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POLONAIS PHILATELIC SOCIETY



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POLISH FIELD POST IN FRANCE 1939-40

By I. GUST

The history of Polish resistance to the Hitlerite invaders is today well known. The heroic deeds performed by the soldiers and the civilians inside and outside Poland were admired by all people of good will. The Fascists did not succeed in crushing the spirit of the people. Organized resistance outside Poland began while the fighting was still going on in and around Warsaw, Gdańsk and other cities. On September 9, 1939 a Polish Government was set up in France. It signed an agreement with the French Government to create a Polish Army on French soil to fight the common enemy. The call to arms was answered by the Poles who lived in France and was increased by those soldiers and officers who managed to reach France after the defeat of Poland. According to reliable information, by June 15, 1940 this army totalled 84,000 men.

With the setting up of an Army Organization, postal facilities had to be organized. According to H. B. Smith in his 'Polish Post, 7 Years War' — "during the time the Polish Forces were in France all ordinary letters and post cards weighing not over 20 grammes, addressed to military persons or offices, were delivered free of postal charges." Members of the Polish Forces, were granted similar free facilities, provided only that they submitted their correspondence first to the respective Postal Officer of their unit (Vaguemestre) and hence through the Postal Control. Such letters had, of course, the regimental or equivalent hand stamp. When units were moved to the front

line or fighting zone, they then employed a Field Post cancellation "Post Aux Armées, Secteur No. . . ." In the main, letters sent by army units, when registered, were free of postal charges. Not all military establishments had hand stamps, some had a rubber stamp indicating on the envelope the unit in such cases the initials "F.M." (Française Militaire) were used.

It is my intention to describe those I have in my collection without claiming to exhaust the subject. Mr. H. B. Smith gave us valuable general information and now by describing in detail the hand stamp used, other philatelists may fill in the rest. In this way we will be able to get a complete picture of the Field Post Marks used by the Polish Forces in France. My letters cover most of the training centers, a few from military units and some from the fighting zone. This may seem to limit my observations and yet a clear picture emerges from studying the types on hand stamps used during the years 1939-1940.

Broadly there were two distinct groups — circular and straight line hand stamps. The circular hand stamps can be broadly divided into three types:

GROUP A

Type 1 — A single or double circle hand stamp of various sizes with the word "vaguemestre".

Type II — A similar, double circle hand stamp with the Statue of Liberty inside the inner circle.

Both these types were in French.

Type III — A three concentric hand

stamp with the Polish Eagle inside the inner circle. This type was in French and Polish.

GROUP B

Straight line types

These were in French and Polish of different sizes and were used as letter heads, indicating the units and the military character of the letter. Some were used in conjunction with the circular hand stamp but the bulk used this type only. Each of the above types has several variations which indicates that only some were made centrally. It is interesting to note that the color of the ink used was not uniform, — black, blue, red, violet and even green were used.

Now let us describe these hand stamps in detail:

TYPE 1. A double circle with 2 lines 5 & 7 mm. apart, inside the circles the word "vaguemestre" between the lines
2, 4, 1940, Bollene, 27 & 18 mm. "Centre Instr. Polonais" "vaguemestre" blue lines 5 mm. apart (Illustration 1)



Illustration 1

28, 3, 1940, Vichy, 39 & 29 mm. "Centre Instr. Polonais" "Le vaguemestre" black lines 7 mm. apart. (Illustration 2)



Illustration 2



Illustration 3

TYPE 1a A double circle without lines in the circle and "Le vaguemestre" in two straight lines.

1, 6, 1940, Angers, 34 & 23 mm. Centre d'instruction de genie, red. (Illustration 3)

15, 5, 1940, Pont-Chateau, 34 & 22 mm. Armee Polonaise D.C.A., blue. (Illustration 4)

21, 6, 1940, St-nazaire 34 & 22 mm. Armee Polonaise D.C.A.,—blue.

27, 4, 1940, Camp de Versailles, 37 & 28 mm., Armee Polonaise, blue. (Illustration 5).



Illustration 4



Illustration 5



Illustration 6

5, 6, 1940, Coetguidan, 38, & 26 mm.
Commandement de Camp, blue.

TYPE II Double circle with Statue of Liberty.

14, 5, 1940, Val Andree, 38 & 28 mm.
Centre annese instruction, Le vague-
mestre, red. (Illustration 6)

21, 2, 1940, Loudec, 38 & 28 mm. Cen-
tre annese instruction, Le comman-
dant, red. (Illustration 7)

28, 5, 1940, Parthenay, 40 & 28 mm.
depot Polon Ais No. 2, Le major, blue.
(Illustration 8)



Illustration 7



Illustration 8

**TYPE III Hand stamp with three con-
centric circles and Polish Eagle in
French and Polish.**

4, 3, 1940, Lucon, 38, 31, 23 mm., Ośro-
dek Wyszkozenia Oficerów, blue.

4, 6, 1940, Thouars, 38, 31, 23 mm. Ośro-
dek Wyszkozenia Oficerów, black. (Il-
lustration 9)



Illustration 9

2, 4, 1940, Thouars, 38, 31, 23 mm. Ośro-
dek Wyszkozenia Oficerów, black

4, 6, 1940, Loudeac, 38, 31, 23 mm. Ośro-
dek Wyszkozenia Oficerów, blue.

2, 5, 1940, Cerizay, 38, 31, 23 mm. Ośro-
dek Wyszkozenia Oficerów, green.

5, 6, 1940, Cerizay, 38, 31, 23 mm. Ośro-
dek Wyszkozenia Oficerów, green.
(Illustration 10)

Camp-de-Carpiagne, 38, 31, 23 mm., Sta-
cja Zborna, blue. (Illustration 11)



Illustration 11



Illustration 12

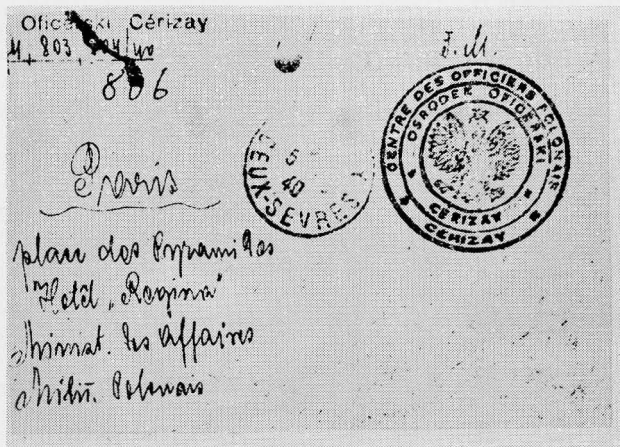


Illustration 10

7, 3, 1940, Serignan, 38, 31, 23 mm.
1-szy Batalion Czołgów, blue. (Illustration 12)

8, 3, 1940, Bollene, 38, 31, 23 mm. Sad
Polowy No. 5, blue. (Illustration 13)



Illustration 13



Illustration 14

5, 6, 1940, Sables D'or, 38, 31, 23 mm.
Komendant Ośrodku Wyszczolenia
Oficerów, red. (Illustration 14)

19, 2, 1940, Sables D'or, 38, 31, 23 mm.
Komendant Ośrodku Wyszczolenia
Oficerów, red.

29, 2, 1940, Bressuire, 38, 31, 23 mm.
Komendant Ośrodku Wyszczolenia
Oficerów, blue

1, 5, 1940, Pau Armées, 38, 31, 23 mm.
Dowództwo 1-szej Dywizji Piechoty,
red. (Illustration 15)



Illustration 15

28, 4, 1940, Bollene, 43, 32, 21 mm. Do-
wódca Oddz. Panc. Imot, Red. (Illus-
tration 16)



Illustration 16

27, 5, 1940, Coetguidan, 46, 32, 19 mm.
Komenda Obozu, red (Illustration 17)



Illustration 17

5, 6, 1940, Coetguidan, 46, 29, 20 mm.
Ewidencja Główna, blue

12, 4, 1940, Coetguidan, 40, 29, 20 mm.
Oficer Gospodarczy, blue. (Illustra-
tion 18)



Illustration 18

The straight line hand stamp is the more numerous one, because all letters from the military establishments used these on envelopes. Some used this type in conjunction with the special circular hand stamps, others did not. To describe each one in detail will serve little purpose because each unit used the most convenient handstamp. The predominant colors were Red, Blue or Black. I can describe the following:

Komenda Ośrodku Wyszczolenia Oficerów, Sables D'or — Polish 2 lines, Red

Dowództwo 2-giej Dywizji Piechoty — Polish 2 lines, Blue

Dowództwo Dywizji Strz. Pieszych — Polish 2 lines Black

Ośrodek Oficerski Cerizay, Polish 1 line Green

Ośrodek Wyszczolenia Oficerów w Thours, Polish and French, 4 lines, Blue

Stacja Zborna w Bressuire, Polish and French, 4 lines, Blue

Ośrodek Wyszczolenia Oficerów w St. Meen, Polish and French, 4 lines, Violet. (Illustration 19.)

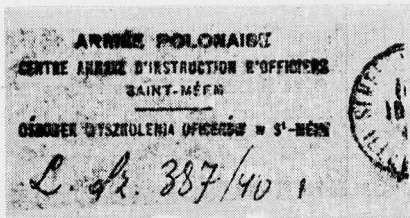


Illustration 19

Ośrodek Wyszkozenia Oficerów w Chatenay-le-comte, Polish and French, Red. (Illustration 20)



Illustration 20

Ośrodek Wyszkozenia Oficerów w Fontenay le comte, Polish and French, 4 lines, Blue. (Illustration 21.)

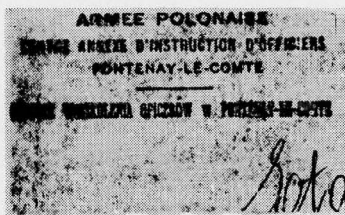


Illustration 21

Sąd Polowy Nr. 3, Polish and French, 3 lines, Blue.

Sąd Polowy Nr. 5, Polish and French, 3 lines, Blue.

Komenda Uzupełnień w Parthenay, Polish and French, 4 lines, Blue. (Illustration 22.)

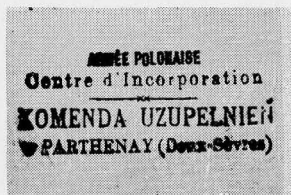


Illustration 22

Ośrodek Zapasowy w Parthenay, Polish and French, 4 lines Blue.

Stacja Zborna dla Żołnierzy Polskich, Camp de Carpiagne, Polish & French 6 lines, Blue. (Illustration 23)

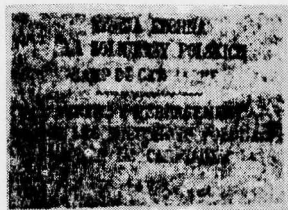


Illustration 23

Officer Placu, 1 Officer Graniczny w Marsylji, Polish and French, 6 lines, Violet.

Officer Graniczny Modane-care (Savoie) Polish and French, 4 lines, Red.

2 Dywizja Artylerii Przeciwlotniczej, St. Nazaire, Polish and French 2 lines Violet.

1 Dywizja Artylerii Przeciwlotniczej, Pont Chateau, Polish and French, 2 lines, Violet.

Centrum Wyszkozenia Sanitarnego, Comboung, Polish and French, 3 lines, Blue.

Centrum Wyszkozenia Saperów, Angiers Polish and French, 3 lines, Violet

Kompania Samodzielną w Niort, Polish and French, 2 lines, Violet.

Ośrodek Wyszkozenia Oficerów w Niort Polish and French, 4 lines, Black. (Illustration 24)

Rezerwowi Ośrodek Wyszkozenia Oficerów, w Sables D'or, Polish and French 5 lines, Red.

French and Polish, 4 lines, Violet.

Ośrodek Wyszkozenia Oficerów w Luzon

Batalion Administracyjny Coetguidan French and Polish, 4 lines, Violet.

Rezerwowi Ośrodek Wyszkozenia Oficerów, Vichy, French and Polish, 4 lines Red.

Depot Polonais Parthenay, French, 1 line, Violet.

Ośrodek Wyszkozenia Oficerów, Val Andre, French and Polish, 4 lines, Red.

Ośrodek Wyszkozenia Żołnierzy, Loudeac, French, 1 line, Red.

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French military postcards were also used with initials F.M. boxed or "Franchise Militaire" in two straight lines, usually placed on the right hand side in place of postage



STAMPS OF THE POLISH POST IN ODESSA

By Thaddeus Gryzewski

One of the interesting yet little known among World collectors is the series of stamps issued by the Postal Agency at the Polish Consulate in Odessa.

The reason being that beyond a listing in German catalogs, (Zumstein catalog), not mentioning Polish catalogs, no other catalogs list this issue, in spite of the fact that they are legitimate, issued with the consent of the Ministry of Posts and Telegraphs of Poland.

During the period of domestic war (1918-1921), and the intervention of Iron curtain countries on territory occupied by counter-revolutionary armies, Polish Consulates were formed with the object of taking care of the number of Poles who had been forced to flee to the East as a result of World War I.

In agreement with a ruling by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, all these Consulates had the duty to receive correspondence addressed to Nationals residing in that Country. There was perhaps some charge for this service, however, on such mail, that I have examined I can find no trace of any stamp for this service. All mail of this kind was sent by Polish Diplomatic Courriers, who forwarded it to their headquarters, which then was forwarded by post to the addressees.

The Polish First Class Consulate at Odessa tried to ease their work and at the same time sanction the existence of such postal service.

Relying on the formation of a Postal Agency at Constantinople, as a precedent, the Polish Consulate at Odessa turned to the Ministry of Posts and Telegraphs with the proposition of forming a similar Postal Agency at Odessa.

The newly appointed Consul Stanley Srokowski turned to the Ministry of Posts and Telegraphs, which by its letter of October, 1919, agreed to the above initiative.

The letter of October 11, 1919 signed by under-secretary of State Dr. Urnanski, the Ministry of Posts and Telegraphs permitted the opening of a Postal Agency at Odessa, enclosing simultaneously the necessary Postal forms

and requisitions. Also enclosed were Polish Postage stamps of 1800 marks face value.

The exact text of the letter of the Ministry pertaining to the stamps was: "Please take note that the Ministry of Posts and Telegraphs will furnish a dated canceller as soon as the Consulate will furnish the wording which you wish on this dated canceller. The same with the postage stamps with overprint. Our suggestion for wording on the date canceller would be, "POLSKA AGENCJA POCZTOWA ODESA" ("POLISH POSTAL AGENCY ODESSA"), while postage stamps should be overprinted "ODESA" ("ODESSA").

Before such dated canceller is made, they should be temporarily cancelled with the Legation stamp and adjoining this the date of receipt should be noted ..."

All such postal action was taken in accordance with instructions given for the Agency in Constantinople, where the Consulate was directing such operations, and had the duty to receive from and send to Poland all mail, such as letters, cards, printed matter, newspapers, trade papers and also merchandise trade samples. Correspondence could be sent as Registered mail. The mail sacks were taken by Polish Diplomatic Courriers. Postage had to be prepaid according to the Polish Foreign Post tariff which was 20 fen. for a card, a letter up to 20 grams 50 fen. (and the next 20 grams 30 fen.). Registry fee 50 fen.

Lack of documents does not permit establishing the exact date of the opening of this Agency. It is known that it started operations in middle of November, 1919 and was closed down January 31st, 1920, when the Polish Consulate was liquidated, in conjunction with the evacuation of the French Army.

According to a recent discovery in a collection of the original bills from the printery, it was ascertained that these stamps were delivered for overprinting on November 28, 1919 (Gregorian calendar) and the Consulate received them the following day. The bill was filed by the Consulate's cashier on

December 2, 1919. The date of issue therefore, would have to be accepted as the first days of December.

From the report of the Consulate sent to the Ministry of Post and Telegraph we find that, the total value of stamps sold was 1180.05 marks, and stamps on hand with the face value 619.95 marks being sent to the Ministry. The Report further says: "In accordance with rules of the Ministry of Posts and Telegraphs dated October 7th and 11th, 1919 under No. 29136/1563 and instructions to Postal Agency No. 13512/IV and No. 29588/1582 the Polish Postal Agency at Odessa had the overprint "ODESA" applied in a local print shop on the following quantities of postage stamps:

10 fen. 550 copies

20 fen. 600 copies

25 fen. 200 copies

50 fen. 550 copies

1 mk. 700 copies

overprinted in black color, also:

10 fen. 50 copies

50 fen. 50 copies

overprinted in proof red color used on letters.

"The Polish Postal Agency in Odessa during its 2½ month period of steady operation sent 599 registered and 135 regular letters, creating much gratitude among the large colony of Poles who were able in this way to correspond with the Motherland and contact those missing members of the family who

were lose during the war.

— Consul St. Srokowski"

As the Ministry of Posts never sent a canceller during the entire existence of the Agency at Odessa, a local canceller was made in the form of a rectangle consisting of three frames with the word "ODESA" in center. The dimensions of the canceller were 26 x 14 mm. The ink used was black or violet black.

Censorship took place in the Consulate, and examined and passed correspondence was marked with a two line stamp, "Czytano w Konsulacie Polskim/ w Odesie" (Read in the Polish Consulate/in Odessa), and the other "Komendant Etapu" (see illustration).

In accordance with the regulation of the Ministry of Posts, the Consulate had the stamps, which it received, overprinted in the local print shop. For the overprint, which was typographed, two printing forms were used: one for stamps valued in fenigs and the other for values of 1 mark (see illustration).

ODESA

ODESA

Form I — used to overprint stamps of fenigi values **Form II — used to overprint the one mark value**

Each form consisted of fifty words "ODESA".

In form I, there were five rows horizontally and 10 vertically; in form II,



ten rows horizontally and 5 rows vertically.

Because of these printing forms, each sheet which consisted of 100 stamps, had to be put through the press twice, perhaps in the first operation the upper half of sheet, and in the second phase the lower half. The same manipulations were used to overprint the one mark stamps which were printed first, the left half, then the right half.

With this type of technique of printing the fifth and sixth vertical rows more often had overprints not on the same level.

The size of the overprint on form I was 13 on $2\frac{3}{4}$ mm. and the form II measured $14\frac{3}{4}$ on 3 mm.

The overprints were made with black ink with a light sheen. The stamps overprinted were 10 fen. (Scott 95) on ordinary paper with yellowish gum, 20 fen. (Scott 99) on horizontally ribbed paper, 25 fen. (Scott 100) on regular smooth paper with yellowish gum, 50 fen. (Scott 102) on smooth paper with yellowish gum, and 1 mark (Scott 103) on smooth paper with white or yellowish gum. In addition to these, as mentioned in the Consular Report, stamps of 10 fen. were overprinted in red ink as proofs. In the proof category also overprinted in black were the 15 hal. stamps (Scott 124) of which there were only 6 copies. All stamps mentioned are perforated $11\frac{1}{2}$.

There are inverted overprints of all values, which according to the Polish Philatelic Press, there exist 3 copies of the 10 fen., 5 copies of the 20 fen., 5 copies of the 50 fen. and 6 copies of the 1 mark stamps.

A correction of the Consulate statement is necessary that all the stamps with the red overprints were used on letters. It is not the proven truth, as one oftener finds the unused and rarely the used, and these were possibly courtesy cancellations.

It is also necessary to mention that one finds imperforated stamps with the Odessa cancellation without overprint for the 5 and 15 fen. (Scott 82 and 84), and perforated for the 10, 20, 25, 50 fen. and 1 mark (Scott No. 95, 97, 99, 100, 102, 103) also for 10, 15 and 25 hal. (Scott Nos. 123, 124 and 126).

Apparently, as with all rare over-

prints on stamps, it did not get along without forgery.

For some forgeries, type not identical to the original was used, some forgeries are very like the original but the forger not always got the same material which differs from the original in color, grade of paper or perforation.

In closing it is necessary to note that the "ODESA" overprint belongs to legitimate issues of the Post which had the approval of the Ministry of Posts and Telegraphs. For this reason they should be found in all catalogs of the world

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NEW ISSUES

By J. J. Domar

To celebrate the Fifth World Congress of Trade Unions which will take place in Moscow, from the 4th to the 16th of December, 1961, a 60 gr. stamp will be released on December 4th, 1961.

It was designed by S. Jasinski, and engraved by B. Kowalska, recess-printed on unwatermarked paper, size 42.5 x 25.5 mm. in sheets of 70 stamps. Three million are to be issued.

On December 4th, 1961, the next set of the Millenium issues consisting of 3 stamps will appear. It will commemorate the Polish Mining Industry.

The stamps were designed by Jan Samuel Miklaszewski, printed in offset on unwatermarked paper in the following denominations:

40 gr. depicts the seal of Peter Bogumilowicz (1284), in the center of which the coats of arms of Kopasyny is shown — Kopasyny (diggers) were the oldest family of miners of among the tribe of Wislanie in the early middle ages. Amount issued — one million.

The 60 gr. stamp shows the seal of the town and depicts the medieval period of mining. Amount issued, one million.

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