

BULLETIN of the

POLONUS PHILATELIC SOCIETY



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COLUMBUS 500th ANNIV.

is \$45.00, a quarter page is \$25.00. Send copy and check to C. Schafer, 864 N. Ashland Avenue, Chicago, IL 60622.

Exhibitors should write for entry forms as soon as possible to A. Walinski, 7353 W. Estes St., Chicago, IL 60631 - phone: 312 763-3597.

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Available from: Polonus/Polpex 92, Box 82, River Grove, Illinois 60171. Add \$1.00 for postage and handling.

A 25 dealer bourse will operate during the three day exhibition with a variety of philatelic and numismatic material. Hopefully, the Polish American Numismatic Association will participate with numismatic exhibits.

POLPEX 92 will take place at the White Eagle, 6839 N. Milwaukee Avenue, Niles, IL. Hours: Friday 10:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.; on Saturday 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.; Sunday 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Admission is free. Plenty of free parking available.

The highlight of Polpex is always the Beeba-Banquet on Saturday, at 7:00 p.m. Tickets for this event are \$25.00.

Further information from Fred Szebel, phone: 708 437-1601.

Pope visits his first philatelic show

By JERZY B. KLIMA

(Translated from "Filatelista" by Teresa Poniecka-Lederer)

This visit was not foreseen in the official program for the Pope's stay in Kielce. However, it was verified by correspondence between the Curia and the Vatican, an agreement of the Holy Father to visit KWF "Totus Tuus Kielce 91," if time permitted. But knowing the very full schedule in Kielce, we were not at all sure whether John Paul II could find even a tiny bit of time for our exhibit.

The first possible opportunity was for the afternoon of June 3rd, 1991, after a mass celebrated at the nearby Cathedral and a meeting with the religious. On that afternoon a Curia messenger came to us, apologizing, due to the prolonged celebrations, the Pope would try to visit perhaps between 8:00 and 9:00 p.m. after a meeting with the faithful at Maslow, the local airport.

Many became doubtful. That evening, the Pope's plans still included a visit to the Theological Seminary. We nevertheless waited tenaciously. Meanwhile, the area was assaulted by torrential rains and hurricane-like winds. The barometric pressure dropped suddenly. Later, we learned that among the 400,000 faithful gathered at Maslow, some people fainted, and all were thoroughly soaked as were the Pope and bishops. We were left with a barely perceptible spark of hope.

But suddenly an optimistic message via the shortwave radio and confirmed by a subsequent visit of two bishops. An off chance was turned into a certainty. Our small gathering, waiting in a closed circle atmosphere, was seized with excitement. We stood watch at the entrance to the National Museum, the site of KWF "Totus Tuus," we paced nervously, trying to ignore the rain which was again falling.

This site for the exposition had been carefully chosen. For this palace, the most magnificent, early-Baroque landmark of the city was once upon a time the residence of the bishops of Krakow, the predecessors of Karol Wojtyla. This building gave an additional symbolic subtext to the exhibit, representing the achievements of Polish philatelists practically from the whole country. How much therefore did all desire that the Holy Father take a look at an exhibit of postal stamps on a religious theme as well as those connected to the Papacy of the Polish Pope John Paul II.

Finally, at twilight a cavalcade of cars arrived with our honored guest and his hosts of bishops, the Polish primate, Cardinal Jozef Glemp and the Bishop of Kielce, Stanislaw Szymecki. They were greeted by the director of the Kielce National Museum, Alojzy Oborny; Henryk Bialek, president of ZGPZF; Andrzej Komendolowicz, Chairman of the Exhibit Committee as well as several others fortunate enough to be part of this select meeting.

The Pope's face showed traces of weariness. We responded with our warmest greetings, and valued even more this honoring us with his visit. Despite the lack of time and in spite of a number of adversities, he reached us at last.

The Pope was scheduled for a ten minute visit but his review lasted over twenty minutes. He stopped momentarily in the hall displaying a work of art painted especially for this occasion by the well-known Kielce painter, Mr. Ryszard Jackowski. The painting depicts a concerned and exhausted John Paul II, bent under the weight of our misdeeds, supporting himself by a crozier topped with a crucified Christ.



As the visit came to an end, Henryk Bialek presented the Pope, in the name of Polish Philatelists, an album containing postal stamps commemorating the Holy Father's previous pilgrimages to his homeland and stamps on a religious theme. The album also contained selected pages of recent "Filatelista" issues (on topics such as pilgrimages, the Club St. Gabriel and the Kielce Exhibit). Deeply moved, we bid the Pope a fond farewell, grateful that he had found the strength and desire to visit the Exhibit.

P.S. To this date the Pope has made approximately 100 pilgrimages, but this was his first visit to a philatelic exhibit.

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War hero to celebrate 100th birthday

By STAN Z. BIERNACIK

General Stanislaw Maczek, the last commander of the First Polish Army Corps under Allied Command, and who previously led the famous First Polish Armored Division, will observe his 100th birthday at his home in Edinburgh, Scotland, on March 31, 1992.

Gen. Maczek is pictured on this issue of 1989 commemorating the 45th Anniversary of the Battle of Falaise.



General Maczek's military career began as an officer of the Austrian Army who fought on the Italian front in 1914. Following the outbreak of World War I, the Polish units were organized around the cities of Kraków, Lwów and the young officer offered his services to the re-born units of the Polish Army.

His military talents became soon evident in the battles for the relief of the city of Lwów, under Ukrainian siege in 1918, and later in the struggle of the young Polish Republic to stem the invading armies of the Communist Russia led by Marshal Budienny.

Following the cessation of hostilities the highly decorated Major Maczek made military service his lifetime career.

In 1939, when the Nazi armies invaded Poland, Colonel Maczek commanded the 10th Motorized Cavalry Brigade, which had fought several battles before on orders from the Commander in Chief Marshal Rydz-Śmigły. The brigade fighting the encircling Nazi forces crossed the Hungarian border and it was interned.

Learning that Polish forces are organized again on French soil, Col. Maczek escaped from Hungary, and in October, 1939 reported in Paris to Gen. W. Sikorski, the Commander of Polish Forces in Exile. As a reward for his services, Gen. Sikorski promoted him to the rank of Brigadier General, and put him in charge of Polish units at the Army camp at Coetquidan, Brittany.

When the Nazis invaded France in 1940, Gen. Maczek was given charge of the 10th Armored Cavalry Brigade, which fought bloody battles against the invader on June 16th and 17th, and scored important victories in the vicinity of Montbard, and on the Burgundy Canal.

The brave efforts of the Polish Brigade proved to be in vain, when

the Government of France decided to capitulate and surrender to the enemy.

Under the orders of Gen. Sikorski, the Brigade was dissolved and her men ordered to seek safety in un-occupied France, in an attempt to reach the shores of England, the last bastion of freedom. There, Prime Minister Winston Churchill rallied his countrymen and called on them to continue to struggle against the Nazi menace. As a result of the collapse of France, many thousands of former Polish soldiers found their way to England, where again several military units were organized on the friendly British soil. In February, 1942, Gen. Maczek — now in England — saw his dream fulfilled: On the 25th day of that month, Gen. Sikorski ordered Maczek to form the First Polish Armored Division. Eager to fight and to take revenge on the enemy, the Division soon proved its worth during the 1944 Invasion of Europe, where her men fought bravely side by side of the British and American comrades.

During the Battle of Normandy, the Polish troops took part in the encircling move against Nazi troops, and are credited with the closing of the "Caen-Falaise Gap," where 14 Nazi Divisions were trapped and destroyed. The battles in the area of Caen-Falaise, which raged during the month of August and culminated in the surrounding and destruction of several Panzer units of the German Army, marked the turning point of the war. This important victory of combined Allied forces made possible further drive of Allied troops across northern France, Belgium and Holland, ending on German soil with the surrender of Hitler's Germany.

The First Polish Armored Division, which fought in Normandy as one of the combat units of the First Canadian Army, under the command of General Crerar, is credited with the crucial military action of closing the German escape route, known as the "Falaise Gap." This heroic tactical maneuver by the Poles trapped the Nazi troops and prevented their escape to the East. Though for several days, the encircled German divisions fought desperately to break out, the Polish troops stood their ground. In bitter fighting the Division suffered heavy losses in personnel and equipment, but fought bravely to the end, frustrating all enemy attempts to penetrate its lines. The battle losses inflicted by the Division on Nazi forces consisted of a total annihilation of several military units, taking a large number of prisoners, including a German general, and of capture or destruction of a great volume of military arms and equipment.

The general area in which most of the military activity took place is known to the Poles as the "Maczuga" (Mace). The Canadians, aware of the fact that some of the fiercest battles of the war were fought here by Polish forces, named it "The Polish Battlefield." Following the battle, General Crerar — recognizing Polish valor and conscious of the valuable contribution made by the fighting men of the First Polish Armored Division towards the Allied victory in Normandy — sent the following telegram to General Stanisław Maczek, the Commander of the Division: "First Canadian Army is very proud because of the fact that First Polish Armored Division is a part of us. If in the future we all continue to fight with equal determination and as well as at the present time the mutual celebration of final victory should not be much delayed."

General Simonds, who delivered the message as Commander of the Second Canadian Corps, added his own words: "I am deeply pleased that

the excellent accomplishments of the First Polish Armored Division received these words of recognition on the part of the Commander of the Army." The importance of the Belgium, Holland and finally into Germany was stressed again by General Crerar in his message, which stated: "The Battle at Chambois decided the fate of the war in Normandy as well as that of the entire French Republic."

As the Allies continued to pursue the German armies across northern Europe, the Polish Division fought with distinction for the freedom of Belgium and Holland and finally entered Germany.

The Division's "Moment of Glory" arrived when its forces captured the German Port of Wilhelmshaven and accepted the surrender of the entire garrison, which included some 200 vessels of Hitler's navy.

Gen. Maczek commanded the "First Armored" until the end of hostilities on the Continent of Europe.

In May of 1945, he was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant General and was given the command of the First Polish Army Corps in Scotland. Gen. Klemens Rudnicki, who coincidentally will celebrate his 95th birthday on the 28th of March of this year, succeeded Gen. Maczek as Commander of the Division.

All those who knew Gen. Maczek and those who fought under his command, have no doubt that the history of armored warfare will include his name as one of the most brilliant commanders who served the Allied cause with the greatest distinction during the entire length of World War II.

From: POL-AM JOURNAL. Reprinted with permission.

Polish royal post founded by Italian

By ROBERT E. LANA

I have always been interested in postal history, and in my casual reading of philatelic literature in the Italian area, I occasionally come across an unlikely bit of information. Such is the case with the Italian involvement during the 16th century with the Polish royal post.

Tuscan merchant Sebastiano Montelupi, who was called Montelupich by the Poles, immigrated to Poland in 1536. He settled in Cracow, where many of his compatriots had gone as merchants and businessmen.

This Italian business immigration to Cracow was undoubtedly a result of the queen of Poland being of Italian origin.

Duchess Bona Sforza of Milan married King Sigismund II (the elder) in 1518. She encouraged the experienced merchants of Tuscan renaissance cities to come to her adopted land to stimulate the Polish economy.

Montelupi soon succeeded in becoming one of the most successful entrepreneurs among the international colony of Germans, Flemish, Walloons, Spanish, Hungarians, English and Scotch who made up the Cracow business community.

Since Poland was and is a very Catholic country, another reason for staying in close touch with Italy, besides the commercial one, was the frequent communication between the Polish government and church offi-

cials in Rome.

This double need inspired King Sigismund August, Queen Bona's son, to enlist Sebastiano Montelupi, as Cracow's leading businessman of Italian origin, to organize the royal Polish post to Italy in 1557. It was the first organized international post in Poland.



A map of the principal and alternative routes used by couriers of the Polish royal post in the 16th century.

Actually, a Piedmontese, Prospero Provano, initially organized and ran the post, but the most successful, long-term development of the service was completed by Montelupi. He was appointed administrator of the Polish royal post in 1568.

The seat of the royal post was at Cracow, then the capital of Poland. It linked Vilno in Lithuania and Vienna and Venice in the south.

Each Sunday, couriers were to leave Cracow with the post and arrive in Venice within 10 days. The same expectations were in effect with the mail that left Venice, also on Sunday.

Each postal courier was furnished with an emblem of the royal post, which incorporated the king's coat of arms, a dispatch bag, a post horn and other sundry equipment.

The king, the chancellor, the under chancellor and the first secretary were exempt from postal charges. All others had to pay a fee of three groschen per half-ounce for mail from Cracow to Vienna, and another 3g for mail from Vienna to Venice. A half-ounce was the equivalent of 12.6 grams.

The principal and alternative routes used by the couriers during the 16th century are shown on the map illustrated with this column.

The post, although subjected to occasional delays, worked well.

Ordinary correspondence, depending on quantity and weight, was placed in sacks or packages and loaded onto wagons, or directly into the saddlebags of horses.

Urgent or express mail was sent by a rider who changed horses at each stop and could be aided by a local carrier as well. The news of the death of King Stefan Batory was carried to Italy in such a manner.

In addition to the transport of mail and packages, money also could be sent through the Polish postal service. The usual system was for a courier with the money to travel alongside the postal courier, who was guaranteed safe passage across international borders. He also acted as a bodyguard for the money carrier and would defend, not only the money, but the carrier as well.

How fast was this renaissance, or rather just post-renaissance, mail?

A letter from Florence to Cracow took one month, rarely more. The fastest delivery time recorded between these two cities was 21 days. From Rome to Vienna, delivery time was from 14 to 32 days. From Prague to Rome, it was 33 to 49 days.

The Polish royal post operated under extremely difficult conditions. Torrential rains in spring and autumn, muddy and snow-clogged winter roads, and frequently broken wagons, all mitigated against the swift and regular delivery of the mails.

And yet, the mail was delivered regularly and in a reasonable amount of time, if we remember it was the 16th century.

The information used in this article was taken from a monograph, SEBASTIANO MONTELUPI, by Danuta Quirini-Poplawska.

The monograph was translated from Polish into Italian and published by the Institute of The Study of Postal History located in Prato, Italy, and directed by Aldo Cecchi.

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New Poland and "Bydgoszcz 91"

By FRED SZEBEL

The political changes of the last two years in Eastern Europe and Poland expected to bring improvements in the economy and way of life. These developments have been much slower than expected. Forty-five years of ruthless communist rule twisted the mentality of the citizens. One of my friends remarked, "two generations will come and go before we can see changes to western thinking."

Upon arriving in late August in Warsaw, I spent a day phoning friends and family. The old fashioned phone system of W.W.-II vintage does not work in most cases. Modern phone communication is of first priority for business. Difficulties encountered in everyday life are the reason for joint ventures failing in a few years.

Since 1989 prices have gone up five to eight times, even higher in some instances, but earnings and pensions increased only twice. Food is plentiful but mostly of poor quality. The selection in restaurants is much better but expensive. Taxis are plentiful since fares are too costly for the average citizen. There are no improvements visible in local transportation. The stupid communist imposed economy of the last 45 years devastated the country to the point of no return, at least in our life time.

Cultural institutions are in serious trouble. Budgets in 1991 were cut by 50%. Privatization of industry and institutions forced the post-office and the telephone-telegraph to break into separate systems. Most businesses are being modeled after American standards which is not necessarily good for Poland's devastated economy.

The communists responsible for this reckless economy devastation and crimes against the nation, should be brought to justice by the law, not left in high positions and pensions.

After a short visit with friends and family in Lublin, Łódź and Warsaw, I went to Bydgoszcz to attend the National Stamp Exhibition "BYDGOSZCZ 91", September 7-15th. There I met some local friends and people from abroad. The opening ceremony, attended by the Mayor of Bydgoszcz, Polish Post Office dignitaries and invited guests, was impressive. In the evening a gala reception was held with champagne, wine and a tasty buffet. In attendance were many friends from Poland and the world. At least ten Polonus members were there: Z. Korszeń, J. Witkowski and J. Ryblewski of Poland; Dr. M. Kamieński with his wife Wanda and J. Podejko of Canada; M. Koseve of France; S. Petriuk and A. Vaumund of Germany; M. Dąbrowski of England and myself, Fred Szebel, U.S.A. (Fig. 1 & 2). In a special ceremony, S. Petriuk awarded a special medal to J. Witkowski (with his name) founded by the Polish Stamp Club of Germany.

The Post Office stand was very efficiently managed by a few friendly ladies with a large supply of stamps, cards and many postmarks (fig. 3). A special medal for the 200th Anniversary of the May 3rd Consti-



(FIG. 1): Polonus members and friends at the Opening Reception at Bydgoszcz '91. tution was minted and given as awards to exhibitors and special guests.

The exhibits ranged from excellent to very poor. Because of the lack of a large exhibit hall, different locations were used, which created some problems.

The Grand Prix was given to M. Miszczak, editor of the new philatelic publication: "Filatelistyka" for his excellent exhibit of Poland #1. Only one Polonus member exhibited in the Court of Honor. M. Da-



(FIG. 2): Polonus members (from left): F. Szebel, Dr. M. Kamiński, M. Koseve with Mrs. Wanda Kamińska, M. Dąbrowski and J. Podejko.



(FIG. 3): Opening Day Postmark of Bydgoszcz '91 and one of I. Paderewski.



(FIG. 4): F. Szebel and Dr. M. Kamiński with the Director of Postal Museum in Wrocław, Miss J. Domagała.

browski of England showed W.W.-II London issues. In the same section, an excellent Wrocław Postal Museum exhibit showed rarities of Poland, including never seen XVIII century Military covers. (Fig. 4).

Special and foreign visitors were invited for an excursion to the "Wenecja" Train Museum, pre-historic Biskupin excavations and Grudziądz. Polonus members M. Dąbrowski, J. Witkowski and Dr. M. Kamiński gave excellent lectures. Dr. Kamiński was also the leader of a group of judges. Foreign visitors were cordially treated and invited to lectures, symposiums and social affairs.

The Palmares was similar to the opening reception. Only Grand, Special and Gold medals were given that evening. In a very friendly atmosphere, special diplomas were given to present Polonus members: Dr. M. Kamiński, J. Podejko, M. Dąbrowski and Fred Szebel, for their achievements in Polish philately. The Polonus Bulletin received special Recognition and a medal for continuous publication for 50 years.

The general impression of foreign visitors was that the P.Z.F. needs definite rejuvenation and has to get in step with changes in the post-communist era in Poland. It was very clear that the current Board of P.Z.F. does not want or is not capable to change.

The balance of my time in Poland, I spent in Kraków and Zakopane with M. Dąbrowski of England. While in Warsaw, very impressive were visits to the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, Belweder (White House) and the Warka Pułaski Museum. On the last Sunday in Warsaw, I visited a stamp dealers bourse. Lots of Polish material was offered for sale, but at very high prices — more expensive than abroad.

After a few days in London, England, I eagerly returned to the good, old U.S.A.



OLONUS PHILATELIC SOCIETY

Annual Dues which include a subscription to the Bulletin are \$16.00 (U.S. funds only) and should be sent to Polonus Treasurer, P.O. Box 82, River Grove, IL 60171. Membership Dues are payable by December 31st, for the next calendar year. New members will receive all the 'Bulletins' for the year in which they join. Changes of address, problems with receiving the Bulletin, should be addressed to: Polonus Philatelic So-

ciety, P.O. Box 82, River Grove, IL 60171. General matters pertaining to the Society, contribution of articles for the Bulletin, complaints, or general matters should be directed to the President.

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PLEASE NOTE!

With the last Polonus Bulletin, notices were sent to members regarding the payment of dues. This Bulletin will be the last for those who have not paid their dues for two or more years. Payment must be received by the end of March, 1992. Dues are \$12.50 per year and should be mailed to the Polonus Treasurer, P.O. Box 82, River Grove, Illinois 60171.

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of two horizontal fields of equal size, with the top one white and the bottom one red. This flag that features Poland's white eagle set against a red shield on the white field is known as a "bandera" (ship's flag or ensign). According to Polish flag tradition it is meant to be flown by Polish ships at sea and by Polish diplomatic missions and other official institutions abroad. Many Polish Americans, however, consider the eagle flag more distinctive and prefer to fly it from flagpoles or display it at various functions.