the Capitulations.

During 1773, Busrah was temporarily evacuated by the Company during a virulent outbreak of plague, for some months, and in 1775, during the siege of Busrah by the Persians, a squadron of the Indian fleet successfully prevented the Persian fleet from entering the Shatt-al-Arab. It is interesting to note that Nelson was a midshipman on board the frigate *Seahorse* which took part in this action.

During the 19th Century, navigation on the Tigris was almost wholly in British hands. In 1835 Colonel Chesney was entrusted with the task of making a survey of the rivers Tigris and Euphrates, and largely as a result of his work the first

trading steamer, the *City of London* owned by Messrs Lynch & Co., started to ply between Busrah and Bagdad.

This was the forerunner of what is now a permanent service of river steamers, run by the Euphrates and Tigris Steam Navigation Co. With the growth of steam navigation, Busrah rapidly assumed importance as the principal port for Iraq, and by 1914, the ships of at least 10 companies were using its facilities. At the outbreak of war with Turkey in 1914, the Indian Expeditionary Force "D" landed at Fao, at the mouth of the Shatt-al-Arab, and moving rapidly inland captured Busrah on the 22nd of November. Busrah then became the base for all subsequent operations in Mesopotamia. The construction of the modern port dates from this time, and was opened for commercial use in 1920. During the 1939-45 war Busrah was the main supply base for Paiforce. Modern Busrah really consists of the twin towns of Busrah City and Ashar, plus the port of Ma'qil about 4 miles north, where there is a civil airport. The estimated population in 1940 was 80,000.



3



3 (1)

The Indian Post Office opened in 1868, at first employing handstruck markings, of which two types are known. These are Type 2(A) a single circle with the office name at top spelt BUSREH and Type 3, a straight line name BUSRAH across the circle. Type 2(A) is found in black, as an unpaid marking. The first cancellation found on Indian stamps is Type 1(A), either used singly, or in duplex with 1(B); they are also found separately on the same cover, the 1(B) cancelling the stamp. Type 1(B) is a rhomboid of 14 lines sloping from top left to bottom right, and enclosing a number "357". In Type 1(A) the office name is spelt BUSSORAH, and can be found in both black and red. The second cancellation is shown in Type 2(A) once again used singly or in conjunction with Type 2(B). The office name is here spelt BUSREH, and the number allocated to this office shown in 2(B) was 19. Whilst in the Karachi circle, Busrah used Type 3, spelt either BUSREH or BUSRAH, singly or with Type 3(1). This latter cancellation bears the lettering K-6/1, being a sub-post office of Bagdad which was K-6. On transference to the Bombay circle, Type 3 was used in conjunction with 3A and 3B, and previous remarks regarding the necessity of having covers apply.

(Busrah to be concluded next week.)

(Next Port : DUBAI)



4



5

PERSIAN GULF

(4) Busrah

By Major T. L. C. TOMKINS

(Continued from p. 657)



6



R.1.

Type 4 came into use towards the end of the 1880's with four bars, and Type 5 shortly afterwards with three bars round the circle. As with Bushire, both these cancellations had a comparatively short life, being superseded early in the 1890's by Type 6. This is a slightly different type to that used at Bushire, the year date being larger, and more in proportion to the day and month size. A variety exists during the early 1900's with a small decoration at the foot of the circle.

I cannot trace Type 7 being used at Busrah, but it is said to exist.

There are two Registered cancellations which I have seen, the first is Type R.1 which is a small circle of 20 mm. diameter, with the office name curved round the top, and REG under it. From copies in my collection, this marking would appear to have been in use between 1900-02, and possibly later dates are known. The second is Type 11 which followed it and was used throughout the reigns of K.E.VII and K.G.V.

These markings are normally found on Indian stamps overprinted I.E.F., but can also be found on unoverprinted Indian stamps. There are also two Censor markings in use during this period, peculiar to Busrah. The first is Type C(1) which I have seen in black, red and purple, and the second is Type C(2) which I have only seen in red. These can be found on Military correspondence, either stamped, or on covers marked ON ACTIVE SERVICE, without adhesives. Type C(1) has been seen cancelling adhesives. After the Great War, the stamps of Iraq superseded those of India, and with these we are not concerned. During the Second World War Indian stamps were in use with the Indian troops in Paiforce. Type M.1 has been seen from Busrah during 1942 cancelling a 3/3 anna K.G.VI.



11



11 (A)



C (1)



C (2)



G (3)



M.1.

(Next Port : DUBAI.)

Another cancellation, which I have only seen used during the 1914-18 war is Type 11(A), a circle of 27 mm. diameter.

The I.E.F. "D" Force, which operated from Busrah during this war used special cancellations of their own; originally Busrah was allocated the Indian F.P.O. No. 26 (Type G), but as the front moved forward, and Busrah became the main supply base, a new type came into use; this is shown as Type G(2) and consists of a double circle 32 mm. in diameter with the lettering BASE OFFICE D round the upper part, and I.E.F. in the lower, with the date in a belt across the centre. This also occurs with REG in the space over the belt, and exists with "killer arcs" either side and vertical bars above and below the date as Type G(3).



G



G (2)

N.Z. Demonetised

From E. G. Cowell (Auckland, N.Z.)

The Postmaster-General of New Zealand announces (under the date line of September 2nd) that the following N.Z. stamps would be invalid for postage from December 21st next. They could, however, be exchanged for current stamps up to the end of 1950.

- 1935 Pictorial issue (including postal stationery).
- 1935 Airmail issue.
- 1937-1945 "Health" stamps.
- 1937 Coronation.
- 1940 Centennial Issue.
- 1903 Express Delivery.
- 1939 Express Delivery.
- 1905 Government Life Insurance stamps.