

BULLETIN OF THE

POLONUS PHILATELIC SOCIETY



Meets Every Second and Fourth Friday of the Month at Falcons Hall, 1062 N. Ashland Ave., Chicago, Ill.

Issue 215

October, 1963

MANY OUT-OF-TOWNERS TO ATTEND POLPEX

With last month's "Polonus Bulletin", questionnaire reply cards were enclosed in order to make a preliminary survey on the coming exhibition. An overwhelming response was received from out-of-town members who plan on coming to Chicago, to exhibit and attend the jubilee banquet at POLPEX 1964 on February 28, 29 and March 1 at the Andrew House, 2441 W. Division St. in Chicago, U.S.A.

The Polpex Committee announces that invitations will be sent to the various Polish stamp clubs in the United States and abroad to participate in our exhibition, with their Polish material. By doing so we hope to present the largest Polish exhibition ever held outside of Poland on this our 25th Anniversary of the Polonus Philatelic Society.

GREATEST NUMBER OF AWARDS TO BE GIVEN

Along with plans for makings this the biggest show ever are plans for giving the greatest number of awards. Besides the Grand Award, Dr. Kozakiewicz Research Award and the usual First, Second, Third and Novice awards, there will be trophies given for Best Locals, Best Plebescite, Best Fieldpost, Best Offices Abroad, Best Prisoner of War and Best Topical exhibits.

A newly created Dr. Matthew E. Uzanski Historical Award, donated by the family of our late president will be given for the best historical stamp exhibit. Another new award is the Maurice Apfelbaum Award for excellence in stamp collection on printed album pages.

A complete listing of the awards will appear in the prospectus which is now being formulated for printing and to be mailed out with the November Bulletin.

LAST CALL FOR SOUVENIR SHEET DESIGN

Only a few days remain for you to submit a design for our POLPEX 1964 Souvenir Sheet. It is not important that your sketch is very elaborate, appearing in two or three colors — black on white is good enough. It is the idea and design that we are after. Just be sure that the theme of the souvenir sheet be the 25th Anniversary of the Polonus Philatelic Society. (For complete contest rules and regulations see last month's "Bulletin.")

The designs should be in the hands of the Contest Committee not later than October 31, 1963. Send your design to Chester Schafer, 864 N. Ashland Ave., Chicago, Ill. 60622.

- 1st Prize—A copy of Poland No. 1.
- 2nd Prize—A set of Poland First Day Covers (of a desirable issue).
- 3rd Prize—\$5.00 in trade from dealer Roman Reinowski.
- 4th Prize—\$5.00 in trade from dealer Roman Burkiewicz.

Additional prizes of the newest Ruch Catalog will be given. These are donated by Joseph Bieniecki of Granite City, Ill.

NEW MEMBER

Mathew R. Zale
6 Oak Tree Lane
Malvern, Penna.

MEET THE AUTHOR

By Walter Szymlek

It is time we introduce to our members the author of many articles appearing in our "Polonus Bulletin", in "Stamps", in the "Polish Daily Zgoda", "Dziennik Chicagoski", etc.

Dr. Mieczysław A. M. Rayall de Ragan was born in 1915 in France but already returned with his parents to Poland in 1919 after World War I. They settled in Poznan where he finished his normal and higher schooling and majored in chemistry at Poznan University.

In 1935 he received an officer's commission in the artillery and later took part as a professional officer in the September campaign in 1939 against the Nazi invasion and was wounded several times.

When the first part of World War II ended (between Poland and Germany), he stayed in the eastern part of Poland occupied by Soviet-Russia, namely in Lvov and later in Vilna where he began to study pharmacy and later worked in an apothecary in Lvov.

In 1945 we find him in Poznan again where he was an assistant of pharmaceutical chemistry at Poznan University and where he received a doctor's degree in chemistry and pharmaceutical sciences in 1949.

Philately was his hobby since his school days. At the age of 14, with the help of Prof. Dr. Charles Rzyński, he organized one of the first philatelic circles, named Dr. Charles Marcinkowski at the state gymnasium school in Poznan.

During the occupation period he wrote and published several philatelic works and was a member of the German Association of Philatelic Literature.

From 1945 to 1952 he was an active member of the "Wielkopolski Klub Filatelistów" in Poznan and one of the first Poland members of the Polonus Philatelic Society, SPA, ASE, ASDA, other European clubs, and became a steady correspondent of "Stamps" magazine, the "Polonus Bulletin" and other German magazines.



Dr. M. A. Rayall de Ragan

In later years, because of political controversies, he totally retired from the Polish Philatelic Society at Warsaw because of its critical article in Bulletin No. 135, "A New Catalogue On Stamps Of Poland". He limited his efforts to that of a Polish philatelic correspondent with publications abroad.

His chief life's work was a study about Upper Silesian stamps and cancellations, "Handbook of Upper Silesia", exhibited at POLPEX 1962.

Apart from his work as a writer, Dr. M.A. Rayall de Ragan is well known and an acknowledged collector abroad. He is not as popular locally because of envious enmity.

His specialized collections of the Grand Duchy of Baden, Upper Silesia, Postmarks of Plebiscite Schleswig 1920 and Germany from 1872 to 1923, were often exhibited and received high awards both locally and abroad.

Unfortunately, due to persecutions and discriminations of a political, professional and official nature, it was impossible for him to exhibit his collections abroad for some years now.

Heavily dissatisfied by this treatment, Dr. M.A. Rayall de Ragan turned

solely to writing and scientific work in the field of Philately. His library contains over 2500 philatelic volumes in all, the largest in Poland, and includes mostly publications of the first period of the history of philatelic literature, 1880-1900.

It came to our knowledge that Dr. M.A. Rayall de Ragan is at the moment working on four works:

1. A monograph on Philatelic Exhibitions, and especially about the participation of Poles in these exhibitions.

2. A basic work about the Cancellations of the District of Memel (Klaipėda) Plebiscite.

3. A Map of Postal Routes, Postal Cancellations (numeral), Railway Postmarks, and Postablage Cancellations of the Grand Duchy of Baden with descriptions.

4. A great work in the form of a four or five lingual encyclopedia "Who's Who On Postage Stamps", a short description of all persons depicted on postage stamps of the world.

Among his non-philatelic writings were three articles on chemistry, five on medicine and one on history. Among his philatelic works are nine major works on Upper Silesia, three of which are in German, three in Polish and three in English. He wrote 19 articles in English for the "Polonus Bulletin", 11 articles in Polish which appeared in "Dziennik Chicagoski" and the "Polish Daily Zgoda" "Gazeta Zielonogórska" and "Gazeta Gorzowska", as well as a great number of short articles and reports appearing in "Stamps."

— POLAND —

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IN MEMORIAM

ELMER STUART

It is with deep regret that Polonus reports the passing of one of its old and staunch former members who held Polonus number 161 and who was a regular full-page advertiser in our POLPEX catalogs. He was a devoted philatelist and a well-known Chicago dealer.

Elmer Stuart died on September 29 in the Northwest Community Hospital at the age of 72. He was a dealer on Washington Street in Chicago's Loop for more than 30 years. His special interest were old U.S. stamps and he was respected as an expert in this field. His Penny Blacks won high awards for him. In 1952 he was honored with the Newberry Award for his distinguished service to philately in Chicagoland.

Elmer will be long remembered for his helpfulness to fellow collectors and for his ability as a speaker and entertainer. The recollection before the Polonus Philatelic Society of his experiences as a stamp dealer was especially refreshing.

In his younger days, Elmer was a vaudeville performer with his wife as a partner in their tap-dance and drum-dance numbers. Philately held Elmer's prime interest so that he built a prized 2-volume collection of early U.S. issues and lost it in a bank vault robbery. He was much interested and well versed in Chicago's history which fact was reflected in his collection of Chicago postal history, in his presidency of the Palatine Historical Society, and in his office as historian of the Chicago Philatelic Society, where he was active for four score years and where he was at one time or other, president, vice-president and chairman of its vital committees. He was also a president of Chapter 1 (not now existing) of the American Philatelic Society; of the Chicago Federation of Stamp Clubs to which Polonus belongs, and others.

To his wife, Shirley, and to his two brothers, Elmer's many friends at Polonus extend their heartfelt sympathy.

—Myron E. Steczynski

PRZEMYSL FLIGHTS

By Fred J. Rafael

(Reprinted from "Austria Philatelic Society Bulletin" of 5/6/52)

Some of the dramatic events of the first six months of World War I are reflected in that part of the Sobetzky Austrian Airmail Collection, now owned by Henry Rosenfeld and recently exhibited at our meeting,—which contains the Przemyśl items. At the beginning of the war, the Austrian plan of operations stipulated an offensive thrust to the north by a strong Austrian wing and a defensive action along the east by the weaker segment of the army. Even before mobilization was completed this left Austrian wing scored considerable successes against the poor Russian opposition. However, the German offensive forces which were intended to supplement the Austrians in the South, had been weakened for the planned push in the west against the country of France.

When the Russians attacked with vastly superior forces and sooner than was expected, the weak Austrian forces even further depleted by shifting part of the Army to Serbia, were obviously defeated east of Lemberg and near Grodek. Lemberg (Lwów) fell to the Russians on September 2nd and after a bloody battle at Rawa-Ruska the Austrian forces were in full retreat along the line of the river San by September 11th.

The fortress of Przemyśl guarded the main crossing of the river San. It consisted of a ring of 36 forts within a circumference of as many miles. Some of these forts were of contemporary construc-

tion, but as a whole, the fortifications were not up to date. It was armed with about 1000 guns, most of them old, short-range weapons. Altogether there were 114 machine guns, a third of them immobile.

The Austrians were too badly shaken by preceding battles to make a stand at the San and retreated further west to the Dunajec line. Within the fortress there were approximately 130,000 men and 21,000 horses when the first siege began on September 18th.

The Russians did not attack at once, awaiting arrival of their heavy artillery which was delayed by their bad communications system. This gave the



Unmanned Paper Balloon in Przemyśl

Austrians time to start an offensive in October for the purpose of relieving the besieged fortress. This was a signal for the Russians to attempt to storm the fortress, without their heavy guns. A fierce battle raged for three days, from Oct. 5th to the 8th and the Russians were repulsed with heavy losses. Upon arrival of the relief army, the Austrian Third, the Russians were forced to retreat to the east bank of the San; Austrian infantry entered the fortress on October 11th.

For the rest of the month, the Austrians tried to force the San line. Przemyśl's supplies were used for this purpose by the field armies, making the garrison vulnerable thereby. Actually there were nothing else that could have been done, Austrian supply service being what it was and the Russians didn't exactly help when they destroyed railroads and bridges in their retreat. This Austrian offensive proved fruitless, increasing Russian pressure made another retreat unavoidable, and a mad scramble began to reprovise the fortress.

The second siege started on November 6th. This time the Russians used second line troops only, which proved adequate for the long siege. The Austrians held the Donec line, east of Cracow — and to the south, the main ridges of the Carpathian mountains. Heavy fighting raged there throughout the winter, the Russians trying to break through to the plains of Hungary. During February and March the Austrians tried to relieve the fortress once more, but without avail. The Carpathian, augmented by German troops, held.

By the middle of March food and ammunition in Przemyśl were nearly exhausted. A desperate attempt to break out of the fortress was stopped by the Russians. (March 19th.) Three days later, after first destroying the fortifications and remaining stores, the commander and his garrison of 110,000 men surrendered to the enemy.

Six weeks later, united German and Austrian armies under General Mackensen broke the Russian lines at Gorlice. On May 30th Russian held Prze-

myśl was attacked and yielded after three days.

Przemyśl was the only land-fortress of World War I to withstand a prolonged siege after complete investment. This can be explained, of course, by the absence of heavy artillery on the part of the Russians. When the situation reversed, the German siege guns, including the famous 42 cm. Big Berthas, did in three days what the Russians couldn't do in four months.

As so often in Austrian history, bitter irony is not missing in the heroic defense of Przemyśl. As pointed out by the Encyclopedia Britannica, Przemyśl served no strategic purpose commensurate with the efforts expended in its defense and relief. The fortress did not control any vital supply lines to the Russian armies operating west of it toward Cracow, since there was a railroad about 15 miles north of the fortress through Jaroslav.

During both sieges the fortress was completely surrounded by the enemy. Radio (?) and aviation were the only means of communication with the outside world. Radio at that time was far from its present stage of development, and was reserved for official purposes only, as were the few planes which the army possessed at the moment.

Two formations of aviators were part of the garrison, namely "Flying Squadron No. 11" and the "Fortress Balloon Division No. 1" which was a formation of the Fortress Artillery Regiment "Prince Kinsky No. 3", and as such probably primarily intended for artillery observation purposes. Both of these troop formations were stationed in Buszkowice, a suburb within the line of fortifications. Members of these troops thus were in close contact with each other and used every flight from the fortress by giving mail to the pilots. Frequently they included mail from friends in other parts of the armed services. This type of mail is classified as "fore-runners" and included everything up to January 6th, 1915 at which time official Flight Post Cards were introduced, later to be followed by "unofficial" airmail. They bear a variety of post—or identifying marks, such as:

1. round
2. oblong rubberstamp of Flying Squadron No. 11.
3. oblong rubberstamp (3 lines) of the Fortress Balloon Div. No. 1.

Of course it often happened that a planned flight was cancelled. In such cases, covers which were in the hands of Balloon Division No. 1 received an additional rubberstamp, either one of the two types, of Flying Squadron No. 11. Pilots carried personal mail, as well as last minute postings, on their own behalf and such pieces of mail show no identifying rubberstamp confirming its origin being the fortress. On some cards carried on the third flight, a rubberstamp mark of the Flying Squadron No. 14 has been found, though that formation was stationed at Kaschau.

The rubberstamp of Fortress Balloon Divisions No. 2 and 3, sometimes found in the space reserved for name and address of the sender are in no way comparable to those of Balloon Division No. 1.

Starting on January 6th, 1915, the transportation of field-postcards by air was systematically organized by the fortress command. Special, thin field-postcards were issued and sold at the General Post Office in Przemyśl at a price of 50 Heller, the proceeds going to a fund for the benefit of widows and orphans of aviators killed in action. The cards were issued in five different colors: yellow — 38%

green — 26% rose — 24%
gray-green — 11% blue 1%

Altogether about 85,000 such cards were sold, a surprisingly low number when it is considered that the fortress was manned by more than 100,000 men and that these cards represented the only means of communications with their families for over 2 months. This might be explained by a possible lack of funds, the pay of Austrian soldiers were pitifully small and there is reason to believe that they were not paid at all during the siege.

Each official Flight postcard bears a number, a rubberstamped legend No. Flight Post Przemyśl, a control mark and two censorship marks. The num-

bers were affixed to the upper left-hand corner, written in by hand (Nos. 966—30,108) on yellow (Brownish-yellow) and green cards which were sold from Jan. 6th to 12th. On cards sold from Jan. 11th to Feb. 24th, a numbering machine with characters 5¾ mm. high was used. The known cards run from No. 2 to 35,732. Another machine printing numbers 6½ mm. in height was used on cards sold after Jan. 16th, the numbers being between 2084 and 17,902.

After the cards were numbered, the General Post Office applied a rubberstamp of which six types are known:

No. 4: Fliegerpost Przemyśl, Janner 1915, (in two lines, 67 mm. wide, purple to purple-black ink, rarely in blue or red ink, on yellow and green cards.)

No. 5: The same as No. 4, but the word "Janner" was removed. (purple to purple-black ink, blue ink, rose and yellow cards.)

No. 7: The same as No. 6, but "1915" in italics. (purple-black and blue ink, rose cards.)

No. 8: Similar to No. 7, but smaller letters - 59 mm. wide, (purple-black and blue ink, rose, yellow, green and grey-green cards.)

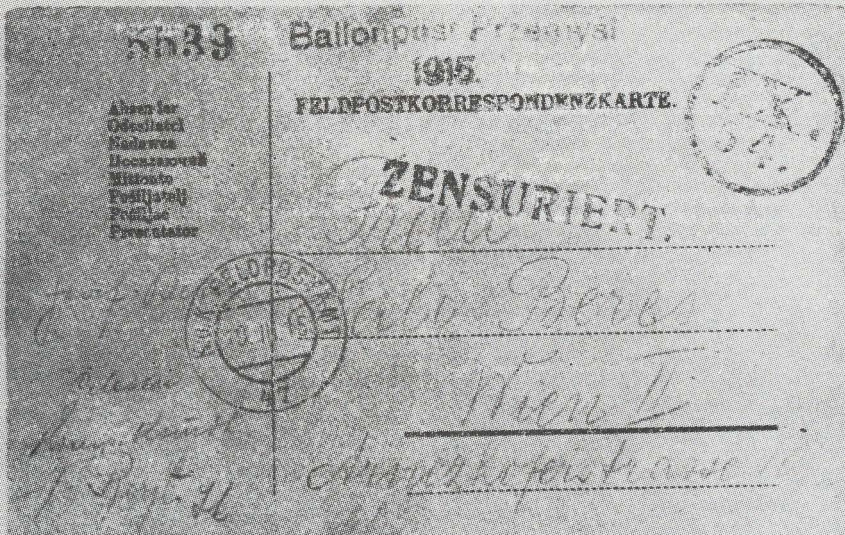
The letter "r" in the word "Fliegerpost" is often only partly visible, or completely missing.

No. 9: Similar to No. 8, but only 56½ to 57 mm. long, (purple to purple-black ink, green, yellow, rose and grey-green cards.)

The name of localities was prohibited within the postmark, therefore cancellations of the postoffice Przemyśl are rare. With the beginning of the official flight service, the Przemyśl postoffice used control marks, rather than the regular cancellation devices. Of this control mark five types are known. All of them show the Roman numeral IX and the Arabic 54 within a circle.

Type I: diameter 20 mm., the "I" of the "IX" is bigger than the "X". Period after IX, no period after 54.

Type II: diameter 26½ mm., diameter of the ring ½ mm., upper and lower



Balloon Card found near Tuja-Remete



Balloon Card No.15747, carried by plane ?

during the first siege.

During the four weeks between the first and the second siege (October 11th to November 6th, 1914) it is known that a number of aviators brought some mail from Przemyśl, but no cover has been found as yet, or which air transportation could be definitely established.

During the second siege twelve mail

carrying flights were staged. Flight No. 2, on November 23rd by Cpt. von Lehman, landed in Cracow, carried fore-runner mail dated November 8th and 22nd which was cancelled on November 23rd by field post-office 101. Delivery was made in Vienna on November 27th.

Flight 3, December 9th, Private Wannek and 1st Lt. Wagner, crossed

the Carpathian mountains and landed in Hungary; they transported fore-runner mail dated November 23rd to December 7th, which was cancelled by the Hungarian field post office 30 on December 10th, though the mutilated stamp reads December 1st.

Flights 4 and 5, December 26th, 1914 by 1st Lt. Schmoeser and 1st Lt. Martinek (flight 4) and 1st Lt. Rzymenowski and 1st Lt. Reischer. Both planes landed in Cracow with forerunner mail dated December 8th to 24th and some that had missed earlier flights. Since both flights took place on the same day and both planes landed in the same place, no distinction between them is possible. Some pieces were cancelled December 27th by field post office 186. Delivery in Vienna was made on December 30th, in Hungary between January 4th and 7th.

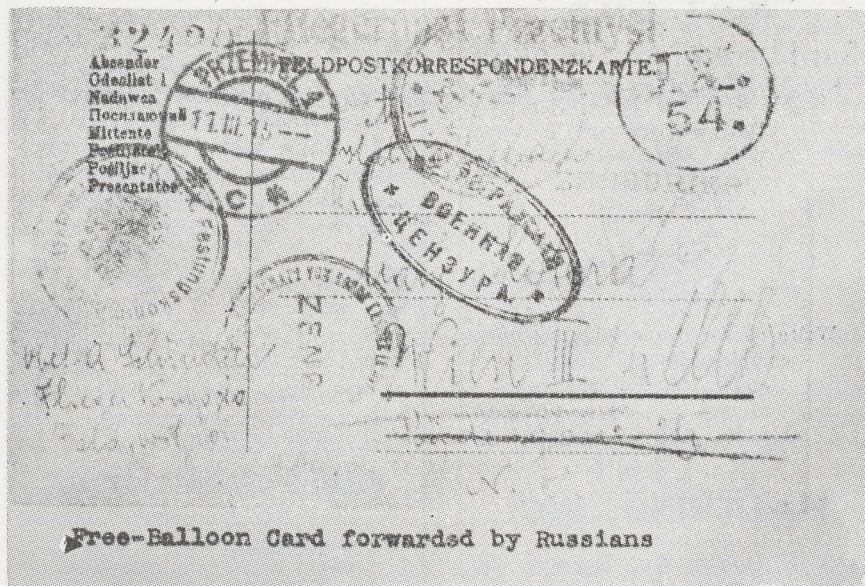
Flights 6, 7, and 8 took place on January 18th, 1915. The pilots were 1st Lt. Schindler (flight 6), 1st Lt. Schmoeser and Kumstadt (flight 7) and Lt. Stanger (flight 8). They landed at headquarters of the Fourth army, and in Brzesko respectively, bringing forerunner mail, and for the first time official flight postcards dated December 24th, 1914 to January 16th, 1915, and remainder mail, as well as unoffi-

cial cards with the same dates. Again it is impossible to distinguish between these three flights. Some of these covers received a rubberstamp "Fahrende Feldpostsammelstelle Krakau — Wien" (Mobile fieldpost collection station Cracow—Vienna) on January 19th, others were cancelled in Mährisch-Ost-rau 1 on January 20th. They were delivered in Vienna on January 21st to 27th.

Flight 9, February 7th, by Cpts. von Lehman and Rankenberger landed in Cracow with official flight postcards and unofficial mail dated January 17th to February 5th and some remainders. Part of the mail was cancelled by field post office 56 with the date February 7th, by the field post office 101 and by the general field post office 22 on February 8th. Delivery was made in Vienna on February 9th, in Hungary on February 10th to 12th.

Flight 10, February 10th, by 1st Lts. Schindler and Kozma, landing in Brzesko. Official and unofficial flight postcards dated February 6th and 7th, and some remainders. Some of these covers were cancelled on February 11th by field post office 56. Delivery in Vienna was on February 11th and 12th; in Hungary on February 14th.

(Continued Next Month)



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Friday, November 8, 1963

Business Meeting; auction to follow.

Friday, November 22, 1963.

Meeting will be held at the Main Post Office, on Van Buren and Canal Streets, in downtown, Chicago. Members will assemble at information counter in main lobby at eight o'clock. After a brief meeting, we will then be taken on a guided tour to see the Main Post Office in action at night.

NEW ISSUES

By J. J. Domar

On October 9th, Czesław Kaczmarek submitted for reproduction his 100th project.

This one was issued to commemorate Stamp Day. The design of the stamp itself was adapted from a famous painting "Love Letter" by the distinguished Polish painter Władysław Czachorski (1850-1911).

It was to be printed by rotary recess (engraver E. Konecki) on chalky paper, in sheets of 40, size 48 x 36 mm. Quantity printed, 2,000,000.

—Filatelista

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