

The 1977 Saudi Arabia King Khalid incorrect date stamps

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King Faisal bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, or simply King Faisal, became King of Saudi Arabia on November 2, 1964. On March 25, 1975, the king was conducting a majlis. This was a planned public event where the citizens of the country were allowed to come directly to the king and express their concerns to see if he could help resolve their problems.

While King Faisal met with his people, his nephew Prince Faisal bin Musaid was waiting to see him. When King Faisal became available, his nephew went to kiss and embrace him as per Saudi custom. As the king hugged his nephew, the prince pulled out a gun and shot the king in the face and the ear. The prince was quickly subdued by one of the king's bodyguards.

King Faisal was seriously injured. He was rushed to the hospital, but the doctors were unable to save his life.

Following the murder of the king, the country mourned for three days. All government activities and services were temporarily suspended.

After the killing of King Faisal, his brother, Crown Prince Khalid bin Abdulaziz Al Saud ascended to the throne. His installation as the new king of Saudi Arabia took place on the Hijri date 13 Rabi Al Awwal 1395 (13-3-1395) corresponding to the Gregorian March 25, 1975.

Born in Riyadh in 1913, Prince Khalid was the fifth son of King Ibn Saud, founder of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. At the age of 62, Prince Khalid became the fourth King of Saudi Arabia. He reigned from 1975 until 1982, when he passed away.

During his time as king, Saudi Arabia prospered and had enormous growth due to the rise in oil revenues. In 1977, the country received about \$40 billion in oil revenues, and in 1980 the oil revenues jumped to around \$90 billion. This wealth made Saudi Arabia one of the richest countries in the world.

King Khalid improved the education in his country by increasing the number of schools. For instance, between 1975 and 1980, the number of elementary schools jumped from 3,038 to 5,373 and the number of secondary schools rose from 649 to 1,377. As for high schools, their number increased from 182 to 456.

King Khalid focused on developing the infrastructure of Saudi Arabia by improving agriculture and industries within his country. During his rule, the two industrial cities of Yanbu and Jubail were founded.

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According to Wikipedia “In April 1975, King Khalid’s first diplomatic coup was the conclusion of a demarcation agreement concerning the Al Buraymi Oasis, where the frontiers of Abu Dhabi, Oman and Saudi Arabia meet. Claims and counterclaims over this frontier had exacerbated relations among them for years. Therefore, King Khalid aimed at settling this long-standing boundary disputes. The conclusion of negotiations under King Khalid added to his stature as a statesman.”

King Khalid worked diligently to improve relations with his neighboring countries. In 1976, he restored Saudi diplomatic relations with the People’s Democratic Republic of Yemen. He visited the Arab Gulf states with the expectations of building closer relationships with them. In 1981, as a result of his visits, King Khalid inaugurated the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC).

King Khalid started bringing in foreign laborers to help in the development of his country. People from around the world poured into Saudi Arabia to assist in this new endeavor.

King Khalid was described as “warm, cheerful, attentive and devout.” He was loved by his brothers and sisters. Whenever King Khalid had free time, he was either horse-back riding or training his great collection of falcons to hunt small animals in their natural environment.

On June 13, 1982, King Khalid passed away. It was a massive heart attack that ended his reign. Today, the reader can see King Khalid’s legacy in numerous buildings and institutions named after him in Saudi Arabia. The most prominent ones are King Khalid International Airport, King Khalid University, King Khalid Military City, King Khalid Medical City and King Khalid Eye Specialist Hospital. These are just a few of the many ways King Khalid’s memory lives on in his country.

When Crown Prince Khalid became king on March 25, 1975, the Saudi government did not issue any stamps to commemorate his accession to the throne. Two years had to pass before the country issued any stamps to pay homage to him as the new monarch.

To celebrate the two-year anniversary of the king’s accession to the throne, the Saudi government issued a set of two commemorative stamps on March 3, 1977. Showcased in **Figures 1 and 2**, the low denomination stamp has a face value of 20 halalas, and the high value stamp is 80h.



Figure 1



Figure 2

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Both stamps are listed in Volume 6A of the 2024 Scott Standard Postage Stamp Catalogue as numbers 727a and 728a. A mint never-hinged set, in the grade of very fine, has a retail value of \$40 and \$36 used.

The two stamps were designed and issued by the Directorate General of Posts at the Ministry of Posts, Telegraphs and Telephones in the kingdom. The stamps were printed in the country's capital by the Government Security Printing Press in Riyadh.

The stamps are multi-colored. They were printed by lithography on white paper that does not contain a watermark. The stamps are comb-perforated gauge 14.

Both stamps have the same design. It features a picture of King Khalid in Saudi traditional dress. He is wearing a thawb, a bisht, a keffiyeh and an agal.

A thawb is actually a robe-like garment with long sleeves and ankle length. While some thawbs are basic, others are decorated. A thawb is made from linen, cotton, wool or polyester fabric. A linen or cotton thawb is lightweight and breathable and it is perfect for hot climate areas. To stay cool in the summer, Saudi men wear thawbs in white or lighter colors. On the stamps, the thawb that King Khalid is wearing is white.

Also known as aba or mishlah, the bisht is a traditional cloak for men. Similar to an overcoat, a cloak is a loose article of garment worn on top of clothing, usually a thawb. According to Wikipedia, the bisht "is a status garment, associated with royalty, religious position, wealth, and ceremonial occasions such as weddings, like the black-tie tuxedo in the West." On the stamps, King Khalid is wearing a bisht over the thawb. The reader can see a trim on the bisht that is "made out of silk and metals such as gold and silver." On the 20h stamp, the bisht is dark brown and black on the 80h.

The keffiyeh is a long-established headwear that men from some parts of the Middle East wear. Also known as hattah or shemagh, the keffiyeh is usually made from cotton. It is a square scarf that protects the head from dust and sunburn among other things. The agal holds the keffiyeh in place. On the stamps, the keffiyeh is white and the agal is in the same color as the bisht.

To the left of the king on the stamps is the Saudi National Emblem. It consists of a palm tree above two crossed swords.

The two stamps have the same bilingual inscriptions in Arabic and English.

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In the upper left corner are the initials “K.S.A.” for Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Below the initials is the Gregorian year “1977.”

In the upper right corner is the name of the country, written out. Underneath it is the Hijri year “1397H.” Both are written in Arabic.

There are Arabic words in the panel right below the king’s picture. They are equivalent to “Installation of Khalid bin Abdulaziz Al Saud as king to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.”

In the two lower corners are the denomination and currency in English at left and Arabic at right. Written in Arabic and flanked between them are the accession date of the king in both Hijri and Gregorian calendars along with the word “postage” below them.

On the stamps, the Hijri date is above the Gregorian one. At the end of each date are the letters H for Hijri, and G for Gregorian. Reading from right to left, both date formats are day (2 digits)-month (1 digit)-year (4 digits). Written in English, the two dates look as follows:

13-3-1395 H(Hijri)

13-3-1975 G(Gregorian)

After the stamps were issued someone discovered an error in the Gregorian date. The installation of King Khalid as King of Saudi Arabia took place on the Hijri date 13-3-1395 corresponding to the Gregorian date of 25-3-1975. As can be seen, the date error occurred only on the Gregorian day of the date. This date should have been “25-3-1975” instead of “13-3-1975.”

The stamps, with the incorrect date, were withdrawn “after a few days” according to the Scott catalog. However, this was an important commemorative set of stamps, and it had to be reissued with the corrected date.

The Saudis were pleased with the original design and bilingual inscriptions on the error stamps and so they were used again. The re-issued stamps do not differ from the original stamps except for the corrected date. It took several months to replace the error stamps. On August 14, 1977, two new stamps with the correct Gregorian date were issued. The two stamps are shown in **Figures 3-4**.



Figure 3



Figure 4

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The table in **Figure 5** gives a summary of the important information on the two sets. The table provides the denomination & currency, the Scott number, the two dates as they appear on the stamps, the issue date in the Gregorian Calendar as well as the quantity printed of each of the incorrect and the corrected date stamps.

Denomination & Currency	Scott Number	Hijri Date On Stamp	Gregorian Date on Stamp	Quantity Printed
Issue Date: March 3, 1977				
20h	727a	13-3-1395	13-3-1975	122,766
80h	728a	13-3-1395	13-3-1975	57,419
Issue Date: August 14, 1977				
20h	727	13-3-1395	25-3-1975	377,234
80h	728	13-3-1395	25-3-1975	442,581

Figure 5

The two re-issued stamps are listed in Scott as numbers 727-728. In the grade of very fine, a collector is expected to pay \$6 for a mint never-hinged set, and \$0.80 for a used set.

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Those who can read Arabic have no problem distinguishing between the stamps with the incorrect date and those with the corrected date. To help the non-Arabic speaking collectors, the three Arabic lines of text that are between the bilingual denomination and currency are shown, as they appear on the issued stamps, in [Figure 6](#) for the incorrect date and in [Figure 7](#) for the corrected date. As noted earlier, the top line is the Hijri date, and the middle line is the Gregorian date. As for the third line it is the word “postage.” In Arabic, the numeral “13” is written as pictured in [Figure 8](#), and the numeral “25” is depicted in [Figure 9](#). If the two right-end characters in the middle line look like [Figure 8](#) then it is the error stamp, and if they look like [Figure 9](#) then it is the re-issued, corrected stamp.

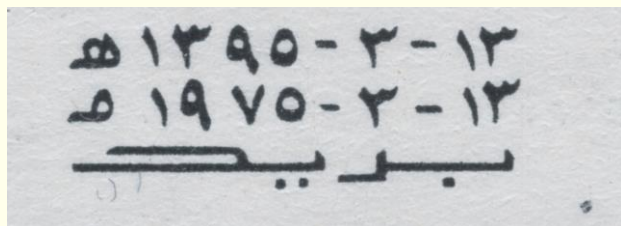


Figure 6

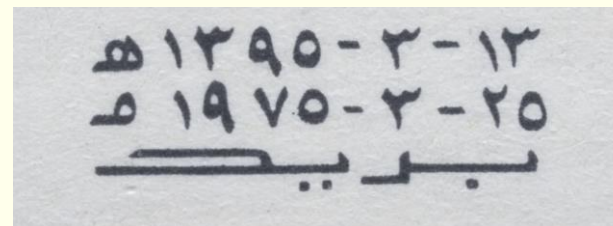


Figure 7



Figure 8



Figure 9

The 1977 Saudi Arabia King Khalid incorrect date stamps

It is not known how many of the Scott 727a-728a stamps sold before the stamps were withdrawn. However, based on catalog values there are more used stamps than mint ones. In any way, if a collector wants to add these stamps to his/her collection, they are promptly accessible.

In mint condition, Scott 727a-728a are known in singles, pairs, blocks of four and larger multiples. I have not seen complete sheets of either denomination.

Scott 727a-728a are readily available in mint condition. Collectors prefer never-hinged stamps. Lightly-hinged stamps are accepted. Unused stamps that have lost their original gum are somewhat tolerated.

Postally used stamps from both denominations of Scott 727a-728a can be obtained off paper. Some of the stamps seen have faults such as creases or tears. If you collect used stamps, make certain that the examples you obtain do not contain faults.

Singles and blocks of four of Scott 727a-728a are found cancelled-to-order on or off paper. Some of the stamps that are off paper still retain their original gum. I have also seen a block of 12 of the 20h stamps canceled-to-order in Riyadh. On this block, the gum on the stamps is pristine.

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I have not seen official first day covers with Scott 727a-728a. However, I have seen them on commercial covers. Both stamps can be found on philatelic covers. An example is illustrated in **Figure 10**.

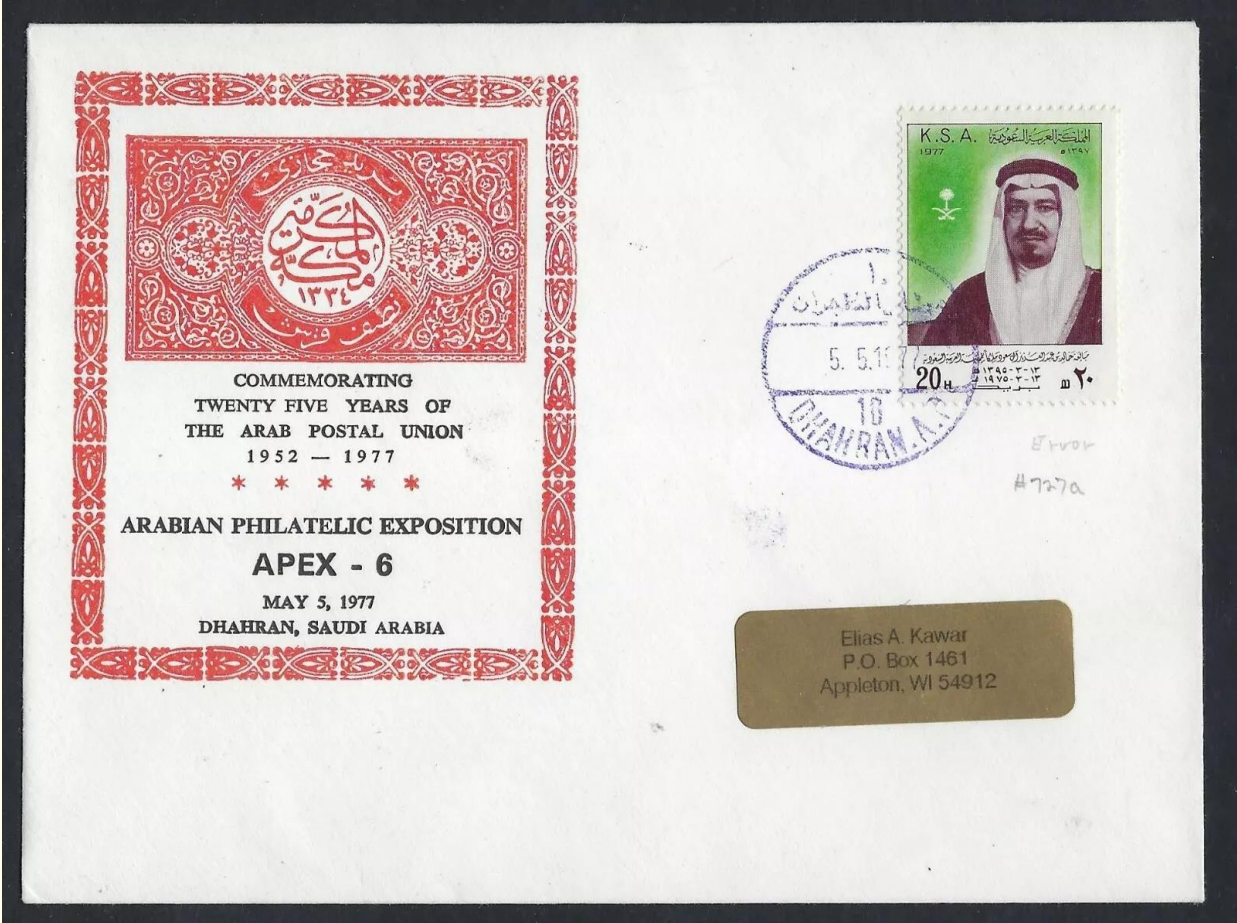


Figure 10

The 1977 Saudi Arabia King Khalid incorrect date stamps

The number of complete fault-free sets of Scott 727a-728a is unknown. I have seen a block of 20 of the 20h stamps and a block of 4 and a pair of the 80h with no gum. Also, I have seen mint and used stamps from both denominations that contained faults such as thins, tears and creases.

The copies seen of Scott 727a-728a have mixed centering. Stamps in the grade of very fine or better can be found, but the collector must look for them.

If you are a collector of errors on stamps, you know that you can spend a fortune on purchasing rare stamps with errors. This King Khalid error-stamp set is affordable, but rich in his legacy.

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