



THE CZECHOSLOVAK SPECIALIST



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THE MONETARY REFORM OF 1953

by Karel Holoubek

trans. by Peter Z. Kleskovic

Toward the end of May 2003, the communications media reported on the reform that took place on June 1, 1953, and its impact on the currency, bank deposits, general standard of living of the population, as well as the fate of the various individuals.

This reform in former Czechoslovakia took place some 50 years ago and left many keepsakes not only for postal historians but also for collectors. These documents of postal service operations are always very sought after; however, they are not very often seen in the philatelic market place. From the philatelic point of view, they are interesting material. While they are mostly business correspondence or official mail, one can also find personal correspondence as well as some items of strictly philatelic production. The implementation of this monetary reform was successfully kept a secret until the last moment. Well known is the declaration of then President Antonín Zápotocký who, even on May 30th at a conference in Plzeň, assured the workers, denied all, and denounced any reports of the planned reform as rumours spread by hostile elements.

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Web Site: www.czechoslovakphilately.com

Editorial Staff

Managing Editor: Ludvik Svoboda, 4766 South Helena Way, Aurora, CO 80015

e-mail: LouSvoboda@comcast.net FAX: 303-680-7118

Distribution Editor: Ludvik Svoboda, (address above)

Assistant Editor: Gerald van Zanten, P.O. Box 159, Napier, New Zealand

Foreign Editor: Henry Hahn, 2936 Rosemoor Lane, Fairfax, VA 22031

Advertising Manager: Ludvik Svoboda (address above)

Elected Officers

President: R. T. Cossaboom, Jr., Box 4124, Prescott, AZ 86302

Vice President: Richard Palaschak, 4050 Carbury Ct., Chantilly, VA 20151-2613

Secretary: Peter Kleskovic, 27 Jay Street, Succasunna, NJ 07876

Treasurer: Edwin Lehecka, 217 Hazel Ave., Westfield, NJ 07090

Appointed Officers

Book Sales: Savoy Horvath, S8207 US Hwy 61, Readstown, WI 54652

Circuit Man.: H. Alan Hoover, 6070 Poplar Spring Dr., Norcross, GA 30092

Expertizing Chrm.: Ludvik Svoboda, 4766 South Helena Way, Aurora, CO 80015

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CZECHOSLOVAK RESISTANCE IN ITALY 1944-45

by Piero Santangelo
trans. by Peter Z. Kleskovic

Government Troops Situated in Italy in 1944/45

The Army of the Czechoslovak Republic was dissolved upon the German occupation on March 15, 1939, when Hitler established the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia.

On July 25, 1939, upon the request of Czech President Hácha, Government Troop Units were established with the intent to help the police. These troops, mainly consisting of professional soldiers or volunteers, were supposed to secure tranquility, to control railroad transportation, and to help in case of a natural disaster.

These troops consisted of about 7,000 soldiers and 200 higher ranks; they were divided into 12 battalions. They were not part of the German Army (Wehrmacht) and due to political reasons, they were left for disposition to the Government of the Protectorate.

The organization and location of the troops in Bohemia and Moravia

The General Inspectorate in Prague

Prague Inspectorate

1. Battalion Prague
2. Battalion Rakovník (Rakonitz) and Terežín (Theresienstadt)
3. Battalion Písek with some detachments in Týn nad Vltavou
4. Battalion Benešov (Beneschau)

Hradec Králové Inspectorate

5. Battalion Kutná Hora (Kuttenberg) with some detachments in Čáslav
6. Battalion Hradec Králové
7. Battalion Josefov
8. Battalion Turnov

Brno Inspectorate

9. [Battalion] Vysoké Myto (Hohenmauth)
10. [Battalion] Bučovice
11. [Battalion] Kostelec nad Orlicí
12. [Battalion] Lipník nad Bečvou

Every battalion consisted of cavalry, a music band, and technical detachments (reconnaissance, telecommunications)(Fig. 1).

The individual offices or departments, as well as the soldiers, did not have the advantage of postage-free mail (franchigia postale). For their correspondence they used the postage stamps of Bohemia and Moravia.

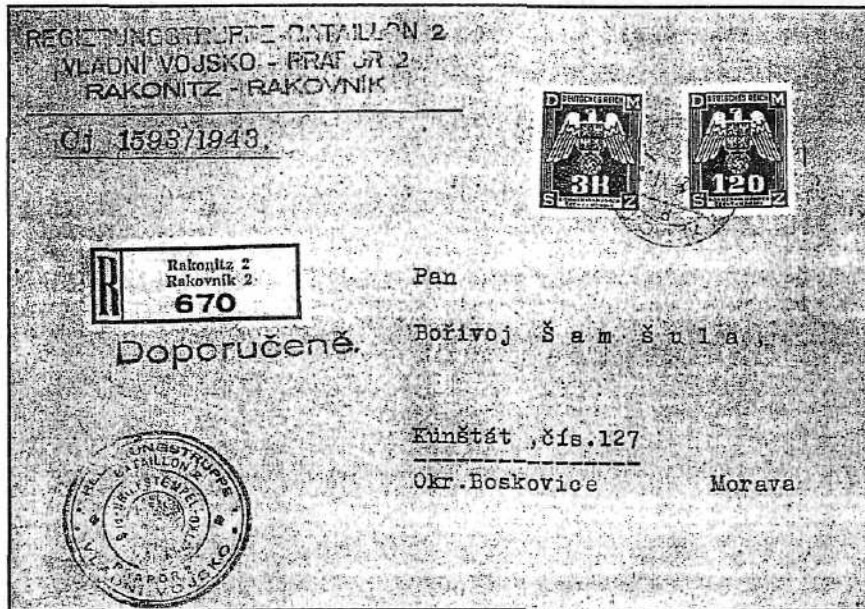


Figure 1: Registered letter from the 2nd Battalion, Rakovník, to Boskovice dated 21 September 1943.

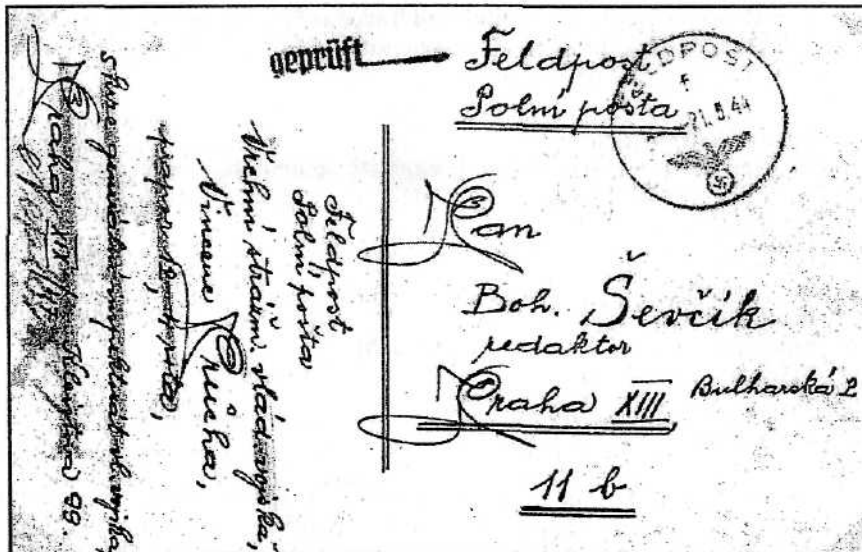


Figure 2: Postcard sent through the Field Post on May 21, 1944, to Prague. Notice that the address of the Government Troops, which the sender wrote as Kleitova 99, has been crossed out by pencil as "neplatná" (invalid). This is most likely one of the earliest known dates for any mail from Italy.

Service Duty in Italy

Regardless of the fact that the Government Troops were not directly subordinated to the command of the Wehrmacht, the German Army decided that individual detachments would be transferred to Italy in May 1944 (Fig. 2).

From May 20th to 29th about 5,000 soldiers from Bohemia and Moravia traveled to Northern Italy through Plzeň, Munich, Brenner, Trento and Verona (Fig. 3). The battalions -- except for the 1st Battalion which remained in Prague -- were divided up among the individual cities for training purposes.

The locations of battalions during the training period:

ZGI - General Inspectorate - Verona
 ZI - I - Service Inspectorate - Bologna
 ZI - II - Service Inspectorate - Varese
 ZI - III - Service Inspectorate - Torino

2nd & 3rd Battalions - Cremona
 4th & 5th Battalions - Bologna
 6th Battalion - Cremona
 7th Battalion - Alba
 8th & 11th - Fossano
 9th & 12th - Savigliano
 10th Battalion - Aosta

For the members of these Government Units writing home was made impossible by the closure of the field post for a 6 week period.

After six weeks of training the individual detachments were relocated



Figure 3: A postcard sent from Borghetto all' Adige "in franchigia" (postage free) to Bohemia. The sender is a soldier in transit on his trip to Italy. The censor cancel [Ad] is from Munich, Germany.

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according to the orders issued May 31, 1944, by the Supreme Commander of the SS, Obergruppen-führer Wolf, who had directed the regrouping of the Government Units for security reasons. ZI - II along with Battalions 6, 7, 8 and 11 were subordinated to the Commander of the SS and Police for the Region of "Upper Italy -- West". ZI - I along with Battalions 2, 3, 4, and 5, and ZI - III along with Battalions 9, 10, and 12 were subordinated to the Commander of the SS and Police for the Region of "Upper Italy -- Center".

The Regional Commanders of the SS were authorized to order specific assignments [for the Government Troop Units] through the German liaison officers at each Inspectorate. However, in practice, on the basis of the direct orders by the Regional Commanders of the SS, the battalions were transferred from their resident areas to new areas of assignment without any notification to the Inspectorate or the ZGI.

The ZGI was transferred from Verona to Chiari, where the German liaison staff was also located. The organizational changes were introduced step by step between June 8 and June 29, 1944. On September 14, 1944, the Germans first ordered the concentration of Battalions 2, 3, 4, 5, and 10, and then on September 24, 1944, all battalions of the Government Troops were set up, as follows:

	<u>Effective Date</u>
2 nd Battalion in Padua	Sept. 29
3 rd Battalion in Padua	Sept. 30
4 th Battalion in Monselice	Oct. 2
5 th Battalion in Este	Sept. 28
6 th Battalion in Milano	Sept. 26
7 th Battalion in Milano	Sept. 27
8 th Battalion in Milano	Sept. 26
9 th Battalion in Vicenze -- Castle Dueville	Sept. 30
10 th Battalion in San Dona' di Piave	Sept. 30
11 th Battalion in Brescia	Sept. 30
12 th Battalion in Lodi	Oct. 1



Figure 4: Picture of soldiers in Italy



Figure 5: Decorations on the transportation train, Beautiful Bohemia, My Bohemia . . . (A Czech song)

Because of the many losses caused by deserters who were escaping to neutral Switzerland or entering partisan units -- and there were many of these -- the German Command ordered new regulations on October 2, 1944. The Supreme Commander of the SS, in coordination with the Minister of State for Bohemia and Moravia, ordered that the Government Troops should also be used in the work on fortifications.

The Supreme Commander of the SS and Police in Italy ordered:

1. The Government Troops will be used in building the defensive fortifications in the region of the Supreme Commissioner, the Province Leader, Rainer.
2. The instructions in the construction areas will be issued by SS Gruppenführer Globecnik.
3. All weapons and their associated ammunition will be taken away from Government Troops and will be stored according to the directives of the command general of the German liaison staff -- officers will be allowed to keep their pistols, non-commissioned officers and soldiers their bayonets.
4. and 5. After their disarmament, Battalions 6, 7, 8, 11, and 12 will be transferred by railroad under the supervision of SS commanders:

Battalion 6 and 7	to Mestre
Battalion 8	to Lonigo
Battalion 11	to Vicenza
Battalion 12	to San Dona di Piave
6. Lodging of the individual battalions will be the responsibility of SS Brigadeführer Herrmann.
7. After the completion of the transfer of the current General Inspectorate and Inspectorates II and III, the command over the worker battalions of the Government Troops will be taken over by the current Inspectorate I.

During the disarmament process the cars, trucks, motorcycles and bicycles were taken away from the Government Troops -- basically all of the material they brought with them from the Protectorate. The command staff was dissolved, and on October 15, 1944, was sent back to Prague. Only Inspectorate I remained as "The highest designated command staff of the Government Troops" with General Pražák as its Commander. As further developments will show, the Germans were not really interested in whether the Czech soldiers worked on fortifications. They were assigned to militarily unimportant work in Pade, while the real fortification zone remained unfinished due to a shortage of workers (Fig. 4, 5).

With the addition of postal detachments, the services of the German Field Post were allowed to be used along with generally postage free privileges. The previously described scheme of locations -- to which the individual battalions were assigned -- should not be considered as definitive ones, because mobility was one of the advantages of these units.

ZGI

The General Inspectorate was assigned Field Post #43 875. The office was established on June 24, 1944, and then closed on November 17, 1944. The command was originally located in Verona, but later it was moved to Chiari/Brescia until the end of the war.

ZI - I

This Inspectorate was assigned Field Post #47 006, which was established on

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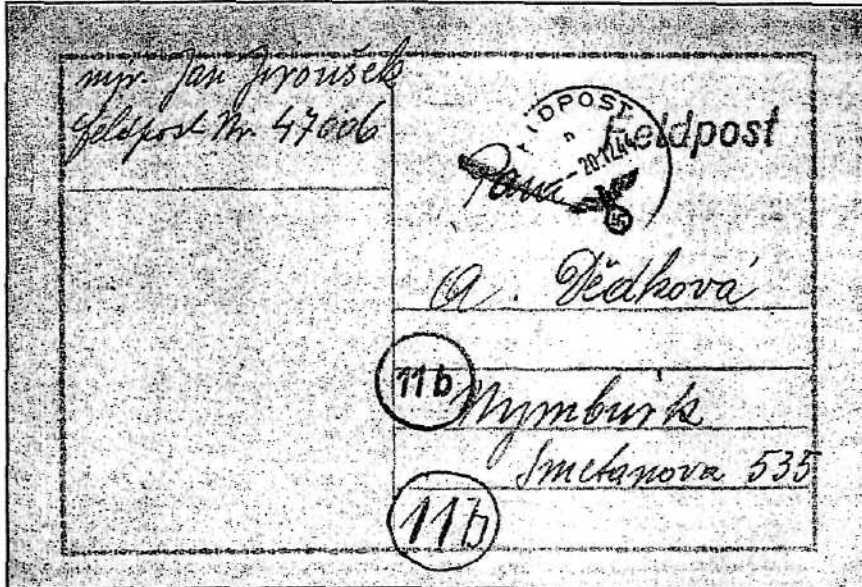


Figure 6: Postcard dated December 20, 1944, from Field Post #47 006.
The sender was in the I. Inspectorate.

June 24, 1944, then temporarily closed on January 16, 1945, and again reopened on February 28, 1945. It was originally located in Bologna, and then later in Villa Bartolomea (Verona)(Fig. 6).

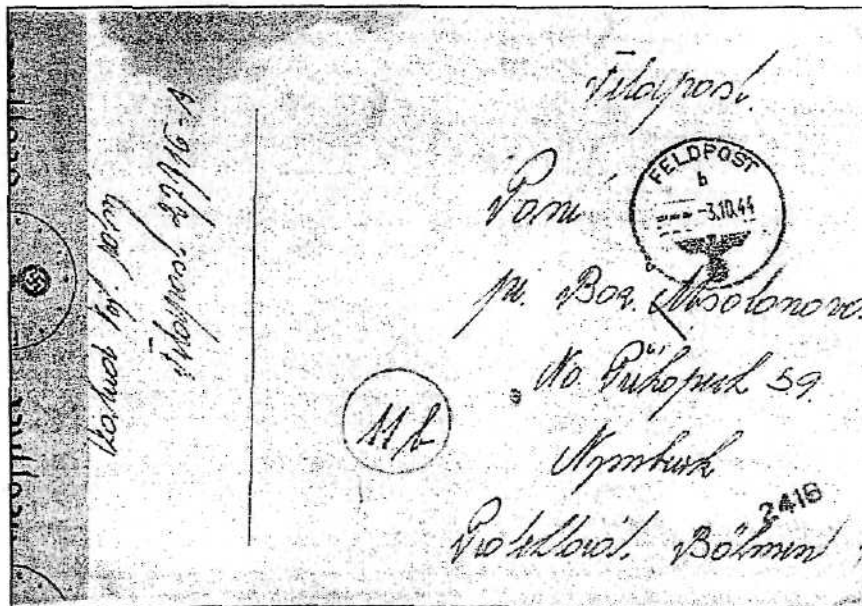


Figure 7: Letter dated October 3, 1944, Field Post #27 716-A,
corresponding to a company of the 2nd Battalion.

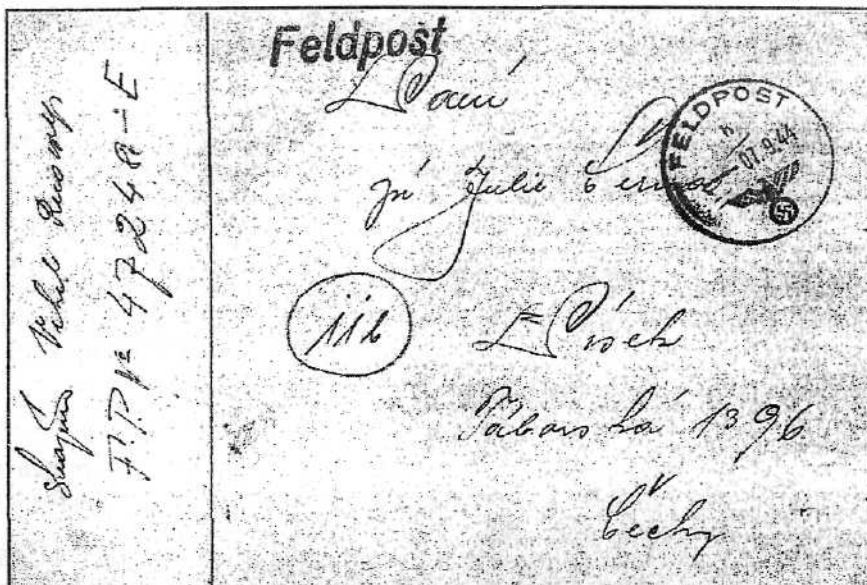


Figure 8: Letter dated September 7, 1944, Field Post #47 248-E, corresponding to the 4th Company of the 3rd Battalion.

ZI - II

This Inspectorate was assigned Field Post #16 639, which was opened on June 24, 1944, then temporarily closed on December 27, 1944, and again reopened

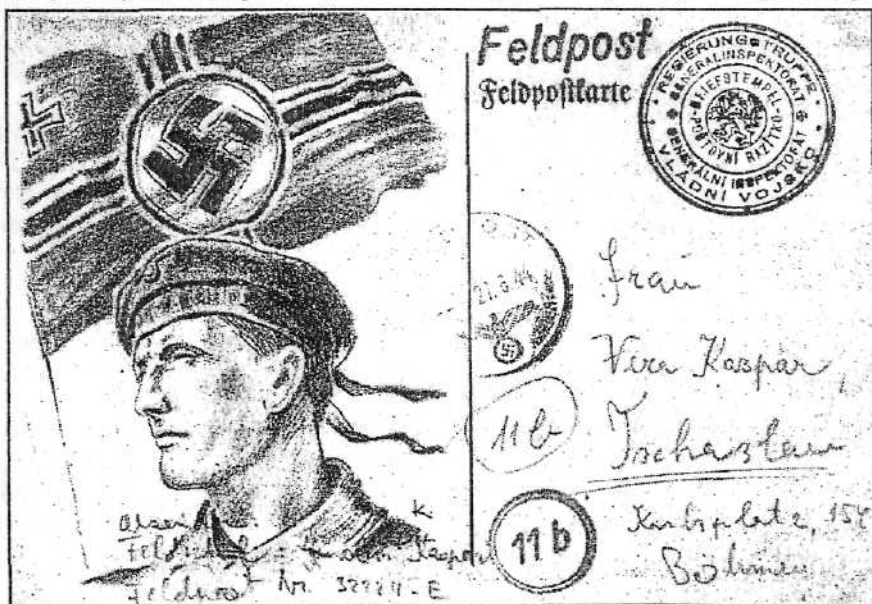


Figure 9: Postcard of June 27, 1944, with Field Post #32 224-E, corresponding to the 4th Company of the 4th Battalion. It includes a rubber stamp cancellation of the General Inspectorate in Italy.

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on February 28, 1945. It was originally located in Varese, and then from October 1944 it was incorporated into Inspectorate I.

ZI - III

This Inspectorate was assigned Field Post #45 298. It was established on June 24, 1944 and closed on November 17, 1944. It was originally located in Torino, and later in Torbola on Lake Garda (Lago di Garda) -- 10 km from Brescia. Then from October 1944 it was incorporated into Inspectorate I.

Office for Cooperation with the Wehrmacht

This Office was allocated the Field Post #38 690. It was opened on July 10, 1944, then temporarily closed on December 23, 1944, and again reopened on February 11, 1945. This office was always located at the general headquarters in Chiari (Brescia).

2nd Battalion

The Second Battalion was assigned the Field Post #27 716, which was established on June 24, 1944, then temporarily closed on December 27, 1944, and again reopened on February 28, 1945.

The Battalion was originally located in Cremona, then from July 21, 1944, along the railroad line Vicenza - Treviso - Conegliano - Udine - Rovigo - Padua - Mestre.

From September 1944 the command was transferred to Padua, and from February 1945 until the end of the war in Peschiera, along the entire length of the river Adige to Mezzolombardo (Trento), Bolzano and Salorno (Fig. 7).

3rd Battalion

The Third Battalion was assigned the Field Post #47 248. The office was established on June 24, 1944, again temporarily closed on December 27, 1944, and then reopened February 9, 1945.

The Battalion was originally located in Cremona, and from July in Molinella (Bologna) and along the railroad line Piacenza - Parma - Rimini - Forli. From September 1944 it was in Padua, in October in Garofalo and Raccano in Rovigo province; from February 1945 again in Rivoli (Verona) and Avio a Ala by Trentino (Fig. 8).

4th Battalion

The Field Post #32 224 was assigned to the Fourth Battalion. The office was opened on June 24, 1944, then temporarily closed on December 27, 1944, and again reopened on February 28, 1945.

The Battalion was originally located in Bologna, however, from July 1944 it was already along the railroad line in Ostiglia (Mantua) - Cremona and along the river Pád (Po). From September 1944, it was again in Monselice in Padua's territory and in November in the Rovigo zone. From February 1945, it stayed along the highway from Trento to Bolzano (Fig. 9).

5th Battalion

The Field Post #19 745 was assigned to the Fifth Battalion. The office was

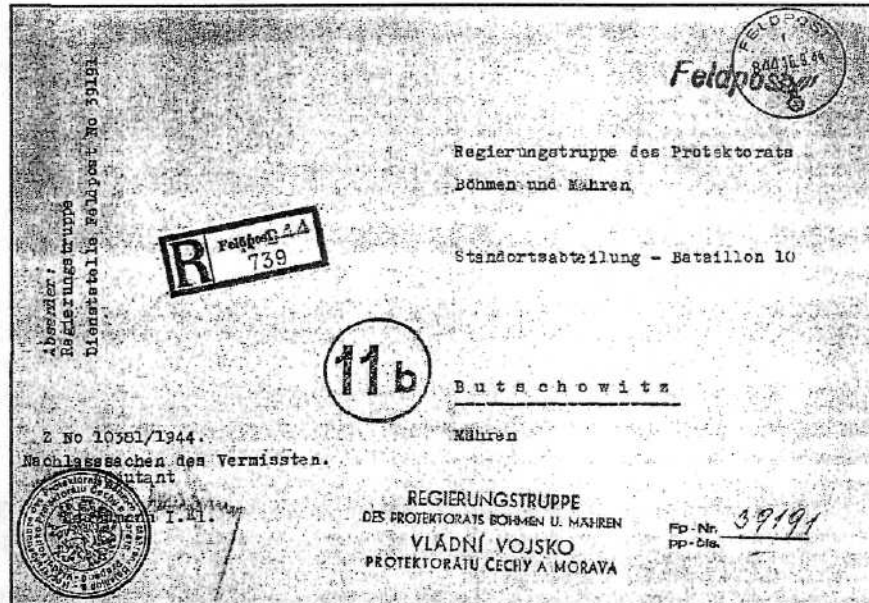


Figure 10: An registered official letter of September 16, 1944, Field Post 39 191, corresponding to the 6th Battalion in Milano. The letter was sent by way of Field Post #731, Kenn. #844, with official stamps of the General Inspectorate in Italy. opened June 24, 1944, temporarily closed on December 27, 1944, and again reopened on February 28, 1945.



Figure 11: Postcard from Josefstadt (Josefov) of September 11, 1944, mailed to Field Post #29 019B. The addressee is a soldier belonging to the 1st Company of the 7th Battalion.

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This Battalion was originally located in Bologna, then from July 1944 in Reggio (Reggio Emilia) and along the railroad line Bologna - Parma. From September 1944, it was in Este, the Padua Province, and from February 1945 in Rovereto and Valle Lagarina.

6th Battalion

The Field Post #39 191 was assigned to the Sixth Battalion. Their office was established on June 26, 1944, subsequently closed on December 27, 1944, and again reopened on February 28, 1945.

The Battalion was originally located in Cremona and from July 1944 it went along the railroad line Milano - Arona - Baveno and Domodossola. From September 1944, it was located in Porabiago (Milano), and from October -- jointly with the 7th Battalion -- in Mestre (Fig. 10). From February 1945, it was in Pescantina, Bussolengo, along the river Adige from Verona to Trento.

7th Battalion

The Field Post #29 019 was assigned to the Seventh Battalion. Their office was opened on June 24, 1944, then closed on December 27, 1944, and again reopened on February 25, 1945.

The Battalion was originally located in Alba (Piemonte), then from June 1944 in Aosta, from September 1944 in Lacchiarella (17 km from Milano)(Fig. 11) and in October 1944 -- jointly with the 6th Battalion -- in Mestre. In November 1944, it was located in Crespino (Rovigo), from February 1945, in the eastern part of the Garda Lake and later in Isera, Deviano and Piazzo in Trentino.

8th Battalion

The 8th Battalion was assigned the Field Post #22 182. The office was established on June 24, 1944; it was temporarily closed on December 27, 1944, and reopened on February 8, 1945.

The unit was originally located in Fossano, then from July 1944 in Cirie and in Torino (Fig. 12). In October 1944, it came to Milano, later to Lonigo (Vicenza), in November in river Pád (Po) zone, and from February 1945 in Verona and Rivoli.

9th Battalion

The Field Post #47 953 was assigned to the Ninth Battalion. The office was established on June 24, 1944, then temporarily closed on December 27, 1944, and again reopened on February 8, 1945.

The Battalion was originally located in Savigliano (Fig. 13), then from July 21, 1944, along the railroad line Verona - Ala - Brennero. From October 1944, it was in Vicenza - Dueville castle -- and in Camisano. From November 1944, it went along the river Pád (Po), in Ficarolo and Solara locations. From March and April 1945 it ended along the river Adige up to Trento and Mezzacorona.

10th Battalion

The Field Post #37 787 was assigned to the Tenth Battalion. Their office was opened on June 24, 1944, then closed on December 27, 1944, and again reopened on February 28, 1945.

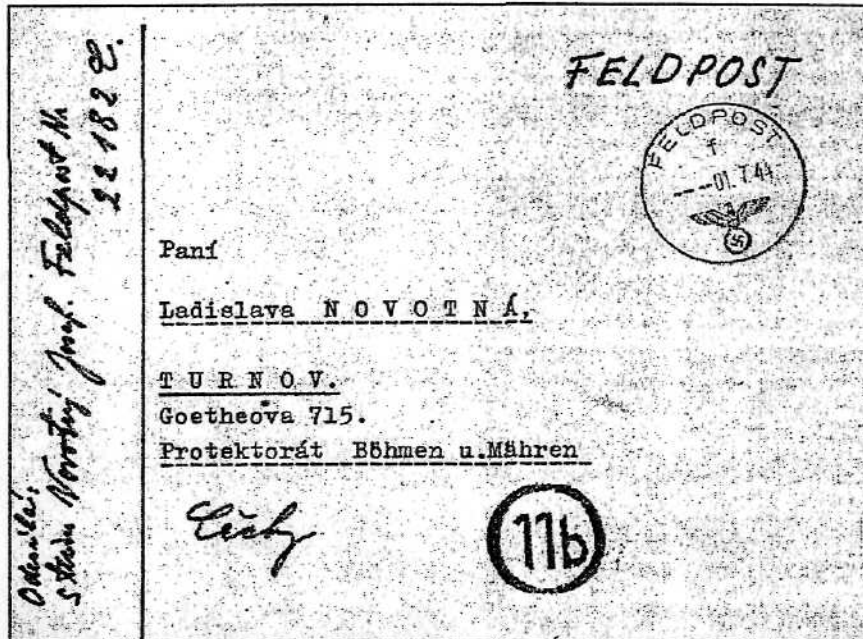


Figure 12: Letter dated July 1, 1944, Field Post #22 182 C, corresponding to the 2nd Company of the 8th Battalion.



Figure 13: Postcard dated July 4, 1944, Field Post #47 953 A, corresponding to the company attached to the command of the 9th Battalion.
 [Pre-printed German text: "Also, if we should perish, Germany must go on. Also, if the Fate should individually hit us, Germany must live. Also, if the Misery and Worries come upon us: Germany must exist despite the Worries and the Misery." Adolf Hitler]

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Figure 14: Letter dated June 27, 1944, Field Post #37 787 D, corresponding to the 3rd Company of the 10th Battalion.

The Battalion was originally located in Aosta (Fig. 14) and from July 21, 1944, it was positioned along the railroad line Verona - Bologna. Further, from

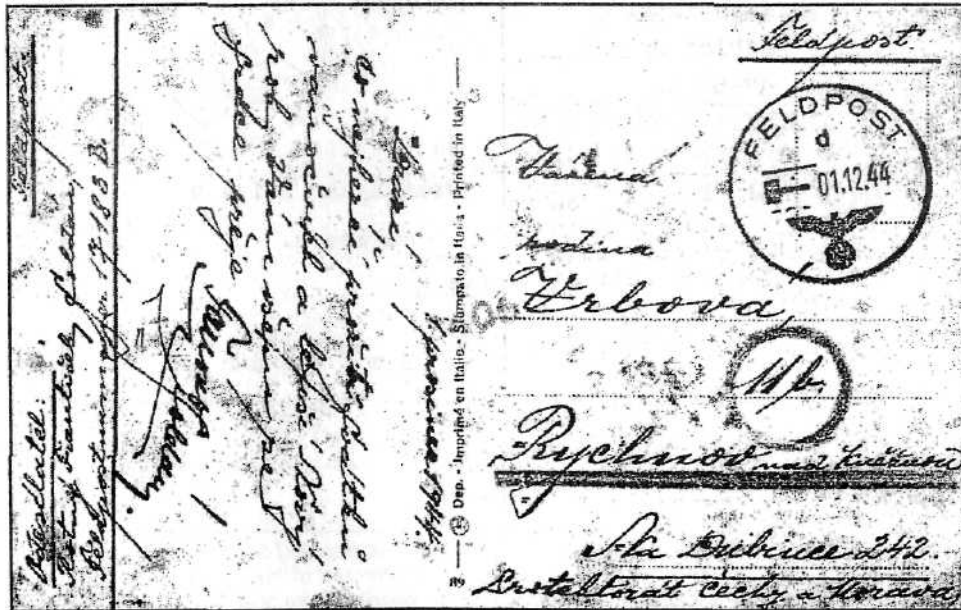


Figure 15: Postcard dated December 1, 1944, Field Post #17 183 B, corresponding to the 1st Company of the 11th Battalion.

September 30, 1944, they were in San Dona di Piave to control the railroad up to Trieste. Then from November 1944 they were in the province of Rovigo and from February 1945 in Fiesso Umbertino, Lendinara, along the river Adige in Peschiera (Verona) and in Mattarello (Trento).

11th Battalion

The Field Post #17 183 was allocated to the Eleventh Battalion. Their office was opened on June 24, 1944, then temporarily closed on December 27, 1944, and again reopened on February 28, 1945.

The Battalion was originally located in Fossano, then from July 21, 1944, in Piemonte Region -- in Avigliana and Susa, then in Lombardia Region -- in Treviglio and in Brescia. In October 1944, they were in Vicenza, in November 1944, along the river Pád (Po), in the territory of the city of Rovigo (Fig. 15), and from February 1945, in Ostiglia (Mantua), Pescantina (Verona), Avio, Chizzola and in Nago by Trentino.

(To Be Continued)



VALUABLE "APOST" LABELS

by RNDr Miroslav Vostatek
trans. by Henry Hahn

Not much has been published on Czech APOST labels thus far. In 2004 it will be ten years since their introduction. In the Czech Republic collectors are demonstrating significant interest in these labels. Even catalogues, such as POFIS, are taking note of them. The Czech Post Office has introduced the APOST labels into virtually all post offices. There also exist commemorative labels, and interest in these among collectors is plentiful. Specialists even publish a journal dealing with this subject, and 250 copies are printed. As in philately, even here are peculiarities. For the post office in Lanškroun in Eastern Bohemia,

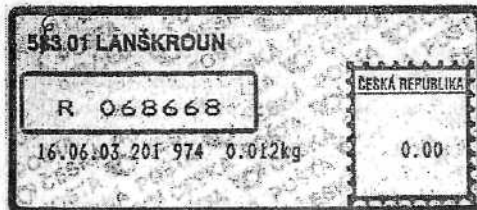


Fig. 1

the label was issued with an incorrect zip code number. Instead of the number 563 01, the number was incorrectly listed as 583 01 (Fig. 1). And thus the first "rarity" was born.

Just one remark for stamp collectors: on stamp number 64 there is pictured a famous personality, i.e. the naturalist and physician Johannes Marcus Marci (1595-1667) who happened to be born in Lanškroun. A commemorative plaque is placed there in his honor.

The Monetary Reform of 1953 (Cont. from Page 1)

Besides the exchange of currency the reform also involved the invalidation of the values on the postage stamps printed prior to that date as well as the stamps already printed on postal stationery. This postal stationery could be used in the future if it carried the new postage stamps. In this way they created stamps with "the old currency" [*staré měny*]. This term then became established and to this day remains in use in the philatelic language.

The postal reform consisted of two factors:

-- One of these was the newly established postal rates, which changed from the originals by a ratio of 5:1. Thus, a normal letter with the 3 Kčs rate, using the new conversion ratio, would cost 60 heller.

-- The second factor was the recalculation of the franked value of the stamps with "the old currency", which were revalued in a ratio of 50:1. Thus, it was necessary to apply 30 Kčs of stamps of the old rate to provide postage of 60h.

These two factors obviously also applied to all other types of postal shipments. Thus, if the rate for a local letter before June 1 was 2 Kčs, then the recalculated franking was 40h, and according to the second factor, it was necessary to apply 20 Kčs of the old rate stamps. Based upon this same scheme, all other postal rates were similarly to be recalculated. The calculation of the international postal rates being directed by the rules of the UPU International Convention that is tied to the Golden Franc, these new rates were calculated using a different method.

Because the monetary reform was successfully kept a secret, the postal clerks initially had no instructions how to proceed during the early hours of this difficult day. This applied to the postal employees working the night shift, who were the first ones to encounter the postal shipments which were not correctly franked according to the newly announced reform. Accordingly, in most cases, their decisions were based upon their own judgement, or they applied what they knew from their past experience. In these first situations they were largely dealing with letters that were deposited in mailboxes. In addition, these could have also been letters deposited in the mailboxes in the early hours of June 1, not just those deposited the day before. This depended on the local circumstances of the organization that made the mailbox pickups. Due to this procedural ambiguity, when the clerks had no instructions on how to deal with this situation, there came into existence two kinds of shipments that were not charged with an additional fee. One kind was canceled with a date of 5.31.53 at 24 PM, and the second with a date of 6.1.53 at early morning hours. On the other hand, there were also shipments that were charged with the additional postage. Thus we have a break point between May 31 and June 1, 1953. Collectors who specialize in this period agree that the 12th hour of June 1 is the determining factor. So it can be assumed that at that time the postal clerks already had some instructions how to deal with this situation. One can thus also assume that at that time the instructions were not in writing, even though the resolution of the Party and the Government implementing the monetary reform -- naturally published later -- was dated May 30, 1953.

Another interesting time frame is the period from June 1 to June 10. At that

time, many post offices had already introduced books [*ledgers*] called *Paid-Up in Cash*. The indication of their use could vary from post office to post office, whether handwritten or by the use of various rubber stamps. Also, perhaps they were enlightened as to the use of the industry's postage meters. Only a limited number of shipments thus franked were preserved. Who saved envelopes having postage meters? In this period it is possible that the use of postage due stamps appeared [*more on this later*]. This is why such letters are among those of most interest.

Remaining for us to consider is the period to June 18 or 19 of 1953. On June 18th all of the stamps of "the old currency" became invalid. It is possible that mail exists that was franked using the old stamps and then canceled on June 19th. Again we can use my assumption, as I stated above, that we are dealing with mail that was picked up from mailboxes. Mail that was franked by cash on the 18th could be just the same as that from the 19th or even later days. It is thus possible to doubt that on the 19th all of the post offices had available the new stamps corresponding with the new rate schedules, and that they had enough of them such that they did not have to be frugal with them.

Stamps and the monetary reform of 1953

According to government regulations the old postage stamps were supposed to be valid until the Ministry issued new stamps with values in the new currency. The regulation gave the Ministry of Communications an implementation date of June 30th. Of course you certainly know that the new stamps were already issued on June 18th. That is why that is the day of consequence when all of the temporary measures were canceled, and also from then all mail was to be franked with the new currency stamps. Also, you were not allowed to mix the old and new kind of stamps. The quoted regulation assumed that the new stamps would be printed using recess print with the portrait of Antonín Zápotocký in the values of 20, 30, and 60 heller -- they were to be used on printed matter, postcards, and regular letters. In addition, there was to be a stamp with the portrait of Josef Slavík produced by recess printing with a 75h value to be used for foreign mail; a recess printed 1 Kčs stamp with the portrait of Klement Gottwald for the additional postage for registered letters; and a recess printed 1.60 Kčs stamp with the portrait of Leos Janáček as a single-stamp franking for registered letters. Actually however, things turned out a little differently -- the Ministry proceeded quickly. In fact, they expeditiously issued 4 regular stamps (Pof. 732-735) by recess printing in values of 15h, 20h, 1 Kčs, and 3 Kčs, further then [*sic*] 20h and 3 Kčs, and 15h and 1 Kčs, all with the portrait of Klement Gottwald. Recess printed stamps having the portrait of Antonín Zápotocký came out with values of 30h and 60h (Pof. 736-737). The recess printed 75h and 1.60 Kčs stamps with Slavík and Janáček -- which had already been engraved for issue but with other values -- only had to have their values changed for this different use. The originally planned values were 1.50 Kčs for Janáček and 4 Kčs for Slavík. This is an overview of the stamps that were valid right after the currency reform. Other stamps were issued later on.

It is interesting to note that the date of issue for the 60h letter card was stated as June 16, 1953, while the regular postal card with the value of 30h was issued on August 1, 1953. But for us the stamps of interest are those that were

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valid for use at the moment of the announcement of the reform. There were well over 200 of them (definitive, commemorative, and air mail), and we find them preserved in collections of covers from that period. Anyone can certainly discover which stamps these were via the catalogs. Right from the beginning the Ministry rejected the possibility of overprinting the old stamps.

The previously mentioned postage due stamps had a privileged status. These could not be in the hands of private persons. They were found only at post offices and were for official use. Their use on correspondence is very rare and varies from case to case. In the first ten days after the monetary reform the postage due stamps were revalued in the same ratio of 50:1. On the 11th (or 13th) of June the postage due stamps were withdrawn from circulation -- which is, once again, not supported by a written order. On June 29th their validity was again renewed in the full nominal value shown on them. It was said that they were to be used until their supply was exhausted, and thus these stamps became the only ones that crossed over the time barrier that canceled the validity of all the other stamps issued prior to June 1, 1953. Some values of a new postage due stamp set were issued on November 22, 1954 (four of them), then a further two on 10 December, and the remaining seven values finally on April 15, 1955.

The printing of the postage meters does not show a great deal of uniformity. Of course, it could be said here that this was due to the shortage of regulations, but actually it was caused by the technology. Thus, in doing periodic examinations, one can find this in the old currency postage meters as well as in the new currency ones. This is the case with the equipment belonging to companies as well as that at the post offices. The owners of the machines had to bring them to the accountable post office for re-calibration and this caused delays. Technically it was not possible to do all of them in the same way. Therefore, we can expect that the conversion from the old to the new currency was probably not uniform time-wise for different companies.

Let us now return to "Paid-Up in Cash". The supply of the old currency stamps at post offices varied. If the demand was high, then the stamps might have been all sold out. Thus, it would have been necessary to ask that the postage be paid in cash. The same, or rather similar, situation could have arisen even with the new currency stamps, as the provided supply of stamps might not have met the immediate actual need. Thus, even here one can discover covers from the end of June that are paid by cash.

The payment for foreign mail was regulated by the International Convention of UPU, and the so called golden franc -- whose gold content was established by the UPU Congress in 1952 -- was used for its pricing. The value of individual currencies, which was the deciding factor in determining the amount of payment, was calculated according to the actual gold content of these currencies. After the monetary reform the new "gold" content of the Czech Crown was tied to the golden ruble, and accordingly new converted fees for foreign mail were implemented both for land and air routes. The fee for a regular letter up to 20 grams was set at 75h, which was a conversion of about 7 to 1, while before the reform this fee was 5 Kčs. Still it is worth remembering that nowadays the postage payment for shipments to different countries is now uniform.

In conclusion, we can examine what factors to possibly consider to place a

value on the covers from this period -- whether an envelope on which are only stamps with one subject is more interesting than an envelope with a varied pallet of different stamps; obviously whether to assume that the correct amount of postage is applied; and also, the date when the item was mailed plays an important role as well as when the supply of old stamps was no longer adequate.



FRED W. HEFER

3.24.1924 - 8.27.2003

On August 27th our hobby lost what may have been its most powerful champion -- a grand collector, a successful entrepreneur and a beloved family man and friend.

Fred was born in Hamm, Germany, which is located in Westphalia. He received his education at the University of Cologne, where he graduated as an electronics engineer. During World War II he served in the German Army as a paratrooper, and participated in the invasion of France. After the War he found himself in a prisoner of war camp -- starved but alive. Fred was first married in 1948 to a German lady, and with her and their daughter Gaby and son Michael moved to Texas in 1954. There he began work as a technician but was soon promoted to engineer in a company manufacturing oil exploration equipment.

In 1960 Fred and a partner founded their own company which was soon merged into the Geo Space Company which was engaged in the field of geo-physics and manufactured exploration equipment. Fred served as Vice President of Engineering. In 1969 Fred moved back to Germany where he founded his own company.

In 1971 he was divorced from his first wife, and in 1972 married his second wife, Jana, whom he had previously met in Texas, and who bore him a son David, who currently practices medicine in New York City. In 1995 the Hefers moved from the Munich suburb of Grunwald to their lovely country home in the village of Vavretice, near Prague.

Fred's hobbies included yachting, golf, flying, good food and good wine. But his main hobby was stamps, which he collected even before moving to the United States. He collected Germany and other countries, most of which he sold before leaving Germany. His interest in the stamps of Czechoslovakia was initiated by his Czech wife's father, who gave his collection to Fred and nurtured him in the early stages. Combined with his dynamic nature, Fred undertook to generate the most extensive holdings of Czechoslovakia and related material, partly by direct purchase from many of the world's most distinguished collectors and their estates. In the relatively short time period between 1979 when he won his first Gold in Munich and 1989 when he won his last Large Gold at the FIP show in Sofia, Fred

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accumulated five (5) Large Golds, fourteen (14) Golds plus numerous lower awards -- all these at FIP, FEPA, US, German and other major National shows. His greatest triumph occurred at PRAGA'88 where he garnered the Grand Prix National. Fred, holding his large lead glass vase award is shown in the illustration.

Fred did much for our hobby; he donated a large collection of Seizinger drawings and proofs to the Czech Postal Museum in Prague, had our translation of *Padělky* reprinted with illustrations for sale through the SPECIALIST, and did much to further interest in collecting Czechoslovakia.

Fred is survived by his loving and devoted wife Jana, his son David, daughter Gaby, and son Michael by a previous marriage. He was cremated, and his urn temporarily rests in his home in Vavretice. His ashes will be formally interred on August 27, 2004 at 5 pm at the Olšany Cemetery in Prague.

He will be sorely missed by his many devoted friends and by collectors throughout the world.

Henry Hahn

ANTONÍN TACHECÍ

1926 - 2003



In the early days of November, philately lost an ardent collector and member of many societies in Antonín Tachecí, who died in Prague's Vinohradská Nemocnice (Vinohrad Hospital) after a short illness. Tonda, or Tony to his English speaking friends, was born in Pardubice, Bohemia on May 23, 1926. He graduated from the Gymnasium and later the Business Academy in Pardubice, and after World War II served in the Czechoslovak Army in Slovakia. After his service he joined the stamp firm POFIS where he worked for many years. He later became an Organizing Manager for the Czech National Circus. He was competent in seven languages, all self-taught. He traveled all over the world arranging bookings for the circus, all the time remaining a vigorous stamp and postal stationery collector. During PRAGA'78 he worked in the Information Office of the show. Since 1986 he has visited his family in the United States yearly. His last visit was in September 2003 when he attended BALPEX in Baltimore, Maryland.

He was cremated in Prague on November 7th, and his final resting place will be in the family plot in Pardubice. He is mourned by his daughter Marie, and grandsons Christopher and Philip, of Herndon, Virginia. He will be missed by hundreds of collectors who have come in contact with him. We shall honor his memory!

Henry Hahn

THE VITORAZSKO REGION

by RNDr Miroslav Vostatek
trans. by Henry Hahn

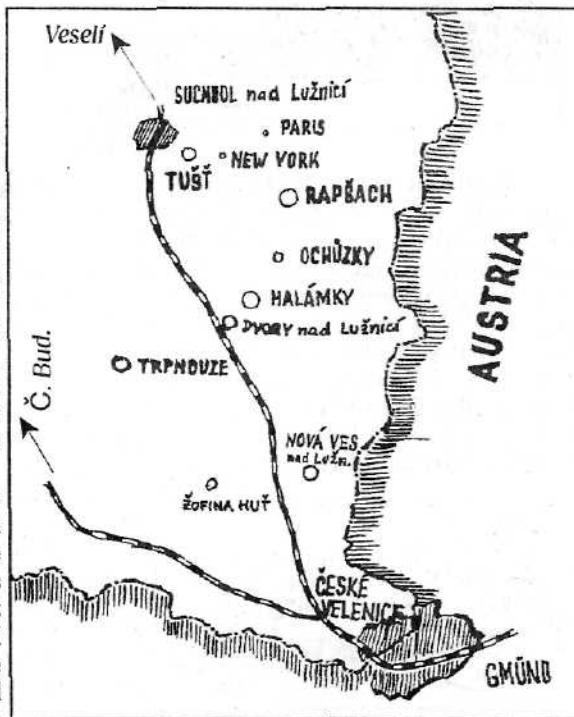
This historic region is located in the south of Bohemia and in Austria in the upper watershed of the river Lužnice (Map 1). It was originally a Slavic region ruled by the Premyslid's. But in 1186 it was seized by the Kuerling family, when prior to that it was under the domination of German Pasau. Eventually in 1296 it was seized by the Hapsburgs who held it up to 1919 as part of Lower Austria. Based on the peace treaty of St. Germain, a portion was incorporated into the fledgling Czechoslovak Republic. It constituted 118 sq. kilometers, and included 11 communities.

An interesting fate befell the community of České Velenice. This was the northern suburb of the Austrian town of Gmünd. When in 1869 a railroad track was built from České Budějovice to Gmünd, there was also built a railroad station and later on a railroad workshop (Map 2). And because of that there were built houses for employees. In 1871 there was also terminated there a railroad leading from Veselí to Mezimostí, so that here occurred the cross roads of two important rail lines. In addition a narrow rail line was built which headed north and south from Gmünd, which is still in use in Austria but was discontinued in the Czechoslovak Republic at the time of student unrests.

Naturally, a post office was established at the railroad station, which exists to this date (Fig. 1). Both main rail lines have become part of our recent history. On the line from Veselí there rode in June of 1914 the Archduke of Austria, Ferdinand d'Este with his wife Sofia from



Map 1



Map 2



Fig. 1

nearby Chlum u Třeboně, where they had their estate. From there they went to Vienna and then to Sarajevo where their lives were extinguished in the famous assassination. From České Budějovice toward Gmünd and Vienna traveled the military transport of the 11th Marchcompagnie of the Budweis infantry regiment. This transport was made famous in the Hašek novel of the Good Soldier Švejk, and is there described in a plaque.



Fig. 2

Right after the overthrow of Austria-Hungary in 1918, the suburb of Gmünd was renamed Cmunt v Čechách (Fig. 2) and later to České Velenice (Fig. 3). At that time the town was split in two, divided by the Lužnice river. Therefore they had to establish a new cemetery in Velenice, since burials could no longer take place in Gmünd. The cemetery is there to this date, and during the Communist period it caused great worry to the Government. Its western wall was (and still is) adjacent to the state border. The State Border Guards had to permit people access to the cemetery, but only after personal search. To this date there is a memorial plaque there and a statue commemorating 512 Hungarian Jews who suffered their fate there at the hands of the Nazis. I visited there in 1980 and the town was wired shut by barbed wire. For about 15 kilometers we drove along a road protected on both sides with barbed wire, 3 meters high, with guard towers and machine guns everywhere. From the town there was only one exit, leading toward the interior of the country. The border guards examined the underpart of our vehicle using mirrors.



Fig. 3

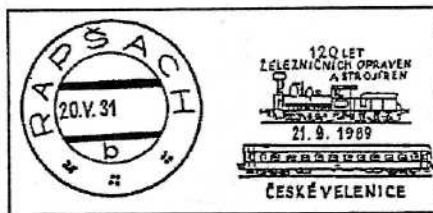


Fig. 4

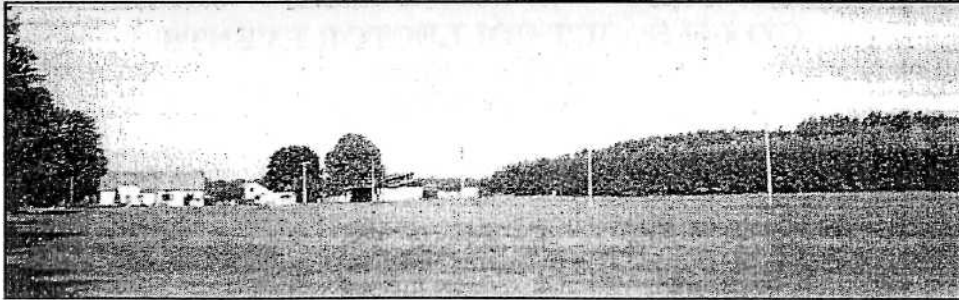


Figure 5: New York, Czech Republic – kind of hard to see a similarity to New York, USA!

The communities that are in the Vitorazsko Region include Rapšach (Fig. 4), Tuš', Halámky, Trpnouze and others. But something is particularly notable: between Tuš' and Rapšach is the village of New York, whose post office belongs to Tuš'. On the flag pole at a house there waves a U.S. Flag. A little further on is Malý (Little) London, Velký (Large) London and Paris.

I take my annual vacation in this lovely region. So this year I visited New York (as it says on the bus stop) and remembered the readers of the Czechoslovak SPECIALIST (Fig. 5).

On the Registered letter from Rakovník (Fig. 2) dated 29.VII.1920 are also Austrian stamps and the postmark Cmunť v Čechách 31.VII.1920. Here the letter was sent from České Budějovice, where the recipient went on summer vacation.

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CZECH SCOUT COLLECTOR EVENTS

by Henry Hahn
Foreign Editor

Here is information about two Czech scout collector events which recently took place in the Czech Republic. I translated them from the original.

EXHIBITION COMMEMORATING 85 YEARS OF CZECH SCOUT POST – NEWS RELEASE

On Monday, October 28th, 1918, Prague awakened to a cold, foggy day. The telegraphy office printed the message that Austria-Hungary accepted the conditions laid down by President Wilson that pure autonomy of the subjugated states was insufficient. Austro-Hungarian Minister of Foreign Affairs Gyula Andrássy requested separate peace and recognized the right of Czechs to self determination. This meant independence -- red-white flags appeared on buildings, and two-headed eagles fell to the sidewalks. The military commander of Prague, von Kostranek, proclaimed an emergency and was threatened with arrest, but after negotiations stepped aside. The commander of the newly established Czechoslovak Army became the leader of the Sokols, Dr. Scheiner. The National Committee, which became the vital organ of the new state, as a first step occupied the Commodities Institute.

And what about the Scouts? Were they prepared? Their head, A. B. Svojsik, walked the streets in uniform, and Scouts immediately flocked to his side. A story appeared in the afternoon paper: "Scouts -- I call upon you to perform your duty. Come, if possible wearing your uniform, on Tuesday morning to the Scout Headquarters!" And really, the following morning there appeared 400 Boy and Girl Scouts. Scout services to the National Committee had their start. Led by Svojsik and Rossler-Orovsky, the command post of Czech Scouts was established at Střelecký Ostrov (Riflemen's Island).

The most prominent service, performed by about 100 Scouts, was the courier service. Scouts in uniform and with identification had access to all important locations. Couriers made deliveries of important mailings promptly by all means -- on foot, by tram, on bicycles and motorcycles. They franked the mailings with either blue 10 heller or red 20 heller stamps, special cancels, and straight line rubber stamps bearing the signature of the delivering Scout. Thus there arose several "firsts":

- they were absolutely the first stamps in postal use in free Czechoslovakia -- they preceded by nearly two months the issuance of the well known stamps showing the Hradčany Castle by Alfons Mucha
- they were the first stamps showing the Czech Lion
- they were the world's first stamps with a Scout theme.

The courier service lasted four weeks, but it was not the only service by which Scouts aided the new republic. Together with Sokols, Scouts performed guard duty at railroad stations, at the location of the National Committee, at military warehouses, and other locations. They disarmed soldiers returning from the front

and accumulated weapons on Střelecký Ostrov, where the first units of the Czechoslovak army were formed. One of the first Scouts was Rudolf Plajner, future commander of Czech Scouts. The Girl Scouts also played a role. Some sewed red-white arm bands and insignia for officers and policemen, others performed clerical services, operated telephones or acted as translators. One of the Girl Scouts, Vlasta Štěpanová-Koseová (later also a Scout leader) recalled the service: "Our work was in the details, but its value was in demonstration of Scout readiness".

František Soukup thanked the Scouts in writing on behalf of the National Committee -- "The Republic is thankful and indebted for your services during the time of transition -- it was a beautiful generation of Scouts which worked toward our common goal".

YES, THE CZECH SCOUTS WERE PREPARED!!!

The exhibit was prepared in cooperation with the Postal Museum by the Club of Scout Collectors. The public is presented not only documents of the Scout Post of 1918, but also other documents relating to its famous past. Included are period posters, old insignias, belt buckles, picture postcards, almanacs and other collectibles. So as not to concentrate merely on the past, included is a small display of the greatest current Scout event -- the 20th World Jamboree held in Thailand last January.

Scout Collectors' Club: Václav Nosek -- Windy

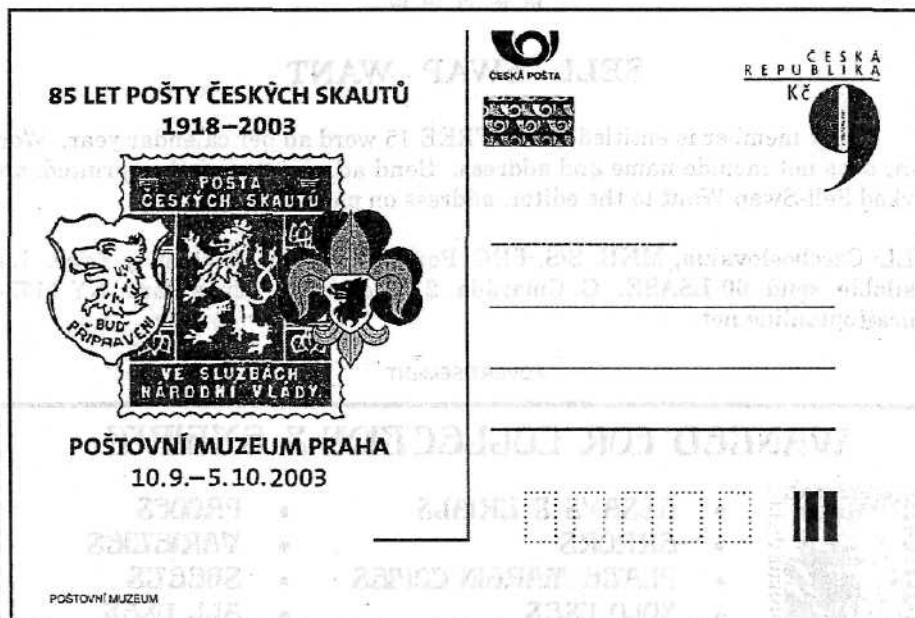


Fig. 1

Club of Scout Collectors Presents
XIIITH INTERNATIONAL MEETING OF SCOUT COLLECTORS
 October 18, 2003

THE CZECHOSLOVAK SPECIALIST

In the Hall of the Main Wilson Railroad Station in Prague
INVITED ARE COLLECTORS: Of Scout Philately, badges, honors, medals,
and uniform components, literature, etc., all with Scout themes.

A postal card has been prepared (Fig. 1) for all participants with cachet +
postal cancel, as well as a commemorative metal pin.

The meeting will be preceded by an exhibit in the Postal Museum in
Prague 1, Nové Mlýny 2, entitled
"85 Years Since Czech Scout Post"
from September 10 to October 5, 2003
with commemorative cancel and postal card available
September 27 from 10 am to 3 pm.

[Ed. Note: Our Foreign Editor, Henry Hahn, NEEDS YOUR HELP! Our Society put
out two commemorative covers in conjunction with SEPAD 1982 which had a Scout
theme. The organizer of next year's Scout exhibit in Prague has asked Henry for them.
If you have these covers, would you please contact Henry (address on page two of this
issue) or e-mail: hhahn25@ntmail.net]

✠ ✠ ✠ ✠ ✠

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Sister Society News

The Czech Republic Embassy and CPSGB present
**THE 85TH ANNIVERSARY OF
 THE FOUNDING OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA**
 A Philatelic Exhibition and Seminar
 by Richard Beith

Impressed by our May 2003 exhibition at the Czech Embassy in London, the Czech Ambassador invited the CPSGB to participate in a philatelic seminar on the morning of Saturday, 25 October to celebrate the 85th anniversary of the founding of the Czechoslovak Republic. The seminar was subtitled 'an unorthodox look at history' and was supported by a 35 frame exhibition, open to the public from 24 to 28 October.

The Exhibition booklet introduction to the seminar states:

"The year 2003 marks the 85th anniversary of the founding of Czechoslovakia as an independent state in 1918. In order to make the day special, the Embassy is trying each year to give the celebrations a different flavour and feel. This year, inspired by the Czechoslovak Philatelic Society of Great Britain's exhibition at the Embassy marking its 50th anniversary, we have toyed with the idea that we might use stamps and other postal memorabilia as the backdrop for the celebrations. It has finally come true and for that we would like to thank the Society.

Stamps are often silent witnesses of historical events and offer quite an unorthodox look at history and, of course, art. They depict national heroes as well as national themes and are often very fine works by the most distinguished artists of the day.

It is not only stamps themselves but also the postcards and letters that give their testimonies and offer personal views by people living at the time of greater or smaller historical upheavals. Perhaps these are also the reasons why stamps hold such fascination for so many collectors.

And that is also what we wanted to show and talk about at the accompanying seminar -- the history of 1918 and the founding of a country as told by stamps and people's impressions committed to paper and sent to friends and others.

The scope of the exhibition reflects the themes connected with the founding of Czechoslovakia, be it the historical context (Masaryk, Štefánik, Austro-Hungarian Empire) or some of the "icons" that characterised the First Republic (Mucha, Sokol, Scouts or national anthems). We hope that you will go away with a new perspective. Please enjoy."

The seminar commenced with greetings from H. E. Štefan Füle, Ambassador of the Czech Republic and from Dušan Kristofik, Deputy Head of Mission at the Slovak Embassy. Mrs. Lindy Bosworth, Chairman of CPSGB, thanked the Embassies for initiating the event.

THE CZECHOSLOVAK SPECIALIST

Four speakers took part in the seminar. Firstly Katya A. M. Kocourek, from the School of Slavonic and East European Studies at University College, London, discussed 'Historical Imagery and Political Ideals -- the Consolidation of the new Czechoslovak Order in 1918'. She was followed by Richard Beith, CPSGB Vice-Chairman, who talked about the history of the Society and the aims of the exhibition.

The third speaker was to have been Lumír Brendl, the President of the Czech Union of Philatelists, but he was unable to travel having hurt his knee. His sister Svetla Brendlová had kindly travelled from Prague to deliver his presentation on 'Postal and Historical Curiosities from the Austro-Hungarian Period Before 1918 to the First Days of Czechoslovakia'. The final speaker was L'ubomir Floch, President of the Union of Slovak Philatelists, who gave a colour slide enhanced talk on 'The Slovak Union of Philatelists, Past and Present'. This talk contained many references to the first Slovak stamp issues of 1993.

Lindy Bosworth ended this most interesting and enjoyable morning by presenting certificates to the speakers. The participants then had plenty of time to chat while enjoying a buffet lunch provided by the Embassy.



NEW MEMBERS

CALIFORNIA

- 1953 Simpson B. Chan
1958 Flavio Epstein
1959 George P. Fulton
1952 George P. Pollack
1960 Patricia Stennett

MINNESOTA

- 1955 Phil Rhoads

NEW JERSEY

- 1950 Kurt W. Alstede
1948 Michael J. Cuddy

PENNSYLVANIA

- 1943 Steve Krivy

SOUTH CAROLINA

- 1946 Gerald M. Devlin

WASHINGTON D.C.

- 1961 Janet Tersoff

GERMANY

- 1942 Harthut Liebermann

CONNECTICUT

- 1963 Myron S. Kavalgian

ILLINOIS

- 1957 David J. Stueckmann

MARYLAND

- 1945 Peter F. Nack

NORTH CAROLINA

- 1949 Joseph S. Butchko

NEW YORK

- 1944 Kris Haggblom
1954 Ken Morrison
1951 David Schwartz

VIRGINIA

- 1956 Richard Nootbaar
1962 David Wells

WISCONSIN

- 1947 Mark Schroeder

MASTER PAVOL
 One of Slovakia's Greatest Medieval Artists
 by G. M. van Zanten

He lived in Levoča, where he lead carving and painting workshops and was born around the year 1470.

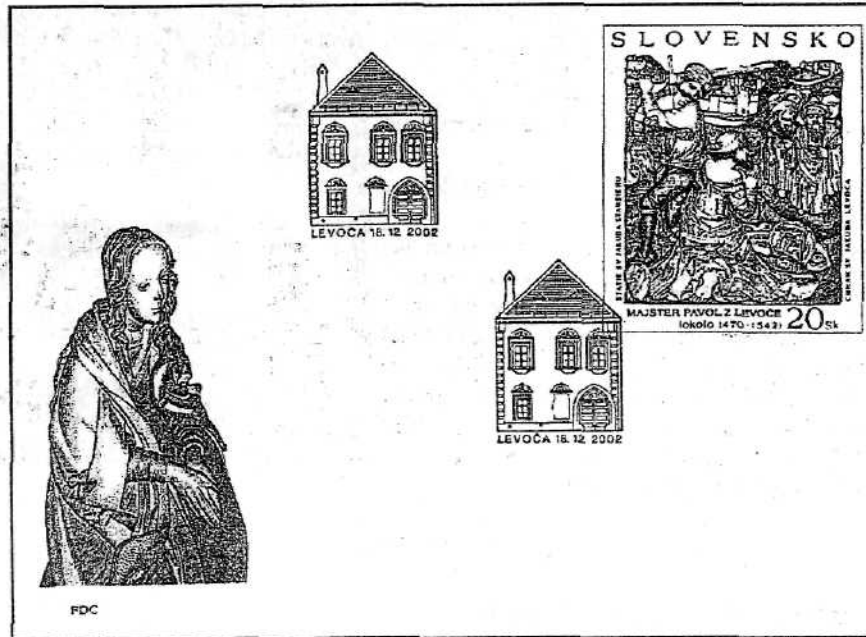


Fig. 1



Fig. 2

He was most famous for the main altar in the St. James' church in Levoča. This altar is one of the highest of the late gothic period (18.5 m high, 6 m wide).

In 1968 a 3 Kčs stamp was issued in the Art series, reference Pofis 1733. This stamp depicts a detail from the altar, namely the "Madonna and Child". It was covered in my article on Levoča in the Nov/Dec 1997 SPECIALIST with illustrations.

On December 16, 2002 a further stamp in the Art series was issued by Slovakia. This was the 20 Sk value depicting the "Decollation of St. James, the Older", St. John the Evangelist at Pathmos Island and torture of St. John to death situated on the lower left movable panel (one of four panels)(see copy of a FDC at Figure 1).

The FDC shows a detail of the Virgin Mary statue, which is part of the altar of the Nativity (Fig. 2). The whole of this altar depicts the Nativity scene with the



Fig. 3

Virgin Mary (shown second from the left in Figure 3).

Looking at the cover again we seen the cancellation depicting the house of Master Pavol, which is also shown on a recent photo (Fig. 4) taken from the book "SLOVAKIA (Walking Through Centuries of Cities & Towns)". This book was given to me for my birthday last year after our daughter and son-in-law had been touring through Slovakia.

Master Pavol died in 1542.



Fig. 4



Philatelic News and Views

From Savoy Horvath:

-- The Czech Post is to lose it's monopoly on mail delivery by the end of 2008. Until that time the loss will be gradual. Today the Post has deliveries up to 350 grams; next year -- after the Czech Republic's acceptance into the EU -- this will drop to 100 grams; between 2006 and 2008 it will be only 50 grams. Since the mid 90's the majority of other postal services like parcel post and express delivery have been eroded by international services like UPS, DHL and TNT, by local carriers like Sprinter and Messenger, and also by individual private couriers. A city in eastern Bohemia, Police nad Metují, has a big start in private mail delivery. According to the deputy mayor, Ida Seidelmanová, as of 3 September 2003 the city hall has hired a community courier (obecní kurýr). She also stated that so far the money saved by not using the Czech Post has been substantial. The community courier carries not only all of the city letter mail but even registered letters.

-- Here is an interesting post card from Slovakia issued for the 50th anniversary of the seating of the watchdog commission of neutral states in Panmunjom, Korea (Fig. 1, only 1,000 were printed) including Czechoslovakia, Poland, Sweden and Switzerland. The Swedes and Swiss were neutral all right, but the Czechoslovaks

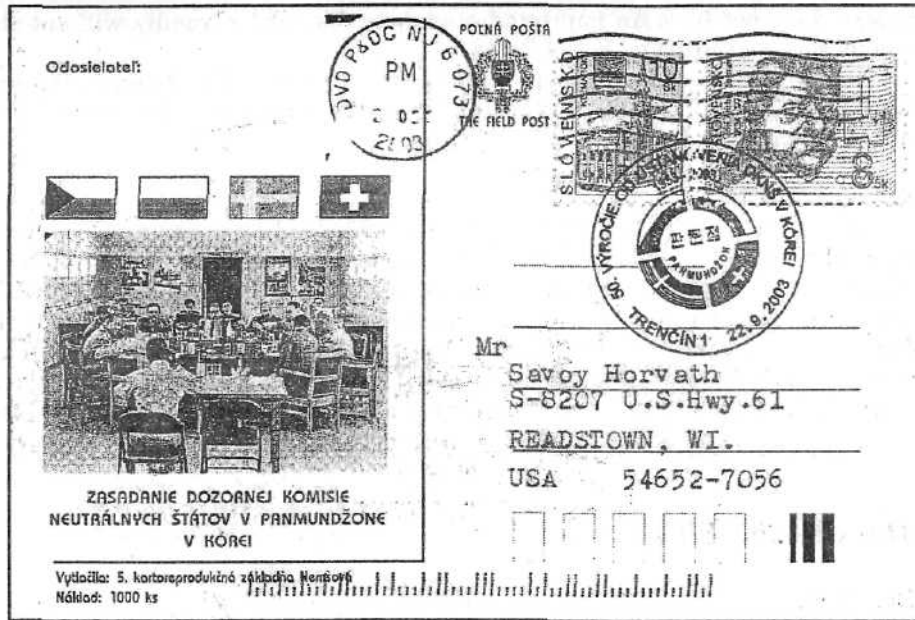


Fig. 1

and Poles were probably spies. A Czech friend that I knew from Europe served in Korea with a Signals Intelligence unit and had a year-long assignment to date and "milk" one of the Czech women from the commission who was stationed in Seoul.

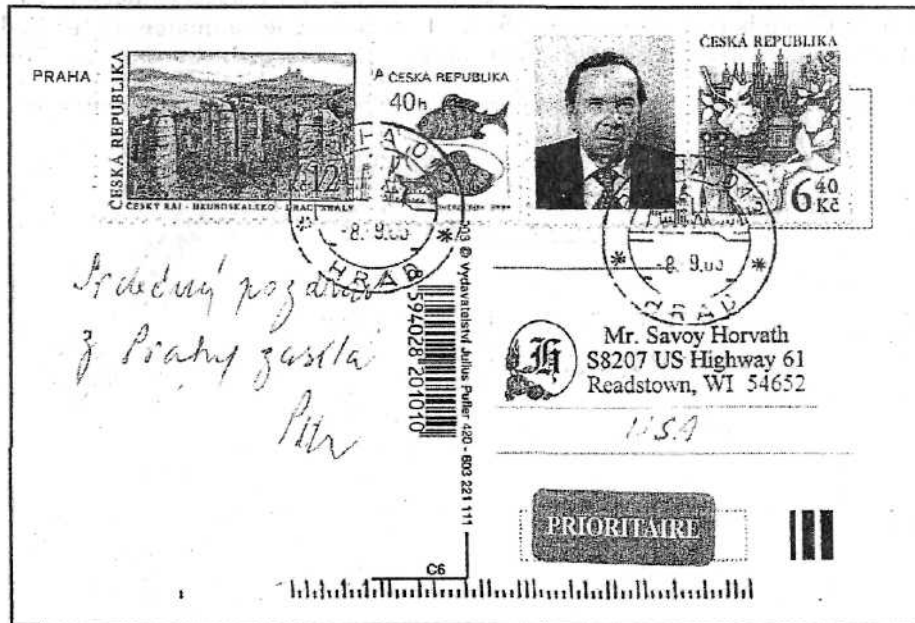


Fig. 2

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The card does not have an imprinted stamp, but is used normally without the commemorative printing by Poľná Pošta.

-- Here is another of the Czech personalized stamps in actual use on a post card sent to me (Fig. 2). This time it contains the picture of our new Secretary, Peter Kleskovic.

From Henry Hahn:

-- The Czechoslovak Society in the Netherlands held an election. Our Dutch friends held a meeting in which Hans van Dooremalen [also a member of our Society] was elected President of the Society, replacing Jan Verleg who has successfully served in this capacity for several years. Jan was elected to Honorary Membership and will continue serving onboard. The Dutch Society will begin publishing a bi-annual journal in 2004, at which time the dues will be increased to 20 Euros per year for overseas members. They have been sent our best wishes for continued success.

✠ ✠ ✠ ✠ ✠

Letters to the Editor

1. Dear Lou:

It was with a great interest that I read Lumír Brendl's article 'Czech and Slovak Exiles of the 20th Century' -- especially that part concerning Regimental Sergeant Major Josef Pŕichystal. Among the thousands of other soldiers suffering the same fate as he, was also Captain Oldřich Večerek, well known to collectors of the Czechoslovak Army Field Post in Great Britain during WW II as its founder and first CO from December 1940 to August 1943. He also designed a number of the Field Post commemorative and other cancellers. He finished the war in Great

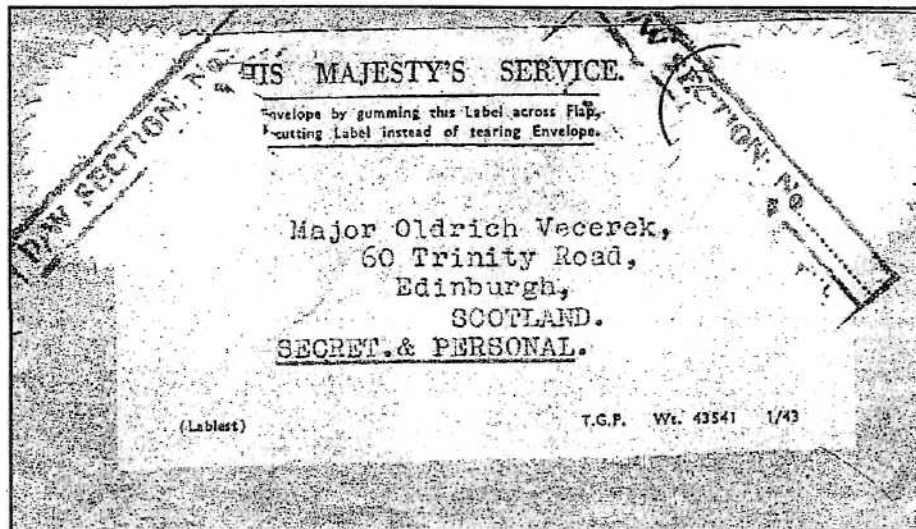


Fig. 1



Fig. 2

Britain serving as an Intelligence Officer in a POW Camp in Scotland (Fig. 1).

He returned to Prague at the end of July 1945 and was attached to the Allied Liaison Department, General Staff, MNO with the rank of Major (Fig. 2). In 1946

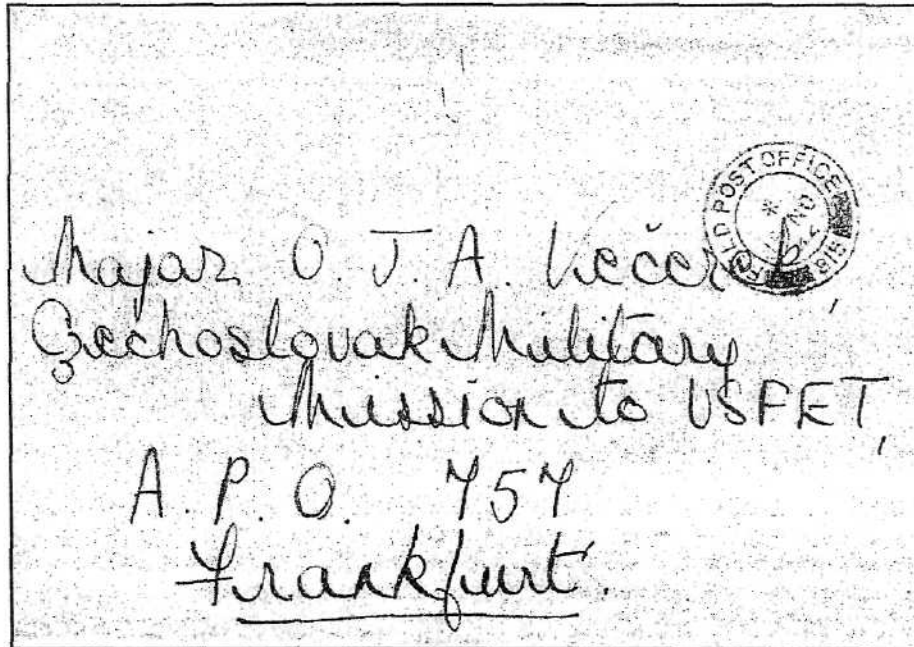


Fig. 3

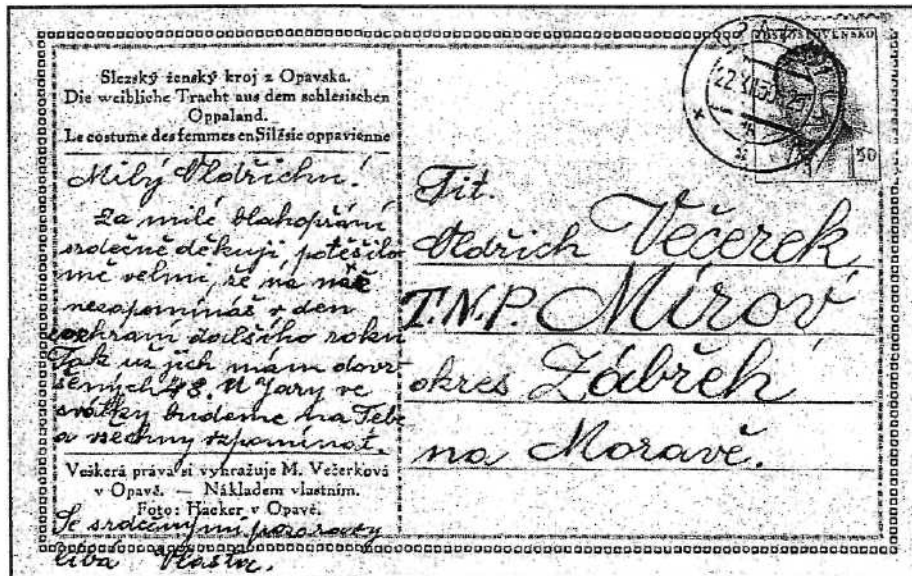


Fig. 4

he was transferred to Frankfurt, Germany, where he was attached to the Czechoslovak Military Mission to USFET, at first as the Deputy CO and later as its CO (Fig. 3). In March 1948 he returned to Brno where he commanded the 10. Regiment J. Sladkeho Koziny. On 1 November 1948 he was placed on leave whilst awaiting posting and on 4 May 1949 he was arrested and imprisoned without a trial in the T.N.P. Mirov camp (T.N.P. = Tabor Nucenych Pracich == Hard Labor Camp) until 19 July 1951 (Fig. 4). After release from prison he was employed as a laborer in Brno. He ended his working life when he reached the age of 60 and died on 14 May 1987.

That was the fate of a great patriot and soldier, who sacrificed much for his country, and then because his country's new masters could not permit freethinking people to exist, he suffered again.

Vladimir J. Kralicek



New Issues

CZECH REPUBLIC

by G.M. van Zanten

1. On October 15, 2003, the Ministry of Post and Communications issued a set of three commemorative stamps in the Nature Protection series and entitled Birds of Prey (Fig. 1). The traditional series Nature Protection acquaints the general public with the species of flora and fauna which are currently endangered in this country. The 2003 stamps in the series picture three kinds of birds of prey and are

accompanied by First Day Covers with drawings of three other kinds of endangered predators. In order to prevent the extinction of these beautiful birds in our country, it is important to apply effective protection. Thus, e.g., it is essential not to disturb nesting couples, not to fell trees used by these birds for



Fig. 1

nesting, but also to adapt the electricity poles which are popular resting places for the birds, but which often kill them when the birds' large wings touch the high voltage wires. Another opportunity to protect the birds is to withdraw them from the Hunting Act in which they are cited as "vermin", and also to suppress trading in endangered species. The stamps were designed by Josef Saska, engraved by Václav Fajt, and produced by the Post Printing House in Prague by rotary recess print in black from flat plates combined with color photogravure in printing sheets of 50 stamps.

-- 6.50 Kč, *Milvus milvus* [kite] - in yellow, pink, blue, black. *Milvus milvus* belongs to a critically endangered species, which means that there is an immediate threat of its complete extinction in our country. A FDC in red-brown has a cachet depicting *Circus cyaneus* [harrier] at its nest (Fig. 2).

-- 8 Kč, *Falco peregrinus* [peregrine] - in yellow, pink, blue, green-blue. *Falco*



Fig. 2



Fig. 3



Fig. 4

peregrinus also is a critically endangered species. A FDC in gray has a cachet depicting *Falco subbuteo* [hobby] at its nest (Fig. 3). [Refer also POFIS 331-2 of 25/1/1938 which also depicts the peregrine, the SOKOL falcon.]

-- 9 Kč, *Hieraetus pennatus* - in yellow, pink, blue, brown. *Hieraetus pennatus* is rare and only moves through our country at irregular intervals. A FDC in brown has a cachet depicting *Circaetus gallicus* at its nest (Fig. 4).

2. On October 15, 2003, the Ministry issued a set of three commemorative stamps in the Technical Monuments series entitled Fire-Fighting Technologies (Fig. 5). These stamps are issued to celebrate the 140th anniversary of the Czech fire-fighting movement. The organization with the largest membership is the Association of Firemen from Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia. Established in 1991 as a civic association and the legal successor to the Fire Prevention Union, it has more than 310,000 members of all age categories. Firemen not only fight fire, they also help



Fig. 5

at the time of natural disasters, traffic or industrial accidents and wherever there is a risk to human life, health or property. The permanent exhibition of the history of Czech firemen (which was a source of inspiration for the author of the issue designs) is at the Přebyslav Castle. Besides the name of the fire-engine the stamps contain the Czech text "140 Years of the Czech Firemen Movement". The stamps were designed and engraved by Bedřich Housa, and produced by the Post Printing

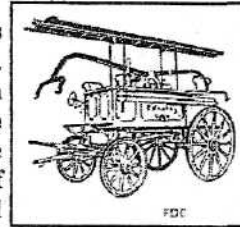


Fig. 6

House in Prague by rotary recess print in black combined with color photogravure in printing sheets of 50 pieces.

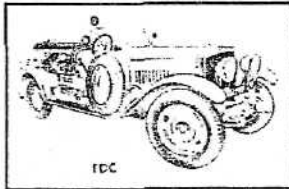


Fig. 7

-- 6.50 Kč: Wooden fire-engine, 1822 - in gray, ochre, red. A FDC in dark-brown has a cachet depicting a four-wheel hand fire engine from 1882 (Fig. 6).

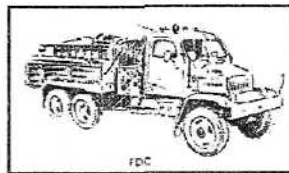


Fig. 8

-- 9 Kč: Powered fire-engine, 1933 - in ochre, brown, gray, red. A FDC in red has a cachet depicting a TATRA car from 1920 (Fig. 7).

-- 12 Kč: CSA 8/AVIA DAEWOO, 2002 - in blue, black, red, gray. A FDC in dark-red has a cachet depicting a water tank car fire engine CAS-16 from the 1960's (Fig. 8).

3. On October 15, 2003, the Ministry issued a 6.50 Kč stamp commemorating the "Porch of the Basilica of the 'Porta Coeli' Monastery in Předklášteří" and publicizing the European Postage Stamp Exhibition BRNO 2005 taking place at the Brno Fair complex (10-15 May 2005)(Fig. 9). The women's Cistercian monastery "Porta coeli" (The Gate of Heaven) was founded in 1233 by Queen Constanzia, the wife of King Přemysl Otakar I, and she is also buried there (it



Fig. 9

is located just north of Brno near Tišnov, Fig. 10). The original Romanesque-Gothic architecture still exists in the church, in the cloister, and in the



Fig. 10

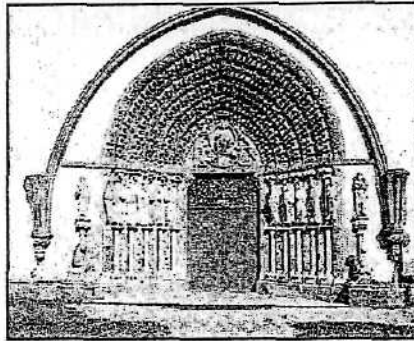


Fig. 11

chapter hall. The other buildings date back to the periods of the Renaissance and Baroque. The most admired part of the complex is the western column porch with rich ornamentation including figures and shapes borrowed from the world of flora (Fig. 11, May 1987 Czechoslovak Life Magazine). The consoles are embellished with stone sculptures of the apostles and of two lions. The stamp shows the tympanum (the arched portion right above the double doors in Figure 11), which is a stone relief representing Christ at whose feet is the kneeling Queen

Constanzia with her son Přemysl as they hand over a model of the church to Jesus Christ. Behind them is King Václav I and Saint Agnes of Bohemia. The whole monastery complex has been renovated, and today is the domicile of the Podhorácko Regional Museum. The stamp was designed by



Fig. 12

Karel Zeman, engraved by Jaroslav Tvrdoň, and produced by the

Post Printing House in Prague by rotary recess print in black combined with photogravure in ocher, pink, blue and red-brown in printing sheets of 30 pieces. Besides the stamps in sheet arrangement, philatelic booklets of 8 stamps and 4 labels bearing the column head with dragons and

lilies (Fig. 12) from the cruciate corridor of the cloister will be issued. A FDC in brown has a cachet showing a view of the western facade of the basilica of the cloister (Fig. 13).

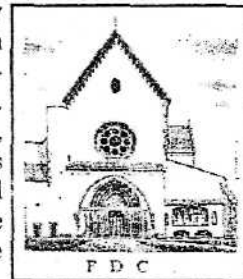


Fig. 13

4. On October 22, 2003, the Ministry issued two definitive stamps in the Beauty of Flowers series entitled The Cornflower and The Dahlia. The stamps bear the flowers with buds together with the Czech names of the cornflower and the dahlia. The stamps were designed by Anna Khunová, engraved by Bohumil Šneider, and produced by the Post Printing House in Prague by rotary recess print combined with photogravure in printing sheets of 100 pieces. The drawings of both stamps are underprinted by iridescent color with tilting effect.



Fig. 14



Fig. 15

-- 50h: The Cornflower - in blue-black (recess print), blue, pink, green (Fig. 14).

-- 6.50 Kč: The Dahlia - in violet (recess print), light green, dark green, pink (Fig. 15).

5. On October 22, 2003, the Ministry issued a 9 Kč definitive stamp with label for additional printings entitled A Lantern in the Nový Svět [New World] (Fig. 16). The stamp bears a hand-made metallic lantern illuminating a part of the old fashioned corner of Nový Svět in Prague, near Prague Castle. The stamp will be issued in printing sheets with 9 stamps and 12 labels. On the date of issue, the upper right label is provided with an ornamental



Fig. 16



Fig. 17

6. On October 22, 2003, the Ministry issued a 6.50 Kč definitive stamp with label for additional printings entitled A Rose Above Prague (Fig. 17). The design of the stamp is identical with the 6.40 Kč stamp from March 26, 2003, of the same name -- they differ only in their colors and shown value. The stamp will be issued in printing sheets with 9 stamps and 12 labels. On the date of issue, 9 labels will contain the logo of Poštovní Spořitelna (the Post Saving Bank) and Czech Post; three labels on the right side of the sheet contain drawings of minute ornamental details. A portion of the sheets will be issued with blank labels for additional printings in accordance with the wish of the customer. The stamp was designed and the printing sheet arranged by Karel Zeman, and it was produced by Victoria Security Printing, a.s. by multicolored offset.

7. On November 5, 2003, the Ministry issued a set of three stamps in the Works of Art on Stamps series. The original works of art are in the National Gallery in Prague. The stamps were produced by the Post Printing House in Prague by recess print from flat plates in printing sheets of 4 pieces.



Fig. 18

-- 17 Kč: "Poor Countryside, 1900" by Max Švabinský (1873-1962) - in yellow, red, green, blue, brown - engraved by Bohumil Šneider (Fig. 18). The painter and graphic designer Max Švabinský, was a graduate of the Prague Academy of Graphic Arts where his professors included M. Pirner and J. Mařák. Švabinský was a member of the Mánes Association of Graphic Artists, of the Czech Academy of Arts and Sciences. He was a co-founder of the Hollar Association of Graphic Artists, and eventually a professor and rector of the Academy of Graphic Arts in Prague. He created a number of painted or pen-and-ink portraits of leading Czech political and cultural personalities; but he was also a book illustrator and designer of banknotes and postage stamps. He contributed considerably to the development of



Fig. 19

windows and mosaics for the St. Vitus Cathedral in Prague represent the zenith of his activities in terms of monumental projects. Švabinský made his first studies for the painting Poor Countryside (which is pictured on the stamp) in the summer of 1899, after his return from Paris. This picture is regarded as a representative work of Czech symbolist painting around the year 1900. A FDC in black contains a portrait of Švabinský's aunt from 1898 called Aunt Mary (Fig. 19).

-- 20 Kč: "Autumn in Veltrusy, 1896" by Antonín Slavíček (1870-1910) - in yellow, red, green, blue, brown - engraved by Václav Fajt (Fig. 20). The Czech painter A. Slavíček, a leading personality of the generation of the 1890's, was one of the representatives of Czech impressionism in landscape painting. He studied irregularly at the Prague Academy of Graphic Arts under J. Mařák, who together with A. Chitussi had the main



Fig. 20



Fig. 21

influence on his early paintings reflecting a turn away from realism and nostalgic landscapes to impressionism. Apart from his landscapes he became equally noted for his pictures of Prague streets, squares and parks which depict the face of the modern big city and the human loneliness engendered by the city. Slavíček's study trips to Paris and Brussels in 1907 inspired him for his panoramic pictures of Prague. The picture Autumn in Veltrusy (which appears in an engraved form on the stamp), dates back to his early period. In the year 1909, Slavíček broke his arm during a visit to Yugoslavia, and in the summer he suffered a stroke while swimming at Německá Rybná. After treatment, he tried to paint small and simple still-lives. Eventually he decided to resolve the tragic conflict between his lofty aspirations and standards in art and the crippling restraints of his physical handicap by suicide on February 1, 1910, just three months before his 40th birthday. A FDC in gray-green contains a study of the portrait of the painter's wife (1897)(Fig. 21).



Fig. 22



Fig. 23

-- 26 Kč: "Eleonore From Toledo (after 1540)" by Agnolo Bronzino (1503-1572) - in pink, red, yellow, blue, brown - engraved by Miloš Ondráček (Fig. 22). The Italian Renaissance painter A. Bronzino (a pseudonym of Angelo di Cosimo Allori) was one of the most important Florence mannerists. Influenced by Rafael, Michelangelo and S. Del Piombo, Bronzino painted altar pictures, decorations, wall paintings, allegories and portraits. Bronzino became a popular portrait painter of Florence aristocracy, and later he became the court painter of the Duke of Medici and his wife Eleonore from Toledo whose picture can be seen engraved on this stamp. A FDC in brown contains a detail of the painting

"Taking Down of Christ (about 1545)" depicting the profile of a woman by A. Bronzino (Fig. 23).

8. On November 5, 2003, the Ministry issued a 6.50 Kč commemorative stamp to celebrate Christmas (Fig. 24). The stamp bears a small snow-covered Christmas tree, which should evoke a festive impression of calm and peace in nature and in men's hearts. Christmas festivities are perceived in our culture as the climax of the whole year. They are connected with a number of customs which combine Christian contents with pre-Christian elements of the Solstice festivities and with new civilization habits. The



Fig. 24

most important aspect of these festivities is the preparation for the Christmas Eve, symbolized with a lit decorated tree, fried carp, many kinds of sweets, lots of gifts both for children and adults. On the Eve, the famous Czech Christmas Mass composed by Jakub Jan Ryba is played in churches, decorated with the crib, and peace should rule over the country. The following days are the time when family members pay a visit to each other and prepare for the coming New Year. The stamp was designed by Ivan Exner, engraved by Pavel Kovářík, and produced by the Post Printing House in Prague by rotary recess print in black combined with photogravure in light brown, ocher, gray and green in printing sheets of 50 pieces. A FDC in green has a cachet showing a sprig of mistletoe (Fig. 25).

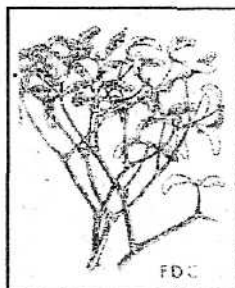


Fig. 25

9. On November 5, 2003, the Ministry issued a 6.50 Kč definitive stamp with a portrait of the President of the Republic, Václav Klaus, like that of 6.40 Kč issued on July 30, 2003, but in different colors (Fig. 26). As a result of the abolishment of the 10h and 20h coins on November 1, 2003, the postal rate for a standard inland letter will be 6.50 Kč instead of 6.40 Kč. The stamp was designed by Oldřich Kulhánek, engraved by Miloš Ondráček, and produced by the Post Printing House in Prague by rotary recess print in black-violet combined with photogravure in blue-green in printing sheets of 100 stamps.



Fig. 26

Stationery

10. On October 22, 2003, the Ministry issued a postal card for current postal operations with an imprinted 6.50 Kč postage stamp (Fig. 27). The stamp pictures a view of Český Krumlov, one of the most significant city monument reserves of the Czech Republic, which was added to the UNESCO world cultural and natural heritage list. The stamp contains the logo of UNESCO. The postal card was designed by Josef Saska. The card was produced by the Post Printing House in Prague by multicolored offset. It sells for 7.50 Kč.

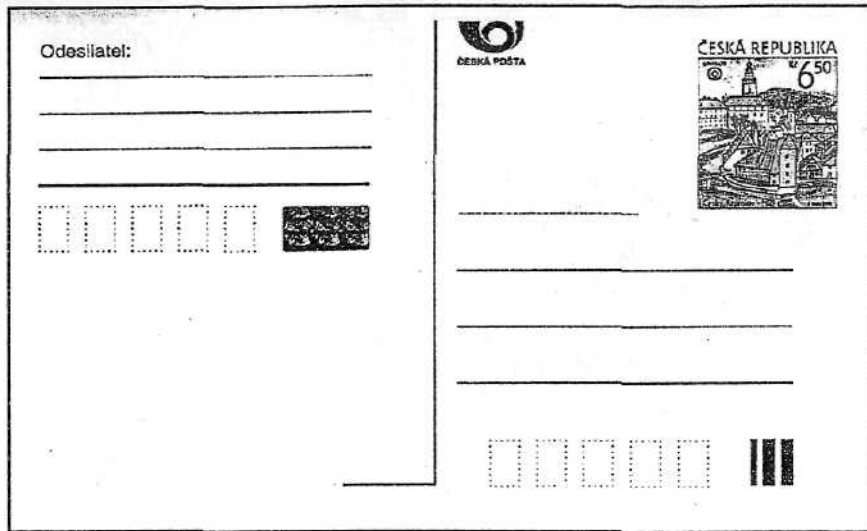


Fig. 27

11. On October 22, 2003, the Ministry issued a postal card with an imprinted 6.50 Kč stamp for commercial and promotional purposes with a free left portion for additional printing (without lines for the sender) (Fig. 28). The image of the stamp is a graphical composition arranged by Jan Solpera. The postal card was produced by the Post Printing House in Prague by multicolored offset. It sells for 7.50 Kč.

12. On November 5, 2003, the Ministry issued a commemorative postal card for the European Postage Stamp Exhibition 2005 with an imprinted 6.50 Kč postage stamp

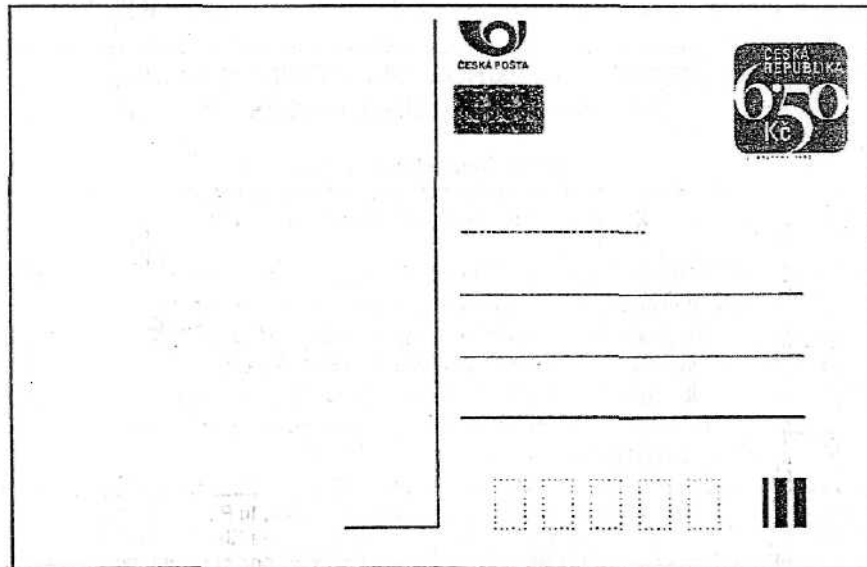


Fig. 28

THE CZECHOSLOVAK SPECIALIST

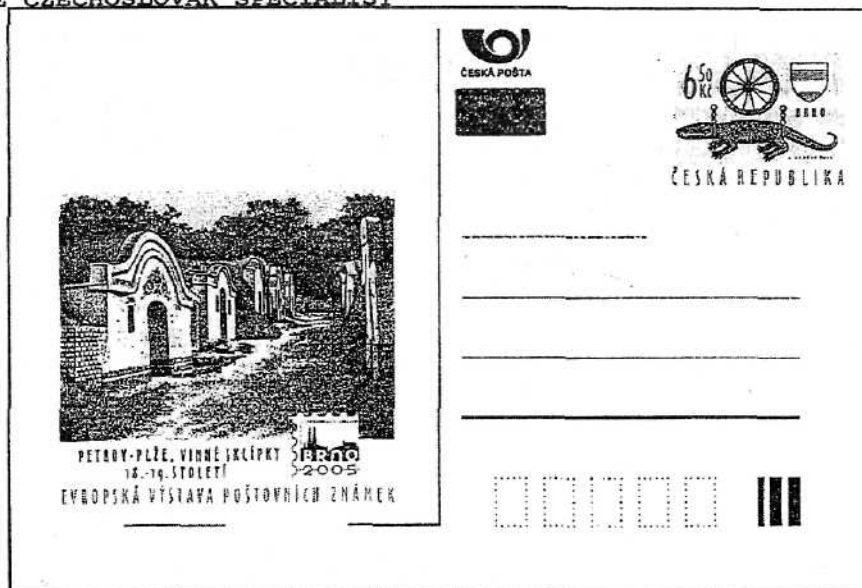


Fig. 29

(Fig. 29). The picture of the imprinted stamp is created by the graphical composition of the coat-of-arms of the town of Brno with the Brno dragon and a wooden wheel -- all similar to the 9 Kč commemorative postal card issued September 10, 2003, but with a different cachet. The design of this cachet is a drawing of the Petrov-Plze wine cellars of the 18th and 19th centuries, along with the BRNO 2005 logo. BRNO 2005 will take place May 10-15, 2005, at the Brno show ground. The postal card was designed by Karel Dvořák and produced by the Post Printing House in Prague by multicolored offset. It sells for 11.50[?] Kč.

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