

THE CZECHOSLOVAK SPECIALIST

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EDITORIAL

The various reports we have received about WIPA since our last description of the event, make us feel very sad that we were unable to attend that greatest exhibition of all time. We have also learned that a number of our foreign members were the recipients of outstanding awards: Gosta Hedbom—bronze; Jaroslav Kracik—silver; Eduard Herout and Zdeněk Kvasnička—guilded silver. Our warmest congratulations to all these members. Max Mařr, a collector from West Germany, received the highest award given a Czechoslovak exhibit, i.e., a gold-silver medal. It is of interest to note that of the thirteen Czechoslovak entries, eleven were given awards.

Long before WIPA the President of the International Postal History Society (SIPH) asked for our permission to place our name in nomination at the convention during WIPA in Vienna, for Vice President of the Society to represent it in the United States. We were recently informed that we were elected representative for the United States at the convention held on June 10, 1965, in the Palfy Palace. We shall endeavor to be of service to that fine organization, which publishes four Bulletins annually containing original articles in French, German and English.

We understand that member C. J. Pearce, Box 32, Coalgate, Okla. 74533, is very interested in securing a copy of Compex Directory 1960. Anyone wishing to help him in this quest, please contact him.

Members are requested to support SIPEX which is to be held in Washington in May of next year. We wish to emphasize the importance of support for this United States endeavor. Every one of us should do whatever possible to make the exhibition a real success.

The August 30th issue of Linn's was sent to every member by courtesy of Mr. Carl P. Rueth. We shall reprint the original articles in the Specialist for our members' convenience so as to have all special articles in one place.

NEW MEMBERS

- 810 Michael A. Maldony, 38 Utica Road (Edison), Rahway, N. J. 07065.
- 811 Leon Schensol, Box 353, Sharon, Conn. 02067.
- 812 Robson Lowe, 50 Pall Mall, London S. W. 1, England.
- 813 R. G. Phillips, c/o Stanley Gibbons Ltd., 12 Buckingham St., London W, C. 2, England.
- 814 Henry Stollnitz, 24 Rockrose Place, Forest Hills, N. Y. 11375.
- 815 Mildred Urbanski, 626 U. S. 17-92, Fern Park, Fla. 32730.
- 816 Mrs. Edward L. Sheppard, 645 Delaware Ave., St. Paul, Minn. 55107.
- 817 Homer V. Roberts, Box 343, State College, Pa. 16801

A POSTAL HISTORY STUDY

Field Post of Czechoslovak Siberian Legions

By Jaroslav J. Verner

Reprinted from American Philatelist

Undoubtedly one of the most unusual stories to come out of the First World War is that of the Czechoslovak Siberian Legions; the history of how more than 80,000 troops moved over the vast expanse between Kiev and Vladivostok has still to be written properly by a competent historian. The story is one of those incidents that take place from time to time in this world of ours that is stranger and more exciting, and filled with more pathos than any novelist could dream. However, fascinating as this story is we shall restrict ourselves to a resumé of the Legion's movements and then go on to a consideration of its postal history.

Perhaps we should start in Kiev, where on Sept. 28, 1914, the forerunner of the Legion received its colors on the Cathedral Square. This first unit, called the Czeszkaja Druzina, was formed from among Czechs and Slovaks living in Imperial Russia, but with Russian commissioned and non-commissioned officers. It was considered a regular unit of the Imperial Army. As the war progressed, Czechs and Slovaks who had been conscripted into the Austrian Army began to surrender and defect to the Russians en masse. After some initial hesitancy, more and more of these prisoners of war were allowed to join the Druzina, and with the collapse of the Imperial government the Druzina was reorganized as a semi-independent Allied military unit.

The Legion, as it was now called, faced a serious problem with the signing of the Brest-Litovsk treaty which ended the fighting on the Eastern front. The Czechoslovaks wanted to get to France and continue the struggle against the Central Powers, whose defeat would lead to the establishment of their independent homeland. And so, with the Western route closed to them, the long trek across Siberia commences.

Starting from the vicinity of Kiev, the unit moving slowly along the Trans-Siberian Railway until it had effective control of its entire length. With their lines of communication secured, the westernmost units moved East until the entire Legion was able to leave for home. The last units arrived in Europe in 1920.



About the Author: Jaroslav J. Verner is a native of St. Paul, Minn. He is a graduate of the University of Minnesota and also received a master's degree from the Russian Institute of Columbia University. At the present he is with the U. S. Information Agency as a Foreign Service Officer assigned to Zagreb, Yugoslavia. He is an ardent collector of Czechoslovakia, possessing the third largest collection of philatelic material pertaining to the Czechoslovak Legion in Russia. He has received numerous high awards at regional, national and international shows. He is a thoroughly skilled writer of articles dealing with his specialties.



Figure 1.

While the Legion was still a part of or attached to the Russian Army the question of a field post office did not come up because its units were serviced by the Russian field post. At first, the main use of this service was to distribute the Czech newspapers published by the Legion for its various units. With the dissolution of the Russian Army and the movement East of the Legion, these newspapers were printed in a railway car and distributed by couriers. But this method quickly proved insufficient to meet the needs of rapid and reliable communications between units that found themselves farther and farther apart.

Early in 1918, it was decided at Legion headquarters in Chelyabinsk that a regular military postal service would have to be organized. In a letter dated June 10, 1918, Capt. Antonin Novotny and several others were instructed to begin organizing such a service.

The central point of the field post was located in Chelyabinsk, the seat

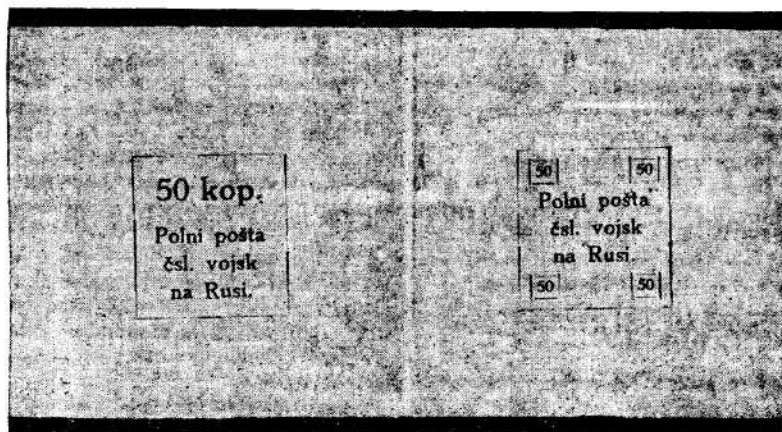


Figure 2. Two proposed stamp designs created by a Mr. Cernenka in Spring of 1919. Final approval to produce these designs was never granted.

of the General Staff of the Legions at that time. The beginnings of the Field Post were painful indeed. There was a shortage of everything, from personnel to writing paper to railroad cars that could be converted into traveling post offices. The Field Post eventually was able to acquire, from one



Figure 3. Set of five essays prepared in September, 1919, which led to first—and only stamp—designed and printed by the Legion. Only essay of a silhouetted soldier on guard was accepted and issued.



Figure 4. "Silhouette Issue" consisted of 1R and 25 and 50k values. Design was etched in stone and lithographed.



Figure 5. Two copies of "Lion Issue," type II (large sabre handle).

source or another, ten boxcars in varying states of disrepair. All of them had been used to haul flour, coal, and various other commodities which made the cars unfit for postal use. All the cars not only had to be cleaned, but also had to be adapted so that postal functions could be carried on within them. Just borrowing tools for this job was a project of Herculean proportions—to be paid for only in spiritus or other commodities difficult to obtain. And so went with every little problem.

The Field Post actually began to function on Sept. 16, 1918, when the first postal car left Chelyabinsk for Sysran. Field Post offices were opened in Chelyabinsk, Samara, Sysran, Ekaterinburg, Omsk, Krasnojarsk and Irkutsk. The mail run from Chelyabinsk, Sysran, Chelyabinsk, Irkutsk and return to Chelyabinsk took about 16 days on the average and covered approximately 5,000 kilometers. At this early stage only one post office was actually housed in a building; the rest were in railway cars that were almost constant-

ly on the move. Of course, with the passage of time the Field Post became better organized, but at no time during the entire period of its existence did it operate under conditions that could be considered normal for a mail service.

In October, 1918, the Postal Service was transferred to the General Staff and placed under the command of Lt. Colonel Klecenda. Under his command, the service was expanded to include a monthly run to Vladivostok, a distance of about 10,000 kilometers. On Nov. 1, 1918, parcel post and money services were organized with international mail connections soon thereafter.

The first mail from Siberia reached Czechoslovakia in the Spring of 1919



Figure 6. Double overprint on 50k value of "Lion Issue."

after traveling across the Pacific, North America, the Atlantic, and half of Europe. Mail from Siberia was carried almost exclusively on ships evacuating troops from Vladivostok, and hence returned to Europe the same way the soldiers did. In addition to the route across the Pacific Ocean, a second route took both troops and mail south through the Indian Ocean, up through the Red Sea and the Suez Canal, across the Mediterranean to France, and then overland to Czechoslovakia.

In 1918 the Czechoslovak Legionnaires did not yet have free franking privileges and there was a need for some sort of accounting mechanism for mail passing between the Legionnaires and private Russian citizens. It was therefore decided to issue overprinted Russian stamps to take care of this Czech-Russian postal traffic.

The first stamp of the Siberian Legions is actually the 10k (kopek) blue Russian stamp overprinted with CZESZKJA POSZTA in Cyrillic letters. The overprint was ordered by the Director General of the Russian Field Post in Chelyabinsk and approved by the Russian postal authorities in Omsk. Several denominations of Russian stamps were overprinted during the trial overprint run (1, 2, 3, 5, 70 kopek and 1R imperforated issue of 1909, and 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 10, 14, 15, 25, 35, 50 kopek stamps of the 1915 perforated issue) but only the 10 kopek blue was authorized for use. These stamps were used in Chelyabinsk for only a few days and then were withdrawn because of a spelling error. (CZESZKJA instead of CZESZKAJA). Before a new overprint could be prepared the Russian postal authorities in Omsk granted members of the Legion free franking privileges, thus obviating the need for a new issue.

The overprint is in black and runs diagonally from lower left to upper right. (See Figure 1). It is believed that only about 1,000 copies of the blue (continued on page 135)



Figure 7. Russian postal card with Field Post Office cancellation (shown by arrow).

Padělky Československých Poštovních Známek

1918-1939

Eng. Jan Karásek, Zdeněk Kvasnička, Břetislav Paulíček

Translated by Jaroslav J. Verner

By permission of the Czechoslovak Theatrical and Literary Agency
Dilia, dated June 3, 1964

Continued

Page 90

Class B Group b

Type II

Genuine

(60/42 h, dark brown, porto, Posif #88)

Height of Overprint: 10.5 mm.

Width of Overprint: 20.5 mm.

Height of Letters: 2.6 mm.

Angle of Overprint: 28 degrees.

Illustration

Genuine

1. The axis of the T in POŠTA passes between the O and the V and between the second 1 and 9.
2. The left lower leg of K does not have the nick and the S is without indentation.
3. Second 9 in date is clipped.

Page 91

Counterfeit Overprint

(Similar to Class B)

Illustrations on left

Counterfeit Overprint

1. Axis of the T in POŠTA passes through the right side of 0 and touches the left side of 1.
2. Nick and indentation are absent.
3. The second 9 of the date is not clipped.
4. The letters and numbers have a different shape and are slightly larger.
5. The angle of the overprint is different.

Counterfeit Overprint

1. The axis of the T in POŠTA passes between the O and V and touches the right side of 1.
2. Lower left leg of K is not nicked and the S is without indentation.
3. The second 9 in date is not clipped.
4. Individual letters are of different shapes and of various heights.

Page 92

Class B Group c

Type 1

Genuine

(1h black gray, porto, Pofis #83)

Height of Overprint: 10.5 mm.

Width of Overprint: 20.5 mm.

Height of Letters: 2.6 mm.

Angle of Overprint: 43 Degrees

Illustration

Genuine

1. The axis of the T in POŠTA passes to the left side of the V and between the 1 and 9.
2. A clearly perceptible hook over the C in ČESKOSLOVENSKA.
3. The second 9 of the year is clipped.

Page 93

Class B group c

Type II

Genuine

(1h, black gray, porto, Pofis #83)

Height of Overprint: 10.5 mm.

Width of Overprint: 20.5 mm.

Height of Letters: 2.6 mm.

Angle of Overprint: 43 Degrees.

Illustration

Genuine

1. The axis of the T in POŠTA touches the left side of the V and the outer bow of the 9.
2. Above the C in ČESKOSLOVENSKA there is a dot instead of a hook.
3. The second 9 in the date is clipped.

Page 94

Counterfeit Overprints

(Similar to Class B)

Illustrations on left

Counterfeit Overprint

1. Axis of T in POŠTA passes between the O and V and touches the outer bow of the 9.
2. The hook over the C in ČESKOSLOVENSKA has a different shape.
3. The second 9 of the date is round and not clipped.
4. The angle of the overprint is different.

Counterfeit Overprint

1. The axis of the T in POŠTA passes through the right part of O and touches the left of 1.
2. Above the C in ČESKOSLOVENSKA there is a clearly visible hook.
3. The second 9 in the date is not clipped.
4. The letters and numbers are of different shapes and slightly larger.
5. The angle of the overprint is different.

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Class C

The following stamps bear the Class C overprint:

(Catalog numbers are listed)

Austrian special delivery stamps of 1917, rectangles:

2h brown red

blue overprint

a) black overprint

5h green-black overprint

a) green-black overprint

Hungarian postage stamps of 1917 with Parliament design; black overprint:

50f red violet

75f light blue

80f green

1k brown carmine

2k olive brown

3k dark violet/gray
 5k dark brown
 10k red brown/violet

All denominations are known to bear types I, II or III of the overprint.
 Two Illustrations

Page 96

Class C

Genuine Type I

(75f green, Parliament, Pofis #112)

Height of Overprint: 16.0 mm.

Width of Overprint: 27.2 mm.

Height of Letters: 4.0 mm.

Angle of Overprint: 24 degrees.

Two Illustrations

Genuine

1. The hook over the S in POŠTA is heart shaped and touches the letter.
2. The first K in ČESKOSLOVENSKÁ is open.
3. The letter S in ČESKOSLOVENSKÁ is full, not cut off.
4. The word POŠTA and the date 1919 are slightly to the right, when compared with Type II.
5. The second 9 in the date is clipped.

Page 97

Class C

Genuine Type II

(2k olive brown, Parliament, Pofis #115)

Height of Overprint: 16.0 mm.

Width of Overprint: 27.5 mm.

Height of Letters: 4. mm.

Angle of Overprint: 22 degrees

Two Illustrations

Genuine

1. Hook over S in POŠTA is heart shaped and touches the letter (as in Type I).
2. First K in ČESKOSLOVENSKÁ is slightly closed.
3. Letter S is cut at top.
4. Second 9 in date is clipped.

Page 98

Class C

Genuine Type III

(10k red brown and violet, Parliament, Pofis #118)

Height of Overprint: 16.5 mm.

Width of Overprint: 27.2 mm.

Height of Letters: 4.0 mm.

Angle of Overprint: 25 degrees

Illustrations

Genuine

1. Hook above the letter S has a different shape (angular), is placed higher and shifted to the left of the letter axis.
2. First K of ČESKOSLOVENSKÁ is slightly closed (as in Type II).
3. The top of the letter S is full, uncut (as in Type I).
4. The word POŠTA is shifted to the right so that the axis of the T passes between the S and the L.
5. The second 9 in date is clipped.

Counterfeit Overprint

(Similar to Class C)

Counterfeit Overprint—similar to Type I
(80f green, Parliament)**Illustration**

1. Hook above S in POŠTA is smaller.
2. First K in ČESKOSLOVENSKÁ is open (similar to genuine Type I).
3. The word POŠTA is shifted to the right (similar to Type III).
4. Dash above A in ČESKOSLOVENSKÁ has the appearance of a dot.
5. Second 9 in the date is clipped (as in the genuine).

Counterfeit Overprint—similar to Type II.
(5k dark brown, Parliament)**Illustration**

- 1, 2, 4, 5, very similar to Type II
3. Upper part of letter S in -----ENSKÁ is cut.
6. Color of overprint is light, partly translucent.
7. Hook over C and dash above A in ČESKOSLOVENSKÁ are less clear.

Page 190**Counterfeit Overprint**

(Similar to Class C)

Counterfeit Overprint—similar to Type III
(2h brown red, special delivery, black overprint)**Illustration**

1. Hook over S in POŠTA is elliptical in shape.
2. Individual letters are different.
3. Dash above A is shifted to the left.
4. Color of overprint is light.

Counterfeit Overprint—similar to Type III
(10k red brown/violet, Parliament)**Illustration**

1. Hook over S in POŠTA is different (compared with the hook in Type III)
2. Letters have different shapes.
3. Hook over C and dash over A in ČESKOSLOVENSKÁ have different shapes and run into the letters.
4. The word POŠTA is shifted to the right so that the axis of the T passes between S and L (as in the genuine)
5. The second 9 in the date is not clipped.

Page 101**Class D**

The following Austrian stamps bear the Class D overprint in black:

(Catalog numbers are listed)

Newspaper stamps of 1908-10 (Mercury facing right)

10h light red

Newspaper stamps of 1916 (Mercury facing left)

2h brown

4h green

6h blue

10h orange

50h red violet

Postage stamps of 1908-13 (large numbers)

2h carmine red

4h carmine red

6h carmine red
 14h carmine red
 25h carmine red
 30h carmine red
 50h carmine red
 Postage due stamps of 1916 (small numbers)
 5h carmine
 10h carmine
 15h carmine
 20h carmine
 25h carmine
 30h carmine
 40h carmine
 50h carmine

All denominations are known to bear overprint Type I, II or III.

Illustrations

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Class D

Genuine Type I

(15h carmine, postage due, small number, Pofis #74)

Height of Overprint: 15.7 mm.

Width of Overprint: 24.0 mm.

Height of Letters: 3.0 mm.

Angle of Overprint: 45 degrees

Illustrations

Genuine

1. Axis of T in POŠTA passes between O and V.
2. Vertical distance between the words POŠTA and ČESKOSLOVENSKÁ is 3.1 mm., between ČESKOSLOVENSKÁ and 1919 it is 2.7 mm.
3. Second O has a small dot to the right and the second E has a dot to the left.
4. The first 1 and 9 are joined by a short diagonal line.
5. Dash over A has an elongated shape.
6. Second 9 in date is clipped.

Page 103

Class D

Genuine Type II

(30h carmine, postage due, small number, Pofis #70)

Height of Overprint: 15.7 mm.

Width of Overprint: 24.0 mm.

Height of Letters: 3.0 mm.

Angle of Overprint: 42 degrees

Illustrations

Genuine

1. Axis of T in POŠTA passes through left part of V.
2. Vertical distance between POŠTA and ČESKOSLOVENSKÁ is 2.7 mm., between ČESKOSLOVENSKÁ and 1919 it is 3 mm.
3. Second O has a small protrusion in the shape of a dot on the right side, second E has a dot on the left.
4. First 1 and 9 are joined by a small diagonal line.
5. Dash over A has the shape of an oval dot.
6. Second 9 in date is clipped.

Page 104

Class D

Genuine Type III

(10h light red, newspaper stamp, Mercury facing right, Pofis#59)

Height of Overprint: 15.7 mm.

Width of Overprint: 24.0 mm.

Height of Letters: 3.0 mm.

Angle of Overprint: 41 degrees

Illustrations

Genuine

1. Axis of T in POŠTA touches the left side of the letter V.
2. Vertical distance between POŠTA and ČESKOSLOVENSKÁ is 2.8 mm., between ČESKOSLOVENSKÁ and 1919 it is 2.8 mm. also.
3. Second O has a very slight protrusion on the right side and the dot on the second E is less noticeable.
4. The first 1 and 9 are joined by a broken diagonal line.
5. Dash above A is curved.
6. Second 9 in date is clipped.

Counterfeit Overprint

(similar to Class D)

Counterfeit Overprint—similar to Type 1

(50h carmine, postage due, small number)

Illustration

1. Axis of T in POŠTA passes between the V and the E. Date 1919 is shifted to the left.
2. Vertical distance between the words POŠTA and ČESKOSLOVENSKA is 3.1 mm., between ČESKOSLOVENSKÁ and 1919 it is 3 mm.
3. Dots at O and E are missing.
4. Diagonal line between 1 and 9 is missing.
5. Both hook and dash are of different shape.
6. Second 9 of date is clipped.

Counterfeit Overprint—similar to Type II

(2h carmine, postage due, large number)

Illustration

1. Same as in genuine Type II.
2. Vertical distance between the words POŠTA and ČESKOSLOVENSKÁ is 2.8 mm., between ČESKOSLOVENSKÁ and 1919 it is 3 mm.
3. and 4. Both identifying marks are missing.
5. Hook and dash are different as are shapes of the letters.
6. Second 9 of date is clipped.
7. The first 1 has a longer upper part.
8. The angle of the overprint is different.

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Counterfeit Overprint

(similar to Class D)

Counterfeit Overprint—similar to Type III

(10h light red, newspaper, Mercury facing right)

Illustration

1. Axis of T in the word POŠTA passes through the left part of the letter V and between 1 and 9.

2. Vertical distance between words POŠTA and ČESKOSLOVENSKÁ is 2.7 mm., between ČESKOSLOVENSKÁ and 1919 it is 2.9 mm.
3. and 4. Both marks are missing.
5. Second 9 in date is clipped.
6. Individual letters are considerably different when compared with the genuine.
7. First 1 has a longer upper part.

Counterfeit overprint—similar to Type III
(20h carmine, postage due, large number)

Illustration

1. Axis of letter T in the word POŠTA passes through the left part of letter V and through the center of the number 9.
2. Vertical distances vary from the genuine overprint.
3. Identifying mark of letter O and small dot of letter E are missing.
4. Characteristic line between 1 and 9 in date is missing.
5. Second 9 in date is clipped.
6. The dash above A has an angular shape.
7. Upper part of first 1 is shorter.

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Class E

These Austrian stamps were overprinted with Types I and II of Class E
(Catalog numbers listed)

Postage due stamps of 1916 (large size)

1k blue

5k blue

10k blue

Genuine Type I

(10k postage due, large size, blue, Pofis #82)

Height of Overprint: 17.8 mm.

Width of Overprint: 27.5 mm.

Height of Letters: 4.0 mm.

Angle of Overprint: 55 degrees

Illustrations

Type I—Genuine

1. First K of ČESKOSLOVENSKÁ is slightly closed (dotted tops)
2. Second 9 is always full.

Type II—Genuine

1. First K in ČESKOSLOVENSKÁ is open (shown complete)
2. Second 9 in date is always full.

Page 108

Counterfeit Overprints

(Similar to Class E)

Illustrations on left

Counterfeit Overprint

(5k blue, postage due, large size)

1. Color of overprint is dull and translucent.
2. Corresponding letters, for example, T and A in POŠTA, are of a different shape.
3. Second 9 in date is clipped.

Counterfeit Overprint

(10k blue, postage due, large size)

Similar type of counterfeit on a used stamp. The color is applied more thickly. The angle of the overprint may be different in every counterfeit.

Page 109**Class F**

The following stamps received Class F overprint in black:

(Catalog numbers listed)

1f gray

2f yellow

3f orange

6f olive

50f red violet, blue paper

60f olive green, rose paper

70f brown, green paper

Hungarian semi-postal stamps of 1916-17

10+2f red

15h+2f violet

40f+2f light violet red

Hungarian postage stamps of 1916, reapers design—white number on colored background

10f red

a) with perfin G. St.

10f violet

Hungarian postage stamps of 1917-18 with reapers design—colored number on white background

2f yellow brown

3f red violet

5f green

6f green blue

10f red

a) legend—Magyar Posta

15f violet

20f brown

a) legend—Magyar Posta

25f blue

35f red brown

40f olive green

Hungarian postage stamps of 1918, Karl and Zita design

10f light red

20f dark brown

25f light blue

40f olive green

50f light violet

Hungarian special delivery of 1916

2h olive/red

Hungarian newspaper stamps 1908-13

2f orange

All issues are known with overprints Type I, II, III and IV. In the 5f denomination (Pofis #103) overprint D appears as an exception by virtue of a corrected overprint plate.

Editor's note: We urge all of you to acquire a copy of the outstanding book. Available for \$3.96 at the sources advertising in this issue.

(continued from page 126)

10k were overprinted and that only about 50 unused copies remain in existence. The number of trial overprints on stamps of other denominations is also small. The 10k blue is known to exist on covers, as are several of the trial overprint denominations.

Even though stamps were no longer needed for mail either with the Field Post system or for mail going into the Russian and international postal systems, a certain amount of agitation arose for the Field Post to issue stamps of its own. One of the main arguments used was that such an issue would publicize the existence of the Legion and its cause. Stamps also were later used to raise money for the Legion's Invalids Fund.

In the Spring of 1919, Lt. Novotny's assistant, a Mr. Cervenka, designed two proposed stamps (Figure 2) which were submitted to Lt. Col. Klecenda, but final approval to produce these stamps was never given. The first design was purposely kept extremely simple because the technical printing problems that would arise with complex designs might not be soluble locally. Several copies of this essay were prepared in Chelyabinsk, but only eight are known to exist today.

September, 1919, saw another set of essays prepared (Figure 3) which led to the first and only stamps designed and printed by the Legion. All five designs of these proposed stamps were prepared together on one plate. They were printed in red, blue, green, purple, and brown. Only one of these essays, the silhouette of a soldier on guard, was accepted as a basis for a later issued stamp. These essays were lithographed in Irkutsk.

In addition to the 1R silhouette design in brown, the "silhouette issue" contains a red 25 kopek showing an urn with the Irkutsk cathedral as back-

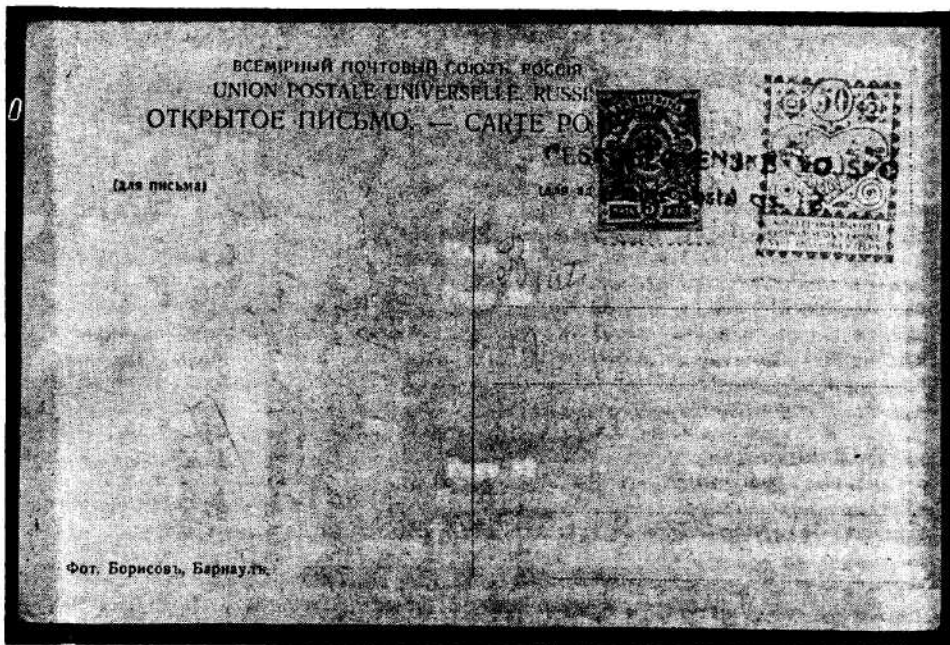


Figure 8. Another example of two-line cancellation, this time applied across two adhesive stamps.

ground, and a light green 50 kopek stamp depicting the armored train "Orlik." (Figure 4). The designers of this set were Karel Cila, Jaroslav Maly and J. Svec. The design was etched in stone and lithographed by the Makuzin and Posochina Printing Plant in Irkutsk. All in all, six master dies were used for each stamp. They repeated in such a way that almost any block of six will contain each of the six types. In each value of this series, errors appear consistently on every sheet—at least in a significant part of the issue.

The first imperforated stamps were delivered to the Field Post in December, 1919, and in January, 1920, a limited number of the stamps were perforated 11½. The balance of the sheets were, after a time, sent to Prague, where a white, smooth gum, as contrasted to the yellowish, cracked gum used in Irkutsk, was applied and the sheets were perforated 13¾. Stamps with this perforation were never used on letters from Siberia.

The last set of the stamps, usually classed under the Siberian Field Post, were actually conceived, designed, and produced in Prague, and is commonly called the "lion issue." It was designed jointly by J. Rossler-Orovsky and a Lt. Rybak and printed and "died out" by K. Kolman. The embossing process that formed the raised center of the stamps also cut them out of the pre-gummed paper on which the printing was done. The stamps were all printed in pairs.

There are two types of these stamps, their most obvious distinguishing feature being the size of the sabre handle on the left side. Type I has a smaller handle than type II (Figure 5). These sets were sent to Siberia in two shipments, one of which was badly damaged by wet and cold. They arrived in 1920. Most of the stamps in good condition were overprinted in Irkutsk, the seat of the Field Post at that time, with 1920 in black and denomination numbers 2, 3, 5, 10, 15, 25, 35, 50k and 1R. Some errors in overprinting are known, such as a missing date, double overprint (see Figure 6), inverted overprints, and so on. Genuinely used letters franked with these

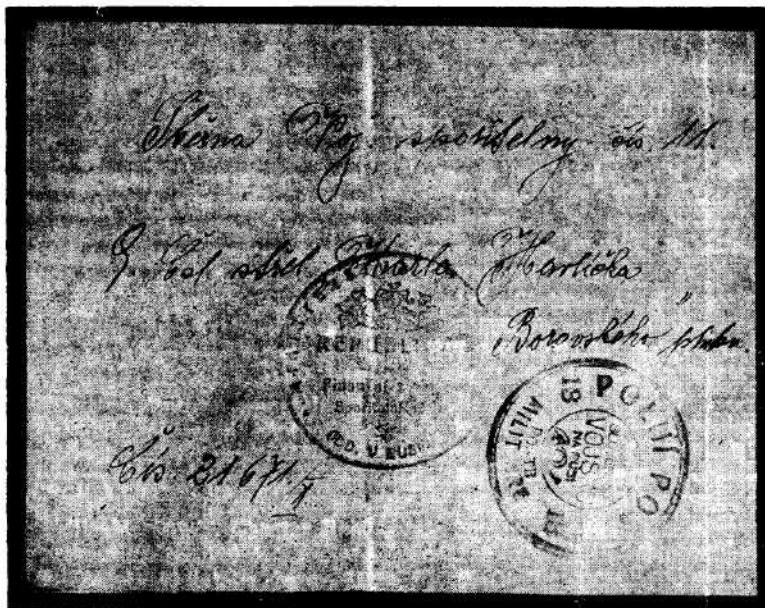


Figure 9. Cover bearing two postal markings and one unit marking.

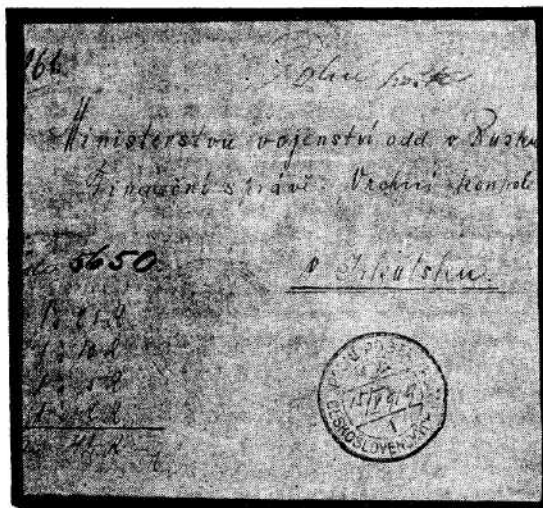


Figure 10. A money letter bearing both unit and postal markings.

stamps are extremely rare.

Three printings were made of these stamps. The first printing has a steel blue color with a bright red center, while the second printing turned out gray-blue with a dull, almost orange center. A third printing from the original plates was later made in Prague and can be recognized by the bright



Figure 11. One of many semi-official postal markings, usually prepared by units for their own use.

red center with heavy red inking at the top. Only stamps of the first two printings were sent to Siberia. The third printing took place after the Field Post returned to Prague and must be considered strictly philatelic and speculative in character.

Since we do not have the space here to go into all the details of various cancellations used by the Siberian Field Post, we shall let the accompanying illustrations do most of the talking. But a few general remarks are in order. There are several classes of markings that appear on covers passing through the Field Post. These can be broken down as official postal markings, unofficial or unit postal markings, and unit markings used as unit identifying stamps but also at times on covers and packages as postal markings. Markings from all three categories were used to cancel as well as backstamp mail received.

The cancellation appearing on the Russian postal card in Figure 7 and on the card bearing mixed franking in Figure 8 was produced by a rubberstamp and widely used by the Field Post offices. There is some variation in size of the cancellation stamp used by various offices. The following post office numbers appear in this 2-line cancellation: 1, 1A, 1B, 2, 2A, 2B, 3, 3A, 4, 4A, 4B, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13 and 16.

The letter in Figure 9 carries two postal markings and one unit marking. The round postal markings are 39mm in diameter and also were made by rubber stamps. The Field Post numbers 1 through 15 appear on these round cancellations. The numbers were pasted onto the rubber stamps and some of them later fell off, which accounts for the missing numbers sometimes found in these cancellations. This large, round cancellation and the straight line cancellation discussed above are perhaps the Siberian Field Post markings most commonly seen.

Figure 10 shows a money letter bearing both unit and postal markings. The clear postal marking in the bottom right hand corner was made by a metal handstamp and used first in Ekaterinenberg and later in Tomsk. The date-

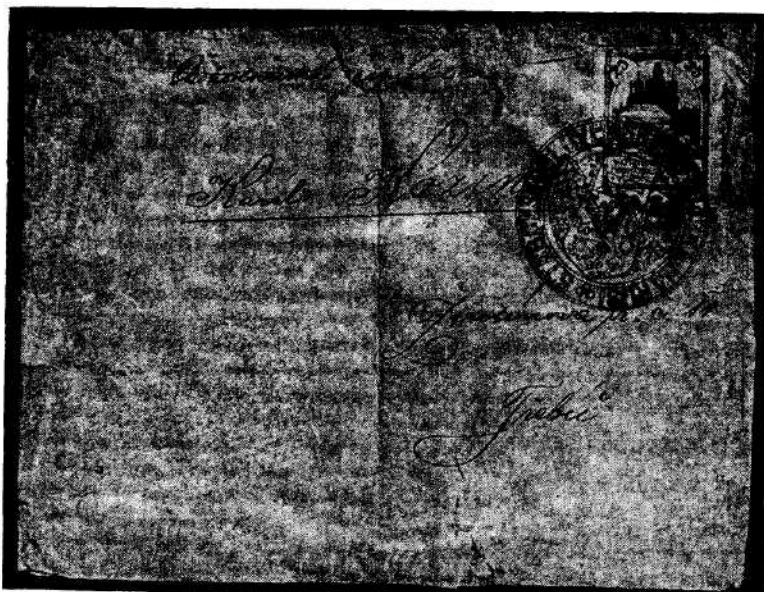


Figure 12. Military unit identification handstamp used as a cancellation.

line is blank on the handstamp so that postal clerks could write in the date—which they often neglected to do.

One of the many semi-official postal markings known is illustrated in Figure 11. These markings were usually prepared by units for their own use and their postal purpose is usually indicated in the text. This particular cancellation was used rather late and was taken back to Czechoslovakia when the unit returned. This card was sent from Norfolk, Virginia, to Czechoslovakia by a Legionnaire on his way home.

The letter in Figure 12 and the postal card in Figure 13 both carry military unit identification hand stamps used as postal cancellations. Such use of unit markings is fairly common on Siberian materials, but do not often appear as cancellations of stamps as in Figure 12. It should be emphasized once more that the markings shown constitute only a random sample of the many that are known to exist.

In closing, a word of caution on fakes may be in order. Counterfeits of ALL the Siberian Field Post stamps are known to have been produced. The most commonly counterfeited was the lion series, and many fakes of this issue are found in collections. Counterfeiting was not restricted to stamps, but also some complete covers were manufactured, while others were altered in an attempt to make them more valuable. Extreme care should be taken when purchasing this material.

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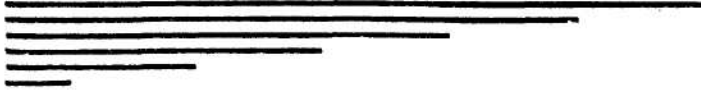
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