

## **Trucial Oman Scouts [ T.O.S.]**

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Established in 1951 as "**Trucial Oman Levies**" [T.O.L]

As very small uniformed internal security and rural patrol force

With originally 1 British Major in command

2 Jordanian officers [from the Arab Legion]  
32 other ranks [from the Arab Legion]

Expanded to 30 British officers [in command positions]

Handful of Arab officers

and Locally recruited soldiers [mainly from Abu Dhabi]

With 1 Battalion

Under the command of a British Major

With Headquarters at Sharjah

### **1952 Mutiny** at Buraimi

When the British commander of the Trucial Oman Levies, Major Otto Thwaites was shot dead along with a Jordanian TOL Sergeant Major and a British Royal Air Force medical doctor by Arab soldiers of the TOL when his vehicle [with 4 occupants] was ambushed outside Buraimi. Only one survivor, a British REME Sergeant TOL soldiers were believed to be selling their ammunition to the Saudi garrison.

The Trucial Oman Levies were renamed in 1956 as "**Trucial Oman Scouts**"

In 1955 had 500 paramilitary personnel  
Organized into 3 Rifle Squadrons

In 1956 had 500 paramilitary personnel  
Organized in 4 operational/Rifle Squadrons  
Including 1 Squadron based at Buraimi oasis

by 1957 included 160 British officers & soldiers

in 1960 had 1 000 paramilitary personnel

1964 had 1 324 paramilitary personnel  
Including 38 British officers  
85 British other ranks

Organized into  
5 Rifle Squadrons  
[Each with 3 British officers  
3 Arab officers  
145 Arab other ranks

1 Group [equipped with machine guns  
and Mortars]

Plus 1 Signals Squadron  
1 Motor Transport Squadron  
1 Medical Centre  
1 Workshop  
1 Boys Squadron

1 Boys School  
1 Training Depot

1970 had 1 600 to 1 700 paramilitary trained personnel  
1971 had 2 500 paramilitary personnel

The Trucial Oman Scouts were a highly respected impartial paramilitary armed regular internal security and rural police force , .

Regarded as well trained, well paid efficient military unit  
Who cost 2 million UK pounds a year to run and operate in 1971  
with small garrisons based in most of the coastal towns  
and other key posts

had a base in Dubai since 1952  
And a permanent garrison at Buraimi oasis of 1 Field Squadron  
Organized as highly mobile light armored cavalry  
Included 40% locally recruited Arab personnel

50 Jordanian NCOs  
Omani [bulk of troops]  
Iranians  
Indians  
Pakistanis

Under the control and command of 30 British officers  
Head Quarters at Sharjah [since 1951]

Equiped with armoured cars  
British weapons  
Landrovers  
Bedford trucks

The only major military operation the Trucial Oman Scouts were involved in was in **October 1956 Clash** at the disputed Buraimi Oasis.  
Two TOS Field Squadrons were used, along with troops from the Sultan of Muscat & Oman personal guard to forcibly evict a 40 strong Saudi Arabian garrison of 40 armed police based in a old fort and a village. The Saudi garrison had been based there since August 1952 when the Saudi Arabian force of 40 armed men forcibly occupied the Buraimi Oasis following a armed clash in which 3 people were killed

with 9 people killed in October 1956  
including 7 Saudi policemen/military personnel  
and 2 TOS paramilitary troops

In 1971 renamed "**Union Defence Force** " [ U.D.F. ]  
On formation of **United Arab Emirates** [ U.A.E. ]  
With 2 500 regular military personnel in the UDF

In 1975 had 3 250 regular military personnel  
Organised in 6 Mobile Squadrons  
Air Detachment  
[ with 7 helicopters ]

equipped with Scorpion Light Tanks  
Ferret Armored Cars  
Land Rovers

[ 8 ] 81mm Mortars  
2 Dhows

The Union Defense Force were used on two occasions in Sharjah Emirate;

In **January 1972** during a **Attempted Coup** [one night long]

In which a force of 18 armed supporters of the former ruler of Sharjah including the former ruler, Sheikh Saqr bin Sultan in person who ruled from 1951 until deposed by British in 1965] attacked and seized the palace of the ruler. The ruler Sheikh Khalid bin Mohammad el Eassim [ruler since 1965] was killed along with one of his guards in the process. The palace was surrounded by Sharjah soldiers and troops of the Union Defense Force.

Several UDF troops were wounded including a British Captain before the rebels surrendered next morning. Sheikh Saqr exiled.

And in **February 1972** following a brief **Border War**

between armed Bedu tribesmen from both Sharjah Emirate, and Fujairah Emirate, over status of a disputed area of land. Disputed area covering ¼ of an acre with water wells and date palm trees. With 22 people killed and 12 wounded before Union Defense Force troops deployed to impose ceasefire

In May 1976 the Union Defence Force unified with military forces of various U.A.E states and to a large extent, lost its individual identity as a unit.

**References;** "The United Arab Emirates", Malcolm C. Peck 1986  
"The Trucial States", Ronald Lawley 1970  
IISS Military Balance