Because of a temporary lack of 5-centime stamps, Indochina overprinted the infrequently-used 35-centime denomination from the Commerce issue. The Commerce series had been in use in all French colonies since 1881. The four-line, red overprint was first available on 8 January 1889. Complaints from postal clerks that red did not contrast satisfactorily with the background quickly led to the preparation of a three-line, black overprint. It appeared only two days later on 10 January.

These two provisional overprints are widely regarded to be the first stamps of Indochina proper since they were first to bear the title "INDO-CHINE". The letters “R” and “D” in both overprints represent the initials of Governor General Richard and Director of Posts Demars.
R&D Overprints

Varieties

Two type sizes were used for the numerals of the red overprint. The smaller are 2mm high while the larger are 2.5 mm high. The small figure variety occurs six times per sheet.

The first sheet with the black overprint showed the numeral "9" to be inverted in the lower right position. The year date was removed so that all subsequent printings carry no numerals in that position.

PRINTING VARIETIES

widely spaced “8 9”
(upper right)

slanted “9”
R&D Overprints
Position Varieties

ASCENDING OVERPRINT

OVERPRINT SHIFTING LEFT TO RIGHT
R&D Overprints
Postmarks

RED OVERPRINT

BACNINH
TONKIN

CAP S' JACQUES
COCHINCHINE

CHOLON
COCHINCHINE

BAC-NINH
23
NOV.
89
TONKIN

COCHINCHINE
7
AVRIL
89
CAP S' JACQUES

CHOLON
1
JUIN
89
COCHINCHINE

HAIPHONG
TONKIN

HANOI
TONKIN

HUE
ANNAM

MY-THO
ANNAM

HAIPHONG
23
NOV.
89
TONKIN

HA-NOI
2\textsuperscript{e}
NOV.
89
TONKIN

HUE
12
DEC
89
ANNAM

MY-THO
23
NOV.
89
ANNAM
R&D Overprints
Postmarks

RED OVERPRINT

SAIGON
COCHINCHINE

SAIGON CAL
COCHINCHINE

SAIGON-CENTRAL
COCHINCHINE

B62
(HONG KONG)

SHANG-HAI
CHINE

(B62)

SHANG-HAI
CHINE
R&D Overprints
Postmarks

BLACK OVERPRINT

BAMBOUS TONKIN
CHOLON COCHINCHINE
HAI-PHONG TONKIN

HAIPHONG TONKIN
TONKIN HAI-PHUNG
HA-NOI TONKIN
R&D Overprints
Postmarks
BLACK OVERPRINT

HANOI RECTE
TONKIN

HUNG-YEN
TONKIN

HANOI-CONCESSEN
TONKIN

NAM-DINH
TONKIN

TONKIN
CORPS EXPEDITION
(shifted overprint)

SON-TAY
TONKIN

HANOI-RECTE

12 MAI
88

HUNG-YEN

16 FEVR.
89

HANOI-CONSESIZ

25 AOUT
89

NAM-DINH

1 MARS
89

TONKIN

21 FEVR.
89

SON-TAY

18 FEVR.
89
R&D Overprints
Postmarks

BLACK OVERPRINT

COCHINCHINE VINHLONG
POULO-CONDORE COCHINCHINE
VINH-LONG COCHINCHINE

SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE
SAIGON CAL COCHINCHINE
SAIGON-PORT COCHINCHINE
SAIGON-PORT COCHINCHINE
R&D Overprints
Postmarks
BLACK OVERPRINT

HAI-PHONG
TONKIN

HA-NOI
TONKIN
R&D Overprints
Fournier Facsimiles

Operating from Switzerland at the turn of the century, Francois Fournier produced facsimiles of postage stamps. He regarded his work as objects d’art which he sold at low prices to collectors who could not afford the original stamps. After his death, his materials were collected and published in a limited series of albums.

Facsimile of the large “1889” overprint in black.
Facsimile of the small “1889” overprint in black.
Facsimile of the inverted large “1889” overprint in red.
Facsimile of the inverted overprint in red.
R&D Overprints
Use of Black Overprint

A single example of the black overprint franked a letter to France in 1889, significantly underpaying the required postage. Service by a British ship (“Voie anglaise”) required more postage than service via a French ship.

POSTAL MARKINGS
SAIGON CAL COCHINCHINE 7 SEPT 89
REVERSE
BRAZEY EN PLAINE COTE D’OR 12 OCT 89
The enclosed letter was datelined at Saigon on 6 September 1889.

Cher OnCLE,

que nous de recevoir ta lettre a Paris ! Je cueisier a un jour d'avance l'hsan-

ferent, sans quoi nous n'aurions eu nos lettres qui n'a

Saigon au retour.

Mais sommes arrivés ici le 4 au matin et nous en

reportons demain matin 7 pour H'ai-phong. Mon

impression générale est que

Saigon est une ville splendide

Ligne d'or comme de tous

les autres.
R&D Overprints
Use of Black Overprint

Five copies of the black R&D Overprint paid the 25-centime letter rate to Algeria in 1889. The black R&D Overprint was first released on 10 January, 10 days prior to the posting of this letter.

POSTAL MARKINGS
TONG-KIN HAI-PHONG 20 JANV 89
R&D Overprints
Use of Black Overprint

Ten copies of the black R&D Overprint paid for mailing a registered letter from Hanoi to Stuttgart, Germany in January 1889. Postage was calculated as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>foreign letter rate</td>
<td>25 centimes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>registration fee</td>
<td>25 centimes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total</td>
<td>50 centimes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

POSTAL MARKINGS
HA-NOI TONKIN 28 JANV. 89
framed R (red) with manuscript registration number
MARSEILLE A LYON SPECIAL 8 MARS 89
REVERSE
TONQUIN HAI-PHONG 29 JANV. 80
STUTTGART 9/3
Two copies of the black 1889 R&D overprint as well as examples of each value of the Annam and Tonkin provisional overprints and several values of the Commerce issue were applied as franking to this 1891 cover. Total value was 85 centimes for registered mail to Japan.

POSTAL MARKINGS
HAI-PHONG TONKIN 13 NOV 91
framed R with manuscript registration number

REVERSE
HONG KONG NO 16 91
*REGISTERED* YOKOHAMA 27 NOV 1891
A single copy of the black R&D provisional stamp contributed to the franking of a registered letter card sent from Saigon to Pnompenh in 1897. Three stamp series are represented on the mailing: 20 centime Commerce General Issue, 5 centime black R&D overprint and the 15 centime blue Navigation and Commerce letter card.
Black R&D Overprint Sheet

Missing “89” in position 50.