

# THE CZECHOSLOVAK SPECIALIST

OFFICIAL MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE  
CZECHOSLOVAK PHILATELIC SOCIETY OF NORTH AMERICA

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Vol. 6.

October 1944

No. 8

## EDITORIAL

Our last issue met with praise from several members. Mr. Russell's article on the Carpatho-Ukrainian stamp was well liked; because the Russian Armies are now on the border of that country it was very timely. Mr. Lowey's Military Postal History of Czechoslovakia is also very timely; now that the complete reliberation of Czechoslovakia is so near. In this issue we have another installment of Mr. Russell's translation of the Posta Ceskoslovenska, 1919, from the great Hirsch-Franek Handbook and another continuation of the Lowey article. Words of praise are like flowers and we love to receive them. We are sure that, when December comes, you will show your appreciation of our efforts by sending in your 1945 dues promptly. Our printer writes he'll be forced to increase the price of the publication again; if our members send in their dues promptly, without costly reminders sent to them, the additional amount saved will be advanced toward the Specialist. We thank you in advance.

## IN MEMORIAM

William W. Dickinson

With deep regret we announce the bereavement of our member, Mrs. Miriam Dickinson, whose husband, Mr. William W. Dickinson, passed away a short time ago. While death is a very natural sequence to life, we never fully realize what it means until it strikes down someone dear to us. To Mrs. Dickinson, on behalf of the Society, we extend our heartfelt sympathy.

## HELP!

Mr. David Lidman, editor of the stamp column in The Chicago Sun, is willing to buy back issues of the Czechoslovak Specialist. He needs all of Vol. I and the first two issues of Vol. II. Can any member help him out?

While on the subject we recall that Dr. Pozdena has lost some early issues of the Specialist — if we are not mistaken they are the same as these. Please, see what you can do to help these gentlemen.

## CONGRATULATIONS!

Our vice president, Mr. Vincent Domanski, Jr. has been elected to the exalted position of president of the Society of Philatelic Americans. Congratulations, Vinc, and may your reign in SPA be as fruitful as the reign of Ed Vining!

## AN INVITATION

Some time ago our member A/C Richardson L. Spofford, while training

in the Armed Forces in California, visited our member Mr. Wm. Bruce Bryant in Pasadena and had a very enjoyable time. Later, our librarian, Mrs. Mildred Glawe, who was visiting her sailor husband in San Diego, dropped in on member Bruce and told us over the phone what a lovely time she and her husband had. Now comes a very fine letter from Bruce whose last paragraph reads:

"Undoubtedly there are a number of other members of our organization both in and out of the armed forces, who reach the vicinity of Los Angeles at one time or another, and I should like to extend a hearty invitation to any and all of them to get in touch with me and perhaps spend an afternoon or evening talking stamps, sightseeing (gasoline permitting!), or just getting acquainted. Through the SPECIALIST perhaps you can extend this invitation for me, and I trust that I shall have the pleasure of duplicating with others the pleasant hours I have spent with Dick Spofford and Mildred and Bill Glawe. My office telephone in Los Angeles is Michigan 7412; my phone at home is SYcamore 9-6993."

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### ELECTIONS

The time has come to elect new officers of the Society for the term of 1945-46. During the past elections it has been a fairly easy matter for the Election Committee to select and propose candidates but due to the fact that many possible candidates are at present serving with the armed forces and that others are too busy to accept additional burdens the task is different. For this reason the election committee is nominating most of the present office holders.

However, it is planned to hold new elections as soon as conditions become favorable, be this even before the expiration of the new term. Many of the present office holders have held their position for many years and feel entitled to retirement, but will serve until such time when candidates will be available.

The Election Committee nominates for President for 1945-46 members K. Zahradnicek, of Cleveland. It is felt that he deserves priority to follow the present office holder, Mr. Secky, of New York. During the past two years Mr. Zahradnicek has been very active on behalf of the Society and has brought a number of new members into the fold.

Additional office holders are nominated:

1st Vice President: Vincent Domanski, Jr., Philadelphia, Penna.

2nd Vice President: Rudolph Novy, Pittsburgh, Penna.

Secretary: J. W. Lowey, New York, N. Y.

Treasurer: Guy Greenawalt, Richmond, Va.

According to our constitution all members are entitled to propose additional candidates for all above posts. Send your nominations until October 31st to the Editor of the Specialist.

The Secretary

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### APPEAL

On July 9th the employees of the Bata Shoe Factory in Batawa, Canada staged a Sokol Festival in which also our member residents of Batawa actively participated.

K. Zahradnicek of Cleveland traveled to Batawa to be present at the event and we surely would like to publish his description of the colorful activities were it not that we are short of space.

However, we feel compelled to mention a certain paragraph in his report which deserves the attention of every member.

"The boys at Batawa are more or less cut off from the outer world in respect to collecting activities. They are eager to obtain stamps of Czechoslovakia but there is very little to be had in Canada. Most of the members are not very advanced and collect used copies only.

We therefore would like to urge all members to look over their used duplicates and see what they can spare. Anything is acceptable including the very first issues.'

Send your donations to either of the following two members; who will distribute and at the same time acknowledge your gift, namely: K. Zahradnicek, 13306 Bartlett Ave., Cleveland 20, Ohio or F. S. Meisel, Batawa, Ontario, Canada.

# Posta Ceskoslovenska 1919

Translated from the Hirsch-Franek Handbook

by W. L. Russell

(Continued from the June number)

## Overprint "C"

The overprint for the oblong Express and the Hungarian Parliament stamp were set up with large size letters as a special overprint, and on an angle of small degree. Although the sheets of Express stamps are differently arranged (13 rows of 8 stamps) from the Parliament stamps (10 x 10 stamps), we can see that both kinds of stamps have been overprinted with blocks made from stereotypes of the same typesets, which were set up in various plates.

Examination of this overprint reveals that the blocks used for it were obtained from 3 types of hand settings, so that for this overprint 3 types appear, which can be easily distinguished. Their characteristics in regard to the letters and the mutual position of the words are sufficiently indicated in the sketch on page 183. Another not unimportant peculiarity of the overprints of these 3 types is their perceptible differences in angle, which are: Type 1, 24 degrees, Type 11, 25 degrees, and Type 111, 22 degrees.

In referring to the previous types of overprints we have not mentioned typical variations in the degree of angle, because such differences are scarcely noticeable and can be detected only with the help of very accurate instruments. In overprint "C", the variations of angle are quite marked and are characteristic of each type.

PLATE 1. The illustration on page 187 shows how the oblong Express stamps were arranged in the sheet. Out of the 104 stamp-fields (13 x 8), 4 were left unprinted and took instead a St. Andrew's Cross. As the normal plates for overprinting consisted of 100 blocks, these 4 fields — referred to as "coupons" — received no overprint. We would emphasize that Plate 1 was used to overprint the 2 heller only, and in Plate 1 we find 33 overprints of Type 1, 33 of Type 2, and 34 of Type 3.

The overprint of some stamps shown in the table (on page 184) in blacker figures, requires special attention. On the first stamp in the 7th row (the 49th stamp in the sheet) the overprint is of Type 2 and always shows a defect in the upper part of the "O" of "CESKOSLOVENSKA," where the top curve of this letter has been knocked off. The fourth stamp of the 12th row (overprint is Type 3) was at first faultless, but later shows in the majority of the 2 heller value a small defect in the "O" of "POSTA." In the later overprint of the 5 heller stamps this defect presents itself in an advanced stage, i. e. a complete break in the centre of the left side of the "O."

Similarly, we can observe this advanced defect in the second "O" in "CESKOSLOVENSKA," i. e., on the 8th stamp of the 4th row (32nd stamp in sheet). On the 2 heller stamp the break in the top of the "O" is barely perceptible, but very noticeable on the 5 heller, where in some of the issue the "O" is absolutely open at top. A final characteristic is the fault in the overprint on the 7th stamp in the last row (99th stamp). This overprint is dirty and has spots between the letters "K" and "O", and between "VE" and "19." On the 2 heller this defect is not noticeable because of the blue overprint, whereas in the black overprint on the 5 heller the defect is quite distinct in a great part of the issue.

We have dwelt upon this subject of defects in the overprints, because it will help you in technical difficulties, especially in questions regarding the overprint on the coupons.

PLATE 1 REPAIRED. For the overprint of the 5 heller Express stamp, Plate 1 was used, but alterations had to be made to it, the first stamp of the 7th row (which is of Type 2) had to be replaced with a faultless stereo, and one of the Type 3 was used. The 4th stamp of the 6th row (Type 3) was replaced with a stereo of Type 1. With these changes there are now represented in the sheet 34 of Type 1, 32 of Type 2, and 34 of Type 3. It is necessary to mention that during the overprint of the 5 heller another alteration was made, i. e., in the 4th place of the 6th row the stereo (Type 1) was exchanged with the defective stereo (Type 2) which ordinarily constituted the first stamp in 7th

row on Plate 1. On the 4th stamp, 12th row, the "O" in "POSTA" is completely broken at left side. The defect is on top of the "O" in the 8th stamp, 4th row, where in some of the issue it is considerably open at top of the "O."

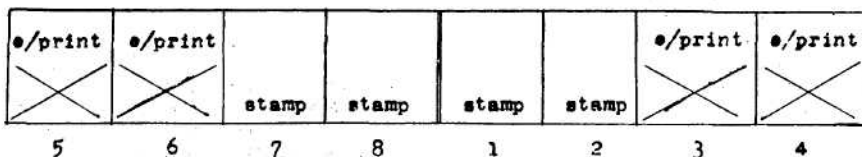
We will refer briefly to the perforation of the oblong Express stamps. They are found line perf. single  $11\frac{1}{2}$  or  $12\frac{1}{2}$ , or compound, either  $11\frac{1}{2} \times 12\frac{1}{2}$ , or  $12\frac{1}{2} \times 11\frac{1}{2}$ . The compound perf. was very rare even before the stamp was overprinted. On the 2 heller sheet (with overprint) a missing row of perfs has been found, between the 3rd and 4th rows. A pair of these stamps is illustrated on page 172.

#### Overprint of the Coupon

I regard to the overprint which is sometimes found on the coupons of the 5 heller stamps, there is scant mention in philatelic literature, and such information as is available is either unreliable or altogether wrong. After examining a large quantity of stamps we ascertained that there were two main causes for the overprint on the coupons:—

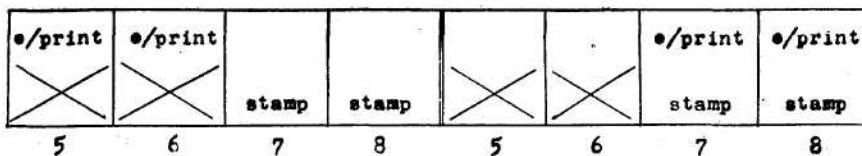
1. After all COMPLETE sheets had been overprinted there were still sheets to be done which had been divided vertically in the centre, perhaps at the P. O.'s, perhaps during transit to the printers. These half sheets had to be joined to make full sheets ready for overprinting. In joining these sheets together the main thing to watch for was that a right and a left half were joined together in such a manner that four St. Andrew's Crosses fell in the middle of the sheet. After that, there was nothing to distinguish a complete sheet from a joined sheet. With the exception of the crosses, all the stamp-fields in the sheet were intended to receive the overprint. It happened, however, that some sheets were joined wrongly, and this could occur in 3 ways:— 1. Right and left sides of the sheets joined at the wrong side. 2. Two right halves joined. 3. Two left halves joined.

The wrong joining of a right and left side of the sheet is shown here. The numbers below the various fields indicate how the stamps and crosses would run in an original complete sheet:—

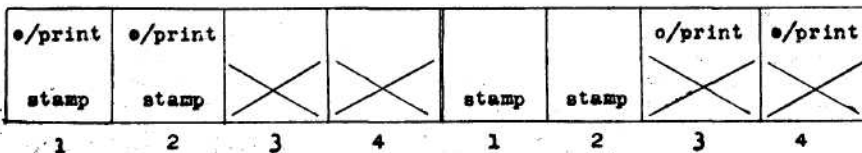


The 4 crosses (5, 6, 3, 4) received an overprint because they happened to occupy the places of stamps in an original complete sheet. On the other hand there are 4 stamps without overprints (7, 8, 1, 2,) because they are in the places where the crosses should have been. Thus, in case 1 there are 4 coupons overprinted and 4 stamps left unoverprinted in row 13.

The joining of 2 right halves makes the bottom row appear as follows:—



The joining of 2 left halves makes the bottom row appear thus:—



The slow process of joining occurred, however, only occasionally, and the majority of sheets showing the coupons overprinted show that it occurred in the following way:—

2. After the original complete sheets had been overprinted, the vertical halves of broken sheets were overprinted with the right half of the broken plate only. (The right half of the plate also printed the left halves of sheets!) During this operation 2 more stereos were placed in position in the 2 empty places of the 13th row. The reason for this was to ensure that no stamp should go through without an overprint, and explains the overprint on the 3rd and 4th places in the last row. In this way the half sheets of both the 2 heller and 5 heller values were overprinted, and the coupons as well.

It is quite possible that the overprint of the crosses has occurred through another method, i. e., with a normal plate, but set one row deeper! In such a case the first row would remain unoverprinted, whilst row 13 would have been completely overprinted with the 12th row of the plate.

Still another possibility would be a plate of 104 stereos. Such MAY have been used, but we have never come across such a complete sheet, so this theory remains unproven.

PLATE 11. Blocks stereo'd from the same 3 types as used for the Express stamps were utilized for setting up a special plate to overprint the Hungarian Parliament stamps (50, 75, 80f, 1, 2, 3, 5 and 10 K). Arranged in sheets of 10 x 10. Although we have seen only the 4 lowest values in complete sheets, we can say that only one plate was used for overprinting all the Parliament stamps.

On Plate 11 there are 36 of Type 1, 31 of Type 2, and 33 Type 3. Some types of overprint, especially their degree of angle, are the same as on the Express stamps — Type 1 is 24 deg., Type 2 is 25 deg., Type 3 is 22 deg. The execution of the overprints, or the casting of the stereos, have been made more carefully. On the 13th stamp in the sheet a large dot can be noticed on the number "91." There are no other defects on this stamp, unlike the Express issue.

(To be continued)

## Military Postal History of Czechoslovakia

By J. W. LOWEY, A. P. S.

In July and September of 1914 two memorable gatherings of the Czechoslovak colony of Paris were held, as a result of which it was unanimously decided that all able-bodied men would voluntarily enter the French Army. The second of these meetings was attended by two prominent Frenchmen—Professor Dr. Dennis, of the Sorbonne University; and the Mayor of Bayonne, Mr. Garat. Both of these men were authorities on Slav history, especially that of Bohemia. They pledged their aid to the Czechoslovak cause. That their help was to be substantial was proven by subsequent events.

From that day on, carrying the banners of the Sokol Gymnastic Society, and singing their national songs, the Czechs marched daily to the garden of the Palais Royal, where their military training began.

On the 20th of August the French government issued an order to the effect that Czechoslovak volunteers were to be incorporated into the Foreign Legion, and on the following day, the entire Czechoslovak colony accompanied the volunteers to the railroad station. By a kind stroke of fate, the new contingents for the Foreign Legion were at that time being assembled at Bayonne, whose Mayor Garat was a pledged friend of the Czechs.

Thus it was that the first company of Czechoslovak volunteers was created on French soil. It was this group which was later to achieve immortality on the battlefields as the "Nazdar" company.

This first company of volunteers arrived at Bayonne on August 22nd, and on October 12th Mayor Garat presented them with a flag which had been made by the women of Bayonne. They were stirring presentation ceremonies for the Czechs, who now, after a lapse of three centuries, again took the oath of allegiance to their own colors. As soon as their training was completed, the regiment was dispatched to the front and was there incorporated into the celebrated Moroccan Division.



From the beginning of October 1914 until September 1918 the Czechoslovaks participated in sixteen major battles and saw action as follows. Four times on the Somme; three on the Aisne; three in the Champagne; and twice each on the Oise, at Artois, in Alsace, at Verdun, and at St. Mihiel. They covered themselves with glory in the Battle of Arras on May 9th, 1915, which became known as the "breakthrough at Artois." As the first unit of the Moroccan Division, they went "over the top," destroying strongly fortified positions, and penetrating deep into the German lines. Of equal importance was the holding of their positions at Belloy en Santerre on the Somme, where in spite of terrific fire and the onslaught of superior forces, they held their section.

All engagements in which they participated were prominently acknowledged in the French War Bulletins. Practically none of the Czechoslovaks who later returned to the homeland was without a decoration, and some among them received the highest awards of the French Republic. But of the original contingent of the "Nazdar" company, only one hundred men survived.

On December 17, 1917 Raymond Poincare, President of the French Republic, signed a decree which authorized the formation of an independent Czechoslovak army on French territory. This action was the result of the prolonged efforts of the Czechoslovak National Council at Paris, in particular its secretary, Dr. Edward Benes.

The first regiments were formed at Cognac and in the neighboring Jarnac, where they went into intensive training under French officers. They were greatly strengthened by regular arrivals of volunteers who had been made prisoner in Romania and Russia and who had been released by the respective governments upon request of French authorities. Men came also from England and Canada, and at one time a transport of twenty-two ships carrying war material from the United States, brought several thousand men who, previous to their embarkation for France, had been in military training at Stamford, Connecticut.

The headquarters for all Czechoslovak armies fighting with Allied troops was at Paris. It was headed by General Janin, a great exponent of the Czechoslovak cause. His staff remained at its post even after he had left for Russia to join the Czechoslovak Legion stationed there.

In June 1918, when Czechoslovak forces had attained the size of a brigade, the entire contingent, commanded by French General Philippe, was moved near the battle front at Darney in the Vosges Mountains. On June 30th the camp was visited by President Poincare, who presented the Czechs with a flag donated by the citizens of Paris. The brigade passed in review before President Poincare in a parade staged in his honor.

On July 14th, French Independence Day, the 22nd Regiment was the featured unit in a colorful review of French contingents marching through the L'Arc de Triomphe in Paris. This regiment then immediately joined the 21st, which had already been sent into battle near Mylhus in Alsace. There both regiments were merged with the 53rd French Infantry Division. In the first they participated in action at Alsace, then in the Champagne, and in the latter half of October, in the Argonne Forest.

Then followed the engagements at Terron and Vouziers, in which they suffered great losses, but not before they had accomplished their task. Crossing the turbulent river Aisne, they stormed the fortified positions of the Germans, for which feat their banner was decorated with the highest French award.

While in the midst of battle, the men received the news from Paris that the Austro-Hungarian Empire had collapsed and that Czechoslovakia had declared its independence.

After the signing of the Armistice the Czechoslovak Army returned to Camp Darney for a well-earned rest. Shortly afterwards the camp was visited by President Masaryk, who selected a group of officers and soldiers to accompany him on his triumphant entry into the liberated homeland.

In December of 1918 the entire army left France, via Italy, for home. Newly equipped with French and Italian uniforms and arms, they arrived there only to be ordered to Slovakia, part of which territory had now been invaded by Hungarian armies.

Unlike the Czechoslovak Legion in Russia, the army in France did not have its own postal system, but we have evidence that there existed sectional field post offices, which served Czechoslovak units wherever they were stationed with French armies. Covers are known to exist, which show besides the French

Field Post cancellations, black rubber stamp impressions with Czech characters.

The earliest of these is a straight line rubber stamp which, when translated, reads "State's Mail of the Volunteers of the Czech Druzina Champagne-Troyes." (Figure 9)

Another, which appears for the first time in 1917, is in red violet ink. (Figure 10) The numbers between the words "Militaire" and "Slovaques" run from 1 to 15, which indicate that there were at least fifteen Field Post Offices. Although these cancellations do not show a date, this can be ascertained from the French Field Postmark which was applied.

Štátní pošta  
Česká družina,  
dobrovolníků  
CHAMPAGNE  
-TROYES-

Fig. 9



Fig. 10

Some of the others also have round double circle rubber impressions which resemble postmarks, but which in reality denote the various army units as for instance, the one used by the 22nd Regiment and mentioned previously in the chapter on the Czechoslovak Hungarian crisis.

All items with these postmarks are very rare, which is easily understood when we realize that only a small percentage of the soldiers had relatives or friends to whom they could write. Those who did were the men who originally had volunteered as citizens in France and who had families in that country. The majority were soldiers who, during the course of time, had been transferred from Allied countries, where they had been prisoners.

#### Arras

On May 4, 1935 the Czechoslovak government issued two stamps of identical design in honor of the approaching twentieth anniversary of the participation of the "Nazdar" company in the Battle of Arras. These stamps, a 1k rose and a 2k dull blue, showed the monument which was erected on the battlefield by the French government, and which monument was the work of the Czech sculptor J. Hruska. (Figure 11)

The stamps were engraved by Karl Seizinger, and printed from rotary presses. Perforation 9%. The printing arrangement was a novel one. The stamps were arranged in sheets of one hundred subjects; seven horizontal rows of sixteen subjects each. The top row consists of the full sixteen stamps, while the following six rows have only fourteen stamps, the right and left end spaces being blank.

On May 9th, the actual anniversary date, all post offices in Prague applied to mail a handsome black machine cancellation. The center shows the round date postmark. On the left side is an ornamental tower and the legend "Rota Nazdar, 20. Vyroci Bitvy u Arrasu, 9.V.1915 - 9.v.1935." (Nazdar Company, 20th Anniversary of the Battle of Arras, May 5, 1915 - May 5, 1935). On the right side appears the Monument of Arras, and the bilingual Czech-French inscription "Rota Nazdar, Zvolili zemriti za svobodu—Ont choici de mourir pour la liberte, 9/V/1915\*Arras\* 9.V.1935." (Nazdar Company. They choose to die for Liberty, May 9, 1915 \* Arras \* May 9, 1935). (Figure 12)

On May 9, 1935 the post office Praha-Hrad (Presidential Residence) used a blue postmark with the inscription "1915 \* Rota Nazdar, 20. Vyroci bitvy u Arasu \* 1935" (1915 \*Rota Nazdar, 20th Anniversary of the Battle of Arras\* 1935).

#### Vouziers

A second commemorative issue depicting the Legion in France, the Vouziers stamp, was released on May 21, 1938. It is a single issue of the 50h

value, deep green, and shows a group of Legionaires in action. It was designed by J. Vlcek, and engraved by B. Heinz; it is perforated 12½.

The stamps were printed similarly to the Arras adhesive, with this difference: the side blanks show an ornament in the form of a French steel helmet and laurel branch. On the top is the inscription "Ceskoslovenska Legie ve Franchii (Czechoslovak Legion in France), and below the helmet appear the names of the battle fields of Vouziers, Terron Sur Aisne, and Chestre Vandy. (Figure 13)

On the day the stamps were issued the post office in Caslav, the town which was the home of the 21st Regiment, (which participated in all French campaigns) used a commemorative cancellation with a double circle in blue showing the following legend in rose carmine: "Infantry Regiment 21, Honorary Commander Marshall Foch, 1918-1938."

## ITALY

The Czechoslovak Legion in Italy did not go into combat until April 1918. This late entry is due to various causes, chief among them being the absence of Czech leaders and organizers such as were responsible for the armies in France and Russia. Besides for a long time Italian authorities resisted suggestions regarding the formation of a Czechoslovak fighting force on Italian soil. Likewise, the requests of Czechoslovak prisoners for transportation to France for combat duty were rejected. Owing partially to pressure of the Czechoslovak National Council at Paris, and partially to the intervention of high Italian officials, the government suddenly acceded to representations and permitted the establishment of a central headquarters for Czechoslovak prisoners at Camp Santa Maria Capua Vetere.

From here the first organization steps were undertaken. In the summer of 1917 the organizing committee moved to Padula, and within a short time, had nine thousand volunteers at its disposition. This number was subsequently increased by additions of smaller units which had been scattered all over Italy and the adjacent isles. At the same time offices were opened for the Czechoslovakia National Council in Rome, thus organizing the political branch of the Legion.

That is as far as the Italian government permitted the movement to go. It still would not heed proposals regarding the transfer of the Czechoslovaks to Allied battlefields, nor permit their participation on its own front. Even the personal intervention of Dr. Benes was of no avail, though the government did permit the formation of Czechoslovak labor battalions, which were to serve the Italian armies behind the lines.

At last, however, all barriers and obstacles were broken down. Military disasters of the Italian army on the one hand, and constant pressure by Allied leaders on the other, lent speed to matters. It was General Stefanik, later first Minister of War for Czechoslovakia, who was chiefly instrumental in ironing out the remaining difficulties, thereby paving the way for the signing of the Italian-Czechoslovak Military Agreement, which was consummated on April 1st 1918.

General Andrea Graziani personally took charge of organizing the Czechoslovaks, and under his supervision an Independent Czechoslovak Division was created, which consisted of four regiments—the 31st, 32nd, 33rd, and 34th. All of these regiments were billeted around Foligno in the province of Umbria.

On May 24th the division was taken to Rome, and during a special ceremony, sworn in and presented with its own colors. On the same day the four regiments were again entrained and speeded into battle zone, where they took up positions in the vicinity of Orgiano.

The 33rd Regiment was the first to go into action, and on June 17th and 19th this regiment distinguished itself in two battles near San Donna di Piave. Prior to this Czechoslovak reconnaissance units had been active along the entire front, however, and one of them prepared the break through at Carzano. All units were later combined into the 29th Reconnaissance Division, which did valuable work, and prepared the victories at Cima Cady, June 14th; Val Bella, June 24th and 29th; Montebello, June 15th; Monte Asolone, July 23rd; Val Concei, July 25th; Riva, August 4th; and Cima Tre Pezzi, October 23rd.

(To be Continued.)