

# THE CZECHOSLOVAK SPECIALIST



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A.P.S. Unit 18

S.P.A. Branch 284

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## Field Posts From the Tesin (Eastern Silesia) Region of 1919

By RNDr. Miroslav Vostatek (Tr. by H. Hahn)

The Tesin region is located in northern Moravia, near the industrial city of Ostrava (formerly Moravska Ostrava). The region is part of Silesia, which up to 1918 was divided between Austria and Germany, while after 1918 the region was divided between the latter as well as Czechoslovakia and Poland. The center of this region is the town of Tesin. At the time, as now, that town incorporates so called Cesky Tesin (Czech Tesin), and beyond the river Olza, Polish Tesin.

After October 28, 1918 territorial disputes between Czechoslovakia and Poland appeared to lead to open warfare. Several boundaries were proposed initially. There functioned, in this region, an Allied Controll Commission, which included a British, French and Italian officer, as well as representatives of Czechoslovakia and Poland. Preparations for a plebiscite were taking place, which are well remembered by collectors through the S.O. 1920 overprints. Some say that the initials stand for "Slezko" and "Orava". (Ed. or "Silesia Orientalis"). There also existed an International Plebiscite Commission. Voting rights were assigned to all citizens of over twenty years of age, who prior to August 1, 1914 were official residents of the Tesin region. At a foreign ministers' conference in Spa (Belgium) on July 10, 1920, the



I. polní prapor čs. pěš. pluku čís. 93. 2

representatives of the two disputing sides, Dr. E. Benes of Czechoslovakia and Dr. Grabski of Poland agreed to abide by the boundaries set at this conference. Consequently, the plebiscite proposed earlier was not carried out. The agreement was signed on July 28, 1920, and between August 6th and 10th the Czechoslovak Army took possession of the territory assigned to Czechoslovakia.

However, prior to that, battles or skirmishes took place between Czechoslovak and Polish troops. Military units on the Czech side consisted primarily of volunteers, Sokols and soldiers who were members of the Czechoslovak Legions in France and Italy. The armed force consisted of approximately 10,000 men. So much for history.

Collectors meet up with a variety of interesting items which pertain to this period. Soldiers wrote home and received mail from home — though not very often. A few items are cited for illustration. The first is a card from the town of Karvina, whose post mark is shown in Fig. 1. This card also bears the unit marking, shown in Fig. 2, which reads: "1st Battalion of the Czechoslovak 93rd Infantry Regiment". This unit was formerly the "Moravian-Ostravian Guard Battalion", and later became the 13th Infantry Regiment located in Sumperk. The founding members of this unit were only 380 Czech soldiers who joined at the Polish locality of Radom, from where they departed on November 4, 1918 for Czechoslovakia. These volunteers joined the Czechoslovak Army and their commander was Lieutenant Slezak. They saw battle action between January 23rd and 24th, 1919. From that date there exists a post mark on a card from Lazy, shown in Fig. 3, which was "nationalized", as well as a round unit marking shown in Fig. 4. Other units taking part in the battle were Legionaires from France. Near Karvina these were units of the 21st Regiment. I have seen other markings, such as one dated February 22nd, 1919 bearing a primitive unit marking of the 22nd

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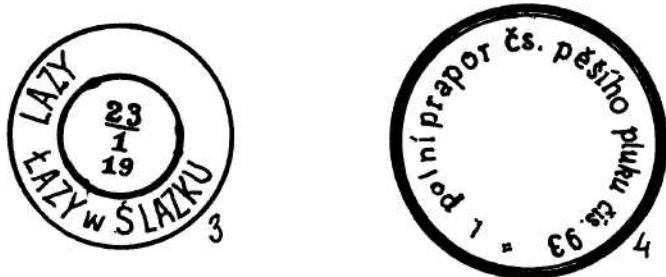
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*Changes of address to the editorial office.*

Czechoslovak Sharpshooter Regiment, French Division, 3rd Battalion. The latter is shown in Fig. 5.

A study of this subject was made in 1937 by Zdenek Jezek. Here, and everywhere else only the 21st Regiment from France is mentioned. The commander of this regiment was Col. (of the French Army) Snejdarek. The commander of the military actions which were to liberate Karvina, Orlova and Lazy was Major Vlasak. Another unit serving in this region was a battalion of the Italian Legion, Col. Bernezzo, with a force of 700 men. However, I have never seen the latter documented by postally used military mail.

I hope I have shed some additional light on this interesting period which most collectors only know through the S.O. overprints.



22.Čes.Slov.Stre1.P.I.  
Divize z Francie  
\* 3-prapor \* 5

## From the Editor's Notebook By Dick Major

This issue of the Specialist contains the annual membership list of the Society for Czechoslovak Philately. It lists only those members who had paid their 1982 dues as of 25 September. We have tried to make the listing correct in every detail, there is always the possibility that errors will creep in. If there is any sort of error in your listing, please let us know. A postcard will do. We would like the list to be completely accurate.

In the listing of officers please note that Ludvik Svoboda has assumed office as Treasurer as of 1 July. Note also that Lou has a new address. He is an Air Force colonel and has recently been transferred to Colorado. Please send all dues and other remittances for the Society to him.

We would also like to remind the members of the two attractive souvenir covers which have been prepared for our annual convention at SEPAD. These covers have The Year of the Scout as their theme and depict the 10 and 20 heller Scout stamps of Czechoslovakia in color. They can be purchased by mail at the price of \$2.00 for the two different covers from Richard Major, P.O. Box 4074, Arlington, VA 22204.

## Book Review: - by Henry Hahn *Minkus and Borek Issue 1982/83 Catalogs*

Last month I was asked to pick up a copy of one of the "standard" European catalogs while in Vienna. The price approached \$90 in spite of the recently improved exchange rate, which makes a good case for single country catalogs. Of course, the fact that NO 1982/83 POFIS catalogue is likely to appear makes the new MINKUS and BOREK even more attractive.

The new MINKUS catalogue\* is not quite a single country catalogue; the single volume includes Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Romania. Though Czecho, Hungary and Austria would probably make more sense (to me, in any event) the new MINKUS has a lot to offer.

In comparison with America's "Standard Brand", it is slightly more specialized — though still quite far from the specialized catalogue of the type the serious Czech collector who can't read Czech really needs. The paper is somewhat superior in quality to Scott, and MINKUS at least alludes to the 1918 "Revolutionary Issues," and "Sudetenland" overprints and even prices the 1918 Scout issue. Siberian Legion, Eastern Siberia, Bohemia and Moravia and Slovakia are listed in separate sections. All issues within these sections are listed chronologically by date of issue, i.e. air mail and semi-postal are included with the regular issues, similarly to most European catalogues. A new and improved system of color nomenclature is also introduced in this edition.

Recognizing that the prices in this catalogue are supposedly based on market values that existed about 6 months ago, i.e. before the recent decline, they still appear to be unrealistically high for the U.S. Increased specialization — i.e. listing of gutters and more varieties would surely make MINKUS more useful. The problem, the publishers may tell us, is space and cost. Suggestion: do away with some of the non-philatelic text such as the listing of Smetana's and Dvorak's compositions and details of their musical career (#401 and 409).

The catalogue is well worth the \$9.95 (retail) price and we heartily recommended it.

The BOREK catalogue is of course in German. It is a true single country catalogue and includes Eastern Silesia, Siberia and Slovakia in separate sections, but not the Protectorate Bohemia and Moravia. In its introduction it makes no pretense of being anything other than a commercial dealer's ready reference, leaving specialization to the "Handbooks". Its graphic appearance is superior to either Scott or Minkus. It bears a 2-column layout and the stamp illustrations are of superior quality. The listings are chronological, for the most part, though Postage Dues are listed separately. As in most catalogues, what *is* listed and what *isn't* is quite arbitrary. In the BOREK catalogue, logic appears to play only a minor role in this regard. For example, the extremely rare gutters of the Siberian "Silhouette" issue (25

Kop and 50 Kop) are listed and priced. Yet the far more common gutters of the 1936 "Castles" set or the gutters of the 1945 Kosice issue aren't. On the other hand the gutter of the extremely rare 1933 1Kc Nitra is listed and priced.

The pricing of stamps, we must assume, reflects the European market. With the West German Mark at about 42¢ at the time of this writing, a comparison of a few items might be of interest:

Item.....	MINKUS.....	BOREK
70f Turul.....	\$1,800 .....	DM 3000 (\$1,260)
125h Svabinsky.....	\$55.00.....	DM 90 (\$37.80)
Masaryk (ultra)		
14Kc Air, First Set,.....	\$35.00.....	DM 60 (\$25.25)
Imperf.		
Olymp. Cong. Set (of 3) .....	\$306.....	DM 500 (\$210)
1955 Costume Set.....	\$64.....	DM 140 (\$58.80)
1975 Svoboda Sheet,.....	\$90.....	DM 250 (\$105)
Imp.		

Prices of more common items tend to be slightly lower in BOREK when using the recent exchange rate with the exchange rate that prevailed when the catalogues were written, the prices were comparable. An exception, among others, is clearly the 1975 Svoboda Sheet, Imperforate, which is priced higher in BOREK.

The retail price of the BOREK Catalogue is DM 12 (about \$5) - fair enough!

\* Minkus Publications, Inc. 116 West 32 St., New York, NY 10001

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## Say Hello to "Mr" háček from Vrbovce.

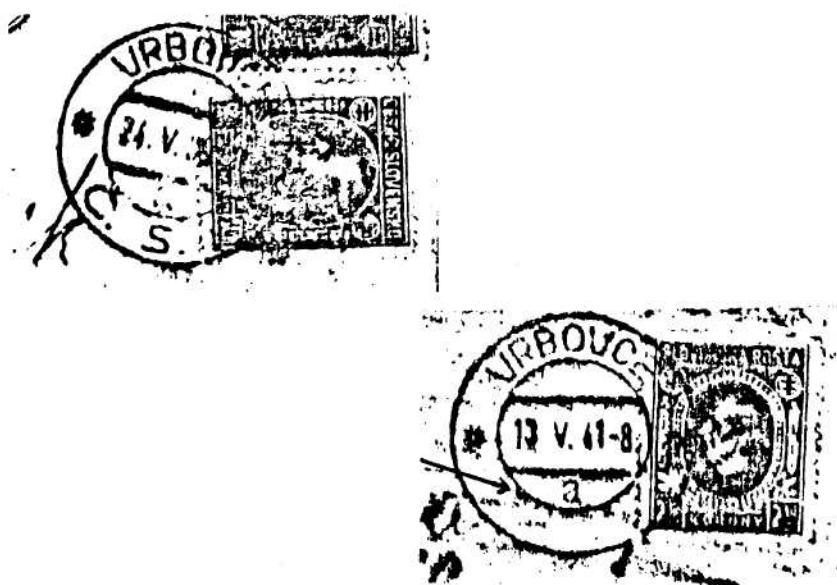
Preface in honor of readers that are not too familiar with the Češko - Slovakian languages: Many letters have a little v-shaped accent above them in order to give the letter a somewhat different pronunciation. For instance the C in Československo. This accent is called a háček. It plays a part in this little story.

In my Slovakian collection there are some letters from Vrbovce, a small town or village about 60 miles NNE of Bratislava. The letters tell me, that the post office of Vrbovce had at least two different postmarks in use, VRBOVCE a and b. VRBOVCE b is an ordinary Slovakian postmark with the name in the upper part, and the three crosses in the lower half of the postmark, and the two times V in the name are really V-shaped.

The VRBOVCE a is the interesting one. It is a Czechoslovakian postmark with Č.S.P. in the bottom of the postmark. The letter V has the form of a small pail, and may be regarded as a somewhat square U if one does not know better - fig. 1. It is found on a letter dated 24. V. 39, more than two months after the separation of the Czech and Slovakian postal administrations. On a letter from 13. V. 41 I found the postmark again, but now the C.S.P. had been cut out - in honor of the Slovakian national feelings. (In Denmark we call such a postmark a "nationalized" postmark.)

How can I know for certain that it is the same device that has been used, and not a new one? Well, the háček is still there - fig. 2.

*E. Skovbo Jensen.*



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October 1, 1982

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1340	Kowal, Jan S.	745 Howard Road, Chelsea, MI 48118
0771	Kozlof, Fred	PO Box 321, Blenheim, ONT, CANADA N0P 1A0
1222	Kralicek, Vlad. J.	232 Bucklands Beach Rd. Bucklands Beach,Auckland NZ
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0540	Krejci, Otakar M.	8702 Ridge Rd. Bethesda, MD 20817
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0698	Kutak, Rudy	227 Elm St., Monroe, N.Y.10950
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