

NORWEGIAN OVERPRINTS

By Roe C. Blume



The Krone provisionals are not commonly seen on cover. Here is the 1 Krone value sent from Kristiania to Dresden, Germany. It was cancelled 1 July 1905, a few days after the issue date of 26 June 1905. It bears the special "NORGE R" machine cancel only used on registered letters for a short time. (Illustration courtesy of Frederick A. Brofos.)

There are three distinctly different reasons for overprinting stamps. The most common reason is that an issue was exhausted before a new type could be prepared and the related situation in which a new postal rate required a new value before the definitive was ready for distribution. In both of these situations the overprint is known as a provisional because the overprint was a stamp issued temporarily until the "permanent" stamp became available. The second, and more interesting, reason for overprinting is political. Finally, an overprint may serve a commemorative purpose.

In the case of Norway, the political overprintings were the result of major governmental upheavals. One of these upheavals, in 1905, was the peaceful withdrawal of Norway from union with Sweden (since 1814) and the creation of an independent country for the first time since the plague of 1350 decimated the Norwegian royal family and the country came under the domination of Denmark for nearly 500 years. Denmark lost Norway in 1814 when a treaty settling the Napoleonic Wars reorganized Norway as a semi-autonomous state under the Swedish Crown and gave to Sweden the agriculturally rich province of Skåne. The second governmental upheaval resulting in an overprinted series was the Nazi occupation of 1940-1945. In this case the V overprint was meant by the occupiers to subvert the Allies' propaganda use of the "V for Victory" which the Norwegian underground was using as a symbol for "Vi Vil Vinne" as one of many devices to annoy the Germans.



The commemorative overprints have been used on only two occasions on Norwegian stamps, both to commemorate philatelic events.

Each of the overprints is discussed below giving Norgeskatalogen (Nk) and Facit (F) numbers (#), date, and the apparent reason for the overprint. The overprint color is black except for Nk# 85, 86, 87.

Provisional Nk#48, 5 June 1888 (F#47) was overprinted **2 Øre**. On Nk#45 12ø brown because Nk#50 was not yet available. It was issued 14 March 1890.



Facit 85

Provisionals Nk#85 I,II; 86 I,II; 87 I,II (F#87,88,89) were overprinted **Kr. 1.00, 1.50, 2.00**, 26 June 1905 on the notoriously badly centered Nk#12 (F#12). These overprints were made because there were dwindling supplies of Nk#32, 33, 34 (with their portrait of Swedish King Oscar II) and it seemed certain that there would soon be a new Norwegian king. It was decided to fill the niche via overprints. It is worth noting that these are the rarest of Norwegian stamps with as few as 11,400 of #86 II printed and, of course, they are especially rare as well-centered specimens. Despite the small number issued, these stamps are not much desired, hence not expensive, because they are rather unattractive. They did serve their purpose and King Haakon VII (a Danish Prince) became king of Norway in 1907 with his own portrait on Norwegian stamps (Nk#89, 90, 91, August 1907). The I and II represent different colors of overprint. Specifically, #85 I,II is yellow-green and olive-green, #86 I,II is blue and ultramarine and #87 I,II is red and carmine. The old Oscar II Kroner stamps became invalid as of 1 April 1908.



Facit 86

Provisional Nk#88x,y (F#86) was overprinted **30 ØRE** on Nk#21,7 sk brown, July 1906, in anticipation that the supply of Nk#81, 30 øre gray would not last until Nk#105, 30 øre gray was to become available (5 March 1910). The x and y represent different papers.



Facit 122

Provisional Nk#92a,b (F#85) was overprinted **15 ØRE** on Nk#19(x, y) 4sk violet, April 1908 in anticipation that the 15 øre brown printing, Nk#75, was not in sufficient quantity to last until Nk#102, 15 øre brown, was to become available (26 April 1910). The a and b represent different shades.

Provisional Nk#117a,b (F#122) was overprinted **5 ØRE** on Nk#104 lilac, 1 March 1922, in anticipation of Nk#118, 5 øre lilac 1 March 1922 (sic). Apparently, it was misjudged how quickly Nk#118 would be printed!



Facit 149

The a and b represent different shades. There are several different varieties of these stamps of which the “thick-throated 5” is the more common (2 percent of the printing) and the remainder involve overprint placement or other irregularities. The “thick neck on 5” variety occurred twice in a sheet, on both a and b shades in positions 2 and 10.



Facit 165

The provisionals Nk#156, 157, and 158 (F#148-150) are treated as a group because all involve overprints of simply a number with a double strike over the original number.

Thus #156, 3 December 1928, has 20 **≡**
 on Nk#146 red; #157, 13 June 1927, has 30 **≡**
 on #129 blue and #158, 13 June 1927, has 30 **≡**
 on Nk#140 blue.



Facit 168

The stamps Nk#163-171 (F#163-171) are the unique “Postage-due Provisionals.” They have two different overprints: (A) **Post Frimerke**, and (B) **POST** **■**

# of Overprint	# of Overprinted Stamp	Type of Overprint	Color
163	P8	A	Br Olive
164	P13	A	Lilac
165	P14	A	Yel Green
166	P11	B	Brown
167	P18	B	Red Violet
168	P15	B	Drk Blue
169	P5	B	Carmin Br
170	P5	A	Orange Yel
171	P17	B	Bluish Violet

The provisional Nk#176 (F#176) was overprinted ~~14~~**ore**14 on Nk#12,2sk2, brownish orange to yellow in July 1929, apparently because the previous 14 øre, Nk#142 yellow orange (1 July 1929) had been delayed in printing and the authorities were fearful that they would not have 14 øre in time to meet a new rate requirement. As it turned out, they had both 14’s in the same month! Fine centering and perforations are scarce for Nk#176 because of the generally poor quality of Nk#12.



The V overprintings, Nk#261-292 (F#266-298) August 1941, are the most interesting of all the Norwegian overprints. They represent an attempt by the Nazi occupiers to subvert the Allies propaganda usage of the “V for Victory” sign and the opening notes of Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony, which were widely popular with the Norwegian people who took them to mean “Vi Vil Vinne” and associated them with the BBC broadcasts to which everyone listened as often as possible — even if listening was a risk. The “Vi Vil Vinne” symbol may also be seen on Nk#335 of the London issue and was used as a signal to Allied aircraft that were over Norway!



Facit 272

It is prudent to point out that these and other propaganda stamps issued under the occupation were not only forged but are often seen with false postmarks, or cancelled-to-order after the war. These V stamps were the only ones on sale in post offices. All others were forbidden to be sold. Patriots protested by using them upside down. Sales stopped 29 November 1941 and stamps became invalid from 29 March 1944.



Facit 371

The stamps Nk#331-338 were printed in Great Britain and #333-338 were issued by the Norwegian government (in exile) for use on Norwegian ships during World War II. Four thousand copies of #333-338 (F#335-340B) were overprinted **London 17/5/43** in addition to a serial number and sold for benefit of the resistance movement. They were used for franking from the liberation, 8 May 1945, until 2 September 1946.

The provisional Nk#374 (F#371) was overprinted **25^{±5}** in three different types on Nk#242 (F#344) in December 1948 apparently because the single letter rate had increased to 25 øre. The three different varieties vary in placement of the strike under the small numeral 5 and in the design of the small 5 itself.

The provisional Nk#375 (F#372) was overprinted **25** on Nk#246 Iib in March 1949 with three different varieties which vary in the formation of the lion’s foreleg and in placement of the overprint. The variants are rather scarce and priced as such. Similarly, the provisional Nk#376 was overprinted **45** on Nk#356 in January 1949 with a single variant in which the G of Norge has a color streak. This variant is only modestly scarce, perhaps 1 in 50 of the issue.



Facit 400

The provisional Nk#410 (F#400) was overprinted **30** on the 25 øre red Nk#393 in December 1951 with two variants. The more common has a white spot in the G of NORGE and is only modestly scarce, while the second has a grossly misplaced 30 and is very scarce (the value is ~1,000 times that of the normal copy).

The provisional Nk#413 (F#411) was overprinted **20** on the 15 øre dark green Nk#389 in November 1959 with 5 variants of which four are only moderately scarce but the fifth with misplaced overprints is quite rare (~900 times the value of the normal stamp).

The first of the commemorative overprints are Nk#428-430 (F#426-428) issued to mark the beginning of the Norwex International Exhibition in June 1955. These attractive overprints on Nk#425-427 have **Oslo** at the top and **Norwex** at the bottom arranged as a wreath with the bottom letters in the shape of a Viking ship.

The second commemorative overprints are Nk#695-696 (F#680-681) which incorporated **Interjunex 72** on Nk#693-694. They were issued to mark the beginning of the International Youth Exhibition in Kristiansand, 25 August-3 September 1972.



Facit 427

