

BULLETIN of the

POLONUS PHILATELIC SOCIETY



Meets every 4th Friday at the Polish Youth Association Building,
(Dom Harcerski) 6434 West Belmont Avenue, Chicago, IL

ISSUE NO. 468

Price: \$2.00

NOV.-DEC., 1994

EVER DECREASING CIRCLES



The Republic of Poland that was reborn on November 11th, 1918, had no frontiers, no established territory, no government, no constitution and no international recognition.

The task of establishing its territory and institutions lasted nearly four years and the birth-pangs were attended by many loud and lusty screams.

In 1914, when Europe went to war, Poland did not exist on the map of Europe and there was no one living who would remember it existing. The thirty million who called themselves Poles, were subjects of the Russian Tsar, the German Kaiser or the Austrian Emperor. So the war brought the subject of the Polish problem to a head and with the help of the American President Wilson's Fourteen Points, Poland was reborn.

The task of recreating a new Poland was difficult, most of Poland's new territory was won by acts of war, not at the Peace Conferences as many text books say. The heartland of the new Poland were the areas of German and Austrian occupation zones (Warsaw, Lublin, Kraków and Poznań) were secured before the peacemakers got together.

The Peace Conferences settled Poland's western borders with Germany by awards of West Prussia (the Corridor), but made Danzig a Free City. Plebiscites were held in East Prussia (Marienwerder and Allenstein) and Silesia.

The border wars fought during this time with Germany, Czechoslovakia, Lithuania, Ukraine and the Soviet Union were of more significance than local importance yielding Wilno, Lwów, Polesie (Borderlands), Rawicz and Cieszyn.

This period (1918-1922) is full of philatelic interest and, luckily is reflected in the stamps and postal history.

—Malcolm K. Stockhill

(The above is from notes prepared for a display under the same title given at the Polish White Eagle Club, London, SW17 on February 20, 1994).

Reprinted from "Polish Philatelic Review" published by the Society For Polish Philately in Great Britain.

Monte Cassino - a Polish soldier's story

By STANLEY DOBRZYCKI

The month of May is special for Poles. The Constitution of May 3rd was adopted by Poland, the first democratic constitution in Europe and second only to the U.S. Constitution. The first Polish pope was born in May and in World War II, Polish soldiers were victorious over enemy forces at Monte Cassino in May, 1944.

On the 50th anniversary of the great battle, veterans from all over the globe traveled to the legendary place where poppies grow red from the blood of Polish heroes. From Poland came President Lech Wałęsa and Prime Minister Waldemar Pawlak. The United States was represented by Col. Zdzisław Wesołowski. Polish soldiers with the help of young scouts had the honor to usher those who came to pay homage. Several groups arrived from Chicago with their families to this important historic place.

Each group made their own travel plans and its own itinerary. Our

eager group started at O'Hare airport on May 9th. We flew to Budapest, the place where during the war, the largest number of Poles were secretly transported and were able to travel to France or the Middle East. It is a beautiful Hungarian city. We cruised the Danube River by hydrofoil to Vienna. Then by bus to Salzburg, the home of "The Sound of Music," a wonderful and clean city. The town of Innsbruck with its beautiful mountain scenery and spirit of past Winter Olympiads was next on our list. Verona, home of Romeo and Juliet, enchanted us and then Bologna followed. It is the place with the largest Polish Army Cemetery of World War II. And afterwards, Loreto, with a very beautiful war cemetery. That's where I found the grave of my school friend, John Gryczan of the Carpathian Lancers Regiment. I also paid my respects to a fallen comrade from my regiment, the 1st Battery of the Carpathian Field Artillery, Zbigniew Okulicki, son of General Okulicki. Pompeii was next to last and it was worth the wait to visit. I

We arrived at Monte Cassino during a downpour, a place filled with the rain of tears. A path led to the Polish Cemetery and a major directed us to our places. We, the veterans of Monte Cassino, were herded into a wet pasture. Instead of honoring the soldiers who fought at Monte Cassino and paying respect to those who gave their lives, others filled the reserved space in the cemetery while we, the soldiers who fought so hard 50 years ago to gain that victory, were driven out of the place of honor and into a wet marsh. We also were slighted by the Allies in the Victory Parade. And the government of the Third Republic of Poland also treated us with little respect at the Monte Cassino commemoration.

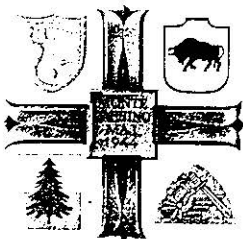
Seven nations fought to take Monte Cassino from enemy control. The first attack, Operation Shingle, took place in January, 1944. Operation Avenger in February was the second offensive. In March, the third attack called Operation Dickens ended in failure. Operation Diadem was the fourth attack and it concluded with a victory for the Polish armed forces. A Polish flag was raised over the ruins of the monastery on May 18th, 1944. The Second Corps of General Władysław Anders suffered 923 casualties and had 2,931 wounded and 94 who were lost or missing.

A cross was issued in recognition of this Polish victory. The above article was written by the one awarded Cross #3770.

In 1984, Poland issued a special commemorative stamp for the 40th Anniversary of Monte Cassino and again in 1994, another stamp was issued for the 50th Anniversary.



50.ROCZNICA ZDOBYCIA
MONTE CASSINO



POLAND, 1939-1949

(A WORLD'S JOURNEY FOR ITS PEOPLE)

By **THOMAS J. GOBBY**

When one says that "I collect Poland," it can mean many things. It can be stamps, mint or used or both, stampless covers of different areas and periods, postal history, and on and on. But in all of these specialties there tends to be a common denominator, stamp or geographic area that says that this collection is distinctively Polish. With other collections that may not be so.

Let me illustrate. World War II was a horrible event about which virtually everyone knows something. This war caused great suffering and its consequences reached out to touch, in some way, every nation on every continent. And perhaps no nation was touched nor suffered so much as Poland. Its people, like straws in the wind, were scattered across the planet Earth. It is possible to form collections around these events. Such a collection would be made up of covers and postcards.

To put together such a collection will require dedicated persistence, and some knowledge of what to look for. Knowing history is more than just a little bit of help. It's a requisite. A working familiarity with other languages is most useful.

Let's begin. With the German invasion of Poland on September 1st, 1939 and the Soviet invasion on Sept. 17th, 1939, things changed forever. Germany and the Soviet Union divided and occupied Poland between themselves. In the German area there are provisional cancellations of the late 1939 period. After annexing western Poland into the Reich, what was left, was designated as the General Government, and this presents quite a challenge for the postal historian. The eastern area of the Soviet occupation is another collecting challenge. After the German invasions of the U.S.S.R. in June, 1941, the Galician area was annexed into the General Government.

A real collecting challenge is the assembly of a collection of material from the internment camps for Poles which were located in the following countries: Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Romania, Spain, Sweden, and Switzerland. The most difficult of the camps are those of the USSR. In Switzerland the internees issued at least two different stamp labels and a like number of postcards.

Prisoner of War mail is another area that could occupy the collector. Such camps housing Polish prisoners were located in Poland, Germany, France and Norway.

An interesting adjunct to the regular POW mail are the stamp issues from POW camps at Woldenberg, Murnau and Gross-Born. These have been accorded catalog status and are eagerly sought by collectors.

Though defeated in Poland, the Polish Forces continued to fight. The Polish Army in France left a postal record of their stay and battle. There were Polish Forces in Great Britain, Canada, Palestine, Scotland, North Africa and Italy. They landed at D-Day and fought in Belgium, France, Holland and Germany. Special Fieldpost cancellations identify these military units.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 468-9)

POSTAL HISTORY OF KRAKÓW 1846-1918

(CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS ISSUE)

The Main Post Office in Kraków - Kraków

On June 1, 1850, Austria introduced for the first time on the lands it governed, thus also in Kraków, postage stamps which were up to then unknown to anyone. The first Austrian stamps were issued simultaneously in five denominations to provide payment for different kinds of mail. The postal regulation, quoted below verbatim, allows to understand what types of mail were accepted for expedition and what postage they required.

"Beginning June 1st of this year a new system of payment for letters becomes effective with a mandatory franking." Starting that day "all letters mailed and to be received within the country must be franked. Franking as well as registration is to be made by means of postage stamps. These stamps with values of 1, 2, 3, 6 and 9 Kreuzer namely: 1 Kreuzer - yellow; 2 Kreuzer - black; 3 Kreuzer - red; 6 Kreuzer - red-brown; 9 Kreuzer - blue will be sold in all post offices. The mailer should affix on the upper part of the address side of the letter the stamp, or as many stamps as are necessary to pay by their value for the franking according to the postal schedule for distance and weight. The payment for registered mail is to be paid by the mailer by affixing a 6 Kreuzer stamp on the side of the letter seal. For return receipt the payment is the same as a single letter.

The payment in terms of the distance for a single letter weighing up to $\frac{1}{2}$ ounce has to be transported, amounts to:

- | | |
|--|-----------|
| a. Within the area of the post office of mailing | 2 Kreuzer |
| b. For distances up to 10 miles (inclusive) | 3 Kreuzer |
| c. For distances 10 to 20 miles | 6 Kreuzer |
| d. For distances larger than 20 miles | 9 Kreuzer |
- (One European mile equals approximately 7.4 kilometers).

For letters weighing more than one ounce and up to 2 ounces, the postage is double, for those above 2 ounces and up to 3 ounces it is triple and so on. The regulations for letters also apply to other objects which are being mailed such as: writings, printed matter, samples, etc. For mail with a cross-shaped band ("Kreuzband") which besides the address, date, and signature does not contain any message, one should pay without considering the distance it has to be transported, the uniform payment of one Kreuzer. For samples of wares which are being mailed where it can be easily recognized that these parcels do not contain anything else, the postage is that for a letter up to 2 ounces. If the reduction of postage applies to the mailing of samples of wares, one may include a single letter which should be weighed together with the sample. Such mailings shall be considered as letters only if their weight does not exceed 16 ounces.

Concerning mailings which contain questions, should be prepaid as a single letter. However one may request a postage free question letter when: a) The sender shows the post office a letter according to which he did not yet receive the registered item but should have received it via normal postal servicing.

- b) The prepaid return receipt did not arrive after a reasonable period. In doubtful cases the parties may ask at the post offices for the correct franking and the postal clerks should affix the appropriate value of stamps on the mailed item after receiving the payment.

Mail found in mail boxes which is not franked with stamps or insufficiently franked mail, are being forwarded, however the addressee is obliged to pay the deficient amount of postage and additional 3 kreuzer for a single letter which is being multiplied according to the franking requirement.

If a letter was put in a mailbox without a stamp or insufficient stamp and such letter requires a reduced postage, then it loses this reduction and requires the same postage as an unfranked or insufficiently franked letter.

Unfranked or underfranked registered items are not accepted. Mail from authorities which have free postage privileges are to be paid for by the recipient without additional postage.

The post offices' imprint on stamps affixed to mail are their usual postmark. Mail franked with stamps which show signs of previous use, are considered unfranked.

The forging of postage stamps is considered to be equal to the forging of fiscal papers.

Concerning postal communication with foreign countries apply the same regulations concerning the progression in weight and temporarily in this respect the franking by cash payment and the choice between franking and non-franking remains still in effect.

For the delivery of letters to places where mailmen are not paid by the state, a payment of 1/2 kreuzer per piece is required.

In cases where according to the wish by the addressee, the post office stores the mail until it is brought for pick up at a separately defined place, then the payment (Fachgebur) amounts to one kreuzer per piece.

Mail should be deposited in mail boxes except registered mail which should be handed to the postal clerks, should be paid in cash in cases where a return receipt is required.

In each post office, regulations are displayed concerning postage payments for letters and a list of places which belong to the same postal district and places not more than 10 (european) miles distant and those 10—20 miles distant.

In larger post offices there are printed lists of places for sale."

The introduction of stamps made the mailing of letters at a post office non-mandatory, because letters franked with stamps could be dropped in mail boxes which were introduced in Kraków virtually simultaneously with postage stamps. The best documentation of the first stamps in Kraków would be a letter franked with some of the first stamps and postmarked with the datestamp of June 1, 1850. It appears to be doubtful that such a cover was preserved until our days but should such a cover exist, it would represent a great rarity. The first stamps in Kraków, in spite of doubtlessly issued previous instructions, presented the post with some problems to be solved. Apparently there were no exact

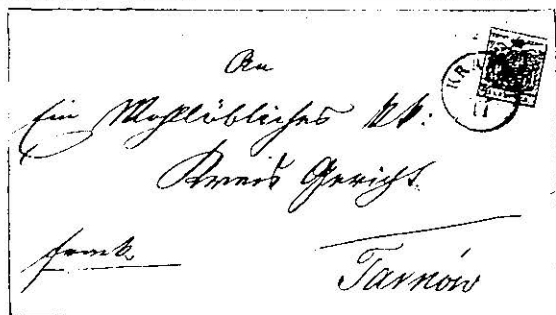
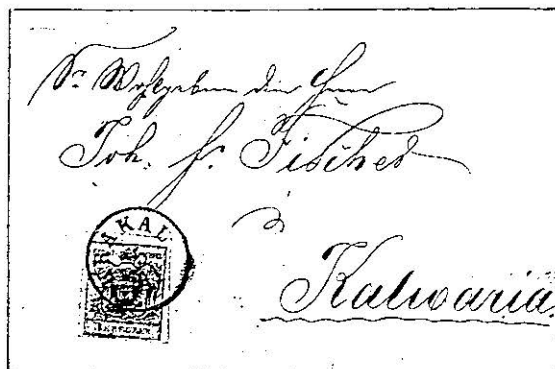
and clear instructions concerning the cancelling of stamps affixed on letters and this may explain the fact that in Kraków an ornamental postmark referred to as "mute" was made. Only in several places in the Austrian Monarchy were such postmarks used. This postmark occurs mainly on stamps while on other places on letters there occurs a postmark with "Kraków" and a date. This rule was not strictly followed because there occur mailings with affixed stamps which are postmarked only with the mute postmark. The period of use of the mute postmark was very short and the post stopped using it either on its own or on instructions by supervisory agencies.

The inborn frugal mind and foresight of the postal clerks of Kraków had as a result that this mute postmark was not destroyed and 13 years later, when temporarily no postmark was available for the cancellation of newspaper stamps, it was re-introduced and used again. This postmark is the rarest and doubtlessly the most valuable Kraków postmark.

One should point out here that there exists still another theory which concerns the use of the mute postmark. It was supposedly used to cancel stamps which erroneously were not postmarked with a datestamp while the letter was being mailed. This theory cannot be confirmed when confronted with letters known to me which bear the mute postmark; usually it occurs next to a stamp postmarked with a date cancellation.

The theory in question could only be considered in the case where letters arriving from other places in Kraków were franked with uncanceled stamps and thus there would be a need to cancel them with the mute postmark.

After the use of the mute postmark on first Austrian stamps stopped, the postoffices in Kraków and in Podgórze returned for a brief time to the use of postmarks of the pre-stamp period. The pioneering experiments ceased when the Austrian post introduced the normalized datestamp.



The Main Post Office in Kraków - Kraków 1

Haupt Postamt — Krakau

(The Main Royal, Imperial Post Office in Kraków)

When the Free City of Kraków was incorporated into Austria in 1846, the Austrian Post Office located at 221 Franciszkańska Street (currently 2 All Saints Plaza) had the status of a postal warehouse staffed with postal clerks (Aerarial Briefsammlung im Krakau). On the 14 of December of that year, the Court Commissioner of Austria, Count Maurycy Deym issued an order which established on December 16, 1846, a postal station in Kraków. In place of the previous postal warehouse, the Postal Inspectorate was formed in Kraków and was moved from the Franciszkańska Street to the "Government House in Stradom." The Kraków Inspectorate started its activity by taking over responsibilities from the postal inspectorate in Podgórze. The inspector, Józef Gromadzki and the postmaster, Jan Koye were moved from Podgórze to Kraków because after the establishment of "Pocztalteria" in Kraków (a station where tired horses were exchanged for rested horses, axels were greased, and also a brief rest period took place, provided that the time table defined one), the route of postal coaches was changed; they stopped in Kraków instead of Podgórze. The transfer of the inspector, J. Gromadzki was apparently of a temporary nature because already in 1849 he was replaced by the inspector Andrzej Kasprzycki, who in turn transferred his appointment to Michał Maciołek, the former chief of the Austrian postal warehouse in the Free City of Kraków. After Michał Maciołek, who served as the administrator of the Main Post Office in Kraków (1851-1859), the other administrators were: August Kobsin (1860-1871), Franciszek Nitecki (1872-1883), (from 1874 on, the chief manager), Aleksander Dawidowski (1884-1900), director Marian Biliński (1901-1911), and director Stanisław Hickiewicz (from 1912 on).

The position of the postmaster was changed between 1858-1860 (an accurate date is not known) and as a result the duties were taken over from the postmaster J. Koya by J. Grunzweig who served until 1883.

In 1858, the main Post Office was moved to Grodzka Street, the residence of Dr. Bererkowski (beginning in 1887 the address of the Post Office was: Grodzka Street No. 60, the headquarters of the Evangelical Community). At the threshold of the 20th century, in 1889, the building of the Main Post Office in Kraków at 1 Wielopole Street was completed and it is located there to this day.

Since the last half of the 19th century, the importance and activities of the Post Office in Kraków increased and this resulted in the increase of its rank from an Inspectorate to a higher grade Post Office and then to the Main Post Office in Kraków (Haupt Post Amt im Krakau). At this point it is worthwhile to mention the significant and not at all accidental evolution of the title of the Kraków Post Office: "Post Office in Kraków", "Post Office in the City", "Post Office Kraków City", (according to the "Kraków Almanac" by Czech which appeared from 1832 to 1917). This final description "Kraków City" was even used officially on the registration postmark and later on the registration label.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

POLAND, 1939-1949 — Continued

There is a sad note in the next category, that of the German concentration camps. Poles were rounded up and placed in camps such as: Auschwitz, Bergen-Belsen, Buchenwald, Dachau, Flossenbürg, Gross-Rosen, Lebrechtsdorf, Neuengamme, Ravensbrück, Sachsenhausen and Stutthof. Mauthausen, Gusen, Plaszów, and Majdanek round out the list. A grisly record of mail, unlike most of the original inmates, survives.

Forced labor camps became the permanent home for many Poles during the war years. Though fatality rates were lower than those in the concentration camps, many perished nevertheless. A large number of such camps were actually sub-camps of concentration camps.

Mail to and from most of the forced labor camps is much more elusive than that of the concentration camps. It would be an accomplishment of the highest magnitude to put together a "complete" collection of such material. Most of these camps were located in Germany, followed by Poland. There were a number in France also.

When thousands of Poles were released from the Soviet Union, most of able bodied men joined the Polish Forces. Their wives, children, orphans, and older people were resettled. Some settled in Palestine, while others were sent to other continents. India held some while others went to several countries in British East Africa. In New Zealand, there was a children's camp and in Leon (Colony of Santa Rosa), Mexico, about 1500 Poles settled. Such refugee camps existed until the late 1940's. Evidence of these settlements is verified by surviving postal documents.

Lesser known were the more permanent settlements of Poles in Asia. One was located in Harbin, Manchuria. The other, which also housed nearly 18,000 Jews (many of them from Poland) was located in Shanghai, China. Both of these, whose Polish populations dated to the early 1900's, saw large influxes of Polish refugees after September, 1939. Mail to and from these Polish colonies survives.

Though World War II ended in 1945, it did not stop in its effects and collecting possibilities. Tens of thousands of displaced persons had to be tended to, and DP and refugee camps operated for the balance of the decade. There is a wealth of collectible postal material from this period. However, it is terribly lacking in terms of research and documentation.

The most famous of the DP camps operated in Germany and Austria, under the auspices of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) and the International Relief Organization (IRO). Other DP camps operated in France, Italy and Great Britain. There is postal evidence of camps in Sweden, Denmark and Norway. It is likely that there were other countries, and this should be confirmed once coordinated research results are published.

So there in a brief overview is a broad terrain of collecting possibilities for Poles around the world, 1939-1949. With some exceptions such as internment camps, German concentration camps, and certain refugee camps one can put together a decent collection for a moderate capital outlay.

Good hunting and good collecting!

THE POLISH ARMY IN FRANCE

On September 30th, 1939 President Ignacy Mościcki, by now interned in Rumania, resigned as President of the Polish Republic, which office he had held since 1926. The new Polish Government, recognized by Britain and France, formed in France under the Presidency of Władysław Raczkiewicz with a Cabinet under General Władysław Sikorski as Prime Minister and from November 7th, 1939 also as the Commander-in-Chief of Polish Armed Forces. The HQ of the newly formed forces in France was the Hotel Regina near the Louvre.

The new Polish Army consisted of: Polish Highland Brigade (Samodzielna Brygada Strzelców Podhalańskich) under the command of Gen. Z. Bohusz-Szyszko. The Brigade participated from April 9th, 1940, in the Allied Norwegian Campaign and in the Battle of Narvik.

1st Polish Grenadiers Division (1-sza Polska Dywizja Grenadierów) under the command of Gen. B. Duch, was in May, 1940, only partially organized but took part in the Battle near Lagarde on the Marne-Rhine canal (June 17-18).

2nd Polish Rifle Division (2-ga Polska Dywizja Strzelców Pieszych) under the command of Gen. B. Prugar-Ketling fought with German advancing units near the Maginot Line. When the French resistance collapsed, on orders of Gen. W. Sikorski, they crossed in the excellent order during the night of June 19-20, 1940, the French-Swiss border into Switzerland where the Division was interned.

10th Light Armored Brigade (10-ta Brygada Kawalerii Pancernej) under the command of Gen. A. Grudziński — although not fully trained and poorly equipped, heroically resisted the oncoming German forces.

On June 20, 1940, Gen. W. Sikorski ordered evacuation of the Polish Army from France to Great Britain. Some 25,000 Polish troops reached safely her shores.

Figs. 1 & 2 show covers addressed to General Stefan Dembiński at addresses in Paris, where he arrived from Hungary. Both covers are stampless as these were in the limit of 20 g., therefore "postfree" for any member of the armed forces in France. Letters "F.M." in manuscript indicate "Franchise Militaire" — Forces Mail — and are supported by round handstamp used by the unit's postal officer — le VAGUEMESTRÉ — and the identification of the unit. In Figure 1 it is: ARMÉE POLONAISE, R.P. MAISON MILITAIRE de le PRESIDENT — (Polish Army R.P. (Rzeczpospolita Polska - Republic of Poland/President's Military Office) and the letter was then posted at Pignerolles nr. St. Barthelemy d'Anjou on 3.5.1940. In Fig. 2, the identification of the unit on "le Vaguemestre" handstamp is illegible, which as a matter of fact is: DEPOT POLONAISE No. 2, PARTHENAY, Deux-Sevres. The letter was posted on 13.5.1940. Both covers have military censorship marks.

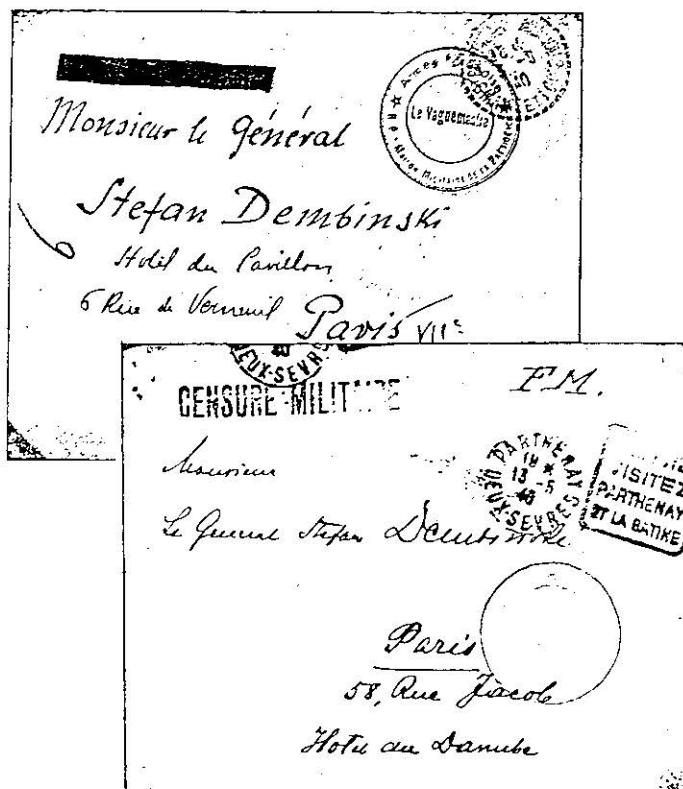


President
W. RACZKIEWICZ
1885-1947



General
W. SIKORSKI
1881-1943

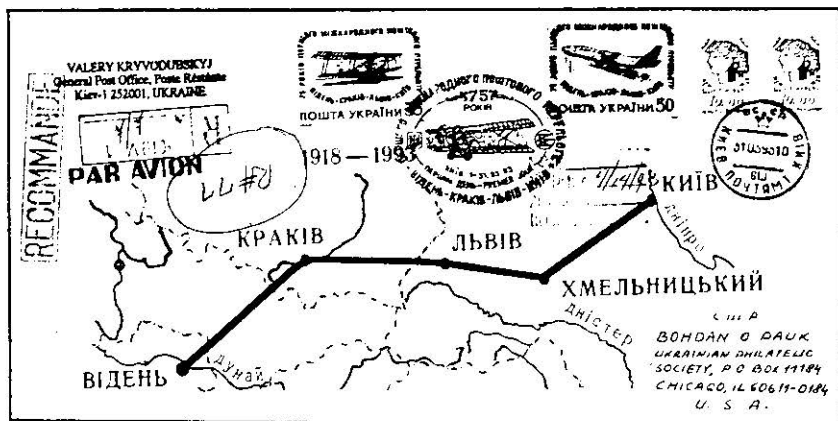
as depicted on stamps produced for the camp post office of Oflag IIC at Woldenberg in Germany.



—Andrzej S. Dembinski

Reprinted from POLISH PHILATELIC REVIEW, London.

75th ANNIV. VIENNA-KRAKÓW-LWÓW-KIEV FLIGHT



Illustrated cover showing the 1918 flight route prepared for Ukraine's first air mail stamps marking the 75th Anniversary of the first international flight.

Independent Ukraine's first set of air mail stamps was issued on

March 31. The set marks the 75th Anniversary of the first international postal flight, Vienna-Kraków-Lwów-Kiev.

The set consists of two values, at 35.00 and 50.00 coupons, the currency unit at the present time. (Although the Canadian Bank Note Company promoted the new stamps using the "ruble" unit, the Austrian Printer and the R. Borek Co., the present distributor of Ukraine's new postage stamps, advertises the currency unit in "coupons.")

75th Anniversary Flight issue

The 35.00 coupon (karbovanciv) stamp shows the old Austrian airplane of the Hansa Brandenburg C1-type, which was used for postal flights from March through October, 1918.

The 50.00 coupon stamp depicts a Boeing 737-400 airplane, a type used presently by Air Ukraine.

The designer of both stamps was A. Bechker (Beczker).

Stamp size: 38.5 x 29.6 mm. Stamps per pane: 50. Printing method: Offset 3 and 4 colors. Printer: Austrian State Printing Office. Quantity: 200,000. First Day cancellations for the air mail pair were held in three different cities: in Lwów (Lviv), at the main post office in Kiev, and at the Kiev airport in Boryspil.

Reprinted from TRIDENT VISNYK, published by the Ukrainian Philatelic and Numismatic Society, May-June, 1993 issue.

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Annual Dues which include a subscription to the Bulletin are \$16.00 (U.S. currency only) and should be sent to Polonus Treasurer, Stefan Czarniecki, P.O. Box 458, Berwyn, IL 60402. 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 Society, P.O. Box 458, Berwyn, IL 60402. General matters pertaining to the Society, contribution of articles for the Bulletin, complaints or other matters should be directed to the President.