

THE CZECHOSLOVAK SPECIALIST

OFFICIAL MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE
CZECHOSLOVAK PHILATELIC SOCIETY OF NORTH AMERICA

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Editor Frank J. Kovarik, 2502 So. Kedzie Ave., Chicago 23, Ill.

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No. 10

EDITORIAL

Our faith in our members never waivered. We have received material for the Specialist from members in such generous quantities that we are sure we shall be able to continue our work on articles about Czech stamps which we started before the war. We saw it would be necessary to translate some parts of the Hirsch-Franek Handbook into English and thus present a more authentic account to our members. Here, too, the husband of one of our members generously offered to help us and we take this opportunity to thank Mr. G. B. Skopecek for his very timely offer. We are reprinting Mr. Lowey's article "Czechoslovak Fieldposts in France 1939-1940" from "Stamps" and Mr. Geo. Blizil's story of "Lidice" from "Linn's." Most philatelic magazines find it profitable to thus help one another out (although most of the time it is the big magazine which helps out a publication as poor as our's); the non-cooperative publications suffer, they lack charity. We have received a letter from Mr. Kimble, editor of the American Philatelist, that we are given permission to reprint Mr. Velek's most complete monograph on the 40h Hradcany illustrated with more plates than our treasury could afford to buy. To these publishers we extend our heartiest thanks and assurances that the Czechoslovak Specialist is ready to help them if the need ever arises. If the treasury is strong enough we see no reason why we should ever revert to less than 12 pages! So, if you haven't paid your 1948 dues, do so now and help further our work (which, after all, is for your benefit). We thank you!

NEWS AND VIEWS

by the Editor

In the September, 1945, issue of the Specialist we illustrated a set of mats prepared by member C. J. Pearce of Box 32, Coalgate, Okla., and only recently we received another group of mats which took in the Hradcany First Issue: 3, 5, 10, 20, 25, 30, 100 and 200, as also the 1h of the Second Issue. Those interested in obtaining these mats to illustrate their Hradcany varieties may contact Mr. Pearce, who failed to quote a price on these. Incidentally the old mats are still available. Mr. Pearce, like Mr. Velek, is a student of this very interesting issue.

* * *

A new 1948 catalogue of Czechoslovakian stamps has just been received. It is brought out by "Drufila," Praha II, Narodni Tr. 32, Czechoslovakia, and the cost is 22Kc plus postage, which would mean about 50 cents, if purchased in quantity. If a sufficient number of our members evince an interest in this catalogue, your editor is willing to obtain it for you. Do not postpone ordering it if you really want it; last year we ordered 5 more copies of the Lehovec Cat; 4 remained on our hands and we don't intend to get stung twice in the same

place. Soon after the end of hostilities we predicted when the heat and hatred caused by the war is gone we shall see the stamps of the Protectorate and of Slovakia included with a specialized listing of the stamps of Czechoslovakia. This fine catalogue brings to fruition our prediction. You ask about prices? we are editor, not price tabulator. So sorry.

* * *

The ninth issue of Vol. II, "Zpravodaj nasi Filatelie" was received by your editor and perhaps the most interesting feature of this copy was an illustration of the progressive stages in the preparation of the 10th anniversary of the death of T. G. Masaryk Memorial Issue. Several of our members have been subscribers to this excellent magazine and your editor is again ready to send your subscription to Praha for either the "Zpravodaj" or the "Cesky Filatelista." The Zpravodaj costs \$1.60; Cesky Filatelista (including membership,) \$2.00 per year.

* * *

A new issue announcement: The Jos. Strnad Agency wishes to make public the following: Issued—October 13, 1947, at St. Louis, Mo., after nine months of special care and attention and a three week overlap in the layout, a dual production of unexpected joy. Results most gratifying. We congratulate member Joe on becoming the father of twins. May both collect Czechoslovakia. Looks like we'll have to make a trip to St. Louis to collect the cigars.

* * *

In a letter from Joe Lowey which accompanied his article on the Czech Fieldposts in France, we read the following: "In connection with the article I should like to say this. Certainly many veterans who were at Camp Agde have returned to Bohemia. Among them, I suppose, there must be some philatelists who have more details pertaining to the postal phase of Agde than I could gather. It surprises me that so far nothing has appeared either in Hirsch's paper or the Zpravodaj. After all, when you look at the illustrations of the covers, you'll admit that they are very interesting (for all I know, there may be additional postmarks or items of which I have no information) and a detailed study could be written. It's alright to report new findings but somehow I feel that this news should be ferreted out. I should not be surprised if Hirsch and Novotny comment on the article and ask readers if they have any additional information." Can you help Joe?

* * *

Any member who knows the present address of member #126, Mr. Frank J. Kaps is requested to communicate with the editor. Thank you.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

222. David Lidman, Park Ridge, N. J.

NEW MEMBERS

307. David Martin, 1320 E. Third St., Long Beach 12, Calif.

308. Hugh Bryce Brooks, 2104 Spaulding Ave., Berkeley 3, Calif.

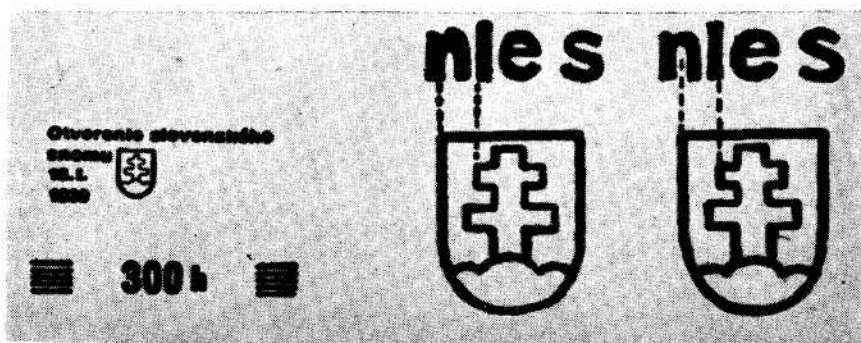
STAMPS OF SLOVAKIA

by F. J. Kovarik

It is quite difficult to write an introduction to the stamps of Slovakia without touching on the political situation in the Republic in those trying days when Hitler's power in Germany was rising. As in every controversy, there are two versions of political conditions: The Czech and the Slovakian. It may have been true that the Czechs treated the Slovaks as dependent brothers; it may be true the Czechs considered the Slovaks as incompetent and it may be true that the Slovaks thought themselves as not only able administrators of their own destiny, but in some respects, superior to the Czechs. At any rate, the Slovaks won autonomy from the Czechs and their own Parliament was to open January 18, 1939.

For this purpose a stamp was to be issued and because things were happen-

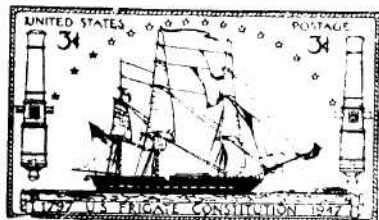
ing fast in those days, not much time was left to produce a special stamp and therefore the Ministry of Posts overprinted a stock of the 10Kcs Czechoslovakian stamp of the 1936 issue with the words "Otvorenie slovenskeho snemu - 18. 1. 1939 - 300h." Under the first two words, to be exact, below "nie s", we find a shield bearing Slovakia's Coat of Arms. The overprint was made from two steel plates of 50 subjects each and for this reason only half sheets could be printed in one operation. The work was done in the Czechoslovakian Printing Works, the Graphic Union, in Praha. These stamps had a validity to January 31, 1939, and the quantity as overprinted is 790,000.



Two types of this overprint are recognized. Type I is recognized by dots appearing atop "n" in "otvorenie" and first "o" of "Slovenskeho"; vertical lines drawn upward from the shields would show that the line from the left edge of the shield would run along the right edge of the "n"; a line from the left end of the upper arm of the cross would run along the left edge of "i" and the line along the right end of the shield would pierce the "s" almost in half. In Type II there are no dots atop "n" and "o"; the first line described in type I would run just a little right of the first left arm of "n"; the second line would run along the right edge of "i" and the last line would appear almost through the right side of "s".

The color of the Type I overprint is orange red; Type II is light orange. All dark blue stamps obtained the Type I overprint; the light blue stamps had either Type I or Type II overprint.

OUR U. S. CORNER



—courtesy of Chicago Svornost

We illustrate the 25c air post stamp which was issued July 30 from San Francisco and to be used primarily on mail to the continents of Africa, Asia and Australia. Our other illustration depicts a model of the Frigate "Constitution" also known as Old Ironsides. The first day of issue is October 21 and the place is Boston, Mass.

These notices of U. S. stamps must, of necessity, be brief as most members want information on stamps of Czechoslovakia. This column is for our members in foreign lands and we hope they find this information satisfactory.

EXHIBITION AND BENEFIT AUCTION

Last March the Chicago group staged a Benefit Auction to bolster the treasury. As a result, a substantial amount was raised; enough to permit your editor to expand his activities and give you many more pages than ever before. A Society like our's can never aspire to grow to the size of the American Philatelic Society, The Collector's Club or the Bureau Issues Association. Yet our problems are not much smaller. We cannot expect the members to pay \$10.00 a year for dues. Many of our members have difficulty raising one dollar for ordinary membership; but they are welcome to all the benefits which are made possible by the generous contributions of the Associate and Patron members. The last page of every issue has been bought by Mr. Alfons Stach, a generous dealer-member. Yet the \$70 which the auction brought in to the treasury was no small change and the Chicago Group decided to go into this in a bigger way this year.

We hope at least three of our dealer members donate trophies, cups or prizes; if not, the Chicago Group will give ribbons, if nothing more. This makes it a competitive exhibition and therefor cannot be limited to the Chicago members only; we know the best Czechoslovak material is not limited to the Chicago area. This being the case, and as the tentative plans call for 125 frames, at present we limit the exhibition to five frames per member. We do not expect to charge for the loan of the frames and we do not expect to insure the stamps as the show is planned for only one day. We ask the members to pay for the return of their exhibition material; if they pay for insurance, it will be returned insured, otherwise, at your own risk.

We should appreciate an announcement from prospective exhibitors what they hope to show. It is our plan to arrange the exhibition so that a broad picture of the stamps of Czechoslovakia is presented to the visiting public. This shall be an educational exhibition and no admission charge is planned. The hall will be paid for by Mr. Reinowski who also promises coffee and donuts to all visitors.

The date for the show has not been set but it will be in March, 1948.

All members are urged to send Czechoslovakian material as a donation to the committee. This shall then be catalogued and the February issue of the Specialist will contain a list of the donated material as well as a list of the donors. Generous bids are asked from those who cannot donate but are willing to buy. After all, it is the buyer who pushes up the profits at this truly charity auction. Let us remember, every cent of the clear profit goes to the Specialist. Wouldn't you like to get at least 120 pages of the Specialist in 1948? Surely,—then work for it.

Mr. George Kobylka has been chosen as general chairman; Eml Zaludek, vice-chairman; Frank Kovarik, publicity; Roman Reinowski, general arrangements; Alfred N. Weiner, 5056½ No. Kenmore Ave., Chicago 40, Ill., auction chairman (yes, that's why we gave you his full address; send him that donation lot now. The sooner, the better!)

The editor has been asked to arrange with Mr. Harry L. Lindquist, publisher of "Stamps," for a special Czechoslovak Issue of that publication. The editor has been empowered to choose the articles for this edition. Members desirous to help in a literary way, are asked to communicate with your editor. This must be done soon. Our special edition in the now defunct "Philately" brought in 17 new members; we are confident, if we sell our idea to Stamps, the result will be better.

Member Novy of Pittsburgh calls attention to an error in the Scott 1947 Cat. In the section devoted to Bohemia and Moravia, Type A16 is inscribed "Cathedral at Pardubice." It should be "main Entrance (with gate built in 1529) to the castle at Pardubice." We shall bring this to the attention of the Scott Publishing Co.

Czechoslovak Fieldposts in France 1939-1940

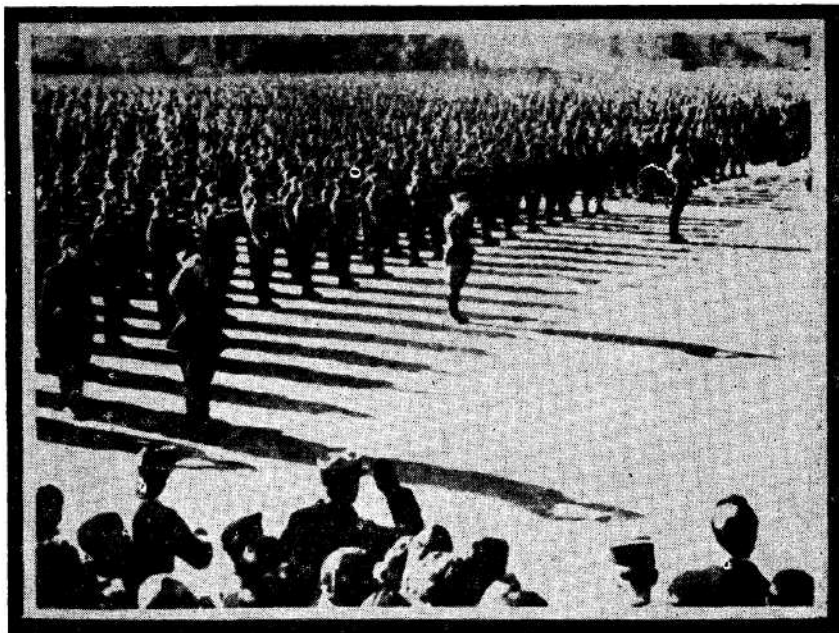
by J. W. LOWEY

Reprinted from "Stamps" with permission from the publishers

During the gradual occupation of the northern part of Bohemia by Hitler's armies in March 1939, Czechoslovak soldiers were already escaping from the homeland in preparation for defending her from without should the need arise. Then, when it was sensed that the enemy would inevitably take possession of the entire territory of Bohemia-Moravia, a mass exodus of Czech soldiers began. Some went singly, some in groups; and several regiments in their entirety, and fully equipped, escaped into Polish territory. There they were at first disarmed, but later when the Germans invaded Poland, their equipment was restored to them so that they might fight against the common enemy. As time wore on, and the situation began to look hopeless for Poland, some of the Czechs escaped into territory of the U. S. S. R., where later, under their famed commander, General Ludvik Svoboda, they fought their way back to Czechoslovakia alongside their Russian comrades. However, the goal of the majority of them was France, which place they eventually reached under great hardships via Romania, the Middle East, and French North Africa.

Meanwhile, several former members of the Czechoslovak government had fled to France and had met in Paris to form the nucleus of what later became the Czechoslovak Government in Exile. It was their aim to build a Czechoslovak Legion on French soil to fight under their own commanders and colors, just as had been done during the first World War.

They submitted their plans to the French government, but could evoke little sympathy since both civilian and military French authorities had no interest in the Czechoslovak cause. The only concession the French government would make was that the Czechs were permitted to enter either the French Foreign Legion in North Africa or the regular army in France. It made a humiliating condition for the Czechs in that officers and men would have to serve in lower



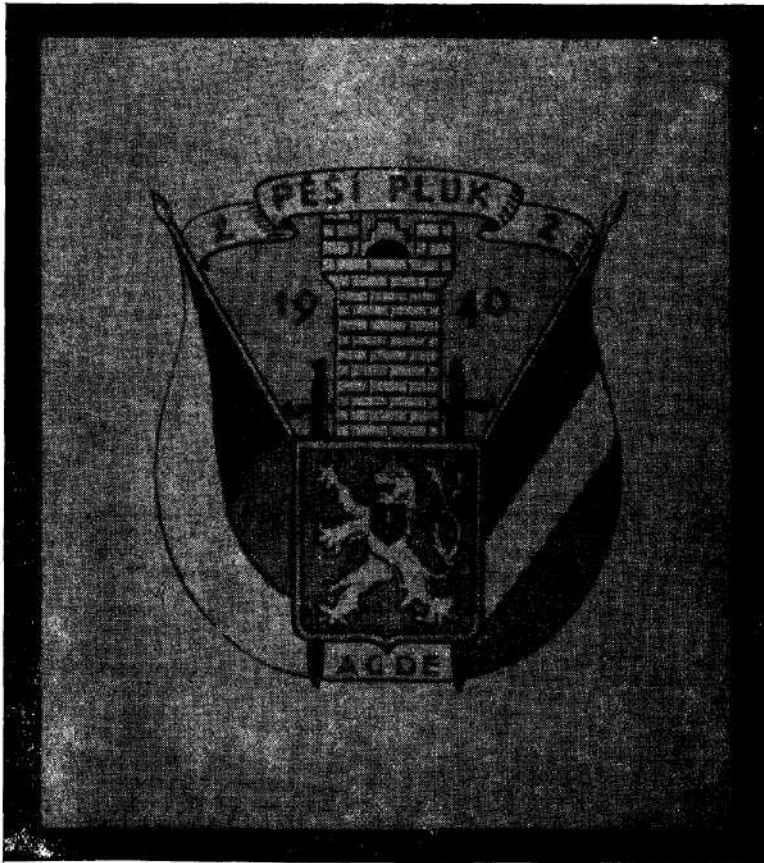
Czechoslovak Legion Giving the Oath at Camp Agde, March 7, 1940, Birthday of T. G. Masaryk

ranks than those they had held in their native land.

However, there were some men in the French government who had held civilian offices or military ranks of importance during the first World War, and they remembered the invaluable services the Czechoslovaks had then rendered the Allied cause. Owing to their influence and persuasion, the French Ministry of War suddenly assented to the formation of a Czechoslovak Legion, which was to be assembled at Camp Agde, Province of Herault, on the shores of the Mediterranean.

During the first World War the Legion had been quartered in and around the famous city of Cognac. The council of that city proposed to the authorities that the Czechs again be stationed there. The plan had many fine advantages. Living quarters and training facilities were very good, and were suitable for quite large contingents of soldiers. The climate was excellent, and the citizens of Cognac had retained the friendship with the Czechoslovaks which had been cemented twenty-five years before. The French Command, however, rejected the well meant offer. The reasons are not known but it can be assumed that some of the reactionary members of the French Military Council had the upper hand in the decision.

Early in September of 1939 the Czechoslovak Military Mission arrived at Camp Agde to inspect the facilities. They were aghast at what they found—a ghost town. In previous years Agde had housed refugees of the Spanish civil



Seal of the 2nd Infantry Regiment

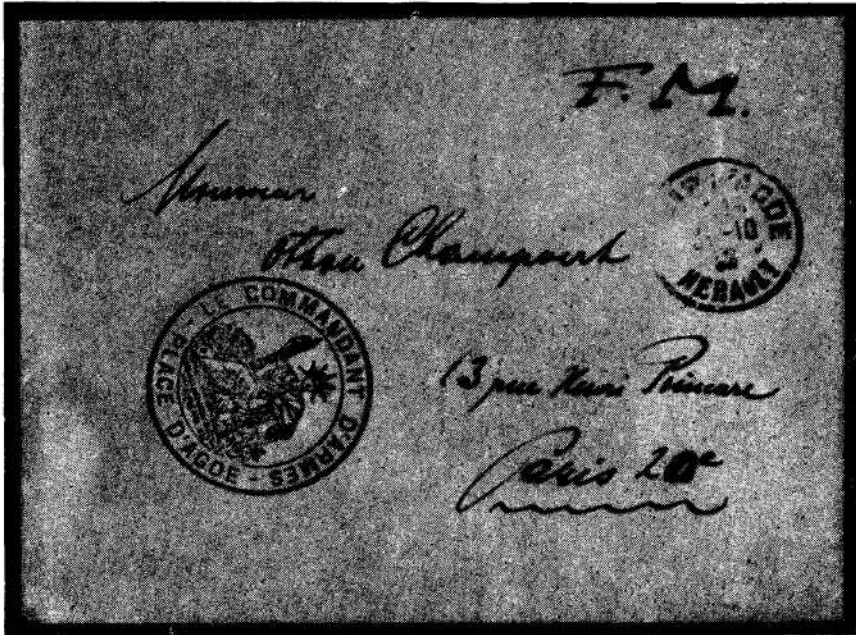


Figure 1

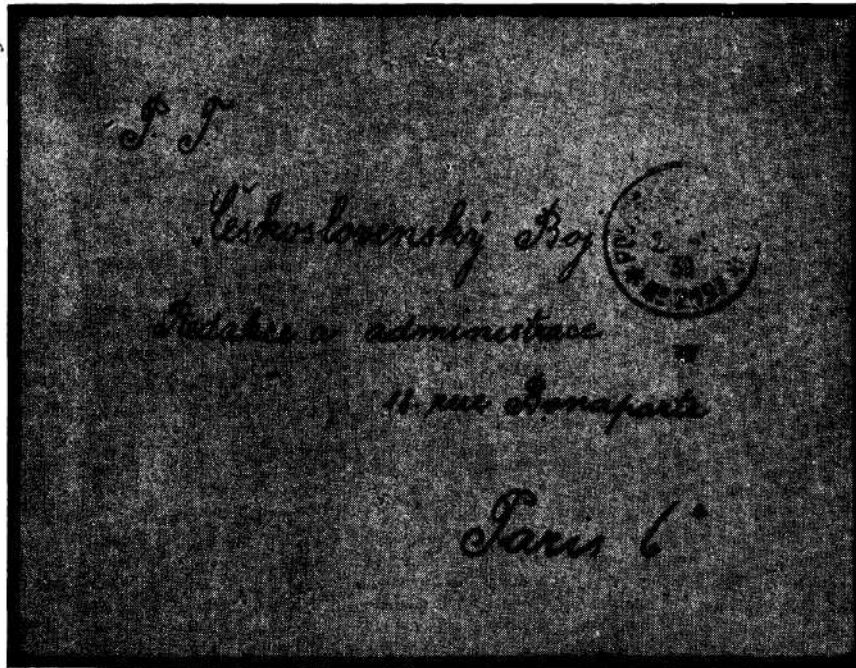


Figure 2

Pr/10ez/
COMMANDEMENT EN CHEF DU
FRONT NORD-EST

Etat-Major
P.C.C.A./3. le 10 Juin, 1940
16 h. 30

3ème bureau.
No. 2012-3/0p.

NOTE POUR LE G.A./3.

LA DIVISION TCHEQUE
la 240e D.I.

I/- Un Régiment d'Infanterie de la DIVISION TCHEQUE et un Groupe d'Artillerie de la 240e D.I. seront enlevés immédiatement V.T. et mises à la disposition de la VIème Armée pour tenir les passages de la MARNE entre L'OURCQ et LA FERTE-sous JOUARRE, esclu.

Mouvement réglé par 4e Bureau.

II/-Des moyens de transport auto seront maintenus à proximité du Régiment d'Infanterie Tchèque, restant de la D.I. Tchèque, en vue de son enlèvement ultérieur.

P. le Général d'Armée Commandant
en Chef sur le front de NORD-EST
Le Lieutenant-Colonel, Chef du
3ème Bureau.

Destinataires.

G.A./3.
VIe ARMEE.
DIVISION TCHEQUE.

M: le Général WEYGAND.
E.M.—E.T.O.—3e Bureau.
4e Bureau.

Order by General Weygand
calling a regiment to the front



Figure 3

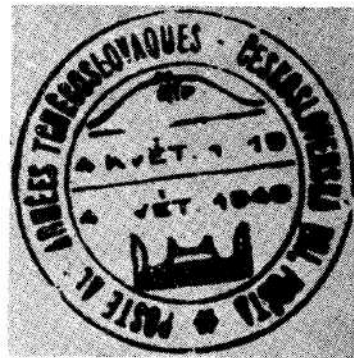


Figure 4

war, but after these refugees had been evacuated, the place had been left to deteriorate. Most of the barracks were without roofs, and all that had remained was rotting wood. The land surrounding the camp was swampy and infested with mosquitoes.

The Military Mission realized that an almost superhuman effort would be needed if the camp was to be habitable for the men who were to occupy it shortly. There was no time for conferences; what was needed was instant action. Orders went out for Czechoslovak engineers and sappers who were stationed at various parts of France. The required building materials would have to be found in the vicinity. With the co-operation of the inhabitants of Agde this problem was solved.

The first structure which was to house the Camp Command was finished on September 20, 1939, and a few days later several barracks were ready for occupation. On the 23rd the first transport arrived bringing administrative officers, and on the 26th the first contingent of soldiers arrived, being followed by others as fast as new barracks went up.

In due time the Camp Command realized the necessity for the adequate handling of incoming and outgoing mails. The soldiers who arrived during the early days were mostly those who had fled from Czechoslovakia. Only very few of them had friends or contacts in France, and mails then were handled through the town post office. Then when the influx of men into the camp increased at an accelerated pace—a large percentage being volunteers and Czech Legionnaires of the First World War who had married and remained in France—it became necessary to establish a post office inside the camp.

Unfortunately, not much is known about details pertaining to the postal phase because the ship which carried the records to England after the fall of France was sunk by an enemy submarine.

However, on the basis of the various postmarks which were applied we



Figure 5

can assume that the camp post office began handling mails early in October, 1939.

For a short time a single circle steel cancellation was used with the legend "CAMP AGDE" on top, "HERAULT" on the bottom, and date in the middle. Official mails, in addition, show a double circle rose carmine rubber stamp with the inscription "LE COMMANDANT D'ARMES—PLACE D'AGDE" and inside the circle the female figure symbolizing France (Figure 1).

About one month later a new postmark was substituted, the lettering now reading "POSTE AUX ARMES" on top and on the bottom between two asterisks "No. 2197" denoting the Fieldpost number, with the date in the center (Figure 2).

Besides these regular cancellations the post office also used three commemorative rubber postmarks, namely: on February 1st, 1940 (Fig. 3), on May 4th (Fig. 4) and on June 1st (Fig. 5). First day cancellations in all three instances were applied in red, and for a few days thereafter black ink was used. In addition to these commemorative postmarks mails show the black steel cancel "POSTE AUX ARMEES" with an asterisk on the bottom and date in the middle (Fig. 6).

In closing, a few words as to the relative value of items. Of course, soldiers had free franking privileges, and stamps are never found on letters with the regular postmarks. In the case of commemorative cancels some covers are with the various issues then in use in France. The stamps were obviously affixed by philatelically minded soldiers, but do not increase the value of an entire.



Figure 6

Mails showing the two regular postmarks are to be appraised as rather valuable especially those with the red rubber stamp of the camp command. As to the commemorative ones all three first day cancels are very good property, more so if they also have the black "POSTE AUX ARMEES" postmark.

"LIDICE LIVES FOREVER!"

by George A. Blizil



Before midnight of June 9th, 1942, it would not have been difficult to overlook the tiny Czechoslovakian village of Lidice, (pronounced Leed-eat-say.) And the following day, June 10th, what was once Lidice, an insignificant dot on the map, gained mammoth proportions in the minds of free men everywhere.

On June 10th the official Nazi statement was aired, not as a local broadcast but for world consumption, via the Prague radio as follows: "It is officially announced that in the course of the search for the murderers of General Heydrich, it has been ascertained that the population of the village of Lidice supported and assisted the perpetrators who came into question. Because the inhabitants, by their support of the perpetrators, have flagrantly violated the law, all men of the village have been shot. The women have been deported to a concentration camp and the children sent to appropriate centers of education. All buildings of the village were leveled to the ground and the name of the village is immediately abolished." By no possible stretch of imagination could the Nazi's ever have realized what a blazing torch of glory could arise from the ruins of a razed village.

The lovely old mining village of Lidice was located ten miles west of Prague, one mile off the main highway. It had stood there for over 600 years. Along the main street, named Woodrow Wilson Street, stood 2 lovely old inns, 2 blacksmith establishments, a tailorshop, a wheelwright and 2 general stores. Above the 90 roofs of the town rose the spire of St. Margaret Church, built in 1736.

No proof from that day to this has ever been unearthed to show that any of the inhabitants had anything to do with the assassination of Heydrich, the Nazi Hangman of Bohemia. But the Nazi's made their own proof, for General Heydrich was one of their greatest men. Lidice was designated to be an example of what could happen to anyone or anything "crossing the path of justice." The population of Lidice was accused of supporting and assisting the perpetrators. All buildings were leveled and the name of the village was abolished. Approximately 200 adult villagers were shot, 56 of them being women who pleaded for the lives of their menfolk. The rest of the women became slave laborers for the Reich and the children were sent off in different directions to "correction schools."

Our modern world has never heard of an atrocity like Lidice.

The assassins of Gen. Heydrich on May 27, 1942, were a trio of Czech parachutists who were dropped into their homeland by a British bomber. The

leader of this trio was Sgt. Josef Gabcik, who is pictured on Czech stamp of the London printing, Scott 277 and 285 (illustration on A98). The parachutists were trapped in a Prague church and took their own lives to avert capture. Their suicide infuriated the Gestapo and in all probability led to the Lidice massacre.

In this country we now have a new town of Lidice, Illinois, dedicated to the people of Lidice, Czechoslovakia. It is a modern housing project in suburban Chicago. Following is an excerpt from the New York Times editorial, June 12, 1942.

"The village of Lidice has been leveled to the ground and the name of the community extinguished. The name of Lidice extinguished? That name now goes around the world. It is written in blood in everyman's atlas. It blazes in undying fire on every map of Europe. What happened there will never be forgiven, never forgotten."

Now the world observes the 5th anniversary of Lidice and the Czechoslovakian government commemorated the event with a set of appropriate stamps and commemorative cancellations. It is now a philatelic item too.

Yes, Lidice Lives Forever!



The Officers of the Czechoslovak Philatelic Society of North America

wish to all members and their families

A Merry Christmas

and a

Happy New Year



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