

# The Czecho-Slovak Specialist

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## FIELD POST

### OF CZECHO-SLOVAK AND ALLIED ARMIES IN SIBERIA AND THEIR POSTAGE STAMPS

By Capt. Anthony Novotny

(Postal Inspector in Praha, formerly head of the Czecho-Slovak Field Post in  
Siberia)

Translated by Frank J. Kovarik

(From the original booklet published in Brno in 1923)

#### 1. FIELD POST OF CZECHO-SLOVAK AND ALLIED ARMIES IN RUSSIA.

The World War taught us the significance of the field post and at the same time proved that the post is not the least necessary organization of an army. It is no wonder that not until the World War was the field post's work fully appreciated; it was the first war in which so many soldiers anxiously awaited news of their loved ones; so many were anxious to read newspapers from which they learned not only news of the front but also of happenings in the rear (even if the news was "colored"). In other words a correctly functioning field post upholds the morale of the soldier and thereby makes him more capable of performing those duties to which the changed circumstances brought him.

Most of us, who participated in the revolution in foreign lands, knew of the work of the field post in the Austro-Hungarian or German Armies, and after our entry into the Czechoslovak army or into the Serbian Army in Russia in 1914-17, of the Imperial Russian Army. Of the activities of these field posts much could be written; that, however, is not my book. I merely wish to call attention to the fact that in the fulfillment of their hard tasks they had sufficient help from the past, that is, long before the outbreak of the World War the field

posts were organized with stationary post offices, ambulant offices, sorting and distributing offices and pick-ups. Most of this sorting was done outside the army by the Government Post Office which transmitted and delivered the mails to the various parts of the army. As most soldiers never came into direct contact with these field posts, they could never understand how this branch worked.

The Czechoslovak field post in 1918 did not have these advantages nor did the Allies have it in Russia. What was this post? How was it organized? Of this I wish to write as briefly as the length of this article permits.

The Czechoslovak military units were, up to the Bolshevik revolution a part of the Russian Army, and the Russian field post served them. Newspapers were obtained through different sources. After the Bolshevik Revolution these units, organized in Ukraine into an independent army corps, remained without a field post, and no thought was given to the organization of one; as the army, by order of Father Masaryk, started on its trip to France, there side by side with the Allies to continue and finish the battle for the liberation of their land.

(CONTINUED NEXT MONTH)

## CZECHO-SLOVAK LISTINGS IN SCOTT'S ARE UNCHANGED

About a year ago the Scott Stamp & Coin Co. invited collectors to make suggestions to improve their Standard Postage Stamp Catalog.

Needless to say that philatelic America responded generously. Among the thousands was the undersigned. It has for many years annoyed me that the Czecho-Slovak section should be so grossly neglected as it is, both in regards to incomplete listings and pricings.

I have had several interviews with Mr. Hugh Clark, the compiler of the catalogue in the course of which I pointed out to him the missing items and the price revisions which should be made. All this of course was done by simultaneously submitting the items in question. After having "worked" on Clark for quite some time I came to the conclusion that I would be unable to convince him of my argument. For instance in showing him certain imperforates in pairs, he would claim that perforation might have been left out accidentally, and therefore wished to see blocks of four. Certain Tete Beches simply did not exist in his opinion, though my proof of such both in mint state and on covers was conclusive.

It so happened that at that time I had an illustrated article about the items missing from the Scott Catalog published in The American Philatelist and I brought this to the attention of Clark. However, he waved me aside with the words: "Show me a letter or official bulletins issued by the Czech-Slovak Ministry of Posts and Telegraphs which prove that these various items were released and I then will make the necessary revisions."

I then enlisted the aid of a Prague friend of mine, editor of a stamp publication, to help me procure the official bulletins and in due course received the answer that the Ministry of Posts would comply with my wish but that this would take some time because certain of the items in question had been issued 20 years ago and going through the archives would therefore require time. Just about the time the official at the Ministry of Posts had almost assembled the file for me, Germany took possession of Bohemia-Moravia.

About two months ago I sent a let-

ter to the official who had cooperated in my request, inquiring as to the status of things. Though I received his answer promptly, it was very discouraging. I was informed by him that due to changed conditions transmission of the bulletins and other official documents could not be undertaken now and he could not say off-hand when, if ever, such would be forthcoming.

Therefore all my labors had been in vain. However, I haven't given up yet. I am at present assembling additional material gathered here and there and when I believe to be ready will again ask Mr. Clark to "reopen the case". In one of our future issues I will bring information as to results—if any.—  
J. W. L.

## N. Y. CONVENTION DECLARED SUCCESS

The New York city convention of the Society held June 17 and 18, was a definite success.

All out of town members who professed to come were present. Disappointing was the absence of some New York members who had promised to appear but did not do so. However, it should be said that it was a very hot day and to the absentees an indoor affair probably seemed unattractive. Late in the afternoon, however, sudden cold breezes drove away the heat and the affair then was held in an ideally cool hall. If (as said before) some members had stayed away, their absence was made up by the unannounced appearance of other members. Sturman had come all the way from Pittsburgh, and a definite and pleasant surprise was the "popping-up" of Editor Raper, who had come to N. Y. to cover the opening of the Ohio Pavilion at the World's Fair for his Columbus paper.

An excellent a la carte dinner, accompanied by golden Pilsener, was enjoyed by all. At 8 o'clock business proceedings began upstairs. Besides a number of guests the following members were present: Charlie Cizek, Guy Greenawalt, Lolly Horechny, Frank Kovarik, Mr. and Mrs. J. W. Lowe, Tod Raper, Dr. Reiner-Deutsch, George F. Smyth, Paul Sturman, Mr. and Mrs. Alfons Stach, Wm. T. Sudds,

Mr. and Mrs. Frank O. Woticky and Michael Zemeny, Jr.

The following program was either discussed or decided upon:

Frank Kovarik, Chicago, accepted the nomination as Election Chairman. It was decided to come to an agreement with a publication at Prague, and to secure their cuts of new issues and interesting illustrations for our publication. Annual membership dues will be paid every January 1st. Since there are a few applications from collectors residing outside our continent in the hands of our secretary it was decided to accept such applicants as associate members. Frank Kovarik will form and propose a committee of three Chicago members which will work out our permanent constitution to replace the temporary one now in effect. The formation of the Judicial Board, consisting of four members, was entrusted to J. W. Lowey. The unofficial invitation of the Cicero-Berwyn Club of Chicago sent through one of its members to our secretary, to hold our 1940 convention as guest of the C.B.C. and participate in the Centennial Exposition held in February was discussed. It officially invited it was decided to hold the convention there and also to reserve a substantial amount of frames in the name of the Society. A membership drive beginning in September was decided to hold the convention there and also to reserve a substantial amount of frames in the name of the Society. A membership drive beginning in September was decided upon, in which our Chicago and New York units are expected to play prominent roles.—J. W. L.

### "OVERPRINTS"

The photographs enclosed with the July issue of the Specialist were taken in front of the Czecho-Slovak pavilion at the World's Fair, on June 18, following a successful convention session the night before. From left to right are: William T. Sudds, Michael Zemeny, Jr., President George F. Smyth, Treasurer Guy Greenawalt and Frank Kovarik, of the Society's Expert Committee. Mr. Lowey handled the camera.

The new York members who were present at the convention have decided to hold informal "get-togethers" every first Monday of every month. The first meeting will be held at 8:30

p.m., July 3, at Mike Lindenfeld's restaurant, Second Ave. and 79th St., 1st floor.

The Society has had splendid notices in many philatelic journals both in the U. S., and abroad. Especially nice were articles in Philatelic Gossip and The American Philatelist. For these, and others, thanks and appreciation from the Society.

Have You Noticed: None of our members have taken advantage of the adlets offered in The Specialist. The price is only a penny a word for members' wants, exchanges, sales, etc. Just to start the ball rolling, here's an offer: To the first member who sends in an adlet to The Editor, Secretary Lowey will send a personal present in the form of a desirable item. Fair enough? Line forms at the right.

Next month The Specialist will continue Mr. Kovarik's article, and in addition will begin printing J. W. Lowey's "The Hradcany Issue of 1918." It had been hoped that the Lowey article would be started this month, but a flood of news prevented its appearing.—J. W. L. & T. R.

### COMING ISSUES

(Excerpts from the "Narodni Sberatel of Prague")

As stated in our last issue all current stamps of Czecho-Slovakia will be overprinted and released at the end of June. Air mails and newspaper stamps will be excluded because there are not large quantities of these to warrant overprinting. In their place some time in the near future new designs will appear.

In addition to the overprinted items new designs will either appear simultaneously or shortly after. All plates for these have already been finished. Design and engravings are by Bohumil Heinz. The following ones will be issued: A 50 h denomination showing castle Karlstein, and a 1 K value with the Hradcany view (similar to the Little Entente issue.)

Though unannounced Air mails (Scott Nos.) 515 and 517 have suddenly appeared some time ago in somewhat smaller size, the new one measuring 31; 22 millimeters. Opinion has been voiced that here is a case of shrinkage but such is not the case. The Bohemo-Moravian postal authorities have not issued the usual bulletins

since the country became a protectorate. In addition it should be stated that the stamps are no rarities since they are on sale at all post offices in Bohemia Moravia.

Warning, however, hereby goes to our members not to buy the two items which have appeared lately in Slovakia. These consist of a 40 h and 1 K value with the portrait of Stefanik and his tomb and are sold in imperforate state. Though these stamps were printed by Slovak authorities issuance was for unknown reasons not accomplished because the design suddenly was found to be unsuitable. It is unknown how a small quantity of the adhesives got into the market, probably smuggled out by some employee of the printing plant.

Member C. J. Pearce, Oklahoma City, has expressed his willingness to supply hereafter our members with new issues of Bohemia-Moravia. His announcement will be found elsewhere in this issue. In the meantime Mr. Pearce has notified the members individually of this service.

### OVERPRINTS ARE ISSUED

The authorities in charge of the Czecho-Slovak Pavilion at the New York World's Fair have now an alleged quantity of 5000 of Scott Nos. 239 and 428 overprinted with the coat of arms and the inscription: "Czecho-Slovak Participation New York World's Fair 1939, Czecho-Slovak Pavilion."

The overprints are in deep, luminous black and are supplied with engraved plates. The official price for a single item at the Pavilion is 75 cents, but sheets are also sold for the same amount by certain dealers.

To our members who wish to acquire the sheets, we recommend buying from our dealer-members.

### NEW ISSUE SERVICE

C. J. Pearce, 2833 N.W., 13th St., Oklahoma City, Okla., has volunteered to handle the new issue service from Bohemia-Moravia. He will supply members with stamps as issued at cost, which is about 4c per Kc., plus 3c postage.

At present he has on hand small quantities of the following stamps: 300h on 10Kc, at 11c; 3K dated 2-3-39, at 11c; 30h Air Mail, at 1c, and 1K Masaryk re-eng., at 4c. Members desiring singles or blocks in these and

coming issues must write Mr. Pearce at once so that he can order accordingly.

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