

Egypt 1956 – the 2nd Pan-Arab Scout Jamboree and a previously unrecorded Scout postmark

by Hallvard Slettebø

Stamps and souvenir sheets

In Aboukir Bay on 1 August 1798, Rear Admiral Horatio Nelson achieved one of the most decisive victories in the age of sail and re-established British command of the Mediterranean. With a fleet of fourteen ships, he captured six and destroyed seven French vessels out of a total of seventeen.

In July-August 1956, however, this same Aboukir near Alexandria, Egypt was the scene of more friendly relations, for here was held the 2nd Pan-Arab Scout Jamboree. Several thousand Scouts from all over the Arab world attended. Three postage stamps were issued on 25 July 1956, together with miniature sheets perforated and imperforated.

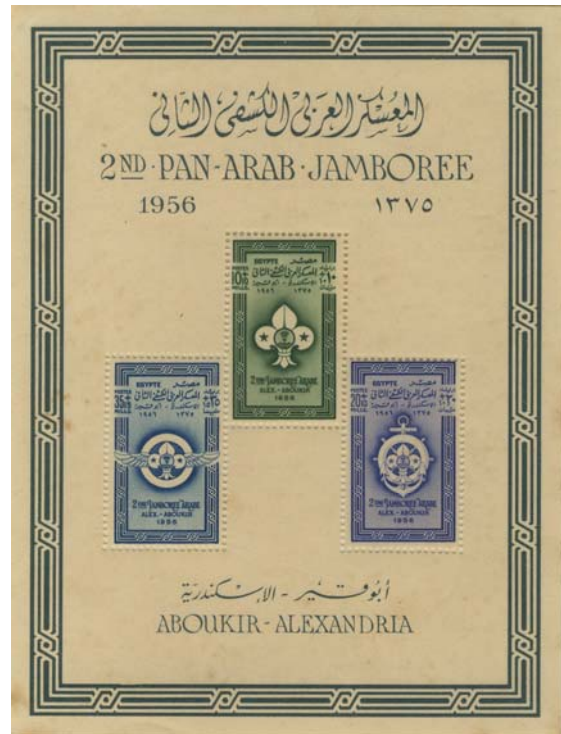
The stamps were:

10 mills + 10 mills (green) Boy Scout badge

20 mills + 10 mills (sky blue) Air Scout badge

35 mills + 15 mills (navy blue) Sea Scout badge

500,000 of each postage stamp value were printed. The stamps carried a charity premium which went to funds of the Egyptian Boy Scout Movement. One set of miniature sheets was sold with each purchase of 200 sets of stamps. 2,500 pairs of miniature sheets were printed, and it is reported that 1,037 pairs were sold.



Imperforated stamps

While the miniature sheets were issued both perforated and imperforated, the regular stamps are usually found only perforated.

Imperforated stamps do however exist, and these are possibly plate proofs and must be considered to be extremely rare. If you come across imperforated single stamps, then check the margins to ensure the stamps are not cut from an imperforated miniature sheet.



First Day Covers

First day covers carry a postmark with Arab and English text SCOUT CAMP ABU QIR. Most of the first day covers are sent regular mail, while registered first day covers are more unusual. Registered first day covers carry a special registration handstamp also with the same text as the postmark. Registration numbers up to No. 302 are seen, but higher numbers may exist.

The cacheted first day covers as shown here have on the reverse an illustrated advert “Coca Cola Bottlers welcome the 2nd Pan Arab Jamboree” in English and Arab, and these covers are of course also sought by Coca Cola collectors!



Previously unrecorded Scout postmark

The stamps, souvenir sheets and first day covers are well known to Scout stamp collectors since they were issued back in 1956. The stamps and first day covers are easy to obtain, while the miniature sheets are rather expensive and command prices in the \$1,000 magnitude for the pair.

What is not known until now is that a machine cancel with advertising slogan was in use in Alexandria around the time of the Jamboree. The slogan is in Arab only, and this must be one of the reasons why Scout collectors have been unaware of this postmark for 53 years.



المعسكر الكشفي
بابي قنبر
من ٢٥ / ٧ إلى ٣ / ٨ / ١٩٥٦

Translation of the slogan:

Arab Scout Jamboree
at Aboukir
from 25/7 to 3/8/1956

A cover with the machine cancel was recently offered in an Ebay auction. The cover is sent from London 4 AUG 1956 to Alexandria, Egypt and the machine cancel is applied as a receiving postmark on reverse of the cover which was censored upon arrival in Egypt. Until now this is the only recorded item with this postmark, but there is every reason to believe that more covers are around – happy hunting!

Cover with the previously unrecorded 1956 Scout postmark on reverse.



Sources: Gordon Entwistle: Boy Scout and Girl Guide Stamps of the World, 1957.
SOSOW (Scouts On Stamps Of The World), 7th edition, 1986.
Grosvenor Sale 47, Auction of British Empire Postage Stamps & Postal History, 2009.
Thank you to Dr. Adel Farid, Egypt and Björn Sohrne, Sweden for translation.