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POLISH UNDERGROUND STAMPS SOUGHT BY GERMAN AGENTS

By STANLEY T. WLODEK

Col. Kazimierz Iranek-Osmecki was on the General Staff of the Polish Home Army (Armia Krajowa) serving largely as the Commanding Officer of the Intelligence Branch during the Warsaw Uprising in 1944. He was also the senior officer that had the sad responsibility of negotiating the terms of surrender of the Polish Underground Forces with the Germans, whose senior representative at the negotiations was the SS General Bach. As the negotiations were being completed, Gen. Bach volunteered the information that the Germans had great difficulty in obtaining intelligence about the disposition of Polish forces during the uprising, particularly the location of the Polish headquarters. To obtain such intelligence the Germans sent in agents fluent in Polish, usually Ukrainians serving in the SS, or Volksdeutch. After a while it became obvious that these agents would not actually risk the



penetration of the Polish positions, but would come back with completely fictitious intelligence reports that they simply made up. Gen Bach then insisted that each agent must bring back copies of the postage stamps that were issued by the Polish Underground. These of course, were only available in Polish controlled territory. However, as the uprising neared failure and ultimate capitulation of the Polish Forces, even this stratagem failed. German agents would buy the stamps from civilians that were able to flee the embattled city and never attempt to cross into Polish controlled territory. The Germans never succeeded in identifying the location of Polish headquarters.

These facts are recorded on page 482 of the book: "Powołanie i Przeznaczenie" by Col. Iranek-Osmecki, published in Poland by the "Panstwowy Instytut Wydawniczy in 1998".

The 1st and 2nd Poznan Issues 1919

By ZBIGNIEW MIKULSKI

(Continued from previous issue)

During the third overprinting the first figure "5" was mounted inverted in the overprinting plate and it appears upside down in positions 21-28. The error was corrected in the fourth overprinting (positions 31-38), where all the overprints are correct.

Each of the figure "5" prints, composing the overprinting plate, has individual features and therefore plates can be distinguished.

An analysis of the overprints in the sheet indicates that the overprinting was done by means of these 8 prints only, directly from manually composed overprinting forms. Two types of figure "5" prints are worth mentioning.

type 1 — the top of figure "5" is pointed (an important feature when analysing the "reverse" in position 21 on the sheet;

type 6 — there is a small gap in the bottom of figure "5" which appeared during the second overprinting (position 16).

The spaces between horizontal overprints, corresponding to successive operations of the overprinting, are different depending on the height of the top edges of the sheets which, unlike in the 1st issue, were not torn off before printing. In the case of the 9th overprinting, on the gum side in positions 81-88 there are "an offset" the overprint (Abklatsch) (Fig. 9a and 9b).

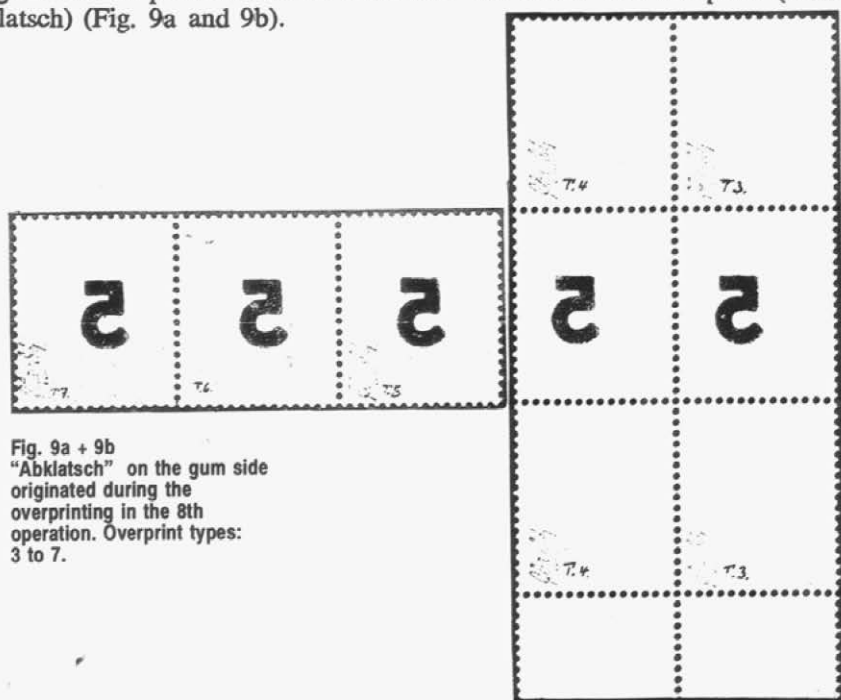


Fig. 9a + 9b
"Abklatsch" on the gum side
originated during the
overprinting in the 8th
operation. Overprint types:
3 to 7.

Blocks or horizontal stripes in overprints from two different operations (fig. 10) are interesting to collectors of this issue.



Fig. 10.
An 8-stamp block overprinted
in 3 operations 1, 2 and 9.
Overprint types: 7-8, 1-2, 7
-8, 3-4

10 pfennig overprints:

The overprinting form was made by the autographic method, i.e. flat print from a form etched in zinc sheet, at the I. Goldberg printing office in Poznań.

20 pieces of 10 pfennig stamps were arranged in two horizontal rows, 10 each. This form was used five times to make 100 overprints on autographic paper. Next, the 100 overprints were etched in zinc sheet. At this stage some figures were retouched (fig. 11). After chemical treatment, an overprinting form for the entire 100 stamp sheet was ready.

In order to better center overprinted sheets, a printer's mark (a cross) was added to the top of the 1st overprinting. The stamps were overprinted on sheets with complete edges.



Fig. 11.
Retouched figure "10" in
position 55.

2. Number of stamps:

Philatelic sources quote different numbers of these stamps. A letter of October, 1919, sent by the Postal Headquarters in Poznań, specified the number at 20,000 pieces, which seems valid.

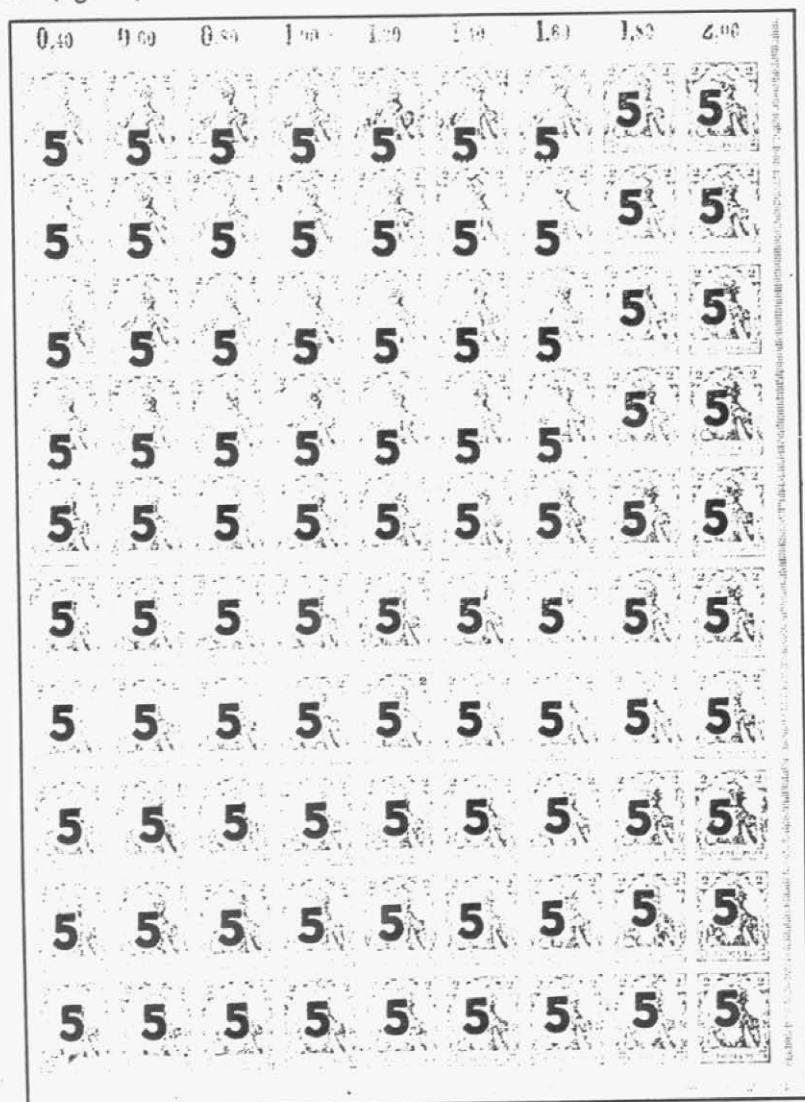
In my 40 years as an expert I consider this data acceptable. Some philatelists are of the opinion that this issue is very "philatelic". A considerable number of these stamps found in 1940 in the basement of the Poznań Headquarters, most of which were unfortunately rotten, contradicts the thesis about the issue being speculative. If it were spec-

ulative, it would have been distributed among philatelists. The stamp from position 21 with inverted overprinting was also found in these sheets. This again confirms the non-speculative character of the issue — which philatelist or profiteer would have left such an inverted overprint in the hands of the post?

3. The largest blocks and sheets

The 5 pfennig stamp exists today in a 90-stamp sheet (collection of Mr. Rinch of Essen). The sheet lacks the first vertical row, with the inverted overprint in position 21. Today the sheet is in the collection of Mr. Wojciech Grabowski, who boasts the largest collection of this issue (fig. 12).

Fig. 12. A block of 90 of 5 pfennig stamps.



In Poland the largest unit is a block of 20 stamps from the top of the sheet, formerly belonging to Dr. Tislowitz, today to Mr. Schmutz.

A few years ago this set was found in Poland in complete sheets, which, unfortunately, were separated.

A block of 9 stamps with the inverted overprint in position 21 from this set is believed to exist. Mr. Grabowski's collection includes a pair of these stamps — from position 11 and an inverted overprint from position 21 (fig. 13).

The 10 pfennig stamp — Mr. Grabowski's collection includes two complete sheets of this value (fig. 14).



Fig. 13.

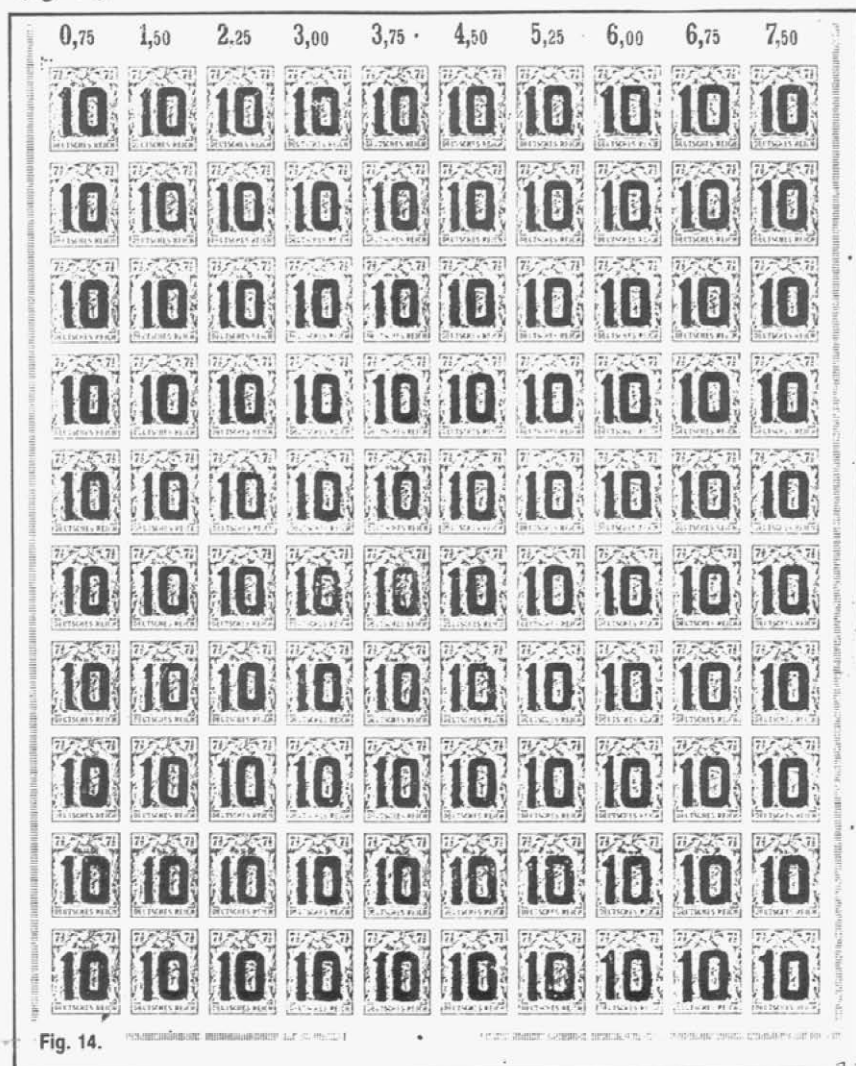


Fig. 14.

4. Circulation of the 2nd issue stamps

The stamps were used in the towns and villages mentioned below (cancelled with the following postmarks):

Gniezno: *1a, *1b,
*1c, *1e, *1f, *1*, *2*,
Bukowicz
(a former German postmark)
Jaraczewo,
Kochłów ***,
Kuschlin
(a former German postmark)
Opalenica *** or
Opalenitz
(a former German postmark)
Ostrów (Pozn)

Ostrzeszów ***
Poznań: *1a, *1b,
*1k, *3n, *5a, *9a, *9c,
Skalmierzyce: ***, *a*,
Strzałkowo *** or
Strażkowo *1b
Terespol
(a former German postmark)
Trzemeszno ***, **a,
Witkowo *a*,
Wolsztyn ***,
Września **a, **b.

Registered letters featured former German registration labels; the German names of towns are different from Polish names. The earliest date of use: August 15, 1919 on a registered letter sent from Września to Poznań.

The latest date of use known to me: December 16, 1919 — an express letter sent from Poznań to Warsaw.

Stamps of the 2nd issue were used in the following way:
—postage paid with 2nd issue stamps only (fig. 15),

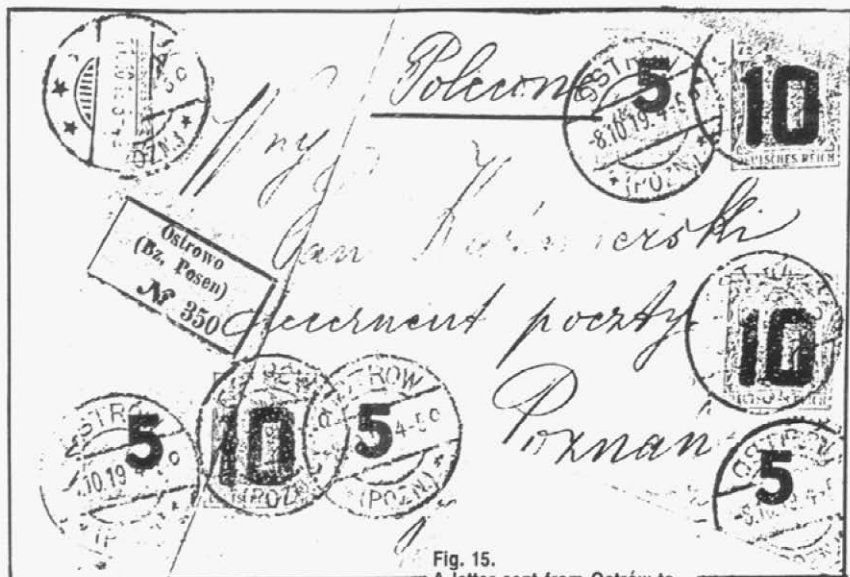


Fig. 15.
A letter sent from Ostrów to
Poznań on 8 October 1919.
Postage features only stamps
of the 2nd Poznań Issue.
A German registration label.

—postage paid with stamps of the 1st and 2nd issue (fig. 16).

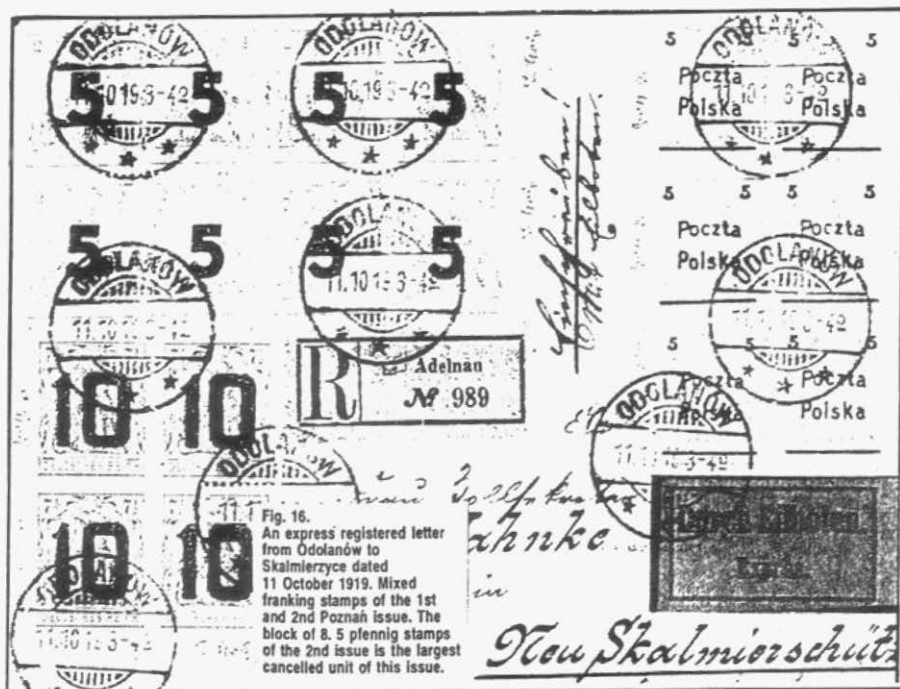


Fig. 16.
An express registered letter from Odolanow to Skalmierzyce dated 11 October 1919. Mixed franking stamps of the 1st and 2nd Poznań issue. The block of 8.5 plennig stamps of the 2nd issue is the largest cancelled unit of this issue.

—postage paid with 2nd issue stamps, Polish issue stamps (fig.17)

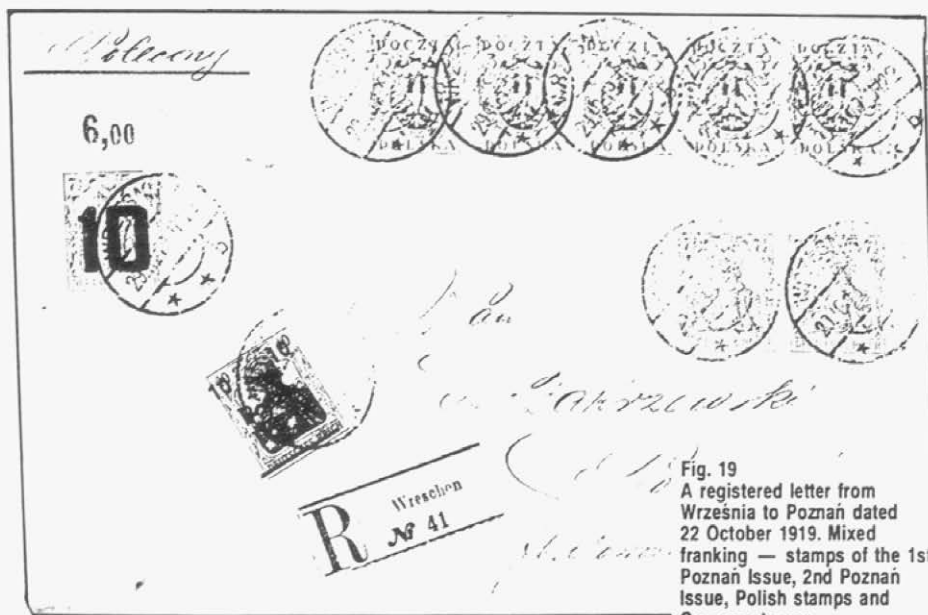


Fig. 17.
A letter from Skalmierzyce to Bialystok dated 1 October 1919. Mixed franking-stamps of the 2nd Poznań issue and Polish issue by the Polish Post.

and German stamps (fig. 18).



—postage paid with all issues in use on the territory of the Poznań Postal Headquarters; the 1st Poznań issue, Polish issue and German stamps (fig. 19).



The 2nd Poznań Issue was very popular in the past in Germany — all albums with stamps from the former German territories featured the two stamps.

Also German collectors had many stamps of this issue in their collections. The largest collection was owned (up to 1968) by H. Rinch, a chemist, a great expert on Polish philately. In addition to both values in sheets, discussed in my articles, he also owned over 100 letters with stamps of this issue.

In Poland these stamps are relatively rare — the largest blocks and interesting letters are difficult to find.

Interest in these stamps abroad has declined but in Poland it is growing.

Both issues — the 1st and 2nd Poznań Issue are ideal to study. Possibility of sheet reconstruction, and interesting letters with different postage offer a chance to make an interesting specialized collection.

Not everything has been explained about the 2nd Poznań Issue yet. There is no knowledge for example of a document which introduced this issue into circulation. However, considering the post-war improvisation of postal headquarters in individual parts of Poland, no action, today considered routine when introducing a new stamp issue, like regulations, could have been expected.

However, it must be said that the post office on the territory of the Poznań Postal Headquarters worked very efficiently at that time — it took only a day to deliver registered letters. Today, it takes much longer.

—Zbigniew Mikulski, St. Gallen, Switzerland

REVIEW OF "POLAND REVENUES"

By JOHN BAREFOOT (England)

with assistance from Ed Neumann (Canada)

Dr. John D. Neefus, Reviewer

Those of us interested in Polish philately, should have great interest in "Poland Revenues." My growth to a philatelist continues to build a library at every opportunity and delve into those subjects near the mainstream of stamp collecting such as postal history, perfins, cancellations and revenues. My purchase of "Poland Revenues" is now an important part of my philatelic library.

Beside the Polish National Revenue issues from 1920 to the recent times, there are also revenues cited for the Pre-World War I Poland (forerunners during partition), W-W-I Occupations, WW-II General Gouvernement, provincial and re-

gional and municipal issues. To my pleasant surprise there were sections on Memel, Upper Silesia and Danzig (Free State), which are also directly related to my interests.

The 132 page book is in A4 format with three columns and well indexed. The font appears to be Times Roman and is easy to read. Prices are in pounds (£) and pence (p) and represented as retail prices. Multiply by 1.6 and you will get an estimate of the US dollar value.

NOTE: copies are available from John Barefoot Ltd., P.O. Box 8, York, YO24 4AR, England
email: JBarefootL@aol.com
Price: £15 (US \$23 surface, \$30 airmail)

The Unique Used 200 Mark Warwiszki Stamp

By STANLEY KRONENBERG

The five kilometer wide demilitarized zone between Lithuania and Central Lithuania was divided by the League of Nations in March, 1923 between Poland and Lithuania. The town Warwiszki and surrounding villages located in this zone were assigned to Lithuania. This resulted in an armed uprising of the exclusively Polish population of Warwiszki under the leadership of J. Chmura.

The uprisers established postal connection with Poland. Additional postage was required to transport mail to the nearest Polish post office. The additional postal rates were: 50 Mk for postcards, 100 Mk for regular letters, and 200 Mk for registered letters. Polish stamps Scott nos. 164, 165 and 166 were overprinted for this purpose in the local printing shop. These overprints were made with a printing form which contained 5 x 5 overprints.

stamp exists. It was cut out from a registered letter and shows the violet postmark: "Self Government Warwiszki, Command of the Armed Force" with the Polish eagle and a skull with crossed bones. It is cancelled in black with the regular postmark of Sopockinie. The overprint on this stamp is from position 21.

The cover from which this stamp was cut out was destroyed a long time ago but while it was still intact it was shown to the editors of the periodical "Nowy Filatelista" and was described there in the issue #4-5 of June, 1923, page 43. According to that description this registered letter addressed to Grodno was franked in addition to the 200 Mk Warwiszki stamp with 12 regular Polish 50 Mk stamps (Scott no. 164). These stamps were cancelled with the Sopockinie postmark dated March 27, 1923, the day the uprising ended because Lithuanians



Used Warwiszki stamps are very rare. Only three regular letters with these stamps exist. They are franked with 50 Mk or 100 Mk Warwiszki stamps in addition to the 300 Mk postage paid with Polish stamps. No postcard franked with a 50 Mk Warwiszki stamp was ever found.

One used 200 Mk Warwiszki

burned Warwiszki. Between February 15 and April 1, 1923, the postage for letters sent within Poland was 300 Mk and the charge for registration was also 300 Mk. The registration number of Sopockinie on that letter was 590.

REFERENCE:

Z. Mikulski, "Filatelistyka", March, 1993.

New Issues - 1998

POLISH NAVY



55 gr.; printing: offset;
paper: fluorescent;
size: 39.5 x 31.25 mm;
Quantity: 1,000,000
Sheet of 20 stamps, 10 of each
Designer: Tomasz Bogusławski
First day: January 4, 1999

"I order to establish the Polish Navy on November 28, 1918, and I appoint Navy Colonel Bogumił Nowotny to be the head of the Navy Section at the Ministry of Military Affairs" — the document signed by Józef Piłsudski initiated the formation of the Polish Navy, which presently celebrates its 80th anniversary.

The Polish Post decided to join the celebrations by means of an emission of two stamps. Made in the convention of black and white,

they are sort of a chronicle, because they present the history and the present day of the Polish Navy. The destroyer ORP "Piorun" as shown in the first stamp, was used under the Polish banner during the Second World War. It helped scuttle the German ship "Bismarck". After the war, the ship, so meritorious for Poland, was returned to the British Admiralty according to the respective agreement. The second stamp represents a contemporary military ship used by the Navy since 1994 and bearing the historic name of ORP "Piorun".

A First Day Circulation (FDC) envelope with a special date seal applied in the Post Office Gdynia 1, was sold on the first day of issue.

—Robert Debski, Polish Post

I LOVE YOU



Printing: offset; paper: fluorescent;
Size: 40.5 x 40.5 mm
Quantity: A 2,500,000
 B 3,300,000
Sales sheet: 16 pcs
Designer: Jacek Konarzewski

First Day: February 05, 1999

It is already a tradition that the Polish Post issue special stamps for all those in love and not only for them at the occasion of St. Valentine's Day. This time, we've decided

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to invite our customers to play domino. It is worth trying. Maybe you will be lucky and the effect will be the same as in the stamps.

A special date seal was applied in the Post Office Warsaw 1 on the first day of issue.

—Robert Debski, Polish Post

STAMP MARKET TIPS

By JOHN G. ROSS

Poland-Offices in Danzig

After World War I, in 1919, the German city of Danzig and its surrounding area were made a free city and state.

Poland later received a plot of Danzig's territory and established a post office there Jan. 5, 1925.

In 1925, Poland began to issue special stamps for use in the office. These stamps will make worthwhile additions to your collection.

I feel that by far the key stamp of this group is the 1-złoty black stamp on cream paper picturing President Ignacy Mościcki, with a vertical "PORT GDANSK" overprint, Scott 1K24, issued in 1933.

There were 100,000 sets issued, a rather large number. However, 1933 was a year of deep depression throughout Europe. There is a good chance that many of these stamps went unsold and eventually were destroyed.

The 1999 Scott catalog values

I buy Polish Stamp Collections, interesting stamps; Fieldpost Provisional & Censor markings; Post cards and covers of normal circulation.

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the mint, never hinged stamp at \$110, \$27.50 more than last year's retail value.

Dealers in Europe are paying a little more than \$60 for the mint, never hinged stamp.

I have rarely seen unused examples of this stamp being faked, but be careful of used versions. There are plenty of forgeries on the market. If in doubt, have the stamp expertized.

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